



Sentenced to death? May deports starving man 'to make political point'

By [Ian Dunt](#)

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Theresa May was accused of allowing someone to die "to score a political point" today, after a starving asylum seeker was deported to Nigeria despite fears he might not survive the flight.

Isa Muazu, who has not eaten for 90 days and can no longer stand or see, feared he was going to be targeted by Islamic terror group Boko Haram if he was returned home, but the Home Office ignored concerns around his health and forcibly removed this morning.

Lord Roberts of Llandudno, who was today desperately trying to organise an independent observation team to meet Muazu on his arrival, issued an extraordinary attack on the home secretary in the wake of the deportation.

"Isa Muazu's removal from the UK and potential death on a flight or upon arrival in Nigeria is not only a tragedy but an end to the UK's reputation as a country with humane, civilised, just policies and government," he said.

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"Theresa May must consider her position and her immigration control policies. Looking 'tough' on immigration simply must not descend to the low of allowing people to die to score a political point."

The Home Office has now confirmed that Muazu was deported this morning.

Supporters of the asylum seeker had been unable to contact him since 02:00 GMT.

A last-minute attempt to secure a court injunction against the deportation failed at around 01:00 GMT. In the early morning, an appeal judge also rejected the injunction request, leaving Muazu with no remaining legal avenues to prevent deportation.

In a damning statement, Muazu's solicitor said: "The home secretary went to great lengths to remove this seriously ill man from the UK.

"She didn't allow him an in-country right of appeal against his asylum refusal; at massive expense to tax payers she hired a private charter plane to remove Mr Muazu to Nigeria today- no other returnee was on the plane; for the out of hours injunction she instructed Queen's counsel to make submissions.

"The court was not willing to intervene at such a late stage. We do not know how Mr Muazu is as we lost contact with him late last night."

Speaking to Politics.co.uk, Muazu's lawyer said he would try to file an out-of-country appeal against the original asylum refusal, but

that option relied on being able to make contact with him once he was in Nigeria.

An out-of-country appeal could potentially see Muazu brought back to the UK, but they rarely succeed - not least because it is so difficult to retain contact with the individual once they leave Britain.

One man was arrested in the early hours of the morning after he glued himself to the entrance of Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre, near Heathrow, in a frantic bid to stop the deportation.

"Police were called at approximately 03:40 hrs on Friday, 29 November, to reports of a protest," a Met police spokesperson said.

"Officer were called to the scene and one man was arrested for criminal damage.

"He is currently in custody at a west London police station.

"The protest dispersed at approximately 08:00 hrs."

The Home Office slightly relaxed its draconian stance yesterday evening with a promise to put embassy staff on the plane and a pledge to cover the cost of Muazu's treatment in Nigeria.

Over 120 people attended a vigil for Muazu last night outside the Home Office.

Organiser Nancy Maller said: "This is a precedent setting moment in which the Home Office have failed to listen to pleas of mercy, justice, independent medical experts and legal arguments in order to show that they are tough on immigrants.

"In flexing their muscles, they have shown how truly cruel and inhumane this government is."

Campaigners in Glasgow protested outside Air Charter Scotland HQ yesterday, demanding the firm refuse to operate Muazu's deportation flight.

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