

MIGRANT SURGE FROM BELARUS: LATVIA NAMES A RUSSIA-BELARUS HYBRID ATTACK ON ITS BORDER

In summer 2026 attempted illegal crossings from Belarus into Latvia rose sharply, with 111 attempts recorded on one day in mid-July and nearly 10,000 attempts stopped in 2026 by mid-August; on 10 August border guards found a tunnel dug from Belarus through which 15 people had crossed. On 11 August the government launched the security operation 'Vilkatis' with greater armed-forces support. Prime Minister Andris Kulbergs said Russia is using Latvia's border as an element of hybrid warfare, 'attacking our infrastructure via Belarus'.

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: Russia and Belarus. Latvian Government (PM Andris Kulbergs, 11 Aug 2026) described the rise as a hybrid threat orchestrated by Russia and Belarus; State Border Guard chief Guntis Pujāts: 'very aggressive neighbours: Russia and Belarus' (Aug 2026). The Poland–Latvia–Lithuania joint declaration of 25 Feb 2026 refers to 'the ongoing hybrid attacks by Russia and Belarus against our countries and the European Union'.

LATEST

On 14 Aug 2026 a drone entering from Belarus near Rugāji was shot down by NATO Baltic Air Policing jets. For the armed 'Black Rus' group that crossed from Belarus on 5 Oct 2026, see the separate entry.

LINK TO THE WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

Latvian officials frame the pressure as part of Russia's hybrid campaign against EU/NATO states supporting Ukraine; Belarus hosts Russian forces and served as a staging ground for the 2022 invasion.

SOURCES

C Euronews – Latvia steps up border security amid surge in irregular migration from Belarus · 2026-08-11

<https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2026/08/11/latvia-steps-up-border-security-amid-surge-in-irregular-migration-from-belarus>

C Euronews – The border frontline: Latvia faces migrants, drones and war fears · 2026-08-19

<https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2026/08/19/the-border-frontline-latvia-faces-migrants-drones-and-war-fears>

C LIGA.net – Underground tunnel from Belarus discovered in Latvia; operation against illegal migration launched · 2026-08-11

<https://news.liga.net/en/world/news/underground-tunnel-from-belarus-discovered-in-latvia-operation-against-illegal-migration-launched>

B LSM – Latvia, Lithuania, Poland to team up tackling border 'hybrid attacks' · 2026-02-26

<https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/defence/26.02.2026-latvia-lithuania-poland-to-team-up-tackling-border-hybrid-attacks.a636460/>

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.

