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Excerpts of speech by [Ronald K. Noble](#), Secretary General of INTERPOL

Today we are together for the European Regional Conference. However, I would ask you to remember that Europe is not an isolated region. We have grouped our member states according to regions yet, on the basis of developments in major crime threats, one must not and cannot think only about his or her region. Our recent experience with [terrorism](#) reminds us that terrorists act domestically, regionally and globally in targeting our citizens.

Just this week we have seen a significant domestic terrorist strike in Russia and a significant international terrorist strike in Saudi Arabia. Both caused the tragic loss of scores of lives and injuries to hundreds of people. Whether the principal target of a terrorist attack is domestic or international, we know that unless we fight terrorism domestically, regionally and globally the world will be unsafe for us all. Terrorists receive funding and support from outside their countries and regions, and terrorists often flee from the site of terrorist attacks to avoid apprehension.



Yet, INTERPOL's conferences tend to be structured based on regions and geography. To some extent the prevailing thinking is that we need to be organized on the basis of geographic regions because we tend to co-operation more frequently with our neighbors. But, this is not true with all of our member countries. Israel, Japan and the U.S. regularly attend European Regional conferences because so much of their police work is done with their European partners. INTERPOL's flexibility permits countries outside the region to attend other regions' conferences. We also have a rich array of observers...in recognition of the fact that Europe's crime concerns are also the world's crime concerns.

Geography is used by the police in other ways to help understand criminal activity. For example, we tend to identify many criminal organizations based on the country of origin of their major participants. Yet, in each of these cases we are not only talking about one group for each country. In fact, organized crime groups contain several different crime organizations of varying sizes operating in different regions. And, when we speak of organized crime groups in terms of one country's citizens, the citizens of those countries are disturbed because they feel tainted.

Another point to keep in mind is this: some criminal organizations that operate in Europe are also involved in arms trafficking in Africa. Indeed, a significant number of small arms and light weapons, which probably number in the tens of millions, are in circulation in Africa. According to intelligence, the sources of arms that have been trafficked into Africa have been primarily Europe and to some extent Asia.

There are also other criminal organizations which originate from countries outside Europe, but then operate in many European countries. Many of the well-known terrorist groups such as Group Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat (GSPC) belong to this category. Some of these organizations also co-operate with each other by using transnational contacts to acquire arms, explosives, or generate money or carry out propaganda activities.

INTERPOL's Executive Directorate has just produced a European Threat Assessment on People Smuggling. There will be presentations on these findings during this conference. Our key findings may not surprise you. They are that organized crime involvement in irregular migration is increasing. Again a number of countries can be identified in this criminal activity. Western European nations remain preferred destinations, although some migrants may continue to North America. There are a number of nexus points en route, including Moscow, Istanbul, Kiev, Bangkok, Belgrade, Amman and elsewhere.

Finally, there are criminal and terrorist organizations which do not necessarily have common criminal activities, but co-operate together. For instance, we know that Al Qaeda training camps were used by other terrorist groups. In addition, criminal organizations follow each other to learn from their techniques such as Al Qaeda copying the sea-based attacks from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka. Moreover, it is suspected that the FARC's move to urban bombings is based on a transfer of technology and know-how from the IRA, as evidenced by the recent capture of three of its members in Colombia. Additionally, we know that the constant upsurge of suicide terrorist attacks in Israel have been increased by terrorist groups outside of Israel.

These are just a few illustrations of why we should not lock ourselves into an operational approach that is region focused alone. We must keep the big picture in mind. At INTERPOL, our own programmes and projects illustrate the same points very clearly. You will hear these projects introduced later during the conference, but I think it is useful to pick up a couple of examples and put them into our overall framework so that when these projects are discussed, INTERPOL's mission to support international law enforcement in the area of transnational crime becomes apparent.

INTERPOL has been involved, for example, in assisting with the investigation of synthetic drugs, especially Ecstasy, through our Exit Project, which has now evolved into the new Sydrug Project. Europe, particularly Western Europe, has been the centre of Ecstasy production for the last ten years. Yet, today, synthetic drugs are also manufactured in Asia, the Americas and Africa where production methodologies are becoming so simple that these drugs can be manufactured at any place anywhere in the world. The Sydrug Project is a great project and we hope that you will support it.

In our Fusion Task force we have produced results to help you operationally to fight terrorism. For example, we have sent to all INTERPOL member countries a report concerning Italian stolen identity documents, another regarding Belgian stolen identify documents, and a report on the Group Salafist pour la Predication et le combat (GSPC) networks in Europe. Eight membership lists of suspected terrorists, primarily North African, totaling over 600 persons, have also been sent to all member countries. Two analytical reports regarding links between terrorist cases and organized crime investigations will be issued later this month. Lists are also being prepared regarding membership in the Hezbollah, with particular emphasis on South American operations (FARC), and Jamai'a Islamiya and Islamic Jihad (Egypt). Another analytical project just started will look at the radical fundamentalist training camps, attendance and methods of recruitment.

I am sure that with these examples I have been able to remind us all again that most crime areas today have an increasingly dominating transnational side to them and that crime activities link several countries together throughout the world with a great variety of different combinations of networks.

...The analysis of messages collected in the INTERPOL Criminal Information system (ICIS) helps us in strategic analysis by illustrating long-term trends. For instance, information in ICIS demonstrates possible common links between terrorists and criminals engaged in facilitating illegal immigration.

To continue to provide this important service, and to improve our capabilities, to better meet the needs of our member countries, we are committed to developing all our databases. We are developing our databases in terrorism, travel documents and DNA automated-search facilities. In addition, INTERPOL is involved in working groups which aim to facilitate money laundering investigations through effective and wider information sharing, coupled with an expanded database, and better analysis of available data.

In order to improve our global approach, we are continuing to develop our sub-regional bureaus in Abidjan, Harare, Nairobi, Buenos Aires, Bangkok and San Salvador. We have budgeted operational positions for some of these offices and an analytical position to each of these offices to improve our knowledge base in these regions, and to support our criminal intelligence analysis in Lyon. Our efforts in locating fugitives will also be reinforced by additional officer positions in Lyon.

In addition to providing communication channels, database and analytical services, we see INTERPOL having an important 'consulting' or 'expert' role in terms of international law enforcement. Those law enforcement experts that our member states second to the General Secretariat in Lyon are an integral part of INTERPOL's overall service. Through clearly focused projects, these experts have not only an opportunity to share their expertise gained in their own country, but to benefit from their colleagues' expertise received in a different context. These international teams are additional contact points to allow for easy and effective access to INTERPOL's international network in our priority crime areas in support of your national law enforcement efforts. We are also committed to developing international law enforcement expertise by providing specialized crime training, an example of which is that INTERPOL, together with Europol, is planning to provide a training course in bio-terrorism later this year.

Finally, we see INTERPOL as having a central role in highlighting key issues related to international law enforcement. We can accomplish this through our various conferences, as is the case today. Personally, as the Secretary General of INTERPOL, I will continue to contribute to this task through my missions to our member countries around the world, and through meeting representatives of our member countries who visit us in the General Secretariat in Lyon.