

INTERPARLIAMENTARY TASKFORCE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING
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My name is Lindsay Mason, and I worked as a personal assistant to Mohamed Fayed at Harrods, between 1989 and 1990. I was 20 years old. I shared an office with Jen Mills, who is sitting beside me now, during my time there.

In hindsight, it is painfully clear that a system of enablement was operating long before I ever stepped inside Harrods. Indeed, police have now interviewed under caution suspected enablers or people with knowledge of abuse who worked at Harrods in the 1980s, 90s, 2000s, 10s and 20s.

But it wasn't limited to Harrods staff. I was scouted on the street by a man from a recruitment agency who said he had the perfect job for me — an *incredible opportunity* to work for the Chairman of Harrods. To a young woman, it sounded like a dream. Later that same day, he called to say I would be collected after work and taken directly to Harrods for an interview with Fayed. The speed of it all should have been a warning.

I was offered the job and sent for a medical check-up arranged by Harrods. The doctor told me that Fayed cared deeply for his staff — that this was a perk of employment — and then carried out a painful, invasive internal examination. It was my first act of sexual violation, disguised as professionalism. I never saw the medical results. They went directly to Fayed, and only then was I offered the job.

Inside the Chairman's office, cameras watched us constantly. Phone lines were monitored. We were summoned like objects.

The sexual abuse began in my first week at Harrods and escalated quickly, in both aggression and frequency. His network of security — some with ties to the met police — made sure I understood the cost of speaking out. They threatened the safety of me and my family.

I was sent with Fayed and several celebrities to Paris. My passport was taken from me. My location was concealed, and my family had no idea where I was. It became clear why I had not been told where I was staying: I had been placed in Dodi's apartment, to remain overnight with Fayed.



The sexual assault that night in Paris was of the most serious nature. I believe I was drugged, out cold, then the next thing I knew, I was back in London — falsely imprisoned inside Fayed's suite at Harrods. I escaped in fear for my life.

A week later, I received a dismissal letter from Harrods. The reason given: *I had used the wrong staff door.*

For more than 15 years after that, I was followed and threatened by Fayed's security. Lawyers told me he was too powerful to challenge. I believed them because the message was everywhere: some men are above accountability. When, in 2019, we tried to bring Fayed to justice, Police confirmed he would not face prosecution because they had been advised he had dementia — which was untrue.

I am speaking out because silence protects perpetrators, not victims. What happened to me is not an isolated story. It was made possible by systems that looked away — by recruitment without safeguards, institutions that prized reputation over justice, and a culture that allowed abusers to operate unchecked.

My colleague Jen and I have written a paper, called the Foundation, which is survivor-led and trauma-informed which we hope will become a blueprint on the fight against global human trafficking for sexual exploitation, a copy of which has been distributed.

We are calling for prevention through education and accountability.

We must begin by *teaching what trafficking and workplace exploitation look like* — in schools, colleges, universities, and graduate and apprenticeship programmes.

We must also educate employers — to recognise grooming, coercion, and abuse of power, trafficking and manipulation indicators, and unsafe recruitment practices.

The goal is simple: to give future generations the knowledge and confidence to spot red flags, seek help, and protect themselves and others.

I also recommend the creation of an international workplace safeguarding accreditation, allowing organisations to demonstrate their commitment to employee protection.

Participating employers would need to adopt clear safeguarding standards, provide mandatory HR and leadership training and offer independent and confidential reporting pathways. They would commit to regular compliance reviews and support employee welfare and accountability measures.



Accredited organisations would contribute a nominal, scaled fee — publicly demonstrating their dedication to ethical employment and worker protection. This accreditation would become an international mark of trust and responsibility — proof that safety, integrity, and respect matter as much as profit and power.

I speak to you today not only as a survivor, but as a witness to what happens when powerful people exploit weak systems.

And so I leave you with this:

Every law that you write, every safeguard that you fund and every young person that you educate can stop another life from being stolen.

The world does not need more silence, or more disbelief — it needs courage, clarity, and consequence.

Thank you for listening.

