



# INTERPOL

## FACT SHEET

# People smuggling

People smuggling – including the smuggling of migrants – is a low-risk, high-profit business that can occur by air, sea or land, often by complex routes which change rapidly and frequently. People smugglers procure, usually for financial or material gain, the illegal entry of an individual into a country of which he or she is neither a citizen nor a permanent resident. Generally speaking, individuals work with a smuggler voluntarily and once payment is completed, the relationship between the irregular migrant and the smuggler ends. Thousands of irregular migrants die each year in transit to their destinations.

### ► A COMPLEX ISSUE

People smuggling affects the world's most vulnerable communities. It takes place on all scales but INTERPOL's focus is on organized criminal networks, due to their international dimension. Traditional modus operandi including forged documents and concealment are becoming increasingly sophisticated, complemented by new technologies such as social media and money transfer services. The criminal networks involved often have links to other crimes such as human trafficking, identity-related crimes, corruption and money laundering.

Irregular migration is not a new issue, but is one that has taken on new proportions in recent years. Transnational organized crime groups are taking advantage of this trend in order to make huge profits. They facilitate the passage of migrants across borders in return for payment, with little or no regard for their safety and wellbeing. Profits from the smuggling of migrants have been connected to the funding of other crimes such as arms trafficking and terrorism.

### ► INTERPOL'S RESOURCES

At INTERPOL, we have developed global policing capabilities which can facilitate the exchange of information among police in member countries and help coordinate action. The following services are accessible to member countries:

- **INTERPOL databases**, including the Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD), fraudulent document databases such as Dial-Doc and Edison, and forensic databases of fingerprints and DNA profiles;
- **Notices**, such as Red Notices for wanted criminals, Yellow Notices for missing persons, Black Notices to identify bodies and Purple Notices to alert on new modus operandi;
- **Analytical support** is offered to provide member countries with updated global intelligence;
- **MIND/FIND technical solutions**, via I-24/7, INTERPOL's secure global police communications system, which enable frontline law enforcement personnel to access INTERPOL databases at both major airport borders and remote land borders;
- **INTERPOL Specialized Operational Network (ISON) against People Smuggling**, an international law enforcement network dedicated to combating people smuggling, comprised of experts from source, transit and destination countries;
- **INTERPOL's Internal Task Force on People Smuggling**, provides multilateral support for capacity building, training, investigative and operational support to member countries against people smuggling and related crimes.

## People smuggling

Following the escalation of the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean region, INTERPOL and Europol convened two joint Operational Forums on Countering Migrant Smuggling Networks in October 2015 and February 2016 which laid the foundations for building a trusted global network to enable source, transit and destination countries to work together effectively to disrupt the criminal networks behind people smuggling.

### ► CAPACITY BUILDING, TRAINING AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

At INTERPOL, our unique position in the international law enforcement community enables us to assist in combating the criminal networks behind people smuggling.

- Training: to ensure our global network is efficient and robust, we strengthen the ability of police forces, where needed, with skills and specialized training;
- Operational support: We support member countries to carry out operations targeting smuggling networks, such as Operation Spartacus in Latin America, or people smuggling fugitives, such as Operation Infra Hydra;
- Incident Response Teams (IRTs) and Investigative Support Teams (ISTs) can be requested by member countries for operational support at short notice;
- A dedicated project, known as Smuggling Training & Operations Programme (STOP), supports our member countries in border management issues, particularly in detecting criminal networks that provide stolen or lost travel documents to illegal immigrants or individuals involved in organized crime.

### ► INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Effective law enforcement can't happen in isolation, which is why, at INTERPOL, we are constantly building new partnerships with a diverse range of regional policing bodies, international organizations, the private sector, academia, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to share, analyse and disseminate pertinent information.



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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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