



INTERPOL

FACT SHEET

Fingerprints

Fingerprint evidence plays a crucial role in criminal investigations. Since a person's fingerprints are unique and do not change during the course of their life, they can be used to quickly and efficiently confirm or disprove a person's identity.

In addition, finger marks can be collected at a crime scene and have the potential to link a series of crimes together, or to place a suspect at the scene. Fingerprints play an equally important role in identifying victims following a disaster such as a cyclone, earthquake, bombing or other attack.

► AUTOMATED SYSTEMS

INTERPOL manages a database of fingerprints, containing more than 167,000 fingerprint records and more than 10,500 crime scene marks. Authorized users in member countries can view, submit and cross-check records using I-24/7, INTERPOL's secure global police communications network, via a user-friendly automatic fingerprint identification system (AFIS).

Law enforcement officers can either take fingerprints using an electronic device or can take them manually using ink and paper then use a special scanner to save the data electronically in the appropriate format. They then submit the data to INTERPOL's General Secretariat to be uploaded to the database.

At the INTERPOL General Assembly held in 2009, heads of the Organization's National Central Bureaus voted unanimously to develop the systematic sharing and updating of fingerprints, including finger marks from unsolved crimes as well as fingerprint profiles taken from offenders who are citizens of other countries, to date this still applies.

In 2016, INTERPOL made more than 1,300 identifications as a result of increased data sharing and comparison by member countries.

► INNOVATION

INTERPOL implemented in 2010 an upgraded AFIS which is capable of searching and filing palm prints and latent palm marks. Automated ten-print verification has been introduced, along with a high-volume search facility that allows more than 1,000 comparisons per day against the INTERPOL fingerprint database.

In 2013, INTERPOL put in place the AFIS gateway which allows member countries to make fingerprint searches on the INTERPOL AFIS database. This new tool enables users to receive the results of their searches very quickly:

- For individuals who are unknown in the AFIS database, this takes only a few minutes (automatic search);
- For individuals known in the AFIS database, this takes about an hour (semi-automatic search – two fingerprint experts are required to validate the identification).

Records are saved and exchanged in the format set by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). To facilitate the transfer of fingerprint data, INTERPOL has made available to member countries a tool called Image2NIST which converts jpeg files into NIST files.

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► IDENTIFICATION

The INTERPOL fingerprint database is a reliable tool to identify wanted persons, facilitating many fingerprint comparisons in a short time. When a man was arrested in the United Kingdom, his fingerprints were compared against records in the INTERPOL databases. This alerted police that he was the subject of an INTERPOL Red Notice issued by Turkey for murder charges.

This example illustrates INTERPOL's ability to solve international crime. Identifications such as these can only occur if member countries regularly update the fingerprint records contained in the database.

► SHARING BEST PRACTICE

An International Fingerprint Symposium takes place every two years. Attended by the Heads of National Fingerprint Bureaus, INTERPOL representatives and private companies, it provides an opportunity for experts from around the world to share best practice and latest developments.

In addition to the Symposium, INTERPOL organizes an AFIS experts' working group. This takes place twice a year and is a forum for discussing new technology, identification procedures and training needs, and for ensuring that INTERPOL's systems comply with the necessary standards.



INTERPOL

► CONTACT INFORMATION:

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