20 February 2024

Belfast rally to oppose "Rwanda safety plan"

A rally called by United Against Racism and End Deportations Belfast will be held at Belfast City Hall on 22 February to oppose the Rwanda "safety plan",

The Safety of Rwanda Bill is the latest attempt by the UK government to introduce anti-migrant, anti-asylum seeker and anti-refugee legislation by legally defining Rwanda as a safe country, despite a myriad of evidence to the contrary – including the revelation that the UK has granted asylum to refugees fleeing persecution in Rwanda.

The Bill seeks to redefine Rwanda as a safe country, seeking to negate the Supreme Court's 2023 decision that refugees cannot be forcibly removed to an unsafe country. That decision came off the back of a legal challenge mounted by PCS against plans to deport refugees and asylum seekers to Rwanda.

Concerns have also been raised about the impact of the Bill on Northern Ireland; that it would undermine both the commitment to 'no diminution of rights' under Article 2 of the Windsor Framework and the Good Friday Agreement.

In addition to this, Freedom of Information requests from End Deportations Belfast revealed the routine incarceration of pregnant women at the Larne House Home Office Holding Centre in County Antrim, despite these women being categorised as an "at risk" group.

Furthermore, more than 5,000 people have been held in Larne House since it opened in 2011, staying in former police barracks accommodation, and more than 1,300 continue to be housed in wholly unsuitable lodgings in hotels for long periods – often more than a year which is completely unacceptable for families.

Support the rally

The rally at **Belfast City Hall on Thursday 22 February at 5pm** is being supported by political parties, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions – including PCS, and a number of migrants' welfare and women's groups. PCS members are

encouraged to attend the protest and show their opposition to these continuing attacks on some of the most vulnerable people in our society.