

2021 BELARUS BORDER CRISIS: MINSK CHANNELS MIGRANTS AT POLAND, LITHUANIA AND LATVIA

From summer 2021 the Lukashenko regime drove migrants to the borders of Lithuania, Latvia and Poland; on 23 August 2021 the four prime ministers called it a hybrid attack 'planned and systemically organized' by the regime. On 17 November, near Dubicze Cerkiewne, Poland's Defence Ministry said Belarusian forces likely damaged the fence and forced migrants to throw rocks at Polish soldiers; the Border Guard recorded 501 crossing attempts that day, while some 300 people were camped near the Bruzgi–Kuźnica crossing surrounded by Belarusian soldiers. The EU broadened its Belarus sanctions to 'instrumentalisation of human beings' on 15 November and on 2 December listed 17 individuals and 11 entities, including Belavia, tour operators and hotels.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
BEYOND UKRAINE
AS OF 20 OCT 2026

DEGREE OF PROOF

OFFICIAL ATTRIBUTION

A government, a prosecutor, the EU, NATO or a UN body has formally named Russia, its services or its state-backed forces. This is a position of that authority, not a verdict.

WHO ESTABLISHED IT

Named: Belarus (Lukashenko regime). Joint statement of the Prime Ministers of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Poland (23 Aug 2021); Polish Ministry of National Defence (18 Nov 2021); EU Council decisions of 15 Nov and 2 Dec 2021 condemning the 'orchestrated and politically motivated instrumentalisation of human beings'. Russia is not named in these texts.

LATEST

Belarus-origin pressure resumed in later years; the EU's 15 Dec 2025 hybrid criterion extends the regime to new Belarusian actions (see Lithuania entry).

LINK TO THE WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

The crisis preceded Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, partly launched from Belarusian territory.

SOURCES

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- B** EU Neighbours East – Belarus: EU broadens scope for sanctions to tackle hybrid attacks and instrumentalisation of migrants · 2021-11-15
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- C** Romea.cz – Polish Defense Ministry: Belarus forcing migrants to attack Polish soldiers · 2021-11-19
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WHAT WE ASK OF MEMBER STATES

- Name the instrumentalisation of migrants as a hybrid attack by the state that organises it.
- Support the EU and frontline states in protecting their borders while respecting international law.
- Sanction the officials and networks that move people to the border.

