

Russians Among Illegal Belarus-EU Border Crossers – Lithuanian Diplomat

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Russian nationals are among the thousands of migrants illegally crossing the border from Belarus to Lithuania, a senior diplomat from the EU member state [told](#) Russian media Tuesday.

Lithuanian officials say they suspect the migrant crisis is being orchestrated by the regime of Belarusian strongman Alexander Lukashenko in retaliation to EU sanctions over his crackdown on political opponents.

“We had a dialogue with the Russian representative because Russian citizens are also crossing the border,” Lithuanian Deputy Foreign Minister Mantas Adomėnas told the Ekho Moskvyy radio station in an interview.

“We will send them back too,” Adomėnas said without disclosing the number of Russian citizens caught at the EU’s external border with Belarus.

Adomėnas said Vilnius has evidence of the Belarusian authorities' involvement in the crisis.

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Lithuania's border guard service announced it had begun to push back migrants trying to enter illegally from Belarus, adding that some 180 migrants had already been sent back Tuesday.

Russian state media then [reported](#) Wednesday that Belarusian border guards found a person “of [Middle] Eastern appearance” in critical condition near the Lithuanian border. The person was reported dead after the guards attempted to administer first aid.

Tensions between Minsk and Vilnius soared last year after Lithuania became a hub for the Belarusian opposition following a disputed presidential election and subsequent crackdown.

AFP contributed reporting.

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