
South Korea secures release of detained workers in U.S.



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SEOUL, Sept. 7, 2025 — South Korea announced Sunday that negotiations with the United States to secure the release of more than 300 South Korean nationals detained during a raid at a Hyundai LG battery plant in Georgia have concluded successfully, with their repatriation expected soon.

The raid, carried out Thursday in the town of Ellabell, marked the largest single site operation

under U.S. President Donald Trump's ongoing anti migrant campaign. Video footage released by U.S. authorities showed workers in handcuffs and ankle chains being escorted onto buses, sparking outrage in Seoul.

Kang Hoon sik, chief of staff to President Lee Jae Myung, said the swift response by Seoul ensured progress. "Negotiations for the release of the detained workers have been concluded. Only administrative procedures remain before a chartered flight departs to bring our citizens home," he stated.

The detainees include 47 LG Energy Solution employees, 46 South Koreans and one Indonesian, while the majority of others, around 250, are believed to be subcontractor staff, most of them South Korean.

In a sign of urgency, LG Energy Solution dispatched senior executive Kim Ki soo to Georgia on Sunday. Speaking before departure, Kim stressed that "the immediate priority now is the swift release of both our employees and those of our partner firms."

The incident has underscored tensions between Washington's domestic enforcement policies and the interests of foreign investors, particularly as South Korean companies play a central role in the U.S. electric vehicle battery supply chain. Seoul officials said they would continue to work closely with U.S. counterparts to prevent similar disruptions in the future.

