



HOUSE OF LORDS

International Agreements Committee

Corrected oral evidence: UK-Rwanda asylum agreement

Tuesday 19 December 2023

5 pm

Watch the meeting

Members present: Lord Goldsmith (The Chair); Lord Fox; Lord Grimstone of Boscobel; Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town; Lord Howell of Guildford; Lord Kerr of Kinlochard; Baroness Kingsmill; Lord Marland; Lord Razzall; Lord Udny-Lister; Lord Watts.

Evidence Session No. 2

Heard in Public

Questions 19 - 31

Witnesses

[I](#): The Rt Hon James Cleverly MP, Secretary of State for the Home Department, Home Office; Dan Hobbs, Director-General, Migration and Borders, Home Office.

Examination of witnesses

James Cleverly and Dan Hobbs.

Q19 **The Chair:** Home Secretary, welcome to this evidence session of the International Agreements Committee looking at the Rwanda treaty. That is our purpose and job today. Thank you for coming. We have very little time with you, which we are unhappy about, but we have to live with that. I am going to ask for two accommodations in that respect.

First, to save time, my colleagues have asked me to ask the questions. They may come in, but on the whole I will be running the questioning. Secondly, I would ask you to kindly keep your answers as short as is appropriate to give the right answer. Finally, if there are issues we cannot cover, would you be willing for us to send you written questions that you and your office will then be able to answer? We would ask for them by the end of the first week of January, because we have to write a report quickly, given the CRaG constraints.

James Cleverly: I am completely happy with all of those. You have a deal.

Q20 **The Chair:** Thank you very much. Let me start this way. The critical question we want to look at is whether what you have been able to achieve will work in practice. We welcome a lot of it—let me be clear about that—such as the fact that this is now a treaty rather than an MoU, which is one of the things this committee raised when we looked at the MoU. The treaty provides for traditional guarantees, including enhanced monitoring and a new asylum process, but the question is how Parliament can be satisfied that these measures will be effective in practice.

I am very conscious, and you will be very well aware, that the Supreme Court decision said in particular that the problem was not whether there was a willingness on the part of Rwanda to meet its obligations, but whether in practice that was going to happen. These are the issues we would like to discuss with you. How satisfied are you that there is in fact a willingness, an ability and the resources in Rwanda to meet the new commitments that this will provide?

James Cleverly: I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the committee. I will answer this from two points of view. One is about the nature of the treaty: the fact that it is legally binding, and that it is a treaty, as you say, so it has a stronger legal underpinning than other relationships that we had with Rwanda and which others have with Rwanda, including the UNHCR.

Some of my reassurance comes from strength in the fact that it is a treaty. The treaty was designed very specifically to address the deficiencies raised by their Lordships in the Supreme Court. We were obviously disappointed with the results and did not necessarily agree with their interpretation, but we absolutely respected their judgment. We looked very carefully at the specific points that they sought to address, and those were embedded in the treaty. The treaty built on the MoU,

which was fairly long running in its incubation, so we felt that was pretty robust. That is one element of it: the legal reassurance that we have.

The other bit is a practical point. This very much reflects the conversations I had when I went to Rwanda. The Rwandans are very conscious that the treaty, much more than the MoU and, indeed, much more than their relationship with the UNHCR, is being stared at and observed very intently by the international community, by lawmakers such as you here in the UK, by other Governments around the world in Europe, Africa and beyond. They have a reputational incentive to make it work and be seen to make it work.

Again, in the conversations I had with the representatives of the Rwandan Government, the Foreign Minister and the Justice Minister, they were very keen for Rwanda to be seen as a country that is helping to solve problems in a continent that sadly has a reputation for exporting problems. They really want this to work; their willingness to engage with us in the drafting and the implementation of the treaty is incredibly strong. The combination of the legal robustness that I now believe we have with the attitude of the Government and their desire to make this a visible success puts us in a very strong place when it comes to their adherence to the points that were made by the Supreme Court.

The Chair: A problem, though, from the point of view of Parliament and this committee, is that this treaty will not be looked at by the courts, because that is what the Bill is intended to prevent. The only assessment of whether this will work will be by Parliament, and there is no committee matching our committee in the Commons, so what this committee has to say will be very important. You in your foreword, and it is a powerful foreword, say that you are satisfied that this will work and that Rwanda is safe, but how do we know that when we have not seen operating all the new safeguards and assurances that you are putting in place?

James Cleverly: Being careful how I phrase this, I note with interest that their Lordships relied quite heavily on comments by the UNHCR about the situation in Rwanda. I am also very conscious that the day after the judgment was made the UNHCR flew over 160 refugees to Rwanda for processing. As an organisation that is working with the Rwandans, it is telling the world through its actions that it believes Rwanda is safe for refugee processing; otherwise, surely it would not have flown those people there.

The treaty that we have signed is more robust than the agreement underpinning the relationship between the UNHCR and Rwanda. I am confident that the combination of the Rwandans' attitude, their experience over quite an extended period working on international migration matters, and the legal and political desire—I am not a lawyer, but I see this as a politician—in Rwanda to be seen to be successful on what is an incredibly high-profile international agreement, more so now than at the time the MoU was signed, is an incredibly powerful motivation for them.

Q21 **The Chair:** Can we just look at some of the elements of this? Quite a few elements have been introduced that have not been used so far. There will be a new asylum law. We do not even know what the law consists of at the moment, do we? It will be introduced by Rwanda.

James Cleverly: That will be part of their ratification process for the treaty. The processes, which are the ones we are going to be reliant upon, are embedded in the treaty rather than the law. That is my understanding of that law.

The Chair: Forgive me, but the policy paper makes it clear that there has to be a new law in Rwanda that will apply to asylum seekers. That is what they will be judged on, but we do not know what it is.

Dan Hobbs: The changes in the Rwandan domestic legislation are to reflect that under the treaty they have agreed to fundamentally reform how they deal with asylum cases. Prior to us agreeing the treaty, they had an internal administrative appeal stage with what they called a refugee status determination committee and a ministerial appeal. Under the treaty, they have removed those elements, so they will ratify the treaty, as the Home Secretary said, but they are also changing their domestic law and approaches in terms of the process to reflect what they have agreed to in the treaty.

The Chair: My point is that we do not know what those changes are.

Dan Hobbs: They are the changes that are reflected in the treaty.

The Chair: Is there a draft of the new law available yet?

James Cleverly: I have not seen one, but the changes and the actions of Rwanda's domestic processes are in order to make meaningful the ratification of and adherence to the treaty. When the draft comes through there will be nothing surprising in it, because they are making changes in order to make the treaty deliverable.

The Chair: Home Secretary, in your foreword to the policy paper you said this, talking about the work that will be done: "This work will enable Parliament to conclude that the Supreme Court's judgment has been addressed and that Rwanda is safe for relocations under the migration and economic development partnership". That is your confidence. I understand that. That is where you want to get to, but, if we look at these details, how can Parliament make that conclusion at this time, before this has been put in place, been tested, been addressed and been seen? It has no fallback, because the courts will not be allowed to assess the treaty's sufficiency after the Bill is passed.

James Cleverly: Their Lordships highlighted remedies in their judgment. The treaty addresses those remedies. My reading of that is that, if their Lordships say, "We don't believe that Rwanda is currently safe because of X and Y, but we think these things can be addressed", which is a very strong distillation of the points their Lordships made, and we go on to

address X and Y, by definition that is addressing the reasons why they felt Rwanda was not safe.

In my view, the framework on non-refoulement is very robust. Given the changes that the Rwandans have committed to in the internationalisation of their process, the degree of oversight that is embedded in the treaty and, as I say, the practical oversight—not driven by legislation—of the UK, your Lordships and the international community's interest in this, I am confident in saying that the two things that underpinned their Lordships then assessment of Rwanda have been addressed through the treaty. Once the changes have been made and the treaty has been ratified at both ends, it will by definition have addressed the reasons why their Lordships said at the time that Rwanda was not safe.

The Chair: That is where I have to take issue with you, because it is a question of practice. The Supreme Court said, probably in its central piece: "The central issue in the present case is therefore not the good faith of the Government of Rwanda at the political level, but its practical ability to fulfil its assurances, at least in the short term, in the light of the present deficiencies of the Rwandan asylum system". I do not want to be the slightest bit dismissive of Rwanda or anything of that sort, but you are asking Parliament—this is why we are looking at the treaty now—to say that it is fixed. How can we be sure that it is fixed before many of the elements in the new system have been tried and tested?

James Cleverly: We are not relying on Rwandan good faith. That is the point. When their Lordships say that they believe Rwanda's good faith, as do we, but then go on to say, "However, there are concerns about refoulement and concerns about the robustness of their judicial process", we are utilising the good will of the Rwandans but in order to put a robust legal framework in place to address, very specifically and directly, the robustness of their legal process, with the Commonwealth element, which should give us all a strong degree of reassurance.

That internationalisation exists at multiple levels: there is the selection committee and the decision-makers who will look at the cases, and cast-iron guarantees about non-refoulement. We have addressed their Lordships' technical concerns in the treaty. Once the treaty has gone through the legitimate democratic process, in Westminster and Kigali, we can legitimately say that their concerns have been addressed.

The Chair: One of the problems the Supreme Court referred to was the fact that Rwanda had not met its assurances to other countries, or so it believed from what the UNHCR was saying at that stage. Let me try to pick up on some of the detail of this, if I may. When will the Government assess whether the agreement is fully implemented?

James Cleverly: We have an incentive for this to be up and running as quickly as possible. We have been working very closely throughout and will continue to do so. The Rwandans will have a system, which we have no intention of distorting, but they have an interest in working through their domestic legislation quickly, as do we. These are concurrent

activities. I cannot tell you specifically, "It will be at this point", but we have an ongoing relationship. At the first point it is ready, we will be able to point to that, but I do not want to speculate on exactly when that would be.

The Chair: Can you confirm that the Government will not ratify the treaty until the new measures are fully effective?

James Cleverly: Our ratification process is running through the CRaG process, as you suggested. The Rwandans are doing things at their end. As you know, until both parties have ratified the treaty it will be held in abeyance. I am rather uncomfortable implicitly dictating to the Rwandans how they should do things.

The Chair: I am not asking you to dictate to them. I am asking about the UK's approach. I am asking you whether you will agree or undertake, whatever language you want to use, not to do the process of ratification until the agreement is fully implemented. There is a lot to do, is there not? There is a new law, there is a new first-instance body, there is a new appeal body, there is a slightly different monitoring system. There are a lot of things to be put in place.

James Cleverly: I would not describe it as a lot of things. There are a number of things. They are important. They are not inherently complicated.

The Chair: They are important, because these are the very things—

James Cleverly: I said they are important, but they are not complicated.

The Chair: Forgive me, but we are short of time. I would not normally do this to a Cabinet Minister. Actually, I probably would, but we know where we are. Can you confirm that you will not take the step to ratify this agreement until you are satisfied that the agreement has been fully implemented?

James Cleverly: We are not going to operationalise this. The only reason I pause is the precise sequencing. We have a process that we are running through. They have a process that they are running through. The point is that we will not operationalise this scheme until we are confident that the measures underpinning the treaty have been put in place; otherwise, the treaty is not credible. We are leaning on the treaty for this process. We want the treaty to be up and running. We want this to be a success.

I am coming at this from a pragmatist point of view rather than a legalistic point of view. The last thing I want is to set something up that is doomed to fail. I want this to work. I have said to my parliamentary colleagues that this is not performative; this is practical. I want these things to be in place. The UK has an interest in that. The Rwandans have an interest in that. None of us has an interest in rushing the fence and getting it wrong.

I can reassure you, and, indeed, will reassure my colleagues in the Commons, that we will make sure that this is working, because we do not want this to fail. Neither do the Rwandans. You should take some reassurance from that.

Q22 **The Chair:** That is important. Just on some detail, how will the monitoring committee conduct its work in practice? Will the committee members personally conduct the “daily monitoring” required during the initial enhanced monitoring period and, if not, who will?

James Cleverly: It is my understanding that the members of the monitoring committee would do it. Again, it is a practical point. Particularly in the early stages, for all the reasons I have given about our desire for this to work, I expect that there will be a very close monitoring, certainly while the first tranche of cases are going through this system.

Once this is a more established process, and once people and the institutions are more used to dealing with this, the monitoring committee will make a judgment about the nature of the ongoing monitoring. We are very keen for this to be a success, so we want to make sure that the initial tranches are of a sensible number that can be closely monitored so that this is bedded in properly.

Q23 **The Chair:** Can you tell me what progress has been made on establishing the confidential complaints process?

James Cleverly: I am not able to give you details on that at the moment. The draft treaty is two weeks old. In the new year, I will get in contact with my opposite number, Dr Vincent Biruta, to get an update on where they are with the novel processes that flow from the treaty. Although it feels like we have been talking about this for ages, the treaty itself has only been in existence for a couple of weeks. I want to give them time.

The Chair: I understand. You will also understand that we are under time pressure because we have a limited period for the CRaG process, so we have to produce a report. So we need to know.

James Cleverly: I appreciate that.

The Chair: Do you know what progress has been made in recruiting the support team?

James Cleverly: Again, there are a number of these logistical points that I will pick up in the new year with my Rwandan opposite number. I want to give them some time. As I say, there are a number of things they have to work on. We will do an audit early in the new year. I do not have a specific date, but it will be early in the new year.

Q24 **The Chair:** Can you tell me why the joint committee has a role in setting the terms of reference of the monitoring committee? I ask, because I thought the point was that the monitoring committee is supposed to be independent of the parties, and of course the joint committee is an

emanation of the parties. Do you know why the joint committee has a role in setting the terms of reference of the monitoring committee?

Dan Hobbs: I co-chair the joint committee. We set the broad terms of reference, but the independent monitoring committee sets its own priorities and its programme, within the parameters of what it is asked to look at, which is the full end-to-end process under the treaty at both the UK and the Rwandan end. That is where its terms of reference are set, but it sets its own priorities and programme for how it looks at things and has full, unfettered access under those terms of reference.

The Chair: What is the joint committee doing? What is it setting?

Dan Hobbs: The joint committee sets the terms of reference. Those are boundaries around what the monitoring committee is looking at, which is effectively anything to do with the end-to-end process, as covered by what was initially the memorandum of understanding and is now the treaty, but it sets its own programme, in the same way that it is customary for inspectorates to have clear terms of reference that are set, but then to set up their own programmes and have unfettered access.

The Chair: I will read that answer quite carefully.

Q25 **Lord Fox:** Who controls the resources at the monitoring team's disposal? Does that come from the joint committee as well?

Dan Hobbs: Yes.

Lord Fox: Who pays the piper? The joint committee is controlling the funds that the monitoring committee has at its disposal in order to perform its monitoring task. Is that correct?

Dan Hobbs: The joint committee of officials oversees the whole operation of the programme, under ministerial oversight at both ends. We provide the monitoring committee with the resources it needs to complete its task.

The Chair: What progress has been made in recruiting the international judges? Again, I am presuming the answer is nothing yet, or is it?

James Cleverly: The answer will not be nothing, but I am not able to give you details, because there are a number of things that flow out from the treaty in terms of processes, recruitment structures and logistics. I have not as yet had an update from the Rwandans on this, but they will have been working on these things because they know we are working to a deadline. I am not able to give the committee an update at this stage, but I will ensure that in the first conversations I have with the Rwandan Government I do a sweep-up of the progress to date, which may well address the concerns that you have before you get to the point where you are drafting a report.

The Chair: It would be helpful to have that. My problem will still be, in a sense, how we assess that.

Q26 **Lord Watts:** If I can pursue that, is the problem that that detail is not in place? Would it not be more sensible to put that structure in place and then come back with a treaty once you can tell Parliament that this is the answer to the question that is being put? At the moment, you have no evidence at all that anything that you have said this afternoon can be put in place in the timeframe that you have been setting out, because, quite frankly, a lot of people think these are very unrealistic timescales.

James Cleverly: We could have a slower process, but every day we delay, people risk their lives in the channel. This weekend we had another two people drown in the channel. There are competing pressures, which I completely understand, but we want to get this right. We are determined that we can get this right, but we also do not want to hang around, because every day we delay there is a higher risk that another set of people die in the channel and another set of people are brutalised by people smugglers. I am not going to hang around watching that happen when there is an opportunity to work quickly.

I recognise that that means that there are lots of things on which you would seek reassurance that I cannot give you at the moment, but I am confident that I will be able to. We are running a number of things concurrently rather than sequentially. I think that is a justifiable position, because we are looking to address an acute, very serious challenge.

Lord Watts: Are you telling the committee that there will be no boat crossings once this is in place?

James Cleverly: No.

Lord Watts: Most people think that is not the case, so your justification for rushing something through is not just defined by the fact that it will change this situation of boats coming across the channel.

James Cleverly: I do not know what others have said. I have never said that this alone will prevent illegal people smuggling across the channel. In fact, I have been criticised by some for reminding the world that we have multiple lines of effort on this. The point is that this is one of the defining challenges of our era. It has forced itself to the front of the agenda in North America and right the way across Europe. Basically, all the democracies in the northern hemisphere are having to deal with this issue.

We do not have the luxury of addressing these things one at a time with a "test and see" mindset. We need to have a full push on multiple lines of effort, and that is absolutely what we are seeking to do. We are looking to progress all those lines of effort with as much pace as we can. I have always said that Rwanda is one part of a multistrand approach, all of which we are pursuing at pace with real enhanced focus.

We know that, as we move towards the spring of next year, we will see the desire to use the better weather to try to smuggle people across the channel. I want to make sure that we have a credible deterrent message

from Rwanda and other schemes in order to dissuade people from making those incredibly dangerous crossings.

Q27 The Chair: Home Secretary, I am very concerned about the time. If you will forgive me, I want to get another couple of questions in. Some of my colleagues might want to ask questions too, but I am not sure there will be time. Roughly, how many migrants do you assess Rwanda has the capacity to receive under the treaty?

James Cleverly: There is no upper limit. There is no cap. There have been some figures floating around, which have not come from me, that I have seen across the Dispatch Box. As I said, we want to make sure that we get this right. We want to make sure that the initial tranche is a figure that is manageable to the Rwandans, but there is no upper limit.

The Chair: Do you have a figure in mind for what the capacity is that Rwanda could take? That is not the same as the point that you are making.

James Cleverly: There is a bit of an irony about this, because ultimately this is meant to be a deterrent. If this works the way we envisage, we would see an increasing number of people as the scheme is operationalised and implemented. It will then have a deterrent effect, which will mean that people stop attempting to come to the UK, so that ultimately we no longer need it as a scheme. There may well be a bell curve, but ultimately there is no inherent upper limit on the totality. The flow rates will be determined by the practicalities of the initial accommodation and the speed with which they can do the legal processes. As I say, there is no cap; there is no inherent upper limit.

The Chair: What is the relationship between the treaty and the financial commitments made by the Government to help ensure that it is delivered?

James Cleverly: Again, I want to take this opportunity to nail down an error that has been floating around. The Rwandans did not ask for any extra money for the treaty. We did not offer any extra money for the treaty. There has been no extra money for the treaty. Where we have asked for institutional changes that will incur costs to the Rwandans, because we are basically buying a service from the Rwandans, that will be reflected in the ongoing financial relationship, but there is no money attached to the signing of the treaty.

Q28 Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town: The Chair has asked how much there is for the monitoring, the judges and all that, but once people get to Rwanda you have promised quite a lot in terms of accommodation, free healthcare and all that. If I have understood the treaty correctly, that is whether or not they get asylum, because Article 10 says that even if they do not get asylum or other protection, they still get that long list that you have. How confident are you that all those things are in place and that the resources are there for all those people, not just for the people who gain asylum but for those who have been rejected but will

still stay in Rwanda?

James Cleverly: I have a very high degree of confidence that the Rwandans will abide by this, for two reasons. First, they are very keen to be seen as a provider of solutions. I have no doubt that they have recognised that the UK is not the only country that is looking at a scheme of this type. We know that the Danes have been looking at this. The President of the United States of America has been talking about third-country asylum processing and rehousing.

Again, I am not here to speak on behalf of the Rwandan Government, but they recognise that the UK is not the only country that wants to do this. Once again, they have an incentive to show that this works. They also recognise—again, this reflects the conversation I had when I went over to Kigali—that much of the world is watching. Everyone will be marking their homework. Therefore, they have every incentive to make sure that they abide by their commitments and are seen to abide by those commitments.

Q29 **Lord Kerr of Kinlochard:** I would like to ask a question and make a suggestion. The question is this: when do you think the judges for the new international appeal body will have received the training in Rwandan law that is required by Article 4.4 of annexe B to your treaty? When will that be ready so that the appeal court will be ready to operate, because all its judges will understand Rwandan law as well as international humanitarian law?

My suggestion is that you might want to correct the record on what you said about UNHCR evidence to the Supreme Court. You were completely correct when you said that the Supreme Court clearly laid a lot of weight on the evidence it got from the UNHCR. You then, as if it were a point in contrast to the UNHCR evidence, talked about 160 individuals being transported to Rwanda by the UNHCR around the time of the Supreme Court decision. It is of course the case that the UNHCR has for many years operated a transit facility in Rwanda for individuals at grave risk of death in Libya. They are not kept in Rwanda. They are there in transit to the eventual third-country destination. You implied that running this operation suggested that the UNHCR might not mean what it said about Rwanda not being a safe country. Would you want to correct the record on that?

James Cleverly: The points that I made were all factually accurate. My assessment of the disconnect between the very strong criticism that it made about Rwanda, which was reflected in their Lordships' judgment, and the fact that it still works with Rwanda is legitimate to highlight. If it came across that I was suggesting that the UNHCR relationship was directly analogous to ours, that was not my intention. That is not what I meant. The broad point is that Rwanda is a partner with the UNHCR, which for me feels at odds with what I read as being very harsh criticism of Rwanda from an organisation that still works regularly and closely with Rwanda on refugee-related issues.

The Chair: I did not participate in the Supreme Court case, of course, but I am sure your very excellent lawyers would have made that point: whether, in fact, it was possible to say, “Disregard what the UNHCR has said, because that’s not the way it operates”. I am just very surprised.

James Cleverly: I am not attempting to relitigate. The point I have made is that we looked very closely at the specifics of the judgment and sought to address that. If I have taken us down a bit of a branch line, that was not my intention.

Q30 **The Chair:** The main line, though, is where I started and where I want to finish, to give you a further opportunity. For this to work, there has to be a new law, new judges, a new system and new complaints. We do not know how it is going to work, and yet once this is in place it cannot be turned back. You will have the system in place. We will not be able to get rid of the system because it will be there, so people will go through that system and nothing else. Do you not think that in those circumstances you ought to delay ratification until we know that it actually works? It is not that one denies your good will or determination to make this work, but should we not wait to see that it has worked? Parliament is being asked to accept that it is safe when we do not yet know.

James Cleverly: I understand the point you make. My counterargument would be that, for the treaty to be meaningful, Rwanda will have to have demonstrated that it has made some fundamental changes to its processes. I reflect on the fact that Rwanda has demonstrated a willingness and ability to move very quickly on its reform programme. It is one reason why I think it is a quite remarkable country. If you look at things like fiberoptic broadband rollout—that was happening in Kigali before it was happening in Dorset, as one of my Ministers reminded me—this is a country that is willing to move very quickly.

Ultimately, if the elements of the treaty are not in place, obviously we will not be able to rely on the treaty for the purposes of asylum process, but I am confident that the elements of the treaty will be in place and will be very visible. There is no way of hiding. There is no way the Rwandans can hide, not that they want to.

The Chair: My point is that we should wait to see that they are in place rather than rely upon your—I am sure—completely well-intentioned confidence. Let us see them in place. Let Parliament see it actually works. That is my question: why not?

James Cleverly: I recognise absolutely the cautiousness of your suggestion, but, as I said in a previous answer, given the scale and the nature of this challenge, we have a counterbalancing incentive to move quickly, not to rush it, not to be foolhardy, but to work at maximum pace consistent with putting the safety and the frameworks in place. That is my incentive. That is why we are moving quickly.

We recognise that this is novel legislation, as we said in the legislation. The treaty asks the Rwandans to make some fundamental changes. They

have agreed to do that, and do that very quickly, but, as I say, all the time we might otherwise want to wait, criminal gangs are still plying their evil trade. That is also a counterbalancing motivation for me. It is a judgment call. I totally recognise that.

Dan Hobbs: I need to clarify on the terms of reference before we conclude. The terms of reference are now set in the treaty, so the only way the terms of reference of the monitoring committee can be amended is by amending the treaty.

Q31 **Lord Howell of Guildford:** Will the treaty create a new class of vulnerable refugees who are not sent to Rwanda because it is considered suitable to keep them here? How on earth will that work?

James Cleverly: Again, it is a degree of reassurance, which is particularly tied up with the elements of the treaty that give protection about non-refoulement. If someone is sent from the UK to Rwanda, the only place they can be returned to is the UK. Is that the point you are referring to? That is providing a degree of reassurance about non-refoulement. Is it about individual claims?

Lord Kerr of Kinlochard: Lord Howell is referring to Article 19 of your treaty, which says that we shall make arrangements to resettle here a portion of their most vulnerable refugees.

Dan Hobbs: Under the original memorandum of understanding, part of the wider agreement was that Rwanda hosts something like 130,000 refugees from the region. These are not Rwandan individuals. They are not the individuals who are relocated under the treaty. If someone has particularly acute needs, or specialist needs that could be better served in the UK, it may be that we provide, as we do with other countries where we have resettlement schemes, safe and legal route for that person who is recognised as a refugee to come to the UK, in the same way as we have worked with other organisations such as the UNHCR to bring refugees from vulnerable areas such as Turkey and Lebanon.

Lord Kerr of Kinlochard: I understand. How many is "a portion"?

James Cleverly: It is not possible for us to speculate, but reflecting on the similar agreements we have with other countries, the numbers tend to be tiny, for all intents and purposes.

Lord Fox: It is 130,000, so are we talking 1%, 10% or 20%?

James Cleverly: No, tiny numbers, single digits, of people. Again, this is not a novel clause. This is similar to clauses we have in other agreements. In those instances, we are talking about literally single digits.

The Chair: Home Secretary, thank you for your time. We would have liked to spend more time with you, but we are very grateful for the time that we have spent with you. We will be sending you further questions, as we discussed at the beginning, and we look forward to getting your

answers. Thank you again. Thank your very large team.

James Cleverly: It is like watching bearbaiting. They have come to see a blood sport, but you have been very hospitable.