



Marie Rimmer CBE, MP
Member of Parliament for St. Helens
South & Whiston
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 4847/01744 752075

Calls to Vote Against the Safety of Rwanda Bill:

I do not believe this Bill will tackle people smuggling gangs or end small boat crossings, but instead will lead to substantial costs while applying to less than one per cent of those who claim asylum in the UK. It is expected that almost £300 million of taxpayers' money will be paid to Rwanda, for what is, in my view, an unethical, unaffordable and unworkable plan. Indeed, nearly two years since the scheme was first announced, no asylum seekers have been sent to Rwanda.

I voted against this Bill at its Second Reading, and also supported an amendment to reject it. Disappointingly, the Bill will still progress to the next stage.

This legislation follows the recent signing of a UK-Rwanda Treaty on the removal of asylum seekers in the UK to Rwanda for processing and resettlement. I am deeply worried that this Bill does nothing to make Rwanda safe.

I am also aware that concerns have been raised over potential conflict between this legislation and courts. We have constitutional roles for Parliament and the courts, and I feel that it is right for Parliament to respond to court judgments, to adapt and to change policy. However, this Bill threatens the UK's compliance with international law, further undermining the potential to ensure border security and establish returns agreements. Returns have already decreased by 50% since 2010.

In my view, we need to focus on how to prevent lives being lost, strengthen our border security, stop dangerous boat crossings, and fix the broken asylum system. The backlog should be cleared, and asylum hotel use ended, with workable returns deals in place. I want to see the establishment of a new major returns unit with 1,000 additional staff.

We also need to redirect the funding for the Rwanda scheme into smashing the criminal gangs - going after the supply chains such as warehouses and lorryloads of boats crossing Europe unchallenged. I support the use of real-time security information, alongside prosecutions and convictions for the smuggler gangs and their vile trade. Ultimately, we need a proper plan to save lives.

Marie Rimmer CBE, MP

Constituency Office:

Marie Rimmer CBE, MP, 2nd Floor, Century House, Hardshaw Street, St. Helens WA10 1QU, 01744 752075,
marie.rimmer.mp@parliament.uk
Website: www.marierimmer.co.uk