



Trafficking for forced begging and criminality in the UK

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Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 37 (b)

“No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention and imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period of time.”



What are children trafficked for

- ⌘ Forced begging
- ⌘ Benefit fraud (young children/babies)
- ⌘ Street crime-e.g.pickpocketing;distraction and ATM theft; bag snatching
- ⌘ Shoplifting
- ⌘ Cannabis cultivation



Where does it occur?



Extent of the issue

- ⌘ 2011 UK assessment – first time acknowledged trafficking for criminal activities in national statistics
- ⌘ 23 children /young people trafficked into the UK Q1-3 for benefit fraud
- ⌘ 21 children/young people were trafficked into the UK for cultivating cannabis
- ⌘ 15 children trafficked for forced criminality, other than cannabis cultivation



Forced criminality

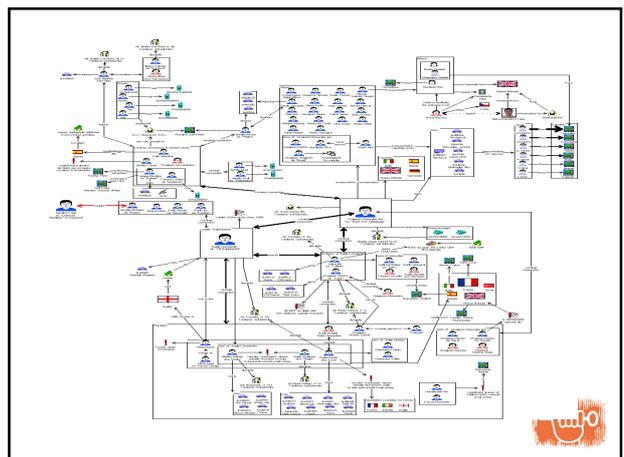
UK-Bulgaria

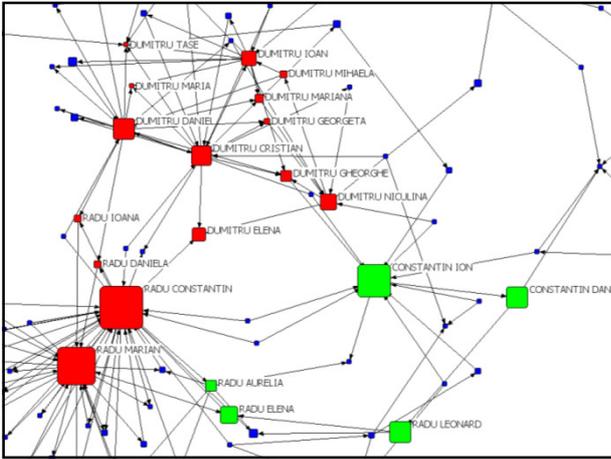
- ⌘ 1 child, 16 years – 13 criminal complaints
- ⌘ 28 journeys out of Bulgaria between 2001 2010 with 27 adults and four children. Crossed EU borders with 48 adults.
- ⌘ 2001, aged 6/7– travelled without parents
- ⌘ 19 adults have a criminal record (Bulgaria, Greece, Austria, France, Germany or Italy.)



Operation Golf data

- ⌘ over 1000 children from one Romanian town found to be trafficked into Western Europe for labour and sexual exploitation between 2007-2010
- ⌘ trafficking network is thought to be responsible for trafficking over 160 children to the UK for forced criminality
- ⌘ a child in the UK can earn as much as £100,000 a year.





Trafficking for cannabis cultivation

- ⌘ In 2011, more than 7,800 commercial cannabis factories were identified across the UK,
- ⌘ police seized more than 1.1m plants with an estimated street value of £207m in the past two years
- ⌘ 2011-3/2012, 16,464 offences recorded for commercial cannabis production



One of many...

- ⌘ T. lived in an orphanage from the age of 3 in Vietnam. T. then taken from there by a family when he was 8 to do chores in a house. Travelled when he was 10 to the UK, and taken to a cannabis house, where he was later arrested



What is the problem?

- ⌘ Many children are prosecuted, not protected – high-profit/low risk crime
- ⌘ Vietnamese children/young persons – second highest national group in young offender institutions
- ⌘ age of criminal responsibility -10 years old in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and 12 years in Scotland



What is the problem? II.

- ⌘ Non-punishment clause disregarded
- ⌘ Prosecutorial guidance not mandatory
- ⌘ Art. 26 of Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
- ⌘ EC Directive 36/2011 Article 8
- ⌘ War on drugs is a higher priority
- ⌘ Organised patterned overlooked



What is the problem? III.

- ⌘ Children go missing
- ⌘ Of the 42 children identified as missing during the reporting period (March 2009 – February 2010), 28 (67%) were Vietnamese.
- ⌘ Lack of understanding of the issue – N v UK (2012 High Court case)



Responses needed

- ⌘ Increased awareness
- ⌘ Protection assessments to include a multi-agency framework, with input from social workers, healthcare professionals, police, specialist voluntary sector groups, immigration officials etc. – worked in Operation Golf
- ⌘ Institute guardianship for children



RACE project

- ⌘ Response Against Criminal Exploitation
- ⌘ October 2012- October 2014
- ⌘ EC funding from ISEC programme
- ⌘ UK -Ireland-Czech Republic-the Netherlands
- ⌘ Unique in focus – both children and adults trafficked for forced begging and forced criminality



RACE project partners

- ⌘ Anti-Slavery International; ECPAT UK
- ⌘ Specialist Policing Consultancy
- ⌘ La Strada Czech Republic
- ⌘ Multi-Cultural Centre Prague
- ⌘ Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
- ⌘ Dutch Police Academy
- ⌘ Vietnamese Mental Health Association



Sources used in the presentation

- ⌘ Anti-Slavery International
- ⌘ ECPAT UK
- ⌘ CEOP, ACPO, UKHTC
- ⌘ Metropolitan Police



THANK YOU

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