

On the Move – Latest migration news

MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

10/05/2022-24/05/2022

- The UK has not ruled out the possibility of [deporting](#) Ukrainian refugees to Rwanda. This comes after the UK has signed a deal to deport all asylum-seekers who are deemed to have arrived irregularly to the UK to Rwanda, and the first flights to the African country should be scheduled for [the next months](#). However, the first [legal action](#) has been launched by lawyers in the UK to challenge this plan on the basis that it breaches international law, the UN refugee convention, and British data protection law.

05/04/2022-10/05/2022

- On 27 April 2022, the controversial [Nationality and Borders Bill](#) became an act of law. The Bill still needs to receive scrutiny by the House of Commons and House of Lords which may propose amendments before it becomes a law. The Bill reduces the provisions for family reunification, proposes offshore processing of asylum, the use of large-scale reception centres, and a general criminalisation of asylum seekers.
- The UK [has dropped](#) the plan to push out of British waters the boats crossing the Channel. The controversial proposal had been receiving criticism from civil society and French authorities and was going to be challenged in court.
- On 14 April, the UK [announced](#) that it would send asylum seekers to Rwanda. The development comes a week after the U.K. [sealed](#) a £120 million deal with the Rwandan government that will see people who attempt to cross the English Channel to seek asylum in Britain sent to Rwanda for resettlement. The move sparked criticism from refugee NGOs, who [called](#) the plan “cruel and nasty”. UNHCR also [expressed](#) its opposition to this plan. At the same time, with this agreement, Rwanda gains [political leverage](#) by presenting itself a reliable partner to Western countries for international issues, while shadowing other critical aspects like the repression of freedom of expression in the country.

22/03/2022-05/04/2022

- [Many people airlifted to safety from Kabul last summer are still stuck](#) in UK hotels. While 4,000 people have been housed to date, another 12,000 remain stranded in hotels.

- Ukrainians who have arrived in the UK have been placed in hotels for asylum seekers [The Independent](#) has learnt. Ministers are facing calls to provide “urgent clarity” on the rights of those refugees entering Britain without visas.

08/03/2022 – 22/03/2022

- As the visa application centre for Ukrainians fleeing war opens in Lille, Calais is organizing to receive the people who [were pushed back](#) at the English border.
- The House of Lords voted last week in favour of the Dubs Amendment, which allows unaccompanied minors to join family members living on English soil, according to [InfoMigrants](#).

08/02/2022 – 22/02/2022

- Former tory MP Rory Stewart [proposed](#) a plan for liberal democracies to set “a long-term internationally agreed target for the number of refugees they are each prepared to take each year” starting from the response to the situation in Afghanistan. He proposes this target number to be 0.05% of each country’s population annually, which would be a considerable increase compared to the number accepted by the UK last year.

25/01/2022 – 08/02/2022

- A [report](#) by Statewatch shows how under the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the UK can carry “cross-border searches of national police databases holding biometric and other data and a system for the mass surveillance and profiling of air passengers” without the need for a parliamentary debate nor scrutiny.
- The UK Home Secretary and Ministers have [kept calling](#) Channel crossings ‘illegal’ despite a Court ruling confirmed they were not.

11/01/2022 – 25/01/2022

- The UK Home Office [told](#) a Syrian asylum seeker to return to Syria. It is the first time the UK deems it ‘safe’ to return someone to Syria. The 25-year-old asylum seeker has escaped forced military conscription in the country, and fears for his life in case he is sent back.
- On 14 January 2022, [32 people](#) were rescued while attempting to cross the Channel but one person died after falling in the water. So far, in 2022, [450 people](#) crossed the Channel.

14/12/2021 – 11/01/2022

- Reception conditions for migrants who crossed the Channel are [very bad](#), according to a recent report by the Prison Inspectorate and Independent Oversight Boards of Dover and Heathrow. Among the evidence gathered, is

proof of insufficient support to raped women, children held in promiscuity with adults, untreated injuries, and migrants forced to sleep on the ground.

- Lawyers representing the family members of the 27 victims of the November Channel shipwreck [denounce](#) 'serious failings' in the rescue operation that may have contributed to the deaths. Meanwhile, Channel crossings continue, with [900 people](#) crossing before the weekend of 25-26 December 2021. Overall, the number of crossings in 2021 tripled that of 2020, with [28,431](#) crossing according to BBC.

30/11/2021 - 14/12/2021

- A legal challenge was [launched](#) against the UK government's plan to push back asylum-seekers crossing the Channel. The group of advocates behind the legal challenge say that there is no legal basis in domestic law that justifies such pushbacks and that they go against the sanctity of life.
- On 7 December 2021, the Nationality and Borders Bill reached its final reading in the House of commons before proceeding to the House of Lords, who cannot block its adoption. The bill is highly [controversial](#) as it aims to criminalise Channel crossings by boat with prison sentences, even if migrants want to file asylum claims in the UK. It also allows pushbacks to France and the creation of offshore asylum centres, where asylum seekers may be held while their application is examined.
- The Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Dunja Mijatović [said](#) that France and the UK should engage in the establishment of safe and legal routes for migration and for the protection of the human rights of refugees. She added that an increase focus on border security leads people to take more dangerous routes, increasing the risks of deaths at the borders.
- Calais Migrants Solidarity raises [concerns](#) over delayed assistance of British and French authorities in the shipwreck that led to the death of 27 people on 24 November 2021. According to survivors' and relatives' reconstructions, people on board contacted both French and British authorities around 2 a.m. Despite the authorities being alerted, the rescue operation was only launched around 2 p.m. of the next day, after 12 hours from the first distress signal. By that time, 27 people had died.

16/11/2021 - 29/11/2021

- On the 23rd of November 2021, at least [27 people](#) drowned in the English Channel after they left from Calais. More than 23,000 people have crossed the Channel since the beginning of 2021, a considerable increase compared with the 8,400 from last year.

- In the meanwhile, conservative MPs in England are suggesting [drastic 'solutions'](#) to deal with the increase of arrivals. One of these, includes sending all boat migrants to offshore centres in the Falkland Islands.

25/10/2021 – 15/11/2021

- In October 2021, the number of people crossing the Channel has been almost [six times](#) higher than last year. On the 26th of October, [three migrants](#) are feared dead in their attempt to cross the English Channel, while the UK is pursuing its new law “that will give its coast guard legal immunity if people drown after their boats are pushed back toward France by British vessels”.

05/10/2021 – 25/10/2021

- Despite the many attempts by French and British authorities to prevent the Channel crossings, from 8 to 9 October, 1,115 people [reached](#) the UK by sea, while the UK Interior Minister is increasingly [tightening](#) the asylum system.

23/09/2021 – 05/10/2021

- According to a [leaked document](#), UK Home Minister, Priti Patel, plans to send migrants crossing the English Channel to detention centres in Albania.
- A UK Court ruled that traumatised young asylum seeker stranded in Greece must be [reunited](#) with brother in the UK.
- Doctors of the World published a new [report](#) titled “Barriers to wellbeing. Migration and vulnerability during the pandemic”.
- On 29 September 2021, a Sudanese 16-year-old boy [died](#) in Calais, France, while trying to board a lorry to the UK.
- According to the Home Office, on 22 September 2021, 459 migrants were intercepted in the English Channel on 14 boats in just one day, amounting to [3,879 people](#) attempting the crossing in September 2021 alone.

6/09/2021 – 22/09/2021

- The UK is rewriting its interpretation of international maritime law, allowing British coast guard to [push migrant boats back into French waters](#), and ask French authorities to rescue them, instead of rescuing them directly. Soon after the announcement, the organisation Channel Rescue [documented a pushback](#) of a migrant boat in the English Channel.
- UNHCR’S representative in the UK said that the new nationality and borders bill could [criminalise Afghan refugees](#) who managed to escape the Taliban but arrived in the UK through irregular routes.

19/08/2021 – 06/09/2021

- Defence secretary [said](#) that the “UK plans to establish offshore asylum centres for Afghan refugees in countries such as Pakistan and Turkey”.
- On 21 August 2021, at least 828 migrants [crossed](#) the English Channel, a new daily record that brings the number of people who have made the dangerous crossing this year to over 12,000.

27/07/2021 – 19/08/2021

- On 13 August 2021, Home Secretary, Priti Patel, in yet another attempt to deter migrants from crossing to the UK, [announced](#) that up to 8,000 asylum applicants will be put in huge holding centres.

5/07/2021 – 27/07/2021

- In a highly controversial Nationality and Borders Bill, the UK is giving the Home Secretary power to [block visas](#) for countries that are not cooperating in readmitting rejected asylum seekers or offenders.
- On 9 July 2021, Britain’s Crown Prosecution Service [declared](#) “it would not charge asylum seekers with offences, such as ‘illegal entry’”.
- Following a record-high number of people rescued on 19 July 2021 (430) who crossed the Channel from France to the UK, French and UK Interior Ministers [announced new measures](#) to prevent migrants from crossing. The [UK will pay France](#) EUR 62.7 million to increase police and border patrols along the French coast and equipment to securitize the border. So far in 2021, 6 600 migrants have been [intercepted](#) by UK authorities, while French authorities prevented 8 000 migrants to cross the Channel.

21/06/2021 – 05/07/2021

- Over the weekend of 3-4 July 2021, UK’s Interior Minister [announced](#) they will increase the **prison sentence** from 6 months to four years for migrants arriving “irregularly” in the UK by crossing the Channel. Around 6 000 migrants arrived in the UK through the Channel in the first six months of 2021.
- On 1 June 2021, a [group of migrants](#) arrived in **Dover**, UK. More than 2,000 migrants crossed the Channel and arrived in the UK in June 2021.
- UK Home Secretary, Priti Patel, proposes [legislation](#) to offshore asylum applications, following the recent move by **Denmark** to externalise asylum procedures and reportedly UK-Denmark talks on [sharing](#) an offshore facility.
- A new, open-source research on attempts and crossings of the Channel by sea, 2018-2021, “Exiles at the UK-French border” has been [published](#).

26/05/2021 – 07/06/2021

- In just five days, between 28 May and 1 June 2021, at least 700 migrants [crossed](#) the Channel and arrived in the UK from France on board dozens of boats.

10/05/2021 – 26/05/2021

- In another attempt to [speed up “removals”](#), the UK government is trying to strip migrants and refugees of their right to use judicial review and to challenge deportation orders in the High Court.

27.04.2021 – 10.05.2021

- The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) [criticised](#) the UK government’s asylum plans, which includes deporting migrants who entered the UK irregularly to safe countries such as “France and other EU countries”. UNHCR will soon publish a legal opinion on the plan.
- On 29 April 2021, around 209 migrants in nine boats [crossed](#) the English Channel: the highest number in one single day so far in 2021. Another 166 people were intercepted by the French authorities. More than 1,850 people have reached the UK by boat in 2021.

12.04.2021 – 26.04.2021

- The UK immigration court [ruled](#) that three of the detention policies wanted by home secretary Priti Patel breached human rights rules.
- Despite criticisms on the reception conditions in the military barrack of Napier, the UK Home Office is planning to [increase](#) the reception capacity there to an additional 337 places.
- Certain EU countries declared they would [not conclude](#) bilateral readmission agreements with the UK to facilitate the return of refugees to Europe.

10/03/2021 – 29/03/2021

- On 23 March, six boats carrying a total of 183 migrants reached the UK coast, 231 people were intercepted and arrested on the French side.
- UNHCR [raised](#) concerns over the UK plan to offshore asylum. UK interior minister Priti Patel [stated](#) that the new plan for immigration will make it more difficult for people entering “illegally” to stay in the country.
- The *Civil Fleet* [revealed](#) that the UK government spent EUR 1.1 billion in surveillance drones to monitor migrants’ crossing in the Channel. The report reveals that “no-one made it past the coastguards”.

- UK Home Office staff are [facing](#) legal charges after wrongly carrying out age assessments of minor asylum seekers who were deemed adult, detained in adult accommodations and faced removal.
- The executive director of Refugee Rights Europe [denounced](#) the dangerous migration management at the French–British border and the situation of migrants in Northern France, where people are constantly subject to evictions, violence and abuses.

08/02/2021 – 22/02/2021

- The government announced that all migrants living the UK, regardless of their status, will [receive](#) COVID-19 vaccination and the vaccine shot should not trigger documents' checks.

25/01/2021 – 8/02/2021

- The Anglo-German flight company TUI has [become](#) the “main airline carrying out charter deportation flights for the UK Home Office”. In November 2020, it conducted nine mass deportations to 19 destinations and its deportation flights continue in 2021.
- The UK Court of Appeal [overturned](#) the convictions of a group of activists, known as Stansted 15, who prevented 60 people from being forcibly returned to three African countries in 2017 by stopping their charter deportation flight.

13/01/2021 – 25/01/2021

- Asylum seekers hosted in a military training camp in Penally, Pembrokeshire, are [denouncing](#) the very bad and unsafe conditions which put them at risk of coronavirus.

21/12 2020 –12/1 2021

- As the Dublin III Regulation will cease to apply to the UK as of 31 December 2020, when the Brexit transition period ends, the Home Office is accelerating removal operations of asylum seekers to return them to other EU countries under the Dublin system. The Independent [reports](#) that “£2.3m was spent on forcibly removing 225 people to European countries in July, August and September this year”.

21/12 2020

- Starting from 1 January 2020, the UK will [deny](#) access to asylum, and treat their applications as inadmissible, to people travelling through a “safe third country”.

15/10 – 26/10 2020

- [Data reveals](#) that thousands of child victims of trafficking are at risk of deportation when turning 18 as a result of the Home Office's immigration policies.
- On 21 October 2020, the Court of appeal [ruled](#) that the “forcible removal of a migrant from the UK sometimes within hours and in many cases without access to lawyers” was unlawful.

28/09 – 12/10 2020

- The [government suggested to build](#) an offshore asylum reception centre on Ascension Island, a remote UK territory in the Atlantic Ocean. The British Interior Minister [declared](#) he wants to reform the system to welcome migrants via “safe and legal routes” and systematically refuse entry to those arriving by boat. The installation of floating barriers in the Channel between France and the United Kingdom to deter migrants would also be considered. During the first [deportation flight from the UK](#) after the COVID-19 outbreak, one deportee cut his wrists and another had a concealed blade in his mouth.