

Derby people smuggling gang leader jailed

A Derby man has been jailed for co-ordinating a people smuggling gang who couriered genuine British passports abroad to be used in illegal attempts to reach the UK.

Mohamed Jamal Kawsara, 39 was jailed for three years at Derby Crown Court after pleading guilty to assisting illegal immigration at an earlier hearing. Accomplices, Glen Szabo, 36, Ashley Henson, 29, Craig Edward Smedley 49, Pavandeep Singh, 41 were also sentenced.

The scam was exposed by Immigration Enforcement Criminal and Financial Investigations (CFI).

The investigation revealed that Kawsara, along with other gang members, flew to Greece as couriers, passing over genuine British passports to Syrian nationals who would then attempt to board flights to the UK as imposters. If successful, the passport would either be destroyed or handed back to the courier on the aircraft. Once landed at a UK airport, the Syrian nationals would present themselves to Border Force and claim asylum. Kawsara was arrested on 18 June 2015 at Birmingham Airport, having arrived from Kos on the same flight as a Syrian woman.

Kawsara and the woman were shown on airport CCTV pretending not to know each other. Border Force officers had information to suggest that the two were linked and a search of Kawsara's luggage revealed he was carrying the passport of a British woman along with his own. Officers found that the Syrian woman was listed on the flight manifest under the name of the British woman and had dyed her hair in an attempt to resemble the passport photo. Kawsara was arrested on suspicion of facilitating illegal immigration and the case was passed to CFI.

Investigators identified four other people smuggling attempts linked to Kawsara and the gang.

On 8 April 2015, Ashley Henson flew into Birmingham Airport on a flight from Athens, where he had passed Kawsara's passport to a Syrian man. CCTV showed Henson and the Syrian man making their way from the flight keeping some distance apart. Henson is seen on his mobile phone (later shown to be a call to Kawsara) and gesturing towards the man that he should follow. The man was stopped at immigration control and claimed asylum.

Two separate unsuccessful attempts (on 25 April in Athens and 14 July 2015 in Kos) saw imposters stopped in Greece before boarding planes. Kawsara acted as the passport courier for the first failed attempt and Smedley for the second (using the passport of Szabo). Finally, on 29 September 2015 Pavandeep Singh escorted a Syrian woman from Athens to Manchester Airport using a British woman's passport supplied by Szabo. The woman claimed asylum at the UK

border.

Phone records showed Kawsara was in contact with all of the couriers to make arrangements for the smuggling events. Money transfers were identified between Kawsara and several of his 'customers' who were thought to be charged about £7000 for his assistance.

Andy Radcliffe, from CFI said;

This case should act as a warning that anyone involved in criminality of this kind will be prosecuted.

The evidence uncovered by CFI officers showed Kawsara was the common link between all the smuggling attempts. Several of these offences were driven purely by the desire to make a profit, which was done off the backs of desperate people.

The success of this case has only been possible thanks to the effective work between CFI, Border Force and Immigration Enforcement International. Border Force officers played a key role in the initial interceptions, with their work informed by vital information gathered by Immigration Enforcement International colleagues based in Greece which first identified Kawsara's suspicious activities.

Craig Smedley and Pavandeep Singh pleaded guilty to facilitating illegal immigration and were jailed for 18 months, suspended for 18 months. Ashley Henson, admitted one count of assisting illegal immigration and was jailed for 20 months, suspended for 18 months. Glen Szabo was handed a sentence of 15 months, suspended for 18 months.

- Mohamed Kawsara, of Caernarvon Close, Spondon, Derby, admitted five counts of assisting illegal immigration and was jailed for three years.
- Ashley Henson, of Ash Street, Derby, admitted one count of assisting illegal immigration and was jailed for 20 months, suspended for 18 months and a community order for 100 hours unpaid work.
- Pavandeep Singh Dosanjh, of Donington Drive, Derby admitted one count of assisting illegal immigration and was jailed for 18 months, suspended for 18 months and a community order for 100 hours unpaid work.
- Craig Smedley, of High Street, Normanton, admitted one count of assisting illegal immigration and was jailed for 18 months, suspended for 18 months and a community order for 100 hours unpaid work.
- Glenn Szabo, of Millersdale Avenue, Mansfield, admitted to two counts of

assisting illegal immigration and handed a 15 months jail sentence, suspended for 18 months, and a curfew from 8pm to 5am to last for four months.

Kawsara was also sentenced in relation to a separate case led by Derbyshire Police. Kawsara had been found guilty of three counts of inciting a child to sexual activity and was sentenced to six months imprisonment, to run consecutively with the three year sentence for the immigration offences. A sexual harm prevention order was also imposed to last for seven years. Any enquiries relating to these offences should be put to Derbyshire Police.