



Finland plans to build barriers on its border with Russia

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A general view of the border town of Imatra, Finland on March 24, 2022. (Essi Lehto / Reuters File Photo)

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Road signs are seen at the Imatra border crossing with Russia, amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine, in Imatra, Finland on March 23, 2022. (Essi Lehto / Reuters File Photo)

HELSINKI — Finland's government plans to amend border legislation to allow the building of barriers on its eastern frontier with Russia, it said on Thursday, in a move to strengthen preparedness against hybrid threats amid Russia's [invasion of Ukraine](#).

Finland, which is currently applying for membership in the Western military alliance NATO, has a history of wars with Russia, although currently the forest-covered border zone between the two countries is marked merely with signs and plastic lines for most of its 1,300-kilometer (810-mile) length.

The Finnish government has rushed to strengthen border security as it fears Russia could attempt to put pressure on Finland by sending asylum seekers to its borders — as the European Union accused Belarus of doing at the end of last year when hundreds of migrants from the Middle East, Afghanistan and Africa got stuck on the Polish border.

The government's amendments to the law include a proposal to enable concentrating the reception of asylum applications only at specific points of entry.

Under existing EU rules, migrants have the right to ask for asylum at any given entry point to an EU member country.

The amendments would also allow the building of barriers such as fences, as well as new roads to facilitate border patrolling on the Finnish side.

"Later on, the government will decide on border barriers to the critical zones on the eastern border, on the basis of the Finnish Border Guard's assessment," minister of internal affairs Krista Mikkonen said in a statement.

Reporting by Anne Kauranen.

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