

Prosecutions for people-smuggling into UK rise by 50%

Source: The Guardian Monday 4 July 2016

The number of people prosecuted for smuggling illegal immigrants into Britain in their vehicles has risen by more than 50% in a year, according to new figures.

Home Office statistics show that 88 people were prosecuted for bringing stowaways into the UK in 2015-16, compared to the 52 taken to court the year before.

The figures come amid concern that the migration crisis has driven larger numbers of people into the hands of smugglers, risking their lives in the back of vans and lorries to make the journey to Britain.

US trafficking report records forced labour in UK

Source: The Guardian Wednesday 13 July 2016

US Trafficking in Persons report (2016) says some migrant workers were subjected to labour abuses in a number of sectors.

The spread of the trafficking of people and forced labour in a growing number of sectors in the UK and Ireland was confirmed as the US State Department released its latest global report on Trafficking in Persons (TIP).

The TIP report records that some migrant workers in the UK were subjected to forced labour in agriculture, cannabis cultivation, construction, food processing, factories, domestic service, nail bars, food services, car washes and on fishing boats in 2015, according to evidence supplied to the State Department by the UK government. Albania, Vietnam, Nigeria, Romania and Poland were the top countries of origin for foreign trafficking victims.

The report highlights the UK's lead in requiring large corporations to check their supply chains for trafficking through the Modern Slavery Act, passed last year. But it is critical of the UK's failure to support victims after an initial period, finding that it tends to deport people rather than care for them long term.

Modern slavery and human trafficking on the rise in UK

Source: The Guardian Sunday 10 July 2016

Demand for cheap goods, cheap labour and cheap sex has driven a steep increase in the number of victims reported to authorities.

Efforts to eradicate modern slavery in the UK are failing, with the number of potential victims being trafficked into Britain rising by 245% over the last five years, according to official figures.

Police and other authorities identified 3,266 people last year thought to have been the victims of modern slavery compared with 946 in 2011, a rise that has prompted disquiet among MPs and charities.

The figures from the National Referral Mechanism – a government safeguarding framework that aims to help potential victims of trafficking – reveal a steady rise of potential slavery victims over the last five years, with the single largest annual increase between 2014 and 2015 when nearly 1,000 extra cases were recorded.

Human traffickers 'using migration crisis' to force more people into slavery

Source: The Guardian Thursday 19 May 2016

EU report warns that children have become preferred target for criminal gangs amid concern over thousands of minors disappearing from official view.

Criminal gangs are taking advantage of Europe's migration crisis to force more people into sex work and other types of slavery, according to an EU report on human trafficking.

Children have become a preferred target for traffickers, the report warns, amid growing concern over the fate of unaccompanied child refugees who have disappeared from official view since arriving in Europe.

Almost 96,000 unaccompanied children claimed asylum in Europe in 2015, about one-fifth of the total number of child refugees. But at least 10,000 unaccompanied children have dropped off the radar of official agencies since arriving in Europe, the EU police agency reported in January. German authorities reported earlier this year that 4,700 children had been lost to officials, while up to 10 children a week are reported missing in Sweden.

The report from the European commission, which will be published on Thursday, does not attempt to estimate how many may have fallen victim to criminal gangs, but warns that the phenomenon of child trafficking “has been exacerbated by the ongoing migration crisis”. Children are at high risk of being doubly victimised, it says, because they are treated as perpetrators of crimes if they are found by the authorities.

EU authorities registered 15,846 victims of human trafficking in 2013-14, including 2,375 children, but the report’s authors believe the true number of victims is far higher. More than two-thirds (67%) of people were trafficked into sex work; about one-fifth (21%) were put into forced labour, often as agricultural workers, a form of slavery that disproportionately affected men. The remainder of trafficking victims faced an equally grim catalogue of exploitation, ranging from domestic servitude to forced begging.

More than two-thirds of the identified victims were EU nationals, with the largest numbers coming from Romania, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Hungary and Poland. The remainder came from all over the world, with Nigerians, Chinese and Albanians especially prominent.
