

UK deportation flight to Rwanda grounded after European Court steps in



Police officers stand near a plane reported by British media to be first to transport migrants to Rwanda at MOD Boscombe Down base in Wiltshire, Britain, June 14, 2022. (Reuters photo)

London, June 15 (RHC)-- Britain's plan to send the first group of asylum seekers to Rwanda has been stalled after the European human rights court issued last-minute injunctions to stop the deportation.

The first flight taking a handful of asylum seekers was scheduled to depart for Rwanda on Tuesday, but shortly before the plane was due to take off, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) granted injunctions to prevent their deportations.

"I have always said this policy will not be easy to deliver and am disappointed that legal challenge and last-minute claims have meant today's flight was unable to depart," UK Home Secretary Priti Patel said.

"It is very surprising that the European Court of Human Rights has intervened despite repeated earlier success in our domestic courts," Patel said.

Human rights groups assert the policy is inhumane and will put vulnerable asylum seekers at greater risk.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has warned that Rwanda does not have the capacity and infrastructure to handle the process, and there is a risk some migrants could be deported to their home countries.

At least 30 individuals set to be on the first flight argued that they should not be deported on health or human rights grounds. The UK government, however, justifies his policy saying that the deportation strategy will stop smugglers from flowing migrants across the English Channel.

Meanwhile, Iran has joined the growing crowd of critics of Britain's plan, calling it "a historic shame for London" and all those who try to mask their imperialistic record. "Forced deportation of the asylum seekers to a third country and the deadly silence of the self-proclaimed flag-bearers of human rights and the concerned international organizations is not only a shame for them all, but also obvious breaching of the asylum seekers' human rights," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said on Tuesday.

Khatibzadeh said that the rights of these asylum-seekers, who also include some Iranians, "must be respected under the 1951 Convention and the relevant protocol."

"What is happening is a systematic media conspiracy against Iran. The Persian-language media based in London provide an engineered and unrealistic image of Iran from within and a more unrealistic dream of living in Europe, paving the way for the dangerous departure of some Iranian citizens," he noted.

He went on to say that Iran, in spite of all economic sanctions, is hosting millions of citizens of other countries, including Afghanistan, but "the so-called human rights defenders have not been able to accommodate the thousands of refugees and asylum seekers, many of whom have taken the risk of being displaced due to the systematic deception of these same governments."

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