British High Commissioner to Rwanda, Alison Thorpe, confirmed that the UK government has no intention of requesting Rwanda to return the funds it received for the resettlement of migrants. This comes after UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who took office in July 2024, announced the suspension of the migration plan based on the April 2022 agreement.

The policy, aimed at deterring illegal migration into the UK, was halted after it failed to prevent the influx of migrants to London.

The Rwandan government expressed its willingness to continue addressing global migration challenges but clarified that it played no role in the suspension of the agreement, which had been on the verge of implementation.

Public speculation arose over whether Rwanda would be asked to return the £270 million provided by the UK for the program. However, Rwandan government spokesperson Alain Mukuralinda stated that this issue was not part of the agreement.

During a press conference on October 2, 2024, Ambassador Thorpe was directly asked about the possibility of the UK requesting the funds back, to which she responded, “As far as I know, there are no plans to ask Rwanda to return the funds.”

When further questioned about the potential for the UK to reconsider the plan, Thorpe explained that such a reversal seemed unlikely, as the government had already adopted alternative measures, including increased border security, to manage migration issues.

Thorpe noted that, following Starmer’s decision to halt the plan, the UK Parliament is expected to approve the suspension. Once this process is completed, the UK government will formally notify Rwanda in accordance with legal protocols.

UK-Rwanda Relations Continue to Strengthen

High Commissioner Thorpe emphasized that the suspension of the migration plan does not mark the end of UK-Rwanda relations. She affirmed, “The halt in migration cooperation does not mean severing ties with Rwanda. Our relationship is much deeper than just migration issues.”

She pointed to the strong and growing bilateral relationship, which was recently reinforced by the visit of Lord Collins, the new UK Minister responsible for African relations, to Rwanda in September 2024. His visit, soon after assuming office, demonstrated the UK’s commitment to maintaining and strengthening its partnership with Rwanda.

“He prioritized visiting Rwanda early in his term to convey a clear message about the government’s priorities,” Thorpe said. “The UK seeks not only to maintain our strong relationship but also to further enhance it in the coming years.”

Thorpe also highlighted the UK’s ongoing interest in working with Rwanda to advance trade, economic development, and environmental protection, ensuring that the bilateral relationship remains robust and multifaceted.