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Former Border Force Chief Slams Inconsistencies in Migrant Crisis Response

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A former senior immigration officer has criticised Britain's response to the ongoing migrant crisis, highlighting a growing gap between political statements and operational realities. Kevin Saunders, who served as Chief Immigration Officer at the United Kingdom Border Force, raised the alarm as the number of illegal Channel crossings this year surpassed 25,000.

Speaking to GB News, Saunders warned that the figure could rise significantly by the end of the year. He described current policies as “inconsistent” and said that the mismatch between public messaging and frontline enforcement is undermining the country’s ability to manage border security effectively.

Saunders noted that criminal smuggling networks continue to lure migrants with promises of generous benefits, including accommodation and financial support. “They’re going to get their hotel rooms, they’re going to get money, they’re going to get everything,” he said, suggesting that such expectations are being met under the current system.

Despite ongoing efforts by immigration enforcement teams, Saunders revealed that officers face a critical obstacle: limited detention space. “They’re finding people who shouldn’t be in the UK... but they’re having to release them because there’s nowhere to put them,” he explained. This cycle of releasing individuals due to a lack of capacity, he said, renders many enforcement efforts ineffective.

Saunders proposed centralised accommodation as a more viable alternative to the use of widespread hotel placements. He pointed to military sites such as Wethersfield as cost-effective solutions, noting that housing 400 individuals in one location could significantly reduce operational costs. “I did the sums for the one up here near where I live, and it was a lot cheaper,” he said. However, he acknowledged that political opposition has blocked such measures.

With Channel crossings continuing to rise, Saunders’ comments underscore the urgent need for practical solutions. His remarks reflect concerns shared by many in the enforcement sector who are calling for policies that not only deter illegal entry but also enable consistent, lawful removal of those with no right to remain.