

UK threatens visa suspensions for countries refusing Migrant returns



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The United Kingdom could suspend visas for citizens of countries that fail to cooperate in accepting the return of migrants with no legal right to stay in Britain, Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood announced on Monday. Speaking after hosting ministers from the Five Eyes alliance including the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, Mahmood described securing Britain's borders as her top priority. She said coordinated action was under discussion, adding: "For countries that do not play ball we are considering the possibility of suspending visas in the future."

The warning came after record Channel crossings, with 1,097 people arriving on Saturday, bringing this year's total to more than 30,000. According to Home Office figures, arrivals are up 37 percent compared with the same period last year. Mahmood called the increase "utterly unacceptable."

Although she did not identify specific nations, migration experts highlighted India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal as countries where returns of failed asylum seekers remain low despite strong demand for UK visas. Prime Minister Keir Starmer has previously supported a "transactional" visa policy linking access to cooperation on removals.

The London meeting also addressed issues including online child exploitation and drug trafficking. Mahmood held bilateral talks with US Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, who oversees America's immigration enforcement agencies.

Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp criticized Labour's approach, urging stronger measures such as cutting aid to uncooperative countries.

Mahmood, appointed home secretary in last week's cabinet reshuffle, said the government is exploring the use of military and alternative facilities to reduce dependence on asylum hotels while working with Five Eyes partners to target people-smuggling networks.