



## ORIGINS AND BACKGROUND

The Santa Marta Group is an alliance of international police chiefs and bishops from around the world working together with civil society to eradicate human trafficking and modern day slavery.

Launched in 2014 by Pope Francis and led by Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, SMG grew out of a unique partnership established in 2012 between the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the Metropolitan Police Service Human Trafficking Unit in London. This developed into cooperation at strategic and operational levels and provided the impetus for collaboration between women religious and police teams in London.

In April 2014 at its inaugural conference in the Pontifical Academy for Social Sciences at the Vatican attended by police chiefs, civil society leaders and bishops from 24 countries, Pope Francis endorsed its approach, telling the participants: "Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ. It is a crime against humanity".

The Santa Marta Group is named after the Papal residence where the participants from the first conference stayed. It was at this conference that a Declaration of Commitment



## **ORIGINS AND BACKGROUND (CONT)**

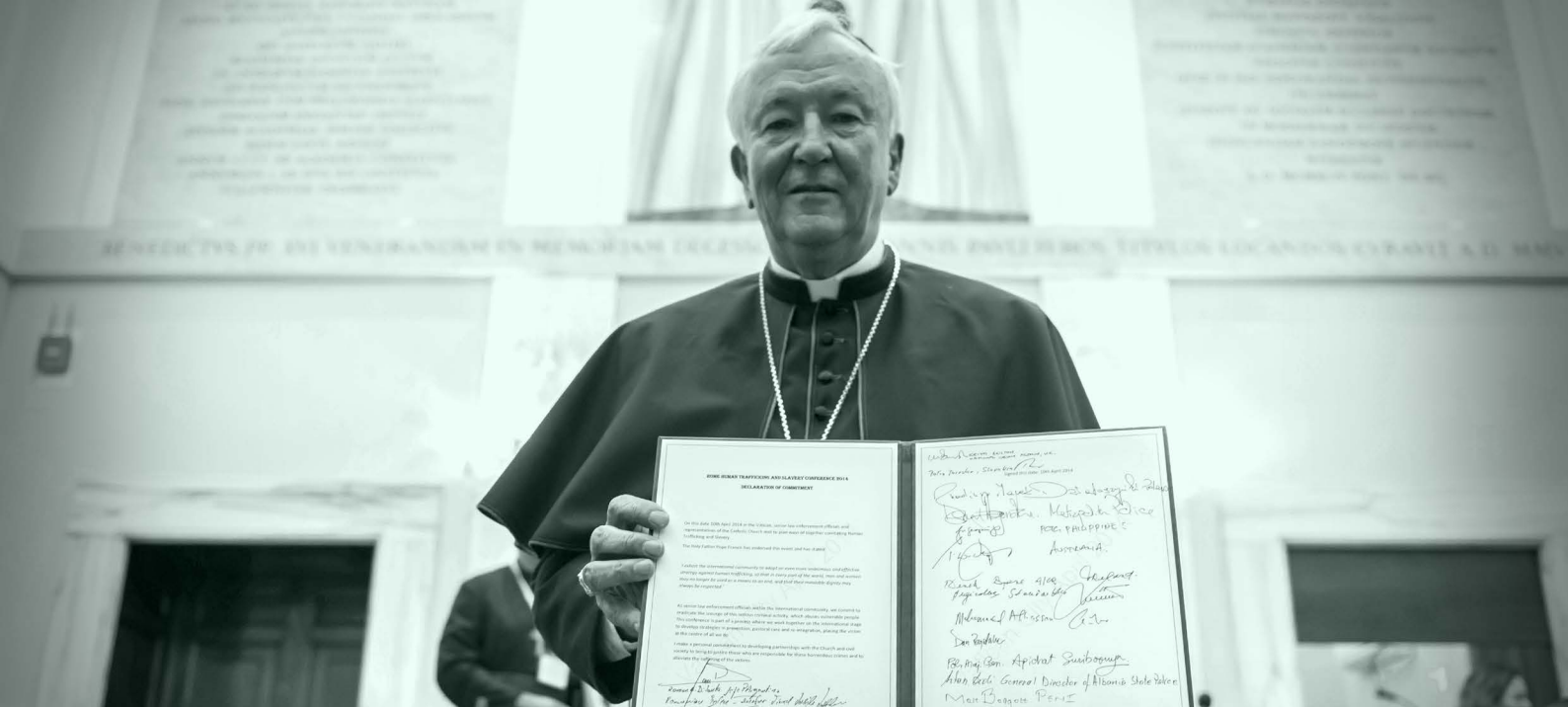
was signed by all the Chiefs of Police present to work together on the international stage to develop strategies in prevention, pastoral care and re-integration, always putting the victims of human trafficking first.

Since then, two conferences of the Santa Marta Group have taken place, one in London in December 2014 and most recently, in Madrid in October 2015.

The conferences have established networking, exchanges in best practice, case studies, and focused future directions. These conferences serve to unite leaders across borders to help them deal with this international crime, estimated by the United Nations to be worth \$32bn a year.

However, the SMG is not a series of conferences but a process that identifies issues of modern slavery and brings together those who have the decision-making authority to implement strategic change, from legislative changes to improved funding and use of resources.

At the heart of this work is creating trust, partnerships, and processes that are enduring, focusing on the dignity and protection of the human person, especially women, who are about 65% of all persons trafficked and enslaved.



## SANTA MARTA DECLARATION

When the first Santa Marta Group conference drew to a close in Rome on 10 April 2014, police chiefs from around the world made a declaration of commitment in the fight to bring an end to human trafficking and domestic slavery.

---

*As senior law enforcement officials within the international community, we commit to eradicate the scourge of this serious criminal activity, which abuses vulnerable people.*

*This conference is part of a process where we work together on the international stage to develop strategies in prevention, pastoral care and re-integration, placing the victim at the centre of all we do.*

*I make a personal commitment to developing partnerships with the Church and civil society to bring to justice those who are responsible for these horrendous crimes and to alleviate the suffering of the victims.*