

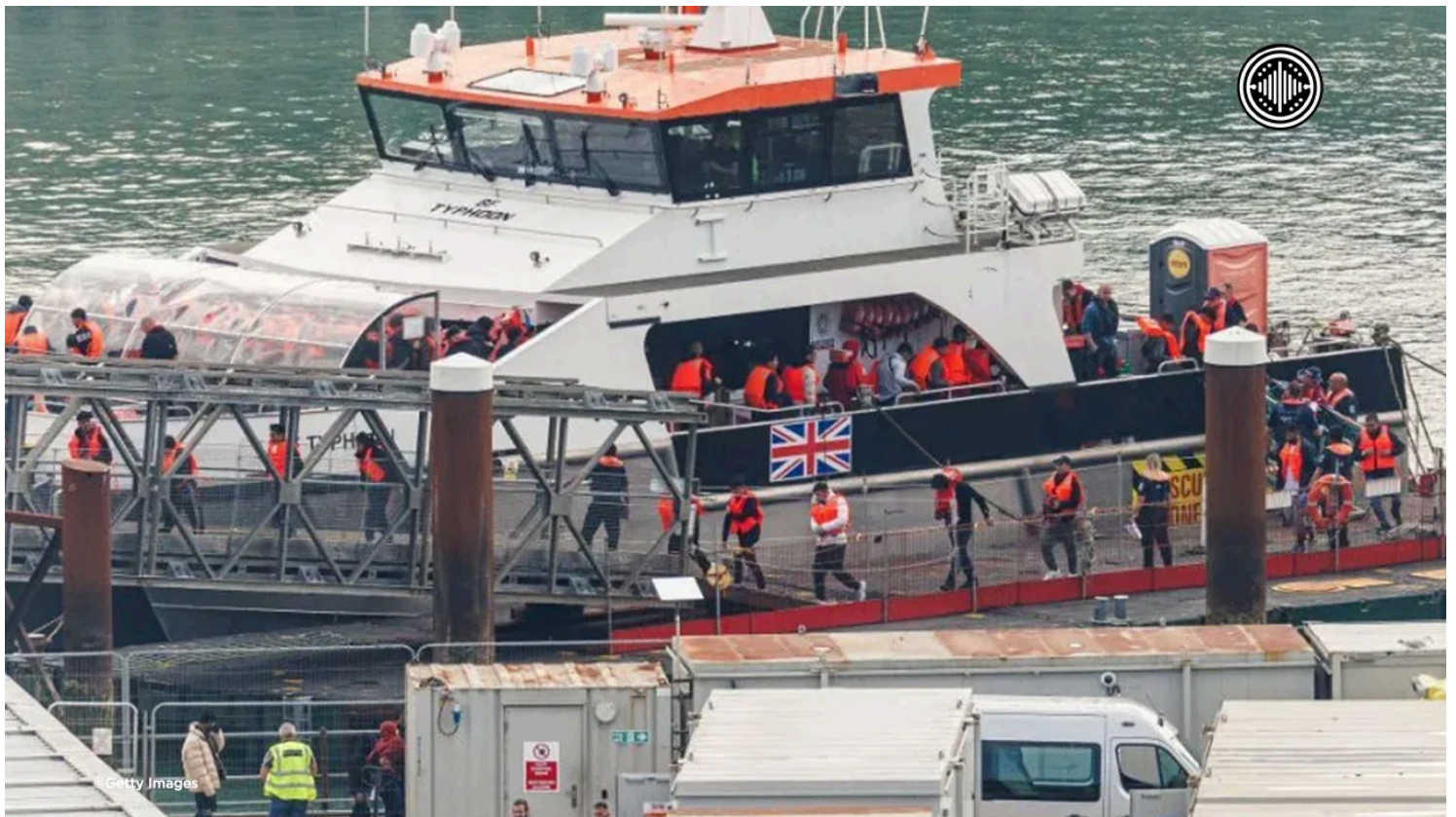
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French Actions Condemned as 155 Migrants Reach Dover After New Deal

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On the first day of a new migrant exchange agreement between the UK and France, 155 migrants were escorted into British waters, prompting fierce criticism from Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp. Speaking to GB News during a patrol at Dover port, Philp described the French actions as “disgraceful” and accused them of actively facilitating illegal migration. The incident, occurring just 24 hours after Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer’s deal took effect, undermines claims that the agreement would deter Channel crossings. Philp’s observations highlight ongoing challenges in controlling illegal migration and raise questions about the efficacy of the new policy.

While patrolling the Dover port, Philp witnessed two heavily overloaded migrant boats within a mere 30 minutes, escorted by French authorities into UK territorial waters. He told GB News, “I came out to the Channel today because the Government claimed their deal yesterday would deter crossings, so I wanted to find out if it’s true and it’s not true, because we’ve seen migrant crossings.” The Shadow Home Secretary expressed outrage at what he perceived as French complicity, noting a particularly bold request from a French captain. “The French captain then had the cheek to ask for his life jackets back, we caught that on the radio, so he can give those life jackets to a load of other illegal immigrants in the future,” Philp recounted, suggesting the equipment would be reused to aid further crossings.

Philp argued that the French were not working to prevent illegal migration but were instead enabling it, calling their conduct “completely wrong.” He criticised the Labour Government’s exchange agreement, pointing to significant exemptions that weaken its impact. Migrants claiming to be minors, those citing modern slavery concerns, or individuals raising human rights issues are not subject to return under the deal. “The human rights lawyers will make mincemeat of the Government using all of those various loopholes,” Philp warned, estimating that 94% of arriving migrants would likely remain in the UK. This high retention rate, he argued, eliminates any deterrent effect the agreement might have had.

The Shadow Home Secretary contrasted the current approach with the previous Conservative Government’s Rwanda policy, which he claimed was poised for implementation in July 2024 after overcoming legal and parliamentary obstacles. “The Rwanda scheme was ready to go. That would have seen 100 per cent of illegal arrivals getting removed, that would have acted as a deterrent,” Philp explained. He accused Starmer of abandoning the Rwanda plan without establishing a robust alternative, a decision he believes has exacerbated the migration crisis. “This year so far, 2025, has been the worst year in history for illegal crossings. That is down to this Labour Government,” he asserted, attributing the record-breaking numbers to what he described as the administration’s weak stance on border control.

The arrival of 155 migrants on the deal’s first day underscores the persistent challenge of securing the UK’s borders. Philp’s critique resonates with centre-right concerns that the Labour Government’s policies lack the stringency required to address illegal migration effectively. The exchange agreement, intended to reduce Channel crossings, appears to have faltered at the outset, with French actions seemingly undermining its purpose. As crossings continue to surge, the issue remains a flashpoint in British politics, with calls for

tougher measures to deter illegal migration and restore control over the nation's borders growing louder.