

News story: Slough people smuggler jailed

On 12 February, Border Force officers at the UK inward tourist controls at the Channel Tunnel in Coquelles, France stopped a hired British-registered Ford Luton van. They questioned the driver of the vehicle, Harbans Lal Doll, 61, who said he had left the UK the previous day to go to Calais to collect some furniture. He had stayed overnight before collecting the furniture that morning.

When officers asked to examine the load they found the van 3 quarters full of beanbags and chairs with a double mattress stood upright part way inside the van. Hiding behind the mattress the officers found 16 people, including 5 minors.

Dave Smith, Deputy Director of Border Force South East and Europe, said:

Border Force officers are on the frontline keeping our borders safe and secure. We will continue to work with law enforcement colleagues to ensure that people smugglers and traffickers, whose actions often put the lives of others at risk, face the consequences of their crimes.

Doll was arrested and the investigation passed to Immigration Enforcement Criminal and Financial Investigation (CFI) officers. He was subsequently charged with assisting unlawful immigration into the UK.

Doll pleaded guilty yesterday (23 November) on the first day of his trial at Canterbury Crown Court and was sentenced there immediately.

Assistant Director David Fairclough, from the CFI team, said:

Although Doll offered no explanation for his behaviour, the Judge considered in his sentencing that the motivation was financial. Offences like this, where individuals take advantage of the desperation of others for personal gain, are among the worst that we deal with in CFI.

We work closely with Border Force colleagues to rigorously investigate allegations of immigration related criminality and this case should serve as a warning to anyone tempted to get involved with this kind of offending. We will catch you, and put you before the courts.

The 16 people, 14 Iraqi nationals – comprising 3 families – and 2 women from

Albania, were passed to the French Police Aux Frontières.

Anyone with information about suspected immigration abuse can contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 anonymously or visit their [website](#).