
UK passes "Safety of Rwanda" bill. Legal challenges to deportation of asylum seekers already underway

After a marathon final day of debate between members of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, the so-called "[Safety of Rwanda Bill](#)", the controversial legislation proposed by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson two years ago that will allow the UK to deport hundreds of asylum seekers to the African country, was passed by the Westminster Parliament overnight. The bill is expected to receive 'royal assent' - the formal approval of the sovereign, King Charles III, to make the bill into an Act of Parliament (law) - on Tuesday. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said that the first group of asylum seekers with weak legal claims to remain in the UK had already been identified and that the first flights carrying asylum seekers to Rwanda would leave in 10 to 12 weeks. However, the leading UK charities working with migrants announced legal challenges to stop the deportations. British Courts have blocked deportation flights several times in the past on the grounds that such legislation violates the human rights of asylum seekers. Last November, the UK Supreme Court ruled that Rwanda was not a safe third country because asylum seekers would face a real risk of being returned to their home country where they could face torture and persecution. "The 'Safety of Rwanda Bill' is an inhumane, absurd, vicious, degrading and humiliating piece of legislation. It violates the human rights of hundreds of refugees and asylum seekers", said **Raymond Friel**, managing director of Caritas Social Action, an organisation that brings together the country's main Catholic charities, commenting on the final approval of the "Safety of Rwanda" Bill by the British Parliament: "The Catholic Church has consistently advocated respect for human rights, and the European Court of Human Rights found this legislation to be unlawful", he remarked. "Unfortunately, we at Caritas, although we are campaigning to mobilise citizens and parliamentarians against this legislation, we lack the financial resources to appeal to the courts to stop asylum seekers' deportation. However, I hope that other charities will challenge this legislation in court to stop the flights, as they have done many times before". The chief executive of Caritas Social Action is convinced that "British public opinion disapproves of the 'Rwanda Bill', deeming it a very extreme way of tackling the migration problem which might not be successful, but the British government is determined to implement it because it is backed by a segment of Tory voters, the most fanatical. Labour is far ahead of the Conservative Party in the opinion polls, and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is confident that the Rwanda plan will act as a deterrent to discourage small boats carrying migrants from crossing the Channel.

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