

UK parliament approves new copy of Sunak's controversial Rwanda bill



[UN blasts UK 'dishonesty' in deporting asylum-seekers to Rwanda](#)

London, January 18 (RHC)-- The United Kingdom's lower chamber of Parliament has approved Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's controversial Rwanda deportation bill. The legislation titled Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill passed the House of Commons on Wednesday by 320 votes to 276, with a majority of 44.

The House of Lords will now consider the bill for approval, having the power to block it, or at least demand changes in it.

Sunak on Thursday called on the House of Lords to approve the contentious Rwanda bill, saying it is time for the deportation planes to take off, making reference to the European Court of Human Rights ordering the UK to halt its flight to Rwanda back in June 2022.

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 UK Home Office minister, Chris Philp, said the UK was not acting above the law. "We're not disregarding the law, we're making the law. Parliament is sovereign, parliament passes laws following sober debate, which is what the House of Commons did last night," Philp said in an interview on Thursday.

Philp said also he would not need to advise civil servants to break international law to override "rule 39" injunctions on Sunak's Rwanda scheme. Asked whether he would be advising officials to disregard international obligations if Strasbourg orders threatened to obstruct flights taking off, he said: "No, because international law means our treaty obligations to be clear. "There is no reference in the treaty we signed back in 1950 to these rule 39 injunctions, and the power provided for in the bill is a lawful power."

British refugee charities have accused the Home Office of attempting to deport unaccompanied 16-year-olds to Rwanda in the first wave of asylum seekers to be sent to east Africa. Meanwhile, if the bill gains full approval it would allow the government to send asylum seekers reaching the UK by any means to the East African country.

Last year, the UK Supreme Court blocked the Government's Rwanda plan, ruling that Sunak's illegal deportation scheme was against British and international law.

Then, Sunak released his so-called emergency Rwanda legislation, hoping it would override the legal obligations preventing the deportation of unwanted asylum seekers.

The ruling Conservative Government has so far paid £240 million to Rwanda to accept the refugees. The opposition Labour Party has labeled the failed deportation scheme an expensive "gimmick" aimed to garner votes for the Tories who are forecast to lose in upcoming elections.

Labour shadow home secretary, Yvette Cooper, pointed out that so far the Government's efforts had failed to send any of the asylum seekers to Rwanda.

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