

UK may fit asylum seekers with electronic tags



London, September 2 (RHC)-- Britain's Home Office says asylum seekers arriving undocumented to the United Kingdom could be monitored with electronic and GPS tags, according to a report by The Times newspaper.

Under the Illegal Migration Act, approved by the House of Commons in April, anyone who arrives in the country on small boats will be prevented from claiming asylum, will be detained and then deported either back to their homelands or to a third country, such as Rwanda.

But The Times reported that Home Office authorities have been tasked with ensuring that asylum seekers who cannot be detained do not abscond or disappear. "Tagging has always been something that the Home Office has been keen on and is the preferred option to withdrawing financial support, which would be legally difficult as migrants would be at risk of being left destitute," a Home Office source told The Times.

In an interview with British broadcaster Sky News, Home Secretary Suella Braverman said: "We've just enacted a landmark piece of legislation in the form of our Illegal Migration Act that empowers us to detain those who arrive here illegally and thereafter swiftly remove them to a safe country like Rwanda."

"That will require a power to detain and ultimately control those people. We need to exercise a level of control if we are to remove them from the United Kingdom. We are considering a range of options," she added.

Kolbassia Haoussou, who fled torture in Chad and was granted refugee status in the UK, told Sky News that the electronic tagging would not have stopped him from coming to Britain. "What I am fleeing is more dangerous than electronic tagging. But it would harm my psychology," he said.

Electronic tagging is a tool the UK uses regularly to monitor the whereabouts of prisoners and ensure they follow their curfew orders. In June last year, the Home Office had proposed an electronic tagging scheme to monitor asylum seekers who were due to be removed from the UK but did not confirm if any people had been tagged, according to local media reports.

Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who oversaw the scheme, told reporters at the time that while the UK is a "very, very generous, welcoming country", such a measure was important to ensure that those who came illegally, "can't just vanish into the rest of the country."

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