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## UK Announces £100m Border Security Investment to Combat Smuggling Gangs

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The United Kingdom government has pledged £100 million to bolster border security and target organised people smuggling gangs, as part of a wider strategy to stem illegal

immigration via small boat crossings. The funding, announced alongside a renewed enforcement agenda, will support operations under the newly piloted “one in, one out” agreement with France and enhance cross-border cooperation.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper stated the investment would reinforce what she described as a “serious and comprehensive plan” to dismantle the networks enabling illegal Channel crossings. The initiative aims to support law enforcement, particularly the newly established Border Security Command, in collaboration with the National Crime Agency (NCA), police, and other agencies both domestically and abroad.

Speaking on *Sky News*, Home Office Minister Dame Angela Eagle acknowledged the scale of the ongoing challenge, describing it as “formidable” and noting the need for sustained efforts. “We’re making progress, but there’s no quick magic that’s going to switch this off,” she said, reiterating the government’s commitment to ending the use of asylum hotels by the end of the current Parliament.

The £100 million will be used to recruit up to 300 new NCA officers, deploy advanced detection technologies, and acquire specialist equipment. According to the Home Office, the funding will also empower UK authorities to conduct more aggressive operations against smuggling networks operating in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Additionally, it will support enforcement tied to forthcoming legislation, including the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill.

A key element of the bill includes criminalising the creation or sharing of online content that facilitates illegal immigration, such as advertisements for small boat crossings. Ministers argue this will disrupt the digital infrastructure exploited by traffickers. Research suggests that up to 80 per cent of those arriving by small boat used online platforms during their journey, including to contact smugglers.

Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp criticised the announcement, calling it a “gimmick” and a “desperate grab for headlines.” Philp argued the Labour government lacks a credible strategy, saying, “The British public deserves real action, not empty slogans and tinkering at the edges.”

Government figures indicate that over 25,000 individuals have arrived on small boats so far in 2025, a record for this point in the year. Ministers maintain that their expanded law enforcement framework, in tandem with new bilateral agreements and legislation, will deliver the structural change needed to restore order to the immigration system.