

International 

Trump imposes 30% tariffs on all SA goods

As of 1 August, but 'separate from all sectoral tariffs'.

By Suren Naidoo, Moneyweb, with Josh Wingrove and Catherine Lucey, Bloomberg · 7 Jul 2025 ⌚ 21:37

ABSA R181.53 2.24% 8/11/2025, 10:49 AM	FIRSTRAND R77.23 2.05% 8/11/2025, 10:49 AM	INVLTD R131.76 2.01% 8/11/2025, 10:49 AM
JSE R134.20 0.15% 8/11/2025, 10:49 AM	NEDBANK R233.02 1.56% 8/11/2025, 10:49 AM	STANBANK R235.92 2.21% 8/11/2025, 10:49 AM



US president threatens to slap an additional 10% levy on 'any country aligning themselves with the Anti-American policies of Brics'. Image: Will Oliver/EPA/Bloomberg

President Donald Trump followed through on his April threats and hit South Africa with 30%

tariffs “on any and all South African products sent into the United States” on Monday.

Trump confirmed the move in an official [White House letter](#) to President Cyril Ramaphosa (which was also posted on his Truth Social platform) and noted that the tariffs will come into effect as of 1 August but are “separate from all Sectoral Tariffs”.

Read:

[Ramaphosa sees scope to lower US tariff in talks](#)

[Trump tariffs sour the fortunes of South Africa's citrus farmers](#)

He hinted that a new trade deal could be reached before August, adding: “There will be no tariff if South Africa, or companies within your country, decide to build or manufacture product[s] within the United States... In fact, we will do everything possible to get approvals quickly, professionally, and routinely – in other words, in a matter of weeks.”

In the letter, Trump recognised “the strength and commitment” of trade relations between both nations, highlighting “the fact that the United States of America has agreed to continue working with South Africa despite having a significant Trade Deficit with your great Country.”

He said it was time “to move forward... but only with more balanced, and fair, trade”.

“Our relationship has been, unfortunately, far from reciprocal.”

“Goods transhipped to evade a higher tariff will be subject to that higher Tariff. Please understand that the 30% number is far less than what is needed to eliminate the trade deficit disparity we have with your country,” he added.

Warning

“If for any reason you decide to raise your tariffs, then, whatever the number you choose to raise them by, will be added onto the 30% that we charge,” warned Trump.

“Please understand that these tariffs are necessary to correct the many years of South Africa’s tariff and non-tariff policies and trade barriers, causing these unsustainable Trade Deficits against the United States.

“This Deficit is a major threat to our Economy and, indeed, our National Security!” he remarked.

Listen/read:

[Trump tariffs and political instability fuel rand volatility.](#)

[Emerging market currencies rise as focus shifts to negotiations](#)

Trump’s letter to Ramaphosa was part of the first in a wave of promised letters that threaten to impose higher tariff rates on key trading partners, including levies of 25% on goods from Japan and South Korea, also beginning 1 August.

Ramaphosa labels it a 'unilateral' move

In a late-night statement on Monday, the SA Presidency said that Ramaphosa "has noted the correspondence from President Donald Trump on the unilateral imposition of a 30% trade tariff against South Africa".

He also noted that South Africa was one of several countries to receive the communication on 7 July 2025.

"This 30% tariff is based on a particular interpretation of the balance of trade between South Africa and the United States. This contested interpretation forms part of the issues under consideration by the negotiating teams from South Africa and the United States," it said.

"South Africa maintains that the 30% reciprocal tariff is not an accurate representation of available trade data."

"In our interpretation of the available trade data, the average tariff [on] imported goods entering South Africa stands at 7.6%. Importantly, 56% of goods enter South Africa at 0% most favoured nation tariff, with 77% of US goods entering the South African market under the 0% duty," the Presidency added.

"South Africa will continue with its diplomatic efforts towards a more balanced and mutually beneficial trade relationship with the United States. We welcome the commitment by the US government that the 30% tariff is subject to modification [on] the back of the conclusion of our negotiations with the United States," it said.

Read/listen:

[Brics in wait-and-see mode after Trump threatens extra tariffs](#)

[Fractured US relations pose serious threat to SA economy](#)

[SA must strengthen diplomatic ties, diversify trade partnerships beyond the US](#)

"President Ramaphosa has instructed the [SA] team to urgently engage with the US on the basis of the Framework Deal that South Africa submitted to the US on 20 May 2025. This Framework deal addresses the issues initially raised by the US, including South Africa's supposed trade surplus, unfair trade practices and lack of reciprocity from the US," the Presidency added.

"The President urges government trade negotiations teams and South African companies to accelerate their diversification efforts in order to promote better resilience in both global supply chains and the South African economy."

Meanwhile, Trump also announced 25% rates on Malaysia and Kazakhstan, while Laos and Myanmar would face a 40% levy.

The nations were the first in what the president promised would be a flurry of unilateral warnings and trade deals announced on Monday, two days before agreements are due from trading partners facing his 2 April so-called reciprocal levies.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said there would be around a dozen countries that receive notifications about their tariffs Monday directly from the president. Additional letters will come in the coming days, she said.

Many of the tariff rates, shared on his Truth Social platform, were largely in line with what Trump had already announced nations were likely to face. Some, including Laos and Myanmar, were slightly lower.

After a 90-day reprieve from his initial so-called "reciprocal" tariffs, Trump lowered those duties to 10% to allow time for negotiations. Few nations did so successfully in the short time given, though Trump's latest move effectively offers another extension – set to be formalised in an executive order signed later Monday – that pushes the looming 9 July deadline until at least the beginning of August.

The delay is expected to benefit all nations facing so-called reciprocal tariffs, and not just those who are issued the presidential letters in the coming hours and days, Leavitt said.

Trump warned nations against retaliation over his latest gambit in his letters.

Key industries

He also said that the rates did not include any sectoral-specific tariffs that the administration had or would separately implement on goods imported in key industries.

Both Japan and South Korea are major auto exporters, and are also facing US tariffs on steel.

Read: [Trump tariffs: SA gets hit with a 30% reciprocal duty](#)

Trump's letters did offer them a way to meet his demands. No tariffs will be imposed if Japan or Korea, "or companies within your Country, decide to build or manufacture product within the United States and, in fact, we will do everything possible to get approvals quickly, professionally, and routinely – In other words, in a matter of weeks," he wrote.

Markets fall

Following a rally to all-time highs last week, the S&P 500 Index lost 0.9%, while the Nasdaq 100 Index fell 0.8% at 12:36pm in New York. The Cboe VIX Index sat near 18.10, while a gauge of

expected volatility in technology stocks traded at the highest level in two weeks.

For many of the nations, engaging Trump in trade negotiations on his accelerated timeline has proven difficult.

The European Union is not expecting to receive a letter setting tariff rates today [Monday], according to a person familiar with those discussions who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Trump has also threatened to slap an additional 10% levy on “any country aligning themselves with the Anti-American policies of BRICS,” targeting the bloc of developing nations led by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa as they gathered for a meeting in Rio de Janeiro.

Read: [Brics leaders condemn attacks on Iran, urge Israel to leave](#)

Leavitt on Monday said Trump would “take any action necessary to prevent countries from taking advantage of the United States and our people”.

The dollar extended gains after Trump’s announcement, hitting the highest level in more than a week against a basket of peers. The currencies of South Korea, South Africa and Japan all fell more than 1% against the greenback.

Japanese automakers’ American depository receipts fell to session lows after Trump’s announcement. Toyota ADRs fell 4.3% to session lows, while Honda’s fell 3.9% to session lows. The South African rand fell 1.5% to a session low.

© 2025 Bloomberg

Follow Moneyweb’s in-depth finance and business news on [WhatsApp here](#).

TAGS: BRICS | CYRIL RAMAPHOSA | DONALD TRUMP | JAPAN | KAROLINE LEAVITT | MYANMAR | NASDAQ 100 INDEX | RECIPROCAL LEVIES | RECIPROCAL TARIFFS | S&P 500 INDEX