

## AN ATTEMPT TO USE RWANDA AS AN ASYLUM BASE BY BRITAIN IN JUNE 2022: PROS AND CONS

**JOSEPH OKECHUKWU NWOKE**

Department of History and International Studies

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Email: jo.nwoke@unizik.edu.ng

### **Abstract**

*Britain through Brexit quitted the EU (European Union) in 2020. In April 2021 a bill was introduced in the House of Commons and in April 2022 the bill became law. This law made it impossible for asylum seekers going through irregular routes to UK (United Kingdom), not to be granted asylum but to be moved to a third safe country possibly Rwanda. A lot of negatives linked to Rwanda have been pointed out against the policy of not granting asylum to people in UK. However, this study has been able to bring out some positives associated with Rwanda, noting that despite these positives Rwanda should not be a place to send asylum seekers. The positives and negatives associated with the asylum transfer policy are highlighted here, with a preamble to the UK-Rwanda asylum partnership. The major sources of data are gleaned from the internet. Findings reveal that the acceptance by Rwanda to house asylum seekers forcefully ejected from UK by the UK government was to prove to the world that she was a safe country, which was untrue. She had poor human rights records. This study recommends that Britain as a bastion of democracy should lead by example instead of abdicating her responsibility to another country.*

**Key words:** Asylum Seekers, Rwanda, United Kingdom, Pros, Cons

### **Introduction**

Rwanda is located in Central Africa. It is bounded by Uganda to the north, Tanzania to the east, Burundi to the South, and Congo Democratic Republic to the West. It is nicknamed land of a thousand hills. The ethnic groups in Rwanda include Hutu (84%), Tutsi (15%) and Twa (1%).<sup>1</sup> The people of the area in the 11th century which later became Rwanda were already organised into a number of kingdoms. Tension between the Hutu and Tutsi became noticeable after the establishment of the Kingdom of Rwanda. In the 19th century, King Rwabugiri's reign was a disadvantage to the Hutu as they were exploited. Following leadership tussle in Rwanda, the Germans moved in 1897 from Tanganyika. The 1910 Brussels Convention drew up boundaries of Uganda, Congo and German East Africa, consisting of Tanganyika and Ruanda-Urundi. The Germans ran the administration of Rwanda. The Germans lost the World War I, making it to lose the control of Rwanda. By 1916, Belgium ruled Rwanda as a mandate territory, which was one of the two kingdoms of Ruanda-Urundi. The ethnic divide between the Hutu and Tutsi was made pronounced with the introduction of ethnic identity card, as the Belgian rule tilted in favour of the Tutsi.<sup>2</sup> In 1962, Rwanda gained independence from Belgium and the Hutu majority were in charge of government business after killing about 20,000 to 100,000 Tutsi in 1959 revolution.

Major General Juvénal Habyarimana, a Hutu overthrew the first elected president, Gregoire Kayibanda in 1973. Tutsi refugees under the platform of Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel group attacked the country in 1990 sparking the Rwandan civil war. A corollary to the assassination of Habyarimana and his Burundian counterpart, Cyprien Ntaryamira in 1994 was the Rwandan genocide. The genocide which saw the death of about 800,000 to 1,000,000 Tutsi

and moderate Hutu was carried out by the Interahamwe, a militia.<sup>3</sup> Between July and August 1994, RPF (Rwanda Patriotic Front) under the leadership of Paul Kagame moved into Rwanda and overwhelmed the Hutu regime and put a stop to the genocide. Kagame formed a unity government with Pasteur Bizimungu, a Hutu becoming the president while Kagame held a dual position of defence minister and vice president. In 2000, Kagame forced Bizimungu out of power<sup>4</sup> making him (Kagame) the president from 2000 till date (as at 25th July, 2022)

In June 2022, the UK government attempted to send people that came to seek asylum in UK to Rwanda which was rebuffed by some British residents and international community. According to the government, if these people were genuine asylum seekers they would have stopped in France to apply for asylum there rather than crossing to Britain. In 2021 about 30,000 migrants crossed the English Channel in small boats landing on beaches<sup>5</sup> (See Figure D). The removal of these ‘unwanted persons’ was a follow up to a policy signed between Rwanda and UK known as the migration and economic development partnership. In the view of Boris Johnson, “anyone entering the UK illegally – as well as those who have arrived illegally since January 1st – may now be relocated to Rwanda.”<sup>6</sup> The first batch that was to be sent to Rwanda was supposed to include 31 persons made up of Albanians, Iraqis, Iranians and a Syrian. Morseley observed that an Iranian man, who was one of those due to fly out, couldn’t bear the idea of being separated from his adult son in the UK, and his wife and two daughters who were still in Iran.<sup>7</sup> On the said day (14th June, 2022) that the plane was to depart, the European Human Rights Court aborted the deportation following its ruling that it was against the UK’s Human Rights Act 1998 and U.N 1951 Refugee Convention. The European Court of Human Rights made up of 46 countries with Britain being among passed its judgement noting that an Iraqi man that was supposed to be in the plane should not fly as he faced “a real risk of irreversible harm.”<sup>8</sup> The British Court had earlier sanctioned the removal of these persons to Rwanda. It is the view of this research that for Britain to send asylum seekers to Rwanda implies that Britain was sanctioning Rwanda’s poor human rights records and the British government was abdicating her own responsibility of taking care of asylum seekers and refugees.

There are numerous works on asylum. Mark Justin Rainey notes the lack of right to work based on the experiences of four male asylum seekers residing across Greater Manchester, UK. He states that many depend on charity and could face arrest, detention and deportation in a “hostile environment.”<sup>9</sup> Lucy Mayblin discusses a UK-based campaign, “Let Them Work” which tried to make the government to extend the right to work to asylum seekers.<sup>10</sup> Sin Yi Cheung dissects the relationship between social capital and labour market integration of fresh refugees in the UK adopting the Survey of New Refugees (SNR). He observes that language competency, pre-migration qualifications and occupations, and time are the most pertinent in gaining employment.<sup>11</sup> Lucy Mayblin applying the concept of Chimi of “myth of difference” shows that asylum seekers have long been present outside Europe and that their non-involvement in international rights has been long lasting and deliberate.<sup>12</sup> Zana Vathi and Russell King focus on the relationship of agency of migrants and the structure of the host country. They bring to light that delays in the implementation of an unsettled asylum policy which have negative consequences on migrants’ integration and sense of belonging, even acquiring citizenship.<sup>13</sup> Ruth L. Healey identifies that coping strategies adopted by asylum seekers and refugees differ by gender as both sexes used internal and external coping strategies.<sup>14</sup> James Souther argues that nations that are responsible for the plight of refugees must provide the most fitting form of reparations.<sup>15</sup>

Liza Schuster writes that the choices of a great number of migrants concerning their destination and how to move are restricted by the kind of traffickers or smugglers they use.<sup>16</sup> Thais Bessa takes into account that Northern countries have given fewer resettlement places due to great numbers of asylum seekers coming directly into their countries.<sup>17</sup> Artendt observes that refugees are being deprived of ‘a right to have rights’ encompassing ‘loss of their homes and...the entire social texture into which they were born and in which they established for themselves a distinct place in the world.’<sup>18</sup> Richard Tutton and Christine Hauskeller aver that in ascertaining the legitimacy of an asylum seeker’s right, it is essential to determine the said person’s national identity.<sup>19</sup> Andy Lamey adumbrates that nations supposedly dedicated to human rights will in turn deny refugees the right of entry<sup>20</sup>. These works talk about asylum seekers but do not argue why Rwanda should not or should be given the chance to host asylum seekers from another country, hence this research. This study is divided into four sections viz conceptual definition, background to UK-Rwanda asylum partnership, arguments around asylum transfer to Rwanda and conclusion.

### **Conceptual Definition**

This study will try as much to differentiate asylum seeker from refugee, IDPs (internally displaced persons) and migrant. An asylum seeker, a refugee and a migrant refer to someone moving across international borders. An asylum seeker is a person who runs away from his own country to another country to seek protection due to serious human rights abuses he has encountered in his own country, and is yet to be legally recognised as a refugee and tarrying to get the feedback of his asylum claim.<sup>21</sup> The asylum seeker runs away from armed conflicts and persecution. Simply put, it is a person whose demand for sanctuary is yet to be dealt with. The protection given to asylum seekers is called asylum. Modern asylum is “the sanctuary or refuge given to foreigners, usually refugees, by any sovereign state.”<sup>22</sup> During mass movement of people as a result of war, it is a herculean task to carry out individual asylum procedures and possibly interview each asylum seeker. This set of people are regarded as refugees according to UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees).<sup>23</sup> Refugees are under the protection of the host countries and the United Nations Organisation. Foremost refugee hosting countries in 2017 were Turkey (2.9 million), Pakistan (1.4 million), and Lebanon (1million), Iran (980,000) Uganda (950,000) and Ethiopia (790,000).<sup>24</sup> A refugee is a person compelled to leave his country or home as a result of war or political, religious and social reasons.<sup>25</sup> The 1951 Convention in connection to the status of refugees, defines a refugee as

*a person who, as a result of well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.*<sup>26</sup>

A refugee cannot be compelled to go back to his home country in what is known as refoulement. They are supposed to enjoy the right to education, employment, healthcare, freedom of movement etc. In the past those running away from armed conflicts in one part of a country to another part of the same country were equally known as refugees (for example during the 1967 Nigeria-Biafra War), but today are referred to as IDPs. The IDPs were known as refugees in the past in line with the first definition of refugee in this study. The IDPs are under the protection of their country’s government. According to the 1998 guiding principles on internal displacement, the IDPs are

*persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised State border.*<sup>27</sup>

A migrant is one who lives outside his country of origin and according to Amnesty International is not an asylum seeker or a refugee. A migrant does not leave his country due to persecution but for greener pastures as he aims to look for work, better education, reunite with family members etc. He can return to his home country if he wishes unlike the refugee or asylum seeker who can only return home when the coast is clear. According to IOM (International Organisation of Migration), a migrant is a word used to describe a person moving geographically from one place to another, no matter the direction of movement.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, it can be argued that if one is a refugee or an asylum seeker, the person is a special migrant in as much as the person is on the move. This study regards an asylum seeker as a migrant. Before the Russia-Ukraine war of 2022, there were 20.8 million refugees, 50.8 million IDPs and 4.4 million asylum-seekers in the world.<sup>29</sup> The fulcrum of this study is on asylum seekers in Britain that she wanted to move to Rwanda. The asylum seeker becomes a refugee once his application has been processed and approved.

### **Background to UK – Rwanda Asylum Partnership**

From the 15th to the 19th century the Europeans came to Africa to purchase slaves in exchange of mirrors, hot drinks etc. Following the verdict of the Chief Justice of England, Lord Mansfield in 1772 slavery became illegal and a lot of Africans became free. In 1787, the first batch of about 400 freed slaves were moved from England to what is today Liberia as they were regarded as an unpleasant spectacle. In 1822, the first set of freed slaves from the New World were moved to Cape Mesurado, later named Monrovia which became the capital of Liberia. Part of the reason for the removal was the fear of an uprising from the Africans.<sup>30</sup> After the abolition of slave trade in 1807, the British naval warship stationed on the West African Coast at Free Town and the Island of Fernando Po freed any captured slaves hidden in ships. These freed slaves were moved to Sierra Leone. The Europeans later moved into the interior of Africa for exploration and exploitation. This led to the Berlin conference of 1884/1885 which further led to the partitioning and colonisation of Africa. The relationship between Africa and Europe was lopsided as the Europeans carted away Africa's raw materials to Europe. These materials were processed into finished goods and brought down to Africa and sold at a high cost. The Europeans saw and still see Africa as a dumping ground for their products. At present already used products, toxic products and substandard materials find their way into the African continent. Hence, the British decided to transfer asylum seekers that came to Britain to Rwanda because of the mentality that Africa is a continent where people including both standard and substandard products can be moved to at any time.

In carrying out the asylum transfer, Britain was merely replicating the wind rush generation scandal to an extent. The wind rush generation refers to people who landed in UK between 1948 and 1971 coming from Caribbean countries like Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and other islands to make up for the short fall in labour shortages after World War II. They were called the wind rush generation because the name of the ship that brought the people was called MV Empire Windrush. There were 492 occupants mostly children.<sup>31</sup> In 2018, it was made public that in the past that members of the wind rush generation were denied rights as British citizens as they could not provide any document to show that they were British citizens. Their landing

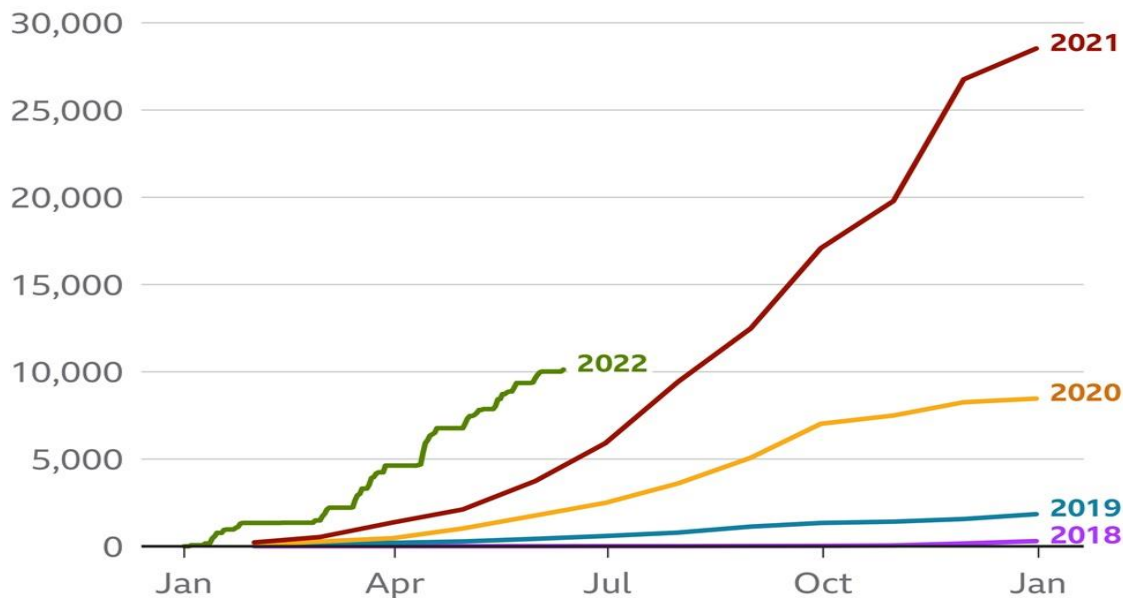
cards have long been destroyed by the British government in 2010. They lost their jobs and some were deported to their home country. Following criticisms, they were inadequately compensated by the British government.

Australia, Israel, Denmark and EU pursued asylum transfer policy in the past. In 2001, Australia began moving those that were attempting to get to Australia by boat to Nauru and Papua New Guinea. In 2013, Israel started relocating Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers to Rwanda and Uganda. In June 2021 Denmark made a law that would allow it relocate asylum seekers. An MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) signed between Rwanda and Denmark was regarded by lawyers to be a preamble to future transfer of asylum seekers from Denmark to Rwanda. The EU reached an agreement with Turkey in 2016 to divert asylum seekers on their way to Greece from Syria to Turkey, thus not allowing them to reach the EU.<sup>32</sup> It is glaring that UK would not be the first country to embark on such policy but experts saw it as a bad precedent that other rich countries might emulate.

Rwanda was already a host of about 150,000 refugees from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and other African countries. It was also a home to migrants who unsuccessfully attempted to sail to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea. Jobless refugees were given about £35 a month each as only few refugees could work as farm labourers and domestic servants. While in Rwanda, the application of the asylum seeker would be processed there based on the laws of Rwanda and not the UK's process of asylum.<sup>33</sup> Ukrainians who sought refuge in UK during the Russia-Ukraine war were unconditionally accepted, making people to feel that the transfer of asylum seekers to Rwanda was discriminatory on the basis of race, religion and skill set. No European was among the would be asylum seekers to Rwanda. Those that were to be sent to Rwanda were those that embarked on dangerous journey that could cause harm or injury 'by small boat or clandestinely in lorries.' Children without guardians and Rwandans who were part of this journey would not be repatriated to Rwanda. The UK government remitted an initial amount of £120million to commence the programme.<sup>34</sup> According to the view of 2,463 persons sampled, 44% supported the policy while 40% were opposed to it. According to Tom Pursglove, the UK Home Office's Minister for Justice and Tackling Illegal Immigration

*The approximate figure for processing a case within our asylum system is around £12,000 per individual... we will make contributions to the Rwandan Government similar to those that we are spending on processing claims here in the United Kingdom... we will be paying sums of money that are similar to what it would cost us to deal with those cases within our asylum system<sup>35</sup>*

**Figure 1: A Graph showing Number of People Crossing the English Channels in Boats**



**Source:** “Why are asylum seekers being sent to Rwanda and how many could go?” 15th June, 2022 <https://www.bbc.com/news/explainers-61782866> (Accessed 20th July, 2022)

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) adopted by the Council of Europe in 1950 came into force on 3rd September, 1953. The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was based on a draft of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Some European countries have the provisions of ECHR as the basis of their constitution. Protocol 11 of the convention came into force on 1st November, 1998, merging the European Commission of Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights into a reconstituted court<sup>36</sup>. Britain as a member of this court ought to know that the planned relocation of asylum seekers was bound to fail before going into the asylum transfer partnership with Rwanda. This court has powers to look into cases involving individuals and its verdict is binding on the parties concerned. It was at this court that the asylum brouhaha was adjudicated.

### **Arguments around using Rwanda as an asylum base by Britain**

One of the arguments in favour for Rwanda was that it would serve as a deterrent to individuals that embarked on perilous journeys to the UK. This was being made possible by criminal smugglers through the English Channel, after passing through safe third countries. They crossed the Channel from France. ‘They’re selling people falsely, luring them into something that is extremely risky and criminal,’ said Boris Johnson.<sup>37</sup> Sending them to Rwanda was regarded by the British Broadcasting Commission (BBC) as a ‘pilot’ or ‘trial.’ Most of those crossing the Channel didn’t have any visa or any other permit allowing them to travel to the UK. In 1993, asylum application snowballed from 22,370 to 103,100 in 2002 and in 2003 it fell to 61,050. The cause of the decline was seen in some quarters to be the serious manner the British handled the situation by differentiating between true asylum seekers and economic migrants.<sup>38</sup> There has been some boat mishaps across the English Channel (32km). In November 2021, there was a boat mishap in a ‘fragile’ dinghy claiming the lives of 27 persons.

A week before this incident the French government moved about 1500 migrants from a migrant camp near Dunkirk after demolishing the camp.<sup>39</sup> Some passengers of the boat mishap might have once been in the demolished migrant camp. Figure I shows that by January 2020 those that crossed the English Channel were between 7,500 and 10,000 in number. By January 2021, it skyrocketed to more than 28,000 and from January to July 2022 the figure was already 10,000. It was reported that in the morning of 1st May 2022, seven boats crossed the Channel with up to 230 migrants. The UK government must have been motivated by the report of the Refugee Council of Australia to execute the MOU with Rwanda. According to the report 20,600 persons attempted to get to Australia illegally by sea in 2013. This number diminished in 2014 to 450 and in 2015 to 217, and in subsequent years did not go beyond 100.<sup>40</sup> It should be noted that from 2001 to 2007, Australia transferred asylum seekers to Nauru and Papua New Guinea, continued in 2012 before putting a stop in 2014. The asylum seekers were those attempting to reach Australia illegally by boat.<sup>41</sup>

Also, Boris Johnson, former British Prime Minister (PM) posited “We are confident that our new migration partnership is fully compliant with our international legal obligations, but nevertheless we expect this will be challenged in the courts...”<sup>42</sup> The PM was compelled to fulfil his promise to ‘take back control’ of Britain’s boundary with other countries. With Britain leaving EU he was expected to curtail the rate of migration into Britain. In 2015 there was free movement of EU nationals into UK and also the influx of 1.3million asylum seekers to EU, with UK having the lowest number of asylum seekers. The nationality and borders act was signed into law on 28th April, 2022. Some aspects of the Act came into force on 28th April, 2022 while others came on 28th June, 2022.<sup>43</sup> It was introduced into the House of Commons by Priti Patel in July 2021. It was concerned with immigration, asylum and UK’s response to modern slavery. As a law, It frowned at asylum seekers following irregular routes to UK, thus rendering them ineligible to be granted refugee status.<sup>44</sup> Evacuating asylum seekers to a ‘safe third country’ was associated with amendments to the immigration rules. The new law made it a crime for new arrivals to follow illegal routes. Refugees were then put into two groups based on their means of arrival into UK viz the use of regular and irregular routes. Those coming through irregular routes using small boats might not be granted asylum. The UNHCR pointed out that this was inhumane as everyone has the right to seek for asylum where they want, no matter the means of transportation. More than 200 organisations, including Oxfam and Save the Children labelled it anti-refugee. Before this act, the UK collaborating with UNCHR resettled 20,000 refugees as part of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) which ended in 2021. These refugees were running away from the Syrian crisis. In January 2022, UK officially opened the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) to resettle vulnerable Afghans fleeing the Afghanistan crisis of August 2021.<sup>45</sup>

Britain claimed that Rwanda was a safe haven to take in tens of thousands of UK bound asylum claimants with time. Rwanda has been on the path to rapid economic development after the 1994 genocide. Belgium, Germany and China were major trading partners of Rwanda. Tourism was the main source of revenue and there were parks like mountain gorilla park, Nyungwe Forest, Akagera National Park, lakeside resorts of Gisenyi and Kubuye. Belgium transacted trade that saw Rwanda receive €25–35 million annually from 2007 which lasted for four years. In 2001 a value of US\$470,000 was contributed by Belgium for fisheries in Kivu. The Clinton Hunter Development Initiative transformed agricultural activity in Rwanda.<sup>46</sup> In 2009, she was accepted as a member of the Commonwealth of Nations at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Her application to join was initially turned down in 2007.<sup>47</sup> Rwanda was being pointed as a model for development in Africa despite

criticisms from human rights groups. Her traditional adjudication mechanism known as gacaca which was modified was applied to try a cadre of suspects of the Rwanda genocide. The outcome of this trial which officially came to an end in June 2012 was acknowledged by the international community to be successful. In order to promote peaceful co-existence after the 1994 genocide, ethnicity was made a crime as laws against 'divisionism' were stated in the 2003 constitution. The recognised identity for any Rwandan national became 'I am Rwandan' (ndi umunyarwanda) and not I am Hutu, Tutsi or Twa.<sup>48</sup> The Rwandans were being given a new orientation that before the Belgians' advent into Rwanda, the country was not divided based on ethnicity but by socio-economic status. The Belgians are regarded as the ones that imposed the ethnic identification. Doris Uwicyeza, chief technical adviser to Rwanda's justice ministry extolled Rwanda's human rights records as she was about to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). The summit was successfully held in Kigali from 20th June to 25th June 2022. She stated that Rwanda's 1994 genocide made the government to insulate 'anybody from hate speech and discrimination'<sup>49</sup>.

The argument against Rwanda was that the United Nations (UN) Refugee Agency said the plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda was "incompatible with the letter and spirit of the 1951 Convention." It violated international law. The U.K.'s Human Rights Act 1998 and the multilateral U.N 1951 Refugee Convention acknowledge asylum seekers' right to protection. The UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, Siobhan Mullaly averred that "there are serious risks that the international law principle of non-refoulement will be breached by forcibly transferring asylum seekers to Rwanda."<sup>50</sup> There could be increased risk of exploitation as it worsened the issue of trafficking in persons, said Mullaly. The 1951 Refugee Convention does not need refugees to apply for asylum in the first safe country they get to. The UN Refugee Agency Office in Kigali reminded us that this policy was a fiasco when Israel sent thousands of asylum seekers to Rwanda as just nine stayed back in the country.

Another argument against Rwanda was that she had a poor human rights record. In 2009 André Kagwa Rwisereka, the vice president of the opposition Democratic Green Party and Jean-Leonard Rugambage, a journalist were killed. The journalist was investigating the attempt on the life of Faustin Kayumba Nyamwasa, former Rwandan general exiled in South Africa. The press was gagged. The United Nations Organisation, European Union, the United States, France and Spain condemned the act as presidential election was drawing nearer.<sup>51</sup> In 2010 Amnesty International vigorously criticized the attack on the opposition in Rwanda. Victoire Ingabire, president of the FDU-Inkingi (United Democratic Forces) and her aide Joseph Ntawangundi were molested while collecting registration documents from the government in February 2010. A Human Rights Watch researcher was refused a work visa re-application in April the same year. Bernard Ntaganda, an opposition party presidential candidate on 24th June was charged with "genocide ideology" and "divisionism." From 2016 to 2020, an average of 480 persons sought for asylum status in Rwanda annually. In 2018, the Rwandan police shot dead a dozen refugees after they demonstrated outside the UNHCR offices in Karongi District. In 2020, about 2,900 Rwandan citizens claimed asylum worldwide. In 2021, the UK's International Ambassador for Human Rights decried Rwanda's human rights profile, particularly the refusal of the UK's recommendation to "conduct transparent, credible and independent investigations into allegations of human rights violations including deaths in custody and torture."<sup>52</sup> Care4calais and Detention Action, Public and Commercial Services Union, a trade union made up of some UK Home Office workers and a lot of the affected asylum seekers came forward with the legal challenge to stop the deportation of flights to Rwanda. For these organisations the policy was 'unlawful on multiple bases.' They queried the



claim of UK Home Secretary Priti Patel's claim of Rwanda being a 'safe third country' in the midst of its human rights record, the sufficiency of malaria prophylactic coupled with European convention on human rights.<sup>53</sup> Care4Calais revealed that it worked with 113 people facing deportation to Rwanda.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi described the MOU between the two countries as 'all wrong' and UK was shifting her obligation to Rwanda. For Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, it was an ignominy to UK as asylum seekers ought to be treated with compassion, fairness and justice. Welby and 24 other bishops viewed the policy as 'evil trafficking' which must be replaced with the provision of safe routes to diminish the rate of precarious journeys to UK. Prince Charles labelled the plan 'appalling.'<sup>54</sup> Human Rights Watch warned that "to this day, serious human rights abuses continue to occur in Rwanda, including repression of free speech, arbitrary detention, ill-treatment, and torture." It stated that Rwanda used excessive force on refugees. UK's Home office disagreed saying that "Rwanda is a safe country and has previously been recognised for providing a safe haven for refugees." Lutz Oette, co-director of the Center for Human Rights Law at SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies), University of London noted that such approach legitimised 'the abdication of countries.' Harsha Walia, a Canadian activist and John Smith, a British political scientist described the asylum transfer as 21st century imperialism.<sup>55</sup>

## Conclusion

This study analyses the pros and cons of Britain relocating asylum seekers to Rwanda. The British courts were in support of the repatriation. But on 14th June, 2022 as the repatriation plane was preparing to leave Britain the European Court of Human Rights passed a 'no repatriation judgement.' It is the conception of this paper that human rights abuses by the Rwandan government should disqualify her from housing asylum seekers and refugees despite achievements recorded in post genocide Rwanda like being listed as the third least corrupt country in Africa based on the 2017 corruption perception index and its GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita rising to \$774 in 2017 from \$146 in 1994.<sup>56</sup> Rwanda's acceptance to accommodate the asylum seekers was just a red herring to prove to the world that she was a safe country coupled with her hosting of June 2022 CHOGM. Rwanda should not be seen as a country where democracy thrives because one man has been in power from 2000 till date. For Britain to move asylum seekers to Rwanda it implies that Britain was abdicating her responsibility as well as promoting rule of force rather than rule of law.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Rwandan Ethnic Groups", <https://study.com> > Courses > History Courses (Accessed 20th July, 2022)

<sup>2</sup> Rosamunde Van Brakel and Xavier Van Kerckhoven, "The Emergence of the Identity Card in Belgium and its Colonies" in Kees Boersma, Rosamunde van Brakel, Chiara Fonio, and Pieter Wagenaar, *Histories of State Surveillance in Europe and Beyond* (London: Routledge, 2014), 170-185, <https://papers.ssrn.com> > sol3 > papers (Accessed 21st July, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> "History of Rwanda" [en.wiki.org](https://en.wikipedia.org) (Accessed 20th July, 2022)

<sup>4</sup> Larissa Rae Begley, "Constructing Identities: The Transition of the Hutu/Tutsi Dichotomy in Rwanda," M.A Thesis in Anthropology, (Iowa State University, 2006),106

- <sup>5</sup> “Why are Asylum Seekers being sent to Rwanda and how many could go” <https://www.bbc.com › news › explainers-61782866> (Accessed 20th July, 2022)
- <sup>6</sup> Peter W Walsh “The UK's Policy to send Asylum Seekers to Rwanda,” 10th June, 2022, <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk › commentaries> (Accessed 27th July, 2022)
- <sup>7</sup> “UK sends Asylum-Seekers to Rwanda, a Dangerous ...” 14th June, 2022, <https://time.com › World › United Kingdom> (Accessed 21st July, 2022)
- <sup>8</sup> “UK vows more Rwanda Deportation Flights after Legal Setback” 15th June, 2022, <https://www.npr.org › 2022/06/15 › u-k-cancels-first-flig...> (Accessed 21st July, 2022)
- <sup>9</sup> Justin Mark and Mark Justin Rainey “Time in the Shelter Asylum, Destitution and Legal Uncertainty” April 2020, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340775929> (Accessed 22nd July, 2022)
- <sup>10</sup> Lucy Mayblin, “Troubling the Exclusive Privileges of Citizenship: Mobile Solidarities, Asylum Seekers, and the Right to Work,” February 2016, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292670771> (Accessed 22nd July, 2022)
- <sup>11</sup> Sin Yi Cheung, “Refugees, Social Capital, and Labour Market Integration in the UK,” January 2013, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259842733> (Accessed 22nd July, 2022)
- <sup>12</sup> Lucy Mayblin Colonialism, Decolonisation, and the Right to be Human: Britain and the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, April 2014 (Accessed 23rd July, 2022)
- <sup>13</sup> Zana Vathi and Russel King, “Have you got the British: Narratives of Migration and Settlement among Albanian-Origin Immigrants in London,” January 2012, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262258010> (Accessed 23rd July, 2022)
- <sup>14</sup> Ruth L. Healey, “Gender Variation in Asylum Experiences in the UK: The Role of Patriarchy and Coping Strategies,” *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies*,4(2), 2010, 24-43, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/47685461> (Accessed 23rd July, 2022)
- <sup>15</sup> James Souther, “Towards a Theory of Asylum as Reparation for Past Injustice, *Journal of Political Studies*, 62 (2), 2014, 326-342, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.12019> (Accessed 24th July, 2022)
- <sup>16</sup> K. Koser quoted by Liza Schouster in Liza Schouster, “The Mobility of Migrants in Italy: Shifting between Places and Statuses, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(4), 2005, 757-774 [doi:10.1080/13691830500109993](https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830500109993) (Accessed 24th July, 2022)
- <sup>17</sup> Thais Bessa, “From Political Instrument to Protection Tool? Resettlement of Refugees and North-South Relations” *Canada’s Journal on Refuge*, 26(1), 2009, 91-100
- <sup>18</sup> H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (London: Deutsch,1986), 293

<sup>19</sup> Richard Tutton and Christine Hauskeller, “Importing Forensic Biomedicine into Asylum Adjudication: Genetic Ancestry and Isotope Testing in the United Kingdom” 2014, DOI: [10.1017/CBO9781107706460.013](https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107706460.013) (Accessed 24th July, 2022)

<sup>20</sup> Andy Lamey, “A Liberal Theory on Asylum” *Sage Journals*, 2011, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470594X11416775> (Accessed 25th July, 2022)

<sup>21</sup> “A Crucial Difference between Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants,” <https://www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk › Blog> (Accessed 25th July, 2022)

<sup>22</sup> M. J Gibney, “Asylum” in M.J Gibney and R. Hansen(eds), *Immigration and Asylum: From 1900 to the Present* (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2005), 23

<sup>23</sup> “Asylum-seekers – UNHCR Nigeria” <https://www.unhcr.org › asylum-seeker> (Accessed 26th July, 2022)

<sup>24</sup> “Refugees and Internally Displaced People “<https://theirworld.org › resources › refugees-and-intern> (Accessed 25th July, 2022)

<sup>25</sup> A.S Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, Sixth Edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 984

<sup>26</sup> Judy El - Bushra and Kelly Fish, “Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons,” <https://www.inclusivesecurity.org ›40refugee> (Accessed 26th July, 2022)

<sup>27</sup> Judy El-Bushra and Kelly Fish, “Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons” . . . (Accessed 26th July, 2022)

<sup>28</sup> M.L Shier, S. Engstrom and J.R Graham, “International Migration and Social Work: A Review of the Literature,” *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*, 9, 2011, 38-56

<sup>29</sup> “Refugee vs. IDP vs. Migrant ... What's the Difference?” 8th April, 2022, <https://www.concernusa.org ›Stories> (Accessed 27th July, 2022)

<sup>30</sup> M.K Akpan, “The Return to Africa: Sierra Leone and Liberia the Return to Africa: Sierra Leone and Liberia”, *Tarikh*, 5(4),1978, 92-110

<sup>31</sup> “Windrush Generation: Who are they and Why are they facing Problems,” 24th November, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com ›news> (Accessed 2nd August, 2022)

<sup>32</sup> Peter W Walsh “The UK's Policy to send Asylum Seekers to Rwanda,” . . . (Accessed 27th July, 2022)

<sup>33</sup> Peter W Walsh “The UK's Policy to send Asylum Seekers to Rwanda,” . . . (Accessed 27th July, 2022)

- <sup>34</sup> U.K. sends Asylum-Seekers to Rwanda, a Dangerous ..." (Accessed 21st July, 2022)
- <sup>35</sup> Peter W Walsh "The UK's Policy to send Asylum Seekers to Rwanda," . . . (Accessed 27th July, 2022)
- <sup>36</sup> "European Convention on Human Rights" [https://www.britannica.com ›event› European-Conve Europe \[1950\]](https://www.britannica.com ›event› European-Conve Europe [1950]) (Accessed 27th July, 2022)
- <sup>37</sup> "UK to send first Asylum Seekers to Rwanda" 14th June, 2022 <https://www.france24.com › europe › 20220614-uk-to> (Accessed 28th July, 2022)
- <sup>38</sup> Ruth L. Healey, "Asylum-Seekers and Refugees: A Structuration Theory Analysis of their Experiences in the UK" *Wiley InterScience*, DOI: [10.1002/psp.412](https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.412), 257-270 (Accessed 28th July, 2022)
- <sup>39</sup> "Channel Deaths: What do we know so far?" 25th November, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com › news> (Accessed 29th July, 2022)
- <sup>40</sup>"The UK's policy to send Asylum Seekers to Rwanda" 10th June, 2022, <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk › commentaries> (Accessed 29th July, 2022)
- <sup>41</sup> "The UK's policy to send Asylum Seekers to Rwanda" . . . (Accessed 29th July, 2022)
- <sup>42</sup>"The UK's policy to send Asylum Seekers to Rwanda" . . . (Accessed 29th July, 2022)
- <sup>43</sup>"When is the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 coming into Force?" <https://freemovement.org.uk › All Posts>) (Accessed 30th July, 2022)
- <sup>44</sup> "Nationality and Borders Act 2022" [https://en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Nationality\\_and Bord](https://en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Nationality_and_Bord). (Accessed 30th July, 2022)
- <sup>45</sup> "What is the UK Nationality and Borders Act and what does it mean for Refugees in the UK," 27th July, 2022, <https://www.rescue.org › article › what-uk-nationality-a..> (Accessed 30th July, 2022)
- <sup>46</sup>Prithish Behuria, "The Disorder of 'Miracle Growth' in Rwanda: Understanding the Limitations of Transitions to Open Ordered Development",2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198801641.003.0008> ,217–249, (Accessed 31st July, 2022)
- <sup>47</sup> "History of Rwanda" . . . (Accessed 20th July, 2022)
- <sup>48</sup> Anna Kamanzi "A Nation without Ethnicity: the Rwandan Reconciliation Model,"29th October, 2021, <https://www.iwgia.org › news › 4556-a-nation-without-...> (Accessed 31st July, 2022)
- <sup>49</sup> "UK deportations to Rwanda stalled as European Court steps in" 14th June, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com › news › uk-due-to-send-firs...> (Accessed 31st July, 2022)

<sup>50</sup> UN Expert urges UK to halt transfer of Asylum Seekers to ... 17th June, 2022 <https://news.un.org › story › 2022/06> (Accessed 1st August, 2022)

<sup>51</sup> “History of Rwanda” . . . (Accessed 20th July, 2022)

<sup>52</sup> Peter W Walsh “The UK's Policy to send Asylum Seekers to Rwanda,” . . . (Accessed 27th July, 2022)

<sup>53</sup> Ivana Kottasová “First UK Flight sending Asylum-Seekers to Rwanda to go ahead after Appeal fails” 13th June, 2022 <https://www.cnn.com › 2022/06/13 › uk › uk-rwanda-dep...> (Accessed 1st August, 2022)

<sup>54</sup> Ivana Kottasová “First UK Flight sending Asylum-Seekers to Rwanda to go ahead after Appeal fails” . . . (Accessed 1st August, 2022)

<sup>55</sup> Parvati Nair, “How the UK's plan to send Asylum Seekers to Rwanda is 21st century imperialism,” 22nd April, 2022, <https://theconversation.com › how-the-uks-plan-to-send...> (Accessed 1st August, 2022)

<sup>56</sup> Daniel Nzohabonimana “What makes Rwanda one of Africa's fastest growing Economies?” 17th January, 2019, <https://www.trtworld.com › Magazine> (Accessed 2nd August, 2022)