

7 August 2023

PCS responds to Ascension Island plan

PCS has responded to press speculation, and suggestions by a government minister, that refugees could be sent to Ascension Island.

PCS has been at the forefront of opposing the government's inhumane and unlawful approach to asylum seekers. We have worked with organisations such as Care4Calais [to take the government to court over its small boats policy in the English Channel and its proposal to send refugees to Rwanda](#).

The government now appears to be considering a plan to send refugees to Ascension Island, a sparsely populated island 1000 miles off the coast of Africa, part of the British Overseas Territories. As the Court of Appeal has already found Rwanda to be unsuitable, it seems unlikely that Ascension Island could be considered as a viable alternative.

PCS head of bargaining Paul O'Connor, who has led on the previous court cases, said: "This government's ever-increasing attempts to demonise refugees to deflect from their catastrophic failings on living standards in the UK are becoming ever more ridiculous and unhinged.

"That a government minister can even seriously contemplate the prospect of deportations to Ascension Island indicates that they have completely lost the plot. As ever, it is our members at the sharp end in the Home Office who are left to pick up the pieces as the government lurches from one disaster to another.

"Asylum is a serious business that requires serious solutions. Gimmicks such as this, and forcing refugees into unsuitable accommodation on barges like the Bibby Stockholm, which the Fire Brigades Union has condemned as a potential death trap, will do nothing to help those in need of safety nor to fix a broken system."