

Foreign criminals and illegal entrants to the UK removed to Albania

Yesterday (Thursday 1 September) the UK government removed a total of 32 foreign criminals and immigration offenders on a charter flight to Albania.

Five individuals who entered the UK illegally were removed on yesterday's flight, including one person who was removed in 24 days after arriving via small boat in August.

Other individuals included a person who was removed 19 days after being caught by immigration officers working in a restaurant having overstayed as a visitor, and another who arrived hidden in a lorry from May.

The 27 foreign national offenders removed had received combined prison sentences of more than 87 years and were convicted of crimes including the supply of Class A drugs, facilitating illegal entry and sexual offences.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

This flight sends a clear message to those who flout our laws and immigration rules that you will be swiftly removed. Anyone who comes to our country in a small boat or other dangerous, illegal means should not expect to stay in the UK for long.

We are working closely with the Albanian government to tackle illegal immigration and have this week agreed our joint operational plans to expedite the removal of Albanians who enter the UK illegally via small boats.

Alongside measures in our Nationality and Borders Act, this will help end the cycle of last-minute claims and appeals that can delay removals. We will stop at nothing to remove those with no right to be here as the public rightly expects.

Foreign offenders returned on yesterday's flight to Albania include:

- an individual sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment for intent to supply Class A drugs
- an individual sentenced to over four years' imprisonment for facilitating illegal entry
- an individual sentenced to over seven years' imprisonment for intent to supply Class A drugs

Yesterday's flight is the 45th operated by the Home Office this year as the government tackles illegal migration and abuse of the asylum system.

Since signing our returns agreement with Albania in 2021, we have removed

nearly 1,000 Albanian foreign national offenders, including some who crossed the Channel illegally to come to the UK.

The UK has removed 7,638 people via enforced, voluntary and other return types since January 1, including 1,995 foreign national offenders. In August 2022 alone, 220 criminals were removed from the UK on both charter and scheduled flights.

The Nationality and Borders Act will further deter illegal entry into the UK, breaking the business model of people-smuggling networks and speed up the removal of those with no right to be in the UK.