

National News

The Uganda Law Society is challenging the move for deportees from US to Uganda as unlawful.

BY KARIM MUYOBO & MIKE SEBALU

The Uganda Law Society (ULS) said yesterday it has run to court to challenge the expected transfer of deportees from the United States of America to Uganda, which they described as "unlawful."

In a circular issued yesterday, the lawyers' umbrella group, detailed that a plane carrying an unidentified group of deportees had arrived or was scheduled to land yesterday at Entebbe International Airport.

"Our research indicates that none of the mandated institutions, such as the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control, Parliament of Uganda, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been engaged regarding the matter. Moreover, no policy document or legislation has been promulgated to stipulate the procedures relevant to the transfer of people from one country to another," the circular signed off by the ULS Vice President, Mr Anthony Asiimwe, read in part.

He added: "Towards a remedy, we have approached the Courts of Law in Uganda and the region, seeking bespoke relief designed to arrest this patent international illegality. Our perspective of the matter is broader than the single act of deportation. We view it as but one gust from the ill winds of transnational repression that are blowing across our world."

Mr Vianney Luggya, the spokesperson of the Uganda Civil Aviation Authority, dismissed the claims saying there was no confirmation of any deportation flight scheduled to arrive.

However, in July 2025, Uganda and US signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the transfer of third-country nationals in the US who may seek protection against return to

ULS sues govt over deportees from US



The Uganda Law Society Vice President, Mr Anthony Asiimwe. PHOTO/FILE

their home country or country of former habitual residence, to Kampala.

In return, according to the MoU drawn by the US's Department of Homeland Security, Uganda agreed not to return any person transferred to Kampala to the US or their home country/another country.

In response to our inquiries about the

deportations rumoured by the ULS, the US Embassy in Kampala said the arrangement is governed by a formal agreement.

Mr Yasmeen Hibrawi, the public affairs counsellor at the embassy said: "In 2025, the United States and the Government of Uganda signed a Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA), which al-

lows asylum-seekers in the United States to pursue their humanitarian protection claims in Uganda."

He added, "We do not, however, discuss the details of our private diplomatic communications and for privacy reasons, we cannot discuss the particulars of their cases. All transfers under the STCA are in full cooperation

with the Government of Uganda. For further details, we refer you to the Government of Uganda."

The policy has, however, been heavily criticised by human rights organisations, with some describing it as turning African countries into dumping grounds for deportees.

A federal lawsuit filed in March 2025 challenged the removals as a violation of US immigration laws, although the Supreme Court later allowed the practice to continue as the case remains pending.

Lawful.

Everything we are doing as a country is in accordance with the law. It is not being done outside the law. Last year, we reached an agreement

with the US to take in deportees from third countries who may not qualify for asylum but are reluctant to return to their home countries. This is a temporary arrangement, with conditions including that individuals with criminal records and unaccompanied minors will not be accepted," Ambassador Adonia Ayebare, Uganda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations

In an interview with *Daily Monitor* yesterday, Ambassador Adonia Ayebare, Uganda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, said authorities are required to determine where asylum seekers will be housed and when they will travel within the country as part of efforts to ensure their protection.

However, according to ULS, such agreements must be anchored in clear legal frameworks and transparent procedures to safeguard both national interests and the rights of affected individuals.

"We have reason to believe that these individuals were deported into Uganda without any clear legal framework, policy guidelines, or statutory instruments in place to regulate such transfers. This raises serious questions about due process, national security, and Uganda's obligations under international law," Mr Asiimwe said.

BY MONITOR REPORTER