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South Africa, Rwanda lose access to Agoa

Trump finds the countries' governments engage in practices 'inconsistent' with Agoa eligibility criteria.

By Alister Bull, Bloomberg and Ray Mahlaka, Moneyweb · 2 Nov 2026, 19:55

JSE	R154.51	-0.94%	PREMIER	R180.65	0.65%	PSG FIN	R30.71	0.89%
09/11/2026, 17:00			09/11/2026, 17:00			09/11/2026, 17:06		



The office of the US Trade Representative issued the statement after President Donald Trump notified Congress of his intention to terminate SA from Agoa. Image: Bloomberg

South Africa and Rwanda have lost their duty-free access to the US granted under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (Agoa), which Pretoria had lobbied hard to retain

Growth and Opportunity Act (Agoa), which Pretoria had lobbied hard to retain.

Introduced by the US Congress in 2000, Agoa grants eligible African countries tariff-free access to the world's largest economy for more than 1 800 products.

However, in a statement released late on Monday, the office of the US Trade Representative confirmed the US's intention to terminate the two countries' inclusion in Agoa, effective 1 January 2027.

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US President Donald Trump "found that the governments of Rwanda and South Africa are engaging in practices that are inconsistent with Agoa's eligibility criteria", US Trade Representative Ambassador Jamieson Greer said in a statement on Monday.

"These concerning and pervasive practices include, but are not limited to, barriers that undermine American trade and investment that pose a threat to US national security."

Tensions between Rwanda and the US have deteriorated over Kigali's involvement in the conflict in neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo.

For South Africa, the government has been bracing for bad news on its continued eligibility for Agoa as ties between Washington and Pretoria have frayed since Trump returned to the White House in 2025.

According to the statement, the Trump administration's concerns about Rwanda include barriers to trade and investment, the rule of law and political pluralism.

> In South Africa, it said, the Trump administration is deeply concerned about barriers to US trade and investment, corruption, and threats to US national security and foreign-policy interests.

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