



All MPs and Peers

14 April 2022

Dear Colleague,

## **UK ENTERS GROUND-BREAKING PARTNERSHIP WITH RWANDA TO HELP FIX THE BROKEN ASYLUM SYSTEM**

The UK has entered a ground-breaking long-term partnership with Rwanda to help fix the broken global asylum system and tackle the scourge of criminal gangs facilitating dangerous and illegal Channel crossings in small boats. This partnership is at the heart of a wider package of measures to tackle illegal migration announced by the Prime Minister today which if successful will enable the UK to welcome even more refugees through safe and legal routes, on which the UK has a proud record.

The global asylum system is broken. Some 80 million people are on the move around the world, driven from their homes by conflict and instability. Many more people are on the move to seek better prospects, driven by a desire for a better life. The result is increased illegal migration flows around the world, including into Europe and onto the UK, with the asylum systems collapsing under the strain of real humanitarian crises and people smugglers exploiting the system for their own gain.

The UK has a proud history of supporting those in need of protection; our resettlement programmes have provided safe and legal routes to better futures for hundreds of thousands of people from across the globe. Since 2015 we have offered a place to over 185,000 men, women and children seeking refuge, which is more than any other similar resettlement scheme in Europe.

This includes almost 100,000 British Nationals Overseas threatened by draconian security laws in Hong Kong, 20,000 through our Syrian scheme, 13,000 from Afghanistan and to whom we owe debts of honour, and around 50,000 Ukrainians.

We will continue to offer safe and legal routes to the UK for refugees from across the world. Indeed, we are determined to be even more ambitious in the numbers we are able to welcome. But we can only do that if we take concerted action to tackle the scourge of the criminal gangs who play on the hopes of economic migrants, pushing them to make dangerous journeys because they can claim asylum if they make it. This has devastating consequences for the countless men, women, and children who have

tragically lost their lives or lost loved ones on these perilous journeys. The existence of these parallel routes is also deeply unfair as it advantages those with the means to pay people smugglers over vulnerable people who cannot.

This can't go on. We need new, innovative solutions and partnerships to put a stop to this deadly trade. And this Government is delivering a plan.

Today the UK and Rwanda are entering a ground-breaking, long term, partnership which sets a new international standard – tackling this urgent global issue at its roots by addressing the human capital imbalances which, together with conflict and instability, drive the global migration crisis; ensuring those who are in genuine need of protection will be safe and secure in a host country recognised globally for its record on welcoming and integrating migrants; and disrupting the business model of organised crime gangs and deter migrants from putting their lives at risk.

Under this partnership, people who enter the UK illegally, including by small boat across the Channel, may have their asylum claim considered in Rwanda rather than in the UK, with a view to receiving the protection they need in Rwanda if their claim is granted. They will be supported in Rwanda to build a safe and prosperous new life, supported for 5 years with integration support, accommodation and healthcare.

Rwanda has one of the fastest-growing economies and enterprise cultures, with growing trade links with the UK, which this scheme will complement, as part of our Global Britain agenda. As part of the agreement, the UK is making a substantial investment in the economic development of Rwanda over five years, with an initial upfront payment of £120million, and ongoing financial support for each person who is transferred to Rwanda under this partnership.

This new partnership builds on the substantial measures already being taken by this Government through the Nationality and Borders Bill; and is at the heart of a further package of measures to deter illegal migrants from making dangerous journeys to the UK and deal more swiftly and effectively with the asylum claims of those who do.

This further package of message includes:

- the military taking primacy in preventing and intercepting small boat crossings in the Channel, working hand in hand with Border Force, and with an enhanced range of military and surveillance assets at our disposal to increase the effectiveness of our operational response;
- new investment in initial triage and processing centres at Western Jet Foil and Manston to ensure more effective locking-in of identity, security checks and screening at those facilities, which will also be safer for migrants;
- new investment to create new detention places in Immigration Removal Centres;

- a new asylum accommodation centre in Linton-on-Ouse, which, alongside a new approach to ensuring that asylum seekers are dispersed across all Local Authority areas, will further reduce the Government's reliance on expensive hotels which cost the taxpayer an average of £4.7million per day; and
- a commitment to ensure that we fully utilise the new powers in the Nationality and Borders Bill by conducting a full investigation in every small boat case where we have any evidence to identify who has been piloting the boat.

This Government is undertaking the most significant overhaul of the immigration system in decades, with new laws to tackle abuse and illegal entry, a flourishing points-based immigration system welcoming people around the world, and safe and legal routes for those fleeing conflict or persecution around the world.

For too long, we've seen horrific abuse of the system and by introducing a New Plan for Immigration, we are tackling it head on.

There is no one silver bullet. And this will be a long, hard road to reform. This summer will see another challenging period of migrants arriving by boat. We will no doubt face opposition – in Parliament, in the media, in the courts – from those who profess to care about the lives of those who are exploited by criminals but who offer no credible alternatives to our plan. I urge all colleagues to reflect deeply on the imperative for action to tackle this evil trade, and the necessity of a new international order to do so.

I will also arrange for a copy of this letter to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

*With all good wishes*  


**Rt Hon Priti Patel MP**  
**Home Secretary**