

**Global development**  
Modern-day slavery in focus

## UK condemned for deporting survivors of trafficking back to Vietnam

Activists say British authorities are failing to identify and protect victims who have been trafficked to the UK as slaves, many of them children

Ahmed Aydeed, from law firm Duncan Lewis, said some of his clients have been trafficked to the UK multiple times, with devastating consequences. "I'm overwhelmed by the scale and horror of the problem," he said. "Our system is failing victims and potential victims of trafficking by not identifying and assisting them early enough."

Aydeed said one of his clients, a young woman, was trafficked to the UK and found working in a nail bar before being deported as an illegal worker in 2012. According to her lawyers, "there were clear indicators that she had been trafficked, which were not explored".

She was re-trafficked to the UK the following year. She said she was raped and forced to work in brothel in the UK. She only escaped when she miscarried. She was held in a detention centre for 16 months before lawyers from Duncan Lewis heard of her case. She had not been assessed as a trafficking victim despite telling the authorities she had been forced to work in a nail bar and a brothel where she was repeatedly raped. She also had scarring across her body consistent with torture.

"I have seen a lot of women being raped and sold as sex slaves," she said. "We left Vietnam with the promise that we could find work and make a lot of money. We didn't know we would have to have sex with anyone ... If I was ever sent back to Vietnam [again] ... I'd rather die here."

Her lawyers are fighting for her to be recognised as a victim of trafficking as the Home Office moves to deport her to Vietnam for a second time.

In Vietnam there is no official support or provision for those who have been deported there as criminals or illegal workers instead of as victims of trafficking. The UK government does offer financial support for people identified as having been trafficked, who are returned, but provision is patchy and underfunded.