# UK admits no migrants have been deported under failed Channel crossing scheme



The UK Government has reluctantly admitted that, despite initially flaunting the "one-in, one-out" scheme as a major breakthrough, not a single migrant crossing the English Channel by small boat has yet been deported to France under the contentious plan. Announced with much fanfare at the July Anglo-French summit, the deal was supposed to serve as a cornerstone in the government's crackdown on the ongoing invasion of Channel crossings, strategically branding it as a tough new approach to deter people-smuggling gangs. Yet, Home Secretary Yvette Cooper’s recent admission in Parliament reveals that deportations are heavily delayed and are now not expected to begin until "later this month," a clear departure from the Government's earlier promises to kick off removals within weeks of sealing the agreement.

The so-called "one-in, one-out" deal was cynically marketed as a way to both detain and swiftly deport illegal migrants, while supposedly offering a legal pathway for vetted asylum seekers to enter the UK—aiming to create an illusion of controlled migration. Despite claims that detentions started soon after the agreement’s ratification, bureaucratic red tape and indecisiveness have hampered progress, leaving migrants in limbo in detention centres as officials wrestle with the slow-moving process. The Government, desperate to spin this initiative as a success, has suggested that the number of returns might gradually increase, but in reality, the scheme remains a paper tiger with no tangible results to show.

Opposition figures have condemned the government’s efforts as a complete farce, with Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp dismissing the promises as “empty,” pointing out that over 29,000 migrants crossed the Channel illegally this year—a staggering 38 percent jump from last year—and not a single one has been deported under this weak and unproven scheme. Philp slammed the current approach as an insult to taxpayers, accusing the government of essentially giving migrants "a one-way ticket to cushy hotels," funded at massive public expense, while doing little to deter future crossings. He ridiculed government claims about disrupting criminal networks, revealing that police actions have often been insignificant, producing few arrests and little impact on the organized people-smuggling enterprises.

Meanwhile, the latest figures expose the glaring failure of the scheme to curb the crisis. While August saw a slight dip in boat crossings—the lowest since 2019—the overall number of migrants arriving by sea remains unacceptably high, with 3,567 recorded for that month alone. This persistent influx underscores the overall failure of the government’s half-hearted efforts to manage the crisis and enforce border control effectively.

Underlying these failed policies is a long-standing UK-French cooperation framework rooted in the flawed Touquet treaty. The government has poured nearly £500 million into French border enforcement, deploying hundreds of officers and funding new facilities, yet the result has been minimal—a dent, not a solution. France has intensified patrols and reportedly begun intercepting boats before they even reach UK waters, though these operations have sparked controversy, including unfounded reports — officially denied — of police damaging migrant vessels to prevent crossings. Such tactics raise serious questions about respect for human life and the government’s true commitment to border security.

This latest move fits into a broader European trend of flailing attempts at migration management, with France and other countries calling for a pan-European system. However, amid rising anti-immigration sentiment across much of Europe, such initiatives remain politically fragile and arguably ineffective. The UK’s unilateral push, which pretends to be a decisive solution, exposes the limited reach of traditional border control measures while emboldening critics who argue it amounts to little more than window dressing for a failed status quo.

Adding insult to injury, the government has also introduced harsher restrictions on family reunion schemes for refugees, effectively preventing many partners and children from rejoining their families in the UK. This follows Prime Minister Starmer’s flimsy plans to relocate asylum seekers from already overburdened, poorly managed temporary accommodation—an initiative that has triggered widespread protests over inhumane living conditions.

Pro-migration advocates claim they are fighting to strengthen international cooperation and disrupt criminal networks, but critics dismiss these claims as merely defending an already broken system. They point out that previous Tory pledges to return migrants to Rwanda remained a spectacular failure, and that without swift, firm enforcement and actual returns, the new pilot scheme is destined to fail just like its predecessors.

As the government struggles to produce tangible results, the mounting chaos at Britain’s borders reveals the stark reality: the failed policies of weak deterrence and ineffective cooperation only serve to embolden illegal crossings, drain public resources, and undermine the rule of law. It’s time to acknowledge that superficial measures and empty promises will not stem the tide—decisive action and genuine leadership are desperately needed to restore order from this chaos.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2103138/3567-migrants-cross-channel-uk-france> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-france-agree-major-deal-to-crack-down-on-illegal-channel-crossings> - In July 2025, the UK and France announced a significant partnership to address illegal Channel crossings and dismantle people-smuggling networks. The pilot scheme allows the UK to return small boat arrivals to France, with an equal number of migrants permitted to enter the UK through a new legal route, subject to strict security checks. This initiative aims to deter illegal migration and undermine the business model of organised gangs profiting from people's misery. Both countries are working to implement the pilot in the coming weeks, with the first detentions expected to begin shortly.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/f40a6263-d5fb-4453-9e52-25861525b2ab> - The UK and France are in preliminary talks about a pilot migrant returns agreement aimed at deterring irregular Channel crossings and people-smuggling operations. The proposed one-for-one scheme would allow the UK to return a limited number of irregular migrants to France in exchange for accepting migrants eligible for admission due to family reunification. While France prefers an EU-wide approach, it is willing to trial this bilateral deal to reduce incentives for smugglers. UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer wants to demonstrate a credible migration strategy in response to public pressure and the rising popularity of the Reform UK party. The pilot scheme may potentially evolve into a broader EU system, though officials from the EU and member states have expressed skepticism due to growing anti-immigration sentiment. This proposed agreement accompanies existing UK-French cooperation under the Touquet agreement, which includes British funding for enhanced French policing and surveillance of Channel crossings. However, France has resisted UK requests for joint patrols or processing asylum claims on its behalf. Small boat crossings have significantly increased, with over 8,200 people arriving in the UK so far in 2025, a 30% rise from 2024 figures. Advocacy groups have criticized the toughened border enforcement for endangering migrant lives.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c99pg1men8po> - The UK government is in negotiations with France on a scheme to return illegal migrants who have crossed the Channel in small boats. In return, the British government would accept legal migrants seeking family reunion in the UK. The French interior ministry told the BBC this would be a pilot scheme based on "a one-for-one principle", with the aim of discouraging smuggling networks. The Conservatives said Labour's decision to scrap the Rwanda deportation agreement last year had removed a deterrent to illegal immigration. UK Transport Minister Lilian Greenwood said the government is talking to France about migration issues but did not comment on the possibility of a removals deal. She told Sky News: "I can confirm that there are discussions ongoing with the French government about how we stop this appalling and dangerous trade in people that's happening across the English Channel."
5. <https://www.irishtimes.com/world/uk/2025/07/10/uk-and-france-agree-one-in-one-out-migrant-returns-scheme/> - UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron have agreed on a plan to send back small boat migrants, with an asylum seeker being sent to the UK in exchange. Mr. Starmer said the scheme would help "finally turn the tables" on the migrant crisis in the English Channel. Under the pilot scheme, people arriving on a small boat can be detained and returned to France for the first time. Reports have suggested just 50 migrants a week will be returned, a small fraction of the numbers crossing, which have reached 21,117 so far this year.
6. <https://www.aljazeera.com/amp/news/2025/7/10/whats-in-the-one-in-one-out-migrant-deal-between-the-uk-and-france> - In March 2023, the UK, under former Conservative PM Rishi Sunak, signed a three-year deal with France, under which the UK agreed to pay France £480 million ($650m) to tighten its border patrols and surveillance. Under this deal, France agreed to deploy 500 officers and provide a new detention centre in France, which would be operational by the end of 2026. France also agreed to increase funding for stricter enforcement, without specifying the amount of money. Separately, in June this year, France agreed to come up with a plan to intercept small boats heading to the UK, for the first time, expanding its navy with six patrol boats that will rescue migrants but also intercept them from heading to the UK. Paris has agreed to do this for boats which are within 300 metres (1,000ft) from the French shore, and has asked the UK for extra funding to fund the police and equipment to enforce these interceptions, according to UK media. French police have recently taken to damaging the small boats, slashing their rubber frames with knives. The French Interior Ministry told The Associated Press that the police had not been ordered to do this, however.