

EU Revives Rwanda Plan Abandoned by UK

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The European Union is considering a migrant deal with Rwanda, echoing the controversial plan the UK government recently scrapped after years of legal and political challenges. The move has reignited debate over the human rights implications of outsourcing asylum processing to third countries.

While the UK government officially abandoned its Rwanda deportation policy in July after repeated legal setbacks and widespread public opposition, the European Commission is now advancing a similar agreement. The EU proposal would allow asylum seekers who

arrive irregularly in Europe to be transferred to Rwanda for processing and possible resettlement.

The UK's version of the plan, first proposed by former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, was blocked by the UK Supreme Court, which found it breached the European Convention on Human Rights. Legal experts warned the scheme risked refoulement, the unlawful return of refugees to countries where they could face persecution. Civil liberties groups and international watchdogs condemned the policy as morally and legally flawed.

However, the EU's revived talks with Rwanda suggest a shift in approach to dealing with illegal migration across the Mediterranean and through the Balkans. The new initiative, spearheaded by European Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas, mirrors earlier efforts by Denmark, which also explored sending asylum seekers to Rwanda.

In the UK, human rights advocates have raised concerns that the EU's move could reignite pressure from hardliners to revisit similar offshore migration policies. With Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government focused on a more domestically managed immigration system, a return to Rwanda-style outsourcing appears unlikely, but the EU's involvement keeps the issue on the political radar.

Critics of such policies argue that they violate international refugee protections and reduce accountability by shifting responsibilities to countries with limited oversight mechanisms. Rwanda has received support from Western governments for hosting migrants in the past, but questions remain about its long-term capacity and commitment to due process.

As the EU pursues its version of the UK's failed experiment, the debate over the human rights costs of migration control continues, and the legacy of the UK's Rwanda plan may still influence future political decisions both at home and abroad.