

## Message to the Sixth Review Conference of the Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons Convention

Speech delivered on behalf of INTERPOL Secretary General [Ronald K. Noble](#)  
Geneva, Switzerland, 20 November, 2006

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*Mr Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,*

The International Criminal Police Organization – INTERPOL – is pleased to address this message to the Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. It should be underlined that INTERPOL is committed to the fight against the criminal misuse of biological agents and toxins by [terrorists](#) and other non-state actors.

We know from recent events that terrorists remain committed to perpetrating large-scale violence. And there is much evidence that terrorists have a strong interest in the use of biological weapons.

As was made clear in a letter dated 1 December 2003, addressed to the President of the [United Nations Security Council](#) from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to [resolution 1267](#) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities – 'Undoubtedly Al-Qaida is still considering the use of chemical or biological weapons to perpetrate its terrorist actions. When might this happen? Nobody really knows. It is just a matter of time before the terrorists believe they are ready. They have already taken the decision to use such chemical and biological weapons in their forthcoming attacks. The only restraint they are facing is the technical complexity of operating them properly and effectively.'

To address the threat of bioterrorism, in 2004 INTERPOL created a [Bioterrorism Prevention Unit](#) to focus exclusively on this area.

In March 2005, we kicked off the unit's activities by hosting a [global conference on bioterrorism](#) at INTERPOL headquarters in Lyon. That event was attended by over 500 police, senior officials and experts from 155 countries. It was the largest gathering of international law enforcement personnel ever.

INTERPOL's Bioterrorism Prevention Unit has since conducted regional [bioterrorism prevention workshops in Africa, Southeast Asia, South America](#), and most recently in [Kiev, Ukraine](#). These workshops were attended by a total of 106 countries and more than 300 members from the law enforcement, health, scientific, legal, and academic communities. Our next workshop will be held in the Middle East.

INTERPOL's Bioterrorism Prevention Unit has several other initiatives underway including:

The recent release of an electronic version of the [INTERPOL Bioterrorism Incident Pre-planning and Response Guide](#), which will be available in hard copy and on our website in INTERPOL's four official languages (Arabic, English, French and Spanish) by year-end

A [Bioterrorism Prevention Resource Centre](#) on the INTERPOL website, which is now at the disposal of the entire law enforcement community

The inclusion on INTERPOL's secure website of training materials from National Central Bureaus and governments on national bioterrorism preparedness and response

Table-top exercises which have been conducted with great effect at our workshops

'Train-the trainer' programmes

International interagency table-top exercises

INTERPOL is now exploring with its partners the feasibility of building a bioterrorism related database.

This September, under the umbrella of the Bioterrorism Prevention Unit, INTERPOL launched a new project focusing on bio-criminalization because we realised that police cannot most effectively confront the threat of bioterrorism unless their work is supported by a proper legal framework for investigating and deterring it.

In the future, INTERPOL hopes to find funding for a police officer rotation program in which police officers from [INTERPOL's member states](#) can rotate through our Bioterrorism Prevention Unit, bringing their added expertise to the unit and then returning home with still greater experience to share with their national colleagues in building their own national training programmes.

INTERPOL is active and innovative in our commitment to help law enforcement do all in its power to confront the threat of bioterrorism. But law enforcement cannot effectively tackle the threat alone. It must do so in partnership with professionals from other relevant disciplines.

All of the relevant professional communities must come together to establish and implement protocols and procedures to share information and cooperate in prevention and detection efforts, to mobilize response resources in the event of an attack or natural outbreak, and to coordinate all of these efforts. This includes law enforcement, first responders, health sciences, bio-safety, bio-security, legal, emergency management, intelligence, environmental management, agricultural authorities, and other relevant private and public resources (local, national, regional, and international). Such coordination among these communities is needed to maximise the synergies of their complementary skills, methodologies, perspectives and resources and minimise their conflicts. This means overcoming many difficult obstacles, but it is essential to do so.

Law enforcement will also require the full support of national governments in their efforts to prevent bioterrorism.

INTERPOL thanks the Chair of the Conference, Ambassador Masood Khan, for the opportunity to address the Conference. We wish it success in its deliberations during the coming weeks.