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High Court orders removal of asylum seekers from Hotel



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London, Aug. 19—The High Court has ruled that asylum seekers housed at The Bell Hotel in Epping, Essex, must be relocated after Epping Forest District Council successfully obtained a temporary injunction.

Mr. Justice Eyre rejected a last-minute bid by Home Secretary Yvette Cooper to dismiss the council's case, ordering that all asylum seekers must vacate the hotel by 16:00 BST on Sept. 12. The

Home Office warned the ruling could significantly affect its ability to house asylum seekers across the UK.

The decision followed weeks of protests outside the hotel, sparked by the arrest of a resident charged with sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl. Demonstrations have drawn both opponents of the hotel's use and migrant rights supporters, with some protests turning violent. Sixteen people have been charged with related offences, Essex Police confirmed.

Council leader Chris Whitbread welcomed the judgment, saying the community had been under "intolerable strain" and that the ruling offered "a chink of light at the end of the tunnel."

Philip Coppel KC, representing the council, argued the site no longer functioned as a hotel and that Somani Hotels failed to consult planning authorities. Lawyers for the Home Office and the hotel confirmed they intend to appeal, with a full hearing expected in the autumn.

The case has stirred national debate, with Reform UK leader Nigel Farage hailing the ruling as a "victory for parents and concerned residents."