# John Fredriksen’s London exit highlights surge in billionaire departures after non-dom tax repeal



John Fredriksen, the Norwegian-born shipping tycoon ranked as the UK's ninth richest billionaire, has moved his business operations out of London, signalling a broader trend of wealth departure from the capital. This decision follows the controversial removal of the United Kingdom’s non-domiciled (non-dom) tax status by the Labour government, a move that has unsettled many affluent individuals with business interests in the country. Fredriksen, whose fortune is estimated at around £13.7 billion, closed one of his private business headquarters, Seatankers Management, located in Sloane Square, London. The shipping magnate conveyed his disillusionment with Britain's economic outlook during a shipping event in Oslo, stating bluntly that "Britain has gone to hell" and likening the country’s decline to his native Norway. He now spends much of his time managing his empire from the United Arab Emirates.

The abolition of the non-dom tax status in April 2025, which previously allowed UK residents with a foreign permanent home or domicile to avoid certain UK tax liabilities, has been a critical factor in the exodus of high-net-worth individuals. This tax policy change introduced a 40% inheritance tax on global assets of non-doms, alongside other tightening measures such as the closing of offshore trust loopholes and removal of VAT exemptions on private school fees. These reforms, championed by Chancellor Rachel Reeves, have faced substantial criticism for driving wealthy investors, financiers, and business owners out of the UK, threatening the country’s competitiveness as a global financial hub. Internal discussions in the Treasury hint at potential revisions to inheritance tax rules to retain international appeal, demonstrating the delicate balance the government must strike between fiscal policy and economic impact.

The broader economic implications are visible in the declining number of billionaires recorded in the UK. The latest Sunday Times Rich List shows a historic drop from 165 billionaires in 2024 to 156 in 2025—marking the sharpest fall since the list’s inception 37 years ago. Key figures such as Francois-Henri Pinault and the Fayed family have disappeared from the rank, while financial market volatility and trade tensions, alongside the abolition of the non-dom exemption, compound the challenges. This exodus is paralleled by other notable departures, including Indian steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal, who is also reportedly considering leaving Britain due to the same tax reforms. These trends underscore concerns that the UK may be losing its status as a welcoming domicile for wealth and enterprise.

In response to this situation, political counter-movements are emerging. Reform UK recently unveiled a policy initiative—the ‘Britannia Card’—which proposes a 10-year exemption from UK taxes on international income, wealth, and gains for a lump sum payment of £250,000. The policy aims to attract wealthy individuals, including foreign investors and entrepreneurs, back to the UK, offsetting Labour’s more stringent tax regime. Reform UK leader Nigel Farage argued the card would promote employment and economic contribution by redistributing the funds to lower-paid full-time workers. However, this proposal has been met with firm resistance from Labour representatives, including Rachel Reeves, who condemned it as a tax break favouring foreign billionaires at the expense of the working population and essential public services.

The impact of these fiscal changes and the resulting wealth flight has sparked broader debate regarding Britain’s future as a destination for wealth creation and retention. Experts and commentators warn that without supportive policies to maintain the UK's attractiveness for global capital and talent, the country risks becoming a place where wealth diminishes rather than grows. The Labour government faces a complex challenge to balance political popularity for tax reforms with the economic necessity of retaining a vital segment of wealthy residents who contribute significantly to investment and employment in the UK.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14851281/Norwegian-shipping-tycoon-quits-London.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/ba781c26-f3f0-4657-bad7-d47337353790)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14851281/Norwegian-shipping-tycoon-quits-London.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/ba781c26-f3f0-4657-bad7-d47337353790), [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/7fafdfe5-f25a-4cb9-a326-03aa54358fe8)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14851281/Norwegian-shipping-tycoon-quits-London.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-has-fewer-billionaires-2025-sunday-times-rich-list-shows-2025-05-16/), [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/7fafdfe5-f25a-4cb9-a326-03aa54358fe8), [[6]](https://news.sky.com/story/the-sunday-times-rich-list-billionaires-fall-as-king-rises-to-match-rishi-sunak-13368850), [[7]](https://www.cityam.com/billionaire-exodus-shows-britain-is-no-longer-a-place-for-wealth-to-grow/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britains-reform-party-unveils-britannia-card-lure-back-wealthiest-2025-06-23/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/ba781c26-f3f0-4657-bad7-d47337353790), [[7]](https://www.cityam.com/billionaire-exodus-shows-britain-is-no-longer-a-place-for-wealth-to-grow/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14851281/Norwegian-shipping-tycoon-quits-London.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britains-reform-party-unveils-britannia-card-lure-back-wealthiest-2025-06-23/> - On June 23, 2025, Britain's Reform UK party introduced the 'Britannia Card', a policy offering a 10-year exemption from UK taxes on international income, wealth, and gains for a one-time payment of £250,000. This initiative aims to attract wealthy individuals, including foreign nationals, to the UK. The proposal contrasts with the Labour government's recent closure of tax exemptions for non-domiciled residents. Reform UK leader Nigel Farage argued that the card would draw entrepreneurs, investors, and high taxpayers, and suggested distributing the funds to the UK's lowest-paid full-time workers to incentivise employment over welfare. The policy has faced criticism from Labour's finance minister Rachel Reeves, who labelled it a tax break for 'foreign billionaires', warning it could lead to higher taxes for working people or cuts to public services. The Reform UK party currently leads in national polls, capitalising on public dissatisfaction with mainstream politics.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-has-fewer-billionaires-2025-sunday-times-rich-list-shows-2025-05-16/> - The Sunday Times Rich List 2025 reveals a significant decline in the number of billionaires in the UK, marking the largest drop since the list's inception in 1989. The number of billionaires fell from 165 in 2024 to 156 in 2025. Leading the list for the fourth consecutive year is Gopi Hinduja and family, with a fortune of £35 billion, followed by the Reuben family (£26.87 billion) and Leonard Blavatnik (£25.73 billion). The downturn is attributed to factors such as stock market volatility linked to U.S. trade tariffs under President Trump and UK tax policy changes, including the removal of the 'non-dom' tax exemption, which previously benefited wealthy foreigners. Notable absentees from this year’s list include Francois-Henri Pinault, Salma Hayek, the Fayed family, and Nicky Oppenheimer. King Charles saw his wealth rise to £640 million, climbing 20 places to rank 258. Former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty ranked 238th. U.S. television personality Ellen DeGeneres debuted on the list at £363 million after relocating to England's Cotswolds.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/ba781c26-f3f0-4657-bad7-d47337353790> - UK Chancellor Rachel Reeves is considering revising the newly implemented inheritance tax rules for non-domiciled individuals (non-doms), following a wave of wealthy residents leaving the country and pressure from the City of London. Since April 2025, the UK's abolition of the non-dom regime extends a 40% inheritance tax to global assets of non-doms, causing concern among financiers and officials. The Treasury may alter the policy to maintain international competitiveness. Prominent billionaires such as Lakshmi Mittal and Nassef Sawiris have either left or plan to leave the UK due to these taxation changes. The end of the non-dom regime, coupled with the closure of an offshore trust loophole and removal of VAT exemptions on private school fees, has drawn criticism for pushing investors and business owners away. While the policy is politically popular and projected to generate less revenue than expected, internal debate continues, particularly regarding new taxes on business and agricultural property to be implemented from April 2026. The Labour government is balancing economic impact and political optics, with budgetary decisions possibly emerging in autumn.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/7fafdfe5-f25a-4cb9-a326-03aa54358fe8> - Lakshmi Mittal, the Indian steel magnate and one of the UK's wealthiest residents, is considering leaving Britain in response to the Labour government's abolition of the non-domicile tax regime. Mittal, who moved to the UK in 1995, reportedly sees the termination of non-dom tax benefits—a policy allowing residents to avoid UK taxes on foreign income—as a significant motivator for his potential departure. This move aligns him with other wealthy non-domiciled individuals relocating to countries with more favourable tax policies such as the UAE, Italy, and Switzerland. Mittal, estimated to be worth £14.9 billion, owns high-value properties worldwide, including a record-setting mansion in London. He stepped down as CEO of ArcelorMittal in 2021, handing leadership to his son Aditya while retaining the role of executive chair. Critics of the tax reform warn that the exodus of high earners may harm the UK's economic prospects, particularly through lost income and spending contributions. The non-dom regime, in place for over two centuries, was first targeted by Conservative Chancellor Jeremy Hunt in 2024 and fully abolished by Labour Chancellor Rachel Reeves, who also outlawed offshore trusts used to avoid inheritance taxes.
6. <https://news.sky.com/story/the-sunday-times-rich-list-billionaires-fall-as-king-rises-to-match-rishi-sunak-13368850> - The Sunday Times Rich List 2025 reveals a sharp decline in the number of UK-based billionaires, marking the biggest drop in the list's 37-year history. The number of billionaires fell to 156 from 165 in 2024. Gopi Hinduja and his family topped the list for the fourth consecutive year with £35.3 billion. King Charles' personal wealth grew by £30 million to £640 million, placing him on par with former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty. The decline in billionaires is attributed to factors such as stock market volatility and the abolition of the 'non-dom' tax exemption, which previously benefited wealthy foreigners. Notable figures like Sir Jim Ratcliffe saw significant declines in wealth, while others like Ellen DeGeneres entered the list after relocating to the UK.
7. <https://www.cityam.com/billionaire-exodus-shows-britain-is-no-longer-a-place-for-wealth-to-grow/> - The Sunday Times’ Rich List has revealed a sharp decline in the number of UK-based billionaires, sliding to 156 this year from 165 in 2024, representing the sharpest decline in the list’s 37-year history. This decline is attributed to factors such as the abolition of the non-domiciled (non-dom) tax regime, which had previously made the UK an attractive place for global wealth to settle and grow. The exodus of high-net-worth individuals is seen as a sign of deeper structural issues in how the UK attracts, generates, and retains wealth. The article highlights the need for policies that support the vision of making Britain a destination for wealth, talent, and investment, to prevent the country from becoming a place where wealth once came to grow but no longer stays.