

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said today:

“There is much that the Government and Church of England agree on when it comes to Britain’s asylum policy. We are clear that we cannot have open borders, that we cannot take everyone, and that we must stop people risking their lives crossing the channel in small boats. We agree that we must stop the people smugglers.

“But the Church has also been clear in our profound concerns – moral and practical – about outsourcing our obligations to refugees to Rwanda. We have been clear that the inefficiencies of our asylum system and its failure to treat all people with compassion and dignity must be addressed. Today’s decision by the Supreme Court leaves our response to desperate people fleeing conflict and persecution in a state of limbo. I hope this judgement will give the Government the opportunity to reflect and reconsider its approach.

“Britain has moral and legal responsibilities to those who come to us seeking safety and refuge. We have a proud history of welcoming refugees and treating them with fairness, dignity and justice. Let us put aside the politics of division and approach this issue with a shared sense of purpose – so that we can work with international partners and allies to design an asylum system fit for the growing pressures of the coming century. One that is based on fairness, compassion and the God-given dignity of every human being.

“The Church of England continues to call for the 1951 Refugee Convention to be built upon so it can meet the challenges we face today. We want to see nations around the world working effectively together and taking their fair share of refugees, without leaving the greatest burdens on the poorest countries. We also continue to call on the Government to develop and publish a 10-year strategy for tackling the refugee crisis and human trafficking.

“In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus says to his disciples: “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” In a world where so many are suffering in conflict, persecution and extreme poverty, I pray that we keep these words in mind.”

2 min read

Source URL: <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/news/news-and-statements/archbishop-canterbury-responds-supreme-court-decision-rwanda-policy>