

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
House of Commons,
London
SW1A 0AA

Tuesday 13 December 2022

Dear Ms Patel,

I write to request a correction to a false claim you made in Parliament when you were Home Secretary about the percentage of small boat arrivals from Albania over the summer.

On 5 September, you said: "Over the summer the majority of arrivals in small boats from France - about 60% - have been Albanian nationals."¹

I previously wrote to you about this claim on 7 November. At the time we pointed out that what you said was not backed up by data, as detailed in our fact check.² We asked you to make a correction if you could not provide evidence to back it up, but we did not receive a response from you.

We subsequently requested that the Home Office provide us with a daily breakdown of small boat arrivals by nationality from June to September.

Whilst we don't know exactly what definition of summer you were using when you made the claim, we can't see any breakdown of the figures provided that makes your claim correct.

The data shows that there were 15,458 small boat arrivals between 1 June and 31 August, 6,872 (44%) of which identified as Albanian. For the period from 1 June to 5 September, when you made the claim in Parliament, there were 17,990 small boat arrivals, 8,261 (46%) of which identified as Albanian.

In terms of individual days, there were 10 days between 1 June and 31 August where 60% or more of small boat arrivals identified as Albanian, and another 4 days in this period where the percentage of small boat arrivals which identified as Albanian could be rounded up to 60%. In addition to this, on 3 September the percentage of small boat arrivals which identified as Albanian exceeded 60%.

¹<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-09-05/debates/E1DA4C5A-1A63-474B-9C50-C2FFEBE53737/AlbanianMigrants#contribution-4D4C941E-61C4-4EE1-8C96-C261BA8C2B8F>

² <https://fullfact.org/immigration/home-office-albania-small-boat-crossing-60-percent/>

So between 1 June and 5 September there were only 15 days where it would be fair to say “about 60%” (or more) of small boat arrivals were Albanian.

It is therefore incorrect to claim that about 60% of small boat arrivals were Albanian nationals “over the summer.”

We therefore ask again that you correct your error at the earliest opportunity. It is particularly important to correct this claim given the high level of public interest in this matter.

We would be grateful if you could let us know what action you will be taking in relation to this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Will Moy", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Will Moy
Chief Executive, Full Fact