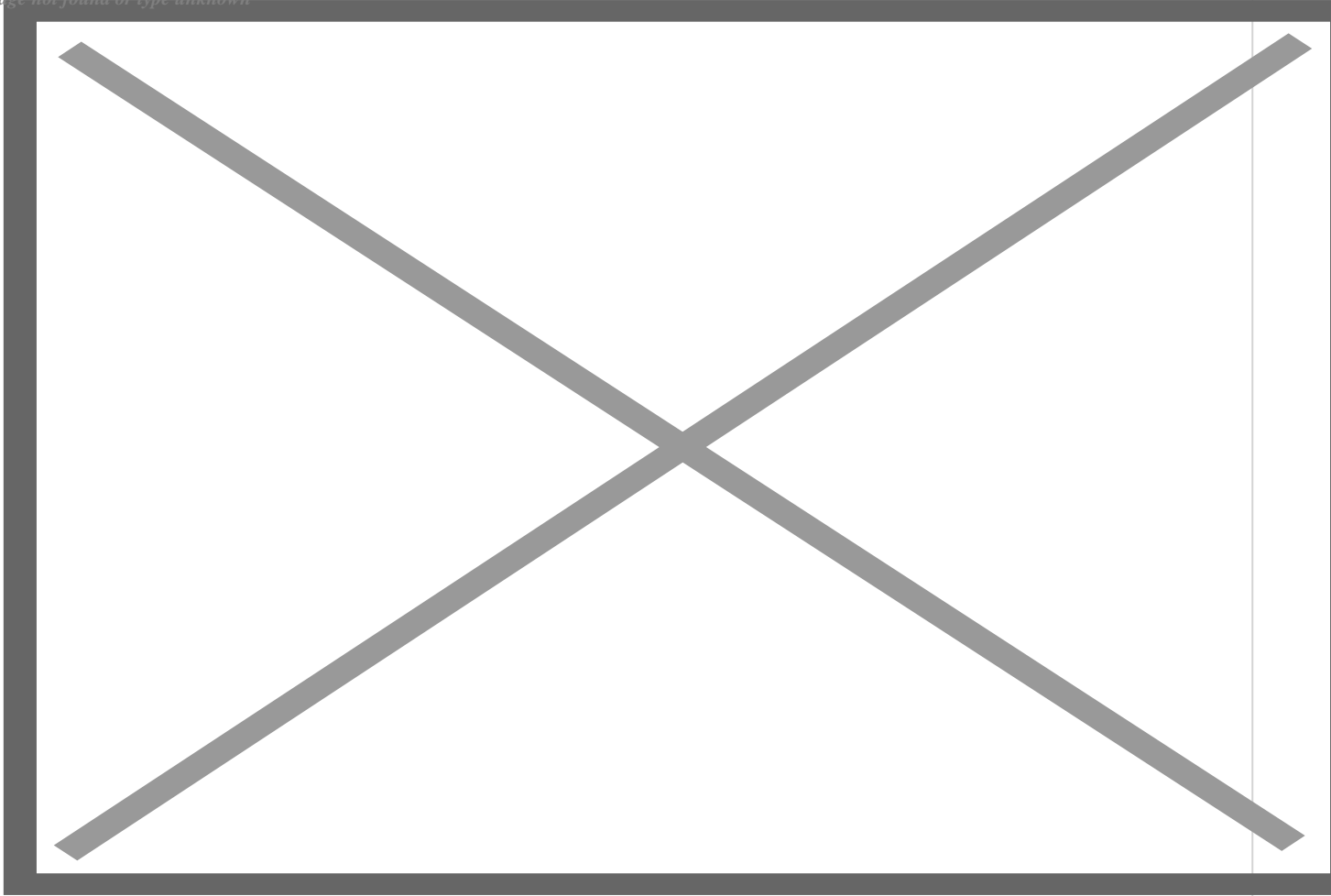


French president says UK immigration policy hypocritical

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Paris, February 5 (RHC)-- French President Emanuel Macron has called Britain's immigration policy 'hypocritical' and blamed London for the deaths of migrants trying to get to the UK from France. The UK government has rebuffed that comment and claims it's doing all it can to ensure a safe passage.

Observers say that migrants, in overcrowded dinghies and often in the cover of darkness, are running away from war and instability and take to the choppy waters separating France from the UK. Some make it, others die trying: 27 of them in November last year alone. That incident further strained the fragile ties between Paris and London.

French President Emmanuel Macron says Britain's reliance on illegal immigrant labor is behind the surge in numbers crossing from France and in their deaths.

Britain says the French president is wrong and that the government is searching for ways to stop the crossings. England wants France to let British police patrol French beaches and has ruled out physically pushing boats back across the English channel. London also says it wants to give people traffickers life sentences, and has introduced a controversial new bill that will allow it to send migrants to detention centers in other countries. In response, campaigners say Britain's intentions are draconian and racist.

More than 28,300 migrants crossed the English Channel in 2021, triple the number the year before. And while the UK and French leaders trade accusations, more boats packed with desperate migrants will continue to embark on the perilous journey across the English channel, and that will almost certainly mean more deaths.

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