



KALAYAAN

justice for migrant domestic workers

The following speech was delivered at the Human Trafficking Foundation's forum, hosted at law firm Linklaters on 22 February 2023.

Good morning. Thank you to the Human Trafficking Foundation for inviting Kalayaan to speak today.

As many in this room will know, Kalayaan is a First Responder Organisation. We have held this status since the NRM was established in the UK in 2009.

Kalayaan made an Urgent Public Announcement on 30 January 2023 in which we highlighted and flagged our concerns about the pressures facing First Responder Organisations across the UK, and the real life implications it will have, and already has had, on survivors of trafficking and modern slavery.

Our announcement included four recommendations. We would like to stress today that we believe that training, whilst important, is part of a long term solution to the very real pressures the NRM is facing. It is not the starting point. The sector cannot wait, and more importantly, survivors cannot and should not be made to wait that long.

There are short term solutions that the Government, the Home Office and the Modern Slavery Unit could implement to assist and alleviate the pressures being faced by everybody...and it is *everybody* because the lack of capacity of First Responder Organisations has ripple effects that impact everyone, from survivors, to the police, to criminal prosecutions, to accessing mental health support services and so on.

Kalayaan believes that the issue can be made quite simple: we need more non statutory First Responder Organisations and an actual application process for prospective organisations to be able to apply.

An application process appears to already exist. The Refugee Council is a First Responder. The Statutory Guidance tells us that they were removed from the Government's list of First Responders in September 2021 but were then re-added to the list in May 2022. This would suggest that a selection process to appoint and remove First Responder Organisations is already in place. If this is not the case, then such an application process needs to be properly established and to be done so quickly and with transparency.

We issued our public announcement and sounded the alarm over First Responder and capacity concerns over two weeks ago now. Since then and as far as we are aware, the Home Office has taken no action, not even interim action, to try to resolve this situation. If any steps or action have been taken, this has been done without communicating it to Kalayaan. Either way, we do not think that is good enough.

Kalayaan has today issued our report about how the National Referral Mechanism is near breaking point. If the Home Office and Government do not act fast enough, then we will witness the NRM implode, and watch survivors, already trafficked once, be re-trafficked.

Thank you.

Avril Sharp, Policy Officer.

22 February 2023