

Botswana says it has rejected a proposal to accept asylum-seekers from the United Kingdom, an arrangement similar to the one Rwanda has agreed to. The move follows criticism from human rights groups to send migrants to a third country.

The UK government is facing pressure to address the issue of migrants arriving in small boats across the English Channel. Their solution, a deal with Rwanda to process asylum claims on their behalf, has been widely criticized.

Lemogang Kwape, Botswana's foreign minister highlighted concerns of these asylum seekers and the strain it would place on their own immigration system. Civil society groups in Botswana also urged the government to reject the proposal, arguing that the UK policy unfairly discriminates based on nationality.

The situation in Ukraine has been cited as an example of the UK's inconsistent approach. Asylum seekers fleeing the war were offered a fast-tracked system and even public support for accommodation, contrasting with the current stance on migrants arriving by boat.

Experts believe the UK's plan is unlikely to succeed. Professor Jonathan Portes, suggests it will deter legitimate asylum seekers while damaging the UK's reputation. He also questions Rwanda's long-term commitment to the program, suggesting they may have reservations despite financial incentives from the UK.

Earlier this week, British lawmakers passed legislation that the government hopes will allow it to deport asylum-seekers arriving in small boats across the English Channel to Rwanda for processing.

UK Minister Rishi Sunak said the prospect of being sent thousands of kilometers away to Rwanda will deter migrants from making the journey to Britain.

"The first flight will leave in 10 to 12 weeks. Now, of course, that is later than we wanted. But we have always been clear that processing will take time," Sunak said Monday evening after the legislation passed.

The UK government's controversial policy faces an uncertain future. With legal challenges and international disapproval, the goal of starting deportations to Rwanda by mid-July seems increasingly difficult to achieve.