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WAPIS

# NEWSLETTER



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Minister of Internal Affairs for the  
Republic of Sierra Leone

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## EDITORIAL

Dear colleagues,

Let me take this opportunity to remind everyone about the security situation in our region and how it is affecting the environment in our respective countries. You will be aware of the huge toll that transnational organized crime and terrorism and the fear they create have taken on the citizens of most of the countries in our region, causing significant property damage, displacing thousands of people across the region, causing schools to close, and damaging medical infrastructure. Over the years, these phenomena have proved to us that no single country in our region today is immune from the scourge of cross-border offences, and therefore no one country can fight them alone. From the Sahel-Sahara to the Gulf of Guinea, the threat of terrorism, the proliferation of small arms, piracy, cyber criminality, immigrant smuggling, motor vehicle theft, drug trafficking and other similar offences have forced our law enforcement authorities to think outside the box in order to combat this menace.

It is with this in mind that I would like to thank our chiefs of police, who in 2010 realized that the best way to respond to this threat was with collective security. In the same vein, in 2010, during a symposium organized in Brussels by INTERPOL together with the Belgian Presidency of the European Union, West African Police Chiefs declared that, in order to tackle the security challenges facing the region, our countries needed automated criminal databases to share information at a national, regional, and global level. I would like to make it clear at this point that the goodwill of the European Union in providing funds to INTERPOL to implement the WAPIS Programme, and the strategic leadership provided by the ECOWAS Commission, are proof that the voices of our chiefs of police were heard.

WAPIS is now a key component of our security architecture and an effective tool in the fight against transnational crime and terrorism in West Africa. This was highlighted during the fifty-fifth (55th) ordinary session of the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government, held on 29 June 2019 in Abuja, Nigeria.

I call on all of us to contribute to the successful implementation of the WAPIS Programme at a national level in our respective countries, and especially ask the countries that have yet to sign the MoU with INTERPOL on the implementation of the Programme to do so. On a legal front, allow me to encourage our lawmakers to speed up the publication of the ECOWAS Supplementary Act to Personal data Protection Law 2010 in our official gazette, and thereafter to take the necessary



measures to domesticate this law, not forgetting the fact that we should begin setting aside a budget line to ensure that the Programme can continue after the implementation phase.

Finally, on behalf of His Excellency the President Retired Julius Maada Bio and the people of the Republic of Sierra Leone, I would like to reiterate the full support of the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone for the successful implementation of the WAPIS Programme. Allow me to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the European Union for providing funds for the implementation of the WAPIS Programme, to INTERPOL for the technical expertise they have provided to our Member States, and to the ECOWAS Commission for their strategic leadership in spearheading the implementation of the WAPIS Programme. I would also like to thank all participating countries for the resilience you have shown.

Thank you very much.

## LEAD STORIES

### **The Secretary General of INTERPOL encourages G5 Sahel countries to make the WAPIS Programme an essential tool in the fight against terrorism and transnational crime.**

On 11 September 2019, the Secretary General of INTERPOL, Jürgen STOCK, took part in a meeting of Ministers responsible for security in the G5 Sahel area at Ouagadougou, in Burkina Faso.

During the course of this day of information-sharing and discussion concerning the security situation in the G5 Sahel, Ministers for Security from Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Chad urged one another to coordinate their efforts better in the fight against terrorism, which is on the rise in this zone.



Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between INTERPOL and the Government of Burkina Faso on SIPAO in the presence of the Interpol SG and the Minister of Security, 11 September 2019, Ouagadougou, (Burkina Faso)

During his speech, the Secretary General of INTERPOL stressed the Organisation's ongoing and unwavering commitment to the region with regard to the fight against terrorism and transnational crime. He also outlined to ministers responsible for Security the need for increased information-sharing in order to curb threats to the region.

To this end, he encouraged the G5 Sahel countries to speed up implementation of the WAPIS system in their respective countries to make up for the lack of information-sharing between the law enforcement agencies in these countries.

As a side event to this meeting, the Secretary General of INTERPOL signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the government of Burkina Faso and INTERPOL with the minister responsible for Security, Mr Ouséini COMPAORE. Following signature of the MoU, Mr STOCK commended the commitment of the political authorities in Burkina Faso to implementing the WAPIS Programme, which supports the IRAPOL project at national level.

As a reminder, since 2012 Burkina Faso has had its own police information system called IRAPOL (Identification, Rapprochement et Analyse de Police). The government has officially decided to continue using the IRAPOL system, boosted by technical support and equipment from the WAPIS Programme.

## LEAD STORIES

### The 4th WAPIS Programme Steering Committee urges countries to strengthen their commitment to implementing the WAPIS system.

The 4th WAPIS Programme Steering Committee, which met in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) on 26 and 27 November 2019, was attended by representatives from West Africa and Chad and co-chaired by ECOWAS and the European Union.

The quality of discussions during this important Committee was elevated by the effective presence of the Minister of Justice for Guinea-Bissau and the Director General of the National Police of Burkina Faso.

The state of advancement of the Programme was reported and examined, with special focus on the progress achieved by each country. The Committee also debated the ECOWAS Expert Committee's conclusions and recommendations and how much progress had been made in implementing the recommendations of the 3rd Steering Committee meeting in March 2019.

During the various presentations, the WAPIS Programme reviewed its achievements over the previous six months,

including the 14 MoUs signed with beneficiary countries involved in the Programme. This progress was again illustrated during the Committee with the official handover, by the Minister of Justice for Guinea-Bissau, of the MoU signed with INTERPOL to the Director for Planning and Development, Mr Dirk ALLAERTS.

At the end of the talks and discussions, several recommendations were formulated concerning both the countries and the implementing partners.

As co-chair of the Committee, Mrs Daniela ROFI, representing the European Union, thanked the participants for their perseverance in implementing the WAPIS Programme and assured them of the European Union's constant support. The ECOWAS Commission's representative and meeting co-chair, Mr Abdourahmane DIENG, also encouraged the countries to engage fully in implementing the Programme and emphasized the need to achieve concrete results before the Programme ends in 2022.



4th meeting of the WAPIS Steering Committee, 26 November 2019, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire





Official photo of the opening ceremony of the legal seminar, 22 October 2019, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

## Government experts from the ECOWAS countries and Mauritania scrutinize the legal framework of the WAPIS Programme.

Government experts from the ECOWAS countries and Mauritania met as part of an ECOWAS Committee of Government Experts in Abidjan from 22 to 24 October 2019 in the presence of representatives from INTERPOL, ECOWAS and the European Union. Two independent experts from the region, personal data protection specialists, also took part in this Committee.

During the Committee, a wide range of questions were examined, in particular the state of implementation of the recommendations issued by the legal seminar which was held in March 2019, adoption of the project for a WAPIS Programme good practice guide concerning personal data protection, modification of the list of offences contained in the existing WAPIS system and expansion of the scope of the data used in the context of the Programme.

Chaired by Niger's legal point of contact, Mr Amadou Morou, the Committee was an opportunity for the participants to talk and to formulate the following recommendations:

- Law enforcement agencies using the WAPIS system should comply with the WAPIS Programme Good practice guide concerning personal data protection.
- The list of offences appearing in each WAPIS national system should be amended to comply with the provisions

in the national law of the country participating in the WAPIS Programme, using a two-stage transposition procedure:

**Phase 1:** every country participating in the WAPIS Programme should complete, before the end of April 2020, a table of preselected offences to be included in its WAPIS national system.

**Phase 2:** starting at the end of INTERPOL's implementation period, every country participating in the WAPIS Programme should finalize complete transposition of its relevant national legislation into its WAPIS national system.

- The scope of the WAPIS national systems should be expanded to include the categories of administrative police data.

The WAPIS Programme, in tandem with the participating countries, has therefore committed to making the WAPIS system a reliable legal tool in the field of personal data protection. This tool should take account of the specific legal characteristics of each country participating in the Programme, in order to tackle terrorism and transnational crime in the region more effectively.

## NIGER has entered a new phase: its WAPIS national system is now connected to INTERPOL's I-24/7 databases

Niger continues to make progress in implementing the WAPIS Programme. INTERPOL's National Central Bureau in Niamey and the Criminal Documentation Department housing the WAPIS Programme signed an agreement concerning the granting of direct access to INTERPOL's I-24/7 information system on 4 November 2019.

The aim of the agreement signed between the two parties is to authorize the CDD, in accordance with Article 31 of INTERPOL's Data processing regulations and the "Charter for access to INTERPOL's information system by national entities", to directly consult data processed in INTERPOL's I-24/7 information system.

It's a great step forward for Niger's WAPIS Programme, which will now benefit from direct access to INTERPOL's

databases of stolen vehicles, lost or stolen travel documents, stolen administrative documents, wanted persons, fingerprints and illegal weapons.

Until the regional platform has been set up under the aegis of ECOWAS, which will allow information sharing between West African countries, Niger's WAPIS Programme will be the first system to incorporate an international dimension to its Programme implementation, thanks to being able to exchange information with the rest of the world via the I-24/7 network.

Following in the footsteps of Niger, Mali and Ghana have also signed the I-24/7 agreement. Technical measures are being implemented to connect up the systems in the coming weeks.

## OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Law enforcement officers learn about the WAPIS Programme in Niamey

From 9 to 11 September 2019, an information session to raise awareness about the WAPIS Programme, aimed at law enforcement officers, was held in Niamey, Niger.

The opening ceremony was presided over by the Secretary General to the Ministry of the Interior, in the presence of the EUD Head of Cooperation in Niger and the Head of the ECOWAS Bureau in Niger's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In their speeches, they each stressed the importance of the WAPIS Programme in the fight against crime in the Sahelian strip, and urged law enforcement officers to adopt this tool and to become ambassadors for the WAPIS Programme once the session was over.

These information and awareness-raising sessions have inspired around 400 people from all the law enforcement agencies and people involved in the country's criminal justice system. Also represented were: the National Police, National Gendarmerie, National Guard, the Ministry for Water and Forests, as well as judges from the Ministry of Justice.

Over the course of the three days, the National Point of Contact, Mr TAHIROU Moustapha, along with the team from the Criminal Documentation Department, supported by Country officer Dominique DUPONT, addressed participants on the following topics:

- the WAPIS Programme: how it came about, its objectives, those involved and the steps in its implementation;
- the WAPIS system: its role, how it operates and its functions;
- implementation of the WAPIS system in Niger: the various stages since 2012, the legal framework, the DACORE and how it operates, officers' experience in entering information in the database on a daily basis, how existing self-governing remote outposts operate, and the question of interconnection which is currently in progress;
- and gave a demonstration of how the WAPIS app works.

These different topics were the subject of constructive discussions between the participants, demonstrating their interest and commitment to adopting the WAPIS system and being a force for change in Niger's security architecture. They undertook to pass on what they'd learned within their different departments.

The WAPIS Programme plans to hold its next information and awareness-raising sessions in Ghana and Benin during the first quarter of 2020 to encourage adoption and better use of the system in these countries..



## OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Countries participating in the WAPIS Programme formalize their commitment by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with INTERPOL.

In the context of its collaboration with countries participating in the WAPIS Programme, INTERPOL has drawn up a Memorandum of Understanding in order to ensure it is properly implemented in participating countries. The MoU, which describes the rights and duties of both parties in the process of implementing the WAPIS Programme, has been sent to every participating country for negotiation and signature.

During the last quarter of 2019, several countries signed the MoU with INTERPOL, namely Niger, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau.

Also worthy of note is the official handover of the MoU between the government of Guinea-Bissau and INTERPOL during the 4th Programme Steering Committee meeting by Guinea-Bissau's Minister of Justice, Mrs Ruth DA CONCEICAO MONTEIRO.

To date, 14 of the 16 countries participating in the Programme have already signed the MoU on implementing the WAPIS Programme. With regard to the last two countries, discussions



Signature of the MoU between INTERPOL and Guinea Bissau represented by its Minister of Justice, 26 November 2019, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

are ongoing with the political and judicial authorities in these countries in the hope that the MoU will be signed in the near future.

### INTERPOL officially hands over computer equipment to the government of Togo as part of the WAPIS Programme launch.

In order to deliver on the above commitment and get started on the work of digitizing paper-based police data, the WAPIS Programme officially handed over donated equipment on 5 November 2019 to the Ministry of Security and Civil Defence.

The official handover of this equipment was presided over by the Minister of Security and Civil Defence, in the presence of Madame Ambassador and Head of the EU Delegation in Togo as well as the Ambassador and High Representative for ECOWAS in Togo. INTERPOL was represented at this ceremony by its Director for Planning and Development.

It should be noted that the WAPIS system equipment consisted of 40 scanners, 40 desktop computers, 40 Uninterruptible Power Supplies, 40 external hard drives and a video projector.

After handing over the gifts, the Minister of Security commended ECOWAS for initiating the WAPIS Programme, the European Union for funding it and INTERPOL for its professionalism in implementing the Programme. He reaffirmed Togo's commitment at the highest level to supporting the Programme's implementation and adopting it. Finally, he called on the end beneficiaries, especially the chief executives of the law enforcement agencies, to make very good use of the equipment.

This gift of equipment marks the start of the practical implementation phase of the Programme in Togo. To this end, a training course for 15 officers drawn from the National Police, National Gendarmerie and the Togolese Central Office for the suppression of illicit drug trafficking and money-laundering (OCRTIDB) was organized from 12 to 16 December 2019 in Lomé.



Official handover of equipment between the Head of the EU Delegation in Togo and the Minister of Security and Civil Protection, 05 November 2019, Lomé, Togo

# A FEW WORDS FROM THE DIRECTOR



**Richard GOTWE**  
WAPIS Head of Programme

Dear colleagues,

I wish you all the best for a very happy new year in 2020. Throughout the past year we have been able to rely on your constant commitment and support. My wish is to see even greater efforts from you during the coming year, so we can achieve the goals we set ourselves during the last Programme Steering Committee in Abidjan at the end of November 2019.

This Steering Committee was an opportunity to bring together the greater WAPIS family, whose deliberations have concentrated on the progress made in implementing the WAPIS Programme. The meeting was co-chaired by representatives of

the European Union and the ECOWAS Commission.

I can share with you the following key points on the state of progress:

- 13 of the 16 participating countries have signed an MoU on implementation of the WAPIS Programme with INTERPOL (14 after handover of the signed MoU by Guinea-Bissau during the Committee).
- 16 of 16 participating countries have designated their single point of contact (SPOC) for WAPIS.
- 6 of the 16 data collection and registration centres in the WAPIS Programme (DACORE) are up and running.
- 4 of the 16 participating countries have operational outposts connected to their respective national systems.
- 316 WAPIS work stations have been delivered to 10 countries.
- Training sessions on the WAPIS Programme have been organized in 6 of the 16 participating countries. 75 law enforcement officers have been trained.
- 3 of the 16 designated national entities, responsible for their respective WAPIS national systems, have signed the Cooperation Agreement on direct access to and use of INTERPOL's I-24/7 system: Ghana, Mali and Niger.

- 1 of the 16 participating countries has established a connection with INTERPOL's I-24/7 system: Niger.
- A good practice guide concerning protection of personal data has been drawn up, presented and adopted by the participating countries.

The main goals to be achieved, by the end of 2020, are as follows:

- 6 participating countries will have operational outposts connected to the WAPIS system.
- 8 participating countries will have established a DACORE.
- 6 participating countries will have operational outposts connected to the WAPIS system.
- 6 WAPIS national systems will be connected to INTERPOL's I-24/7 system (by mid-2020).
- 4 participating countries will have a team of WAPIS certified national trainers.
- 4 participating countries will include WAPIS training modules in their standard training Programmes for law enforcement officers.
- The WAPIS Programme will provide the national authorities with an estimated budget for maintenance of equipment and premises, including running costs of the WAPIS national system.

Thank you again for all the support you have given the WAPIS team in the field. Happy New Year 2020!

	MAURITANIA	GUINEA BISSAU	GUINEA	GHANA	THE GAMBIA	CÔTE D'IVOIRE	CABO VERDE	BENIN	BURKINA FASO	SIERRA LEONE	SENEGAL	NIGER	NIGERIA	LIBERIA	MALI	TOGO
SIGNED AN MOU ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WAPIS PROGRAMME	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DESIGNED THEIR SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT (SPOC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DATA COLLECTION AND REGISTRATION CENTRES (DACORE) ARE UP AND RUNNING				✓				✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	
OPERATIONAL OUTPOSTS CONNECTED TO THEIR RESPECTIVE NATIONAL SYSTEMS								✓	✓	✓		✓				
WAPIS WORK STATIONS HAVE BEEN DELIVERED IN 2019	✓		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
ORGANIZED TRAINING SESSIONS ON THE WAPIS PROGRAMME IN 2019	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
SIGNED THE COOPERATION AGREEMENT ON DIRECT ACCESS TO AND USE OF I-24/7 SYSTEM				✓								✓			✓	
CONNECTION WITH INTERPOL'S I-24/7 SYSTEM												✓				

## EXPERTS' CORNER

### The WAPIS Programme Good practice guide concerning personal data protection: improving protection of personal data

The WAPIS Programme Good practice guide concerning personal data protection (the "Guide") is the response to a request formulated during the legal seminar on the WAPIS Programme, which took place on 19 and 20 March 2019 and brought together the points of contact and legal experts from the 16 countries participating in the WAPIS Programme. Given people's anxieties concerning the absence of appropriate legislation and a personal data protection authority in certain countries participating in the Programme, it was suggested that a project to draw up a "good practice" guide concerning processing of personal data in the WAPIS system be set up and subjected to scrutiny by the points of contact and legal experts in the WAPIS Programme during a dedicated legal workshop.

INTERPOL therefore prepared the Guide, a tool designed to help law enforcement agencies process data in the national WAPIS system in compliance with Supplementary Act A/SA.1/01/10 on the protection of personal data in the ECOWAS area, other laws and regulations applicable in the countries concerned, as well as international standards and good practice in processing personal data in the context of police information systems.

The Guide was presented during the Committee of Government Experts for ECOWAS and Mauritania, which met from 22 to 24 October 2019. The Guide was very well

received by the participants and adopted at the end of the Committee, with the recommendation that law enforcement agencies using the WAPIS system comply with the Guide to the WAPIS Programme and "take the necessary measures, such as capacity building training or campaigns to raise awareness of personal data protection, to ensure proper compliance with the Guide".

Consisting of 12 chapters, the Guide discusses the general principles of data protection, the role of national data protection authorities, good practice with regard to all operations involving processing (collection, sharing, updating, deletion, etc.) of personal data, and other essential topics relevant to the processing of personal data in national WAPIS systems. The aim is to provide practical guidance to law enforcement agencies on how to best process police data in their national WAPIS system.

The Guide may be intended to serve as a tool offered to countries participating in the WAPIS Programme in order to improve protection of personal data when processing personal data in national WAPIS systems, but it in no way relieves the ECOWAS Member States of their obligations under the Supplementary Act, notably those requiring the adoption of national legislation relating to data protection and the setting up of a data protection authority.



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