



Lukashenko's plan: destabilize Poland and divide Europe

Arriving in Belarus is not an easy way to migrate to Europe, but to get into the middle of the conflict between Russia and Belarus with Poland and other European countries. This conflict is part of aggressive imperial policy of Russia, the effects of which can be seen in neighbouring with Poland, Belarus, and Russia, Ukraine, where a war is underway as a result of the Russian invasion. More than 100,000 people have already died there, hundreds of thousands are injured, and several million civilians have fled, seeking refuge primarily in Poland. Any attempts to illegally cross the Polish border in such conditions are madness, and at the same time are part of hostile actions against Poland and its security, regardless of the intentions of migrants. Is it imaginable that during the war with Daesh, the army and security services of Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region, freely let migrants from other countries try to illegally cross the border and ignore all security laws and rules? Therefore, it is difficult to expect Poland to act differently and not be guided primarily by its security.

At the same time, Poland distinguishes between migrants and refugees, and this does not depend on religion or skin colour, but on the reason for crossing the border. It was the same in Iraq during the war with Daesh. The refugees were those fleeing the terrorists from Mosul, Sinjar, Tel Afar and other places occupied by Daesh hordes. They were not residents of Bangladesh, the Philippines, Georgia or Pakistan, coming to work in Irbil, Baghdad or Najaf. Nor were they citizens of various European, Asian or African countries, arriving with bad intentions, i.e. to pose a terrorist threat, spy on or join Daesh. This is what the security services and the rules of crossing borders are for to check. In a situation of threat to national security, and Poland is currently in such a situation, as Iraq was during the war with Daesh, these rules are particularly restrictive, and those trying to violate them can expect a strong reaction.

Poland welcomed refugees from Ukraine, regardless of whether they were Ukrainians or foreigners studying or working there, including Iraqis, Kurds, Arabs, Indians, Muslims, etc. However, all of them had to cross the border in designated places, i.e. border crossings, presenting documents and obeying the instructions of the Polish border guards. It was no different in the case of people fleeing Daesh. How would the Iraqi services, including the Kurdish ones, react if some groups or individuals tried to bypass checkpoints, flee from the officers carrying out the checkpoint, or attack them by throwing stones, rods or branches? Especially if they were on top of that commanded by Daesh terrorists? And it is the



Belarusian services hostile to Poland that organize migrant militias to attack Poland and its officers and soldiers. They want to provoke bloodshed in this way.

Migrants trying to illegally cross the Polish-Belarusian border pose a threat to Poland's security, violate the laws of Poland and the European Union, and have to account for the same reaction of Polish services that would be encountered by people trying to penetrate from Daesh areas, avoiding control. For Poland, there is no difference between Daesh and the regime of Putin and his subordinate dictator of Belarus – Lukashenko. Putin is already being prosecuted by the International Criminal Court for his crimes, and this is just the tip of the iceberg. The Russians and officials of Lukashenko's regime are responsible for numerous atrocities, rapes, murders. Therefore, anyone who fits into the plan of Lukashenko and Putin against Poland must take into account severe consequences.

Refugees in Poland and smuggling activities

Russian and Belarusian propaganda tries to present a false image of Poland and its attitude towards refugees. The fact that Poland has taken in several million Ukrainian refugees, and has built a dam on the border with Belarus and is pulling back people trying to cross the border, is supposed to testify to double standards and racism. This is, of course, complete nonsense. First of all, people coming from Ukraine fled from war-torn areas, as was the case with people fleeing from areas under Daesh control to the Kurdistan Region, or areas secured by the federal forces of Iraq. People who attempt to cross the Belarusian-Polish border arrived legally in Belarus, paying for it to companies associated with the regime hostile to Poland, and then they try to break Polish law, creating a threat to Poland's security. Whether they are aware of it or not is irrelevant. It is worth noting that Poland has also welcomed tens of thousands of refugees from Belarus (citizens of that country), who were threatened with imprisonment there due to their opposition activities. Refugees are people who are fleeing war or persecution, and not those who want to live in another country because they think they will be better off there.

From the point of view of the rules of crossing the border with Poland, it also does not matter whether people who have arrived in Belarus are in any danger there, whether they are chased there by officials of the Belarusian regime with dogs, whether they are beaten there and herded to the Polish border like animals, or whether they are treated there like subhumans. Yes, such is Lukashenko's Belarus and anyone who wants to travel there should know that they are exposed to such consequences. Companies encouraging this migration are lying and



the grievances should be directed at them, not at Poland. Poland does not bear any responsibility for how migrants are treated in Belarus, and they are treated in a bestial way, as people were treated by Daesh. However, Poland will not negotiate with Lukashenko's terrorists, who treat migrants as hostages, trying to force it to change its policy by playing with human tragedy and emotional blackmail. If Poland gave way, it would only contribute to an even greater tragedy, as it would encourage Russian-Belarusian terrorists to attract even more migrants and expose them to suffering.

Therefore, Poland will not open its border to anyone who will be treated this way by Russian-Belarusian thugs. Exhibits of this practice operating in other countries, including Iraq, i.e. intermediaries organizing such migration, should be closed, and people operating there should be treated as criminals, because they are no different from cells organizing recruitment into the ranks of Daesh. It should also be a matter of honour for those criminals to be punished by the relatives of those who suffered during such a journey. Because it is the fault of those who organize these trips and take a lot of money for it, not Poland, which defends its border as all other countries do.

It also does not matter whether Poland is a destination country for migrants trying to cross the border illegally or a transit country, as they are trying to reach other European countries, in particular Germany. The fact is, that in any advertisements encouraging illegal migration, Poland is not the country of destination, so it is not that someone wants to seek refuge in Poland. Unfortunately, if someone treats Poland as a corridor through which you can freely walk and do what you want, it not only shows disrespect for this country, but is also deeply wrong. Would anyone want strangers to walk through their house like that?

Poland's border with Belarus is the external border of the European Union and Poland is obliged to monitor it. Poland, however, is fulfilling its international obligations. Therefore, even if someone manages to cross the border illegally and does not drown in the swamps or freeze in the forest, they will most likely be stopped on the way to the German border. It's a long road, and criminals transporting migrants treat them like animals, stuffing them in trunks and other unventilated containers. In such conditions, one has to travel several hundred kilometres

and most of such transports are stopped by the Polish services. However, this is not the worst thing that can happen to illegal migrants along the way, as they expose themselves to death by suffocation in these inhumane transport conditions.



It is a misunderstanding to assume that Polish officials will not stop illegal migrants trying to illegally reach Germany from Poland. This is their duty, which they conscientiously perform. Leaving the territory of Poland by illegal migrants and entering another EU country is not "getting rid of the problem" for Poland. Firstly, because Poland is a serious country that takes its law seriously, as well as its international reputation. Secondly, because migration through Poland to other EU countries poses the threat of the need to change the rules for crossing the internal borders of the EU in the Schengen area and the reintroduction of border controls. Poles do not want this and have the right to do so. Thirdly, because, in accordance with bilateral agreements and European Union regulations, foreigners who illegally crossed the Polish-German border are subject to readmission, i.e. withdrawal from the destination country to the first European Union country whose border they crossed. So in this case to Poland. Here, however, they will be sent to a closed centre and then deported if they do not meet the criteria for being considered refugees.

Legal way to Poland

Even if someone meets the conditions for being recognized as a refugee, they have no right to illegally cross the Polish border. It is a crime, and in connection with the hostile actions of Belarus against Poland and the war unleashed by Russia in Ukraine, it is also an increase of threat to Polish security. People who act this way have to therefore account for the consequences, regardless of the reason for their arrival in Belarus. Statistics show that among those who try to illegally cross the Polish border, people who meet the criteria for refugee status are individual cases. Meanwhile, illegally crossing the border is punishable by a prison sentence of up to 3 years, and for organizing such crossing – a prison sentence of up to 8 years. For assaulting a border guard, you can be imprisoned for up to 12 years before being deported. Regardless of this, people deported for illegally crossing the border are banned from entering Poland and the EU (Schengen countries). Such a person will no longer be able to come legally, and the possibility of legal entry does exist.

Thousands of citizens of Iraq, as well as other Middle Eastern countries, enter Poland legally every year. These are tourists, students, employees, etc. They are welcomed as they come legally. From the beginning of 2021 to mid-2023 Poland has also issued about 570 temporary or permanent residence permits for Iraqi citizens. However, the more attempts to cross the border illegally, the more difficult it will be to enter legally. Poland also accepts refugees, and not only from Ukraine. For example, in 2022, applications for international protection were submitted in Poland by 10,000 foreigners (this does not include most Ukrainians, as they



benefit from a different procedure, i.e. temporary protection), including 639 from Iraq. Positive decisions were issued against 4,962 people, including only 10 Iraqi citizens. For comparison, during the last few years Poland granted international protection to approx. 150 Kurds from Syria, Iran or Turkey. In 2022, 20 Iraqi citizens applied for permanent residence in Poland, 2 applied for EU long-term resident status, and 277 applied for temporary residence. At the same time, Poland issued 19 positive decisions on permanent residence, 7 – negative, 2 cases were discontinued, and 1 was left unaddressed. With regard to long-term EU residents, only 1 negative decision was issued, while as for temporary residence, 181 people received a positive one, 47 – a negative one, 6 cases were discontinued, and 23 were left unaddressed. It is worth explaining that the decisions issued in a given year do not necessarily concern applications from the same year, as the proceedings take many months. Nonetheless, it is clear that Poland does not discriminate against anyone and is not closed to Iraqi citizens, provided that they comply with Polish law and their arrival and stay is legal.

Therefore, it is not worth risking trying to illegally cross the border with Poland and thus committing a crime. It is also worth understanding that every country has the right to defend its security, especially in difficult moments such as those suffered by Iraq (including the Kurdistan Region) during the Daesh threat, and Poland is currently experiencing in connection with the aggressive actions of Russia and Belarus, in particular the war in Ukraine. Criminals who encourage these journeys lie and are responsible for their tragic consequences. They should be punished for it and it is a matter not only of law but also of honour.



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