

UK's persecution of kidney transplant patient Roseline goes on and on

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[Simon Parker](#) [1] 23 December 2012

Actor Colin Firth condemns Home Secretary's challenge to court judgment allowing transplant patient's right to life.

Home Secretary Theresa May has challenged [last month's court judgement](#) [2] that overruled her decision to deport transplant patient Roseline Akhalu to her death. But May's challenge has been denied, which means that the government will now need to seek leave to appeal to the Upper Tier of the Immigration Tribunal to pursue its stated intention of returning 49 year old Akhalu to Nigeria, where the Home Office has accepted she would die within matter of weeks.

Oscar-winning actor Colin Firth has condemned the Home Office's continued attempts to return Ms Akhalu to Nigeria.

"Rose is a harmless, much loved individual — entirely welcome in her community here in the UK — and this wrangling over her fate smacks of persecution," said Firth. "The apparent determination of the Home Office to inflict suffering on her is incomprehensible. Her case has been made, her legal position ruled on. The Home Office should respect those decisions, respect this woman and her terrible predicament — and proceed with compassion."

Summarising her case on [OurKingdom last month](#) [2], Akhalu's advocates, Public Interest Lawyers, stated: "Roseline, a Nigerian university graduate, came to the UK in 2004 on a Ford Foundation scholarship to do a Masters degree in Development and Gender Studies at Leeds University. Soon after arriving and whilst here lawfully she was diagnosed with renal failure and began treatment. In 2009 she had a successful kidney transplant. Roseline needs to take immunosuppressant drugs for the rest of her life or the transplant will fail. However, such drugs are prohibitively expensive in Nigeria and so, if deported, Roseline would be unable to afford them and she will die within four weeks."

Friends and supporters of Akhalu, who is a community volunteer, greeted the court's latest decision with joy and relief.

Esmé Madill (my partner) who has organised a [petition](#) [3] of more than 1,500 signatories in support of Akhalu's said: "We see this latest ruling as a vindication that Roseline has not only a moral right to life but also strong legal grounds for remaining among her many friends and fellow parishioners in Leeds. The judge has made it clear that the Home Office's grounds for challenging the immigration tribunal's decision were spurious and that they have no basis in law. It is time that the Home Office stopped this vindictive and unnecessary vendetta against a sick and defenceless woman whose health has been worsened by the stress of not knowing what the future holds for her."

Roseline's MP Greg Mulholland commented: "It is great news that the tribunal has rejected the Home Office's application to appeal the judge's ruling last month that Rosaline should be allowed to remain in the UK."

But, he warned: "Of course there is still the option for the Home Office to go to the Upper Tribunal to appeal the decision. The Home Office should, however, now acknowledge that they are fighting a

losing battle and that to continue fighting this decision in the Upper Tribunal would not only be a waste of time, but a continued drain on the public purse. The cost of the battle to have Roseline deported is now exceeding the cost of her much needed treatment in this country, which is absurd.”

Tessa Gregory, of Public Interest Lawyers, said: “We welcome the ruling of Immigration Judge Gibb who has rightly upheld the determination of the First Tier Immigration Tribunal in relation to our client Roseline Akhalu. We would urge the Home Office now to accept the court’s verdict without imposing further unnecessary suffering and anxiety on our client and further costs on the taxpayer.”

OurKingdom has followed Roseline Akhalu’s story closely since May 2012, when it published [her own account of the cruel and degrading treatment](#) [4] she suffered at the hands of the Border Agency and its contractors during her second period of detention. OurKingdom’s coverage has underpinned a media campaign that achieved exposure of Akhalu’s plight in today’s [Mail on Sunday](#) [5].

Akhalu’s friends and supporters continue to ask people to sign the online [petition](#) [3] urging the Home Office to let her stay in the UK.

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 About the author

Simon Parker is Senior Lecturer in Politics and Director of the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of York (UK) and lead investigator for the UK Economic and Social Research funded project: ‘[Precarious Trajectories: Understanding the Human Cost of the Migrant Crisis in the Central Mediterranean](#) [11]’. In addition to the politics of asylum and migration his other research interests include urban studies and urban theory, socio-spatial informatics, and comparative European politics (with particular reference to Italy). Simon is a co-founder of Refugee Action York and the UK-based campaign group End Child Detention Now.

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