



# INTERPOL

## FACT SHEET

# People smuggling

People smuggling is a low-risk, high-profit business that can occur by air, sea or land, often by complex routes which change rapidly and frequently. People smugglers procure, usually for financial or material gain, the illegal entry of an individual into a country of which he or she is neither a citizen nor a permanent resident. Generally speaking, individuals work with a smuggler voluntarily and once payment is completed, the relationship between the illegal immigrant and the smuggler ends. Thousands of illegal immigrants die each year in transit to their destinations.

### ► A COMPLEX ISSUE

People smuggling takes place on all scales but INTERPOL's focus is on organized criminal networks, due to their international dimension. The modus operandi of criminal organizations is increasingly sophisticated, with numerous other crimes linked to people smuggling, such as human trafficking, identity-related crimes, corruption, money laundering and violence.

Irregular migration is not a new issue, but is one that has taken on new proportions in recent years, especially in the Mediterranean region. Transnational organized crime groups are taking advantage of this crisis in order to make huge profits. They facilitate the passage of migrants across borders in return for payment, with little or no regard for their safety and wellbeing. They also take advantage of new technologies and financial systems to make profits from vulnerable people. Those profits are often used to fund other crimes such as arms trafficking and terrorism.

### ► INTERPOL'S RESOURCES

At INTERPOL, we have been working to counter people smuggling for a number of years and have developed global tools which can facilitate the exchange of information among police in member countries and help coordinate action. The following services are accessible to member countries:

- **INTERPOL databases**, including the Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD), fraudulent document databases such as Dial-Doc and Edison, and forensic databases of fingerprints and DNA profiles;
- **Notices**, such as Red Notices for wanted criminals and Purple Notices to alert on new modus operandi;
- **Analytical support** is offered to provide member countries with updated global intelligence;
- **MIND/FIND technical solutions**, via I-24/7, INTERPOL's secure global police communications system, which enable frontline law enforcement personnel to access INTERPOL databases at both major airport borders and remote land borders;
- **The International Contact Directory for People Smuggling Issues** contains updated contact details for individuals responsible for people smuggling and irregular migration issues within INTERPOL National Central Bureaus around the world;
- **Events, working group meetings and conferences** allow key stakeholders to contribute to a strategy for combating the complex nature of people smuggling issues.

## People smuggling

Given the escalation of the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean region, INTERPOL, in partnership with Europol, convened an operational law enforcement event in October 2015 with the aim of building a trusted global model to enable source, transit and destination countries to work together effectively to disrupt the criminal networks behind people smuggling.

### ► CAPACITY BUILDING, TRAINING AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

At INTERPOL, our unique position in the international law enforcement community enables us to assist in combating the criminal networks behind people smuggling.

- Training: to ensure our global network is efficient and robust, we strengthen the ability of police forces, where needed, with skills and specialized training;
- Operational support: We support member countries to carry out operations targeting smuggling networks or people smuggling fugitives;
- Incident Response Teams (IRTs) and Investigative Support Teams (ISTs) can be requested by member countries for operational support at short notice;
- A dedicated project, known as Smuggling Training & Operations Programme (STOP), supports our member countries in border management issues, particularly in detecting criminal networks that provide stolen or lost travel documents to illegal immigrants or individuals involved in organized crime.

### ► INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Effective law enforcement can't happen in isolation, which is why, at INTERPOL, we are constantly building new partnerships with a diverse range of international organizations, the private sector, academia, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to provide a multidisciplinary response.



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#### ► CONTACT INFORMATION:

Contact us via our web site. For matters relating to specific crime cases, please contact your local police or the INTERPOL National Central Bureau in your country.

► **Twitter:** @INTERPOL\_HQ

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