

United Kingdom government's intention to offshore asylum...

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The following [press release](#) has been issued this afternoon by Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, and I think it worth sharing as indication of international reaction to what the UK is proposing with regard to the treatment of those legitimately claiming the right to asylum in the UK:

Strasbourg, 14 April 2022 - "Today's announcement by the UK government of its intention to offshore asylum processing to Rwanda sends a worrying signal", said Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović. "Not only does such externalisation raise questions about the protection of the human rights of the people involved. It also indicates that the UK intends to shift the responsibility for what is in fact a very small proportion of people seeking protection worldwide from its territory to that of another country. Such a shift in responsibility runs the risk of seriously undermining the global system of international protection."

While the government emphasises the importance of safe and legal routes in general, the announced plans do not address the lack of such possibilities for people currently in France, even those who have legitimate claims to move to the UK, for instance on the basis of family links. Expanding such safe and legal routes and putting human rights at the heart of the approach is crucial to addressing the problem of dangerous sea crossings of the Channel and to removing the conditions in which the smuggling of people can flourish.

I call on parliamentarians, in the context of their further examination of the Nationality and Borders Bill, to ensure that no downgrading of the human rights safeguards and protections in the UK's asylum system takes place. They should in particular reject proposals that enable offshoring and that make distinctions in the level of protection or the procedures applied on the basis of the manner in which people arrive in the UK.

More than ever, all Council of Europe member states should stand firm in their commitment to upholding the human rights of people seeking protection. From this

perspective, I will continue my engagement with the UK government on this important matter."