



INTERPOL

**STRATEGY  
FOR COUNTERING  
MIGRANT SMUGGLING**

**A GLOBAL LAW ENFORCEMENT  
RESPONSE**





## ORGANIZED CRIME AND PEOPLE SMUGGLING

The world finds itself in the midst of a humanitarian and security crisis, with migrants fleeing from conflicts and dire economic circumstances in search of a better, more secure life. Organized criminal groups are taking advantage of the desperation of these people, demanding large sums of money as payment for smuggling them across borders, usually with little concern for their welfare.

The illicit earnings generated from people smuggling are often subsequently channeled into other forms of serious transnational crime, hindering efforts to bring stability to some of the world's most volatile regions.

Urgent and collective action is required to meet this crisis, which has far-reaching implications. Combating the organized criminal groups behind migrant smuggling requires a coordinated, flexible and global strategy.

The role of law enforcement is critical to identifying and apprehending those who organize and make a profit from migrant smuggling. With its international network of 190 member countries supported by a broad range of tools, services and expertise, INTERPOL is ideally placed to lead and coordinate the global law enforcement response to this escalating challenge.

## INTERPOL'S STRATEGY

INTERPOL's strategy for countering migrant smuggling sets out a comprehensive programme comprising six pillars, designed to be flexible and responsive whilst incrementally building police capacity in order to deliver sustainable outcomes.

An immediate operational response is complemented by long-term investigative support, extensive training and technical assistance for police in affected countries, particularly in countries of source and transit. The strategy will be implemented over a five-year period.

The aim is to equip member countries in the regions most affected by migrant smuggling with the tools, skills and operational know-how to disrupt the criminal networks responsible, whilst enhancing policing resilience to future threats.

## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

INTERPOL will align its initiatives so they are complementary to those taken by other international players and will work closely with key institutions in source and transit countries, as well as destination countries. These include European Union institutions such as Europol and Frontex, as well as the Arab Interior Ministers Council, the African Union and the regional African Police Chiefs' Associations.

## OPERATIONAL AND INVESTIGATIVE SUPPORT

A dedicated operational and investigative team has been established to provide immediate support and gather actionable intelligence. Coordinated centrally from the General Secretariat, this team combines the expertise of INTERPOL's Regional Bureaus, National Central Bureaus and its Specialized Operational Network against Migrant Smuggling (ISON), a network of member countries which was established to leverage intelligence gathering and information sharing in the affected regions.

This operational framework allows for the centralized exchange of information and the deployment of specialized assistance to assist member countries in gathering and analyzing information on the ground, so they can investigate, identify and locate the criminals behind the smuggling networks, and take appropriate action.

The model is designed to be scalable and flexible. Where required, specialist operational support services can be deployed to emerging hotspots in the event of a crisis, to gather information, provide forensic support and assist local authorities as needed.

## ENHANCED NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Ahead of the implementation of the training, technical and operational capacity building components, a thorough assessment of existing needs will be performed. This approach will enable INTERPOL to provide a tailored and sustainable programme adapted to the unique situation in each affected country.

This involves studying the feasibility of extending connectivity I-24/7, INTERPOL's secure global police communications system, to key remote border sites, whilst pinpointing acute training and operational needs.

In parallel, INTERPOL will engage key officials and stakeholders in each country to ensure strong high-level support for subsequent programme activities.

## TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

For INTERPOL's Regional Bureaus and National Central Bureaus to best facilitate the exchange of information needed to disrupt migrant smuggling networks, they need up-to-date equipment so they can consult the Organization's range of databases and tools effectively. INTERPOL will review the technical infrastructure in each affected country, and carry out modernization upgrades where necessary.

When possible and practical, INTERPOL's I-24/7 secure communications system will be extended to targeted border crossing points to allow frontline law enforcement officers timely access to critical police information on stolen passports, wanted persons and more.

Additional equipment to support frontline officers with their operations and investigations – such as cameras, fingerprint scanners and other forensic devices – will also be delivered to member countries which could benefit the most from such support.



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## CAPACITY BUILDING

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Following a thorough assessment of existing capacity, dedicated training sessions will be delivered to build up the skills and knowledge of police in member countries, to enable them to use INTERPOL's tools and services more effectively to combat migrant smuggling. Based on identified needs, tailored training programmes will incorporate use of INTERPOL's notices system, intelligence gathering mechanisms, the use of INTERPOL's criminal databases and criminal analysis techniques.

Members of the ISON network will take part in a certification programme, which will enable them to deliver training sessions to their national colleagues. To enhance sustainability, they will work with training experts to produce and deliver a course which responds to the specific threats and challenges faced by their country, and they will share the curriculum with national training authorities.

## POLICING OPERATIONS

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A number of policing operations will be carried out with member countries, which will follow proven INTERPOL models for operations. These will include operations to target fugitives wanted for people smuggling crimes, intelligence-driven operations, regionally-coordinated operations within national jurisdictions, and border operations using INTERPOL's STOP model (Smuggling Training and Operations Programme).

These operations will support member countries in streamlining their skills on the use of INTERPOL tools and services and the sharing of information and intelligence.

## EVALUATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

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As the fight against migrant smuggling appears poised to remain an ongoing challenge for law enforcement globally, it will be critical to evaluate the outcomes of these activities to ensure they are sustainable in the long term.

This will be done through evaluation workshops with key stakeholders from target countries and international organizations, assessments of how effectively training skills have been put into practice, visits to relevant regional and national bureaus, and analysis of the use of INTERPOL's targeted databases.

## ABOUT INTERPOL

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INTERPOL is the world's largest international police organization, with 190 member countries. Our role is to enable police around the world to work together to make the world a safer place. Our high-tech infrastructure of technical and operational support helps meet the growing challenges of fighting crime in the 21st century.

Only through international cooperation can police hope to tackle today's criminals. We work to ensure that police around the world can instantly share and access the relevant data necessary to assist their investigations through secure communications channels. We facilitate police cooperation even where diplomatic relations do not exist between particular countries, in line with INTERPOL's objective of political neutrality.

The targeted training, expert investigative support and global networks offered by INTERPOL help police on the ground to coordinate their efforts to make the world a safer place.

### Contact:

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For more information, contact INTERPOL's Vulnerable Communities unit at the General Secretariat. [webHTCE@interpol.int](mailto:webHTCE@interpol.int)



## INTERPOL

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INTERPOL General Secretariat  
200 quai Charles de Gaulle  
69006 Lyon  
France  
Tel.: +33 4 72 44 70 00



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