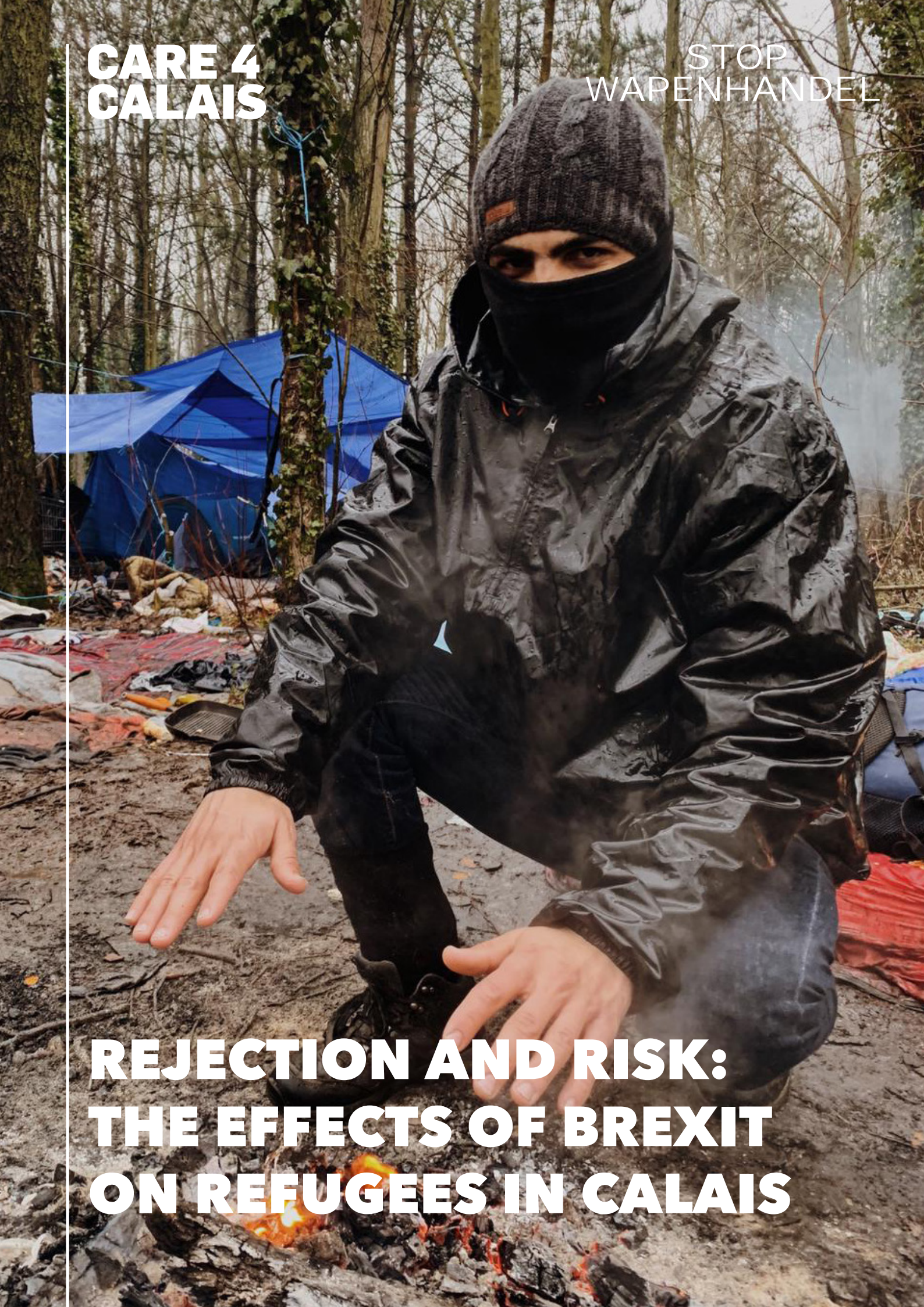


**CARE 4
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**REJECTION AND RISK:
THE EFFECTS OF BREXIT
ON REFUGEES IN CALAIS**





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: BREXIT AND THE FUTURE

The UK government often stated that leaving the EU would give back control of the country's borders. However, now the UK is no longer part of the EU, it has lost the ability to deport refugees to other EU countries. And refugees are well aware of this. Talking to people in Calais, 55% say they feel that post Brexit they have a better chance of being granted asylum in the UK, compared to 18% who feel they have less chance and 27% who don't know.

An attempt has been made to remedy this by introducing new UK legislation to deport people, but for this to work individual agreements will need to be made with any countries to which the UK wants to send people back - and so far the EU do not appear keen to discuss this.

In Calais, with juxtaposed UK border controls and UK funded French border security, legal deals with the EU are of less importance. Most of the cooperation is based on agreements between France and the UK only, and it is likely that security cooperation will continue to be stepped up, with ever more harsh security measures and border militarisation. This is a trend that has been going on for years and is welcomed by the military and security industry, which sees continual new profit opportunities arise.

However, one immediate effect of Brexit is long delays at border points, with lorries queuing up

due to extra inspections and new paperwork requirements. In the first days of January this was somewhat concealed because of truck drivers avoiding Calais, but the Road Haulage Association expects to see volumes of freight movement going up again soon, leading to more significant disruption. This will mean miles-long lines of lorries waiting to go to the UK, providing many opportunities for refugees to try to climb aboard, risking their lives as they do. Once again, the refugees are well aware of what is coming, with 58% saying they are most likely to try to cross by lorry in the coming weeks. Surprisingly, given the pattern of the last twelve months, only 22% say they will only be trying only with boats, with 20% telling us they will try both methods. Boats are more expensive they tell us, and more dangerous too.

In the midst of the continuing Covid-19 crisis the situation for refugees at Calais has turned worse than ever. Having to live with fears of getting the virus, they are victims of ever more repression by French police forces and ever less adequate assistance. To get to the UK they have the choice between risky attempts to climb on lorries or equally dangerous crossings by small boats. In the latter case they have to face an increasingly militarised response in the Channel and possible confrontations with far-right vigilante groups on UK shores. And if they arrive in the UK, more often than not their rights, including the right to apply for asylum and non-refoulement principles, are trampled

upon in bids to deport them as quickly as possible; being locked in inhumane detention centres and army barracks is common.

A September 2020 report from the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee found that the Home Office “based policy decisions not on evidence, but rather “anecdote, assumption and prejudice” against migrants. Even more scathing was a November 2019 report by the Foreign Affairs Committee, that found that “in the absence of robust and accessible legal routes for seeking asylum in the UK, those with a claim are left with little choice but to make dangerous journeys by land and sea”. It concluded that “a policy that focuses exclusively on closing borders will drive migrants to take more dangerous routes and push them into the hands of criminal groups”.

Sound conclusions and advice, which has been completely ignored. The UK government is focussed almost exclusively on introducing new legislation and measures to keep or get refugees out of the country. It continuously steps up efforts to stop migrants from crossing from France and now explores all kinds of draconian measures, which are often at odds with international law.

Yet, the Home Office had to acknowledge that “many of these people are desperate”, and according to their own Clandestine Channel Threat Commander “the vast majority – very close to all – of small boats arrivals claim asylum when they arrive in the UK.”

The full consequences of Brexit remain to be seen, with the UK having to negotiate new agreements on migration with individual countries within the EU. The prospects aren’t hopeful though. It seems more than likely that the UK government will continue its escalation of anti-migration policies, leading to more dangers, inhumane situations and neglect of rights for refugees.

A completely different approach is needed, one based on the presumption of freedom of movement, providing shelter and support to refugees and working towards eliminating the reasons people are forced to flee in the first place, for which the UK and other western countries carry a large responsibility with their selfish international (trade) politics, military interventions, arms trade to conflict regions, authoritarian regimes and contributions to climate change.



CALAIS UPDATE



A year ago we published the report ‘Hunted. Deported. – UK-French co-operation and the effects of border securitisation on refugees in Calais’. This report painted a grim picture of the situation for refugees in and around Calais and investigated the UK policies and security cooperation with France that created this.

Since then, the situation has escalated and worsened, with the Covid-19 crisis (as well as its direct health risks) and developments around Brexit used as excuses to further increase border security efforts and violent police operations against the refugees at Calais. While attempted crossings via lorries are still going on as before, much of the new developments have concentrated on the rise in attempted small boat crossings.

In this update we look at the steps that were taken in UK-France cooperation, the militarisation of the Channel, the developments in broader UK immigration and border policies, the consequences of Brexit and what this all means for the refugees on the ground.

UK POLICIES AND PLANS

As well as steps taken to further militarise the area at and around Calais and the Channel, as described below, the UK government has also tried to tighten asylum laws to act as a deterrent against migrants. The most far-reaching change, which came into effect on 1 January 2021, is new rules to make asylum claims from refugees who have travelled through or are connected to safe third countries inadmissible in the UK, and which make claiming asylum in UK territorial waters impossible¹. Both new rules are target refugees crossing from Calais or other places on the European mainland. While Immigration compliance minister Chris Philp said: "There is no reason to leave a safe country like France to make a dangerous crossing. These measures send a clear message and are just one of the steps the government is taking to tackle the unacceptable rise in small boat crossings." Beth Gardiner-Smith, chief executive of Safe Passage International called the new rules "a direct assault on the fundamental human right to asylum"².

The explanation of the 'safe third countries'-principle in these new rules, goes as far as stating that it is applicable when a refugee has a 'connection to' a third country which would make it "reasonable for them to go there to obtain protection", leaving room for broad interpretation. Equally problematic is the possibility of returning refugees to any 'safe' third country that wants to take them. However, experts called the new rules unworkable, only leading to delays in the asylum process³.

With Brexit, the UK has left the Dublin system, which gives EU member states the right to return a refugee to their first country of entry into the EU. Now that this possibility has disappeared the UK would have to negotiate and conclude new return agreements with individual states in order to make its new rule work. In a parliamentary debate, Philp said that if refugees are "declared inadmissible, we will seek for a short period to get the agreement of that other country to return them there, where their asylum claim can be substantively and prop-

- 1 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/943127/CCS207_CCS1220673408-001_Statement_of_changes_in_Immigration_Rules_HC_1043__Web_accessible_.pdf (accessed 12 January 2021)
- 2 Jamie Grierson, UK to deny asylum to refugees passing through 'safe' third country, *The Guardian*, 10 December 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/dec/10/uk-to-deny-asylum-to-refugees-passing-through-safe-third-country> (accessed 12 January 2021)
- 3 Colin Yeo, Briefing: new UK approach to refugees and safe third countries, *freemovement*, 11 January 2021. Available at: <https://www.freemovement.org.uk/briefing-new-uk-approach-to-refugees-and-safe-third-countries/> (accessed 12 January 2021)

erly considered. If that is not possible, the asylum claim will of course be substantively and properly considered in this country."⁴

Another controversial plan that was investigated was the use of offshore detention and processing centres, mirroring the much criticised approach of Australia, which refused all refugees arriving by boat, leaving them for years in inhumane circumstances in detention centres on Papua New Guinea and Nauru.⁵

Other possibilities investigated by the UK Foreign Office included building asylum processing centres on the remote Ascension Island or St. Helena in the south Atlantic.⁶ Another option looked at was building such centres in Morocco, Moldova and/or Papua New Guinea, . For now these plans seem to be shelved, with the Foreign Office raising lots of legal and practical obstacles.⁷ The government also discussed putting asylum seekers on disused ferries off the British coast or sending them to decommissioned oil platforms in the North Sea.⁸

The UK government also looked to Australia regarding its infamous 'Operation Sovereign Borders', aimed at turning back any boat with migrants trying to reach Australia. The Home Office contacted the Australian Border Force, and its former head Roman Quaedvlieg, for advice. Quaedvlieg proposed introducing new legislation to be able to intercept and return boats, which is not possible under current international laws.⁹ Former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, who was appointed as an adviser to the British Government's Board of Trade in September 2020, also advised the UK government to adopt policies similar to the ones he had rolled out when in power and to ignore legal obstacles and protests from neighbouring countries: "To stop people from setting out for Britain in unseaworthy boats, you have to ensure that they never arrive; or that if they do arrive they are swiftly sent back."¹⁰

- 4 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-12-16/debates/06EA3DD8-026C-4AAF-BCBA-60F1B5D2E3F6/ImmigrationRulesSupportedAccommodation> (accessed 12 January 2021)
- 5 <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/offshore-processing/>; Michael Flynn, UK: Plans to Replicate Australia's Maligned Offshore Detention Regime Ignore a Long History of Failure and Suffering, *Global Detention Project*, 15 October 2020. Available at: <https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/uk-plans-to-replicate-australias-maligned-offshore-detention-regime-ignore-a-long-history-of-failure-and-suffering> (accessed 12 January 2021)
- 6 George Parket, Peter Foster, Sebastian Payne and Michael Peel, Priti Patel looked at shipping UK asylum seekers to south Atlantic, *Financial Times*, 29 September 2020. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/ff1dc189-5531-4d81-8d17-7f332596f2cd>(accessed 12 January 2021)
- 7 Paul Lewis, David Pegg, Peter Walker and Heather Stewart, Revealed: No 10 explores sending asylum seekers to Moldova, Morocco and Papua New Guinea, *The Guardian*, 30 September 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/sep/30/revealed-no-10-explores-sending-asylum-seekers-to-moldova-morocco-and-papua-new-guinea> (accessed 12 January 2021)
- 8 Steven Swinford, George Grylls, Emily Gosden and John Simpson, Floating asylum centres planned on retired ferries, *The Times*, 1 October 2020. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/home-office-considered-sending-asylum-seekers-to-north-sea-oilrigs-3vqg22tbj> (accessed 12 January 2021)
- 9 Charles Hymas, Home Office approaches Australian Border Force chief who helped mastermind return of sea migrants, *The Telegraph*, 25 May 2020. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/05/25/home-office-approaches-australian-border-force-chief-helped/> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- 10 Tony Abbott, Channel crossings will continue as long as illegal migrants are allowed to stay in Britain, *The Telegraph*, 31 May 2020. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/05/31/channel-crossings-will-continue-long-illegal-migrants-allowed/> (accessed 13 January 2021)

COOPERATION WITH FRANCE

The report 'Hunted. Detained. Deported.' showed the increasing cooperation between the UK and France on border security and control and the legal base for activities of British border authorities at Calais, building on the Sangatte Protocol (1991) and the Treaty of Le Touquet (2003).

In 2020 new steps were taken in this regard. In early May Home Secretary Patel and her then French counterpart Christophe Castaner agreed in a phone call that more needed to be done to stop boats by doing three things: increase the deployment of forces with adequate equipment on the French side with UK funding (for an unknown amount of money), France stepping up efforts to return boats to land and improving intelligence sharing.¹¹

This was followed with a visit of Patel to meet with the new French Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin in July. They concluded a Declaration of Intent, agreeing to set up a Franco-British Operational Research Unit, a joint intelligence cell to combat

migrant smuggling. Much fuss was made about perceived "ruthless criminal gangs" facilitating the crossings, but the UK Border Force actually had to admit that "despite all of the action taken by law enforcement to date - intercepting the boats, making arrests, returning people back to France and putting the criminals responsible behind bars - the numbers continue to increase".¹² However, instead of questioning the failure of increasing border security or looking at alternatives such as providing safe and legal routes, both ministers decided to expand policies that have been endangering refugees for years, as our report 'Hunted. Detained. Deported.' showed in detail.

Notwithstanding the agreement about further cooperation, days after her visit Patel heavily criticized France, to its dismay, for not doing enough to stop migrant boats in a meeting with the Commons Home Affairs Committee.¹³ This echoed the remarks of several Conservative MPs in parliamentary debates through the year.

- 11 Mark White, UK and France step up efforts to curb migrant Channel crossings, Sky News, 7 May 2020. Available at: <https://news.sky.com/story/uk-and-france-step-up-efforts-to-curb-migrant-channel-crossings-11984720> (accessed 12 January 2021)
- 12 UK Border Force, Priti Patel and new French Interior Minister agree action on Channel crossings, 12 July 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/priti-patel-and-new-french-interior-minister-agree-action-on-channel-crossings> (accessed 8 January 2020)
- 13 BBC News, Priti Patel calls on France to return migrant boats, 15 July 2020. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-kent-53420063>; BBC News, Priti Patel accused of 'fake news' over Channel migrant boats, 16 July 2020. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-kent-53429390> (accessed 8 January 2021)

The main point of discussion between the two countries revolves around stopping boats in French waters, with an ongoing dispute about interpretations of maritime law. Patel accused France of not intercepting boats at sea, claiming that French authorities think maritime law doesn't allow them to do this, while the UK thinks this is perfectly possible.¹⁴ Her remarks were contested by French MP for Calais Pierre-Henri Dumont, who said France did stop boats and take refugees back.¹⁵

Patel also approached French authorities with a proposal to cooperate on blockading the Channel. According to secret documents seen by The Guardian, a blockade has already been tested: "Trials are currently under way to test a 'blockade' tactic in the Channel on the median line between French and UK waters, akin to the Australian 'turn back' tactic, whereby migrant boats would be physically prevented (most likely by one or more UK RHIBs [rigid hull inflatable boats] from entering UK waters."¹⁶

At the end of November Patel and Darmanin reached a new agreement, again focussed on boat crossings. The agreement includes doubling the number of officers patrolling French beaches along a 150-kilometre stretch of coastline. Since November 2019 the UK had paid for 45 French police officers patrolling the coastline, on top of regular French border police patrols.¹⁷ The UK also promised to supply new surveillance technology (including drones, radar equipment, optronic binoculars and fixed cameras) to France and increased border security at ports in northern and western France.¹⁸ The UK committed €31.4 million (£28.2m) to these measures. According to director of Detention Action Bella Sankey this comes down to throwing "taxpayers' money away on more of the same measures that stand no chance of having a significant impact on this dangerous state of affairs", created by the "refusal to take the sensible step of creating a safe and legal route to the UK from northern France, thereby preventing crossings and child deaths."¹⁹

- 14 Flora Thompson, Row over maritime laws in bid to stop migrant crossings, MPs told, PA, 15 July 2020. Available at: <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/row-over-maritime-laws-bid-142405972.html> (accessed 12 January 2021)
- 15 FR24 News, Priti Patel accused of "fake news" by a French deputy over declarations that France would not reject migrants from the English Channel, 16 July 2020. Available at: <https://www.fr24news.com/a/2020/07/priti-patel-accused-of-fake-news-by-a-french-deputy-over-declarations-that-france-would-not-reject-migrants-from-the-english-channel.html> (accessed 12 January 2021)
- 16 Jamie Grierson and Jessica Elgot, UK tested Channel 'blockade' to deter migrants, leak reveals, The Guardian, 1 October 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/oct/01/uk-tested-channel-blockade-to-deter-migrants-leak-reveals> (accessed 12 January 2021)
- 17 William McLennan, Channel crossings: Why can't the UK stop migrants in small boats?, BBC News, 20 August 2020. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-53650537> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- 18 UK Border Force, UK and France sign new agreement to tackle illegal migration, 28 November 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-france-sign-new-agreement-to-tackle-illegal-migration> (accessed 11 January 2021)
- 19 Nick Hardinges, Britain and France reach agreement to prevent migrants crossing Channel, LBC, 28 November 2020. Available at: <https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/britain-france-reach-sign-agreement-prevent-migrants-crossing-english-channel/> (accessed 11 January 2021)

This new spending comes on top of hundreds of millions spent on border security at Calais since 2010, as detailed in our report 'Hunted. Detained. Deported.'. Answering parliamentary questions in May 2020 minister Philp said €68.2 million had been spent in recent years on commitments under the Joint Declaration (2015), the Sandhurst Treaty (2018) and Joint Action Plan on small boats (2019), "including investments in improving border infrastructure at the ports of Calais and Dunkirk" and

"the purchase of equipment to improve detections of boats making crossings".²⁰ In December, Philp told the Commons Home Affairs Committee the UK has spent £192 million on border security and control activities in France since September 2014.²¹ Comparing this with figures presented earlier this seems to be an underestimate, with a previous Home Office estimate of spending in the years 2014-2016 already running up to almost £160 million.²²



- ²⁰ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-05-11/45263> (accessed 13 January 2021)
²¹ BBC News, Channel crossings: 'No agreement' on turning migrant boats back, 2 December 2020. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-kent-55147809> (accessed 13 January 2021)
²² UK Home Office – Border, Immigration & Citizenship System Policy and Strategy Group, FOI Reference: 41250, 28 April 2017. As cited in the report 'Hunted. Detained. Deported.'

MILITARISATION OF THE CHANNEL

While previously the UK left most of the actual border security work to French authorities, supplying them with money and equipment, the increasing occurrence of Channel crossings by small boats has spurred measures of its own. While in 2018 the total number of migrants crossing by boat was 300, this rose to over 1,800 in 2019 and to more than 8,400 in 2020.²³

The first steps to counter this, including an increase in Border Force patrol on the Channel, the use of drones and the temporary deployment of a navy vessel, were already taken in 2019, as described in the report 'Hunted. Detained. Deported'.²⁴ In 2020 many other, sometimes outrageous, ways to stop boats were explored. Worryingly, not only the government tries to stop refugee boats,

but far-right groups are increasingly patrolling beaches and ports on their own as well.²⁵

In the first months of 2020 there was much fuss over the increase of migrant boats trying to cross, as was the case in the whole of 2019. Often this increase has been presented as a consequence of making it more difficult to climb on lorries going from France to the UK, in line with other developments in international migration movements where making more difficult the use of certain routes has led to pushing refugees to other, mostly more dangerous, routes.²⁶ Regardless, climbing on lorries or crossing by boat each come with their own set of risks and dangers, which wouldn't arise if there were safe and legal migration options available.

- ²³ InfoMigrants, English Channel: More than 400 migrants reach UK in single day, new record, 3 September 2020. Available at: <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/27037/english-channel-more-than-400-migrants-reach-uk-in-single-day-new-record>; BBC News, 31 December 2020. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-kent-55501123> (accessed 13 January 2021)
²⁴ It was later reported that the drones are operated by Portuguese IT, defense and aerospace company Tekever, which flies them five days a week, eight hours a day. France hasn't allowed the drones to fly on its side of the Channel; Morgan Meaker, Here's proof the UK is using drones to patrol the English Channel, Wired, 10 January 2020. Available at: <https://www.wired.co.uk/article/uk-drones-migrants-english-channel>; Charles Hymas and Jamie Johnson, France rebuffs UK's drone offer to stop Channel migrants leaving beaches in first place, The Telegraph, 22 September 2020. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/09/22/france-rebuffs-uks-drone-offer-stop-channel-migrants-leaving/>; Inzamam Rashid, Inside the control room that sends drones to catch people smugglers on the English Channel, Sky News, 24 September 2020. Available at: <https://news.sky.com/story/inside-the-control-room-that-sends-drones-to-catch-people-smugglers-on-the-english-channel-12079722> (accessed 13 January 2021)
²⁵ Sue Mitchell, The wedding DJ who wants to stop migrant boats, BBC News, 1 November 2020. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-54756575> (accessed 12 January 2021)
²⁶ See for example: Seth Farsides, UK asylum laws edge towards murky waters, International Observatory Human Rights, 11 August 2020. Available at: <https://observatoryihr.org/news/uk-asylum-laws-edge-towards-murky-waters/> (accessed 13 January 2021)

Research by David Bolt, the UK Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, into the numbers of refugees detected on lorries up until 2020 concluded that “it would appear that since 2017 the numbers of lorry detections at Calais and Coquelles have remained more or less at the same level each year”.²⁷ In 2020 this might have seen some change, with a rise in boat crossings attributed to a combination of stricter controls preventing climbing on lorries, a long streak of good weather and a fall in freight traffic due to the Covid-19 pandemic.²⁸ Another reason was the increase of police violence towards refugees in Calais, who had to face the spread of Covid-19 amongst their settlements, which was used as an excuse for brutal evictions and cutting of assistance, with aid groups once again having to step in to provide for basic needs.²⁹ Throughout 2020 refugee rights and aid groups have noted an increase in evictions, to fatigue and wear down refugees, and continuous human rights violations, including use of excessive force and destruction of personal belongings.³⁰

The British and French anti-migration policies in general are the main driver, according to Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor: “What forces people to take such risk [of crossing by subseaworthy boats, MA] is a combination of French Government crackdowns on refugees, particularly on migrant camps in Calais and Dunkirk, in addition

to joint French-British efforts to curb smuggling by trucks and shipping containers, and profound fear that Brexit would soon mean a closure of British borders. This puts significant pressure on asylum seekers to rush and undertake such dangerous trips before it’s too late.”³¹

In August 2020 Home Secretary Patel appointed Dan O’Mahoney as Clandestine Channel Threat Commander (CCTC), a new function with “the primary responsibility of making the Channel route unviable for small boat crossings”, “by bringing together all operational partners in the UK and in France”. Prior to this appointment O’Mahoney worked as Director of the UK’s Joint Maritime Security Centre (JMSC), before that he was in the Royal Marines and had functions with the National Crime Agency and the Border Crime Command at Heathrow.³²

His Twitter history and a guest comment to The Sun show that O’Mahoney clearly positions himself as a crime fighter, targeting the people that facilitate boat crossings and the migrants concerned.³³ This is in line with the broader approach of the government, ignoring the reasons that people try to come to the UK and the lack of safe and legal possibilities to do so, driving them to make dangerous attempts via boats and lorries. According to Steve Valdez-Symonds, Amnesty International

- 27 Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, An inspection of the Home Office’s response to in-country clandestine arrivals (‘lorry drops’) and to irregular migrants arriving via ‘small boats’ (May 2019 – December 2019), November 2020. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/933953/An_inspection_of_the_Home_Office_s_response_to_in-country_clandestine_arrivals___lorry_drops___and_to_irregular_migrants_arriving_via_small_boats_.pdf (accessed 12 January 2021)
- 28 Mehdi Chebil, ‘At night the UK looks close, but once water starts entering your boat, it’s terrifying’, InfoMigrants, 14 September 2020. Available at: <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/webdoc/206/at-night-the-uk-looks-close-but-once-water-starts-entering-your-boat-it-s-terrifying> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- 29 Josh Evans-Jesra, Covid-19 in Calais – a harsher hostile environment, Global Justice Now, 5 May 2020. Available at: <https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/blog/2020/may/5/covid-19-calais-%E2%80%93-harsher-hostile-environment> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- 30 Peter Yeung, ‘Like torture’: Calais police accused of continued migrant rights abuses, The Guardian, 13 January 2021. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/jan/13/like-torture-calais-police-accused-of-continued-migrant-rights-abuses> (accessed 13 January 2021).
- 31 Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, French-British Policies Behind Surge in Migrants Crossing English Channel, 4 January 2020. Available at: <https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/3309/French-British-Policies-Behind-Surge-in-Migrants-Crossing-English-Channel> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- 32 UK Home Office, Home Secretary appoints small boat commander, press release, 9 August 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-appoints-small-boat-commander> (accessed 10 January 2021).
- 33 Dan O’Mahoney, My job is to end illegal Channel crossings — and that’s what I will do, The Sun, 5 September 2020. Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/12594380/dan-omahoney-ending-illegal-boat-crossings/>; <https://twitter.com/cctcommander?lang=en> (accessed 10 January 2021)

UK’s refugee and migrant rights programme director, the “constant talk of ‘criminal gangs’ deflects attention away from the UK’s responsibility to cooperate with the French authorities in establishing safe procedures for desperate and often very vulnerable people”, emphasizing that “what smugglers are actually profiting from is the lack of a proper Anglo-French responsibility-sharing system by which people can safely seek asylum, including in the UK.”³⁴

Also in early August, the Home Office lodged a request for military assistance to the Ministry of Defence. While studying the request, the MoD began deploying an RAF Airbus A400M Atlas plane to fly back and forth across the English side of the Channel to spot small boats.³⁵ Use of other MoD aircraft, including the Boeing P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft and the Beechcraft Shadow R1 surveillance aircraft, for border patrol missions has also been reported.³⁶

In September this was followed by the deployment over the Channel of a Watchkeeper drone by the Army. This marks the first time these military drones, produced by arms companies Thales and Elbit, were flown operationally within the UK. Earlier the Army used them in the war in Afghan-

istan.³⁷ That same month, Elbit demonstrated its Hermes 900 drone to the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).³⁸ While the demonstrated model has been modified for use in search and rescue missions, the Hermes 900 has a troublesome history of Israeli use against the Palestinians and flying border patrol missions in the Mediterranean for Frontex.³⁹ Elbit was paid almost £1 million for this ‘drone demonstration and development’ contract.⁴⁰ Earlier MCA also tested a surveillance drone from Austrian company Schiebel.⁴¹

Meanwhile, CCTC O’Mahoney told the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee in September that “only “a very small proportion of landings actually arrive on a beach without being intercepted by one of our assets” and that he is “not aware of any landings where migrants got off the boat and we did not subsequently intercept them”.⁴² In October, in his contribution to The Sun O’Mahoney proposed even more draconian measures to do “whatever it takes to end this route and the ever-growing problem of illegal migration”, arguing for the French to use “automatic number plate recognition, surveillance and aerial support to stop the boats leaving French shores in the first place”.⁴³ Another possible tactic on the UK side

- 34 Press Association 2020, MP blames French politicians for migrants coming to UK ‘on false premise’, Telegraph & Argus, 3 September 2020. Available at: <https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/national/18695088.mp-blames-french-politicians-migrants-coming-uk-on-false-premise/> (accessed 10 January 2020)
- 35 Jamie Grierson and Dan Sabbagh, Boris Johnson accused of scapegoating migrants over Channel comments, The Guardian, 10 August 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/aug/10/boris-johnson-hints-at-law-change-to-deport-migrants-who-cross-channel> (accessed 11 January 2021)
- 36 James A. Cowan, The Dover Patrol, Police Aviation News, November 2020. Available at: http://www.policeaviation-news.info/index_htm_files/295PANovember2020.pdf; <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-09/87497> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- 37 Adam Forrest, British Army drone to fly over English Channel to monitor migrant boats, The Independent, 31 August 2020. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-army-channel-crossings-migrants-drone-monitor-a9696956.html> (accessed 11 January 2021)
- 38 Mike Ball, Hermes 900 UAS Demonstrated to UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Unmanned Systems Technology, 10 September 2020. Available at: <https://www.unmannedsystemstechnology.com/2020/09/hermes-900-uas-demonstrated-to-uk-maritime-and-coastguard-agency/> (accessed 11 January 2021)
- 39 Mark Akkerman, Frontex awards €50 million in border surveillance drone contracts to Airbus, IAI and Elbit, Stop Wapenhandel, 30 October 2020. Available at: <https://stopwapenhandel.org/node/2432> (accessed 11 January 2021)
- 40 <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/713d488e-6c55-4293-9a10-9759a2191dad> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- 41 Gian Volpicelli, The UK is spending big on migrant-tracking drones to surveil the seas, Wired, 12 August 2020. Available at: <https://www.wired.co.uk/article/english-channel-migrants-drones> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- 42 UK Home Office, Media factsheet: Small boats, 15 May 2020. Available at: <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/05/15/media-factsheet-small-boats-2/>; Home Affairs Committee, Oral evidence: Channel crossings, migration and asylum-seeking routes through the EU, HC 705, House Of Commons, 3 September 2020. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/793/default/> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- 43 Dan O’Mahoney, My job is to end illegal Channel crossings — and that’s what I will do, The Sun, 5 September 2020. Available at: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/12594380/dan-omahoney-ending-illegal-boat-crossings/> (accessed 10 January 2021)

he mentioned in an interview with The Telegraph is the use of nets or chains to clog propellers and bring boats to a standstill. O'Mahoney was also involved in a secret consultation the Home Office had with maritime industry to discuss the possibilities of constructing floating walls in the Channel. Trade group Maritime UK, which acted as a conduit between government and industry, itself had to acknowledge it didn't think the plan was 'legally possible'.⁴⁵ The use of water cannons to create waves to push back migrant boats was also explored, but discontinued because of fears that personnel may have to face murder charges if migrants drown.⁴⁶

Apart from the use of MoD aircraft on the Channel, the deployment of Royal Navy ships was also discussed in the context of the Home Office request of August. Lawyers warned that using navy vessels to push boats back to France would be unlawful and Dr. Maurice Stierl (migration researcher, University of Warwick) stated: "The home secretary appears to have been inspired by mass push-back operations in the Mediterranean Sea, where migrants are routinely forced back and prevented from reaching Europe, in breach of maritime laws and human rights conventions. Lives have been lost in consequence and enacting similar deterrence measures in the Channel could have similarly disastrous consequences."⁴⁷ In a rare statement,

even the UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) criticized these plans: "The foreseen deployment of large naval vessels to deter such crossings and block small, flimsy dinghies may result in harmful and fatal incidents. Although increasing numbers of people have been crossing the Channel by boat this summer, the numbers remain low and manageable. People forced by wars and persecution to flee their homes and people on the move frequently embark on risky journeys in many parts of the world. Saving lives should be the first priority – both on land and at sea."⁴⁸

While the Navy did deploy a vessel at the start of 2019 to temporarily patrol the Channel, awaiting the return of Border Force vessels from the Mediterranean, the role of the Navy now seemed to be limited to assisting the Border Force in planning and logistics.⁴⁹

Apart from the measures militarising the Channel, the UK Home Office also started a so-called 'social media blitz', geo-targeting migrants at border locations in France with advertisements warning them to remain where they were. The messages in five languages on large social media sites also tell them they will be prosecuted for steering a migrant boat and risk death.⁵⁰

- 44 Jamie Grierson, Home Office may use nets to stop migrant boats crossing Channel, The Guardian, 11 October 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/11/home-office-considers-using-nets-to-stop-migrant-boats-crossing-channel> (accessed 10 January 2021)
- 45 Jim Pickard, George Parker, Robert Wright and Helen Warrell, UK considers floating walls in Channel to block asylum seekers, Financial Times, 1 October 2020. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/ac028f1c-cf83-444c-b61f-00e99d-404d6a> (accessed 11 January 2021)
- 46 Steven Swinford and Francis Elliott, Priti Patel and Foreign Office at war over asylum plans, The Times, 2 October 2020. Available at: [Priti Patel and Foreign Office at war over asylum plans](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/priti-patel-and-foreign-office-at-war-over-asylum-plans) (accessed 12 January 2021).
- 47 Diane Taylor, UK plan to use navy to stop migrant crossings is unlawful, lawyers warn, The Guardian, 7 August 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/aug/07/uk-plan-to-use-navy-to-stop-migrant-crossings-is-unlawful-lawyers-warn> (accessed 11 January 2021)
- 48 UNHCR and IOM, UNHCR, IOM: Interception at sea is not the solution to channel crossings, 13 August 2020. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/press/2020/8/5f3567a84/unhcr-iom-interception-sea-solution-channel-crossings.html> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- 49 Richard Ford, Royal Navy will help plan operations to stop migrant Channel crossings, The Times, 17 August 2020. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/royal-navy-will-help-plan-operations-to-stop-migrant-channel-crossings-pzvmg5fdm> (accessed 11 January 2021)
- 50 Charles Hymas, Social media blitz to warn migrants against UK voyage, The Telegraph, 21 December 2020. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/12/21/social-media-blitz-warn-migrants-against-uk-voyage/> (accessed 12 January 2021)

On the French side, in recent years authorities have also deployed military and police assets for patrols on the Channel, including maritime gendarmerie patrol ships, a civilian boat chartered by the navy, a coastal patrol boat from Customs and Falcon 50 aircraft, Airbus NH90 and Airbus Dauphin helicopters from the Navy.⁵¹ Human rights

groups have noted that "French police routinely confiscate or destroy boats, life jackets and other marine safety equipment from any migrants they stop in Calais. Local authorities have also severely restricted the sale of these items to anyone without valid ID."⁵²



- 51 Olivier Berger, Migration Des moyens renforcés dans le détroit du Pas-de-Calais pour sauver des vies, La Voix Du Nord, 5 January 2019. Available at: <https://www.lavoixdunord.fr/516449/article/2019-01-05/des-moyens-renforces-dans-le-detroit-du-pas-de-calais-pour-sauver-des-vies-33> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- 52 Thom Tyerman and Travis Van Isacker, Border Securitisation in the Channel, Border Criminologies, Faculty of Law, University of Oxford, 9 October 2020. Available at: <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/blog/2020/10/border> (accessed 13 January 2021)

DEPORTATIONS

As described above the UK has been tightening its migration policies in general, partly as a move to deter refugees from crossing from France. According to Susan Williams (Minister of State (Home Office)) this includes “maximised returns – to remove the incentives for people to seek to reach the UK via small boat and other dangerous methods.”⁵³

To this end Home Secretary Patel tried to convince France to agree to immediately take back migrants crossing the Channel, whether they are intercepted at sea or on UK soil.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, the UK itself started Operation Sillath, to swiftly return migrants coming by boat from France. According to human rights lawyers these deportations sometimes take

place before asylum claims have been properly considered and/or without evidence that people had been registered in France at all, violating Dublin regulation rules. Lily Parrott (Duncan Lewis Solicitors) said this amounts to “an egregious breach of European law that allowed many asylum-seekers to be wrongly removed from the UK.” Among the refugees deported in this way there have been victims of trafficking and torture.⁵⁵ Notwithstanding this severe criticism, it was revealed in September that Home Secretary Patel was planning weekly deportation flights of migrants arriving via the Channel.⁵⁶ She also accused ‘activist lawyers’ of frustrating deportations by filing last minute legal procedures.⁵⁷

- ⁵³ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-10-09/hl8963> (accessed 13 January 2021).
- ⁵⁴ Charles Hymas, Priti Patel seeks French backing for plan to return Channel migrants to France to end people trafficking, *The Telegraph*, 6 May 2020. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/05/06/priti-patel-seeks-french-backing-plan-return-channel-migrants/> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- ⁵⁵ Diane Taylor, Home Office deporting migrants who cross Channel in small boats, *The Guardian*, 21 May 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/21/home-office-deporting-migrants-who-cross-channel-in-small-boats> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- ⁵⁶ Emma Wallis, UK government plans ‘weekly flights’ to return Channel migrants, *InfoMigrants*, 21 September 2020. Available at: <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/27430/uk-government-plans-weekly-flights-to-return-channel-migrants> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- ⁵⁷ <https://twitter.com/pritipatel/status/1301590225936953346> (accessed 13 January 2021)

More generally the UK sped up deportations to other EU member states in the last months of the year, in the light of the end of its participation in the Dublin system as Brexit came into effect at the start of 2021. According to campaigners this again included removals of trafficking and torture victims, without proper screening because of the rush in deporting them.⁵⁸ Moreover, many of the deportees were simply dumped upon return without any assistance or place to go, sometimes in places with heavy Covid-19 problems and subsequent lockdowns.⁵⁹

Two legal blows against the deportation policies didn’t seem to affect them, with the government ignoring their merits. The High Court decided that Patel was “acting unlawfully in curtailing asylum screening interviews by asking a narrower set of questions than those that are identified in the published policy guidance” to identify victims of trafficking. The counsel for the Home Office told the court that it took the position there was “a justified departure from the published policy and it doesn’t really matter.”⁶⁰ In another legal case, the Court of Appeal also ruled a policy that gave migrants as little as 72 hours’ notice before deporting

them to be unlawful. The policy, which was meant to prevent last-minute legal procedures, led to an “unacceptable risk of interference with the right of access to court”, according to the court.⁶¹

The Home Office stated that “the majority of returns take place on commercial scheduled flights”.⁶² Corporate Watch reported that all major airlines are involved in such deportations, specifically identifying British Airways, Kenya Airways, Easyjet, Qatar Airways, Turkish Airlines, Ethiopian Airlines, Air France and Royal Jordanian. It also doubts that Virgin Airlines, which in 2018 announced it would not participate in deportations anymore, holds up to this promise. Other companies involved in the deportation process are Carlson Wagonlit Travel (bookings and contracting charter flights) and Mitie (security guards).⁶³ Other deportations are done by charter flights, flights with only deportees to particular destinations, with heavy security. Companies contracted for these in 2020 include Titan Airways, which has a longstanding relationship with the Home Office in this regard, Hi Fly (Portugal), Evelop (Spain), multinational TUI, Air Tanker (UK) and Privilege Style (Spain).⁶⁴

- ⁵⁸ Mark Townsend, UK races to deport asylum seekers ahead of Brexit, *The Guardian*, 6 December 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/dec/06/uk-races-to-deport-asylum-seekers-ahead-of-brexit> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- ⁵⁹ Corporate Watch, Cast Away: The UK’s Rushed Charter Flights To Deport Channel Crossers, 29 August 2020. Available at: <https://corporatwatch.org/cast-away-the-uks-rushed-charter-flights-to-deport-channel-crossers/#dumped;>; Tony Winterburn, Asylum seekers forced to sleep rough in Spain hours after being deported from Britain, *Euro Weekly News*, 6 September 2020. Available at: <https://www.euroweeklynews.com/2020/09/06/asylum-seekers-forced-to-sleep-rough-in-spain-hours-after-being-deported-from-britain/> (returned 13 January 2021)
- ⁶⁰ Diane Taylor, Priti Patel not following her own anti-trafficking policy, judge rules, *The Guardian*, 13 November 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/nov/13/priti-patel-departing-from-her-own-anti-trafficking-policy> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- ⁶¹ Silvia Hui, Appeal Court Judges Rule UK Deportation Policy Unlawful, *Associated Press*, 21 October 2020. Available at: <https://apnews.com/article/government-policy-ce77a7f480a716d720ee045e765fe66f> (accessed 13 January 2021).
- ⁶² <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/15060/default/> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- ⁶³ Corporate Watch, UK Deportations 2020: How BA, Easyjet And Other Airlines Collaborate With The Border Regime, 10 June 2020. Available at: <https://corporatwatch.org/uk-deportations-2020-how-ba-easyjet-and-other-airlines-collaborate-with-the-border-regime/> (accessed 13 January 2021)
- ⁶⁴ Corporate Watch, Hi Fly: Airline Profiting From Deportations While Owners Decry ‘Desperate Plight Of Migrants’, 9 October 2020. Available at: <https://corporatwatch.org/hi-fly/>; Corporate Watch, Privilege Style: The Home Office’s Deportation Airline Of Last Resort, 15 December 2020. Available at: <https://corporatwatch.org/privilege-style-the-home-offices-deportation-airline-of-last-resort/> (accessed 13 January 2021)

BREXIT AND THE FUTURE

Throughout this briefing, the consequences of Brexit have sprung up, for example in the attempts to speed up deportations because of the end of the UK's participation in the Dublin system. Migration was not a part of the deal to define new (trade) relations between the UK and the EU, which was finally concluded at the end of 2020, and is one of the subjects of new rounds of negotiations.

The UK government has often stated that leaving the EU will give the country back control of its borders and the possibility to negotiate stricter and broader return agreements with the EU and individual EU member states. However, in spite of UK pressure, in August 2020 EU officials told the press that the EU wasn't in a rush to get a post-Brexit deal on migration with the UK, believing that it was more important to the UK than to any of the remaining member states.⁶⁵ For now, this has left the UK with no possibilities to deport refugees to other EU countries, unless agreed upon a case-by-

case basis.⁶⁶

In Calais, with juxtaposed UK border controls and UK funded French border security, a deal with the EU is of less importance. Most of the cooperation is based on purely bilateral agreements, with the Sandhurst Treaty of 2018 already factoring in Brexit. It is highly likely that the security cooperation will continue as before and will be stepped up resulting in ever more harsh security measures and border militarisation.⁶⁷ A trend that has been going on for years and is welcomed by the military and security industry, which sees continual new profit opportunities arise. To illustrate this expectation Home Secretary Patel opened a new command centre to stop migrant boats at a secret location in Dover at the start of January 2021. The centre is led by CCTC O'Mahoney and aims to cooperate with French authorities to increase land, sea and air surveillance.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Gabriela Baczynska, Fate of migrants entwined in Brexit talks as EU holds out on deal, Reuters, 20 August 2020. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-migration/fate-of-migrants-entwined-in-brexit-talks-as-eu-holds-out-on-deal-idUSKBN25G1QB> (accessed 13 January 2021)

⁶⁶ Juliette Bénézit, Après le Brexit, les questions migratoires restent à négocier, Le Monde, 4 January 2021. Available at: https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2021/01/04/apres-le-brexit-les-questions-migratoires-restent-a-negocier_6065137_3224.html (accessed 13 January 2021)

⁶⁷ RFI, À Calais, les associations redoutent les conséquences du Brexit pour les migrants, 5 January 2021. Available at: <https://www.rfi.fr/europe/20210105-a-calais-les-associations-redoutent-les-cons%C3%A9quences-du-brexit-pour-les-migrants> (accessed 13 January 2021)

⁶⁸ Bhvishya Patel, Nicole Conner and Chris Jewers, Priti Patel sets up high-tech command centre in war on people smugglers ferrying migrants across The Channel – as 20 more refugees make dangerous crossing today, Daily Mail, 10 January 2021. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9131075/Priti-Patel-sets-high-tech-command-centre-war-people-smugglers.html> (accessed 13 January 2021)

One immediate effect of Brexit is long delays at border points, with lorries queuing up because of extra inspections with new paperwork required, and longer waiting times.⁶⁹ In the first days of January this was somewhat concealed, because of truck drivers avoiding Calais due to fear of this, but the Road Haulage Association expects to see volumes of freight movement going up again soon, leading to more significant disruption.⁷⁰ Any relaxation or end of Covid-19 restrictions will probably give rise

to another increase in freight traffic sometime in the coming months.

This all leads to miles-long lines of lorries waiting to go to the UK, providing opportunities for refugees to try to climb aboard. However, this also comes with all the risks involved in such dangerous journeys and will probably be used as an excuse to further intensify and expand security measures.



⁶⁹ Lisa O'Carroll, 'I'm stuck here': lorry drivers in Calais begin to feel effects of Brexit, The Guardian, 8 January 2021. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/jan/08/stuck-lorry-drivers-calais-effects-brexit-eurotunnel> (accessed 13 January 2021)

⁷⁰ Naomi Ackerman, Business warns current post-Brexit border disruption is just 'tip of the iceberg', Evening Standard, 8 January 2021. Available at: <https://www.standard.co.uk/business/dover-calais-border-disruption-business-cost-b764717.html> (accessed 13 January 2021)

CONCLUSION

A September 2020 report from the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee found that the Home Office “based policy decisions not on evidence, but rather “anecdote, assumption and prejudice” against migrants.⁷¹ Even more scathing was a November 2019 report by the Foreign Affairs Committee, of which Patel herself was a member prior to be appointed as Home Secretary. The Committee found that “in the absence of robust and accessible legal routes for seeking asylum in the UK, those with a claim are left with little choice but to make dangerous journeys by land and sea”. Regarding the situation in northern France it said that “focusing on increasing border security without improving conditions in the region may have the counterproductive effect of forcing migrants to make desperate journeys across the Channel.” In general it concluded that “a policy that focuses exclusively on closing borders will drive migrants to take more dangerous routes, and push them into the hands of criminal groups” and advised that “the UK should address the wider, interlinked

factors driving irregular migration—including climate change, conflict, repressive governance and corruption—rather than focusing narrowly on reducing the numbers reaching Europe’s borders in the short term.”⁷²

Sound conclusions and advice, which has been completely ignored. The UK government is focussed almost exclusively on introducing new legislation and measures to keep or get refugees out of the country. It continuously steps up efforts to stop migrants from crossing from France, in an escalation of policies and practices described in our report ‘Hunted. Detained. Deported.’ of January 2020. It explores all kinds of draconian measures, which are often at odds with international law. Yet, the Home Office had to acknowledge that “many of these people are desperate”, and according to CCTC O’Mahoney “the vast majority – very close to all – of small boats arrivals claim asylum when they arrive in the UK.”⁷³

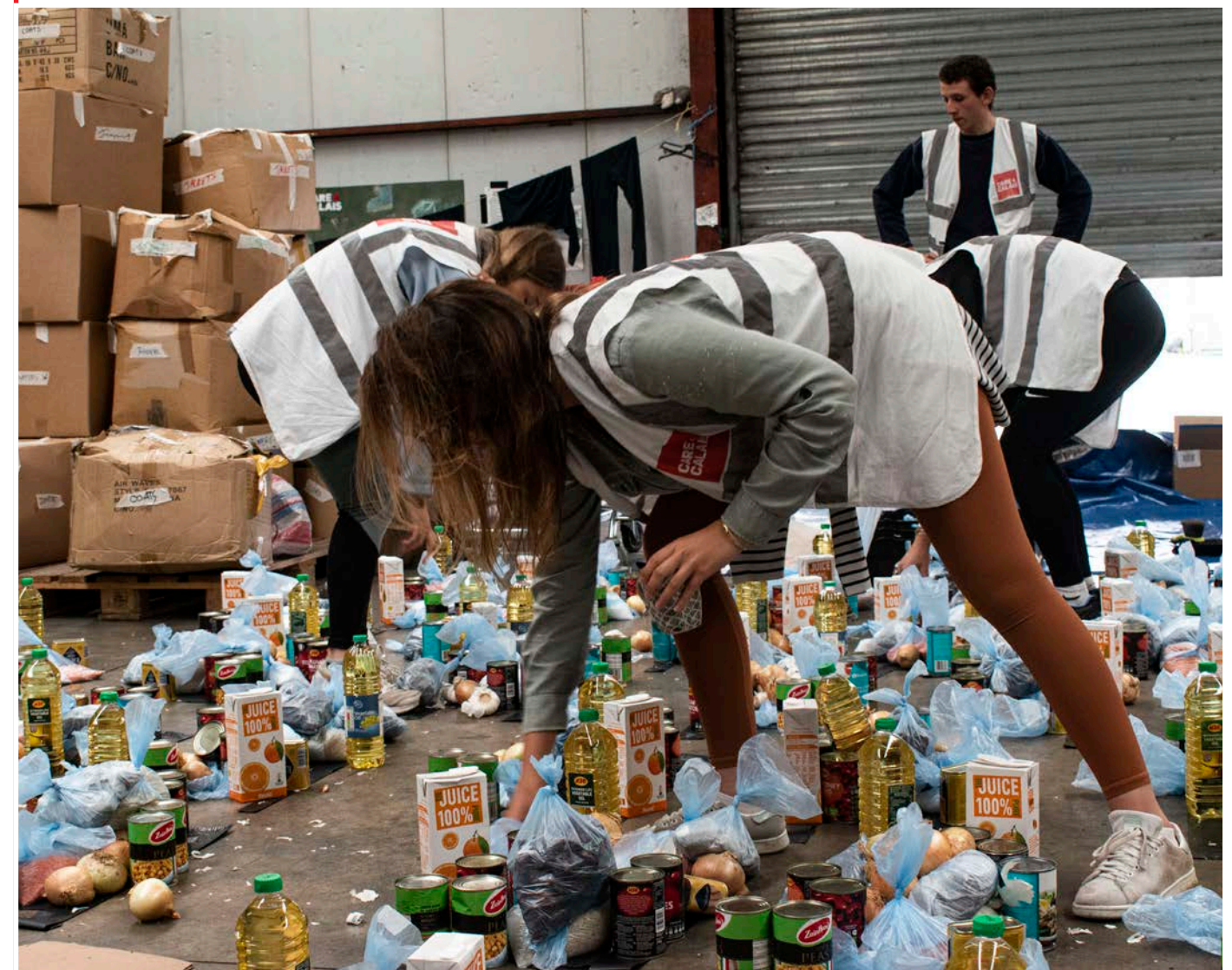
⁷¹ Public Accounts Committee, Home Office “has no idea” of the impact of immigration policies, 18 September 2020. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/127/public-accounts-committee/news/119248/home-office-has-no-idea-of-the-impact-of-immigration-policies/> (accessed 13 January 2021)

⁷² House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, Responding to irregular migration: A diplomatic route, First Report of Session 2019, 29 October 2019. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201919/cmselect/cm-faff/107/10702.htm> (accessed 13 January 2021)

⁷³ UK Home Office, Media factsheet: Small boats, 15 May 2020. Available at: <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/05/15/media-factsheet-small-boats-2/>; Home Affairs Committee, Oral evidence: Channel crossings, migration and asylum-seeking routes through the EU, HC 705, House Of Commons, 3 September 2020. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/793/default/> (accessed 13 January 2021)

In the midst of the continuing Covid-19 crisis the situation for refugees at Calais has become worse than ever. Having to live with fears of getting the virus, they are victims of ever more repression by French police forces and ever less adequate assistance. To get to the UK they have the choice between risky attempts to climb on lorries or equally dangerous crossings by small boats. In the latter case they have to face an increasingly militarised response from the French and UK side of the Channel and possible confrontations with far-right vigilante groups on UK shores. And if they arrive in the UK, more often than not their rights, including the right to apply for asylum and non-refoulement principles, are trampled upon in bids to deport them as quickly as possible, while keeping them locked up in inhumane detention centres as they await a decision.

The full consequences of Brexit remain to be seen, with the UK having to negotiate new agreements on migration with individual countries within the EU. The prospects aren’t hopeful though. It seems more than likely that the UK government will continue its escalation of anti-migration policies, leading to more dangers, inhumane situations and neglect of rights for refugees. A completely different approach is needed, one based on the presumption of freedom of movement, providing shelter and support to refugees and working towards eliminating the reasons people are forced to flee in the first place, for which the UK and other western countries carry a large responsibility with their selfish international (trade) politics, military interventions, arms trade to conflict regions, authoritarian regimes and contributions to climate change.



APPENDIX

Calais and Dunkirk refugee survey

Calais Dunkirk Aggregate

Since Brexit (31 December) is easier or harder to cross to the UK?

a) Easier	8%	14%	12%
b) Harder	87%	73%	79%
c) About the same	5%	13%	9%

Do you plan to cross by boat or lorry?

a) Boat	8%	33%	22%
b) Lorry	62%	54%	58%
c) Either	30%	13%	20%

Which is easier, boat or lorry?

a) Boat	37%	52%	45%
b) Lorry	45%	37%	40%
c) Neither	18%	11%	15%

How safe do you feel in Calais since Brexit (31 December)?

a) More safe	7%	20%	15%
b) Less safe	57%	61%	63%
c) About the same	37%	19%	22%

Do you think you have a good chance of getting asylum in the UK since Brexit?

a) A better chance	55%	37%	45%
b) A worse chance	18%	25%	22%
c) About the same	27%	38%	33%

Why do you want to go to the UK? (Pick all that apply)

a) I have family or friends there	40%	37%	38%
b) I speak English	32%	37%	35%
c) I like the UK culture	43%	16%	28%
d) The UK respects refugee rights	27%	13%	19%

Calais Dunkirk Aggregate

Where are you from?

a) Sudan	37%	-	16%
b) Eritrea	3%	-	1%
c) Afghanistan	32%	11%	20%
d) Iran	2%	34%	20%
e) Syria	-	14%	8%
f) Iraq	2%	34%	20%
g) Other (including Pakistan, Palestine, Egypt)	24%	6%	14%

How long have you been in Calais/Dunkirk?

a) Less than a month	13%	19%	16%
b) 1-3 months	26%	57%	44%
c) 3-6 months	34%	18%	25%
d) More than 6 months	26%	6%	15%

Over 17-18 January 2021, we surveyed 139 refugees across Calais and Dunkirk



CARE 4 CALAIS