# Dunkirk remembrance eclipsed as Little Ships are diverted amid surging Channel migrant crossings



A recent remembrance event commemorating the Dunkirk evacuation of 1940 was marred by a stark contrast to its heroic legacy, as a flotilla of 66 “Little Ships” was diverted to allow illegal migrants safe passage across the English Channel. This scene, reminiscent of a time when ordinary citizens risked their lives to save soldiers, has drawn both indignation and sorrow as the UK grapples with rising numbers of undocumented crossings, a disarray largely attributable to ineffective government policies.

Eighty-five years since the valiant rescue efforts of Operation Dynamo, which saw over 300,000 troops returned home from the beaches of northern France, British authorities now find themselves engaged in a disheartening maritime charade. Facilitating the crossing of military-age migrants—an influx that many rightly perceive as an "invasion"—the historical significance of Dunkirk feels overshadowed by a modern political failure to secure our borders. The operation recalls a time when national unity was paramount, sharply contrasted against the current climate of discord over immigration.

Statistics paint a sobering picture: since 2018, over 150,000 migrants, predominantly young men, have arrived by crossing the Channel, with over 800 landing in a single day earlier this month alone. Predictions suggest that this year’s total could reach an astonishing 50,000. Despite government claims of spending more than £500 million to stem illegal crossings, the evidence of efficacy is glaringly absent—as distressing as the reports about French authorities employing dangerous tactics that put lives at risk. While these measures are posited as solutions, harrowing accounts reveal that migrants are often subjected to perilous interceptions, contradicting the assurances that such scenarios are rare.

In late March, a noted spike in Channel crossings returned to levels not seen since 2022, exacerbated by worsening weather and ruthless tactics from smugglers. Internal investigations underscore the ineffectiveness of established policies — reports indicate that most migrants are actually escorted partway by French forces before being handed off to UK Border Force, who then take them ashore with little opposition.

The current government stance has sparked rampant indignation; the public witnesses the once-celebrated "Dunkirk spirit" being supplanted by an apparent inability to safeguard British shores. Commentators bemoan how the present political class seems utterly detached from the values of resilience and independence that were once synonymous with the nation. What was once a patriotic flotilla now navigates the unsettling complexities of border control, as fear and frustration over illegal crossings continue to mount.

As the situation escalates, memories of national pride are eclipsed by rising discontent over the government's failure to act. Far beyond immigration, this crisis threatens to redefine the essence of British identity and idealism. With ongoing political debates and public sentiments becoming increasingly strident, the stark imagery of a nation’s past colliding with its present paints a troubling picture of what it means to be British today.

The legacy of Dunkirk reminds us of Britain’s past resilience, but as modern challenges mount, the spirit of unity and security that once defined the nation is increasingly suffocated by a tumultuous political landscape and ineffective immigration enforcement.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14739937/RICHARD-LITTLEJOHN-Dunkirk-Spirits-dumped-favour-illegal-migrants.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2024/03/23/french-police-use-aggressive-techniques-to-stop-migrants-from-crossing-english-channel_6648196_7.html> - French law enforcement is employing aggressive methods to prevent migrants from crossing the English Channel as part of a crackdown supported by British funds. Techniques include puncturing boats at sea, which has led to dangerous and life-threatening situations for the migrants. Testimonies from migrants like Ziko, who experienced their boat being deliberately deflated at sea, highlight the peril these practices pose. Authorities maintain these actions are isolated incidents and emphasize their primary role in rescue operations. Nevertheless, internal documents and reports reveal that the French Interior Ministry has designated these interventions as 'interceptions at sea,' contradicting official policy. The contentious methods have strained UK-France relations, where the UK funded €543 million to bolster anti-migration measures. Meanwhile, organizations and experts criticize these practices for endangering lives and breaching maritime laws. There have been rising numbers of deaths attributed to these dangerous tactics, and ongoing investigations seek to uncover the extent and impact of these interventions.
3. <https://www.lemonde.fr/en/europe/article/2024/04/02/channel-crossings-are-on-the-rise_6667176_143.html> - After a 35% decrease in 2023, Channel crossings between France and the UK have surged again at the beginning of 2024, with over 4,600 migrants reaching England. March 20 saw 514 people crossing in 10 boats, and at least 10 people have died so far this year. This resurgence returns to 2022 numbers when over 45,000 migrants crossed. French authorities attributed the 2023 decline to effective police actions and an agreement with Albania which dramatically reduced Albanian crossings. In 2024, Afghans, Iranians, and Vietnamese constitute nearly half of the crossing migrants. Boats in 2024 have become more overcrowded, raising capsizing risks. French police have thwarted 69% of crossing attempts and reported increased violence from smugglers. Truck smuggling has also tripled, particularly involving Sudanese and Eritrean nationals. Spring is expected to see further smuggling activity due to better weather conditions.
4. <https://news.sky.com/video/dunkirk-migrants-risk-their-lives-to-reach-england-undeterred-by-british-government-policy-12850569> - Migrants in Dunkirk risk their lives to reach England, undeterred by British government policy. News correspondent Adele Robinson reports from Dunkirk, where she witnessed migrants attempting to cross the channel and police patrols scouring the dunes - but no British officers.
5. <https://readsector.com/bon-voyage-migrants-set-sail-from-dunkirk-at-dawn-to-make-perilous-crossing-to-uk/> - Migrants escorted by unscrupulous people traffickers today set sail from Dunkirk at dawn – with an estimated 400 landing in England. Photos showed dozens of migrants embarking from Gravelines beach in the twilight and their smugglers scurrying back up the dunes after seeing them off. At least 27 boats were brought into the marina in Dover later on Tuesday after a few days of relative quiet due to high seas in the world’s busiest shipping lane. It comes amid fears that record numbers of migrants are making the 20 mile dash across the waves before the winter brings rougher seas.
6. <https://www.gbnews.com/news/exclusive-eight-boats-carrying-over-300-people-cross-english-channel-in-busiest-day-of-illegal-migrant-crossings-this-year/428725> - At least 380 people have crossed the English Channel in 10 small boats today, in the busiest day of illegal migrant crossings so far this year. A GB News source said several other small boats are reported to have set off this morning, but have not yet made it to UK waters. Persistent bad weather has largely prevented small boats making the dangerous journey in significant numbers for more than a month. A break in the weather late on Saturday allowed the criminal people smuggling gangs in France to start pushing small boats off from the beaches. GB News understands that most boats were launched from an area around Gravelines, near Dunkirk. The boats were shadowed by French naval vessels, who have a policy of not intervening to intercept the inflatables once they get into the water.
7. <https://www.itv.com/news/2024-04-10/undeterred-and-uninterrupted-french-police-watch-on-as-migrants-cross-channel> - Evidence shared exclusively with ITV News shows that the large sums of government money poured into policing small boat crossings on the French side of the Channel, are failing to control the problem, Peter Smith reports. British-funded French police have been filmed watching as migrants board small boats to illegally cross the English Channel, an ITV News investigation can reveal. Our team were near Dunkirk at a well-known launching point for the small boats, when a group of more than 50 migrants were able to cross the beach and get onto a dinghy directly in front of French officers, apparently unimpeded. This occurred despite a £500m investment from the UK government as part of a three-year agreement with the French, which is supposed to help them stop these crossings. The money is to be used on vehicles and surveillance equipment such as drones. ITV News witnessed this hardware, which is paid for by Britain, being actively used by the French as they let the migrants pass them by. The boat they boarded was already on its way to the UK and appeared full when it performed an audacious U-turn and headed back towards the beach where police were standing.