



April 2022

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about processing asylum claims in Rwanda.

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, over 185,000 men, women and children seeking refuge have been offered a place in this country, 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 the Syrian scheme, 13,000 from Afghanistan, and around 50,000 Ukrainians.

However, it is clear that 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, 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.

It is therefore extremely encouraging that the UK has now entered the world's first Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda. Under the 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.

The UK is investing £120 million into the economic development and growth of Rwanda, with funding also provided to support the delivery of asylum operations, accommodation and integration, similar to the costs incurred in the UK for these services. Furthermore, it is the case that 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 the Government's Global Britain agenda.

Rwanda is a fundamentally safe and secure country with respect for the rule of law. Under this agreement, Rwanda will process claims in accordance with the UN Refugee Convention, national and international human rights laws, and will ensure their protection from inhuman and degrading treatment or being returned to the place they originally fled.

Rwanda has a credible track record of hosting refugees and working constructively with the UN Refugee Agency to provide food, healthcare and jobs with over 130,000 refugees recently resettled. The EU and UN both resettle people in Rwanda. Since 2019 Rwanda has been working with the UN Refugee Agency and the African Union to support over 500 refugees and asylum seekers evacuated from Libya, under the Emergency Transit Mechanism. They are housed at a



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dedicated centre providing mental health services, legal assistance, employment training and opportunities. Rwanda has also supported around 30,000 Burundian refugees who have also transited to the centre since 2015.

These new measures, combined with the reforms to the asylum system and the changes to our laws in the Nationality and Borders Act, will help deter illegal entry into the UK. In doing so it will help break the business model of the criminal smuggling gangs, protect the lives of those they endanger, ensure continued support for the truly vulnerable, and enhance our ability to remove those with no right to be in the UK.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**