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## Unverified Video Claim Prompts Questions Over Handling of Channel Dinghies

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A video filmed in August 2023 and circulated online by Andrew Bridgen MP (Member of Parliament) claims to show dinghies used in small-boat crossings being returned to France without being deflated. As of July 2025, there is no publicly available evidence from the Home Office or from independent sources to verify what the footage actually depicts. A link cited in relation to the claim directs to an unrelated legal judgment from March 2024 concerning a defamation case involving Mr Bridgen and contains no information about dinghies or cross-Channel operations.

Mr Bridgen has suggested that the clip demonstrates a practice which could allow criminal gangs to reuse vessels for further illegal crossings of the English Channel. The footage appears to show a UK-registered vehicle transporting several dinghies, but there

is no confirmed documentation or official statement linking the transport to any Home Office operation. Nor is there verifiable evidence that the boats shown were subsequently returned to France for reuse. In the absence of independent confirmation, these assertions remain unsubstantiated.

The handling of small-boat crossings remains a sensitive and politically charged policy area. It involves joint UK–French operations, as well as broader measures aimed at disrupting people-smuggling networks. While vessels recovered at sea or intercepted near the British coast are generally removed from service, detailed information about what ultimately happens to each craft is not routinely made public. This lack of official transparency can fuel speculation when videos surface on social media without verifiable sourcing or corroborating evidence.

At present, what can be stated with certainty is limited. Footage posted by Mr Bridgen purports to show recovered dinghies being transported to France intact; however, no statement from the Home Office has confirmed that such a practice takes place. There is also no independently verifiable record indicating that the craft shown in the video were later used again by people-smuggling groups. Without such confirmation, the central allegation cannot be regarded as established fact.

The reliability of the original claim is further weakened by the fact that the cited link does not substantiate the allegation. Instead, it refers to a separate legal matter entirely unrelated to the handling of migrant boats. This mismatch raises questions about the accuracy of the initial reporting and highlights the importance of verifying information before presenting it as fact.

A more accurate and responsible framing of the situation would therefore be: footage shared by Andrew Bridgen MP claims to show dinghies used in small-boat crossings being returned to France without being deflated, but there is currently no evidence to support this claim. Any mention of specific contractors, vehicle registrations or operational procedures should be treated as unconfirmed unless supported by official statements, court records or multiple independent sources.

As of now, the Home Office and any parties linked to the video have not issued on-the-record responses addressing the footage. Until further verifiable information becomes available, the claim should be regarded as unverified and reported with clear disclaimers to ensure accuracy and maintain public trust.