

Kosovan refugee drowns trying to swim to Britain

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An unnamed Kosovan male asylum seeker drowned in the English Channel on August 20, after jumping from a ferry in a desperate attempt to reach Britain. The crew of the *SuperSeaCat One* had earlier found two Kosovans near the ferry's vehicle deck as the ship approached Dover after the two-hour crossing from Ostend, Belgium. According to a spokesman for shipping company Hoverspeed, "A crew member asked to see their tickets and passports, but they said they didn't have any. We believe they ripped them up en route so that they could claim asylum on reaching Dover, and then they admitted they were Kosovan."

The two men were detained by Hoverspeed's own security guards and held on board during the ship's turnaround in Dover. Early in the return journey, one of the Kosovans slipped from his guards, ran onto the open deck and jumped overboard, in an attempt to swim the two miles back to shore. He was found unconscious 20 minutes later by the Dover lifeboat, and was pronounced dead when the boat reached shore. The other refugee was then brought back to Dover for questioning by the British police.

This needless death is the result of the calculated brutality of British and European government immigration policy. Last year, 58 Chinese people suffocated inside a sealed container lorry carrying tomatoes, while being smuggled into the UK. Only two survived the journey. Following these deaths, under the pretext of clamping down on illegal "human traffickers" who extort thousands of dollars from asylum seekers, Britain's Labour government introduced even more stringent measures to prevent anyone entering Britain clandestinely across the English Channel. A new system of fines levied against transport operators on whose services "illegal" immigrants were discovered means companies paying

£2,000 for every asylum seeker. To avoid the fines, companies have organised special security patrols, equipped with devices to scan enclosed spaces for the increased carbon dioxide levels that would indicate a person was hiding. In March this year, Home Office Minister Barbara Roche claimed in parliament that carbon dioxide checks run by the P&O Stena Line had reduced asylum seekers originating in Calais by 37 percent.

On August 21, cross-Channel train company Eurotunnel launched a legal action against the French government calling for the closure of a refugee camp 2 kilometres from Eurotunnel's La Coquille terminal near Calais. The camp at Sangatte is a complex of Portakabins and a large disused factory space run by the Red Cross, providing only the most basic accommodation for up to 700 asylum seekers. Many of those staying at Sangatte have been turned back from the terminal in Calais on numerous occasions because of Eurotunnel's increased security measures. According to a *Guardian* report, each Portakabin houses 25 people, in three-metre square "rooms" divided from each other by fabric walls. The factory contains rows of tents, in each of which 14 people sleep. The camp has only one television and a football pitch by way of recreational facilities. The food provided is very basic.

As a result of the new security checks, and harassment by the British and French authorities, those seeking to enter Britain clandestinely have been forced to take even more dangerous measures. This June, six Russian refugees were discovered attempting to row the 26 miles between France and England across the Channel, in a small boat. Late July, a ferry picked up two Lithuanian men as they attempted to paddle their way across the Channel on airbeds. The men had spent

ten hours at night in the freezing water, in one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world.

On August 2, sixteen Romanians smuggled themselves into an under-floor compartment in a Eurostar cross-Channel train. The stowaways, including nine children between the ages of three and fifteen, were discovered only feet from 750-volt power cables on the train. Recently, the French government introduced what are effectively internal immigration controls to check the status of all passengers leaving Paris for Calais aboard Eurostar services, whether or not they have purchased tickets for London.



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