

Human Trafficking Summit

Meeting of Heads of Prosecution Services from Scotland, England & Wales, Northern Ireland and Ireland

Edinburgh, Scotland: 17 October 2014

BACKGROUND

1. On 17 October 2014, the Lord Advocate, Frank Mulholland QC hosted a Human Trafficking Summit at the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh attended by Alison Saunders, DPP, Crown Prosecution Service for England and Wales, Barra McGrory DPP, Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland. Claire Loftus DPP, Ireland also attended the summit as an observer and participated in the discussion.
2. Human trafficking is the slavery of our times. It is a serious violation of human rights and causes lasting harm to its victims. Every year thousands of men, women and children are trafficked across the globe, including within the United Kingdom and Ireland.

AGENDA

3. The Prosecution Heads discussed current trends in relation to human trafficking, the challenges faced by investigators and prosecutors and the importance of identifying victims. Technology and social media play an increasingly significant role in the recruitment of human trafficking victims and it is essential that investigations and prosecutions take account of this.
4. The National Crime Agency has revealed a 22% rise in the number of potential victims of human trafficking within the United Kingdom. Steps must be taken to ensure that these victims can have faith and confidence in the criminal justice system.
5. It is agreed that all agencies must work together to tackle a crime that is not contained by national borders.
6. We also heard from Police Scotland and the Police Service of Northern Ireland, in addition to prosecutors from Scotland and Northern Ireland about the challenges faced in the investigation and prosecution of cases of human trafficking.

FUTURE MEETINGS AND STRATEGIES FOR UNITED KINGDOM AGENCIES

7. Human trafficking is a serious and complex crime, presenting unique challenges to investigators and prosecutors. It is perpetrated against victims out of sight of our communities. However, when a victim of trafficking is identified we must ensure the crimes are thoroughly investigated and effectively prosecuted.
8. The perpetrators of Human Trafficking do not respect boundaries. Today we agreed as prosecutors to work together across boundaries and rise to the challenges to disrupt this abhorrent trade in human beings.
9. Within a year United Kingdom prosecutors will publish our Prosecutor's Commitments to tackling Human Trafficking. Our prosecutors and investigators will hold regular meetings to discuss the challenges and how these have been overcome. From a shared understanding we can build robust and effective prosecutions. The first of these meetings will take place in Edinburgh in February 2015.
10. Together, along with our partner agencies, we can combat this modern day slavery and make the United Kingdom hostile to human traffickers.