

International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)

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Year of Establishment: 1923

CTITF Working Group Membership:

- Strengthening the Protection of Vulnerable Targets (lead)
- Border Management Related to Counter-Terrorism (co-chair)
- Preventing and Responding to WMD Terrorist Attacks
- Tackling the Financing of Terrorism
- Countering the Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes
- Protecting Human Rights While Countering Terrorism

The International Criminal Police Organization, or INTERPOL, is an independent multilateral organization with a general assembly made up of 188 member countries and an executive committee made up of thirteen elected members. As the world's largest international police organization, INTERPOL facilitates police cooperation across borders, even where diplomatic relationships do not exist between countries.¹¹² Established as an institution to focus on criminal, rather than political issues (as indicated in Article 3 of its constitution), INTERPOL has been active in working with its member countries to address criminal and police issues relating to terrorism. As part of these efforts, INTERPOL facilitates the exchange of best practices and operational information about the organization and methods of active terrorist networks through its Fusion Task Force (a forum for counterterrorism experts). Additionally, it is involved in:

- maintaining a range of global databases including information on wanted individuals (fingerprints, photos, DNA profiles, etc.) and stolen and lost travel documents (SLTD);
- coordinating the circulation of alerts and warnings on suspected or wanted terrorists;
- assisting the UN Security Council with the implementation of the sanctions regimes, most extensively the al-Qaida and Taliban sanctions regime, by circulating relevant information to law enforcement authorities worldwide;
- assisting member countries, upon request, in their investigations in the aftermath of terrorist acts by deploying on-site incident response teams (IRTs);

- assisting member countries in the preparation, coordination, and implementation of security arrangements for major events through deployment of a major event support team (IMEST).

INTERPOL is particularly engaged with the work of the UN Security Council's Al Qaida Sanctions Committee (formerly Al Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee) in developing INTERPOL-UN "special notices," issued for individuals and entities that are subject to sanctions through the freezing of assets, travel bans, and arms embargoes.¹¹³ These special notices alert law-enforcement officers to the names of those listed under the Al Qaida sanctions regime and also constitute a request to each law-enforcement authority to cooperate with INTERPOL and the UN by undertaking the actions specified in the notice against the person or entity concerned.¹¹⁴ As of 2010, such special notices have been published on more than 330 individuals and thirty entities.¹¹⁵

INTERPOL also signed an agreement with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to assist in enhancing police capacities in peace operations and has partnered with DPKO and the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) to launch an initiative in support of the Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) action plan against transnational organized crime. This project is expected to promote a more collaborative regional approach to addressing criminality and strengthening policy capacities and information sharing mechanisms.¹¹⁶ Additionally, INTERPOL is a frequent participant in country visits conducted by the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), in order to assess states' efforts to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1373.¹¹⁷

Immediately following the attacks of September 11, 2001, which INTERPOL's Secretary-General Ronald Noble deemed "an attack against the entire world and its citizens," INTERPOL announced the creation of the 11 September Task Force.¹¹⁸ This task force was established to coordinate international criminal police intelligence received at INTERPOL's headquarters related to the terrorist attacks in the United States. INTERPOL also issued fifty-five Red Notices for terrorists who had committed, or were connected to, the attacks and

increased its circulation of Blue Notices—requests for information about or the location of a suspect, of which nineteen directly concerned the suspected 9/11 hijackers.¹¹⁹

Additionally, a command and coordination center (CCC) was established at INTERPOL's general secretariat to serve as the first point of contact for any member country in need of assistance or faced with a crisis situation. States are requested to send information about incidents to the CCC so that pertinent developments can be passed along to relevant member countries and INTERPOL can provide the necessary support. A new financial and high-tech crimes subdirectorates was also created specializing in money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

In April 2002, INTERPOL announced the creation of a terrorism watch list, which provides direct access to information on fugitive and suspected terrorists for law-enforcement authorities. Also that year, a new internet-based global communications project called I-24/7 was announced. I-24/7 is a secure global communications system that connects law-enforcement officials in all of INTERPOL's 188 member countries,¹²⁰ providing them with the means to share crucial information in real time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The initiative was designed to promote information sharing and the exchange of early warnings concerning terrorism and related international crimes among INTERPOL's member countries.

INTERPOL has been active in the area of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) materials and weapons, where it works to raise awareness of the threat, counter proliferation, develop police training programs, and strengthen the enforcement of existing legislation as a complement to international treaties. As part these efforts, INTERPOL has developed a *Bio-Terrorism Incident Pre-Planning and Response Guide* and also conducted several “train-the-trainer” workshops on the topic, bringing together police officers, healthcare and customs officials and prosecutors. These sessions serve to identify effective strategies for prevention and response, and promote more active subregional cooperation.¹²¹ Moreover, INTERPOL has worked closely with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) in developing its biocrimes database, which will “gather information relating to biological cases in which criminal

intent is identified and/or where lessons can be drawn, such as biocrimes, acts of bioterrorism, hoaxes and 'grey area' incidents. It will contain practical information and standard operating procedures for law enforcement officers handling biocrime incidents."¹²²

An active member of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, INTERPOL participates in a number of its working groups. In particular, INTERPOL is one of three leading entities in the Working Group on Strengthening the Protection of Vulnerable Targets and co-chairs the Working Group on Border Management Related to Counter-Terrorism. In the former, INTERPOL established a referral center that aims to identify focal points and experts in member countries and to facilitate the development and sharing of best practices and resources for the protection of vulnerable targets. The latter working group focuses on key issues of border management as they relate to international counterterrorism efforts, including the illegal cross-border movement of people; control of open borders; and the movement of cash, goods, and weapons, and aviation and maritime security.

In addition to its work with the United Nations, INTERPOL also maintains active working relationships with other international partners such as Europol, ASEANAPOL, and the Arab Interior Ministers' Council, to promote cooperation in policing terrorism and other international crimes.