

# Far-right pogrom burns out immigrant families in Belfast

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An organised pogrom by far-right forces against immigrants and asylum seekers began in Belfast, Northern Ireland, on Tuesday evening.

Seizing on a horrific stabbing attack by a Sudanese refugee, mob violence left families burned out of their homes and communities terrorised across the city.

Mobilisations were also organised in Glasgow and Liverpool, cities with an historic presence of the Ulster Unionist forces at the centre of events in Belfast. Hundreds of masked men attacked migrants and a hotel housing asylum seekers was attacked in Liverpool.

Many schools and shops were closed and public transport shut down across Northern Ireland Wednesday, stranding some and leaving Belfast mostly deserted during the day. On Wednesday evening, a group of around 200 people—again clothed in black—gathered at roundabout about eight miles north of Belfast city centre and confronted police, including by throwing projectiles. Riot police, who barricaded the road, responded by firing water cannon.

The pretext for the latest far-right provocation was the attack on Stephen Ogilvie, who was stabbed on Monday evening in a street in the north of the city with a kitchen knife by Hadi Alodid, aged 30. Ogilvie was stabbed repeatedly in the face, head, neck and back and Alodid also tried to cut his throat. Ogilvie, aged 44, lost his left eye. Members of the public intervened to fend off the attacker until police arrived. The incident was partially filmed, and the footage widely circulated by far-right figures, including Tommy Robinson.

On Wednesday, Alodid appeared at Belfast magistrates court charged with attempting to murder Ogilvie, threatening to kill a National Health Service radiographer on the same day, and possessing a knife.

Ogilvie's family issued a principled statement condemning the far-right attacks, which concluded, "We have many migrants who make a deeply valuable contribution to our country, including in our healthcare system and hospitality sector, and we depend on them to make our country work. We do not want this terrible tragedy

to be used to divide people or fuel hostility."

In a posting on X Tuesday afternoon Robinson described the stabbing as "another invader attack on our people" and listed specific times for protests being held that night in various cities. The posting was eventually viewed over 9 million times. Rupert Lowe, leader of the far-right Restore UK added his voice to calls for mobilisations with a video (viewed over 2 million times) and another posting stating, "We must stop harbouring those who wish to decapitate children. A vast number of people need to be removed from our country-when I say vast, I mean it. Millions and millions need to leave or be made to leave."

Elon Musk, the billionaire oligarch who uses his control of X as a megaphone for the international far-right, reposted another of Lowe's diatribes reading "Enough", resulting in it being viewed over 62 million times.

The previous day, June 8, Robinson had met Musk's estranged father, Errol, for discussions in a hotel in Moscow, Russia.

Nigel Farage, leader of the far-right Reform UK—which leads national polls—insisted that authorities had a duty to immediately disclose the suspect's identity and immigration status to the public. Reform UK has since moved to announce a policy banning visas from Sudan.

The thugs involved in the attacks Tuesday night responded to online instructions declaring, "All men aged 18 and over, wear dark clothing... and be prepared to fight or be arrested... All businesses must close at 5:30 p.m. tonight, no excuses."

In east Belfast, a Loyalist stronghold, hundreds of masked men—some wearing balaclavas and waving flares—terrorised the area. Bins were set alight and pushed into a bus on the Newtownards Road, prompting suspension of bus services. Cars were also set on fire, including a police vehicle. A Middle Eastern supermarket was set ablaze in south Belfast and a Turkish barbers in Ballyclare, County Antrim were among other businesses attacked. Serious disturbances also occurred in Portadown, Derry, and Newtownabbey.

In Belfast, gangs went door to door demanding the

removal of anyone identifiably foreign. At least three homes were torched. Some families had to be evacuated by Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) officers as their homes caught fire or flames approached. Among those rescued was a two-month-old baby.

The protest involved hundreds not thousands, with the fascist hardcore reported to have attacked one local youth—who involved himself in the attacks—for filming them with his phone.

Jon Butcher, the chief constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) said of those attacked in their homes: “And by the way, these weren’t just families from ethnic minority communities, these were families from across communities that were caught up in this vile behaviour last night.”

The PSNI, for its part, essentially stood aside as the violence unfolded. Its public statement on Tuesday focused primarily on clarifying the national origin of the man in custody, after police initially wrongly said he was Somali—a statement repeated across right-wing social media accounts—while appealing for calm and emphasising it was a “fast-time investigation.”

Tuesday’s attacks took place a year to the day of another anti-migrant pogrom in Northern Ireland. The far-right have also been heavily organising in the Republic of Ireland over the last few years.

The attacks Tuesday were the second major occurrence of violence organised by the far-right within a week. It followed sustained protests in Southampton and beyond after Vickrum Digwa, a British Sikh, was jailed for the fatal stabbing of 18-year-old student Henry Nowak in December.

In that city Robinson told the crowd “As white people we are treated like second-rate citizens by our own government.” Former British National Party member and current Britain First leader Paul Golding urged the crowd to “take your anger and turn it into political action” against “the real criminals who are turning Britain into a foreign country”.

The intention is to recreate the far-right riots of July 2024, when mobs attacked buildings, including hotels, accommodating asylum seekers after the murder of three children in Southport. This was followed by a nationwide “Raise the Colours” campaign in which the Saint George Cross flag of England and Union flag were hung by right-wing elements on lamp posts, government buildings and monuments. This culminated in the Unite the Kingdom demonstration held in London last September—the largest far-right mobilisation in British history.

None of this emerges in a vacuum. The far-right has been cultivated and animated by an unrelenting campaign of immigrant demonisation that has characterised every

government at Westminster for years. The Conservatives and now Labour have made the scapegoating of asylum seekers and migrants a central instrument of their political programmes, competing to demonstrate toughness on borders in order to deflect working-class anger from the social catastrophe they are themselves imposing.

Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham, positioning himself as a future Labour leader, moved to line up substantially behind Farage’s agenda, having already backed harsh anti-immigrant proposals of Labour Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood.

Speaking on Tuesday to BBC Radio Manchester—ahead of next week’s Makerfield parliamentary by-election where he is Labour’s candidate—Burnham said of the Home Office housing asylum seekers in deprived areas of the country, “I do agree with what Farage is saying. What we’ve got to do is get back to a sense of order.”

Citing his record covering immigration, citizenship and nationality in the Home Office of Tony Blair’s New Labour government, Burnham said, “We need to make greater use of detention so that people who have got no basis for a claim are not actually admitted into the country. So that’s dealt with quickly and there’s a speedier return... It is something that has to be gripped and gripped properly.”

Britain’s independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, Jonathan Hall KC, gave an indication of how far the ruling elite are prepared to go in clamping down on immigrants and asylum seekers—the better to scapegoat them for all the social ills caused by the capitalist class.

On Wednesday, Hall said that far-right US President Donald Trump had “raised legitimate concerns” about migration into the UK and that Britain needed to consider immigration “not simply in terms of the economy or housing but also in terms of national security.”



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