

Hundreds of South Koreans repatriated after U.S. detention raid



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Seoul, September 12, 2025 – A total of 316 South Korean nationals returned home on Friday following their detention in a U.S. immigration raid last week, according to official reports.

A chartered flight carrying the repatriated workers, along with 14 other foreign nationals, landed at Incheon International Airport at 3:23 p.m. local time. The plane had departed from Atlanta's

Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport about 15 hours earlier.

The return followed a September 4 operation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the construction site of an electric vehicle battery plant jointly operated by Hyundai Motor Group and LG Energy Solution. The raid resulted in the detention of 475 individuals, including more than 300 South Koreans, who were subsequently held at the Folkston detention center in Georgia.

President Lee Jae-myung, marking his 100th day in office, noted that the incident raised concerns about the broader investment climate. “As it stands, our companies will inevitably be very hesitant about direct U.S. investment,” he said, urging careful evaluation of future cooperation. South Korean authorities stated they will continue close coordination with U.S. counterparts to safeguard citizens’ rights and ensure smooth bilateral economic engagement.