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UK and Iraq Sign Border Security Agreement to Reduce Illegal Crossings

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The United Kingdom has formalised a new agreement with Iraq to strengthen border security and reduce small boat crossings. The deal, signed during a two-day visit by Iraq's Deputy Foreign Minister and Head of the Higher Returns Committee, was concluded with UK Security Minister Dan Jarvis.

This agreement aims to ensure the swift return of Iraqi nationals who have no legal right to remain in the UK. Officials stated that this initiative is part of a broader effort to deter illegal crossings and to reinforce the government's commitment to improving the asylum system.

According to recent government figures, the number of Iraqi nationals arriving in the UK via small boats has fallen significantly. For the year ending March 2025, 1,900 arrivals were recorded, down from 2,600 during the previous 12 months. Authorities attribute this decline to strengthened bilateral cooperation and enhanced border measures already in place.

The new arrangement builds on earlier discussions between UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani, in which both leaders committed to working closely on migration management and related security measures. While the UK continues to address broader migration challenges, this agreement is seen as a targeted step towards curbing unauthorised arrivals and maintaining border integrity.

UK officials emphasised that the partnership will facilitate faster processing for returns while upholding international obligations. The cooperation will include logistical coordination, documentation support, and continued dialogue between the two nations to address migration-related challenges more effectively.

The move comes amid ongoing efforts by the UK government to improve the asylum system and manage migration flows more efficiently. It reflects a broader strategy to discourage dangerous and unlawful routes used by migrants, particularly across the English Channel, where small boat crossings have been a persistent concern.

This latest development underscores the importance of international collaboration in managing migration pressures and ensuring that those without legal rights to remain are returned in a timely and safe manner.