



4th JOINT PERIOD OF ACTION DEBRIEF WORKSHOP

BALI PROCESS WORKING GROUP ON THE DISRUPTION OF PEOPLE SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS NETWORKS

**BANGKOK, THAILAND
22 NOVEMBER 2018**

CO-CHAIRS' STATEMENT

The 4th Joint Period of Action Debrief Workshop under the Bali Process Working Group on the Disruption of People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons Networks (the Working Group) was held in Bangkok on 22 November 2018. The workshop was co-chaired by the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) and Immigration New Zealand, with participants from seven member countries as well as representatives from the Australian Bali Process Co-Chair, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), the Bali Process Regional Support Office (RSO), Interpol, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Sri Lanka, Thailand, and the United States of America (USA) offered apologies for not being able to attend.

The 4th Joint Period of Action ran over a period of six months (June to November 2018) with ten countries participating – Australia, Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the USA, and Vietnam. During the Debrief Workshop, member countries reported back on the results achieved through nine joint investigations aimed at dismantling people smuggling and trafficking in persons networks in the Asia-Pacific region. The 4th Joint Period of Action resulted in several successes, including the arrest of a Fijian citizen as a result of the joint investigation conducted with Immigration New Zealand (INZ) and the Fijian Police. The female Fijian national was charged with a range of crimes, including 17 counts of human trafficking.

Following on from the successful prosecutions of 10 facilitators and organisers under the 3rd Joint Period of Action of a failed maritime people smuggling venture that departed Indonesia in 2015, Indonesia made solid progress in its financial investigation into the syndicate of notorious people smuggler Abraham Louhenapessy, better known as Captain Bram. With support from Australia and New Zealand, the Indonesian National Police (INP) and the Indonesian Financial Intelligence Unit (PPATK) identified two companies and 13 bank accounts used by the syndicate. Authorities also traced the financial flows from this network to 10 countries, enabling them to identify seven new suspects.

The outcomes of the 4th Joint Period of Action also resulted in the development of a significant intelligence picture across several syndicates, with a vast range of targeting opportunities. Vietnamese authorities continued to work with Australian and Malaysian authorities to detect and deter networks involved in the trafficking of Vietnamese nationals, including minors, for the purposes of sexual servitude. Numerous suspects have been identified, particularly in Australia, and arrests are expected as investigations continue.

As part of a separate case, Sri Lankan Police arrested a male suspect believed to be trafficking Sri Lankan nationals to Malaysia for the purpose of forced labour. Bangladesh also continues to monitor the risks of human trafficking and people smuggling in Cox's Bazaar.

Members heard from the Australian Co-Manager of the RSO on its ongoing activities, including collaboration with UNODC on enhancing the sharing of maritime information and intelligence between Bali Process countries and the development of information sharing guidelines and training to increase cross border collaboration. Interpol provided an overview of their efforts to identify, deter, and disrupt transnational crimes associated with, or related to, the fisheries sector, including human trafficking. UNODC also noted some of its ongoing initiatives, including training on cybercrime and how social media is used by human traffickers and smugglers. Members acknowledged the value of this work and noted the possibility of further engagement (e.g. through training and / or capacity building activities) under the next Joint Period of Action.

Members identified several priorities and areas of focus for the next Joint Period of Action, including:

- Establishing and maintaining national focal points to ensure continuity and to deal with cross border requests
- Responding with timeliness and in good faith to requests made under the Joint Period of Action
- Developing better understanding of processes and requirements of countries requesting information
- Utilising more effectively INTERPOL's tools and technologies, for example, I-24/7 communications system and National Centre Bureaus (NCBs)
- Promoting use of a victim-centred approach throughout investigations
- Conducting a deep dive into the context of a member country and / or an issue to enhance law enforcement capacities (e.g. social media / cyber-crime training)
- Strengthening information sharing and reporting among Working Group members (e.g. an established email address for focal points and increased use of the messaging application, WhatsApp for group sharing of ongoing activities, trainings, launch of a new investigation, etc.)

Members noted that the Working Group had significantly strengthened contacts, reinforced trust, and enhanced operational cooperation between countries in the region.

Having completed its two-year appointment, Malaysia stepped down as the Working Group co-chair at the end of the workshop. New Zealand thanked the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) for being a dedicated and hardworking partner. Malaysia's dedication to the Working Group had been demonstrated, not only through their leadership, but also through the results achieved under all four Joint Period of Action. The RMP confirmed it would remain a committed member of the Working Group.

The New Zealand co-chair welcomed Fiji as the next co-chair of the Working Group. New Zealand will work closely with the Fijian Police over the next two years to co-lead the Working Group activities, including the 5th Joint Period of Action.