

Victims of kidnapping and slavery

29 October 2018

✘Romanian and UK authorities successfully took down an organised crime group involved in human trafficking for exploitation – forced labour, false imprisonment and money laundering.

In a series of early morning raids carried out on 16 October in east London by the Met's Modern Slavery and Kidnap Unit, eight premises were searched. Eight suspects were arrested. Four suspects appeared in court on 18 October, charged with conspiring to hold a person in slavery or servitude and money laundering. They were remanded in custody. The other four suspects arrested in the UK were released under investigation, and further enquiries are ongoing in relation to their involvement in trafficking offences.

On the same day, seven searches were simultaneously carried out in Romania by the Directorate for Investigation of Organized Crime and Terrorism, Territorial Office of Vrancea and Romanian Police. Seized in the searches were five automobiles, approximately GBP 37 000 (in Romanian and UK currency), gold jewelry, several laptops and mobile telephones, as well as bank documents and cards issued by the UK authorities. Additionally, in Romania, two men and two women have been heard on suspicion of modern slavery and money laundering offences and placed under judicial control.

Eurojust, via the Romanian and UK Desks, supported this case from the beginning, and held a coordination meeting to map out the judicial strategy. A joint investigation team (JIT) between the UK and Romania was formed in September 2017 and was extended for one year. Funding for the JIT was provided by Eurojust.

Thirty-three potential victims of trafficking were rescued (24 men, 4 women and 5 children) from the London addresses and brought to safety.

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