



SPEECH • DISCOURS • DISCURSO • خطاب

REMARKS

by

Ronald K. NOBLE

Secretary General

THIRD MEETING OF EXPERTS
DIGEST OF TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME CASES

11 June 2012

Palermo, Italy

Mr Renato SCHIFANI, President of the Italian Senate,

Mrs Anna Maria CANCELLIERI, Minister of the Interior of Italy,

Mr Francesco CASCIO, President of the Regional Assembly of Sicily,

Prefect Antonio MANGANELLI, Chief of the Italian Police and Director General of Public Security of Italy,

Mr John SANDAGE, Director for the Treaty Affairs Division of UNODC,

High-ranking representatives of Italy's governmental institutions and law enforcement agencies.

Dedicated Members of the Experts' Group,

Dear colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

I am pleased to be here with you for this Third Experts Meeting in the framework of the Digest of Organized Crime Cases project, launched two years ago at the occasion of the 10-year anniversary of the Palermo Convention.

This meeting is the final meeting of the project and, as such, it brings to light the very fine work accomplished by all the countries involved, under the leadership of Italy, Colombia and the UNODC, and with the support of INTERPOL.

Let me ask the members of the Experts' Group to stand and be recognized.

Albania, Brasil, Canada, Colombia, El Salvador, France, Hungary, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, UK, USA and Venezuela.

I would also like to thank the Italian authorities for so superbly hosting this event. As always in Italy, we enjoy warm hospitality and great class.

As we are gathered here in the magnificent city of Palermo, we can only be reminded of great figures who devoted their lives to justice and the rule of law — I am thinking of course of Giovanni FALCONE and Paolo BORSELLINO, who were born here in Palermo, and who also died in this city twenty years ago from the bloody hands of la Cosa Nostra siciliana.

Their courage, determination and legacy live on and inspire us every single day.

But let's not forget the nine other victims of these two cowardly bombings — eight Italian police officers who died in the line of duty while protecting FALCONE and BORSELLINO, and Giovanni FALCONE's wife, Francesca MORVILLO, who perished besides her husband — they shall forever be remembered.

In 1993, one year after FALCONE and BORSELLINO were assassinated, I was appointed Undersecretary for Enforcement at the US Department of the Treasury with oversight responsibility of four of the then

eight largest US federal police agencies.

That same year, I visited Palermo for the first time with then-FBI Director Louis FREEH on our first joint international mission. We came here to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the Falcone and Borsellino assassinations.

FREEH was a close colleague and dear friend of FALCONE. As a federal prosecutor in New York City, he had worked with FALCONE on two of the most successful Mafia prosecutions ever brought to court — the 1987 Pizza Connection case in New York and the Maxi-trial in Italy.

I remember how emotional Louis Freeh was throughout his visit here. I recall him saying how FALCONE's and Italy's sacrifices were beyond imagination and nothing short of heroic. I remember how warmly we were embraced by the people of Sicily who were suffering under the evil hands of the mafia.

There are many ordinary Italian citizens are no less heroic.

Italians know that right here in the Palermo province, Felicia IMPASTATO, the mother of Giuseppe IMPASTATO, who was also murdered by la Cosa Nostra in 1978 for publicly opposing it, dedicated her life to bringing her son's murderers to justice. She lived long enough to see, in 2002, the conviction and sentence to life imprisonment of Tano BADALAMENTI, one of the most powerful bosses of the Cosa Nostra, who had ordered the murder. Her struggle was further recognized when, five years later, Italian President Giorgio NAPOLITANO honored the memory of her son in a ceremony here in Palermo.

President NAPOLITANO returned to Sicily again this year, to Corleone, to celebrate a State funeral in honour of Placido RIZZOTTO. RIZZOTTO was a trade union leader who was assassinated in 1948 by the Cosa Nostra, but whose body was only found in 2009 and recently identified.

But, prior to this State funeral, RIZZOTTO was relatively unknown to the general public. Yesterday, I traveled to Corleone to honour his memory; to visit the International Anti-Mafia Documentation Center so I could learn more about Italy and Sicily's struggle against the mafia.

The high recognition paid to Placido RIZZOTTO by President NAPOLITANO is significant, and the other examples of Italy's ongoing struggle against the Mafia are significant, because they demonstrate how long and determined Italy has been in battling mafia-type organizations and how the sacrifices of all those fighting the Mafia will never be forgotten by Italy, its government or its people.

The above examples also reflect two essential ingredients that make up a country: institutions and a people.

And these two components need to join hands under the rule of law in order to defeat organized crime.

This is the case in Italy today.

The tens of thousands of individuals holding public mandates — ministers, members of parliament, police officers, and judges — but also journalists, writers, professors and countless ordinary citizens find the courage to stand up against the Mafia.

From my perspective almost 20 years ago and from my perspective as INTERPOL Secretary General over the last 12 years, I have witnessed first-hand the determination of Italian authorities and the Italian people to keep Italy free from the harm caused by organized crime, and in particular mafia-type

organizations.

I commend all of you for your never-ending resolve.

By demonstrating that its institutions and people are standing as one in facing the Mafia, Italy is setting an example for the world.

And here I want to take a moment to also recognize the immense accomplishments of Colombia with whom I've worked closely for 12 years.

Thanks to the determination of the Colombian government, the sacrifice of thousands of Colombians and the determination of even more ordinary Colombians, the country is winning a decades-long battle against armed guerrilla groups that have been terrorizing the Colombian population for more than half a century.

As a result, Colombia stands today as an example of the victory of the rule of law on organized crime, drug traffickers and terrorists.

The same can be said for the efforts of all the experts present here today, in helping one another better investigate and prosecute organized crime.

Dear colleagues,

There is a third ingredient, besides righteous institutions and people, that is also necessary in successfully combating organized crime, and it is international law enforcement and judicial cooperation.

With the increasing globalization of crime, this cooperation is every day more crucial for the freedom and security of our citizens.

And this is precisely what INTERPOL strives to accomplish within the international law enforcement community.

INTERPOL works, for example, at improving the existing international channels active in tracing and recovering illegal assets, in particular in the framework of INTERPOL's Global Focal Point Initiative on Illegal Asset Recovery, which currently counts 103 participating countries.

INTERPOL also assists bringing dangerous fugitives to justice.

Just recently, INTERPOL contributed to arresting one of Italy's most wanted criminals — Vito Roberto PALAZZOLO, who had been sentenced here in Palermo to nine years in prison for external collusion with the Mafia. PALAZZOLO, who was subject to an INTERPOL Red Notice, was arrested in Bangkok, Thailand on 30 March by Thai authorities with the support of INTERPOL's Fugitive Investigation Support unit and Italy's State Police.

A few months earlier, in December 2011, another Italian organized crime figure, Antonio RECCIA, also subject of an INTERPOL Red Notice and wanted by Italy for association with a criminal organization, drug trafficking and possession of weapons, was arrested in Curacao with the support of INTERPOL's Fugitive Investigation Support unit. RECCIA was extradited to Italy on 30 December.

These are but two recent examples of how INTERPOL and Italy have joined forces in exceptional ways against transnational organized crime.

And here I would like to commend Prefect MANGANELLI for showing the leadership and dedication he has shown over the years in working with INTERPOL and countless other law enforcement bodies worldwide to fight transnational organized crime. Italy and the international law enforcement community are lucky to have such a talented and committed professional with whom to work.

These two recent arrests, as well as the dozens of cases contained in the Digest of Organized Crime Cases, covering all crime areas and all regions of the world, demonstrate that our determination bears fruit.

This Digest is not only a fantastic toolbox for police officers, prosecutors and judges, but it is also a source of inspiration for all those who believe that transnational organized crime can be defeated.

The people of Italy, Colombia and countries all around the world who suffer from organized crime deserve that we continue put all our efforts in answering their cry for justice.

As I think about the future and the men and women who devote — and often sacrifice — their lives to combat it and as I think about the citizens whose lives and freedom we defend, I am filled with hope.

I know that together, here in Italy and around the world, we have the will, commitment, determination and expertise to defeat the Mafia and organized crime.

Thank you very much.