

Prospective Tariffs on Goods from Colombia

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On January 26, 2025, a feud between the United States and Colombia began pertaining to U.S. military flights carrying deportees to Colombia. After initially providing approval for the two aircraft to land in Colombia, Colombian President Gustavo Petro blocked their landing. According to his multiple social media posts, he explained that he was objecting to the use of military planes as opposed to commercial airlines to deport the migrants. In response, President Trump posted on social media that his administration will institute a number of actions against Colombia, including a 25% tariff on all goods from Colombia—which would be raised after one week to 50%, and a travel ban and immediate visa revocations on Government of Colombia officials. Secretary of State Rubio issued a [media note](#) on January 26 reporting that he had authorized the immediate suspension of visa issuances at the U.S. Embassy in Bogota. The note also reports that the Secretary is authorizing travel sanctions on individuals and their families who were responsible for the interference in the repatriation flights. Rubio reported his authority as INA 212(a)(3)(C).

By late evening on January 26, a statement was issued by the White House advising that the Government of Colombia has agreed to all of President Trump's terms, including the "acceptance of illegal aliens" being returned from the United States via military aircraft. The White House also suggested that the executive order imposing tariffs and sanctions on Colombia via the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) will be held in reserve, and not signed, unless Colombia fails to honor the agreement. Tariffs on Colombian goods would have a significant impact on Colombia's economy. The tariffs would also increase prices for U.S. customers for all goods from Colombia, particularly with respect to coffee, flowers, crude oil, and bananas. Petro, for his part, did not provide statutory authority for his threatened retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods.

The immediate threat of tariffs was designed to send a serious message that countries must accept deportation flights or be subject to tariffs and other sanctions. We also have now confirmed that tariffs will be issued under IEEPA, one of many options [discussed in our alert here](#). IEEPA is useful for the executive branch because its authority can be invoked by an executive order declaring a national emergency. Any such order issued under this Act may also include, in addition to tariffs, an annex with persons who are immediately subject to sanctions. Given the keen focus on tariffs targeting Mexico, Canada, Colombia (and now other sources of illegal immigration), companies should evaluate their supply chains and consider emergency measures in the event that tariffs are instituted on a counterparty (or themselves).

We will continue to track these developments. Please contact the authors or your Winston & Strawn relationship partner to ask questions or learn more.

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