

# WRITTEN EVIDENCE SUBMITTED BY HARLAND & WOLFF

## The role of the military in countering migrant crossings (Operation Isotrope)

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Harland & Wolff is a multisite fabrication company, operating in the maritime and offshore industry in five key markets: commercial, cruise and ferry, defence, oil & gas and renewables and six services: technical services, fabrication and construction, decommissioning, repair and maintenance, in-service support and conversion.

1.2 Its Belfast yard is one of Europe's largest heavy engineering facilities, with deep water access, two of Europe's largest drydocks, ample quayside and vast fabrication halls.

1.3 As a result of the acquisition of Harland & Wolff (Appledore) in August 2020, the company has been able to capitalise on opportunities at both ends of the ship-repair and shipbuilding markets where there will be significant demand for ship-repair and shipbuilding capabilities and capacity in the months and years to come.

1.4 In February 2021, the company acquired the assets of two Scottish based yards along the east and west coasts. Now known as Harland & Wolff (Methil) and Harland & Wolff (Arnish), these facilities will focus on fabrication work within the renewables, oil and gas and defence sectors.

1.5 Since its Scottish acquisition, it now boasts the largest marine fabrication footprint in the UK.

1.6 Harland & Wolff is formally known as Harland & Wolff Group Holdings plc (AIM: HARL), a London Stock Exchange-listed firm focused on strategic infrastructure projects and physical asset life-cycle management.

### 2. What role will the private sector play, for example in the supply of equipment and crew?

2.1 Modern technological innovations within maritime have resulted in semi to fully autonomous vessels which replace resource intensive activities such as manual search through rapid detection. Innovations such as this would allow for a more cost-effective solution.

2.2 The Royal Navy is already stretched and has little flexibility to offer the necessary support required to make an impact on the current crisis with a military force alone. It is therefore incumbent on the private sector to offer an innovative solution which provides the equipment and crew to address this growing crisis and reflects the existent strains on the Royal Navy.

2.3 The most practical role for the Royal Navy would be as controller of a task force of non-military vessels manned by UK Merchant Navy personnel. The UK Merchant Navy offers readily available crewing resources who are already operating sophisticated vessels engaged in offshore, cruise and ferry activities.

- 2.4 This not only has the advantage of a minimal call on an overstretched Royal Navy crewing resource but can be structured to recruit and release personnel as required.
- 2.5 The use of civilian vessels to supplement the Border Force Fleet also prevents unnecessary deployment of Royal Navy Units away from essential defence duties, and only uses a fraction of a warship's capability - avoiding the need to use unnecessarily sophisticated equipment for simple activities.
- 2.6 To this end, Harland & Wolff can offer an all-in-one solution which would provide responsive skilled and experienced personnel to support a lite Royal Navy structure aboard a mothership and swarm ship model.
- 2.7 Through alternative financing, such as market fundraising (debt, equity, working capital, bid bonds, investor loans), Harland & Wolff would be able to build, a large volume of commercial HADR platforms at speed for UK Defence and offer wet/dry lease-back options - effectively developing an all-encompassing hire purchase ship scenario. This would provide a trained crew (assume merchant shipping standard) or otherwise as well as the platforms required to address this crisis.
- 2.8 Harland & Wolff offers readily available capacity and capability to provide the necessary volume of new build HADR-Border Patrol hybrid platforms, estimating the need to meet the current demand to be approximately 12 platforms from 65m to 100m, supported by a 135m HADR vessel, much like the one proposed by Britannia Maritime Aid.
- 2.9 The UK designed, built, and manned HADR ship (mothership) would be based on a RoPax platform and configured to accommodate many refugees for short durations, with a medical centre, sanitary facilities, food and water and facilities to receive, process and support a large number of distressed people.
- 2.10 As part of upskilling and proving a more all rounded crew, the Harland & Wolff management team has experience in taking Navy personal into a shipyard setting on secondment. Thus, providing insight and training in all aspects of shipyard operations including ship repair, upgrade, conversion and emergency repairs which in time will provide for greater platform availability to Navy or Border Force.
- 2.11 Harland & Wolff would tap into the existing Civilian maritime training centres which already undertake considerable Border Force training. Delivering the skills needed for effective border patrol without placing additional pressure on Royal Navy training centres.

### **3. Summary & Recommendations**

- 3.1 There is no scope to employ a traditional delivery model – Royal Navy equipment and crew resources are too sparce.
- 3.2 The private sector must offer innovative new solutions which allow the needs of the Border Force to be met in a way that is both cost effective for the taxpayer but also successful in addressing the crisis.
- 3.3 Harland & Wolff offers a flexible and novel solution which addresses the funding, resource scarcity and speed issues which present a barrier to delivering an effect border patrol.

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