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The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP  
Home Secretary  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

19 September 2016

Dear Home Secretary,

## **PREVENTION AND IDENTIFICATION OF MODERN SLAVERY IN CALAIS: IASC RECOMMENDATIONS**

I am writing to express my views and concerns on the current situation relating to unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable adults in the camps of Northern France, in particular La Lande camp in Calais. This letter also includes a number of recommendations on how to improve prevention and identification of modern slavery and human trafficking efforts in the region.

Key immediate issues concerning the vulnerability of unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable adults include: need for more pro-active identification of potential modern slavery cases; provision of adequate accommodation that meets minimum safeguarding and child protection standards; more efficient and sustainable family reunification procedures under Dublin III and proactive identification and relocation of unaccompanied minors, where it is in their best interest, as per the announcement by the former Prime Minister reflected in Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 (commonly referred to as Lord Dubs amendment); improved understanding about the correlation between human trafficking and smuggling criminal networks, as well as between nationalities of migrants living in Calais and recent trends of modern slavery in the UK.

## **1. Background**

In August last year, upon the request of the then Home Secretary, Rt Hon Theresa May MP, I provided advice and recommendations on the France Terre d'Asile (FTDA) project proposal for the identification and referral of potential victims of human trafficking in Calais, which the Home Office indicated it would be funding.

In May 2016 I visited Calais port, hosted by UK Border Force, to learn about their operational work. In the afternoon, I met with Help Refugees and Citizens UK, two British charities working on the ground, who arranged a visit to the Calais camp, La Lande, also known as "the Jungle". My Senior Research Officer and Victim Support Adviser conducted a follow-up visit to Calais in late June to meet with FTDA and to participate in Operation Focal, led by the UK Border Force team.

Just as reinforced in the joint statement by the UK and French governments, following your recent visit to France, I too commend the commitment of the UK and French governments to work in partnership to address issues in Calais, with a particular focus on border security, targeting criminal gangs that are exploiting the vulnerable and providing humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including bringing unaccompanied asylum seeking children to the UK when in their best interest, in accordance with the Dublin III regulation.

## **2. Current situation: statistics**

According to Help Refugees and L'Auberge des Migrants, a French NGO, who together carry out a monthly census, at the time of my visit in May there were approximately 5,178 migrants in La Lande alone. This number has risen substantially over the summer months, to a total of 9,106 migrants in August 2016. In the past few months there have been, on average, over 500 new arrivals per week, including an influx of young Eritrean women arriving to Calais (Help Refugees and L'Auberge des Migrants briefing, e-mail correspondence).

According to the same source, at the time of my visit in May there were approximately 550 children residing in Calais; 412 of them were believed to be unaccompanied. By August the number had gone up to 865 children, with 676 (78%) unaccompanied. The top four nationalities for unaccompanied minors are Eritrean, Sudanese, Afghani and Ethiopian (Help Refugees and L'Auberge des Migrants briefing, e-mail correspondence).

As you know, earlier this year I was asked by the Rt Hon Theresa May to undertake a series of visits to the so-called "hotspots" in Italy and Greece. The main purpose of the visits was to assess the trafficking risks and provide advice on what more could be done to protect unaccompanied children and other vulnerable migrants against modern



slavery and human trafficking. Written advice was submitted to you, the Foreign Secretary and the Development Secretary at the end of July, with recommendations detailing how to support the response in Italy and Greece in order to ensure unaccompanied children are better protected from falling prey to criminal human trafficking networks. Although the situation in Italy and Greece is dramatically different from the situation in Calais, there have been some similar findings and possible solutions identified.

Drawing on my experiences in Greece and Italy, along with the evidence I have gathered regarding the situation in Calais, I have developed a number of recommendations. These focus on what more could be done in Calais to improve prevention and identification efforts concerning unaccompanied minors, as well as vulnerable adults, in order to better protect them from possible exploitation and slavery. For, while I commend the work of the UK and French Government to secure the borders and tackle smuggling criminal networks, I am of the opinion that not enough is being done to address the vulnerabilities of migrants, in particular unaccompanied children, currently residing in La Lande camp, as well as other smaller camps across Northern France.

### **3. IASC recommendations to HMG:**

#### **1. Vulnerability to modern slavery and human trafficking in Calais**

I appreciate that the UK Government recognises that migrants and refugees in Calais are vulnerable to modern slavery and human trafficking. This was demonstrated by the funding provided for the project run by FTDA, which specifically focuses on: identification of potential victims of modern slavery amongst the migrant population; development of referral pathways to support services; and training for relevant organisations working on the ground.

The project was launched in November 2015 and includes regular patrols by the field team, through which important information and exploitation trends have been identified. However, the evidence remains largely anecdotal, coming from NGOs and volunteers working on the ground, and rarely from migrants themselves.

FTDA have identified the following groups of migrants to be at high risk of exploitation and trafficking:

- **Young women originating from countries of the Horn of Africa** are most vulnerable to being sexually abused and exploited. Anecdotal evidence suggests that women seen entering the camp's 'night clubs' are forced into sexual exploitation by their smugglers to pay for the next leg of their journey. Some



women have disclosed their ordeal and sexual abuse suffered during the passage through Libya to Italy.

- **Afghani minors (mainly unaccompanied boys)** are exploited by the adult members of their community. They are made to perform 'Bacha Bazi', a practice involving dancing and sexual exploitation.
- **Egyptian boys** are being forced by adults to steal in Calais town and to bring goods back to the camp. One FTDA worker identified one particular boy and tried to talk to him, but was immediately interrupted by an adult man who took the boy away.

In June 2016 UNICEF published a report titled "Neither Safe Nor Sound"<sup>1</sup> that identified similar trends and findings as that of the FTDA's team. The study is based on the testimony of 60 children (all aged between 11 and 17 years old) who lived across seven migrant sites in the North of France during the period of January to April 2016. According to the findings of the study, children are exploited for forced criminal activity or labour in the camps along the shores of the English Channel. Sexual violence and abuse, including sexual exploitation of boys, are a constant threat. Young women testified that they had to perform sexual services as a way of payment for the next leg of their journey.

During the first six months, FTDA identified several difficulties that hinder implementation of their project. Firstly, disseminating information about risks of trafficking and talking about any possible exploitation directly with migrants is often not possible, as traffickers and smugglers are often present in the same circles. Thus the safety of both migrants and the FTDA team is jeopardised. In addition, FTDA failed to recruit enough interpreters for the main languages spoken by migrants in the camp. This resulted in failure to establish a direct rapport and trust with the migrant community. Therefore, the FTDA team primarily rely on information coming from a secondary source.

Secondly, when a potential victim is identified and referred for assistance, they are choosing to go back to the camp shortly after being taken to a place of safety. In my opinion this is due to the lack of comprehensive support structures for victims of trafficking. Potential victims are unwilling to disclose their experiences; this may be because they are ashamed, but usually due to fear of reprisals from traffickers. Failure to provide protection and respond to the individual needs of these victims means that they continue to mistrust the system and choose to go back to the camp where the

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<sup>1</sup> "Neither Safe Nor Sound: Unaccompanied children on the coastline of the English Channel and the North Sea", UNICEF, June 2016 [http://www.unicef.org/media/files/Unicef\\_NeitherSafeNorSound\\_\(003\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/media/files/Unicef_NeitherSafeNorSound_(003).pdf)



abuse will continue. However, the underlying factor is the failure to build trust directly with the migrant community.

The FTDA team have also reported that the majority of the referrals they receive from partner organisations, based on their initial assessment, are not linked to human trafficking and exploitation, but rather are cases of vulnerable migrants with health issues, or victims of domestic abuse or sexual violence. FTDA had to either signpost such referrals to other organisations, or turn down provision of assistance.

***Recommendation 1: Strengthen efforts to identify, refer and assist potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking***

Based on the lessons learnt from the first six months of the FTDA's project on identification of potential victims of human trafficking in Calais, and considering that the funding will last until April 2017, I believe the following suggestions will strengthen efforts to identify, refer and assist potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking through the current work of FTDA (I was also pleased to learn that the Home Office is currently working on suggestions to improve the project's delivery to achieve the best possible outcomes):

- a) Building trust with the migrant community is the biggest challenge of all. It is important that the FTDA team recruits and trains people of the same nationality and area of origin as migrants to perform the role of cultural mediators and interpreters, who will therefore speak the same language, understand the culture and be able to built trust with migrants in the first instance.
- b) Providing protection and responding to the individual needs of potential victims is crucial. This not only helps them recover but also builds trust, allowing others to come forward. According to FTDA, if a potential victim is identified, they would be provided with emergency accommodation in one of FTDA's asylum centres or in a hotel or B&B. Aside from this, if a victim of trafficking is identified and referred to the French national structure for assisting victims of trafficking, he or she will be taken far away from the place of exploitation and accommodated in non-specialised centres spread across the entire country. In addition, the official identification process is fully dependent on victim's cooperation with law enforcement (GRETA country report on France, 2013). Such provisions may deter victims from consenting to accept assistance and on the contrary push them back to criminals.
- c) Appropriate immediate reception facilities must be provided. This is vitally important in building trust with potential victims and shaping their willingness to further cooperate with authorities. The initial reception, with a first point of contact in a positive environment, is a key time to provide potential victims with



information about their rights, possible options of support and protection from future risks. An inability to respond to the immediate needs of potential victims and to provide protection pushes them back to the camp, even though traffickers are active there. The case of a Vietnamese boy identified by the FTDA team in a detention centre, who chose not to cooperate with authorities by refusing to apply for asylum and choosing to go back to the camp, proves exactly that.

- d) Referrals of vulnerable migrants with other protection needs, such as victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence, and others, should be accepted and assisted by the FTDA team. Providing protection and assistance to these vulnerable adults would help prevent further abuse and possible exploitation. This would also help to build trust with migrant communities, as well as partner organisations.

Going forward, I believe it is crucially important that FTDA's response is based on a clear assessment of needs related to identification and safeguarding, to then be matched to their resources. In addition, it is important to assess the main risks and develop a strategy to mitigate those, including developing a contingency plan, for successful project implementation.

## **2. Living conditions in the La Lande camp in Calais**

During my visit to Calais in May, I found the living conditions to be unsuitable and unsafe, particularly for women and children. According to Help Refugees, less than 20% of migrants live in secure accommodation in the government run La Cap (container site) and the Jules Ferry day centre. La Cap has a capacity to house up to 1500 people only. Unaccompanied minors are accommodated together with adults, without any proper safeguards in place. The Jules Ferry day centre for women and children, run by La Vie Active Centre, is the only safe place in the Calais camp, but it can only cater for up to 400 people. The Women and Children Day centre, run by a UK volunteer, is a double-decker bus where women with children can find safety and receive additional care, but only during the day. Thousands of other migrants and refugees, including unaccompanied minors, must sleep in inadequate conditions, such as overcrowded tents. I believe this puts unaccompanied children at a very high risk of abuse, violence and exploitation.

These children have fled violence, poverty, and conflict. To reach Calais they have had to travel on long and perilous journeys only to find that their suffering is not yet over. They are faced with severe and dangerous realities of living in Calais and try every single night to cross the English Channel, even though the risk of being caught and returned to the camp, or even the risk of serious injury or death, is very high.



UNICEF's report, "Neither Safe nor Sound", suggests that minors have to pay an "entry fee" to traffickers to be allowed to stay in the camps. Most unaccompanied minors would be forced to work for adults, selling food for example at the informal night-time market or performing other chores in order to pay for their stay. The study also includes evidence that the fee collected by smugglers to pay for crossing the English Channel has been raised to £4,000-£5,500 due to increased security around the border; children are therefore being pushed to take even higher risks in order to cross the Channel, including being hidden in refrigerated lorries.

Conflicts and clashes between various groups of migrants often occur in the Calais camp. Rapidly increasing numbers of migrants and refugees in the camp lead to more frustration and tensions. One of the biggest recent conflicts, between Afghani and Sudanese nationals, has led to many people being injured. Such clashes and conflicts increase the vulnerability of children to being abused and trafficked. According to the UNICEF report, many children were hospitalised following instances of mental health breakdowns and violent episodes. Considering the exponential growth of numbers of new arrivals throughout the summer months, it appears to me that the conditions have worsened.

***Recommendation 2: Provide protection and better living conditions to unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable migrants***

I believe it is important to provide separate temporary accommodation for unaccompanied children with appropriate safeguards in place, as well as access to education. Providing safety and educational opportunities is key to addressing the vulnerability of children and ensuring they have every chance for integration, either in France or in the UK, and therefore a better future.

In order to pro-actively identify unaccompanied children and safeguard them from existing risks, it is important to identify their needs and ensure they are protected from any further abuse and exploitation. It is absolutely unacceptable that these children are left in the camp at the disposal of the criminal networks and they continue risking their lives daily to reach the shores of the UK.

In addition, I am concerned about the potential eviction of the northern part of the Calais camp, as was announced by the Mayor of Calais in early July (Reuters, 11 July). According to Help Refugees, more than 9,000 migrants, of whom 656 are unaccompanied children, currently live in the Calais camp and the majority of them reside in the northern part. A similar eviction of the southern part of the camp was carried out earlier this year and is believed to have led to over 100 children going missing (Safe Passage, Citizens UK). I am concerned that the planned eviction will result in many more children being pushed into the hands of traffickers and smugglers as a result of desperation and a sense of urgency to leave the camp. Therefore, I



believe, if an eviction is to go ahead, it is crucial to put appropriate safeguarding and protection measures in place well in advance, including providing safe accommodation for unaccompanied children. Otherwise, many migrants, and unaccompanied children in particular, will be put at a greater risk of being trafficked and exploited.

### **3. Frustration with official processes resulting in increased vulnerability**

I have received a clear message from the NGOs working on the ground in Calais, and also most importantly from the migrants themselves, that there is very little confidence in asylum seeking procedures in France, as well as the Dublin III regulations on reunification with family members in the UK. My visits to Italy and Greece have also confirmed this. I am therefore convinced that the frustration with, and lack of confidence in, Dublin III procedures is one of the key motivators behind risk taking behaviour, which leads to higher exposure to modern slavery and exploitation.

My team and I had an opportunity to speak to migrants who had been living in the Calais camp for months. Some had already applied for asylum in France and some had applied for family reunification under Dublin III regulations. However, every night they were continuously trying to cross the Channel illegally. The waiting time was simply far too long for them. Lack of communication regarding the progress of their case is another significant contributing factor. Unfortunately, migrants had more trust in smugglers than in state led procedures that exist to ensure their protection.

During my visit to the camp, I was kindly invited by a Syrian refugee into his home. He told me his story, as well as stories of many other Syrian refugees in the camp. He was the first person in the camp to start a register with the names and passport data of all Syrians living in Calais. He also documented their stories. Some have successfully claimed asylum in France, some have been reunited with family in the UK, but some have also died trying to get to the UK. He told me a story of a young woman with two young children (4 and 5 years old) whose husband died in the armed conflict. She had family in the UK, her father and brothers, and wanted to be reunited with them. However, she was afraid to register for asylum in France. She viewed her only option as going to smugglers to get herself and her children to the UK. This woman refused to leave her tent as she was afraid of being abused and harassed by certain male migrants. It is this lack of trust in asylum procedures, as well as the lack of information and legal advice provided, that kept this woman with her children living in fear in the hands of smugglers, significantly at risk of exploitation and abuse.

I do recognise the fact that a lot of recent work has been done to improve the Dublin III procedures. However, it appears to me that currently implementation is far too reliant on the civil society sector, which regularly identifies cases of unaccompanied minors who have grounds to apply. These organisations provide advice on legal rights, gather evidence needed for the applications, register claims and provide evidence to French



authorities. This work has been primarily led by Citizens UK, who has already successfully reunited over 50 unaccompanied minors with their relatives in the UK. However, according to Citizens UK, at present there are at least 185 children eligible for humanitarian protection in the UK under the Dublin III regulation still in Calais (E-mail correspondence, Citizens UK).

Citizens UK have also shared their concerns about the lack of resources for NGOs and the fact that there are too few lawyers working to deal with the caseload. Operations led by Citizens UK have been successful so far, but this is clearly not a sustainable or desirable approach. Such work has to be appropriately resourced, mandated and managed.

On 4 May 2016 the Government announced a new initiative for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to be relocated to the UK from Greece, Italy and France, which is now reflected in the Immigration Act 2016. Citizens UK have pro-actively identified at least 210 children who they believe would be eligible for relocation to the UK under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 (E-mail correspondence, Citizens UK). The Government should act as quickly as possible jointly with its French counterparts, for every day that children spend in camps in Northern France is another day they are at risk of exploitation and trafficking.

***Recommendation 3: Provide increased resources and efforts to ensure that unaccompanied refugee children, eligible for family reunification under Dublin III and relocation under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016, are proactively identified and brought to the UK***

It was reassuring to see the UK's commitment to bring unaccompanied asylum seeking children to the UK when in their best interest, in accordance with the Dublin III regulation, reinforced in the joint statement by the UK and French governments, following your recent visit to France. To achieve that, I believe the Government should provide increased resources, and possibly deployments, for a sustained period, to quickly identify eligible children, verify processes and register cases who qualify for family reunification under Dublin III provisions and relocation under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016. This will ensure that those who are eligible are proactively identified and are provided with the humanitarian protection that they are entitled to. I believe that relying so heavily on the voluntary sector is not a sustainable solution and this needs to be urgently addressed.

This urgency is heightened due to an increased number of unaccompanied children now present in the camp, and the possible up-coming eviction of the northern part of the Calais camp. It is important to ensure that unaccompanied refugee children have access to legal advice and are informed about the procedure for re-uniting with families



in the UK via Dublin III. The information must be provided in their language and in a form that they can understand.

The Government should work jointly with the French authorities to ensure that family reunification processes are as efficient as possible. It is essential that Dublin III processes take place within the shortest feasible time period. Given clear risks to children who lack confidence in the current system or are left there waiting for too long, the Government should consider the possibility of introducing a Fast Track and more flexible system for unaccompanied children eligible for family reunification, as well as for the relocation to the UK under Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016.

Children are not waiting. Every night they go to their smugglers who have promised to get them across the Channel. Every night they think that this time they will be lucky. However, every night each of these children are at risk of exploitation and sadly even dying as they take huge risks to reach the UK.

#### **4. Joint law enforcement response to tackling criminal networks exploiting the vulnerable**

It became clear during the visit that criminal networks and facilitators continue to operate in migrant camps across Northern France. They use every opportunity to profit and exploit the vulnerabilities of migrants and refugees, in particular children. Criminals know exactly what migrants need. They exploit their trust and communicate deceitful messages easily. Moreover, they live amongst the vulnerable migrants, having direct and easy access to them and jeopardising on-going identification and protection activities led by both statutory authorities and charitable organisations.

#### ***Recommendation 4: UK law enforcement to work closely with French counterparts in collecting intelligence on human trafficking and other criminal gang activity within the camps***

UK and French law enforcement have built a strong collaborative relationship in working together to tackle criminal activities in Northern France. It will be important to ensure that the UK proactively works with French counterparts to offer a high level of partnership in tackling human trafficking and exploitation within the camps. Strategies and intelligence gathering techniques used for tackling other serious and organised crime should be used in the camps in order to gather intelligence, build a better picture of the on-going crime and work jointly on investigations to disrupt the criminal gangs. Unfortunately, at present, much evidence about abuse and exploitation remains anecdotal.

#### **5. Potential correlation between nationalities of migrants in Calais and modern slavery in the UK**



According to the monthly census administered by Help Refugees and L'Auberge des Migrants, the top four nationalities of migrants in Calais are Sudanese, Afghani, Pakistani and Eritrean. The top three nationalities of unaccompanied minors are Eritrean, Sudanese and Afghani.

Based on UK National Referral Mechanism (NRM) data<sup>2</sup>, the number of potential victims referred to the NRM from Sudan (83 cases, 492% increase), Eritrea (137 cases, 158% increase) and Afghanistan (48 cases, 100% increase) increased substantially in 2015.

The NRM statistics for the first quarter of 2016 show a similar trend. Eritrea, Sudan and Afghanistan have now entered the top ten countries of origin of potential victims of trafficking identified in the UK. During the first 3 months of 2016, 20 Afghani nationals were referred to the NRM (18 of whom were minors) compared to 4 referrals (3 minors) in the same period of time in 2015; 23 Eritrean nationals (16 minors) were referred in the first quarter of 2016 compared to 14 Eritreans (4 minors) in the same period of 2015; and 22 Sudanese nationals (4 minors) were referred during the first quarter of 2016 compared to 6 referrals (3 minors) in the first quarter of 2015.

***Recommendation 5: Improve understanding of potential correlation between nationalities of migrants in Calais and potential victims of modern slavery identified and referred to the NRM in the UK***

Although it is too early to presuppose that the two statistics are linked, I strongly believe that the Government needs to commission research to improve understanding of how the numbers are potentially related. Have those potential victims referred to the NRM in the UK lived in and come through Calais? What were their experiences? Have they been exploited during their journey? Have the 268 individuals entering the NRM in 2015 from Sudan, Eritrea or Afghanistan, been provided with a debrief that would be given to victims or witnesses of other forms of serious and organised crime, such as counter terrorism or sexual violence? More research needs to be undertaken to understand the links between modern slavery and people smuggling. This will help inform the joint law enforcement response, and help to better identify and assist potential victims of modern slavery.

While there is a lot of intelligence being fed into and exchanged through the JOCCC to tackle people smuggling and exploitation, I believe it is important to share briefs and threat assessments with the NRM competent authorities (UKVI and UKHTC) in order to ensure that NRM decision making, in particular on cases of potential victims from Sudan, Eritrea and Afghanistan, is well informed.

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<sup>2</sup> NRM quarterly reports <http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/national-referral-mechanism-statistics>



## **4. Other emerging issues:**

### **4.1 Vulnerability of Vietnamese migrants living in smaller camps around Calais must be addressed**

Vietnamese migrants live in separate, much smaller camps, around Calais. One of the well known camps where Vietnamese migrants are living is called “Vietnamese city” and is located near the small town of Angres. The camp is closed and very tightly controlled by criminal gangs. The FTDA team could not get access inside, even when they attended with a translator. FTDA interviewed two Vietnamese nationals in a migrant detention centre (a child and an adult). Both had a large sum of money in debt to their smugglers for their journey to the UK. The boy said that he travelled from Vietnam through Russia, Central European countries, Germany and France. The final destination for him was the UK. FTDA has already commissioned an academic to conduct research on smuggling of Vietnamese migrants and their situation in camps around Calais, who my office have been liaising with.

In my role as the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (IASC), I have prioritised Vietnam in my Strategic Plan 2015-17 as one of five key countries with whom effective and targeted international collaboration to combat modern slavery should be encouraged. In July 2015, the former Prime Minister David Cameron became the first serving British Prime Minister to visit Vietnam. Subsequently, I accepted No. 10’s invitation to undertake a follow up visit. Following my visit to Vietnam I asked my team to begin to develop this understanding, including through engagement with law enforcement and frontline responders. My team are currently working on this task with Dr Daniel Silverstone from Liverpool John Moores University, who is well respected for his work on East Asian organised crime issues. A report will be produced later this year and will include my recommendations to help develop a better understanding and an improved response to modern slavery and human trafficking in Vietnam and the UK.

### **4.2 Refusal of Leave to Enter the UK to EU/EEA nationals based on the premise of possible exploitation in the UK must be reconsidered**

Another matter that I would like to bring to your attention, which I discussed with Border Force during my visit to Calais, is refusal of entry to the UK by Border Force on the premise of possible exploitation in the UK. Border Force officials have confirmed that they have to regularly turn away cars or mini vans, refusing entry to the Central European nationals, as they believe they could be in the process of being trafficked to the UK. Being a juxtaposed border control, the only thing the UK Border Force can do is refer the potential victims of trafficking, as well as report criminals, to the French authorities.




The Independent Chief Inspector of Immigration and Borders is currently carrying out an inspection of how Border Force identifies and treats potential victims of trafficking on entry to the UK. Unfortunately, this inspection will not be looking closely at the situation in Calais, as it is a juxtaposed control. However, it is an important first step towards identifying similar cases at other entry points to the UK. Refusing entry to a national of any country on the premise of possible exploitation in the UK means preventing possible exploitation in the UK alone; however the potential victim could remain in the hands of traffickers or be returned to their country of origin to criminal networks. I believe that the Government must ensure that every effort is made to prevent exploitation from happening at all. In the case of Calais, this means working jointly with relevant French authorities to establish clear pathways for referral of potential victims of trafficking into the French support system.

The Prime Minister has described modern slavery as the great human rights issue of our time. There are clear risks to unaccompanied children, as well as vulnerable adults, located in migrant camps in Northern France, including Calais. Organised crime groups have been operating for years with impunity, trafficking and exploiting vulnerable children and adults. Working closely with French authorities, I believe a more proactive and urgent response is needed to ensure criminal networks are disrupted and vulnerable migrants, in particular unaccompanied children, are better protected and assisted.

I look forward to hearing from you and would be happy to discuss this further.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KH', with a vertical line extending downwards from the right side of the signature.

**KEVIN HYLAND OBE**  
**Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner**

**CC: Sarah Newton MP**  
**Minister for Vulnerability, Safeguarding and Countering Extremism**