

The United States has announced new visa restrictions targeting foreign nationals it says are responsible for, or complicit in, policies involving racial discrimination, land seizures and the incitement of violence against minority groups in South Africa.

The US State Department announced the policy on September 15, saying it would target foreign nationals involved in the enactment or implementation of laws or policies that Washington says enable uncompensated land seizures, race-based discrimination or the incitement of imminent violence against minority ethnic or racial groups in South Africa.

The restrictions are being imposed under Section 212(a)(3)(C) of the US Immigration and Nationality Act. The provision allows the US secretary of state to make a foreign national inadmissible when their entry could have potentially serious adverse foreign-policy consequences for the United States.

Certain family members may also be covered by the restrictions, according to the State Department.

The announcement follows an executive order issued by President Donald Trump in which his administration raised concerns about what it described as racially motivated crime and government-sponsored discrimination against Afrikaners and other minority groups in South Africa.

Washington also cited South African land policy, including threats of land expropriation without compensation, as well as what it described as incitement of racial violence through chants and slogans.

The US government said Pretoria had not adequately addressed concerns it had previously raised.

"We once again strongly urge the South African government to quickly address these egregious actions," the State Department said.

The US said the measures were intended to respond to conduct it considers incompatible with its foreign-policy priorities, including peace, economic stability and the rule of law.

The State Department did not name specific individuals who would be affected by the new restrictions in its September 15 announcement.

The latest policy is aimed at individuals whom the US says are responsible for, or complicit in, specified conduct or policies. It therefore does not amount to a general ban on South Africans travelling to the United States.

The announcement comes as Washington has introduced a series of changes to its visa and immigration system in 2026, affecting nationals of several countries.

In January, the US fully suspended visa issuance to nationals of 19 countries and partially suspended issuance for nationals of another 19 countries. The measures included several African countries.

The latest South Africa measure comes against a wider tightening of US visa policy affecting a number of African countries.

The January 2026 restrictions fully suspended visa issuance for nationals of countries including Burkina Faso, Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. Other African countries, including Angola, Burundi, Gabon, The Gambia, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe, were subject to partial restrictions.

Separately, the State Department has introduced visa-bond requirements for nationals of a number of countries. Its May 2026 list included African countries such as Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho and Malawi.

The US has also been reorganising visa operations in Africa into regional hubs as part of a broader effort to change how visa applications are processed.