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UK's bid to export some refugees to Rwanda, 'all wrong', says UN refu



UNICEF/Geai | A boy walks through a migrant camp in Calais, northern France. Many asylum seekers attempt the sea crossing to England from the French coast.

13 June 2022 | **Migrants and Refugees (/en/news/topic/migrants-and-refugees)**

UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi (<https://www.unhcr.org/the-high-commissioner.html>), on Monday dismissed the British Government's plan to process United Kingdom-bound asylum seekers in Rwanda, describing the offshore deal between the two countries announced in April, as "all wrong"

The development comes as senior judges in the UK ruled that the Government's first flight taking asylum seekers to the African nation, could go ahead.

A High Court judge refused a temporary injunction on Friday to halt the first flight, due to take place on Tuesday, and on Monday, according to news reports, to uphold that decision.

A full legal hearing on the controversial policy is reportedly due to take place next month.

"On Rwanda, I think we've been so clear over the last few weeks that we believe that **this is all wrong, for so many different reasons**," UNHCR (<http://www.unhcr.org>) continued.

International convention

Underscoring that the UK is a signatory to the International Convention on Refugees (<https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html#:~:text=The%201951%20Refugee%20Convention%20and,of%20States%20to%20protect%20them.>), the High Commissioner maintained that the deal "runs contrary to any notion of responsibility and international responsibility-sharing".

Rwanda had a strong history in welcoming and processing tens of thousands of Congolese and Burundian refugees in the past, Mr. Grandi continued, insisting that Rwanda does not have the capacity or infrastructure to carry out the refugee status assessments that were required on a case-by-case basis.

Irresponsible

"If it were the other way around, maybe we could discuss, but here, **we are talking about a country (the UK) with structures that is exporting its responsibility Rwanda.**"

Speaking in Geneva, the High Commissioner also dismissed the UK Government's assertion that the policy's aim was "to save people" from dangerous boat j Channel, from the coast of mainland Europe.

"I mean, saving people from dangerous journeys is great, is absolutely great," Mr. Grandi said, "but is that the right way to do it? **Is that the real motivation for don't think so.**"

Urging greater communication between the UK and French governments on the issue, since the majority of refugees likely to be impacted came via France, th noted that France also had the structures in place, to help asylum-seekers.

When the policy was announced, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1116342>) the \$160 million scheme would " migrants who often put themselves in the hands of illegal people traffickers.

Legal avenues

Mr. Grandi conceded that although the situation was complicated, many legal avenues nonetheless exist for refugees and asylum-seekers to join family men EU countries.

"All of this needs to be looked at bilaterally between the UK and respective EU countries; we have made ourselves available many times to provide advice; th Grandi said.

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