

4th JOINT PERIOD OF ACTION PLANNING WORKSHOP

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

**BANGKOK, THAILAND
17 MAY 2018**

CO-CHAIRS' STATEMENT

1. The Governments of Malaysia and New Zealand co-chaired the 4TH Joint Period of Action Planning Workshop under the Bali Process Working Group on the Disruption of People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons Networks (the Working Group) on 17 May 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. The workshop was co-chaired by Assistant Commissioner Maszely Minhad from the Royal Malaysia Police and General Manager Nicola Hogg from Immigration New Zealand.
2. Ten countries – Australia, Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the USA, and Vietnam – attended the workshop and agreed to participate in the 4th Joint Period of Action, which involves two or more countries simultaneously targeting the same people smuggling or trafficking syndicates through information exchange and coordinated investigative efforts in the participating countries. Interpol also participated and agreed to support countries in their joint investigations. Representatives of the Australian Bali Process Co-Chair, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), and the Bali Process Regional Support Office (RSO) attended as observers.
3. During the planning workshop, countries provided an overview of the investigations nominated for inclusion under the 4th Joint Period of Action. Subsequent discussions and collaboration led to the development of nine joint investigation / data collection plans. The 4th Joint Period of Action will be carried out over a six month period (June to November 2018).

Proceedings

4. The Co-Chairs welcomed participants and opened the meeting by reflecting on the successes achieved under the 3rd Joint Period of Action, which contributed to 72 persons being convicted of human trafficking and people smuggling offences, including notorious people smuggler Abraham Louhenapessy, better known as Captain Bram. A special welcome was extended to Fiji and Vietnam as new members of the Working Group. This will be the first time these countries participate in the Joint Period of Action initiative.
5. Countries provided overviews of the investigations nominated for the 4th Joint Period of Action. Several of them involved cross border cooperation with countries that had not traditionally worked together in the past. Countries then broke into small teams to develop joint data collection or investigation plans.

Nine plans were developed:

- **Australia – Vietnam:** Investigation into Vietnamese nationals, including minors, trafficked into Australia for the purposes of sexual servitude.
 - **Bangladesh:** Information gathering and sharing of the risks of human trafficking in Cox’s Bazaar.
 - **Fiji – New Zealand:** Human trafficking and financial investigations into Fijian based facilitators involved in the trafficking of Fijian nationals to New Zealand.
 - **Indonesia – Australia – New Zealand – Sri Lanka:** Financial investigation into a people smuggling syndicate involved in a failed illegal maritime venture which departed Indonesia in 2015.
 - **New Zealand – Malaysia:** Investigation into a smuggling network facilitating the illegal entry of Malaysians to New Zealand.
 - **Sri Lanka – New Zealand:** Investigation into a potential people smuggling network facilitating the illegal entry of Sri Lankan nationals to New Zealand.
 - **Sri Lanka – Malaysia:** Investigation into Sri Lankan nationals trafficked to Malaysia for the purposes of forced labour.
 - **Vietnam – Malaysia:** Investigation into Vietnamese nationals trafficked to Malaysia for the purposes of sexual exploitation.
 - **Thailand – USA:** Information sharing into the sexual exploitation of children in Thailand.
6. Countries provided report backs on their investigation plans, highlighting how they would progress their joint operations over the next six months.
7. The Co-Chairs outlined the next steps under the 4th Joint Period of Action:
- Co-Chairs to write up and distribute the investigation plans to the Working Group participants
 - Co-Chairs to revise the reporting template and distribute to participants for comment
 - Participating countries to submit mid-term reports to the Co-Chairs on the progress of their joint investigations by end of August 2018 with brief updates submitted at the end of July, so that the Co-Chairs can report to the Bali Process Ministerial Conference in August 2018.
 - Participating countries to submit final reports to the Co-Chairs by end of November 2018.
 - Co-Chairs to convene a debrief meeting on the 4th Joint Period of Action in late November / early December 2018.
8. Interpol provided a short overview of some of the tools and services available through their systems to support the Joint Period of Action, including its criminal databases, I-24/7, and its notices and diffusions. Interpol noted that it is in the process of developing an electronic

Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MFAT) platform to automate (and ultimately speed up) the process.

9. The Australian representative of the Bali Process co-chair informed participants of the upcoming Bali Process meetings at which the Working Group Co-Chairs will be required to report back on the activities of the Working Group, principally the progress being made under the 4th Joint Period of Action. The Ad-Hoc Group Senior Officials Meeting will be held in Sydney at the end of June, followed by a full Bali Process Senior Officials meeting and Ministerial Conference in August 2018. All 45 member countries are expected to send a Minister to participate in the conference, which takes place every two years.
10. In closing, the Co-Chairs reiterated they were there to provide support and encouraged countries to inform them of any issues hindering their investigations so that solutions could be identified as soon as possible. The Co-Chairs thanked countries for their ongoing commitment and support of the Working Group and the Joint Period of Action initiative. They were looking forward to the midterm reports and learning how the investigations were progressing under the 4th Joint Period of Action.