

# Smugglers responsible for hiding migrants in vans brought to justice

Two men who dangerously smuggled 31 illegal migrants into the UK, including seven children and a pregnant woman, have been sentenced to a combined 14 years in prison.

Akan Brayan, of Nottingham, and Dylan Shwani, of Lincoln, were found guilty of recruiting drivers to hide migrants in hired vans containing various goods before smuggling them into the UK.

The defendants, both aged 37, were sentenced at Nottingham Crown Court on 7 June, 2022, following a five-year investigation by the Home Office's Criminal and Financial Investigations (CFI) unit. They were each sentenced to seven years in prison.

Between 2016 and 2018, Brayan and Shwani, paid six drivers from the Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire areas to bring 31 Iraqi migrants, on six separate occasions, into the country.

Although the majority of the migrants were men, children as young as one and a pregnant woman were also found in the vans.

People were crammed into the vehicles among stacks of tyres, second-hand furniture and household goods being transported to the UK. Photos show in one of the vans a woman cradling a small child, with other children sat around her in the tightly enclosed space.

CFI teams found boxes of goods deliberately placed to hide people as well as paprika on the floor of one of the vans in an attempt to confuse sniffer dogs from detecting the migrants' scents.

Minister for Justice and Tackling Illegal Migration, Tom Pursglove MP said:

These brazen attempts to smuggle illegal migrants, including very young children, into the UK in tiny, air-tight spaces with room to barely move, are despicable.

Our expertly trained officers continue to work round the clock to prevent this illegal activity, which puts lives in extreme danger.

The Nationality and Borders Act will make it easier to prosecute people smugglers and, by making it a criminal offence to arrive in the UK illegally, we can truly break the business models of these callous criminals.

Ben Thomas, Deputy Director for Immigration Enforcement's Criminal and Financial Investigations, said:

My team work tirelessly to bring to justice anyone attempting to smuggle people unlawfully into the country.

These two evil men endangered the lives of people, including children, to line their pockets without a care in the world for their safety. I hope these sentencings send a powerful message that breaking the law and putting individuals' lives at risk will not go unpunished.