

Nigerian church survivors return to Swartkops

The 25 South Africans who were injured when a building at the Synagogue Church of all Nations in Nigeria collapsed, have arrived back in South Africa.



Minister in the Presidency and Chairman of the Inter-Ministerial Task Team working to repatriate injured South Africans from Nigeria after a church collapsed has asked the media to respect the privacy of survivors and their families. Image: GCIS

The Inter-Ministerial Task Team on the Nigerian tragedy, led by Minister in the Presidency and Chairman of the task team, Jeff Radebe, greeted the 25 patients, including three children, at the Swartkops Air Force Base in Pretoria.

"All South Africans injured in Nigeria when the building collapsed have been brought back home except for one person who decided to go back to Synagogue Church of all Nations," said Radebe.

He said the South African delegation had managed to identify all South Africans who were in the church when it collapsed. A total of 84 South African died in the tragedy while 25 returned home from Lagos.

He said the evacuation was the biggest that South Africa had done since the ANC come to power in 1994.

The most seriously injured patients were brought out of the plane on stretchers and taken by ambulances from the Gauteng Emergency Services, to the Steve Biko Hospital for assessment and further treatment if required.

Patients to be assessed in hospital

All the patients will be admitted and assessed prior to being transferred to the hospital of their choice or discharged

according to their condition.

Families of the survivors were waiting for their loved ones at the hospital. Social workers were available to counsel the injured and their families.

Among those who returned home were two orphaned children whose parents died in the church.

Radebe appealed to the media to respect the privacy of the injured.

"This is a difficult situation. As the South African government, we are keenly awaiting the results of an investigation into why the church collapsed," Radebe said.

He said the South African Assessment team in Lagos was continuing with the work of finalising the process of repatriation of the remains of the South African who died in the incident.

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