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Media Statement

Bali Process countries target trafficking in persons and people smuggling networks during a regional joint period of action

Ambassador Hasan Kleib and Ambassador Andrew Goledzinowski, co-chairs of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (the Bali Process) praised the outcomes achieved during a regional *Joint Period of Action to Disrupt People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons Networks*.

Eight countries and INTERPOL participated in the inaugural Joint Period of Action, which ran from the 28 September to 28 October, 2015. During this period, law enforcement and immigration agencies from Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Maldives, New Zealand, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand took part in separate, but coordinated law enforcement operations against people smuggling and trafficking in persons networks. Trafficking for sexual and labour exploitation was investigated across a wide range of sectors, including agriculture, farming, fishing, beauty services, and domestic work. Criminal networks involved in the online commercial sexual exploitation of children were also targeted.

In total, authorities in the eight countries:

- assisted 59 trafficked persons
- executed seven search warrants and identified 63 suspects
- made 32 arrests and launched eight new investigations
- made over 70 bilateral and international enquires to progress trafficking in persons and people smuggling investigations
- conducted 68 awareness-raising activities, including for employers, civil society, and vulnerable groups
- carried out 12 training sessions and trained 485 police, airport, immigration, and compliance officers throughout the region
- gathered useful intelligence on the traffickers and smugglers involved and their modus operandi

Ambassador Hasan Kleib, Indonesian co-chair of the Bali Process, emphasised the importance of coordinated action to combat trafficking in persons and people smuggling networks. “Members of the Bali Process are committed to new approaches to disrupt and dismantle criminal networks,” Kleib said. “The Joint Period of Action is a milestone under the Bali Process as it is the first initiative of its kind under the Bali Process.”

Ambassador Andrew Goledzinowski, Australian co-chair of the Bali Process, said that the outcomes achieved under the Joint Period of Action show how successful operational results can be achieved when countries work together under the Bali Process. “Although trafficking in persons and people smuggling are complex crimes, Bali Process countries are committed to cooperative, practical action.”

The Joint Period of Action is an initiative under the Bali Process Working Group on the Disruption of Criminal Networks (the Working Group). Co-chaired by the New Zealand and Sri Lankan governments, the Working Group brings together law enforcement authorities from 16 countries.