

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 15, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to express our profound alarm and strong, fundamental opposition to reports that the Department of State has implemented a refugee program that President Trump established solely for eligible South Africans of ethnic White descent.¹ If true, this policy is inherently and unacceptably racist, morally indefensible, and undermines core purposes of the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP).

Since the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980, the USRAP has helped those seeking refuge from persecution in their home countries, including as a result of armed conflict to find a new home in America. These refugees have been forced to flee their homes due to persecution or fear of persecution due to religion, race, membership in a particular social group, nationality, or political opinion. For example, USRAP assisted many refugees from Afghanistan who are now in danger because of the assistance they provided to U.S. military servicemembers. USRAP has required prospective refugees to undergo rigorous security screenings and vetting before they are approved to come to America, making it among the most secure immigration programs in the United States.²

On January 20, 2025, the first day of his second term in office, President Donald Trump issued an Executive Order that suspended the USRAP, effectively eliminating the ability of the United States to conduct orderly, secure, and vital refugee admissions into the United States. His order also resulted in cuts to federal funding to local organizations providing support for refugees in our communities. President Trump's order cancelled flights for refugees already approved to move to America. It left refugees stranded and at continued risk of harm and abandoned many of our Afghan allies and their families.

Under the President's leadership, refugee admissions have restarted primarily for only one country, South Africa. On February 7, 2025, President Trump issued an Executive Order mandating the establishment of a new program for "Afrikaners in South Africa who are victims of unjust racial discrimination."³ Subsequently, President Trump justified his decision to restart

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/us-diplomats-asked-if-non-whites-qualify-trump-refugee-program-south-africans-2025-07-25/>

² <https://2021-2025.state.gov/refugee-admissions/frequently-asked-questions/#:~:text=The%20safety%20and%20security%20of,DHS%20approve%20the%20refugee%20application.>

³ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/02/addressing-egregious-actions-of-the-republic-of-south-africa/>

refugee admissions for White South African Afrikaners by citing a widely disproven claim that there is an ongoing genocide against white farmers in South Africa. In addition, in late July, 2025, Reuters reported that when U.S. embassy staff in South Africa requested additional guidance on eligibility for this program, Spencer Chretien, Senior Bureau Official for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration at the State Department, told embassy officials that this program was intended only for white people.⁴

In light of these troubling reports, we request that you provide answers to the following questions no later than September 4, 2025:

1. What information did the Department use to determine that a new refugee admissions program was needed for South Africa, and specifically what information did you use to establish that South African Afrikaners face or have faced “government-sponsored race-based discrimination, including racially discriminatory property confiscation” and would allegedly thus qualify for entry into the United States as refugees under Executive Order 14204 of February 7, 2025?
2. What information did the State Department provide to U.S. embassy staff in South Africa regarding eligibility requirements for this refugee admissions program, specifically to include whether White racial identity was or is a qualifying factor with respect to such eligibility—and if so, how such racial identity was or is to be established or proven?
3. What criteria were or are required for South African Afrikaner U.S. refugee status applicants to prove that they are the victims of “unjust racial discrimination” or “government-sponsored race-based discrimination, including racially discriminatory property confiscation,” the key eligibility criteria as set out in Executive Order 14204 of February 7, 2025? What factual criteria establish that Afrikaners face “disproportionate violence,” as claimed in Executive Order 14204, compared to non-White South African social groups?
4. What steps are you taking to ensure that this refugee admissions program does not make determinations based on arbitrary racial characteristics, particularly given that some “Afrikaners” may be of mixed racial descent; as many South Africans who may not consider themselves to be White are native Afrikaans speakers; and as Afrikaner identity is, in part, a cultural construct?
5. How many Afrikaners have been resettled in accordance with Executive Order 14204 of February 7, 2025; how many remain active applicants whose cases the Department of State continues to consider; and what is the cap, if any, on the number of such applicants that the Department of State may permit to enter the United States?

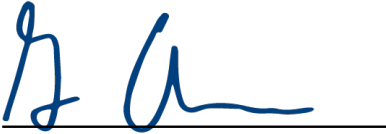
We also request that you provide all documents, communications, and guidance shared with U.S. embassy staff in South Africa or elsewhere in relation to the questions above and regarding how U.S. consular officials were or are to implement this refugee program for eligible South Africans.

We are horrified that the storied U.S. Refugee Admissions Program no longer helps the numerous vulnerable people around the world who face active identity-based persecution,

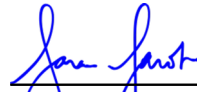
⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/us-diplomats-asked-if-non-whites-qualify-trump-refugee-program-south-africans-2025-07-25/>

including as a result of civil or inter-state armed conflict, and is instead being used as a racist policy tool to promote unjustified claims. We urgently demand that you immediately stop this racially discriminatory policy and resume all USRAP activities that were under way or otherwise active or applicable prior to the issuance of Executive Order 14163 of January 20, 2025.

Sincerely,



Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Africa
House Foreign Affairs
Committee