

**BEFORE THE ARBITRATION TRIBUNAL**

**PCA Case No. 2025-45**

**IN THE MATTER OF AN ARBITRATION UNDER THE 2012 RULES OF THE  
PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION**

**PURSUANT TO THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF RWANDA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF  
GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND FOR THE PROVISION OF AN ASYLUM  
PARTNERSHIP TO STRENGTHEN SHARED INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS ON  
THE PROTECTION OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS**

**- between -**

**THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA  
("the Claimant")**

**- and -**

**THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND  
("the Respondent", and together with the Claimant "the Parties")**

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**RESPONSE TO THE NOTICE OF ARBITRATION**

**12 December 2025**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. This is the Response of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Notice of Arbitration filed by the Republic of Rwanda dated 24 November 2025. The Notice of Arbitration was filed pursuant to Article 22 of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for the provision of an asylum partnership to strengthen shared international commitments on the protection of refugees and migrants (“**the Agreement**”)<sup>1</sup> and Article 3 of the 2012 Arbitration Rules of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (“**the PCA Rules**”). This Response is filed in accordance with Article 4 of the PCA Rules and the letter from the Permanent Court of Arbitration (“**the PCA**”) dated 26 November 2025.
2. This Response is accompanied by two Annexes as set out in the List of Annexes.

## **II. THE RESPONDENT**

3. The Respondent is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
4. The United Kingdom’s Agent for these proceedings is:

Dr Tamsin Stubbing  
Deputy Director, Resettlement & International Strategy  
Home Office Legal Advisers  
Government Legal Department  
Peel Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
United Kingdom  
Email: [REDACTED]  
Telephone: [REDACTED]

5. The United Kingdom shall also be represented in these proceedings by:

Mr Daniel Hobbs  
Director General for Migration and Borders Group  
Home Office  
Peel Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
United Kingdom  
Email: [REDACTED]

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<sup>1</sup> Notice of Arbitration, Annex 1.

6. The United Kingdom's counsel for these proceedings are:

Ben Juratowitch KC  
Naomi Hart  
Essex Court Chambers  
24 Lincoln's Inn Fields  
London WC2A 3EG  
United Kingdom  
Email: [REDACTED]  
Telephone: [REDACTED]

Alma Mozetič  
Twenty Essex  
20 Essex Street  
London WC2R 3AL  
United Kingdom  
Email: [REDACTED]  
Telephone: [REDACTED]

7. The United Kingdom requests that all communications regarding these proceedings be sent by email to all of the individuals listed above. It confirms that no hard copy service is required.

### III. RESPONSE TO RWANDA'S CLAIMS

8. The United Kingdom's position will be fully set out in its Statement of Defence to be filed pursuant to Article 21 of the PCA Rules. What follows is an initial summary statement of the United Kingdom's position by way of immediate response to the Notice of Arbitration.

#### A. *Claims concerning financial arrangements*

9. Rwanda claims that the United Kingdom has breached Article 18 of the Agreement.<sup>2</sup> That claim is incorrect because the Parties made "financial arrangements in support of the relocation of individuals" under the Agreement. Those financial arrangements were proposed in the United Kingdom's Note Verbale 101/2024 dated 20 June 2024 ("**the Finance Note**").<sup>3</sup> Rwanda accepted those arrangements in its Note Verbale 051/09.16/North. E/24 dated 21 June 2024.<sup>4</sup>
10. Rwanda further claims that the United Kingdom: (i) has breached para. 2.3.2 of the Finance Note because it failed to pay Rwanda £50 million within 10 days of 13 April 2025; and (ii)

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<sup>2</sup> Notice of Arbitration, para. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Notice of Arbitration, Annex 2.

<sup>4</sup> Notice of Arbitration, Annex 3.

is under an obligation to pay Rwanda a further £50 million within 10 days of 13 April 2026.<sup>5</sup> This is also incorrect:

- (a) The Finance Note expressly provided at para. 3.1 that the Parties could by written agreement amend the Finance Note.
  - (b) The Parties reached such a written agreement. In its Note Verbale 182/2024 dated 13 November 2024, the United Kingdom proposed that the Finance Note be amended such that Rwanda would forgo any additional payments under paras. 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 and that the United Kingdom would not pay those sums.<sup>6</sup> Rwanda accepted this proposal in its Note Verbale 8520/09.16/North. E/24 dated 14 November 2024.<sup>7</sup> By the terms of the Parties' agreement, the amendment came into effect on that date.
  - (c) Accordingly, from 14 November 2024 onwards, the United Kingdom has not been under any obligation to make any payments under paras. 2.3.1 and 2.3.2.
  - (d) Rwanda's subsequent unilateral conduct,<sup>8</sup> by which it purported to rescind the agreed amendment to the Finance Note, is of no legal effect.
11. Contrary to Rwanda's assertion,<sup>9</sup> the amendment of the Finance Note was not contingent on the Agreement subsequently being terminated, at all or within any particular timeframe, or the occurrence or conclusion of discussions concerning any other financial arrangements.

***B. Claim concerning the resettlement of refugees***

12. Rwanda further claims that the United Kingdom has breached Article 19 of the Agreement,<sup>10</sup> which provides that "[t]he Parties shall make arrangements for the United Kingdom to resettle a portion of Rwanda's most vulnerable refugees in the United Kingdom".

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<sup>5</sup> Notice of Arbitration, paras. 33, 47(b)–(c).

<sup>6</sup> Notice of Arbitration, Annex 7.

<sup>7</sup> Notice of Arbitration, Annex 8.

<sup>8</sup> See Notice of Arbitration, Annex 9: Rwanda's Note Verbale 1499/09.16/North. E/25 dated 25 February 2025.

<sup>9</sup> Notice of Arbitration, para. 34.

<sup>10</sup> Notice of Arbitration, paras. 35–36.

13. It is not clear from paras. 35–36 of the Notice of Arbitration what Rwanda claims the breach of Article 19 of the Agreement to be, what evidence it relies on in this regard, or how this claim is said to relate to the claim of breach of Article 19 formulated in the correspondence on which Rwanda relies at paras. 29–32 of the Notice (Annexes 11 and 12 to the Notice of Arbitration). The United Kingdom will respond to Rwanda’s case once properly articulated, but in any event it has not breached Article 19 of the Agreement.

#### **IV. CONSTITUTION OF THE TRIBUNAL**

##### ***A. Rwanda’s appointment of an arbitrator***

14. The United Kingdom acknowledges Rwanda’s appointment of Prof. Dr. Mohamed Abdel Wahab as arbitrator for these proceedings.<sup>11</sup>

##### ***B. The United Kingdom’s appointment of an arbitrator***

15. In accordance with Article 22(4)(c) of the Agreement, the United Kingdom appoints as arbitrator for these proceedings:

Ms Joan Donoghue  
Arbitrator Member  
Twenty Essex  
20 Essex Street  
London WC2R 3AL  
United Kingdom  
Email: [REDACTED]  
Telephone: [REDACTED]

##### ***C. Procedure for the appointment of the chairperson of the Tribunal***

16. Having taken note of Rwanda’s proposal for a procedure for the Parties to reach agreement on the chairperson of the Tribunal for the purposes of Article 22(4)(d) of the Agreement (as set out in the Notice of Arbitration),<sup>12</sup> the United Kingdom proposed a modified version of that proposed procedure. It communicated this counter-proposal to Rwanda by way of Note Verbale 154/2025 dated 4 December 2025.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Notice of Arbitration, paras. 40–41.

<sup>12</sup> Notice of Arbitration, para. 43.

<sup>13</sup> **Annex R-1**, Note Verbale 154/2025 from the High Commission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda (4 December 2025).

17. By way of Note Verbale 322/09.01/CAB.MIN/25 dated 10 December 2025, Rwanda accepted the United Kingdom’s counter-proposal, annexing the text setting out the agreed procedure.<sup>14</sup> Rwanda also noted that it would “direct its legal representatives to submit a copy” of the agreed procedure by email to the PCA, which Rwanda’s counsel did by email dated 11 December 2025. By letter of 12 December 2025 the PCA agreed in principle to administer that procedure and invited the United Kingdom to confirm its agreement to the procedure.
18. The United Kingdom confirms that the Parties have agreed on the procedure set out in the attachment to the email from Rwanda’s counsel to the PCA dated 11 December 2025. The Parties will now proceed with that procedure. The United Kingdom is grateful to the PCA for administering it.

## **V. OTHER PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

### ***A. Place of arbitration***

19. The United Kingdom proposes that the oral hearing of this arbitration take place in The Hague, using facilities at the Peace Palace provided by the PCA.

### ***B. Transparency***

20. The United Kingdom has taken note of Rwanda’s email dated 3 December 2025 “communicating its consent to the inclusion of the proceedings” on “the list of cases registered on the PCA’s website”, as well as the PCA’s letter dated 4 December 2025 inviting the United Kingdom’s comment on this correspondence by 12 December 2025.
21. The United Kingdom considers that all arrangements regarding the transparency of these proceedings should be determined by procedural order of the Tribunal. These arrangements should be discussed by the Parties ahead of the first procedural meeting with the Tribunal. Any listing of the case on the PCA’s website should form part of those discussions and be addressed in the relevant procedural order.

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<sup>14</sup> **Annex R-2**, Note Verbale 322/09.01/CAB.MIN/25 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda to the High Commission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (10 December 2025).

**C. *Third parties***

22. With reference to Article 22(3) of the Agreement, the United Kingdom considers that there is not any third party with an appropriate interest who should be invited to participate in this arbitration.

**VI. REQUEST FOR RELIEF**

23. For the reasons stated in summary form at paras. 9–13 above, and to be developed in the Statement of Defence, the United Kingdom respectfully requests that the Tribunal dismiss each of Rwanda’s claims set out at para. 47 of its Notice of Arbitration.
24. The United Kingdom reserves the right to amend or supplement its request for relief.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tamsin Stubbing', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Tamsin Stubbing**

**Agent of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

**12 December 2025**

## LIST OF ANNEXES

	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Annex R-1</b>	Note Verbale 154/2025 from the High Commission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda	4 December 2025
<b>Annex R-2</b>	Note Verbale 322/09.01/CAB.MIN/25 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda to the High Commission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	10 December 2025