

# The New Anti-Slavery Commissioner – Mr Kevin Hyland

---

On Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December, Theresa Helm and Sister Patricia Mulhall represented TRAC, at a Migrants Forum meeting called by Bishop Patrick Lynch. TRAC has recently been invited to attend these twice yearly meetings as the brief is widening to include the issue of Human Trafficking. It was a great opportunity to meet the new Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Kevin Hyland, pictured here with Theresa and Sr Patricia.



Kevin Hyland, Theresa Helm & Sr. Patricia Mulhall

Kevin Hyland gave an impassioned speech saying that people had said he must feel privileged to have landed such a role! He said he felt it was not a privilege but an honour to be able to be of service. He said this role wasn't about 'Kevin' it was about the victims.

He stressed the importance of his 'independence' and spoke of the outstanding work that has been carried out by police and faith based organisations. The new Modern Slavery Bill being introduced in the UK, which is the base of Kevin's appointment as Anti-Slavery Commissioner, is, he said, being hailed as the best legislation in the world. Even the Vatican is talking about it!

Kevin has a five point plan:

- Victim care/support
- Training
- Partnership
- Evaluation
- Private Sector – Supply & Demand

He also spoke of the broader picture, e.g. the need for fair wages and decent living conditions, not only in source countries to stem the growth of vulnerable communities, but also in the UK.

Kevin Hyland is very happy to work collaboratively and will use NGOs to be his ears and eyes on the ground!



Kevin Hyland & Bishop Pat Lynch

The new Anti-Slavery Commissioner also firmly believes that law enforcement is of huge importance. The issue of Human Trafficking is a serious, organised and violent crime that needs to be addressed. He said that Law enforcement agencies need to develop an appropriate response which has the 'person' at the centre.

In London, Religious sisters now accompany undercover police officers to support victims of trafficking when they are identified in exploitative situations; having the sisters present, he said, changes the psyche of the police too. It is good for the police to see sisters treating the women they find with respect and compassion – it can make a huge difference on future dealings with victims of trafficking and indeed, all vulnerable people. As Kevin added, there is a great need to “get out there and find the victims!”

Being the First Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Kevin said he was standing on the shoulders of giants!

He quoted William Wilberforce “If to be feelingly alive to the sufferings of my fellow-creatures is to be a fanatic, I am one of the most incurable fanatics ever permitted to be at large.”

Kevin Hyland is certainly an incurable fanatic! He speaks with great passion and displays a resolute commitment to the treatment, well-being and on-going rehabilitation of victims of slavery and trafficking. He has agreed to attend one of our TRAC meetings and we look forward to offering him a warm welcome!