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Israel to Pay Rwanda \$5,000 for Every Deported Asylum Seeker It Takes In

In addition to the payment to the Rwandan government, which was first reported by Channel 10 and confirmed by Haaretz, Israel will continue to pay asylum seekers \$3,500 and their airfare if they leave voluntarily

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An asylum seeker in south Tel Aviv in August, 2017. Credit: Moti Milrod

- **Israel approves plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda or jail, close detention center**
- **UN refugee agency expresses concern at Israel's expulsion of African asylum seekers**
- **Israel to pay out over \$120,000 to African asylum seekers jailed illegally**

Israel will pay the Rwandan government \$5,000 for every African asylum seeker it accepts from Israel, Channel 10 reported Sunday. A senior government official confirmed the report to Haaretz.

The Israeli government will additionally continue to pay **asylum seekers** who voluntarily leave the country a grant of \$3,500, as well as the cost of their airlines tickets out of the country. The agreement with Rwanda had not been made public, and it had not been known what Israel was providing in exchange for Rwanda's agreement to accept the asylum seekers.

As reported by Haaretz, the Population and Immigration Authority is **expected to launch an expulsion operation** in the coming weeks directed at asylum seekers in Israel from Eritrea and Sudan. Many of them are expected to receive notices demanding that they leave the country or face incarceration for an unlimited amount of time.

It remains undecided who will be the first recipients of the notices, but women, children and victims of human trafficking are to be

excluded from the expulsion drive as will individuals who have sought asylum in Israel and have not yet receive a response.

In a related development Sunday, the cabinet unanimously approved a proposal by Interior Minister Arye Dery and Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan that is to **shut down the Holot detention center** in the Negev within four months. Asylum seekers sent to the facility are free to leave during the day but must report for roll calls.

The plan to close Holot is contingent on the success of the expulsion plans. Up to now, Israeli authorities have exerted pressure on Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers to leave but have not forcibly expelled them.



Ilan Lior
Haaretz Correspondent

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