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Rwanda Reaches Agreement with US to Accept Deported Migrants Under New Bilateral Initiative

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Rwanda and the United States have entered into a bilateral agreement that will allow up to 250 migrants deported from the US to be resettled in Rwanda, according to reports from international news agencies. The deal, signed in Kigali this past June, is seen as a continuation of Rwanda's active role in regional and global humanitarian responses, while also aligning with Washington's increased immigration enforcement policies under the Trump administration.

A Rwandan government official confirmed to Reuters, on condition of anonymity, that the US has already submitted a shortlist of ten individuals for initial assessment. The agreement permits Rwandan authorities to review each case individually before approving resettlement.

Yolande Makolo, spokesperson for the Government of Rwanda, stated that the country's openness to this initiative is rooted in its national history and values. "Rwanda has agreed with the United States to accept up to 250 migrants, in part because nearly every Rwandan family has experienced the hardships of displacement, and our societal values are founded on reintegration and rehabilitation," Makolo said.

Makolo emphasized that migrants approved for resettlement will be offered comprehensive support to help them integrate into society. "They will receive workforce training, healthcare, and accommodation support to help them rebuild their lives and contribute to Rwanda's economy – one of the fastest-growing in Africa over the past decade," she added.

The partnership is not unprecedented. Rwanda has previously demonstrated its capacity and willingness to take part in international resettlement efforts. Between September 2019 and April 2025, Rwanda received 2,760 refugees and asylum seekers evacuated from Libya. These individuals, many of whom came from countries such as Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Cameroon, and Nigeria, were transported via 21 coordinated flights and temporarily housed at the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) center in Bugesera District.

Many of those evacuees were later relocated to third countries, primarily in Europe, in

coordination with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the African Union. The arrangement demonstrated Kigali's growing influence in humanitarian diplomacy and its capability to host displaced populations in a structured, humane manner.

The current deal with the United States underscores a broader trend of strategic migration partnerships emerging outside of traditional frameworks. It also reflects a shift in Washington's immigration policy toward leveraging international agreements to manage irregular migration flows.

While the US has not officially released a public statement confirming the agreement, sources familiar with the development describe it as part of a broader strategy to strengthen bilateral ties and promote orderly migration alternatives. The details of funding, logistics, and timelines for migrant resettlement remain under discussion.

This agreement marks another chapter in Rwanda's evolving role as a regional partner in addressing global displacement and underscores the nation's emphasis on structured reintegration, economic participation, and social rehabilitation.