

Daily Nation

[Africa on the back burner in Trump's first-year scorecard](#)

January 25, 2026

What you need to know:

- Trump's priorities clearly lie with the First World according to his National Security Policy released last year.
- Among the listed victories were the peace deal between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

As the White House marked Donald Trump's first year back in office with a list of 365 "wins", the signs suggested Africa could face tougher times ahead.

Among the listed victories were the peace deal between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, proposed talks on the dam pact between Egypt and Ethiopia, and the migration of Afrikaner "refugees" from South Africa.

Yet Mr Trump's priorities clearly lie with the First World—specifically the western hemisphere—according to his National Security Policy released late last year.

The tariffs, visa bans, and visa bonds he imposed in 2025, alongside other threats, mean Africa's dealings with the US remain precarious.

On Thursday, a new report from the Gold Institute for International Strategy—a Washington-based policy institute focused on global security, trade, and economic resilience—warned that sustained US tariffs and political uncertainty across key manufacturing regions will force apparel exporters to rethink how and where clothing is produced.

African countries such as Kenya had relied on the Africa Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA) to sell apparel to US markets. While AGOA, which expired in September 2025, may be revived for another three years if Congress approves the recommendation, trade relations may never be the same under an unpredictable Trump.

The Institute's report, *Turning Tariffs into Opportunity: How the Global South Can Reshape US Textile Supply Chains*, argues tariffs should no longer be treated as a temporary disruption. It projects that the 2025 tariff package could raise US apparel prices by approximately 38 per cent in the short term, with clothing costs remaining about 17 per cent higher in the long run as producers source materials from regions affected by the higher rates.

This has forced countries such as Bangladesh, Kenya, and Peru to allow brands to source from multiple locations to avoid losses.

For Trump, African countries mostly appear in the list of punitive actions. Somalia, for instance, features in win number 33, where the White House claims Mr Trump "terminated temporary protected status for a variety of dangerous third-world countries, including Somalia, Venezuela, and Haiti".

Somali refugees who obtained US citizenship also feature, with the White House stating Mr Trump "began the process of auditing Somali immigration cases for systemic fraud and potential denaturalisation amid Minnesota's Somali fraud scandal".

Terror-prone countries

America's strikes against ISIS in Nigeria are listed as win number 174, described as efforts to "protect Christian communities". Afrikaners appear in win number 176, where the White House claims Mr Trump "welcomed the first flight of Afrikaner refugees from South Africa after the rise of racial discrimination in their home country".

Win number 41 also targets African nations, stating that Mr Trump "restricted the entry of nationals from 39 terror-prone countries", including Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Libya, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan.

On Friday, the Trump Administration announced an expanded Global Gag Rule, prohibiting foreign entities receiving US global health assistance from providing legal abortion services or

referrals, while also barring advocacy for abortion law reform—even if funded independently of US aid.

Although not a new policy—it was first implemented during Ronald Reagan’s presidency—each US leader has had leeway to toughen or soften its application. Health rights advocates warn African countries will bear the brunt.

“This radically expanded Global Gag Rule is nothing short of a regressive, harmful policy that puts the United States even further out of step with our global counterparts,” said Dr Anu Kumar, President and CEO of Ipas, which campaigns for access to contraceptives and safe abortions.

“This is yet another consequential setback for global health and human rights that threatens the lives and well-being of women and girls around the world.”

The expanded rule applies to all foreign aid, including humanitarian efforts and programmes run by US-based organisations, UN partners, and other governments. It follows the US withdrawal from UN Women and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), which normally address gender-based violence and reproductive health among the poor.

Trump’s list, released on 20 January, carries his trademark tone and wording, with phrases such as “narcoterrorism dictator” in reference to ousted Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro, and “nonsensical” to describe diversity, equity, and inclusion laws. It also refers to Hunter Biden, son of President Joe Biden, as a “notorious crackhead and gifter”.

Some “wins” have drawn particular criticism. Win number 22 celebrates a 17 per cent reduction in foreign student numbers in the US. Win number 120 relates to pausing the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, with the White House claiming Mr Trump “reduced extraterritorial overreach that disadvantaged US companies competing abroad”.

Equally controversial is win number 365, which touts “new hunting opportunities across 87,000 acres within the National Wildlife Refuge System and National Fish Hatchery System”.

The White House also claims Mr Trump deported more than 2.6 million “illegal aliens”, expanded federal detention capacity, and added 85,000 new identities to the National Counterterrorism Centre’s terrorist database.

Predictably, Mr Trump frequently compares his record with that of his predecessor. Mr Biden’s name appears at least 38 times in the list, often as a target of criticism. For example, win number 66 states the administration “captured a record number of criminals on the FBI’s Most Wanted List—outpacing the number captured under Biden in just one year”.

In all, the list is an amalgam of bravado and self-promotion.

“From negative net migration for the first time in 50 years to the largest homicide drop on record, trillions in re-shored investments, peace deals ending multiple wars, record energy production, and massive bureaucracy cuts, President Trump has put America First with urgency—and he’s just getting started,” said the White House.