

EU Border Agency Deploys Guards at Finland-Russia Frontier

By [AFP](#)

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Finnish Border Guards escort as migrants arrive to the Raja-Jooseppi international border crossing station in Inari, northern Finland, on Nov. 25. [imago-images.de / TASS](#)

The European Union's border protection agency has deployed some 50 guards to watch Finland's border with Russia, it said on Thursday, as Helsinki accuses Moscow of orchestrating a surge in migrants.

"Currently we deploy 55 officers in Finland, a majority of them are border guard officers performing surveillance of the border," Frontex spokesman Piotr Switalski told AFP.

The support, which was announced in late November, is scheduled to last until the end of January.

"Of course we are ready to change that as the situation changes. We can be here longer or shorter as needed," Switalski added.

"We know that migratory pressure is one of the tools used by the Kremlin so we can expect this to continue," he continued.

Related article: [Finland to Close Last Border Crossing With Russia](#)

Nearly 1,000 asylum seekers, mainly from Somalia, Iraq and Yemen, have turned up at the 1,340-kilometer border separating the two countries since the beginning of August, according to Finnish authorities.

Helsinki accuses Moscow of deliberately funneling these migrants towards Finland, calling it a "hybrid operation."

"There are more large groups of third-country migrants in the nearby area of the border still, even though if you compare to the situation of what it was two weeks ago, some of them have, by themselves or by authorities, moved already to some other parts of Russia," Finnish border guard Ville Joskitt said.

Joskitt told AFP that the situation at the border is expected to last a "long time."

In mid-November, Finland closed four of its eight border crossings with Russia, before restricting passage to a single crossing — the country's most northerly.

The last border crossing was eventually also closed at the end of November.

Finland's relations with its eastern neighbor soured after the invasion of Ukraine.

After Finland acceded to the U.S.-led military alliance NATO in April, reversing its decades-long policy of military non-alignment, Russia warned of "countermeasures."

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