



For Immediate Release

September 2, 2025

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IMMIGRATION LAWYER DENOUNCES THIRD COUNTRY DEPORTATIONS TO ESWATINI Alleges U.S. Government Orchestrating Clients' Denial of Rights in Eswatini Prison

Denver, USA - On July 16, 2025, the United States Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) [deported](#) five men, who are citizens of Vietnam, Laos, Jamaica, Cuba and Yemen, to the southern African kingdom of Eswatini. Since arriving there, the men have been [imprisoned](#) in Eswatini's maximum security prison, the Matsapha Correctional Centre. Pursuant to a [secretive agreement](#) made at the highest level between the United States and Eswatini governments, the men's detention is [financed by the United States](#) to the tune of [several millions of dollars](#). Despite representations by the United States government that the men were deported to Eswatini because their home countries refused to accept them, the Jamaican government has [publicly stated otherwise](#), and the government of Eswatini intends to [repatriate](#) the men to their home countries with the assistance of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

"My two clients have been imprisoned in Eswatini, at U.S. taxpayer expense, for over six weeks. No one has told them why they are being detained, and no lawyer has been permitted to visit them," said [Alma David of Novo Legal Group](#), the U.S. based attorney for the two men from Yemen and Cuba.

"It appears the United States is still calling the shots with regard to what happens to the men, making a mockery of the Eswatini legal system. Even though the constitution of Eswatini provides for the right to counsel, the local attorney who has tried on multiple occasions to visit my clients has had doors slammed in his face at every turn. Last week, the chief of Matsapha prison told me that only the U.S. Embassy in Eswatini can grant access to the deportees. Since when does the U.S. Embassy have jurisdiction over Eswatini's national prisons?"

Tin Nguyen, the immigration attorney who represents the Vietnamese and Laotian nationals deported to Eswatini [issued a statement raising concerns the deportations were punitive](#); Mia Unger, who represents the Jamaican national, [also raised legal and human rights concerns](#).

Attorneys in Eswatini have filed two separate constitutional lawsuits related to the men's deportation to and detention in Eswatini; one [demands attorney access](#) for the men, and the other [challenges the very legality of the agreement](#) to accept third country deportees into which the government of Eswatini entered without the required approval by Parliament. Both lawsuits have been stonewalled in court. A growing

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[coalition of local civil society organizations is mounting pressure](#) on the Eswatini government to decline to accept future third country removals from the United States.

“It is no hyperbole to say that the Trump administration’s immigration policies have descended into complete lawlessness for the sake of spectacle. Now the U.S. is paying other countries to emulate its disregard for basic rights, and human beings are treated like trading cards in the process. My clients’ cases exemplify this,” David said. “The White House gets to boast that they are being ‘tough on immigration,’ while these schemes actually erode the host countries’ sovereignty - and American taxpayers are funding the whole show.”

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Image: Matsapha Correctional Centre, August 12, 2025

