

# Dublin Refugee Calamity Could be the Future of Europe

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*In the Irish capital, Dublin, a refugee and migration issue, made worse by the conflict in Ukraine, has fueled tensions. Ireland already faces a housing crisis, with tent encampments (repeatedly cleared by the police) having increasingly become part of Dublin's landscape, as detailed by a [DW news report](#) published last week.*

An EU agreement allows Ukrainians to enter the continent without having to apply for asylum first, and a recent law in the post-Brexit United Kingdom (which enables London to deport illegal migrants) has also led to a rise in asylum applications in neighboring Ireland. The political climate is so bad that, since the end of 2023, there have been [arson attacks](#) against buildings that would be converted into refugee shelters, and [riots](#).

Moreover, a recent Irish Times poll reveals that 63% of the population wants stricter immigration policies. Slogans such as "Ireland is full", and "Ireland for the Irish", displayed on banners everywhere, are an increasingly common sight.

The issue goes beyond the UK and Ireland. The English Channel has been at the center of a migration crisis for a while, with people crossing it in small boats. In December 2021 I [wrote](#) on how it became a focus for tensions between France and the United Kingdom, which remains the case.

Back in June 2022 the British government [struck a deal with Rwanda](#) and announced its plans to deport thousands of asylum seekers to that East African country so that they have their asylum claims processed there, without the possibility of returning to Britain. Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson defended this Rwanda deal claiming it to be one of the world's safest destinations for migrants, and incumbent Prime Minister Rishi Sunak plans to go ahead with this plan.

British judges have disputed this notion, however. In any case, the UK government [started detaining migrants on May 1](#) and they are expected to be sent to Rwanda, after the British Parliament overruled a Supreme Court decision and, [last month](#), declared the East African country to be a safe destination. Legal experts have been claiming that this breaches both domestic and international laws, but London is going ahead with it anyway.

Rwanda has a record of hosting migrants: in 2013, for example, Israel signed a controversial secretive agreement with the country to transfer Sudanese and Eritrean migrants there, an arrangement that was carried out until 2018. According to reports, the human rights of these migrants were not observed, the whole experience being compared to [being in a prison](#).

The issue is further complicated by the fact that, on May 13, a Belfast (Northern Ireland) high court suspended the so-called Rwanda Act in Northern Ireland, declaring it to be a violation of the Windsor Framework, which regulates post-Brexit relations with the European Union.

According to law professor Colin Murray, quoted by the DW,

“as part of the Brexit deal, EU law protecting asylum-seekers is retained in the space of Northern Ireland, in keeping with all of the EU human rights law continuing to apply after Brexit for Northern Ireland if it’s related to the 1998 [Good Friday] agreement.”

As I [wrote](#) in 2021, the Brexit arrangements came to a deadlock over the issue of the Northern Ireland Protocol pertaining the so-called Brexit Trilemma – that is the impossible task of simultaneously making sure that there is no “hard border” between the independent Republic of Ireland and (British) Northern Ireland on the Irish island; and making sure there are no customs border in the Irish Sea; while Britain, in its turn, leaves both the European Union Customs Union, and the European Single Market.

London basically chose to sacrifice the second item, thereby creating a de facto sea frontier, which has been causing many problems for the Northern Irish population and has reactivated unhealed old ethnic-religious quarrels between predominantly Protestant “loyalists” (who consider themselves British-Irish) and Catholic Republicans. The risk of such conflict [coming back](#) has been haunting the region – and now the migration crisis largely driven by the vast number of displaced Ukrainians can only add fuel to the fire, with implications to the whole Western European continent beyond Ireland and Britain. One can easily imagine a scenario where this situation (with violent protests and xenophobia) is replicated in [Poland](#) and elsewhere, with economic, political and security consequences.

By the end of 2022, there were already 15 million Ukrainians fleeing to (Western) Europe, amid the largest European refugee crisis since World War II. According to The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, a Swiss-based civil-society organization, migrant smuggling has resurfaced in Eastern Europe.

The Russian Federation has been conducting successful operations towards the Avdeevsky and Kharkov areas, and this can only increase the flow of Ukrainian refugees. All kinds of law-abiding civilians from Ukraine join the ranks of the migrants, but it would not be unexpected to find a number of radicalized elements amongst them, considering the [far-right problem](#) that the country has – it is after all a global hub for White Nationalists and neo-Nazis, as TIME magazine [reported](#) already in 2022.

This input of radicalized people with military experience into an already [NATOized](#) and [fascitized Europe](#) is a recipe for disaster. And, of course, the presence of [NATO troops in Ukraine](#) will only aggravate the crisis, by making a much needed peace agreement to become a more distant scenario and thus perpetuation the conflict.

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