



Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland

PRESS RELEASE



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MAJOR POLICE PROBE INTO TRAFFICKING LEADS TO 528 ARRESTS

The largest ever police crackdown on Human Trafficking resulted in police recovering 167 victims and arresting 528 criminals associated with one of the worst crimes threatening our society.

Human Trafficking victims are brought to the UK and sold as commodities for the purposes of sexual exploitation, domestic servitude or forced labour. In the fight to make the UK a hostile environment for trafficking and protect victims and potential victims from this abhorrent crime police carried out 6 months of targeted operations.

Pentameter 2 is a coordinated campaign of activity aimed at disrupting those who engage in trafficking for sexual exploitation throughout the UK, involving all UK police forces, other law enforcement agencies, the UK Human Trafficking Centre, and other voluntary and statutory agencies. It was coordinated and led by a national coordination cell staffed by Gloucestershire Constabulary who worked to the Gold Commander, Chief Constable Dr Tim Brain. A key feature was the use of a national intelligence infrastructure, which supported police operations. Intelligence reports were collated and placed onto a specifically created database on the HOLMES 2 system. This supported regional intelligence units and local forces, it highlighted organised crime links across the United Kingdom and beyond.

Pentameter 2 results show:

- **167** victims identified
- **528** criminals arrested
- **822** premises visited
- **6,400** police intelligence reports gathered
- more than **£500,000** worth of cash has been recovered from those criminals arrested and court orders are in place to restrain further criminal assets running into several millions of pounds
- Of those recovered **13** of the victims were children with the youngest aged just 14 years old.

Pentameter 2, launched on the 3 October 2007, is the second operation of its kind. Pentameter 1 launched in 2006 and rescued 88 victims, led to 232 arrests and 134 perpetrators charged.

Police forces throughout the UK were focused on rescuing and protecting victims trafficked to the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation and on bringing to justice the perpetrators.

Of the 822 premises that were visited, 157 were massage parlours and saunas and 582 residential properties; evidencing the covert nature of the crime. The majority of victims recovered originated from China, SE Asia and Eastern Europe. During the operation 5 victims (three of which were children) who had been trafficked for forced labour were recovered.

Dr Tim Brain, ACPO Lead on Pentameter 2 and Chief Constable of Gloucestershire Constabulary, said:

"At its core this Operation was about striking a blow against one of the most distressing aspects of serious and organised crime in this country; that of people trafficking for sexual exploitation.

"It was a large scale, co-ordinated operation, based in Gloucestershire and I am very proud that my staff have demonstrated excellence in delivering against the challenging task of national coordination. The lessons learned from UKP2 are being considered and it should not be underestimated how this operation will influence developments within the Police service.

"The figures show how successful we have been in achieving our goals. As a direct result of Pentameter 2 more than 160 vulnerable people have been saved from lives of abuse, exploitation and misery.

"Perhaps even more importantly, Pentameter 2 has been instrumental in seriously disrupting the organised crime networks responsible for human trafficking. Organised criminals view individual victims as merely another commodity, and their trafficking as a lucrative and relatively low risk activity. By arresting those involved in these offences and seizing their assets, we reduce the ability of these criminal networks to operate effectively.

"This is an example of how all forces and partners throughout the British Isles have cooperated together against an important aspect of serious and organised crime. Pentameter 1 and Pentameter 2 remain unique examples of nationally coordinated operations".

Home Secretary Jacqui Smith said:

"One of the vilest crimes that threaten our society is the trafficking of human beings. This horrendous crime is the product of organised criminality, whose business is to make money from human misery.

"This campaign has proved to be a great success and is an excellent example of partnership working. I commend the efforts of those who have been at the front line making a real impact in disrupting these evil crimes.

"I am committed to tackling this crime and we have already made great progress. Last year we signed the Council of Europe Convention and will ratify the Convention by the end of the year. But we will not stop there, efforts to rescue

victims of trafficking and bring to justice those that exploit them will go on until we ratify and we will continue to try to improve our ability to combat this terrible crime after we ratify.”

Nick Kinsella, Head of the UK Human Trafficking Centre said:

“Pentameter 2 has been a great success and now the results need to be analysed in depth, to see what we have actually found. This operation was one of many strands of activity that are taking place in the UK or being led by UK law enforcement internationally, to combat the trafficking of human beings.

“The results from P2 highlight that great steps have been taken to tackle the trafficking of human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation. We need to build on what we have learnt and take this momentum forward. The UKHTC will continue to coordinate for the service in this regard, and with its partners will continue to take forward a diverse range of programmes to ensure that the UK becomes a hostile environment for traffickers.”

Members of the public should continue to be vigilant for the signs of human trafficking and if anyone has information about trafficking they should ring their local police force or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or in an emergency they should dial 999.

New measures to tackle trafficking and support victims are published today in update of the UK Human Trafficking Action Plan, first published last year. In reviewing the strategy new areas and opportunities were identified to combat trafficking and lead to 23 new actions being added.

The Government is committed to putting victim care and protection at the heart of it, and as a result new actions include allowing victims of trafficking to be immediately granted a 45 day stay in the UK and a further new 1 year temporary residency permit to legitimately stay in the UK after being identified as a victim of this horrendous crime. Both measures go further than the minimum standards outlined in the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking.

Notes to editors:

- Pentameter 2 (UKP2) was launched on 3 October 2007. It was initiated by the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) and developed by Gloucestershire Constabulary. It involved the 55 police forces throughout the UK.
- UKP2 had the full support of the Government, led by the Home Office, Ministry of Justice and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Department of Children, Schools and Families, along with agencies such as the Serious and Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), HM Revenue and Customs and NGO's including the POPPY project.

- Pentameter 2 was linked to activity that is taking place in a number of EU countries, which is being led by the UK and Poland. As with Pentameter 2 the aim of the operation is for the victims to be treated sensitively and provided with a wide range of support from both voluntary and statutory agencies.
- For interviews for with the Home Secretary Jacqui Smith, please contact the Home Office press on 0207 035 3535.
- For interviews with Dr Tim Brain, please contact Lisa Vasco from the ACPO Press Office on 020 7084 8947 (office hours) or via 07803 903686 (out of office hours).
- For interviews with Nick Kinsella from the UKHTC please contact Lou Bloomfield, UKHTC Media Consultant on 07792 285009.
- The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) is an independent, professionally led strategic body. In the public interest and, in equal and active partnership with Government and the Association of Police Authorities, ACPO leads and co-ordinates the direction and development of the police service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In times of national need ACPO, on behalf of all chief officers, coordinates the strategic policing response.
- ACPO's 341 members are police officers of Assistant Chief Constable rank (Commanders in the Metropolitan Police and City of London Police) and above, and senior police staff managers, in the 44 forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and other forces such as British Transport Police and States of Jersey Police.