

## **The Ballad of the Stansted Fifteen**

Home Office has a mission to create an atmosphere  
they call Hostile Environment. It means: Get out of here.  
So what if you were trafficked? They don't care how you feel.  
It won't make any difference if your case is on appeal.  
They'll drag you on in handcuffs, there is no room for doubt.  
Just count up foreign bodies and proceed to fly them out -  
First stop will be Nigeria (you're OK if you're white).  
It's brutal and it's racist when you take the Stansted flight.

You can mutter disapproval, you can write to your MP  
but that won't make the difference, won't set these people free.  
In crisis, words won't do it; what history has found  
is change depends on action by people on the ground.  
Fifteen broke into Stansted, they formed a human chain.  
They locked themselves around the wheels, immobilised the plane.  
These were not mindless vandals, they knew there'd be a cost  
but somewhere in the process all common sense got lost.

They're charged under a statute from very different times,  
A law passed after Lockerbie for terrorism crimes.  
The only precedent we know where they've invoked this power  
was a helicopter pilot who crashed an airport tower.  
Their judge pays no attention to the case for human rights -  
"The only thing that matters - did they affect the flights?"  
The jury finds them guilty; he leaves them little choice.  
So now it's up to all of us: who gets to have a voice?

There's a right to legal process when officials fix your fate.  
And there's a right to protest at injustice by the state.  
They're doing us a favour, the Stansted brave fifteen,  
By posing us this question: Now what does justice mean?  
Deep down we have this feeling that says things should be fair,  
Not just for us, but everyone. It's something we all share.  
The only terrorising here is secret chartered flights,  
So here's our answer, loud and clear - we want our human rights.

*Paul Francis 15.12.18*