

## Press release: UK cracks down on modern slavery in Nigeria

The UK is cracking down on the barbaric crime of modern slavery, International Development Secretary Priti Patel announced from Nigeria today, as she called for a world free from this abhorrent trade.

During a visit to a safe house – home to child victims as young as seven – Ms Patel met survivors of modern slavery and announced increased support to provide alternative jobs and livelihoods for potential victims of trafficking and modern slavery, including support for those who become victims to help them reintegrate into society and to protect them from re-trafficking – reducing a crime that directly affects the UK.

Nigeria is the fourth largest source of human trafficking to the UK, and the International Organization for Migration estimates that approximately 80% of girls arriving to Europe from Nigeria through irregular migration are potential victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

During a joint visit to Nigeria alongside Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, Ms Patel raised the issue of trafficking at the highest levels in government and challenged the political and cultural acceptance of modern slavery, a trade which earns more for criminals around the world than any other, apart from the illegal drug trade.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

It is shameful that in the 21st Century the evil crime of modern slavery lurks in every corner of the globe, including on the UK's streets, destroying the lives of young men, women, and children. We will not stand aside and ignore this barbaric and often invisible crime, which all too often reaches our shores and is damaging for everyone except the perpetrators.

The UK is a global leader in stamping out modern slavery, pressing the international community including the Nigerian Government to tackle this crime at source, bringing perpetrators to justice and protecting victims who have been subject to unimaginable horrors.

Our support is offering vulnerable girls and women an alternative life to slavery and exploitation and helping them reintegrate into society, stopping vicious cycles of abuse and creating a more prosperous and secure future for thousands, as well as for us at home.

The Prime Minister Theresa May has made clear that tackling modern slavery is a top priority for the UK, creating the world-leading Modern Slavery Act in 2015 and establishing the cross-government taskforce, which includes the

International Development Secretary.

According to latest figures, 875,500 Nigerians are living in modern slavery worldwide, including in the UK, and Ms Patel heard from counsellors at a safe house in Lagos, run by Nigeria's National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), who have helped some of these vulnerable people.

In the safe house, Ms Patel saw children – some as young as seven years old – who have been trafficked across the world, including to the UK, Europe, Libya and other countries across Africa. She vowed to challenge the cultural acceptance of human exploitation; often young girls and boys who end up trapped in this abusive trade are encouraged by their families to risk their lives in search of money and a better future.

This new package of support builds on progress already being made by the UK in Nigeria and across the world. The UK's existing support to Nigeria is helping to support investigations and bring perpetrators to justice, as well as providing protection for victims.

The British Government is driving reform within the international system to coordinate a more effective and focused approach to stamp out this exploitation.

#### **Notes to Editors:**

- There are an estimated 46 million people living in modern slavery across the globe who have been trafficked, coerced or otherwise forced into terrible exploitation, labour or domestic servitude.
- The UK's £7 million announcement will work to tackle the root causes as well as the symptoms of modern slavery and human trafficking in Nigeria:
  - The programme will build evidence and trial interventions to prevent modern slavery and be ready to do what works.
  - We will provide credible alternatives for women and girls in the high risk demographic and help diversify economic activity in Edo State – Nigeria's trafficking hub – and other Niger Delta states.
  - We will improve the essential support for victims, which could include assistance to help them reintegrate into society, to prevent vulnerable people being re-trafficked and falling back into a cycle of exploitation.
  - DFID will challenge the Government of Nigeria to step up to tackle modern slavery and act as Champions who will help us advocate for reform.
  - This is a new allocation of funds from the DFID Nigeria budget towards explicitly tackling human trafficking and modern slavery.
- This funding is in addition to £5 million of the UK's Modern Slavery Fund, which the Prime Minister announced in July 2016, that has been allocated to Nigeria and which will build capacity of Nigeria law enforcement to crack down on the crime, help investigate prolific

traffickers, and provide protection for victims.

- DFID has previously donated four vehicles to NAPTIP to support human trafficking investigations and to assist with the safeguarding and care of identified victims of trafficking.
- The ILO estimates that global trade in humans costs \$150 billion. Only profits reaped from illegal drugs earn more for criminals than forced labour.
- Trafficking for sexual exploitation alone costs the UK an estimated £890 million every year.
- IOM estimates that approximately 80% of girls arriving to Europe from Nigeria are potential victims of trafficking for exploitation – whose numbers have soared from 1,454 in 2014 to 11,009 in 2016.
- The Home Office estimates that there were 10,000 – 13,000 potential victims of modern slavery in the UK in 2013.
- In 2016, 3,805 potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the National Referral Mechanism; a 17% increase on the number of referrals in 2015.
- In December last year the International Development Secretary announced £8 million to double support to a special protection fund set up to keep women and girl refugees in the Mediterranean region safe from trafficking and exploitation.
- DFID is already working to tackle slavery. Our Regional Women and Girls Protection Programme will support 40,000 vulnerable women migrants in Libya to protect themselves from trafficking, forced labour and sexual violence in Greece and the Balkans.
- The announcement was made during a two day visit by the International Development Secretary Priti Patel and the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, where they announced a new package of humanitarian support to help rebuild north east Nigeria, and saw how UK aid, defence and diplomacy are working together to build security and shared prosperity in Nigeria and at home.

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