



INTERPOL

FACT SHEET

Crimes against children

Sexual abuse of children has two main international dimensions: exploitation via the Internet and sex tourism. The spread of the Internet and technology has led to a huge rise in offending. Offenders can distribute and access child abuse material more easily, and can have direct contact with children. But Internet-facilitated crimes are only one form of child abuse; all serious and violent crimes committed against children must be investigated as such. The identification of the young victims is a top priority for law enforcement, as it can also help identify the perpetrators.

▶ INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION

Crimes against children have increasingly taken on an international dimension. Images can be easily taken and uploaded in one country and made available to anyone in the world via the Internet. Child sex offenders can travel to developing countries to abuse children where the laws are less strict.

INTERPOL's unique position in the international law enforcement community gives us the resources and networks to fight the global aspects of this crime more effectively. We offer logistical support and provide coordination and assistance for international operations, including training sessions, intelligence, briefings, analysis and technical advice.

▶ VICTIM IDENTIFICATION

Managed by INTERPOL, the International Child Sexual Exploitation image database (ICSE DB) allows specialized investigators to share data with colleagues across the world with a view to identifying the victims and perpetrators. Available through INTERPOL's secure global police communications system I-247, the ICSE DB uses sophisticated image comparison software to make connections between victims and places. There are already 48 countries plus EUROPOL connected to the database, and many others contribute material for analysis.

Backed by the G8 and funded by the European Commission, ICSE DB was launched in March 2009 in response to the increasing need for an international tool allowing investigators to collaborate globally. To date, some 7,800 victims from nearly 50 countries and more than 3,800 offenders have been identified through the database.

Member countries can ask INTERPOL to issue **Yellow Notices** to help locate missing persons, especially minors. We also encourage the use of child abduction alert systems where they exist.

▶ ACCESS BLOCKING

The INTERPOL "Worst of" list includes Internet domains that contain the most severe child sexual abuse material, according to defined criteria. INTERPOL provides this list, updated several times a week, to any Internet Access Service Provider (ASP) willing to participate in this voluntary initiative. The providers stop all access to these sites, redirecting viewers to a "stop page" or an error message. A complaints procedure exists for domain owners who believe their site has been wrongfully placed on the list.

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► SPECIALIST GROUP

The INTERPOL Specialist Group on Crimes Against Children meets annually and brings together law enforcement investigators to facilitate and enhance the investigation of sexual crimes against children, including computer-facilitated crimes. Through research, education and shared intelligence, the group promotes strategies that lead to the effective prosecution and treatment of individuals who have, or are at risk to, abuse children.

► TRAVELLING SEX OFFENDERS

Often referred to as "sex tourism," this type of crime involves the abuse of children in developing countries by people who travel there. It is often linked to child trafficking and organized crime.

Project Childhood brings together INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and World Vision to combat child sexual exploitation and trafficking in Southeast Asia. INTERPOL works with law enforcement agencies in the affected countries to strengthen their abilities to identify, arrest and prosecute travelling sex offenders through enhanced intelligence sharing. The project is funded through the Government of Australia's AusAID programme.

To fight this type of exploitation, we encourage countries to issue INTERPOL **Green Notices**, which can provide warnings and criminal intelligence on serious child offenders who travel internationally and are at risk of committing further crimes against children.

► PARTNERSHIPS

INTERPOL is a member of the **COSPOL Internet Related Child Abusive Material Project (CIRCAMP)**. This is a European police collaboration fighting the production, online distribution of and access to child sexual abuse material. It also works to identify children and to stop the abuse.

The **Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT)** is a global partnership of law enforcement agencies that acts to protect children from online sexual abuse through joint operations and raising public awareness. It currently comprises agencies from Australia, Canada, Italy, New Zealand, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United States, Europol and INTERPOL, as well as a number of private sector partners.



INTERPOL

► 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.

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