

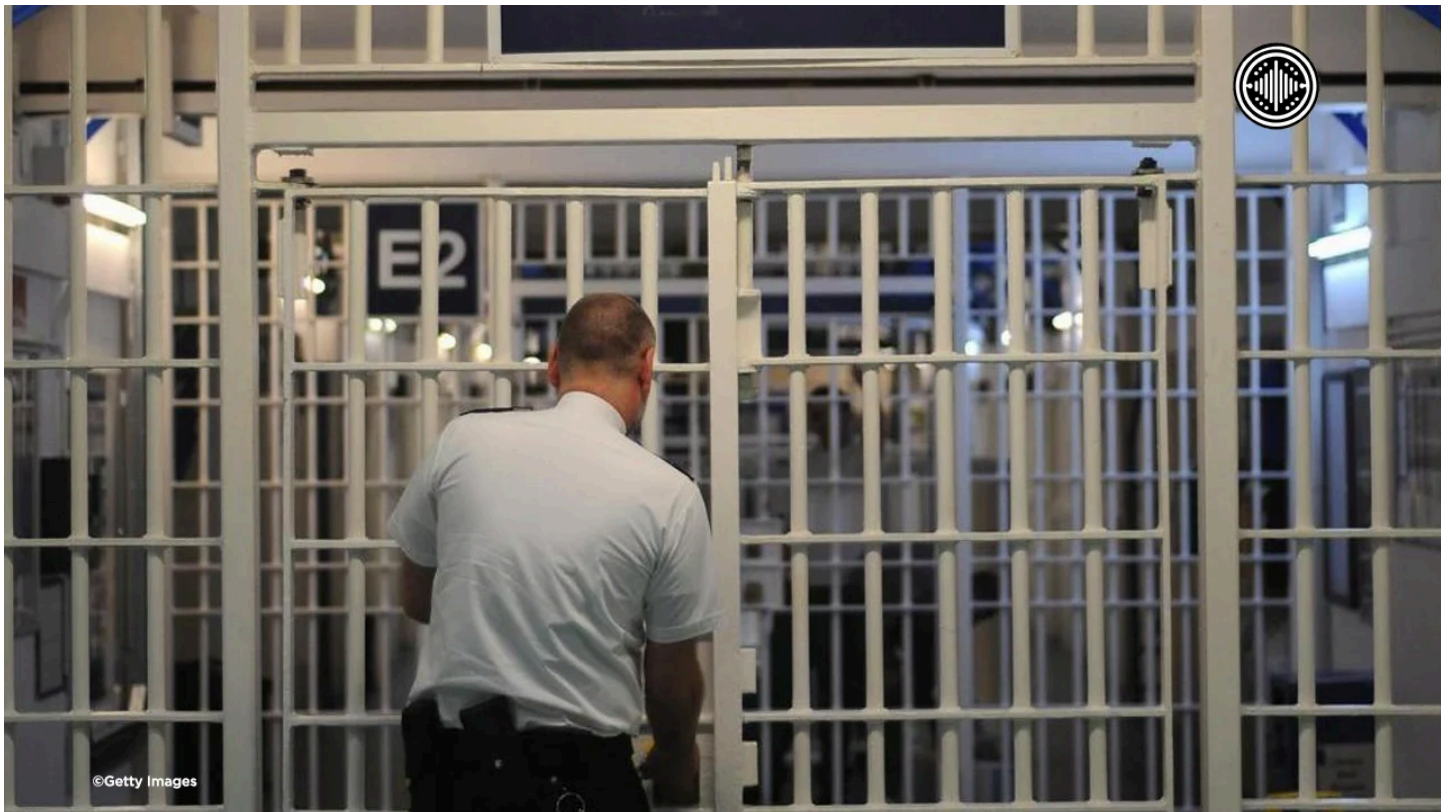
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Government Plans Immediate Deportation for Foreign Criminals After Sentencing

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Foreign criminals could face immediate deportation from the United Kingdom under a new proposal announced by the Justice Secretary, which would mark the toughest approach yet to removing offenders from the country. The policy would replace existing rules that only allow deportation after an offender has served part of their custodial sentence.

Currently, foreign national offenders can be removed after serving 50% of their sentence. A law change announced in June 2025, due to take effect in September, will lower that threshold to 30%. The latest plan, unveiled in July 2025, would go further by setting the threshold at 0%, enabling removal to take place as soon as sentencing is complete.

Government figures indicate that foreign nationals make up around 12% of the prison population. Since July 2024, 5,198 foreign offenders have been deported, representing a 14% increase on the previous 12 months. Officials say the proposed change could save taxpayers an average of £54,000 a year for each prison place freed up, as well as reducing pressure on the already crowded prison system.

The Justice Secretary has stated that the UK must send a clear message to those who abuse the country's hospitality by committing crimes. She said deportations are already up and that this new measure would ensure removals happen "earlier than ever before".

While the aim is to remove offenders immediately, authorities would retain the power to keep certain individuals in custody. This could apply in cases where there are credible threats to national security, evidence of planned criminal activity in the UK, or other public safety concerns.

In the past, the UK has used prison transfer agreements with other nations to allow offenders to serve their sentences in their home countries. Between 2010 and 2023, 945 prisoners were transferred abroad under such agreements, averaging fewer than two per week.

The proposed immediate removal policy will require parliamentary approval before it can take effect. If passed, it would represent one of the most significant changes in recent years to how foreign national offenders are dealt with in the criminal justice system.

Supporters of the plan argue that it will improve public safety, reduce the burden on prisons, and save money. Critics, however, question whether foreign governments will always cooperate in accepting their nationals promptly, and whether the policy could lead to complex legal challenges.

If implemented, the measure would cement the UK's stance on removing non-citizens who commit serious crimes, prioritising swift removal over extended incarceration in the British prison system. The government has made clear that its objective is to ensure the protection of the public while maintaining a justice system that deals robustly with those who break the law.