Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has ordered the immediate evacuation of his country's nationals from South Africa following months of escalating anti-migrant violence.

The rescue operation comes ahead of a Tuesday, 30 June deadline issued by local vigilante groups for undocumented foreigners to leave—an ultimatum that has sparked widespread panic across migrant communities.

So far, 746 Ugandans have voluntarily registered for the government-funded charter flights, while hundreds of others have already fled the country independently.

While South Africa has suffered periodic waves of deadly xenophobic unrest since 2008, the current crisis has been building for several months.

Anti-immigration groups have staged increasingly aggressive demonstrations across multiple provinces, accusing foreign nationals of taking jobs, driving up crime, and straining public services. Tensions boiled over into open clashes and displacement in early June, forcing countries like Malawi to launch their own emergency repatriation programmes.

The human cost of the unrest was underscored by the confirmed killing of a Ugandan national, Wilber Niwamanya.

Mr Niwamanya, who also went by the name Joseph Ainebyona, worked as a motorcycle delivery rider in KwaZulu-Natal Province. He was assaulted and killed by a mob who stole his vehicle. Reports from local humanitarian agencies indicate that several other foreign nationals have been killed in similar targeted attacks over recent weeks.

Uganda's High Commission has formally requested that South African authorities thoroughly investigate the murder and prosecute those responsible.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has issued a stern warning against vigilante justice, insisting that the enforcement of immigration laws remains the sole responsibility of the state.

According to the South African Government News Agency, "There is no place for xenophobia, for Afrophobia, or any other form of intolerance," Mr Ramaphosa stated, warning that "no individual may stop any person to demand documentation

or proof of identity.”

However, the President has also had to walk a fine line, acknowledging the “deep and legitimate concerns” of South Africans regarding gaps in the countries migration system.

In an effort to quell public frustration, Mr Ramaphosa promised a sweeping crackdown on illegal immigration, including tighter border security, increased penalties for businesses hiring undocumented workers, and the introduction of strict employment quotas for foreign nationals.

With widespread anti-immigrant rallies planned to coincide with the 30 June deadline, South Africa’s state security agencies say they are on high alert to prevent further violence.