



Home Office

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Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP
Chair, Home Affairs Committee
Committee Office
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Dame Diana,

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to give evidence during the session on 13 December. Following our letter of 29 December, please find the additional information we promised. We have also included some areas which were of interest to the committee in the session on 13 December.

Rwanda

- 1. Can you confirm whether the figure of £2,137,045 includes claimants' costs in the UK and Rwanda? If, so, please provide a breakdown of those costs.**

It does not include claimants' costs.

- 2. Please write to the Committee outlining the conditions attached to the monies agreed and sent under the MEDP.**

Under the Government's Rule of Law partnership with Rwanda, funding has been used for the purposes of the Memorandum of Understanding to enhance its capability of accommodating and welcoming new arrivals to benefit both migrants and host communities and to expand Rwanda's economic development. This funding contributes to both the safety of asylum seekers relocated to Rwanda under the MEDP and the prosperity of Rwanda.

The "Economic Transformation and Integration Fund" has the aim of supporting the Government of Rwanda to achieve its Vision 2050 and National Strategy for Transformation. As the Permanent Secretary set out at the Public Accounts Committee,

investment has been focused in areas such as education, healthcare, agriculture, infrastructure, and job creation in the following way:

Priority sectors	Percentage Allocation from the first £120m of Economic Transformation & Integration Funding
Education	39%
Health	13%
Job creation (National Employment Program)	19%
Infrastructure	21%
Agriculture (food security)	5%
ICT related	3%

3. Regarding the break-clause in the MEDP to allow an early termination of the partnership, what proportion of any payments made to Rwanda could be returned to the UK?

If the agreement is terminated, we would not pay any further Economic Transformation and Integration Fund (ETIF) payments. However, as per the treaty Rwanda will have continuing obligations towards any relocated individuals and we would therefore continue to meet our funding obligations for the on-going support and integration of any such individuals for up to 5 years.

Funding made by the UK to Rwanda is not intended to be returned. This funding is part of the UK and Rwanda’s migration partnership and it aims to support sustainable and inclusive economic growth within Rwanda and improve the conditions of the existing refugee population and host communities. If the Government were to exercise the break clause in the agreement, it would therefore not result in additional funding being available for other migration priorities.

Withdrawals

At the evidence session, we set out in broad terms that there can be a variety of reasons for an asylum claim to be withdrawn, including those we know to have left the United Kingdom, those who have been issued a different form of permission to remain here, and those who have disengaged from the process entirely.

It is erroneous to say that the Home Office has lost the 17,316 cases that have been withdrawn over the 12 months to 30 September 2023. There are a variety of reasons for an asylum claim to be withdrawn, including voluntarily by individual claimants or by the Home Office, for example as a result of not attending interviews or failing to meet reporting requirements. These reasons are set out in paragraph 333C of the Immigration Rules.

We can confirm that, of the 17,316 asylum cases¹ who received an initial decision of withdrawal in the 12 months to 30 September 2023 and that you referenced at your evidence session of 13 December, the majority (68%) have either left the UK already or

¹ As set out in the Permanent Secretaries’ letter of 12 December, these decisions constitute both “legacy” and “flow” cases.

have re-established contact through a new asylum claim or are being actively caseworked to secure their removal from the UK. This breaks down as follows:

- **3,144 (18%)** of these individuals are no longer in the UK. They have no reason to have a continuing asylum claim.
- **2,643 (15%)** remain in the UK. Following our initial decision to withdraw, they have re-engaged with the Home Office and have been granted some form of lawful immigration status.
- **5,931 (35%)** remain in the UK, have re-engaged with the Home Office and their cases are now being managed by various teams across the Home Office including but not exclusively, Immigration Enforcement, appeals and litigation teams and further submissions. The Home Office deploy resource flexibly in order to respond to priority casework, evidenced by the department making 112,000 asylum decisions made last year. Having met the PM's commitment to double the number of asylum caseworkers, we are now in an excellent position to continue making significant numbers of asylum decisions over the coming year.

None of these cases are in the initial decision backlog because they have already received a first outcome on their case.

- **5,598 (32%)** remain in the UK and the Home Office is taking steps to urgently re-establish contact with them. When we withdraw a claim, and if someone has no other permission to stay in the UK; funding and support stops and someone becomes liable for law enforcement activity to be removed from the UK. If these individuals were to make further submissions, caseworkers may consider whether their previous actions are damaging to their credibility.

The Government's compliant environment measures are intended to prevent them working or accessing public and private services. The Home Office has a dedicated tracing capability that works with the police, other government agencies and commercial companies to trace absconders.

Where we obtain up to date contact details for a person from our tracing checks, we will then consider the most appropriate intervention, including whether to task an enforcement team to go and arrest them.

Many individuals who are out of contact may voluntarily re-engage with the department or decide to leave the UK, others may come to light as a result of an encounter with the police, or during other enforcement activity such as an illegal working raid.

Returns of small boats arrivals

The committee were also keen to understand further information about the subset of total returns relating only to people who arrived on small boats (Q23 to Q25). We have previously provided you with data up to 30 June 2023 and the department has been undertaking further data reconciliation, to bring the returns figures up-to-date and to provide you with further detail.

We previously provided you with data up to 30 June 2023 showing 628 small boat returns in the first six months of 2023. We have since updated that analysis to include all returns in 2023, as shown below:

Returns of small boat arrivals 2023	Albanian	Non-Albanian	Total
FNO	367	6	373
Non-FNO	1,261	216	1,477
Total	1,628	222	1,850

We are continuing to explore options for the regular publication of this data.

We trust that this reply is helpful.

With best wishes,

Yours ever,



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