



Office of the  
Advocate General  
for Scotland

The Right Honourable  
Lord Stewart of Dirleton KC

Advocate General for  
Scotland

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett**

House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

04 March 2024

Dear Baroness Lister

**SAFETY OF RWANDA (ASYLUM AND IMMIGRATION) BILL: HOUSE OF LORDS  
COMMITTEE STAGE**

I am writing to follow up on the debate in the Lords on day two of Committee (Official Report, 14 February, column 330) regarding Northern Ireland.

You asked for an explanation as to why more faith should be put in the Government's interpretation of the implications of the Bill for the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement than those of both official and unofficial human rights watchdogs in Northern Ireland.

As I stated at the despatch box, the Government's position is clear. The Bill's provisions relate to administrative matters of asylum procedure and has been drafted to remain within our international obligations.

I should be very clear that the Government is unshakable in its commitment to the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement. The Bill does not undermine this commitment, and is consistent with the provisions of the Rights, Safeguards and Opportunity chapter of that Agreement – to which some discussion on the floor of the House has related... The Government considers this to be the case because those rights seek to address longstanding and specific issues relating to Northern Ireland's past. They do not extend to administrative matters of asylum procedure as provided for in the Bill.

I can also confirm, for clarity, that the Safety of Rwanda Bill's online fact sheet has been updated to reflect the Government position on these matters for clarity [Safety of Rwanda \(Asylum and Immigration\) Bill: factsheet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/factsheets/safety-of-rwanda-bill-factsheet).

I am copying this letter to Lord Scriven, Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate, Viscount Hailsham, The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford, Lord Carlile of Berriew, Baroness Chakrabarti, Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws, Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle, Lord Deben, Lord Dodds, The Lord Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Lord Kerr of Kinlochard, Lord German, Lord Blunkett, Baroness Lawlor, Lord Anderson of Ipswich, Lord Tugendhat, Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate, Lord Murray of Blidworth, Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede.

I will also place a copy of this letter in the library of the House.

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Yours sincerely,

*Stewart of Dirleton.*

**RT HON LORD STEWART OF DIRLETON KC**