

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DF

14 January 2016

Dear Home Secretary

PORT SECURITY

I wrote to you on 11 December 2015 regarding Port Security. I sought assurances from you regarding a review of small port security and the review of counter terrorism provision. That letter remains unanswered.

This week, the national media is carrying stories that reveal two things which are germane to this issue:

1. Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the ringleader of the Paris atrocities, came to Britain through the port of Dover (Daily Mail - 12 January 2016), arguably the most secure port in our country and despite being Wanted in Belgium and subject to a European Arrest Warrant.
2. The Border Force are "two or three steps behind" illegal migrants entering this country (Times - 13 January 2016).

These stories are, I suspect, only the tip of the iceberg. They are in our national media and the facts will not go away. All the evidence points to our Border Force being in crisis, our ports being porous, and the security of our country compromised.

As Police and Crime Commissioner for Dorset, I am both honour and duty bound to sound the warning bell. You are the Home Secretary with responsibility for National Security and this unacceptable situation is happening on your watch. You are responsible, on behalf of the Government, for keeping our borders safe. In Dorset, I share with you responsibility for ensuring that the public are kept safe but at a national level you are responsible for the safety of every individual.

Further to my letter of 11 December 2015, I now formally call on you to announce a full review of Port Security in the UK. This review must look at events since the Paris terrorist attacks on 13 November 2015 and must not be constrained by funding restrictions. We need action, and we need it now.

If you fail the country at this crucial time you will immediately lose credibility among those who have responsibility for public safety, as well as that of the public at large. To ignore the obvious failings in the Border Force may lead to our citizens suffering an attack of such ferocity that neither your Government, nor your personal career, will survive. The potential for loss of life would be, quite simply, massive and catastrophic.

Please act now. Order a review of our ports.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martyn Underhill', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Martyn Underhill
Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner