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Nov 19, 2023 · 18 tweets · [P_Kallioniemi/status/1726300413077631014](#)

In today's #vatniksoup, I'll talk about a hybrid warfare strategy I call the Migration Bomb. It's a strategy in which countries like Russia and Belarus organize immigration from relatively poor regions to EU and Schengen areas.

1/17



Since Aug 2023, there's been an uptick in asylum seekers on eastern border of Finland. Russian officials didn't previously allow travel from Russia to Finnish border crossings without the necessary travel documents, but recently all this changed.

2/17

Domestic news

Uptick in asylum seekers on eastern border

Russia is now allowing people without visas to pass into Finnish checkpoints.



File photo of the Vaalimaa border crossing in 2022. Image: Antro Valo / Yle

YLE NEWS

12.11 17:02 · Updated 12.11 17:10

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To understand what's going on, we have to go back to year 2015, when 1,3 million people - mostly from Syria, but also from Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iraq and Eritrea - came to Europe, requesting asylum.

During that time, Finland received 30 000 asylum seekers.



Most of these immigrants crossed the Mediterranean, but at some point FSB started allowing people to cross from Russia to Norway and Finland.

Both countries saw several hundred irregular border crossings every day. Since it's illegal to drive from Russia to Norway or...


DISPATCH *The view from the ground.*

A (Very) Cold War on the Russia-Norway Border

The number of Syrians taking an unlikely route into Europe through the Arctic Circle has expanded from a handful to hundreds. And Oslo thinks Moscow is responsible.

By [Alissa de Carbonnel](#)



 The article is more than 7 years old

Asylum Seeking

Russian border guard to STT: Russian security service behind northeast asylum traffic

Finnish news agency STT reports a Russian border guard's confession that the transport of asylum seekers to Finland's two northeast border crossings is being orchestrated by the Russian Federation's Federal Security Service, the FSB. Families with children are given priority, the source said. Finnish authorities have suspected for some time that the transfer of asylum seekers from Russia to Finland has been part of a carefully organised operation.



...Finland without a permit and crossing by foot is prohibited, Russian officials and smugglers provided the asylum seekers with bicycles.

We now know that this 2015 operation was a countermeasure for the Western sanctions against Russia after the annexation of Crimea.





Immigrant smuggling was big business, and back in 2015 Syrian asylum seekers paid at least 3000 USD for a relatively safe passage to Europe. These smugglers and criminal organizations were often connected to organized crime, including Italian Mafia.

November 24, 2015 3:20 PM
Heather Murdock

From Syria to Europe: The Price They Pay

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FILE - A Greek Red Cross volunteer comforts a crying Syrian refugee moments after disembarking from a flooded raft Oct. 20, 2015, at a beach on the Greek island of Lesbos.

BRUSSELS — To get from Syria to Europe, you need at least \$3,000. Some people make it on less, but when traveling as a refugee, money equals safety.

And most people, like 22-year-old Mahmoud in London, remember every penny they spent.

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'Bigger than drugs': how the Mafia profits from the Mediterranean migrant crisis

Rosanna Ryan
Posted 29 Jun 2015



Migrants wait in the port of Lampedusa to board a ferry and be transferred in Porto Empedocle in Sicily, February 2015. (Alberto Pizzoli/AFP/Getty Images)

In 2021, Belarus, a puppet regime of Russia, started their own migration bomb against Poland and the Baltic states. This crisis was triggered by the worsening of Belarus-EU relations following the 2020 Belarusian presidential elections and the 2020-2021 protests in Belarus.

7/17





In Jul 2021, Belarusian dictator Lukashenko threatened to "flood" Europe with "drugs and migrants". Soon after this, Belarusian tourist agencies started advertising in the Middle East, promoting a hassle-free entry to the EU and its countries with good social welfare system.

8/17

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Digest

Belarus dictator threatens to ‘flood EU with drugs and migrants’

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Reformation

Who is behind the flow of migrants from Belarus to Lithuania? Reform.by investigation

Belarusian-Lithuanian border. Photo: @LRKAM

AUTHOR **REFORM.by**

PUBLISHED **02:12 07/23/2021**

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The topic of illegal or, as human rights activists advise to say, irregular migration on the border of the EU and Belarus has gradually become the main topic on the information agenda. Who is behind the flow of migrants, how is it organized and who makes money from people's misfortune? Reform.by conducted its own investigation and came to

Minsk quickly doubled flights from Baghdad & Iraqi travel companies started massive campaigns, promoting cheap flights to Minsk. Many "tourists" arrived and then tried to enter Europe through Lithuania, Poland or Latvia. Belarus even provided them with wire cutters & axes.

Cheap tours

Let's return to Iraq, where, according to the Lithuanian side, the main flow of migrants comes from. Since the spring of 2021, Iraqi travel companies have begun to massively offer travel from Baghdad to Minsk for vacation. Tour prices range from \$560 to \$950. The tour package includes air tickets, visa, insurance, hotel accommodation and several excursions.

SYRIA \$945
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 ساركو بالبحر وتواصل معنا موهبتنا بتشارككم

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Amin is 25 years old. The young man says that all his life he dreamed of leaving Iraq; he calls Iraq hell on earth. Having heard about Belarus on TV, he and his friends decided not to miss the chance. They say that for migrants, a tour to Belarus is still one of the cheapest and healthiest ways to get to Europe.

"Typically, smugglers are paid several thousand dollars to travel to a European country in a truck," says Amin.

According to him, because of Lukashenko's words, the demand for tours from Iraq to Belarus has increased significantly. He and four of his friends purchased tours from the travel agency Al Qimma Travel and Tourism for \$700 per person. The price includes a PCR test, visa, accommodation and several excursions. Amin was given a 10-day visa right at the Minsk National Airport. All five guys lived at the Yubileiny Hotel.

Even before arriving in Belarus, Amin told us: he and his friends monitor news about detentions of migrants by Lithuanian border guards and mark on the map the places where they occurred. The guys planned to cross the border in the Grodno region: they explained this by the fact that forests were visible there on satellite maps. They were also looking for information about what transport to get to the border and where to buy Lithuanian SIM cards. Amin and his friends decided to take public transport to Lida, and from there to the border by taxi.

Migrants Say Belarusians Took Them to E.U. Border and Supplied Wire Cutters

Iraqi Kurds and other migrants said they were fleeing despair at home, but Belarus encouraged them, offering visas and helping them get to the border.

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We can safely state that Russia is now waging similar hybrid warfare against Finland, most probably due to Finland's recent NATO membership and military aid to Ukraine. The process most probably goes as follows: Russian intelligence agencies are promoting opportunities to..

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Finland accuses Russia of aiding illegal migrant crossings

🕒 4 days ago



AFP

Finnish border guards patrol the frontier with Russia

...enter Europe via Russia with cheap flights and transportation to the border. These opportunities are also advertised on social media platforms. They are then provided with instructions on how to gain the status of an asylum seeker,...

Europol coordinates referral action targeting migrant smuggling from Belarus

On 16 December, a total of 455 social media accounts facilitating the illegal immigration from Belarus to Europe have been targeted as a result of a large-scale referral action.

Europol's European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC), together with the European Union Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) within Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) coordinated the referral activity which involved law enforcement authorities from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Poland and Germany.

The referral action focused on the collection of online content promoting illegal immigration services from Belarus to Europe, such as social media accounts advertising the sale of counterfeit ID documents, passports, visas or illegal transportation services. These accounts have been referred to the Online Service Providers with the request to review them against the terms of service.

The new Belarusian migratory route is heavily advertised to migrants on social media and instant messaging applications, which represents a significant pull factor. The misuse of these online platforms by facilitators led to a large increase of departures and irregular border crossings.

...put into cars that drive them to the border after which they attempt to cycle across the border crossing to Finland. They are not allowed to stop in any of the towns before the border, and Russian official do nothing to stop them from crossing the border over to Finland.

12/17

Finnish officials say migrants arrive by car before cycling across the border in small groups to claim asylum.

Finland shares a 1,340km (833-mile) border with Russia, Europe's longest.

The number of crossings remains small but has been rising this week. Border guards say they have registered around 89 crossings in two days.

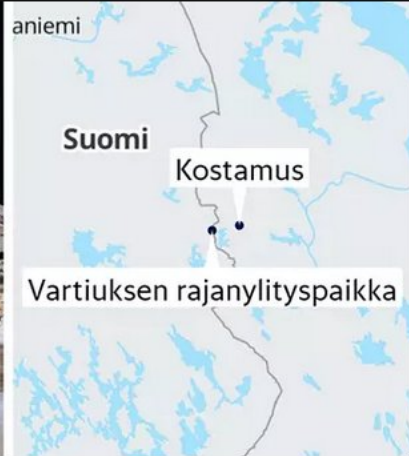
That compares with 91 in the four months to 12 November.

DIAMOND OF THE DAY : 93-year-old Warren Buffett is an extraordinary billionaire – the

Foreign countries | Eastern border

A hotel clerk from Kostamu tells HS how Russia directs newcomers to the border

Only a few people in Kostamus wanted to talk on the phone about the immigrants who arrived in the city. HS also called the border department of the Russian Security Service in Kostamus, but the operator on duty slammed the receiver into his ear.



The Vartius border guard station in Kuhmo has received more asylum seekers from Russia than usual in recent days. PHOTO: PEKKA AGARTH & MAPTILER / OPEN STREET MAP

Jenni Jeskanen HS

14:40

On 18 Nov 2023, Finland decided to close four of its border crossings & made asylum seeking possible only in two crossings further up north. Finance Minister Riiikka Purra said Thursday that Finland was ready to close all crossing points on the Russian border if necessary.

Finland slams shut some Russia border crossings

'We have acted decisively and swiftly,' says Finnish PM, amid escalating dispute with Moscow about migrants.



Border guards check a vehicle at the Nuijamaa border station between Russia and Finland in Lappeenranta | Vesa Mollanen/Lehtikuva/AFP via Getty Images

BY PIERRE EMMANUEL NGENDAKUMANA

NOVEMBER 16, 2023 | 3:55 PM CET | © 2 MINUTES READ



Europe

Dozens of migrants wait at Finland-Russia border after Helsinki blocks crossings

By **Anne Kauranen**

November 19, 2023 5:58 PM GMT+2 · Updated an hour ago



[1/6] A border guard holds a bicycle of an asylum seeker at the Vartiuss border station in Kuhmo, Finland, November 19, 2023. Lehtikuva/Miska Puumala via REUTERS [Acquire Licensing Rights](#)

HELSINKI, Nov 18 (Reuters) - Dozens of migrants stood behind barriers at two crossings on Finland's border with Russia on Saturday, the Finnish Border Guard said, after Helsinki erected barricades to halt a flow of asylum seekers it says was instigated by Moscow.

The Finnish government [has accused Russia](#) of funnelling migrants to the crossings in retaliation for its decision to increase defence cooperation with the United States, an assertion dismissed by the Kremlin.

HELSINKI, Nov 18 (Reuters) - Dozens of migrants stood behind barriers at two crossings on Finland's border with Russia on Saturday, the Finnish Border Guard said, after Helsinki erected barricades to halt a flow of asylum seekers it says was instigated by Moscow.

The Finnish government [has accused Russia](#) of funnelling migrants to the crossings in retaliation for its decision to increase defence cooperation with the United States, an assertion dismissed by the Kremlin.

The Finnish Border Guard [erected barriers](#) from midnight on Friday at the Vaalimaa, Nuijamaa, Imatra and Niirala border posts in southeast Finland, which account for most of the traffic between the two countries.

Despite the closure, dozens of migrants arrived on Saturday afternoon at the Nuijamaa and Vaalimaa crossings, and lit a campfire in sub-zero temperatures behind razor-wire barriers mounted by border guards, Finnish Border Guard told reporters.

In Nuijamaa, two people managed to breach the barriers and enter Finland, it added.

"We are currently improving the barriers so that something similar will no longer be possible," Colonel Mika Rytkonen said, according to Finland's public broadcaster YLE.



The parties that benefit from these hybrid operations are Russia, criminal organizations and the smugglers who exploit the people in poor regions in the Middle East and in Northern African countries. They also exploit European refugee and immigration policies.

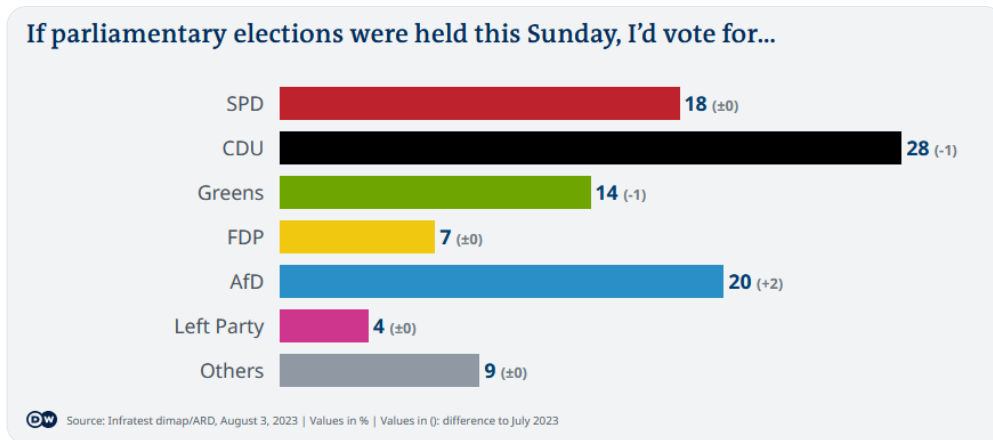
14/17



But this also helps pro-Kremlin, anti-immigration political parties like the German AfD, that then use anti-immigration rhetoric and populism to gain more popularity. In Aug 2023

survey, 20% of Germans stated that they'd vote for the far-right AfD.

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A scene from a video interview with pro-Russian activist Vladimir Sergienko on the Internet. Foto: Overton Magazin; DER SPIEGEL

The Kremlin's Friends in Berlin

Secret Messages Document Moscow Contacts with Staffer of Far-Right AfD

A pro-Russian activist who works for a politician from the far-right AfD party, sought support from Moscow for a lawsuit against the German government, DER SPIEGEL has learned. They aim of the legal complaint was to delay German arms deliveries to Ukraine.

By [Malk Baumgärtner](#), [Christo Grozev](#), [Roman Höfner](#), [Roman Dobrokhotov](#), [Roman Lehberger](#), [Ann-Katrin Müller](#), [Fidelius Schmid](#) und [Wolf Wiedmann-Schmidt](#)

04.08.2023, 18.10 Uhr

Russia has already used the closing of border crossings as a propaganda weapon, and on 19 Nov 2023 Russians living in Finland organized a protest against the closings. I wonder how many pro-Ukraine rallies these "good Russians" have attended while living in Finland?

16/17



Also, we shouldn't forget that Russia was creating the original European immigration crisis in 2015 with their involvement in the brutal, bloody & ongoing Syrian Civil War, in which they've bombed hospitals & civilian targets, and even murdered people with chemical weapons.

17/17

Syria

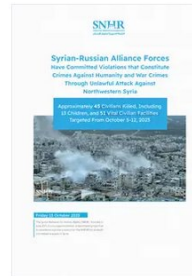
Syrian-Russian Alliance Forces Have Committed Violations that Constitute Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Through Unlawful Attacks Against Northwestern Syria

Analysis • Source: [SNHR](#) • Posted: 13 Oct 2023 • Originally published: 13 Oct 2023

Approximately 45 Civilians Killed, Including 13 Children, and 51 Vital Civilian Facilities Targeted From October 5-12, 2023

The Hague – The Syrian Network for Human Rights today released a report entitled, 'Syrian-Russian Alliance Forces Have Committed Violations that Constitute Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Through Unlawful Attacks Against Northwestern Syria', in which the group revealed that approximately 45 civilians, including 13 children, were killed and 51 vital civilian facilities hit in targeted attacks from October 5-12, 2023, at the hands of Syrian-Russian alliance forces.

The 13-page report noted that, on October 5, 2023, Syrian regime forces escalated their attacks on northwestern Syria. While some of these attacks involved deliberate bombardment of some targets, it was clear that many of them had an indiscriminate aspect to them, with Syrian regime forces using various kinds of weapons, including cluster munitions. The attacks were concentrated in Idlib city and the surrounding areas in eastern, southern, western, and northern rural Idlib, as well as in western rural Aleppo governorate. The report also underlines Russian forces' involvement and support for the Syrian regime in those attacks, by carrying out multiple airstrikes concentrated in western rural Idlib governorate.



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6:09 PM · Nov 17, 2023



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