The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Belarus-EU Migrant Crisis Spreads to Russia With New Border Detentions – Reports

August 11, 2021



Fourteen citizens from Central Asian countries were previously detained while attempting to illegally enter Russia via Belarus. **Smolensk region FSB**

The Belarus-EU migrant crisis has spread to Minsk's close ally Russia as border guards were reported to have detained several people from the Middle East attempting to illegally cross into the country Tuesday.

The European Union has accused Belarus strongman Alexander Lukashenko of deliberately encouraging new unauthorized arrivals of mainly Iraqi migrants in retaliation for increasingly tough sanctions against his regime.

Related article: Belarus Leader Hits Out as U.S., U.K. Levy New Sanctions

Border guards in western Russia's Smolensk region that borders Belarus detained four Syrian

nationals and one Egyptian who had illegally entered the country in a Russian citizen's vehicle, the Smolnarod.ru news website reported.

Earlier, 14 citizens of unnamed Central Asian countries were detained while attempting to illegally enter Russia via Belarus, the outlet said.

"All of them were detained for further verification and to establish the circumstances surrounding the offenses," the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) press service was quoted as saying.

The reports of migrant detentions by Russia came as EU member Latvia declared a local state of emergency along its border with Belarus after about 200 migrants crossed illegally into the country in 24 hours.

Neighboring Lithuania, also an EU member, passed a law that day giving the green light to the construction of a fence along its border with Belarus.

Lithuania, which has offered strong support and refuge to the Belarusian opposition, began turning back migrants this week after more than 4,000 people entered the country from Belarus since the beginning of the year.

Poland, which also shares a border with Belarus, has reported 349 migrant arrivals since Friday.

On Tuesday, the EU said there had been a "significant decrease" in migrant crossings after Iraq suspended flights to Belarus following requests from the EU and Lithuania.

European Union ministers are to discuss the issue next week.

AFP contributed reporting.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/08/11/belarus-eu-migrant-crisis-spreads-to-russia-with-new-border-detentions-reports-a74754