

Sam Okwulehie, Group Area Manager  
Kenya Airways  
Bedfont Road  
Staines  
Middlesex  
TW19 7NL  
01784 888311

Dear Mr. Okwulehie

Associate Nimpagaritse is due to be forcibly removed from the UK on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September on Kenya Airways flight KQ101 from Heathrow @ 20:00 hours to Nairobi and KQ470 onwards to Bujumbura, Burundi. I am writing to ask you not to carry out this forced removal.

Deportation to Burundi will put her in great danger. Many Burundians who know her believe she could be killed. She has been given permission by the Home Office to marry someone with whom she is in love in the United Kingdom. She should be allowed to stay here in safety and get married.

Associate is from the minority Tutsi ethnic group in Burundi, and was born in Bujumbura, the capital city. Hutus killed various family members in 1993. Then, in 2004, armed men who she believes to have been from the FNL (Forces nationales de liberation), a Hutu rebel group, shot and killed her parents at the family home. Associate and her siblings managed to escape from the house and fled to a refugee camp, but she became separated from them and does not know their whereabouts. In the camp she was constantly in fear of discovery by FNL Hutus, and in 2005 was helped to escape to the UK where she claimed asylum. This was refused as was her fresh claim made in April 2007. She suffers from posttraumatic stress disorder and is still receiving counselling.

This will not be the first time that an attempt has been made to deport Associate. On February 28<sup>th</sup> 2008, she was arrested, and then held in a police cell in Sheffield for 3 days in solitary confinement before transfer to Yarl's Wood detention centre. On March 5<sup>th</sup> she was removed to Burundi, but Burundian immigration did not accept her and she was returned all the way back to the UK. It was a terrible trauma for her and for the man who loves her, as well as an appalling waste of time and taxpayers money.

Associate was allowed to return to Sheffield where she began to rebuild her life, studying at Sheffield College, and singing in the French choir at St Marie's Cathedral, helping in the work of the registered charity Assist, and attending meetings of the local Amnesty group. She and her boy friend Aime applied to get married through her solicitor with the warm support of her church, and the Home Office accepted that theirs was a genuine relationship, and gave permission. Despite this, the Home Office have repeatedly failed to return her ID card to her, taken when she was arrested in March. Without it, she has been unable to marry.

On September 12<sup>th</sup> at 6.15 a.m. she was arrested a second time, and taken to Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre in South Lanarkshire. Her solicitor has put in a fresh claim for asylum. Her church, her friends and college teachers are all campaigning for her to be allowed to stay on compassionate grounds in view of the very real suffering she has endured and fears that she will be attacked in Burundi and never reunited with Aime. A petition with over 1200 names, including Nick Clegg M.P. has now been collected asking that she be given the right to stay in the UK.

A Home Office spokesman said the Border and Immigration Agency only contracted with airlines willing to operate removal flights. He added: "The agency uses agents/brokers to arrange both charter and scheduled removals. Airline captains have the right to refuse carriage of a passenger and will do so if they feel it appropriate for security or commercial reasons". This may seem to indicate that Kenya Airlines could choose not to be "willing to operate removal flights".

I urge you therefore not to co-operate with this forced removal. Everyone has the right to family life. It would be cruel and inhumane to separate two people so deeply committed to each other. They would have very little hope of being together ever again if Associate were removed to Burundi to face terrible danger next Thursday.

Yours Sincerely,

Name:

Address:

City:

Postcode:

Country:

Date:

Email:

