

What is the Government doing to arrest people who take money from people seeking to cross the Channel illegally in unsuitable boats?

I have received the following answer to my recent Parliamentary Question:

The Home Office has provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (41593):

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what further steps her Department plans to take to arrest people who take money from people seeking to cross the Channel illegally in unsuitable boats. (41593)

Tabled on: 03 September 2021

Answer:

Chris Philp:

The Government stands resolute in its commitment to tackle Organised Immigration Crime (OIC). We continue to pursue the Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) who facilitate illegal travel to the UK and who exploit vulnerable migrants, knowingly putting people in life-threatening situations.

We are committed to prosecuting those who profit from dangerous and unnecessary Channel crossings in small boats. We are working with national and international partners in these investigations, and are continuing to improve the intelligence co-operation that underpins them. The multi-agency NCA-led OIC Taskforce is the UK government's response to tackling people smuggling. It has been involved in more than 1000 arrests, both in the UK and overseas, with suspects convicted sentenced to more than 720 years in prison. It takes a whole of route approach, deploying over 150 officers to operate in 17 countries, with Crown Prosecution Service prosecutors placed in key source and transit countries to disrupt OCGs profiting from people smuggling.

We also pursue those involved in the financial flows that support this activity. Using criminal powers in the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, an individual can be prosecuted for money laundering offences if sufficient evidence is obtainable and CPS agree to charging, or civil powers within the same act permit the action to be taken against the money concerned. Both these approaches are used to undermine the financial flows supporting small boat and wider clandestine smuggling, both in the UK and with foreign partners.

We are working with NCA and social media companies to agree a joint action plan to tackle content advertising illegal OIC services on online platforms,

including content relating to small boat crossings.

Additionally, the Government published the New Plan for Immigration containing provisions to establish legislation to deter illegal entry into the UK, thereby breaking the business model of criminal people smuggling networks and protecting the lives of those they endanger. In July 2021, the Government introduced this legislation through the Nationality and Borders Bill.

The Government will continue to work tirelessly to stop the criminal networks facilitating OIC and protect the lives of those they wish to recklessly exploit.