The United Kingdom (UK) Home Secretary, James Cleverly has signed a joint Treaty with Rwanda's Foreign Minister, Dr Vincent Biruta to strengthen the two country's Migration and Economic Development Partnership and address the concerns of the UK Supreme Court.

The agreement is part of the UK government's plan to ensure that illegal migrants can be lawfully relocated to Rwanda under the Government's ambition to stop the boats – ensuring that people know that if they come to the UK illegally, they cannot stay.

Following further positive discussions between the two countries after the Supreme Court judgment, and building on months of work between the two countries, the Treaty responds directly to the conclusions of the Supreme Court and presents a new long-term solution.

The landmark Treaty is binding in international law and ensures that people relocated to Rwanda under the Partnership are not at risk of being returned to a country where their life or freedom would be threatened – an act known as refoulement.

It also enhances the functions of the independent Monitoring Committee to ensure compliance with the obligations in the Treaty, such as reception conditions, processing of asylum claims, and treatment and support for individuals including up to 5 years after they have received final determination of their status. The Committee is made up of 8 independent members.

The Monitoring Committee will also develop a system which will enable relocated individuals and legal representatives to lodge confidential complaints directly to them. It will have the power to set its own priority areas for monitoring, and have unfettered access for the purposes of completing assessments and reports. It may publish reports as it sees fit on its findings.

To further bolster assurances that relocated individuals will not be returned, under the Treaty, Rwanda's asylum system will be strengthened through a new Appeal Body. The Appeal Body will consist of a Rwandan and other Commonwealth national Co-President, and be composed of judges from a mixture of nationalities with asylum and humanitarian protection expertise (appointed by the Co-Presidents) to hear individual appeals.

Home Secretary James Cleverly said:

“This is a crucial step forward in our commitment to stopping the boats and saving lives.

“Rwanda is a safe country that cares deeply about supporting refugees. It has a strong history of providing protection to those that need it, hosting over 135,000 asylum seekers who have found sanctuary there. I am grateful to our Rwandan partners for their willingness, dedication and commitment to strengthening this Partnership further.

“The Supreme Court recognised that changes may be delivered which would address their conclusions – this Treaty responds directly to that.

“We remain steadfast in doing everything we can to stop illegal migration, and our wider, ongoing work operationally and internationally has led to crossings coming down by a third compared to last year.”

The Rwandan Foreign Minister, Dr Vincent Biruta:

“This partnership with the UK reflects Rwanda’s commitment to protecting vulnerable people, and builds on our track record of welcoming and hosting refugees and migrants from around the world.

“Rwanda and the UK both understand that there’s a critical need to find innovative solutions to address the suffering of migrants making dangerous, desperate journeys, under the exploitation of criminal human smugglers.

“The people relocated to Rwanda will be welcomed, and they will be provided with both the safety and support they need to build new lives.”

Today’s Treaty signing, negotiated by the new Home Secretary, sits alongside work with the Rwandans to strengthen their asylum processes.

Since taking up his new role, the Home Secretary has been focussed on ensuring that flights leave for Rwanda as soon as possible.

The Treaty also charts a rights-based path for similar collaboration with and between other countries. Countries across Europe are now also exploring third country models for illegal immigration – including Austria, Germany, Denmark and

Italy in their deal with Albania, a new and innovative model for processing asylum claims.

The agreement goes hand-in-hand with wider action to stop the boats, including under the Illegal Migration Act – the most robust our country has ever seen – and our agreements with countries including France, Albania, Turkey and Italy.

It also comes ahead of new legislation announced by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, which will enable Parliament to confirm that, with our new Treaty, Rwanda is safe.

As part of the Home Secretary’s first official visit to Rwanda, he also attended the Kigali Genocide Memorial with Minister Biruta to pay his respects and met with President Kagame and Minister Biruta to further discuss joint working.