

## APPG Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery

### Taking Back Control of our Borders? The Impact of Modern-Day Slavery

25<sup>th</sup> May 2021 Virtual Meeting of Parliamentarians

**Former Detective Superintendent and Chairman of HTF Report Phil Brewer** opened the meeting. He focused on two areas a. preventing trafficking through more effective border control b. offering victims safe and fair routes into the UK. Mr Brewer said that today's meeting was about what was happening at the Borders since Brexit.

**Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Dame Sara Thornton** discussed the law enforcement tools since Brexit and that there was a need to think through the long-term consequences of the effects of Brexit. Further, she noted that changes were inevitable since the UK is now a third-party member of EUROJUST and an outsider to many other Europe-wide organisations which tract criminality.

She mentioned Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) and said there are currently 38 live JITs, of which 18 are focused on Modern Slavery. However, she regretted that the UK no longer has access to CIS2, and that security staff were having to manually upload alerts to INTERPOL i247 system. The UK, she said, is now using the INTERPOL system but there was a difficulty in persuading EU states to use the same system.

She concluded that the UK could access the intelligence systems, on Sienna, but only as a third-party nation. She welcomed the three British law enforcement officers still working in EUROPOL and that the criminal record exchanges were continuing with the EU. However, there was concerns at the loss of European arrest warrants.

**Tim Loughton (Deputy Home Affairs Select Committee)** spoke about the Select Committee's current activity and their present involvement with Human Trafficking in relation to Women and Girls in the sex trade. He noted there would be an update on the post Brexit arrangements.

**Director of Threat Leadership NCA Rob Jones** confirmed that bi-lateral relationships across Europe have helped to mitigate the risk of loss of CIS2 and direct access combined with a stronger relationship with INTERPOL. There is an aspiration to exploit third party access of EUROPOL and continue to work closely with JITs and develop law enforcement relationships with other states. In relation to the current intelligence picture they have seen the rise in clandestine. There will be a surge in crossings this year as weather improves. Suspension of Schengen has meant there is no settled intelligence assessment on the impact of Brexit.

New legislation on the points base system has potential to make things much better, understanding who is leaving and coming into the UK and moving away from the misuse of identify cards which allow criminals to travel. This is an opportunity to detect both victims and criminals. The end of free movement is significant and the NCA are working with police and Border Force to minimise disruptive impact.

The significance of clandestine entry is increasing. A more confrontational presence at the border is likely to increase clandestine entry. The conventional small boat model doesn't lend itself to Modern Slavery, and it is more likely to see Modern Slavery in bigger entry vessels i.e. lorries.

**Karen Bradley** observed that it is notable that lorry crossing has decreased because of pandemic. She also raised concerns of fake points being used in the new points-based system and that within the New Plan for Immigration, clandestine travel will equate to being returned to your country.

**Director of Threat Leadership NCA Rob Jones** remarked that the business model for organised trafficking crime can be dismantled by this, breaking down incentives of high-risk crossings and debt bondage. This will disincentivise high risk crossings, preventing loss of life, but this needs to be done concurrently with other methods.

**Tim Loughton** fought amendments on family reunion programme since Dublin Arrangement no longer applies to the UK after Brexit and wont any longer cover family reunion programmes. For the last five months no safe and legal routes operating. If the Government is going to take a tough stance on asylum seekers coming here illegally the payoff is that we need to be more generous in the offer safe and legal routes.

**Since Chief Constable and National Police Chief Lead for Modern Slavery Shaun Sawyer was unable to attend the meeting**, his staff officer made the following comments. There are no firm trends at this time on the impact of Brexit on Modern Slavery. Currently, Mr Sawyer is working with Border Force to enable their staff to have access to slavery prevention risk orders.

**Sir Iain Duncan Smith** said there is a need to give victims of Modern Slavery time to settle before they give evidence in criminal trials. To get traffickers prosecuted you need victims to feel secure and safe that they aren't going to be forced to leave the country suddenly. There is no evidence to support the fact that Modern Slavery claims are a 'backdoor' for getting into Britain and **there is a need for a mindset change in the Home Office.**

**Karen Bradley** noted the importance of helping with employment prospects for victims referencing the recent [report](#) from the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. Stated that there is a need for recognition that a victim centred approach is the key to successful prosecution.

**The Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner** agreed that there is a need for more generous leave post conclusive grounds, and noted that at the centre of the New Plan for Immigration is the concept of one stop process which unfortunately doesn't take notice of the significance of trauma in impacting survivors ability to disclose their experiences at the drop of a hat.

**Baroness Butler-Sloss (Co-Chair)** thanked all the speakers for their contributions. The APPG would look at the importance of the relationship with Europe long-term since the issue of safe and legal routes were a pre-requisite to more effective control of traffickers and victims gaining access to the UK.