

Important Rwanda Update for Asylum Seekers

On 25 April 2024, the UK adopted new legislation that allows the Home Office to send asylum seekers to Rwanda for their asylum claim to be processed.

Although in theory, thousands of asylum seekers living across the UK could be considered for removal to Rwanda, in practice, we think only a small number of people will be affected.

However, it is important for asylum seekers to know what to do if they are at risk. This briefing provides some practical tips for asylum seekers.

Who can be sent to Rwanda?

Only adult asylum seekers who claimed asylum after 1 January 2022 can potentially be sent to Rwanda. The Home Office cannot consider families with children under 18 years.

What is the process?

Before the Home Office sends any asylum seeker to Rwanda, it must follow [published process](#).

First, if the Home Office is considering sending you to Rwanda, it will first issue a **Notice of Intent**. This is not a formal decision letter. Instead, it means that the Home Office is looking for a 'third country' to accept you for relocation.

Next, and only if the Home Office considers you are suitable for removal, it will issue a **second Notice of Intent**. This letter will specify the country the Home Office plans to send you to i.e. Rwanda.

What should I do if I receive a Notice of Intent?

If you receive a Notice of Intent naming Rwanda you should notify your solicitor immediately. If you do not have a solicitor, you should seek immigration advice urgently.

Should I continue to report to the Home Office?

Most asylum seekers are required to 'report' regularly to the Home Office. Asylum seekers living in Northern Ireland are usually required to report to the Home Office at Drumkeen House in South Belfast. The Law Centre advises asylum seekers to continue to report and to abide by Home Office conditions. Migrants who do not comply with Home Office restrictions are at increased risk of immigration detention.

What steps should I take?

If you are asked to attend a reporting event, and you have received a Notice of Intent that names Rwanda, we recommend that you:

- Notify your solicitor of the reporting event;
- Have a copy of your solicitor's contact details written on a piece of paper and keep it close, in your wallet for example.
- Give your friends and family the contact details of your solicitor.
- Ask someone to go to the Home Office appointment with you. It is unlikely that they will be admitted into the building, however, they could notify your solicitor if you don't come out within a reasonable time.
- Consider taking your Home Office documents and any medication with you to your reporting event in case you are detained.
- Pack your valuable items together and leave them with someone you trust. This is necessary because, if you are detained, your belongings could be disposed of by Mears.