

Yvette Cooper Launches Review of Family Rights Amid Migrant Surges

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Home Secretary Yvette Cooper has ordered a formal review into how the right to family life under the Human Rights Act applies to individuals who enter the United Kingdom illegally. The decision comes as small boat crossings across the English Channel continue to rise, with more than 25,000 arrivals recorded by July, marking the highest mid-year total to date.

Cooper stated that the review aims to ensure that legal protections are not exploited by those arriving through irregular means. She stressed the importance of maintaining a fair immigration system that upholds public confidence and enforces border control while respecting genuine human rights obligations.

The review is part of a broader government strategy to address illegal immigration and people smuggling. Alongside this, the Home Office will expand workplace enforcement operations targeting employers who knowingly hire undocumented migrants. These inspections will focus on industries such as fast food, barber shops, and delivery services, where abuse is believed to be widespread. Ministers have also pledged to extend enforcement to contractor and franchise operations.

To tackle the wider smuggling networks, the UK will host an international summit in London, bringing together legal, law enforcement, and diplomatic experts to strengthen cross-border cooperation. The event aims to address organised migration crime and develop coordinated strategies to disrupt people smugglers operating across Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Despite the increased enforcement, some experts have raised concerns about the challenges of regulating online content used to advertise illegal crossings. Dr. Annette Idler from the University of Oxford warned that new laws criminalising such posts may have limited effect if operators are based outside the UK jurisdiction. “It sounds promising, but enforcement faces limits when content originates overseas,” she said.

Opposition voices, particularly from the Conservative benches, argue that the current approach lacks sufficient deterrence. Critics blame the

Labour government's abandonment of earlier initiatives, such as offshore processing arrangements, for the recent rise in illegal entries. They have called for tougher border measures and faster deportation mechanisms.

The Border Security Command, established last year, now leads national efforts to disrupt smuggling networks. It brings together staff from MI5, Border Force, Immigration Enforcement, and the National Crime Agency to coordinate operations and intelligence.

Cooper said the review will balance legitimate claims to family life with the need to uphold immigration law. The outcome is expected to influence future policy as pressure grows for stronger control over UK borders.