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Poland Charges Russians, Ukrainian with Human Trafficking Amid Migrant Crisis

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Poland has charged two Russian nationals and one Ukrainian citizen on accusations of ferrying undocumented migrants from the Middle East to Germany, prosecutors said Monday.

The announcement comes amid a tense standoff over thousands of migrants from war-torn countries who are stranded on Belarus' border with EU member Poland.

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According to the Russian state-run TASS news agency, Polish prosecutors indicted three foreigners for "organizing and paying for the illegal transportation of persons arriving from the Middle East to Germany, including through Poland."

Two of the suspects are "of Chechen nationality who lived in Poland illegally," the authorities

were quoted as saying.

Their Ukrainian accomplice, described as the "procedure's organizer," reportedly remains at large with a European arrest warrant.

The recent standoff over migration has pitted the EU and the United States against Belarus and its key ally Russia.

The West accuses Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko of luring the migrants in with the intent of pushing them to cross into European Union member Poland in retaliation to sanctions from Brussels.

Lukashenko and his close ally Russian President Vladimir Putin deny the accusations, pointing the blame back on the West for past U.S.-led military campaigns in the region.

British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss on Sunday urged Putin to intervene in the crisis that has left thousands of migrants trapped on the Belarus-Poland border.

Putin meanwhile has brushed aside accusations of bearing responsibility for the crisis.

Brussels calls the migrant crisis a "precarious humanitarian situation," as Minsk says some 2,000 migrant men, women and children currently live in at least one border camp.

Aid agencies say at least 10 migrants have died on the border so far and have warned of a humanitarian crisis unfolding as temperatures drop below freezing, urging a de-escalation.

Poland has refused to allow the migrants in and has accused Belarus of preventing them from leaving.

Lukashenko said Monday that his country was working on repatriating the migrants.

AFP contributed reporting.

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