

Far-right violence against migrants continues in Belfast

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Far-right loyalist mobs targeted migrants in Belfast, Northern Ireland, for a second night Wednesday. While on a smaller scale than the violence launched Tuesday, a target list of homes shared on social media confirms that this was an organised pogrom.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) used water cannon against the rioters and fired 20 rounds of rubber bullets. It is reported that 200 police from across the UK are being drafted into Northern Ireland ahead of possible further riots.

Using as a pretext the horrific stabbing Monday of Stephen Ogilvie by a Sudanese refugee, Hadi Alodid, far-right mobs targeted the homes of migrants and foreign nationals. As on Tuesday, shops, schools and delivery services closed early. Public transport operator Translink suspended all bus and train services.

After the first night's violence, a "hit list" of "migrant homes" was circulated on social media, and threats were issued against the Sinn Féin mayor of Belfast, Róis-Máire Donnelly. In an exclusive published Thursday evening, the *Guardian* reported that the Accountability Project Northern Ireland (APNI), which monitors anti-immigration activity, has been notifying the PSNI of such lists since the beginning of this year.

The newspaper reported it "understands a so-called hitlist of addresses has been circulating among far-right groups since August 2025 and was sent to the PSNI in January 2026. They were among the locations targeted during this week's anti-immigration disorder". This confirms, as the WSWs noted, that the PSNI essentially stood aside as the violence initially unfolded. Their first activity was largely around clarifying the national origin of the assailant, whom they originally falsely stated was Somali.

In a warning of more attacks to come the *Guardian* reported that the APNI "reports sent to police also cited a Facebook post stating that HMOs [Houses in multiple

occupation, often accommodating asylum seekers] in the Glengormley area [bordering Belfast] 'will now be treated as fair game and dealt with accordingly'. It went on to state: 'Anyone caught funding or helping these animals in being housed will be condemned as equally guilty.'"

On Wednesday evening, around 200 masked youths attempted to march on Newtownabbey's Chimney Corner Hotel, which houses asylum seekers. They met a blockade of PSNI vehicles on Antrim Road, which they charged repeatedly using bins, bricks, bottles, and fireworks as missiles. One of the mob told the media, "There wouldn't be any of this going on if they'd just let us reach the hotel. They've caused the trouble tonight by being too heavy-handed."

Rioters, again clad in dark clothing and masked, used sledgehammers to crack paving slabs and break brickwork and fences for ammunition. A Department for Infrastructure vehicle was torched at Sandyknowes, with other fires set along the road and in wheelie bins.

At around 11 p.m., a mob set fire to a bungalow behind a petrol station and launched a flaming van at the police line. Police responded by firing rubber bullets. Fire crews advised people to stay indoors, as the bungalow's roof may have been lined with asbestos.

In Derry, wheelie bins and a salt box were torched in the early evening, and the PSNI advised the public to avoid the Loyalist Tullyally estate. Petrol bombs were thrown in Portadown.

Disturbances were repeated in Scotland, with protests in Greenock outside a Holiday Inn used to home asylum seekers.

The PSNI said 12 officers were injured by petrol bombs and objects thrown on Wednesday, and 16 rioters were arrested. Government officials say at least 27 migrant families have been intimidated or burnt out of their homes since Monday.

Ogilvie, who lost his left eye in the attack and suffered extensive serious cuts, remains in hospital.

Loyalist mobs were filmed operating makeshift roadblocks in Belfast, as checkpoints for non-white travellers.

Patricia McKeown, a regional secretary for the union Unison, reported that “a nurse with a different skin colour was chased into the Ulster Hospital by four masked men.” The nurse, who insisted on working her shift, has been found alternative accommodation. The *Irish News* reports that at least one property management company has contacted tenants on the far-right’s target list, advising them to keep their homes safe and secure.

This week’s pogroms are the latest in an escalation of far-right attacks across Britain and Ireland. They are the long-cultivated product of the demonisation of immigrants and asylum seekers. Successive Conservative and Labour governments sought to show themselves firmer on policing borders and to deflect working-class anger from the social catastrophe they are inflicting.

Given the terrible social and economic crisis in Sudan, Alodid had been granted asylum in 2023 under a fast-track Simplified Asylum Process (SAP) without interview, a system put in place by the previous Conservative government. This was also the case regarding Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Labour’s Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Hilary Benn this week stressed that asylum seekers were now interviewed in “almost all cases.”

Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham, Labour’s candidate at the upcoming Makerfield parliamentary by-election and seen as likely to take over from the reviled Keir Starmer, is calling for “greater use of detention” of migrants. This week he told BBC Radio Manchester that on the question of the Home Office housing asylum seekers in deprived areas, “I do agree with what [far-right Reform UK leader Nigel] Farage is saying. What we’ve got to do is get back to a sense of order.”

Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch told LBC Radio that she had not been leader or in the Home Office at the time SAP was implemented, and “All I can do is apologise to people.”

Badenoch pointed out that the then Tory Home Secretary and immigration ministers were Suella Braverman and Robert Jenrick, who had both since defected to Reform UK. This was an attempt to position the Tories to the right of Reform, which continues to shape a far-right anti-immigrant agenda for the whole ruling class. Reacting to Tuesday’s riots, Reform leader

Nigel Farage said that “things kicked off in Belfast... in a very big way, and things will continue to kick off.” Reform has pledged a total ban on visas for Sudanese nationals.

Farage said, “I’m very open about the fact that some very bad actors got involved in this stuff [in Belfast], but not the vast majority... The vast majority want action.” This provided legitimacy for fascist demagogue Tommy Robinson, who joined the about to be a trillionaire Elon Musk in calling for the protests ahead of Tuesday’s offensive. Musk tweeted, “Only by protesting REPEATEDLY and LOUDLY will there be any change!!”

Following Tuesday’s pogrom, Musk doubled down, posting: “Murderous migrants beheading innocent people in their hometown is what’s making people angry, not ‘social media’!”

Unionist leaders in Northern Ireland have used the attack to demand a hard border with Ireland. Former Democratic Unionist Party deputy leader Gavin Robinson told Starmer in parliament, “People are tired of warm words and promise. They want to see action. The government must now demonstrate that it is prepared to defend our borders.”

Sinn Féin’s leader in Ireland, Mary Lou McDonald, condemned the “racist intimidation and violence” which had been “orchestrated by loyalist and far-right thugs.” She then praised the “swift” actions of the PSNI, when they were anything but.

The right-wing *Telegraph* used the opportunity to whip Sinn Féin into line. “Nationalists did not join in the rioting,” an op-ed by Eilis O’Hanlon admitted, “but it would be naïve to pretend that they do not share many of the same concerns.”



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