



**THE HON BRENDAN O'CONNOR MP  
MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS**

**INTER REGIONAL PEOPLE SMUGGLING AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
CONFERENCE,**

**JAKARTA CENTRE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION**

**SEMARANG, INDONESIA**

**7 DECEMBER 2009**

*1. Utilising shared experience to combat people smuggling and human trafficking*

2.

Thank you ladies and gentleman, for joining us at the inaugural Inter Regional People Smuggling and Human Trafficking Conference here at JCLEC. I would particularly like to welcome:

- Brigadier General Saud Usman Nasution – Indonesian National Police People Smuggling SATGAS;
- Commissioner Tony Negus – Australian Federal Police;
- Representatives from law enforcement agencies across our region and beyond;
- Mr Knut Brattvik, INTERPOL;
- Mr Ray Chan, INTERPOL; and
- Mr Ashton Robinson, Office of National Assessments.

Ladies & gentlemen, together we face a global problem—one that can only be overcome through our cooperative efforts.

The *UNHCR 2008 Global Trends Report* shows that there were 42 million displaced people worldwide at the end of 2008, which included 15.2 million refugees. Tragically, according to the report, asylum claims increased worldwide by a staggering 28 per cent in 2008. We have seen the recent figures, with Europe remaining the primary destination for asylum seekers with 333,000 claims registered last year. It is also the case that the United States received 49,600 new asylum claims and Canada received 34,800. For South Africa it was an extraordinary number of 207,000 new claims by asylum seekers.

Many displaced persons are trying to change their lives and circumstances—some by any means possible. They may be misled into accepting a job that later sees them trafficked to another nation, or forced into slavery. They may approach a people smuggler to get them to their country of choice; paying thousands of dollars to go on a perilous and life-threatening journey.

That these people pursue desperate means to seek a safer life can be easily understood. However, there is an insidious trade being run by those who would profit from the human misery and desperation of these displaced people.

The majority of people smuggling and trafficking ventures are arranged by criminal syndicates attracted by large profits. Typically they operate with enormous risks and with little regard for the safety and wellbeing of the people whose money they steal and whose lives they gamble away.

These criminals are unscrupulous and they can't be trusted. They are motivated by money alone—they seek to help no one but themselves. The actions of these criminals are a serious challenge to our law enforcement agencies, our governments and our countries.

For law enforcement agencies, the issues are complex and often multi-jurisdictional. The evidence trail may cross several international borders, and victims may be living in a different country to the people smugglers or traffickers. The same set of circumstances can lead to investigations or prosecutions in more than one country.

By their very nature, all the people trafficking investigations that have taken place in Australia have involved transnational crimes. This has required close and ongoing cooperation between Australian agencies and their counterparts in other countries, through mutual assistance agreements, extraditions and police-to-police assistance. Similar levels of cooperation are needed to combat the scourge of people smuggling.

Look around you, under the auspices of the JCLEC, this important forum provides a unique opportunity for us to come together to discuss the issues of people smuggling and human trafficking from a law enforcement perspective. We can focus on the economic and social impacts of this crime type on source, transit and destination countries.

It is fitting that we meet here at this fine establishment. The very purpose of JCLEC is to reflect and promote the shared priority given to bilateral and regional cooperation on a variety of contemporary security issues. Australia is appreciative of the partnership we share with Indonesia and, through JCLEC, with our law enforcement colleagues in the region. And, I thank the JCLEC Executive Director, Brigadier-General Boy Salamuddin for hosting us here and I congratulate him on JCLEC's outstanding reputation for excellence.

Only too aware of just how vital regional cooperation is, it is pleasing to me to see there are representatives from 17 countries here today. Together, we hope to develop holistic strategies to combat this problem, because people smuggling and human trafficking does not just affect those caught up in the trade. The impacts are broad and far-reaching in all our countries. To that end, I thank all of our partner governments and law enforcement agencies represented here today. The Australian Government is sincerely grateful for your contribution.

The Australian Government has also committed more than \$650 million dollars to implement a comprehensive, whole-of-government strategy to combat people smuggling, which includes support for enhanced regional cooperation programs through improved intelligence gathering, investigative capability and the exchange of information.

At a government-to-government level, Australia is committed to the Bali Process, which began in 2003. This is the pre-eminent regional forum for cooperation on combating people smuggling and human trafficking, and a genesis for this week's conference. We also support the UNHCR system of international protection for refugees, and have provided funding to try to boost the number of refugee status determinations taking place in the region.

As is often the case, the most important work is done at the operational level. Relationships between policing agencies and even individual officers are essential for effective information sharing and successful investigations. Conferences such as this help to strengthen regional cooperation, creating the professional and personal relationships that are essential to good police work.

The drawing together of experiences and expertise this week is a significant step towards building a shared view of the nature and extent of the problem of human trafficking and people smuggling. Sharing our expertise and knowledge with each other is crucial to maintain the upper hand on increasingly sophisticated criminal enterprises.

Think, for a moment, of the challenges posed by these issues. Detection and disruption of particular methods of people smuggling or trafficking creates incentives to substitute and to innovate. Organised transnational criminals will continue to adapt with new and emerging technologies, which provide opportunities to increase their operations and revenue. They will continue to be dynamic and move into markets and places where profits are larger and where they perceive risks to their operations to be lower.

Combating people smuggling and human trafficking is not an easy task. It is not one we can complete in days, weeks or even months. Ongoing conflicts, global hardship and natural disasters mean there will always be people displaced from their homes.

However, we must remain focused on targeting those criminals who seek to exploit the suffering of other human beings for profit. This is a fight which unites us.

Through cooperation, collaboration and continued determination, we will be able to stop those who feed on this misery, and stop the illegal movement of people around our region.

I wish you luck in your endeavours this week, and encourage all of you to make the most of this opportunity for open discussion and the sharing of experiences and of ideas that will be of benefit to all.

Thank you.