

French police open fire on migrants' dinghy on Dunkirk beach with potentially lethal rubber bullets to stop their illegal boat crossing the Channel to the UK

- French police shot migrants with rubber bullets to prevent Channel crossings
- Investigation by French national police authorities got under way last night
- Shooting happened at Dunkirk as eight Iranian Kurds carried a dinghy to the sea

By [SUE REID IN LONDON](#) and [JAMES FRANEY IN DUNKIRK FOR THE DAILY MAIL](#)

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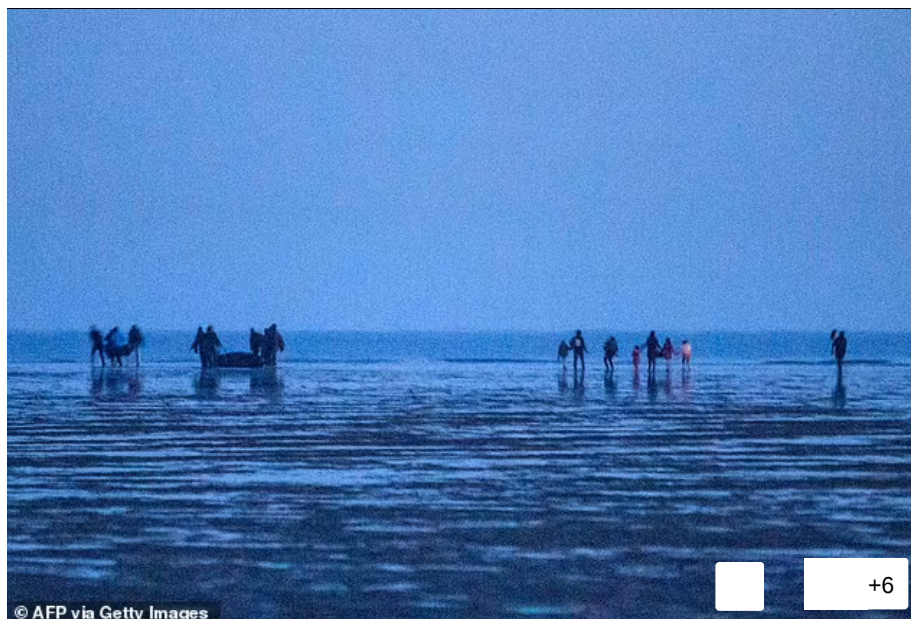
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French police have shot migrants with potentially lethal rubber bullets to stop their illegal boat crossing the Channel to the UK.

An investigation by French national police authorities was under way last night into the first known case of gun tactics to halt a migrant boat launch.

It marks a major escalation of tension on the beaches as gendarmerie night patrols struggle to control the armada of boats heading for Britain.

The shooting happened in darkness at Dunkirk as eight Iranian Kurds carried a dinghy towards the sea. It was destined to bring 40 migrants from [France](#).



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French police have shot migrants with potentially lethal rubber bullets to stop their illegal boat crossing the Channel to the UK

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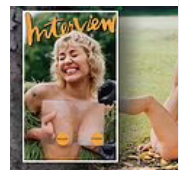
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Two Iranian Kurds hit by the bullets were taken to hospital, one with a fractured leg and the other with a broken hand. Those carrying the boat claim that the group of gun-toting police laughed at them as their injured comrades fell to the ground.

One of the shot migrants, 24-year-old Juanro Rasuli, was last night still in Dunkirk central hospital with a fractured left leg, which was wrapped in bandages. He did not want to speak out because of the fear of reprisals.

The second man, who was shot in the hand, is undergoing medical treatment as an outpatient.

The beach shooting is believed to have followed a noisy altercation between the Iranian Kurds intent on launching the boat and the French patrol unit determined to stop them.



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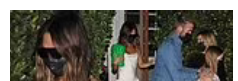
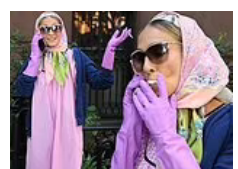
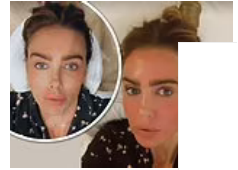
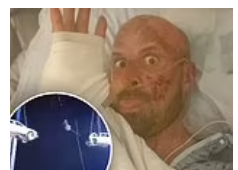
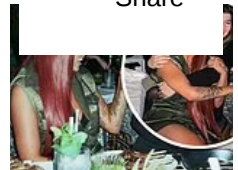
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Pictured: French paramedics treat Juanro Rasuli on the floor at the scene of the rubber bullet shooting

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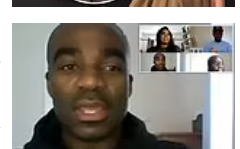
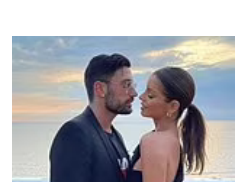
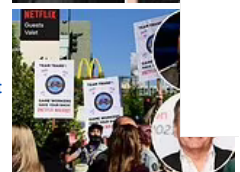
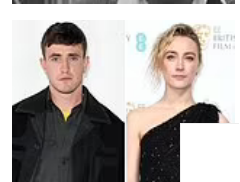
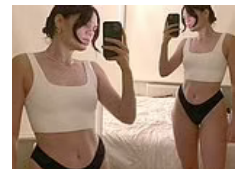
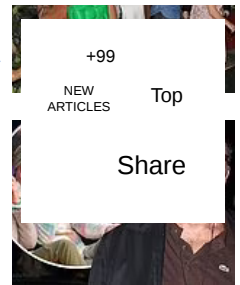
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This year more than 17,000 migrants of multiple nationalities have reached the UK after making the 21-mile Channel crossing.

Those involved in the incident were asked by the Daily Mail if they were people traffickers or assisting the trafficking gangs for money. They have denied it, insisting they are would-be asylum seekers hoping to reach Britain.

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Last night an Iranian Kurd calling himself Mohammed recalled what he saw of the shooting in the early morning of September 22.

At a coffee bar in a migrant camp in Dunkirk, he said: 'There were eight of us holding the boat near the beach. We were getting ready to launch it for 40 people who wanted to cross to your country.'

'Then three or four police arrived in one vehicle. One policeman shot Juanro Rasuli at point blank range. I can't remember how many times they fired the rubber bullets.'



© AFP via Getty Images

It marks a major escalation of tension on the beaches as gendarmerie night patrols struggle to control the armada of boats heading for Britain (stock image)

'When the police saw us, they shouted stop, We stopped and they still shot us. Then we ran away as best we could.' A video of the aftermath of the shooting, taken by the migrants, shows Mr Rasuli lying on the ground with his leg bleeding.

The other shot man shows his injured hand to the camera. A voice says in Kurdish: 'You can see the police laughing at us.'

Rubber bullets are potentially lethal and have also caused blindness and permanent disabilities in those struck in the past. Typically, they have a metal core with a rubber coating and are often used in France in riot control.

The bullets were considered so dangerous that they were banned from use by the police in mainland Britain until 2001.

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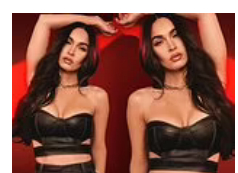
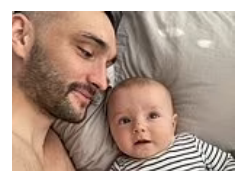
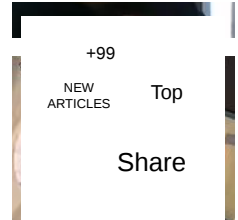
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The shooting happened in darkness at Dunkirk as eight Iranian Kurds carried a dinghy towards the sea. It was destined to bring 40 migrants from France (file image)

They were invented by the Ministry of Defence for security services to combat protesters in Northern Ireland and are said to have killed 17 people during the Troubles.

The migrants' shooting took place five miles from Grande Synthe, a suburb of Dunkirk where hundreds of migrants live in squalid camps in woods awaiting a boat to Britain.

French judicial sources insist their beach patrols only use such a show of force when it is 'proportionate' and if the officers are placed in danger by a 'seriously hostile situation'.

The camp has been infiltrated by people smuggling gangs who the French say thwart their efforts to stop boats leaving.

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AJ Odudu

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