

# B O R D E R S

Ban asylum claims for illegal entrants

Out of the ECHR, ECAT and repeal HRA

Removals Force established, to remove 150,000 per year

Deport all new illegal arrivals within a week, and all foreign criminals

End the Immigration Tribunal, Judicial Review and legal aid for immigration cases

Returns agreements backed by visa sanctions

Support our allies abroad to prevent illegal entry to Europe

THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY PLAN TO  
END ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION



Shadow Home Secretary, Chris Philp  
visiting camps in northern France.

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# Foreword

## The UK is in the grip of an illegal immigration crisis.

Small boat crossings have surged to record levels under the Labour government. The number of asylum claims is higher than ever. And there are now 32,000 people in asylum hotels, causing serious community tensions across the country.

Meanwhile, the number of serious foreign criminals out on our streets grows by thousands every year, because legal obstacles continually stop them from being deported.

The Labour government has no answer to these problems – only gimmicks like their failed “one-in, one-out” deal. Since Keir Starmer signed his agreement with France, 11,000 illegal immigrants have arrived. Only a handful have been deported.

In fact, Keir Starmer's first act as Prime Minister was to cancel the only plan that would have had a deterrent effect and offered the opportunity to release pressure on asylum hotels – our deportation deal with Rwanda.

If Britain is going to deal with this crisis it needs a proper plan and a party that is serious about fixing the issue.

That's why we have developed a real plan to tackle illegal immigration, set out in this document.

Our approach starts with a detailed legal analysis of the impact of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) on key policy areas, written by the leading barrister, Lord Wolfson KC. After careful consideration, we have concluded that the only way to protect our country's borders is to leave the ECHR and repeal the Human Rights Act (HRA), in a way that is orderly and well thought-out. This is only the first step. But it is essential, so we can change the whole broken system and restore control of our country's borders, while continuing to protect human rights in a way that is faithful to our democratic heritage.

We are the only party to have properly analysed our ECHR exit and developed a comprehensive plan for restoring border control.

The **BORDERS** plan builds on announcements we have made in this area to date, including pledging to introduce a strict numerical cap on immigration, extending the length of time to claim citizenship, and setting strict conditions on anyone with Indefinite Leave to Remain. A separate document setting out our plan to reduce legal immigration will be published later in the year.



**Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP**  
Leader of the Opposition



**Rt Hon Chris Philp MP**  
Shadow Home Secretary

UK Border

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Customs

# The UK's borders crisis

The UK's borders crisis stems from four main problems:

1. Illegal small boat entries are at record levels,
2. Asylum claims are at record levels,
3. People in the UK illegally are not being removed, and
4. Foreign National Offenders are not being removed.

If we are to overhaul our immigration system, and restore public faith in that system, the next government must deal with these problems.

## Illegal small boat entry are at record levels

The Labour Government has lost control of our borders.

Nearly 30,000 people have crossed the Channel in small boats in the first eight months of 2025 – the worst start to a year in history.

In the first six months of this year alone, 19,982 crossed – nearly a 50 per cent increase on 2024.

Labour ministers try to pretend they are mainly women and children. In reality 84 per cent are men – and most are young men:

**Age and sex of small boat arrivals, first six months of 2025**

	Male	Female	Not recorded	Total
17 and under	1,479	479	-	1,958
18 to 24	5,633	877	-	6,510
25 to 39	8,385	1,093	-	9,479
40 and over	1,330	272	-	1,602
Not recorded	-	-	433	433
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,827</b>	<b>2,721</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>19,982</b>

Source: Home Office Accredited Official Statistics (total variance due to rounding)

# The UK's borders crisis

To make matters worse, hundreds of illegal immigrants have been charged with criminal offences, including sexual assaults on girls as young as eight years old. This is how our generosity is being repaid:

- More than 90 criminal charges brought against migrants staying at just one hotel in central London – including one convicted of an arson attack against the hotel itself.<sup>1</sup>
- In Bournemouth, 116 charges have been brought against 51 asylum seekers living across three hotels.<sup>2</sup>
- The protests in Epping started after a 38-year-old Ethiopian man at the Bell Hotel was charged with sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl. He has now been convicted.<sup>3</sup>

## Case Study: Channel migrant, Abdelrahmen Abouelela

42 year-old Egyptian man, Abdelrahmen Abouelela<sup>4</sup> is an illegal immigrant who claimed asylum and was put up in a 4 star Hilton Hotel in west London, at taxpayers' expense. He was convicted in June 2025 of dragging a young woman into bushes in Hyde Park and brutally raping her in November 2024. It has now transpired that he was found guilty in Egypt in 2015 for Islamist terror offences, including making a bomb, and sentenced to seven years in jail.

The small boat crisis is not just a border security crisis; it is a public safety crisis as well. People up and down the country are rightly furious. We will not build a strong and united country unless these problems are fixed. Tensions and social unrest will only grow unless our plan is adopted now.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15108555/Egyptian-illegal-migrant-raped-woman-Hyde-Park-terror-Turkey.html>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dorset.police.uk/foi-ai/dorset-police/disclosure-logs/2025-disclosures/migrant-sexual-offences/>  
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15108555/Egyptian-illegal-migrant-raped-woman-Hyde-Park-terror-Turkey.html>  
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15108555/Egyptian-illegal-migrant-raped-woman-Hyde-Park-terror-Turkey.html>

# The UK's borders crisis

## Asylum claims are at record levels

Our asylum system is on the point of collapse. In Labour's first year in government they have recorded the highest ever number of asylum claims in history – 111,084.<sup>4</sup> This problem is not just confined to small boat arrivals. Too many are exploiting legal routes, such as study and work visas, to then claim asylum and gain permanent residence.

People claiming asylum by route of entry to the UK		Year to June 2025	% of asylum claims
Illegal arrivals	Small Boat	43,600	39%
	Clandestine	8,400	8%
	Without Documentation	3,700	3%
Visas and Other Leave	Study	14,800	13%
	Work	12,200	11%
	Visitor	8,900	8%
	Other leave, including entrants via ETA from 2024	5,200	5%
Other asylum claims		15,000	13%
<b>Total</b>		<b>111,800*</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Home Office Accredited Official Statistics (\*total variance due to rounding)

Despite promising to end the use of asylum hotels, the number of illegal immigrants in state-provided accommodation has actually increased under Labour. The asylum system now costs taxpayers over £4.5 billion a year.<sup>5</sup>

Asylum seekers in asylum accommodation			
Numbers in Asylum Accommodation	30 Jun 2024	30 Jun 2025	Change since election
Hotel Accommodation	29,585	32,059	+2,474
Dispersal Accommodation	61,778	66,234	+4,456
<b>Total</b>	<b>91,363</b>	<b>98,293</b>	<b>+6,930</b>

Source: Home Office Accredited Official Statistics

## People in the UK illegally are not being removed

Even eight years ago, it was estimated that there were up to 900,000 people in the UK illegally.<sup>6</sup>

The Home Office has lost track of tens of thousands of people, as every year thousands claim asylum and then simply disappear<sup>7</sup> or enter legally then melt into the black market.

Yet last year only 34,000 illegal immigrants left the country, around 75 per cent of whom were voluntary departures. Only 2,300 of those removed came here by small boat – representing just 5 per cent of small boat arrivals in the period.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-year-ending-june-2025/how-many-people-claim-asylum-in-the-uk>  
<sup>5</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/688c9785a34b939141463e37/HO\\_ARA\\_2024-25\\_Book\\_WEB\\_Final\\_v3+CorrSlip.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/688c9785a34b939141463e37/HO_ARA_2024-25_Book_WEB_Final_v3+CorrSlip.pdf), page 74  
<sup>6</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/fact-sheet/authorized-immigrants-in-the-united-kingdom/>  
<sup>7</sup> <https://www.migrationcentral.co.uk/p/home-office-has-lost-track-of-thousands>

# The UK's borders crisis

## Foreign National Offenders are not being removed

Labour are not only failing to stop illegal immigrants getting into Britain; Keir Starmer is also failing to deport foreign arrivals who commit crimes in Britain. Government figures show that 12% (nearly 11,000) of the current prison population are Foreign National Offenders (FNOs), with a further 19,500 FNOs released from jail but not deported. Because so few are being deported, the number of foreign criminals walking free in our communities is exploding, with their numbers growing by roughly 2,000 a year.

If a government's first job is to protect its people, Labour are completely failing.

These FNO numbers do not even represent all foreign criminals – just those sentenced to over a year in prison and others deemed particularly high risk. These are individuals convicted of serious crimes, and they do not belong in this country. While they sit in our prisons, the British taxpayer foots the bill. When released, they pose a risk to the British public on the streets.

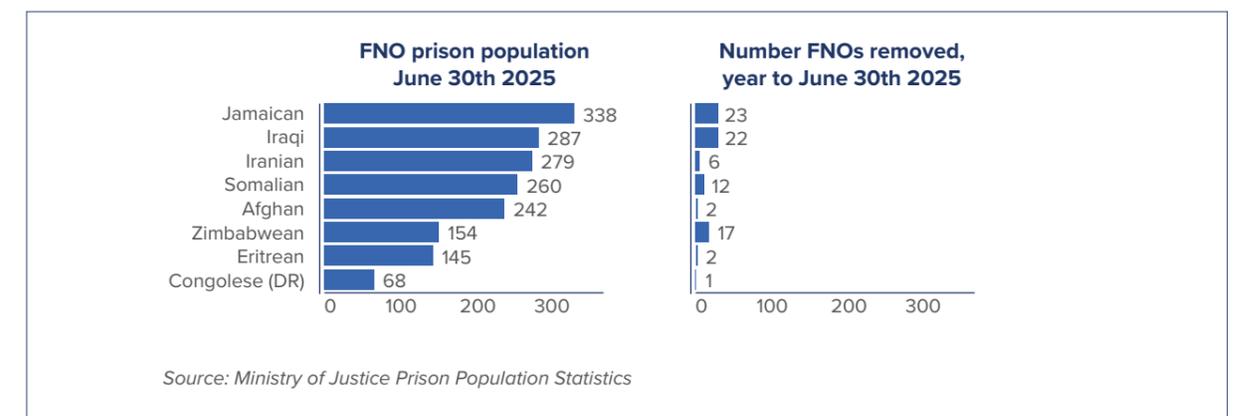
### Case study: Failed FNO deportation, Ernesto Elliott

Convicted criminal Ernesto Elliott was due to be deported back to Jamaica in December 2020. But he was removed from the flight following human rights-based legal challenges and campaigns from celebrities such as Naomi Campbell, Thandiwe Newton and David Olusoga. Earlier in 2020, Keir Starmer and Shabana Mahmood had signed a letter calling for the deportation of all Jamaican criminals, such as Elliott, to be stopped.

Just months later, in June 2021, Elliott, and his son Nico, murdered 35-year-old Nathaniel Eyewu-Ago in south east London after they stole drugs and cash from him. They were sentenced to a combined total of 48 years in prison.

If the deportation had gone ahead in December 2020, then Eyewu-Ago would still be alive today.

Some nationalities are being removed at exceptionally slow rates.



# Labour's failing response

In one of his first acts as Prime Minister, Keir Starmer scrapped the Rwanda plan, just days before the first flight was due to take off in July 2024.

Nearly 30,000 have crossed the channel in small boats in the first eight months of 2025. An increase of more than a quarter and the worst start to a year in history.

Labour are not taking the issue seriously and their gimmicks – such as the ‘one in, one out’ deal with France – are a woefully inadequate response to this growing problem.

**Number of small boat arrivals compared to the returns of small boat arrivals**

Period	Small boat arrivals	Returns of small boat arrivals	% of small boat arrivals removed
Jul-Sep 2024	11,755	589	5%
Oct-Dec 2024	11,572	567	5%
Jan-Mar 2025	6,642	605	9%
Apr-Jun 2025	13,340	569	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,309</b>	<b>2,330</b>	<b>5%</b>

Source: Home Office Accredited Official Statistics

Labour voted against the previous Conservative government's measures to deter illegal immigration. Still, they had no alternative to Rwanda, just a series of arcane schemes, none of which are working.

Starmer said Labour would “smash the gangs”. He was warned, including by the former head of Border Force, that this would not work unless action was taken to address the factors that are pulling people to the UK. With record crossings so far this year, the gangs are clearly undeterred.

Labour then said they had an agreement with the French police that they would try to stop the boats in the water near the shore. This is not happening. The Shadow Home Secretary personally witnessed French vessels escorting small boats into British waters as recently as August.

In July, the government announced a limited “returns deal” with France. Since then, over 10,000 illegal immigrants have arrived but only a handful have been sent back to France. Migrants used human rights law to block their deportation, even to France. Should the scheme eventually function as hoped, it will only see 6 per cent of illegal arrivals removed, which is no deterrent at all.

Deportations will also be offset by equivalent numbers arriving from France, who will be able to obtain legal status and bring family members to join them. This is thanks to Labour announcing small changes to family reunion visa rules for illegal immigrants, pulling even more people to the UK and functioning like a welcome mat. If someone enters this country illegally, they should not be allowed to bring in any family members. They should be deported swiftly on arrival.

The government has also said it will tweak the application of Article 8 of the ECHR in domestic law. We warned them that this will make next to no difference. But they are not listening.

# Labour's failing response

## Labour has ignored the warnings of experts

*“What we really need is to deter those people that are in those dinghies from making that crossing in the first place. And we've heard a number of announcements, haven't we, from this government in its first year in office that is going to do this. But you know, the figures speak for themselves. The number of boats are at record levels, as are the number of asylum applications.”<sup>1</sup>*

**Tony Smith, former Head of Border Force**

*“No country has ever stopped people trafficking upstream in foreign countries – the Australians have done it but that was with a deportation scheme.”<sup>2</sup>*

**The National Crime Agency**

*“What the United Kingdom actually needs is a big deterrent and everybody has told the Prime Minister this. You need a big deterrent to stop the migrants. Forget about the gangs, if you stop the migrants wanting to come to the UK, the gangs won't exist.”<sup>3</sup>*

**Former Chief Immigration Officer, Kevin Saunders**

<sup>1</sup> GB News, 1 September 2025. archived.

<sup>2</sup> <https://url.uk.m.mimecastprotect.com/s/BEXhCxnKDCJGOAQnS8fqtyfh2?domain=telegraph.co.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://url.uk.m.mimecastprotect.com/s/aexhCyoLEuNjnMyquMhMtxBkzS?domain=x.com>

# The ECHR: It's time to leave

## Undermining our democracy

**The ECHR started off as a noble endeavour, but in practice it prevents us protecting our borders and our citizens. It prevents us removing dangerous foreign criminals. It prevents us removing those who cross the channel illegally. The very foundations of democracy are being undermined because the British people have made it clear they want to see action in these areas, and successive governments have failed to deliver.**

The ECHR has powerful legal force in Britain – via the Strasbourg Court and as implemented in our domestic law through the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Articles of the ECHR are necessarily drafted in broad terms (e.g. Article 8, the right to a private and family life). In 1950, these Articles were intended to prevent the horrors of Nazism and the Second World War from recurring. But the practical meaning of the Articles has been defined by judges in relation to each individual case before the courts, meaning the limited original understanding of the Articles is now routinely expanded and twisted. Many immigration decisions relying on the ECHR completely defy common sense and go far beyond what was originally intended.

### Case Studies

A **Zimbabwean paedophile** was allowed to stay in Britain because he would face 'hostility' if he was deported back to his home country. He was jailed for five years for sexual offences against children and distributing and possessing indecent images of children. He fought deportation using Article 3 of the ECHR, saying he was likely to face 'hostility' from the Zimbabwean authorities – and won.

A **Nigerian armed robber** who "presents a high risk of serious harm" to the public, won an appeal against removal from the UK because of limited mental healthcare in Nigeria and the likelihood "he would be considered possessed".

An **Iraqi drug dealer** who was jailed for more than five years after a conviction for dealing cocaine, could not be deported after a judge ruled that he was too "westernised" to be returned to his home country.

A doctor from **Egypt who "glorified" Hamas** could not be removed because a judge ruled the Conservative Home Secretary's decision was too harsh and, lawyers argued, breached her free speech and human rights under the ECHR.

An attempt to deport a **Sri Lankan paedophile**, branded a 'danger to the community' and convicted of assaulting three teenage boys was delayed over claims deportation would breach his human rights.

The ECHR is even being used to bring criminals back to the UK. A **Ghanaian** criminal deported from Britain twelve years ago won the right to return to the UK as he is 'depressed' living in his homeland.

# The ECHR: It's time to leave

## Lord Wolfson KC's advice

In June 2025, Kemi Badenoch commissioned Lord Wolfson KC, one of the country's leading barristers, to examine carefully the options and think through the consequences of our ECHR membership, including whether we were able to implement proper border protections.

**In his report, Lord Wolfson came to the following conclusion:**

*"In practice, the ECHR places significant restrictions on the ability of any government and Parliament to operate the UK's immigration policies without running a risk of breaching the ECHR and being subjected to Rule 39 Orders (as was the case with the Rwanda scheme). ECHR membership places significant practical limits on the UK's ability to maintain control of its borders, both for reasons of mandated process and substance (in the sense that even where claimants lose in the end, the process cost may frustrate effective immigration enforcement more generally)."*

In summary, control of our sovereign borders is only feasible if we leave the ECHR.

## Regaining control of our borders

Having fully considered Lord Wolfson's report, the Shadow Cabinet has taken the decision that Britain must withdraw from the ECHR and repeal the Human Rights Act.

Lord Wolfson's advice indicates that alternative options, such as re-negotiation, derogation or repealing only the Human Rights Act, are either unrealistic or ineffective.

This will be a complex and challenging process involving all areas of government, and our international relations. We will be undertaking detailed work to ensure it is carried out in an orderly and respectful way.

There is no evidence that co-operation with other nations on immigration rests upon our ECHR membership. European countries co-operate with the US, Canada, New Zealand and Australia without any of these countries being in the ECHR.

Leaving the ECHR will prevent the courts in the UK and in Strasbourg using ever-widening interpretations of its articles to frustrate proper, sensible border control.

As Lord Wolfson advises, however, withdrawing from the ECHR alone is not enough. It is an enabling step to regain control of our borders from the courts. If we are fully to control our borders and end illegal migration, there must be further action.

## What the experts are saying about ECHR exit

*“One point should be made at the outset and never overlooked: we do not need the European Convention on Human Rights in order to protect human rights... I once thought that the Strasbourg court could be reformed from within.... But I no longer believe that this unwieldy body with its isolated splendour in Strasbourg, its arrogant self-assurance, its 46 judges from as many nations, its powerful registrar and its more than 200 ideologically committed staff lawyers is capable of changing direction.”<sup>1</sup>*

### **Lord Sumption, former Supreme Court Judge**

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*“Leaving the ECHR would restore Parliament’s freedom, on behalf of the British people, to decide what our laws should be... Rather than simply upholding the terms agreed by the member states, the Strasbourg Court has, since the Seventies, said that the ECHR is a “living instrument”, the meaning of which changes as the Court decides a succession of cases and divines a changing European consensus. Deploying this approach, the Court has remade the Convention, imposing far-reaching new obligations on states and driving its own vision for social, moral and political reform across Europe. Most strikingly, the Strasbourg Court has invented a whole new European law of immigration and asylum which has no foundation in the text. But the Court’s case law distorts legislative deliberation and government policy-making across the field, including in relation to welfare policy, social policy, penal policy, counter-terrorism, military action, housing, taxation and press freedom.”<sup>2</sup>*

### **Richard Ekins KC, Professor of Law at the University of Oxford**

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*“I believe that we should de-couple our own human rights legislation from the Convention (as other European countries have done). But the debate about our future relationship with the ECHR, and its parent body, the Council of Europe, should be conducted on its merits. This paper from distinguished jurists, Casey, Ekins, and Laws, helps to clear the ground for that debate. It argues, in thorough and forensic detail, that ‘whatever the merits of UK withdrawal from the ECHR, nothing in the Belfast Agreement rules it out as a viable course of action’. It is essential reading for anyone who wishes seriously to contribute to this debate.”<sup>3</sup>*

### **Jack Straw, former Home Secretary, Foreign Secretary and Lord Chancellor**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/judgment-day-the-case-for-leaving-the-echr/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://unherd.com/2023/08/the-case-for-leaving-the-echr/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/The-ECHR-and-the-Belfast-Good-Friday-Agreement.pdf>

# B O R D E R S

**B**an asylum claims for illegal entrants

**O**ut of the ECHR, ECAT and repeal HRA

**R**emovals Force established, to remove 150,000 per year

**D**eport all new illegal arrivals within a week, and all foreign criminals

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**R**eturns agreements backed by visa sanctions

**S**upport our allies abroad to prevent illegal entry to Europe

## The **BORDERS** plan

The Conservative Party believes that if we are to completely end illegal immigration, we need a comprehensive plan that removes every illegal arrival swiftly and straightforwardly, and steadily removes those who have already arrived here illegally.

A plan that not only deals with those who continue to arrive illegally, but also acts as a powerful deterrent to those who wish to try. A plan that puts the power back in the hands of the British people and their elected Parliament, not foreign judges.

This is the **BORDERS** plan.

- **Ban** asylum claims for illegal entrants
- **Out** of the ECHR, ECAT and repeal HRA
- **Removals Force** established, to remove 150,000 per year
- **Deport** all new illegal arrivals within a week, and all foreign criminals
- **End** the Immigration Tribunal, Judicial Review and legal aid for immigration cases
- **Returns agreements** backed by visa sanctions
- **Support our allies** abroad to prevent illegal entry to Europe

# The BORDERS plan

## 1. Ban asylum and other protection claims for illegal entrants

Under our new system, no one who has entered illegally will ever be able to get asylum or make any other protection claim in this country. Their claims will simply not be heard.

This will therefore apply to all small boat arrivals. They will be immediately deported to their home country if possible, or to a safe third country such as Rwanda if not.

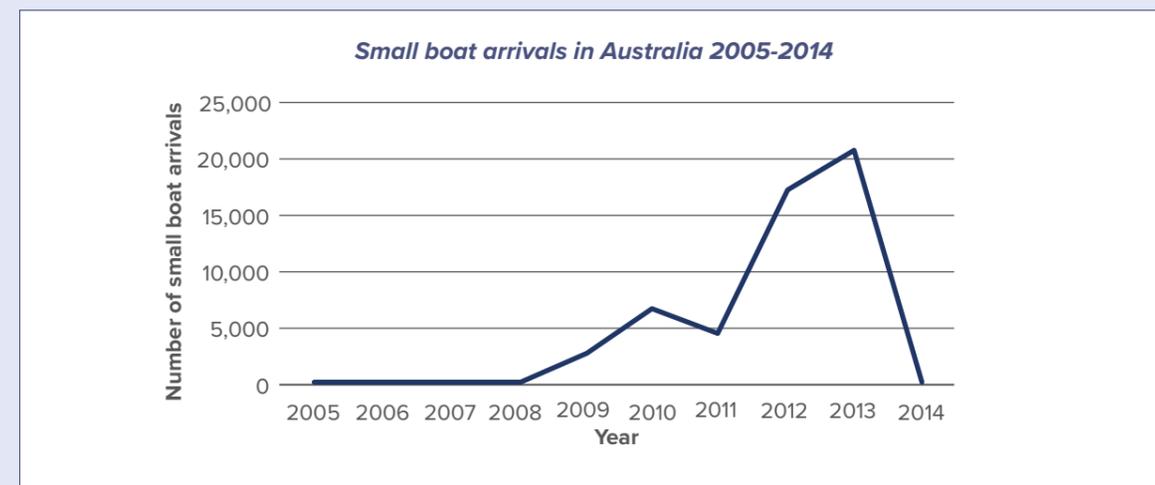
This will happen within hours or at most a few days. This will have a powerful deterrent effect. As Australia proved in 2013, and the US is proving today, illegal immigrants in Europe will think twice before crossing to the UK if they know they will be immediately removed.

No one who has been removed will be allowed to return legally to this country.

### Case Study: Australia, 2013

In 2013, 20,587 people travelled illegally by boat to Australia from countries like Indonesia, Iran and Sri Lanka.<sup>1</sup> The Australian Government therefore introduced “Operation Sovereign Borders” in September 2013. Anyone who attempted to enter Australia illegally via boat was turned back to their point of departure, returned to their home country or transferred to a third country such as Nauru. None were allowed to stay in Australia.

In the year after the policy was introduced, the number of small boat arrivals fell from 20,587 to 450.<sup>2</sup> Virtually no boats have arrived in Australia since.<sup>3</sup>



1 <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/18368/pdf/>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-australia-64898507>  
 2 <https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/43063/documents/791>; [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285581060\\_Asylum\\_seekers\\_and\\_refugees\\_a\\_quick\\_guide\\_to\\_key\\_Australian\\_Parliamentary\\_Library\\_publications#:~:text=Abstract,of which are regularly updated](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285581060_Asylum_seekers_and_refugees_a_quick_guide_to_key_Australian_Parliamentary_Library_publications#:~:text=Abstract,of which are regularly updated)  
 3 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-australia-64898507>

# The BORDERS plan

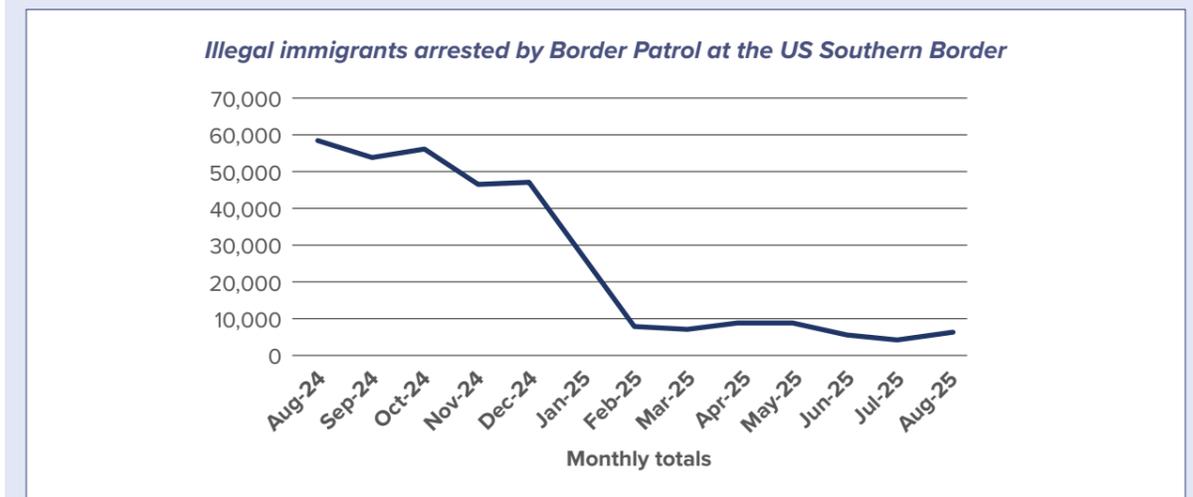
## Case Study: United States of America, 2025

When President Trump took office, he told border patrol agents to turn illegal immigrants back without hearing their asylum claim.<sup>1</sup> Trump also began a programme of deportations. The Department of Homeland Security announced that 2 million illegal immigrants have been removed or have self-deported since 20 January 2025. This includes an estimated 1.6 million who have voluntarily self-deported and more than 400,000 enforced deportations.<sup>2</sup>

Trump threatened to impose tariffs for countries who refused to take back their nationals. In January, the Colombian Government stopped two military planes carrying Colombians deported from the US from landing. However, after the Trump administration threatened Colombia with tariffs, the flights were accepted.<sup>3</sup>

For illegal immigrants who cannot be returned to their home countries, Trump has struck deals with Uganda, Honduras and Rwanda, all of which have agreed to take migrants from the US.<sup>4</sup>

As a result, illegal crossings at the US southern border have fallen by 89 per cent in just one year. There were 6,319 illegal immigrants arrested by Border Patrol in August 2025 compared to 58,009 illegal immigrants arrested in August 2024 – a 90 per cent reduction.<sup>5</sup>



1 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyn2p8x2eyo>  
 2 <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2025/09/23/new-milestone-over-2-million-illegal-aliens-out-united-states-less-250-days>  
 3 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyn2p8x2eyo>  
 4 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn02eezlykdo>  
 5 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/2025/08/unheard-of-illegal-border-crossings-plummet-to-another-new-record-low/>

# The BORDERS plan

## 2. Out of the ECHR, ECAT, repeal the HRA and monitor Refugee Convention membership

We will withdraw from the ECHR and repeal the Human Rights Act. This will end many of the legal claims that prevent border control and enable many of the policies in our BORDERS plan.

We will also exit the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ECAT), which allows illegal immigrants and, in some cases even criminals, to stay in the UK on the basis of flimsy claims. Domestic modern slavery laws will be amended so that modern slavery claims no longer prevent removal of those with no right to be here, while continuing to criminalise trafficking and protect domestic victims. It will no longer be possible to use modern slavery claims to prevent removal of those with no right to be in the UK.

We do not propose in the first instance to leave the Refugee Convention but will instead amend domestic legislation substantially to raise the threshold for an asylum claim to be successful. Parliament, not a European or British court, will set out the interpretation of the Convention. This will include a requirement for objective and verifiable evidence (not just a plausible sounding assertion).

In doing so, we will go back to the original principles we signed up to in 1951. The Home Secretary will grant refugee status only to people where the government of their country is trying or threatening to kill, torture or persecute them for a reason set out in the Refugee Convention – for example, the Ugandan Asians under Idi Amin.

But we will no longer grant asylum claims, for example, because:

- the welfare state in a country is less generous than the UK,
- the country they are from has laws which are less tolerant than the UK on religion or sexuality,
- there is conflict in that country, or
- people face penalties for having avoided military service in their home country.

Few people will qualify, and their cases will be decided rapidly.

After illegal immigration has been ended, we will - if they are ever needed – establish, with Parliamentary approval, very limited discretionary non-asylum humanitarian schemes, like the Ukraine scheme, which the last Conservative government created. Any such scheme will prioritise women and children in genuine need, not young men paying people smugglers.

We will also legislate to make clear that no UK court or decision maker should have regard to customary international law or the Refugee Convention as they interpret our new asylum laws. Parliament will decide on the interpretation of the Refugee Convention. The US and Australia have managed successfully to tackle illegal immigration in this way, and there is no good legal reason for why we cannot do the same. But if activist judges attempt to override Parliament and use the Convention as an obstacle to this plan, we will also leave the Refugee Convention. This situation will be kept under continuous and careful monitoring.



# The BORDERS plan

## 3. Removals Force to be established

We will create and fund an enhanced Removals Force modelled on the recent successful US approach (US ICE), with a goal to remove all illegal arrivals, all foreign criminals and those already here illegally, as well as to monitor illegal working. This will replace the current Immigration Enforcement entity in the Home Office, with a relentless focus on removing those with no right to be here.

Removals Force will have double the budget of current Immigration Enforcement (costing an extra £820 million a year, or £1.6 billion in total<sup>1</sup>). This will be funded from closing the asylum hotels and the wider costs of our out-of-control asylum system, which amount to £4.76 billion a year.

This Removals Force will have sweeping new powers. For example, we will change the law to allow Removals Force to use facial recognition systems without warning signs to identify, detain and remove illegal immigrants. The police will be mandated to check all those they stop or arrest against biometric borders data and all those who are not here legally will then be deported by Removals Force. We would expect Removals Force to integrate closely with the police.

Priorities for removal will be:

1. New illegal arrivals – who should be removed within a week at most.
2. Foreign criminals.
3. Those who recently entered the country illegally and whose protection claims have not yet been processed.
4. Those whose humanitarian / asylum visas expire and are not renewed, including those previously granted asylum or other forms of protection who do not qualify under the new rules set out here.
5. Others identified or encountered who are here illegally, which will include visa over-stayers, failed asylum seekers and illegal entrants who remain in the UK without immigration status.

Removing the legal barriers, and doubling the resources available, should lead to a roughly five-fold increase in the number of removals from 34,000 to around 150,000 per year.

# The BORDERS plan

## 4. Deport all new illegal entrants within a week and all foreign criminals

### *Illegal entrants*

To achieve this, a detention and processing centre will be needed initially with a capacity of up to 1,000 for most periods, and exceptional capacity of a further 2,000 if needed. This will be achieved by expanding an existing facility, funded as above from savings across the asylum system. As evidenced by the Australian and US case studies, the deterrent effect of near-certain removal will mean small boat crossings rapidly drop to close to zero. These facilities will then not be needed and we can also end the use of asylum hotels and HMOs (given that removals will take place within a week).

### *Removing all foreign criminals*

Foreign criminals should be deported and never allowed to return. We will therefore lower the criminal threshold for automatic deportation to any criminal conviction (with exceptions only for the most trivial penalties such as parking or minor speeding offences).

Foreign criminals must be deported directly from prison as soon as they become eligible for deportation, and must not be released onto our streets where they would pose a danger to the British public.

No protection claims at all will be allowed for those being deported as a foreign criminal, subject only to the Home Secretary's exceptional discretion which would be non-justiciable.

## 5. End the Immigration Tribunal, most Judicial Review and legal aid for immigration matters to overhaul the system

The entire legal system around immigration has become wholly dysfunctional. Some judges in the Immigration Tribunal have previously campaigned for open borders and Tribunal decisions routinely defy common-sense interpretations of domestic law and our international obligations. Immigrants can make multiple applications over time, sometimes on mutually contradictory grounds. Law firms coach applicants as to what to say – for example, people who initially said they were not trafficked suddenly claim they were upon receiving legal advice. The entire system needs to be overhauled so that decision making is returned to the Home Office under political and Parliamentary supervision – as was the case in the past.

### *Abolish the Immigration Tribunal*

We will abolish the Immigration Tribunal in its entirety. We will return to the system of the postwar decades<sup>1</sup> in which all immigration decisions were decided within the Home Office.

This will include decisions concerning asylum, accommodation, visa issuance, age assessment, removal, deportation and all other decisions relating to immigration. The leadership of this team will be appointed by the Home Secretary and be open to external candidates. There will be a short internal appeal process for applicants who feel that an initial decision was mistaken. The Home Secretary will be held accountable by Parliament and to the public for the decisions that are made.

<sup>1</sup> Prior to the 1969 Immigration Appeals Act there were no general right of appeal against Home Office decisions. Prior to 2005 adjudicators in the Immigration Appellate Authority were appointed by the Home Secretary.

# The BORDERS plan

## ***Abolish Judicial Review on all grounds except vires***

Judicial Review and any other judicial intervention will be almost entirely ended for all immigration relation matters. The only grounds for Judicial Review will be that the Home Secretary has acted without proper statutory authority, i.e. vires, strictly and narrowly defined. Judicial Review would not include review of a decision on the grounds of unreasonableness, legitimate expectation, failure to consult, the merits of a particular case, proportionality or any other grounds.

## ***Abolish immigration legal aid***

We will abolish legal aid for all immigration matters. People should simply tell the truth about their circumstances and their claims will be fairly assessed against the criteria – there will be no need for lawyers. This will end the substantial taxpayer-funded legal industry that has grown up around immigration litigation.

## ***Require a single, credible claim***

There are cases where immigrants have made repeated claims over time, covering human rights, modern slavery and asylum. These claims are often made at the last minute to prevent removal and are sometimes on mutually contradictory grounds (for instance, one man made a claim as an Iraqi, and when that was rejected, then made a further claim saying that he was in fact Iranian. This was allowed to happen). It took eight years (2015-2023) to deport Somali man, Yaqub Ahmed, who gang raped a 16 year-old girl in 2008, following his release from prison. He used multiple modern slavery, human rights and asylum claims, costing taxpayers huge sums before eventually being deported in 2023.<sup>2</sup>

We will therefore require applicants claiming asylum to submit their claims in one go. Subsequent claims will be disregarded, unless there has been a material change in home country circumstances.

Claims contradicting earlier accounts will also be disregarded, as will claims based on the applicant's behaviour since arriving in the UK (e.g. sudden church attendance or joining an opposition group in their country of origin). As set out above, any claim will need verifiable objective evidence to be accepted.

## ***Exceptional case discretion***

In exceptional cases, where the new rules would lead to manifest injustice or lead to a person being in grave danger, the Home Secretary would be able to exercise a discretion to grant leave to remain (akin to Leave Outside the Rules). This would be a power not an obligation, and decisions on this matter would not be judicially reviewable or otherwise subject to court interference. It would be for the Home Secretary to account to Parliament and the public for their use (or not) of the power. Regular information should be published about the use of this power.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/gang-rapist-deported-five-years-31475646>

# The BORDERS plan

## **6. Returns agreements backed by visa sanctions**

We will seek returns agreements to most countries of origin. We will remove foreign aid and limit UK visa rights for countries that will not agree to take back their own nationals.

The UK accepts its own nationals back and it is routine practice for most countries to take back their own nationals who have no right to be elsewhere. It is only reasonable that all countries do this and suffer serious consequences for not complying. The UK cannot be expected to receive people from a country by issuing new visas for entry, if that country will not accept back their own citizens who commit a crime here, enter illegally or overstay their visa.

The US has successfully used methods like this to ensure that Latin American countries take back their own nationals from the US.

## **7. Support our allies abroad to prevent illegal entry to Europe**

Illegal immigration is a problem faced by our European allies. We must work closely with them to stop illegal immigration to Europe. We will deploy UK assets, including intelligence, police and maritime resources, to help allies enforce their borders and prevent people entering Europe.

Under the last Conservative government, the Royal Navy worked with European allies to disrupt smuggling networks in the Mediterranean as part of Operation Sophia, including search and diversion of suspicious vessels.

We provided training, equipment, and funding for border guards in countries along the Western Balkans route (like Serbia, North Macedonia, and Albania), where migrants often travel en route to the EU. Since 2022, the UK has worked closely with Albania to stop illegal migration, with joint police operations, and a successful returns agreement to send Albanian nationals back more quickly.

We will help in combatting the use of migration as a weapon by Belarus and Russia. There is growing evidence that Putin is importing people into Europe with the intent of using them to put pressure on the borders of Europe to destabilise the west.

Since early to mid-2025, authorities and analysts have flagged an unexpected rise in air traffic linking eastern Libya and Belarus which is thought to reflect a conscious effort to import people to then send to European borders.<sup>3</sup>

We will also use UK diplomatic resources, including visa rights and overseas aid, to assist our European allies in ensuring that countries on Europe's borders do more to prevent illegal migration and to accept back those intercepted at sea and near their borders.

We can also play our part by addressing the “pull factors” that attract illegal immigrants to the UK and cause them to travel across Europe to Britain.

<sup>3</sup> <https://lansinginstitute.org/2025/08/12/increased-libya-%E2%86%92-belarus-flights-analysis-of-causes-actors-timing-and-risks/>

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Promoted by Sheridan Westlake on behalf of the Conservative and Unionist Party, both at 4 Matthew Parker Street, London, SW1H 9HQ.