

# *Trump administration welcomes 59 white South Africans as refugees to the United States*

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Washington, May 13 (RHC)-- A group of 59 white Afrikaners from South Africa has arrived in the United States as part of a refugee program set up by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump to offer sanctuary from what Trump has depicted as racial discrimination against white people.

In a press conference on Monday, Trump mirrored the claims of a myth popular on the far right that white people in South Africa have been subjected to systematic violence since the end of white minority rule in that country.

“It’s a genocide that’s taking place,” Trump told reporters at the White House, a claim that has drawn criticism from government officials, news media, and even some Afrikaners themselves. The move comes as the Trump administration blocks nearly all refugee admissions from non-white countries and leans into rhetoric about an “invasion” of immigrants from poor countries.

While people fleeing widespread violence and persecution in countries such as Haiti and Afghanistan have found a closed door, Al Jazeera correspondent Patty Culhane says that the Trump administration “has made a priority of getting these people [white South Africans] into the United States and paying for them to get here.”

The South African government has called Trump’s claims that Afrikaners face persecution “completely false”, noting that they have remained among the richest and “most economically privileged” groups, even after the end of the apartheid system that upheld white minority control of the political, economic, and military resources of the country and denied basic rights to the Black South African majority.

South African whites still own about three-quarters of all private land in the country, and have about 20 times the wealth of the Black majority, according to the international academic journal the Review of Political Economy.

“We think that the American government has got the wrong end of the stick here, but we’ll continue talking to them,” South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, himself a veteran of the struggle to end apartheid, said on Monday.

Tensions between the Trump administration and the government of South Africa have been high, with the US expelling South Africa’s ambassador over previous criticism of Trump and at odds with the African nation’s prominent position in a case before the International Court of Justice accusing US ally Israel of genocide in Gaza.

The Trump administration offered in February to resettle Afrikaners, descendants of Dutch settlers in South Africa, stating that they face discrimination and violence against Afrikaner farmers. “I want you all to know that you are really welcome here and that we respect what you have had to deal with these last few years,” Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau told the group of Afrikaners who arrived in the US on Monday. “We respect the long tradition of your people and what you have accomplished over the years.”

Bill Frelick, refugee policy director with Human Rights Watch, said the fast-track process of bringing Afrikaners into the US was unprecedented. “These are people who were not living in refugee camps; who hadn’t fled their country. They were the group that was most associated with the oppression of the Black majority through apartheid,” said Frelick. “It’s not like these are among the most vulnerable refugees of the world.”

[ SOURCE: AL JAZEERA and NEWS AGENCIES ]

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