

# ‘My man can fix papers to keep you in Britain’

## Criminals are selling border agency files to asylum seekers, reports Mazher Mahmood

A SUNDAY TIMES investigation has exposed a racket in which asylum seekers can buy their confidential immigration files and are offered the chance to “fix” their applications so they can stay in Britain.

An undercover reporter, posing as a friend of an asylum seeker, was provided with internal immigration service documents by middleman Nabi Haroun Sesay for just £250.

Sesay, 37, also claimed that for as little as £8,000 he could arrange for a corrupt immigration officer to alter information, thus increasing the asylum applicant’s chance of being granted leave to remain.

He even boasted that he could arrange for those already facing deportation after having their applications refused to

have those decisions overturned and instead be granted permission to stay in Britain.

Yesterday, after The Sunday Times handed its dossier of evidence to police, officers raided Sesay’s flat in Bermondsey, southeast London, and arrested him.

Just three days earlier, as people queued for their burgers and fries at a branch of McDonald’s in the Old Kent Road in southeast London, Sesay’s appetite was for quick money, not fast food.

“Just give me your Home Office reference number and I will get you your records the next day,” he said, minutes after climbing out of his black Mercedes-Benz, complete with personalised numberplate.

“Then, when you know what is happening inside, we can

sort something out for you with my man. He’s inside there and will be able to fix your case. The papers will show if they are after you to deport you or not. All the information is in there.”

Sesay’s “inside man” is a worker at Lunar House in Croydon, south London, a 20-storey office block that houses the UK Border Agency (UKBA).

Lunar House is no stranger to corruption. Only last week Samuel Shoyeju, 53, a UKBA

entry clearance officer based there, admitted issuing “scores” of visas granting applicants indefinite leave to stay in Britain. He is believed to have earned tens of thousands of pounds from his criminal enterprise. The father of three was warned he faces a lengthy jail term when he is sentenced at Basildon crown court in Essex.

In May 2006 John Reid, then the home secretary, famously described the former Immigration and Nationality Directorate, which is now part of the

UKBA, as “not fit for purpose” and revealed that he had made an unannounced visit to Lunar House, as it was the only way to discover what was happening without the place “smelling of fresh paint”.

Last Wednesday it was the smell of corruption that was in the air as Sesay revealed the ease with which illegal immigrants and failed asylum seekers are able to manipulate the system — for a price.

We were alerted to the activities of nightclub promoter Sesay — known as Bobby

— by an asylum seeker facing deportation.

“He is well known and had helped two people I know with their immigration cases,” the source said, explaining how he had been handed screenshots from a computer showing details of his application.

“Bobby wanted £10,000 to sort my case out and said that I would get my passport back through the Home Office and I would officially be granted permission to stay here.”

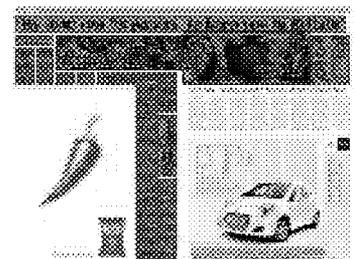
Posing as a friend of another immigrant, our reporter arranged a meeting. Declining our offer of a drink or meal, Sesay was anxious to get down to business. “What do you want me to do?” he asked. “What’s happening in the Home Office, what’s the case?”

Told that the immigrant had been refused leave to remain in Britain and wanted to examine his confidential documents to find out why, Sesay replied: “You need to give me the reference number and give me the name, and from then on I bring you the printout of the person.

“To bring for you the printout, it’s £250. I’ll bring it for you tomorrow. Give me money now, and tomorrow I bring it for you straight.”

The reporter handed him the Home Office reference number of a Pakistani immigrant, Abdul Majeed — who had agreed to assist The Sunday Times in exposing Sesay — along with the fee.

“Tomorrow you will see the printout, the guy’s [immigrant’s] name, everything,” Sesay promised. “Then he will tell me if he can do the job, this



is the price you will have to pay. You will get the passport, [allowing] stay indefinite.

"For any cases the guy has his prices. The guy checks the case for you inside and then says this is the price and says this is what he can do to get his stay. He can do the job for you to get you indefinite stay. It will be in the system. The guy is very good.

"The price is from £8,000 to £10,000. It depends on the case. For a straight case it's £8,000."

Sesay, originally from Sierra Leone, then made his claim that he could arrange for an asylum seekers whose deportation had already been ordered to stay in Britain.

"He [the official] does it the back way. Don't worry, what I do is a proper job," he said as he reached for his phone to call his contact and provide him with the reference number.

The following morning Sesay called our reporter to confirm that he had obtained Majeed's file and to arrange a further meeting.

Sauntering into the same McDonald's restaurant, he handed over a bundle of 10 A4 sheets of paper bearing Majeed's entire case history, complete with passport numbers, addresses, medical reports and the date of every submission made by his solicitor.

The file also included a letter written to the immigration service on behalf of Majeed by Andrew Slaughter, the Labour MP for Hammersmith in west London, and a draft reply prepared by an assistant director of the MP account manager unit.

Informed that details about his involvement had been sold, Slaughter last night told The Sunday Times: "If corruption of this nature is occurring within UKBA, it's a very serious matter and needs to be thoroughly investigated."

Majeed confirmed the details on the documents were genuine, an assessment also

made later by a senior police officer.

Crucially, the papers included detailed notes written by immigration officials who had scrutinised Majeed's case and the reasons why his application had been refused.

The documents would have provided vital knowledge to an asylum seeker appealing a case, allowing him or her to tackle the specific objections to being granted leave to remain.

For those whose application stood little or no chance of success, Sesay offered to have details on the computer system changed to ensure that leave to remain was granted.

"It'll take seven months for him to get his papers. It's expensive — it's £14,000," said

Sesay, who explained that Majeed's previously refused application made the process more difficult. "That's what I'm telling you, each one is different. You will get indefinite leave to remain."

Sesay then called his insider to confirm the deal but refused our request to arrange a face-to-face meeting with the official.

When the reporter expressed concern that he could be being duped, Sesay replied: "You pay me cash. I will take you to my house where I live — I don't f\*\*\* around. I will show you my driving licence, my bills, my passport, everything."

To further prove his credentials, Sesay took the reporter to his home in Bermondsey. Standing by his front door, protected by an iron grille, he said: "You know, I have done lots of cases like this, which is why you have come to me.

"You have been sent by a satisfied customer. The Home Office guy does the job. Some jobs can be done in one day. You will not be deported. As soon as you pay, they will start doing the job."

A team of seven officers from Scotland Yard's organised

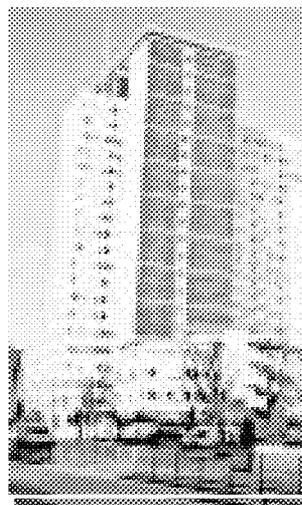
immigration crime unit (SCD9) arrested Sesay at his home at 8.15am yesterday.

A Met police spokesman said: "We are grateful to The Sunday Times for the information, and inquiries are now under way into alleged offences."

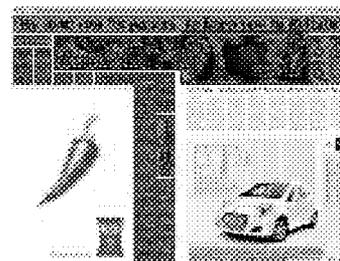
A spokesman for the UKBA said: "The UK Border Agency expects the highest level of integrity, behaviour and professionalism from its workforce. We take any allegations of abuse seriously. Those that have committed crimes will be prosecuted."

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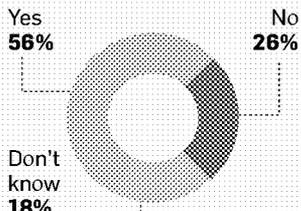


**Lunar House: agency HQ**

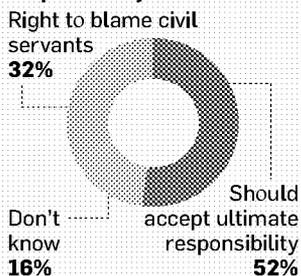


**Out of control?**

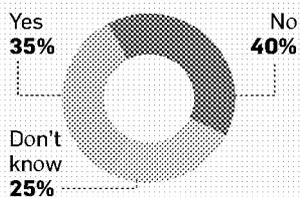
Should Theresa May resign following the row over the relaxation of border controls?



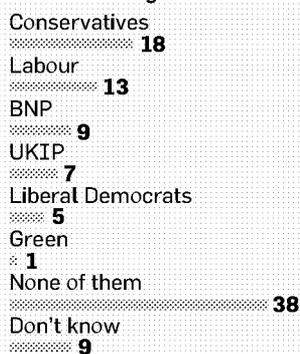
Was Theresa May right to blame civil servants or should she accept ultimate responsibility?



Should the government go ahead with spending cuts to the border agency?



Which party do you most trust on immigration?



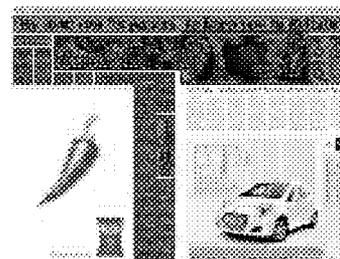
Source: YouGov survey of 1,751 adults, November 10-11



Nabi Haroun Sesay says he can arrange for a border agency official to give illegal immigrants legal status in Britain. Yesterday he was arrested by undercover police at his home

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Brodie Clark disputes Theresa May's claims about the relaxation of border checks. He is suing for constructive dismissal and will testify to a Commons committee this week.

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