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WAPIS

NEWSLETTER



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to Côte d'Ivoire

EDITORIAL

Dear partners and readers,

In the context of our globalized and interdependent world – where greater possibilities often come with greater risks – West Africa has not been spared by threats to the security of its peoples and nations. Therefore, alongside its partners – foremost among which are the States in the region and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) – the European union is supporting efforts to make the region a safer place. We are working together to strengthen effective and legitimate security institutions for the peoples they defend. In the face of the heightened terrorist threat, expansion of trafficking in all its forms, and border insecurity, it is essential that we strive for peace and security if we are to sustain and consolidate the achievements brought about by development and economic growth.

For this reason, the European union enthusiastically welcomed, a few years ago, the decision of West African Chiefs of Police to set up an automated regional and global police information-exchange system. In 2012, the EU gave its backing to the creation of the WAPIS (West African Police Information System) programme, which INTERPOL is actively engaged in deploying.

In June 2018, alongside our partners INTERPOL and ECOWAS, we participated in the official launch of the third phase of the WAPIS programme in Abidjan. This is the most ambitious phase of this programme which is receiving a total of EUR 28 million in EU funding. After the initial stages targeting the four pilot countries (Benin, Ghana, Mali and Niger), the programme now includes 16 West African beneficiary countries. The programme directly involves the ECOWAS Commission, and has established significant links with Chad as well as the G5 Sahel. This is therefore an ambitious programme which will have repercussions on security throughout the region.

At a time when regional considerations are on the rise, I would like to take this opportunity to stress that the main prerequisite for our future success lies at national level, namely in building the capacities of our national police and security forces, and in their willingness to share and exchange information. This first requires a suitable legal framework. On this note, we would strongly encourage countries to facilitate the adoption of laws granting the programme legal status, and to establish a national WAPIS committee. These preliminary stages are essential to establishing a data centre, which would be followed by the installation of equipment and the provision of training envisaged as part of the programme. The

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programme's first two phases and its initial successes, as demonstrated in Niger and Ghana, perfectly highlight one thing: that the involvement and commitment of the national authorities at all levels – ministers, police chiefs, gendarmerie, customs, immigration, and intelligence services – are the keystone to successfully developing an information system.

Data protection is another matter of concern for the European union, both in terms of sovereignty and respect for individual freedoms, because if we want the system to function, it must inspire trust. For this reason, I would like to reiterate that the information in the system must always be recorded and used in compliance with international data-protection standards and respect for fundamental human rights, as well the sovereignty of the States participating in the programme.

We are more than ever convinced that, through these joint efforts, we will have the opportunity in the years ahead to build, through WAPIS, an effective system without any added complexity. In fact, by making it easier to exchange information, we will be better equipped to jointly and effectively tackle criminal networks which take advantage of physical and institutional barriers to prosper and evade the law.

To sum up, this whole system aims to build bridges and it is up to each person, each government and department to make the best use of these bridges to take up future challenges.

Thank you.

SUCCESS STORIES

A British fugitive is arrested in Ghana thanks to the West African Police Information System (WAPIS)

Ghana is one of the countries to have completed the first phase of the WAPIS Programme and to have realized the value of WAPIS by deciding to put the tool to good use in fighting terrorism and transnational crime.

This was proven when a crime which had made headlines in both the United Kingdom and Ghana was solved. Mr X, a Ghana-born British citizen, was wanted in the UK for the murder of his wife and their two children. Their bodies were found in the backyard of the family home, three weeks after they had been murdered.

Three days after committing the murders, Mr X boarded a plane for Accra, Ghana. As soon as the crime was discovered, the British police requested an INTERPOL notice to be sent to the Ghanaian National Central Bureau through official channels. Appreciating the relevance of the WAPIS tool, the Ghanaian authorities automatically entered the notice in the WAPIS database.

One of the special features of the WAPIS platform in Ghana is the fact that the Ghanaian authorities sought efficiency by bringing together the PISCES software, used by its immigration services responsible for border security, and housed them both in the same Data Collection and Registration Centre (DACORE). That decision facilitated the pooling of police and immigration efforts in solving cases such as this one.

The case, which had been recorded in the WAPIS system, was therefore shared and integrated in the PISCES software by the immigration officials assigned to the DACORE. As a result, the suspect was identified by the immigration authorities on his arrival at Accra airport and shadowed by officers from the INTERPOL National Central Bureau and the Ghanaian Criminal Investigation Department.

After going on the run, Mr X was arrested by the Ghanaian law enforcement authorities in Takoradi, some 240 km from Accra. He was then handed over to the British police for extradition to the UK.

The successful outcome of this case is clearly the result of the excellent integration of the WAPIS and PISCES databases. The law enforcement services were able to share information due to the leadership of the Ghanaian authorities whose aim had been to bring together all their law enforcement databases in the DACORE.

WAPIS therefore has its rightful place in the security architecture in West Africa given its effectiveness in the real-time sharing of information and in dealing with transnational crime and terrorism. Its close collaboration with other global information sharing systems also gives it the ability to contribute to the identification of fugitives.

SUCCESS STORIES

The West African Police Information System (WAPIS) bears fruit in the Johnson case in Niger

The West African Police Information System (WAPIS) was installed in Niger in 2012 and, under the impetus of the programme, a Data Collection and Registration Centre (DACORE), which collects information from law enforcement bodies, including the gendarmerie and the police, was created in 2015. The WAPIS software enables law enforcement officers to not only record and collect data, but also to conduct searches on the police information in the database. Within only a few months of becoming fully operational, WAPIS is central to the radical change in the security environment in Niger, a country plagued by terrorism and transnational crime.

On Tuesday, 10 July 2018, a man reported to the gendarmerie investigation unit was summoned for questioning about a case of fraud. During questioning, he stated that he had never previously been taken in for police questioning in Niger. Unfortunately for him, one of the aims of the recently installed WAPIS was to verify such allegations which could not have been checked previously.

The gendarmerie investigation unit conducted a preliminary search through its central records and research division which proved inconclusive, and so, although the investigation was not officially open to other police departments, the investigators consulted the DACORE to determine whether

or not he had a criminal record. This shows the importance of understanding the usefulness of WAPIS. The query conducted in the WAPIS database established that Mr Johnson was known to the police and was already recorded under case No. C-2018/363 for which all the relevant documents were available (police statements and files), including a photograph which led to his formal identification.

The data collection sheet had been sent to the DACORE by the police station in Talladjé. The subject's name is Mike Johnson. He is a Liberian national residing in Niger and has been recorded in a case of fraud. He had already been questioned at the police station in Talladjé on 8 July 2017 and then handed over to the judicial authorities.

This previous record means that Mr Johnson is a repeat offender, which will consequently influence the investigation and judicial decision.

WAPIS is a useful tool for law enforcement and will play a major, decisive role in the years ahead in fighting crime on a daily basis and in improving the security environment in Niger and West Africa in general. This system will make it easy to catch fugitives easily wherever they hide.



SPOTLIGHT

Inside the WAPIS Data Collection and Registration Centre (DACORE) in Accra, Ghana.

Ghana has been one of the four pilot countries in the West African Police Information System (WAPIS) programme since 2012, along with Mali, Niger and Benin. Under the leadership of the local law enforcement authorities, Ghana has met all the conditions required to fully implement the WAPIS Programme, including appointing a Focal Point, constituting a WAPIS National Committee (WANACO) and, most importantly, creating the Data Collection and Registration Centre (DACORE), which was inaugurated on 29 September 2015.

Since then, officers assigned to the DACORE, based in Accra, have contributed to recording police crime data, which has led to arrests being made following searches made in the database.

We therefore decided to go and find out more about this Centre and the people who work there, to take a closer look at the technological shift that has taken place within the Ghanaian Police in the context of the WAPIS Programme.

It was a sunny October Thursday in Accra, and there was a studious air at the WAPIS Data Collection and Registration Centre located in the Headquarters of the Criminal Investigation Department in the North Ridge area of the Ghanaian capital. We found a number of young people in their 20s, eyes glued to the screens of their brand new computers with stickers bearing the gold-starred blue flag of the European Union, reminding us of its excellent cooperation with INTERPOL on this project.

We were welcomed in the Centre's main room by Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Eric Tetteh, who was previously Head of the IT Department in the Ghanaian Police, and has been assigned to the Data Centre as WAPIS system administrator since 20 January 2016. He spoke to us about his passion for the WAPIS Programme, which he hoped to see prosper and contribute to a healthier security environment in Ghana.

He said that working for the WAPIS System was a challenge because it was something new. He had other options, such as being in charge of a police station, but he decided to stay and leave his mark and contribute to the success of the Programme.

The WAPIS Data Collection Centre in Accra has three system administrators, including Mr Tetteh from the Police, whose roles are to check the consistency and veracity of all data entries made by the data entry operators before validating them. The administrators' role often goes beyond these functions and includes the day-to-day running of the Centre, such as organizing meetings of the WAPIS National

Committee or the strategy for expanding the system to other towns in Ghana.

Inspector Jonathan Nii Yemo ODOI is another Data Centre Administrator, he is from the Ghana Immigration Service. Before being assigned to the WAPIS centre by its department in April 2016, Mr ODOI was an Intelligence Officer in a dedicated department at the Ghana Immigration Service. During our conversation, he also showed his energy and enthusiasm for using a tool that helps to make the daily work of his colleagues on the street easier.

He said his work was very interesting, but he had to admit that it had been very difficult at first. It was not easy to get the other parties involved to understand the relevance of the System and convince them that it was going to help all law enforcement bodies. Working with data on paper is very tedious, and WAPIS provides us with information and replies to requests more quickly.

At lunchtime, the faces of our young volunteers lit up at the idea of mustering strength for the afternoon. However, out of curiosity, we asked them about their duties within DACORE. The volunteers work in the Centre as data-entry operators and their task is to enter into the WAPIS System all the data contained in the police reports. These reports come from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) or the Ghana Prison Services (GPS). The reports arrive in paper form and are scanned and entered into the system by the data-entry operators.

The young volunteers responsible for this feat were recruited by the Directorate General of Police via the National Civic Service, at the request of the Centre. They receive no pay, but play a very important role in the changes taking place within the Ghanaian Police. To make this possible, and to keep them motivated, Mr Tetteh told us that he sometimes invests financially to meet their basic needs (water, transport, etc.). There are currently 31 data-entry operators at the Centre, divided into two groups to carry out their work. Every day, over 200 files are entered in the WAPIS System and then validated by the administrators, for which they deserve every praise.

Nevertheless, no human endeavour is ever perfect and there remains room for improvement at the Centre. We have been told that steps are being considered to provide the Centre with its own budget to fully ensure its independence and functioning. Also, the plans to expand the network in the future mean that some forms of transport for exclusive use by DACORE staff would be welcome, to enable regular monitoring of the centres located hundreds of kilometres from Accra.



From Left to Right: Commissioner of Police Tetteh, WAPIS Administrator; Ms Tiwaa ADDO-Danquah, Director of Criminal Investigation Department; M. Jonathan Ni Yemoo, Ghana Immigration Service Officer and WAPIS Administrator
On the right: DACORE visit by Carl Alexandre, INTERPOL Executive Director for Planning and Partnership

Lastly, the proper recruitment of officers with computer skills and solid experience in investigations would be needed to improve the effectiveness of the officers assigned to the Centre. The officers working at the Centre could also benefit from incentives and motivation, such as special promotions for the work done at the Centre, which is not at present valued very highly by officers who prefer other, more attractive posts in other departments.

Looking at all that has been accomplished by the WAPIS Programme, there can be no doubt that Ghana's example is one to be followed in terms of its implementation.

All this would not have been possible without the strong commitment of the Ghanaian security authorities headed by the Directors-General of the Police, Immigration, and Prisons, and the WAPIS Focal Point for Ghana, Ms Yaa Tiwaa ADDO-DANQUAH, Director-General of the Criminal

Investigation Department, as well as that of WAPIS Country Officer Mr Winbonron KONE, whose efforts were frequently recognized by the authorities we met as being the cornerstone of WAPIS's success in Ghana.

Two days before the DACORE visit, we were received by Ms ADDO-DANQUAH, WAPIS Focal Point for Ghana. She told us of the absolute determination of the Police and the Government to see through the implementation of the WAPIS Programme, which was a key tool for managing and combating crime in Ghana.

We hope to return to Accra, and more particularly to the new premises which will have received dedicated WAPIS workstations, to witness once more the determination and vitality of a country which has resolutely decided to strengthen its security through technology.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The new Executive Director for Partnerships and Planning, Carl Alexandre, visits Ghana and Nigeria to assess the implementation of WAPIS.

Following his appointment by the Secretary General in August 2018 as Executive Director for Partnerships and Planning, Mr Alexandre decided to make several visits including to Accra, Ghana, and Abuja, Nigeria, between 1 and 5 October 2018, where he planned to meet senior authorities and assess the current progress of the WAPIS Programme.

Beginning his visit in Ghana, Mr Alexandre had the opportunity to meet the Ghanaian Minister for Security, the Ambassador of the European Union to Ghana, and various senior police officers including the Deputy Commissioner of National Police and the Director General of the Criminal Investigation Department. Their discussions centred on how they addressed the challenges and difficulties encountered during the implementation of the WAPIS Programme, but especially on bolstering the commitment of the authorities to do their utmost to make the programme a success. The Executive Director also took the opportunity to visit the DACORE and learn more about how WAPIS functioned.

In a similar vein, Mr Alexandre went on to Nigeria and had several productive meetings with senior Nigerian security officials, including the Secretary General of the Minister of the Interior. While in Abuja, he took the opportunity to meet senior officials from ECOWAS, a strategic partner in this phase of the WAPIS Programme. He was received by General Francis A. BEHANZIN, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, with whom he had an exchange both



Meeting on the WAPIS implementation in Ghana with the Minister of Interior, the European Union Ambassador in Ghana and the INTERPOL Executive Director for Planning, 2 October 2018

about the support ECOWAS could give to implementing the legal aspects of the programme, and particularly about the sustainability of the WAPIS Programme.

In the interests of establishing closer relationships with the beneficiary countries, Mr Alexandre will continue his West African trip in the first quarter of 2019 to obtain greater commitment on the part of the governments to the programme, thereby bringing security and stability to the sub-region and Africa.

Official handover of equipment in Ghana to expand the WAPIS system within the country.

Since 2012, Ghana has been a member of the WAPIS programme as a pilot country. Now that the legal framework and the DACORE have been put in place, the WAPIS system has become an important part of the security arrangements in Ghana through the management and sharing of police data.

With a view to expanding the WAPIS system to other law enforcement agencies and police departments throughout the country, the programme sponsors officially handed over IT equipment, including servers and computers.

The handover ceremony was highlighted by the noteworthy presence of senior officials including Ghana's Minister of the Interior, the Ambassador of the European Union to Ghana, and Mr Carl Alexandre, INTERPOL's Executive Director for Partnerships and Planning.

On the margins of the ceremony, Mr Alexandre introduced himself to senior Ghanaian law enforcement authorities and took the opportunity to discuss the future of WAPIS in Ghana.



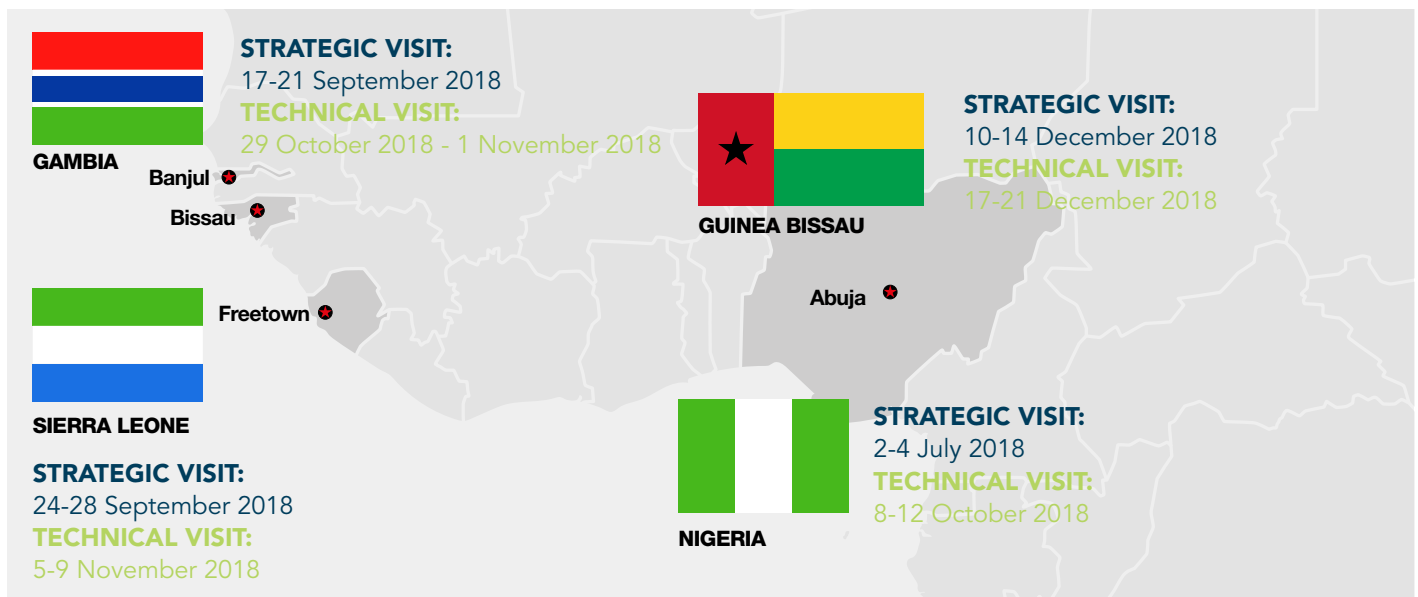
Official handover ceremony for the WAPIS Extension. From Left to right: European Union Ambassador in Ghana, the INTERPOL Executive Director for Partnerships and Planning and the Minister of Interior

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Strategic and technical visits to new member countries

During the third and fourth quarters of 2018, a delegation from INTERPOL and the European union visited Nigeria, Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Sierra Leone to introduce WAPIS and obtain the authorities' agreement to roll it out in those countries. The authorities showed unanimously great interest in the programme, and reassured the delegation of their wholehearted desire to collaborate in the success of this process.

Technical visits also took place during this period in all three countries to assess the existing police data management architecture and the legal framework in place, which will form the working basis of the WAPIS system.



Law enforcement officers in Benin and Chad are trained in using WAPIS

The WAPIS Programme regularly trains law enforcement officers assigned to the system both to build capacity and, particularly, to make the tool accessible to the greatest number of officers possible.

Between 12 and 16 November 2018, training on the system was given to law enforcement officers in Benin and Chad.

Over 20 officers in Chad were trained on the SIPT software (Chad police information system). The commitment of the Chadian government and the European union, who attended the launch of the training course, should also be highlighted.

In COTONOU, Benin, WAPIS Programme experts conducted a training with 20 officers about using WAPIS. In Benin, the Programme will be expanded to other sites in the capital and throughout the country.



Law enforcement agents training on WAPIS, Cotonou, 12-16 Novembre 2018

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Liberia and Gambia: the first signatories of a Memorandum of Understanding with INTERPOL.

As part of its cooperation with the beneficiary countries, the WAPIS Programme team drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) jointly with the above countries to provide a framework for the programme implementation. This MOU sets out the rights and duties of each stakeholder in the deployment of the WAPIS system.

For Liberia and Gambia, as beneficiary countries, this Memorandum of Understanding was signed, respectively, by their Ministers of

Justice and their Ministers of Internal Affairs. These were first two official signatures of the MOU between INTERPOL and WAPIS beneficiary countries, setting in motion the implementation process in those countries.

The WAPIS Programme team is continuing to work towards formalizing a Memorandum of Understanding with other countries. Further official signatures are expected in the coming months.



Signature of the Memorandum of Understanding between INTERPOL and Liberia by the Minister of Justice and Internal Affairs, Monrovia, 24 October 2018

UPCOMING EVENTS

19-20 March 2019: Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Legal Seminar on Personal Data Protection Law within the framework of the WAPIS Programme

Organized in the context of the WAPIS Programme, this seminar aims to bring together National Contact Points and

legal experts from WAPIS beneficiary countries to discuss the actions to be carried out at national and regional

levels to establish a suitable and sustainable legal framework for the WAPIS Programme.

21 March 2019: Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

3rd WAPIS Programme Steering and Coordination Committee Meeting

As part of the third phase of WAPIS, financed by the European Development Fund, the 3rd Steering and Coordination Committee Meeting will be taking place on 14 February 2019 in Abidjan, Côte

d'Ivoire. Officials from ECOWAS, the European union and INTERPOL, as well as National Contact Points from the WAPIS Programme, will be attending. The meeting will provide a forum for

different participants to discuss the progress of the WAPIS Programme and together consider possible solutions to the challenges encountered in its implementation.



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