

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 8718

To impose sanctions on foreign persons and foreign governments participating in or facilitating the recruitment of foreign nationals from African countries for the purpose of fighting in the war in Ukraine.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 7, 2026

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina (for himself and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services, the Judiciary, and Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To impose sanctions on foreign persons and foreign governments participating in or facilitating the recruitment of foreign nationals from African countries for the purpose of fighting in the war in Ukraine.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Countering Russia’s
5 Forced Recruitment and Kidnapping in Africa Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Russian-backed entities are working to re-
4 cruit civilian and military personnel across the Afri-
5 can continent to participate in Russia’s illegal war
6 against Ukraine.

7 (2) The Ukrainian Government has reported
8 that more than 1,400 citizens from 36 countries
9 across Africa are fighting alongside Russian forces
10 in Ukraine.

11 (3) Africans sent to the conflict are often forced
12 to take the most dangerous combat roles in the most
13 dangerous areas of the conflict because Russians be-
14 lieve their lives are less valuable. Videos from the
15 conflict show African recruits with landmines
16 strapped to their chest and ordered by Russian sol-
17 diers to fight or die. Africans are regularly referred
18 to as “expendable” and “cannon fodder” by Rus-
19 sians in the conflict areas.

20 (4) The daughter of former South African
21 president Jacob Zuma, Duduzile Zuma-Sambudla,
22 has been accused in multiple lawsuits of luring 17
23 South Africans and two Botswanan men to Russia
24 by telling them they would be training as body-
25 guards for her father’s political party or attending
26 a personal development course.

1 (5) Accounts of recruitment in South Africa
2 highlight that victims are regularly misled under
3 false pretenses. When they arrive in Russia, their
4 clothes and passports are often burned, and their
5 phones are taken away. If a contract was presented
6 upon recruitment, it is often switched for one writ-
7 ten in Russian with the express intent of exploiting
8 the victim for their service or labor.

9 (6) Other cases reveal that victims believed they
10 were travelling to Moscow for advanced military
11 training but were instead sent to fight on the front
12 lines in Ukraine.

13 (7) A group of more than twenty Kenyan men
14 were rescued from a suspected human trafficking
15 ring in September 2025 following a raid on a resi-
16 dential complex in Nairobi. The men had reportedly
17 been promised jobs in Russia but were set to be sent
18 to fight in Ukraine.

19 (8) Evan Kibet, a Kenyan long-distance runner,
20 reports a sports agent offered to fly him and three
21 other Kenyans to St. Petersburg for races. There, he
22 was told to sign work papers in Russian, and told
23 if he did not sign, he would be killed. He was then
24 sent to a military camp.

1 (9) Kenya’s foreign ministry has described
2 “ruthless” Kremlin-linked recruiters tricking young
3 men to join the war with false job promises. Accord-
4 ing to the Kenyan Foreign Minister, agents mas-
5 querade as working with the Russian government
6 and use unscrupulous methods including falsified in-
7 formation to lure innocent Kenyans into the battle-
8 field.

9 (10) In September 2025, Kenyan authorities
10 arrested a Russian Embassy employee in Nairobi
11 and a Kenyan accomplice, accused of recruiting local
12 men as mercenaries to fight for Russia.

13 (11) In addition, using local networks of re-
14 cruiters, Russia has also directly recruited numerous
15 Cameroonian soldiers, with estimates that 65
16 Cameroonians had been killed in the war.

17 (12) According to Ukrainian media, Ukrainian
18 forces captured two Cameroonian nationals that
19 claimed they had come to Russia to work—one “to
20 make shampoo” and the other “to fix teeth”—before
21 they were instead sent to fight for Russia.

22 (13) African women have been lured to the
23 Alabuga Special Economic Zone in the Republic of
24 Tatarstan in Russia through a recruitment scheme
25 targeting 18-to-22-year-old women promising partici-

1 pants professional training in logistics, catering, and
2 hospitality. Instead, these women are subject to haz-
3 ardous factory condition and used to build drones.
4 By some estimates more than 1,000 women have
5 been recruited from across Africa to work in
6 Alabuga's weapons factories.

7 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

8 It is the sense of Congress that—

9 (1) Russia's illegal, full-scale invasion of
10 Ukraine has strained the Russian military, gener-
11 ating a need for additional personnel to supplement
12 the ranks of Russia's armed forces and leading to
13 the deceptive and coerced recruitment of Africans;

14 (2) abduction and forced recruitment of African
15 nationals to support the Russian war machine in
16 Ukraine likely constitutes human rights violations;
17 and

18 (3) it is unacceptable that some African govern-
19 ment officials have knowingly participated in or ben-
20 efited from these recruitment operations at the ex-
21 pense of their citizens.

22 **SEC. 4. LIST.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
24 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State
25 shall create a list of foreign persons and foreign govern-

1 ments participating in or facilitating the recruitment of
2 nationals from African countries for the purpose of—

3 (1) knowingly or unknowingly joining the Rus-
4 sian military for the purposes of fighting in Ukraine;

5 (2) knowingly or unknowingly joining Russia-
6 aligned organizations for the purposes of fighting in
7 Ukraine; or

8 (3) accepting employment under false pretenses
9 or as volunteer work that supports the Russian war
10 effort against Ukraine.

11 (b) PROTECTION OF VICTIMS.—Individuals who are
12 determined to be victims of fraud, coercion, or deception
13 in connection with the activities described in subsection
14 (a) shall not be included on the list established under that
15 subsection.

16 **SEC. 5. SANCTIONS REQUIRED.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the
18 list required by section 4 is created by the Secretary of
19 State the President may impose the sanctions described
20 in paragraphs (1) through (7) of subsection (b) on each
21 foreign person and foreign government identified on the
22 list.

23 (b) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions de-
24 scribed in this subsection are the following:

1 (1) BLOCKING OF PROPERTY.—The President
2 shall pursuant to the International Emergency Eco-
3 nomic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.), block
4 and prohibit all transactions in all property and in-
5 terests in property of the foreign person if such
6 property and interests in property are in the United
7 States, come within the United States, or are or
8 come within the possession or control of a United
9 States person.

10 (2) EXPORT-IMPORT BANK ASSISTANCE FOR
11 EXPORTS TO SANCTIONED PERSONS.—The President
12 shall direct the Export-Import Bank of the United
13 States not to give approval to the issuance of any
14 guarantee, insurance, extension of credit, or partici-
15 pation in the extension of credit in connection with
16 the export of any goods or services to the foreign
17 person or foreign government.

18 (3) LOANS FROM UNITED STATES FINANCIAL
19 INSTITUTIONS.—The President shall prohibit any
20 United States financial institution from making
21 loans or providing credits to the foreign person or
22 foreign government totaling more than \$10,000,000
23 in any 12-month period unless the person is pri-
24 marily engaged in activities to relieve human suf-

1 fering and the loans or credits are provided for such
2 activities.

3 (4) LOANS FROM INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL
4 INSTITUTIONS.—The President shall direct the
5 United States executive director to each inter-
6 national financial institution to use the voice and
7 vote of the United States to oppose any loan from
8 the international financial institution that would
9 benefit the foreign person or foreign government.

10 (5) LOANS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL DEVEL-
11 OPMENT FINANCE CORPORATION; THE UNITED
12 STATES TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY AND
13 MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION.—The
14 President shall direct the Chief Executive Officer of
15 the United States International Development Fi-
16 nance Corporation, the Chief Executive Officer of
17 the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the Di-
18 rector of the United States Trade and Development
19 Agency to prohibit any loan, loan guarantee, equity
20 investment, project assistance, or any other type of
21 support to a listed foreign person or foreign govern-
22 ment.

23 (6) PROCUREMENT SANCTION.—The United
24 States Government may not procure, or enter into
25 any contract for the procurement of, any goods or

1 services from the foreign person or foreign govern-
2 ment.

3 (7) EXCLUSION OF FOREIGN INDIVIDUALS.—

4 (A) IN GENERAL.—The President shall di-
5 rect the Secretary of State to deny a visa to,
6 and the Secretary of Homeland Security to ex-
7 clude from the United States, any individual
8 identified in the report required by subsection
9 (a).

10 (B) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—An
11 alien who the Secretary of State or the Sec-
12 retary of Homeland Security (or a designee of
13 one of such Secretaries) knows, or has reason
14 to believe, is described in subparagraph (A) is—

15 (i) inadmissible to the United States;

16 (ii) ineligible for a visa or other docu-
17 mentation to enter the United States; and

18 (iii) otherwise ineligible to be admitted
19 or paroled into the United States or to re-
20 ceive any other benefit under the Immigra-
21 tion and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et
22 seq.).

23 (C) CURRENT VISAS REVOKED.—

24 (i) IN GENERAL.—The issuing con-
25 sular officer, the Secretary of State, or the

1 Secretary of Homeland Security (or a des-
2 ignee of one of such Secretaries) shall, in
3 accordance with section 221(i) of the Im-
4 migration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.
5 1201(i)), revoke any visa or other entry
6 documentation issued to an alien described
7 in subparagraph (A) regardless of when
8 the visa or other entry documentation is
9 issued.

10 (ii) EFFECT OF REVOCATION.—A rev-
11 ocation under clause (i)—

12 (I) shall take effect immediately;

13 and

14 (II) shall automatically cancel
15 any other valid visa or entry docu-
16 mentation that is in the alien's pos-
17 session.

18 (c) EXCEPTIONS.—

19 (1) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH INTER-
20 NATIONAL OBLIGATIONS.—Sanctions under sub-
21 section (b)(7) shall not apply with respect to the ad-
22 mission of an alien if admitting or paroling the alien
23 into the United States is necessary to permit the
24 United States to comply with the Agreement regard-
25 ing the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed

1 at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into
2 force November 21, 1947, between the United Na-
3 tions and the United States, or other applicable
4 international obligations.

5 (2) EXCEPTION RELATING TO THE PROVISION
6 OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.—Sanctions under
7 this section may not be imposed with respect to
8 transactions or the facilitation of transactions for—

9 (A) the sale of agricultural commodities,
10 food, medicine, or medical devices;

11 (B) the provision of humanitarian assist-
12 ance;

13 (C) financial transactions relating to hu-
14 manitarian assistance; or

15 (D) transporting goods or services that are
16 necessary to carry out operations relating to
17 humanitarian assistance.

18 (3) EXCEPTION FOR INTELLIGENCE, LAW EN-
19 FORCEMENT, AND NATIONAL SECURITY ACTIVI-
20 TIES.—Sanctions under this section shall not apply
21 to any authorized intelligence, law enforcement, or
22 national security activities of the United States.

23 (4) CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.—In any judicial
24 review of a determination made under this section,
25 if the determination was based on classified informa-

1 tion (as defined in section 1(a) of the Classified In-
2 formation Procedures Act) such information may be
3 submitted to the reviewing court ex parte and in
4 camera. This paragraph does not confer or imply
5 any right to judicial review.

6 (d) NATIONAL INTEREST WAIVER.—The President
7 may waive the imposition of sanctions under subsection
8 (b) with respect to a person if the President—

9 (1) determines that such a waiver is vital to the
10 national interests of the United States; and

11 (2) not more than 15 days after issuing the
12 waiver, submits to the appropriate congressional
13 committees a notification of the waiver and the rea-
14 sons for the waiver.

15 **SEC. 6. TERMINATION OF SANCTIONS.**

16 The President may terminate the application of sanc-
17 tions under this Act with respect to a person if the Presi-
18 dent determines and reports to the appropriate congres-
19 sional committees not later than 15 days before the termi-
20 nation of the sanctions that—

21 (1) credible information exists that the person
22 did not engage in the activity for which sanctions
23 were imposed;

24 (2) the person has credibly demonstrated a sig-
25 nificant change in behavior, has paid an appropriate

1 consequence for the activity for which sanctions were
2 imposed, and has credibly committed to not engage
3 in an activity described in paragraph (1) in the fu-
4 ture; or

5 (3) the termination of the sanctions is in the
6 vital national interests of the United States.

7 **SEC. 7. DEFINED TERM.**

8 In this Act, the term “appropriate congressional com-
9 mittees” means—

10 (1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs Com-
11 mittee of the House of Representatives; and

12 (2) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the
13 Senate.

14 **SEC. 8. SUNSET.**

15 Any sanctions imposed pursuant to this Act shall ter-
16minate on the date that is 5 years after the date of the
17 enactment of this Act.

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