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Africa-USA

When African dictatorships reach out to Trump

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The United States' goal is to force African countries to take in deported individuals. Some despots have already agreed.

South Sudan, Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), Rwanda and, most recently, Uganda, in addition to being dictatorships, have another thing in common: they have signed an agreement with the United States to this effect, which is part of Trump's policy of harassing immigrants.

‘Considerable pressure’

The US Supreme Court, where conservative judges are in the majority, has validated the mass deportation measures in defiance of international conventions that the United States has ratified: the 1984 convention prohibiting torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as the 1951 convention and its 1967 protocol, which prohibit the return of refugees to countries that do not respect human rights.

The first deportees to Eswatini have already seen their rights violated. The Southern African Litigation Centre has filed a petition because the absolute monarchy refused to allow them access to their lawyer.

The Trump administration's goal is to sign agreements with 58 countries, including 31 in Africa, to take in banned individuals. Yusuf Maitama Tuggar, Nigeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs, confirms that considerable pressure has been exerted on his country, which has nevertheless maintained its refusal.

A boon for dictators

The agreements remain secret. However, some have been leaked and are hardly reassuring. In South Sudan, ravaged by armed militias, President Salva Kiir, a party to a civil war that has already claimed tens of thousands of lives, made his demands known during the negotiations: the lifting of sanctions against one of the regime's three senior officials, the lifting of visa bans, the unfreezing of a US-based bank account, and support for legal proceedings against his main opponent, First Vice-President Riek Machar, who remains under house arrest.

As for Rwanda, where torture is commonplace in prisons, President Paul Kagame sees himself as a privileged ally of the Western camp. This allows him to be regularly elected with 98% of the vote and to continue his offensives against neighbouring Congo without fear of retaliation.

For the Ugandan president, in a country where homosexuality is punishable by death, signing the agreement with the United States is a guarantee: the certainty that the US administration will not be too concerned about the repression surrounding the presidential election, which will confirm a seventh term in office.

Whether it is the European Union, which uses African countries to outsource its borders, or the United States, which is trying to force them to take in ‘some of the most despicable people’, in the words of Secretary of State Marco Rubio, both are perfectly happy to accommodate despotic African regimes, to the detriment of the people.

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Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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