



INTERPOL

FACT SHEET

Illicit goods and global health

Criminal groups are increasingly involved in activities which endanger the health and safety of citizens worldwide. Trafficking in illicit goods, which includes practices such as falsification (pharmaceuticals), counterfeiting (trademark infringements), piracy (copyright infringements), smuggling of legitimate products and tax evasion, harms businesses and puts consumers at risk from substandard products which could be hazardous. The types of goods affected are medicines, medical devices, food, alcohol, toys, personal care products (e.g. cosmetics), electronics, engine parts, construction materials, pesticides, among others. The significant increase in the manufacture and distribution of illicit and falsified products poses a major global health risk. Criminals use the profits from selling falsified medicines or illicit goods to fund other serious crimes.

► FIGHTING THE CRIMINAL NETWORKS

Criminals involved in trafficking in illicit goods and pharmaceutical crime operate through informal global networks, as well as through traditional organized crime groups. Large amounts of money are generated by these transnational criminal enterprises, which are attracted by the lucrative profits involved in trading counterfeit goods, trading legitimate goods through illicit channels, or selling fake, expired or otherwise falsified medicines in shops and online. At INTERPOL, we are tackling these criminal rings and the threat they pose to public health and safety by bringing together key players to foster international cooperation.

► BUILDING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

INTERPOL assists member countries by delivering training to build the skills and knowledge of all agencies involved in the fight against illicit trafficking and pharmaceutical crime. Our training portfolio for our member countries and partners worldwide includes practical training as a precursor to operations, specialized courses in investigative techniques, train-the-trainer sessions and online learning courses.

The International Intellectual Property Crime Investigators College (IIPCIC) is a fully interactive online intellectual property (IP) crime training facility developed by INTERPOL to provide its member countries cutting-edge internet-based training. Students who successfully complete the introductory, intermediate and advanced levels will receive special certification. The skills obtained by completing IIPCIC training courses are applicable to the investigation of trafficking in illicit goods.

► SUPPORTING OFFICERS IN THE FIELD

INTERPOL coordinates on-the-ground operations on a national, regional and global level, in conjunction with local authorities. Such operations bring together police, customs, health regulators and key partners in the private sector to tackle the criminal networks behind these crimes.

■ Global operations:

- Operation Pangea – targets the online sale of counterfeit and illicit medicines, and highlights the dangers of buying illicit medicines online by raising awareness among the general public.
- Operation Opson – the first operation focusing exclusively on fake food and drink, leading to the seizure of potentially dangerous items across more than 57 countries in 2016. ►

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- **Regional operations** aim to disrupt the activities of transnational organized criminals involved in the trafficking of illicit goods in regions particularly affected by the problem. Operations targeting illicit goods have been conducted in South America (Jupiter and Maya), Asia (Real) and Africa (Wipeout), while actions against fake medicines have focused on Southeast Asia (Storm) and Africa (Giboia and Porcupine).worth more than USD 1.5 million across five countries in Western Africa. Recovered products included computer supplies, African fabrics, plastic packaging used for food and water, soup cubes, cigarettes and CDs.

► **INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION**

INTERPOL cooperates with multiple international and regional organizations, the scientific community, academia and partners from the private sector to combat crimes which threaten public health and safety. These alliances allow us to tackle all strategic, operational and technical aspects of trafficking in illicit goods.

INTERPOL has also built a global network with specialized points of contact in health and enforcement units around the world, to combat illicit goods and pharmaceutical crime.

INTERPOL organizes each year the International Law Enforcement Intellectual Property Crime Conference. This annual conference, which brings together law enforcement officials and industry experts from all over the world, is focusing on operational activities and allows those on the front lines of the fight against IP crime and trafficking in illicit goods to share practical solutions that have proven successful and discuss emerging crime trends.

► **AWARENESS RAISING**

All levels of society are at risk from counterfeit or substandard consumer products and falsified medicines . Therefore, an important task for INTERPOL is to raise awareness among the general public and governments about the dangers posed by these criminal activities, as well as their links to other crimes such as drug and human trafficking, environmental crime and even terrorism.



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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.

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