

**Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale**

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## UK's Rights Assessment of Rwanda Not Based on Facts

### Abuses Overlooked to Justify Cruel Asylum

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Director, Central Africa

This week, the United Kingdom published its safety [assessment](#) on [Rwanda](#), intended to justify a recently announced [agreement](#) to [send asylum seekers](#) crossing the English Channel or other so called “irregular” or dangerous routes to the Central African country. The report was expected to downplay human rights violations in Rwanda. After all, the government couldn't ship off vulnerable people seeking protection with a one-way ticket to a partner they regard as abusive. But it goes even further, cherry-picking facts, or ignoring them completely, to bolster a foregone conclusion.

In assessing Rwanda's rights record, the report states that, “notwithstanding some restrictions on freedom of speech and/or freedom of association,” there are “not substantial grounds” for believing refugees would be mistreated. This conclusion is hard to square with Rwanda's past treatment of refugees.

Between [February and May 2018](#), Rwandan authorities used excessive force and killed 12 Congolese refugees during a protest over cuts in food rations, and police arrested over 60 others. They charged them with participating in illegal demonstrations, violence against public authorities, rebellion, and disobeying law enforcement. Some were also charged with “spreading false information with intent to create a hostile international opinion against the Rwandan state.” Human Rights Watch [confirmed](#) that between October 2018 and September 2019, at least 35 refugees were sentenced to between 3 months and 15 years in prison. One refugee was [accused](#) of sharing information with us, and the communications were used as evidence against him during trial. He is currently serving a 15-year sentence.

The UK Home Office does acknowledge some [concerns](#) over “evidence of discrimination and intolerance towards persons based on their sexual orientation and gender identity or expression,” but maintains these abuses aren't that serious. Human Rights Watch has [documented](#) how LGBTI people have been detained, beaten, insulted and harassed for their sexual identity. Based on our conversations with members of the LGBTI community in Rwanda, it's difficult to gauge what the UK government would consider “serious” enough.

The UK government can continue to try to sugarcoat its policy decisions with selective assessments like this one, but it won't change the truth: in choosing to rip up international obligations to asylum seekers and expel them to a country with a [track record](#) for human rights abuse, the government continues to embrace a policy of cruelty.

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#### ecoi.net summary:



Commentary on reports  
by the UK Home Office on  
Rwanda's eligibility as a  
country to deport asylum  
seekers to

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