
Ramaphosa praised for calm amid Oval office tensions with President Trump



Published on May 22, 2025

Document Date: Tue, Jan 13 2026 07:43:52 am

Category: , English, International - [, Print Paper](#)

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JOHANNESBURG – South African President Cyril Ramaphosa is being widely commended for his calm and composed conduct during a tense Oval Office meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday.

The encounter took an unexpected turn when President Trump dimmed the lights and played a

lengthy video montage supporting claims of systematic attacks on white farmers in South Africa—allegations long discredited. Trump also cited unverified material and repeated conspiracy theories. Despite the dramatic setting, Ramaphosa maintained a steady demeanor, relying on his background as a key figure in South Africa's democratic transition.

Many South Africans, including government officials and media commentators, feared a repeat of past confrontational exchanges between Trump and other world leaders. However, Ramaphosa's poise was widely admired. While some commentators wished he had responded more forcefully, most praised his restraint under pressure.

Speaking to the press after the meeting, Ramaphosa downplayed the episode, noting that trade talks went well behind closed doors and that President Trump might still attend the upcoming G20 summit in Johannesburg. He also joked that some members of the South African press seemed disappointed by the lack of theatrics.

During the meeting, Trump referred to protest footage and controversial songs sung by opposition figures—elements he misrepresented as official government views. The South African side clarified that the protest involving white crosses was symbolic and not a burial site, and that the songs referenced were part of the historical anti-apartheid struggle, protected under free speech laws.

Ramaphosa's diplomatic approach has been recognized as a demonstration of leadership under provocation, earning respect both at home and abroad.