



# Remarks

by

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INTERPOL Secretary General

## 8th International Fingerprints Symposium

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Your Excellency, Mr. Dorin RECEAN, Minister of Internal Affairs, Republic of Moldova,

Mr. Fredolin LECARI, Head of International Police Cooperation and Head of INTERPOL National Central Bureau, Moldova,

Dr. Elizabeth HEIDER, Founder and Analytical Lead at Capability Geodesics LLC,

Mr. Patrick GROTHOR, Staff Scientist, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST; United States Department of Commerce),

Dr. Itiel DROR, Principal Consultant and Researcher at Cognitive Consultants International Ltd,

Colleagues from Law Enforcement Agencies and International Organizations,

Representatives of Private Sector Firms,

Colleagues from INTERPOL, here at INTERPOL Lyon and in our regional bureaus and offices around the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

At the onset, through what I believe will be a very fruitful symposium ahead, I would like to ask you to please treat the INTERPOL General Secretariat as your home for as long as you are here.

I consider it an honor to open this 8th International Fingerprints Symposium in the presence of His Excellency, Moldova's Minister of Internal Affairs. This year, 2014, also coincides with Moldova's 20 years' celebration of membership in INTERPOL.

It is indeed a year of extreme historical importance, both for international police cooperation and in the evolution of fingerprint identification techniques as we know them today.

Many of you in this room would have heard of Alphonse BERTILLON, a French national who invented the use of human measurement "to create a record of unique identifiers" and who introduced the compiling of photographs into "mug shots" which assisted police in

identifying criminals and in solving crimes. 2014 marks 100 years since Mr. BERTILLON passed away but his contributions will never be forgotten -- certainly not in this room. We know that the search for unique identifiers led to the discovery of and use of fingerprints as one of the most critical ways in which law enforcement links individuals to crimes.

And then, 2014 also marks a 100 years since the very idea of international police cooperation was born at a meeting of police and judicial officials approximately 500 kilometers south from here in Monaco.

To commemorate this historic occasion, INTERPOL is set to launch tomorrow, 5 June, its global campaign titled 'Turn Back Crime' in Paris and around the world. INTERPOL's Turn Back Crime campaign is aimed at bringing together law enforcement, the private sector and the public – to work together in turning back crime and in helping humankind get closer to INTERPOL's vision of a safer world.

The Turn Back Crime campaign is not limited to any one crime area, law enforcement methodology or region. It is an all-encompassing endeavor, spreading awareness across the globe and linking citizens worldwide in the fight against crime, through both traditional as well as innovative ways. It will ask anyone and everyone to think of ways in which they and we can prevent or fight crime.

During your registration each of you should have received a Turn Back Crime bracelet such as the one I am wearing. We would appreciate your wearing your bracelet during this conference as a sign of solidarity with INTERPOL's campaign.

Over the last 100 years through which police bodies have been cooperating internationally to Turn Back Crime through innovation, there is probably no better subject area where this cooperation and innovation has occurred – than in the identification of criminals.

It is truly a matter of great significance and pride for us that over 140 delegates from 63 INTERPOL member countries are participating in this 8th International Fingerprints Symposium.

We at INTERPOL had long ago understood how critically important fingerprint records are for law enforcement in our member countries at the national, and international levels. When I first joined INTERPOL in 2000, we had just put in place our AFIS database to bring about standardized processes for international police cooperation. And, thanks to our strong collaboration with partners such as Safran Morpho we have been able to benefit from the constant innovations and technological advancements occurring in the field of fingerprint comparisons.

Today, our AFIS database contains over 196,000 fingerprints and more than 8,400 crime scene marks. Here I must emphasize that our fingerprint and crime scene mark databases are linked to ongoing international investigations. They are not databases that exist for recordkeeping; they exist to help identify criminals and solve crimes. Last year, they were searched over 28,500 times resulting in more than 1,200 hits.

Let me give you just one example of the power behind such a hit.

In June last year, the INTERPOL fingerprints database was consulted as a result of a Red Notice – otherwise known as a Wanted Person’s Notice – issued at the request of one of our European member countries. Thanks to the fingerprints received and stored from a member country in the Americas – there was a match – a hit, finally leading to the suspected murderer and drug dealer being arrested by an INTERPOL member country in a third continent – Africa.

Your Excellency,

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,

I speak but of one of the many cases in INTERPOL’s and our member countries’ daily efforts to Turn Back Crime.

Here is how the events of this case unfolded:

On 11 June 2013, almost one year ago, INTERPOL issued a Red Notice at the request of the United Kingdom, seeking the arrest of a suspect named “ALI HUSSEIN MOHAMED”. The charges were serious: murder linked to a rivalry within organized crime and drugs groups.

INTERPOL’s fingerprints team, led by Mr. Mark BRANCHFLOWER, is quick to respond. We consult our databases – and on 13 June 2013 there is a match – a hit. It is with a set of fingerprints submitted by Canada in 2012. Those fingerprints were under a different identity: “Ali Bashi MOHAMED.” INTERPOL’s National Central Bureau (NCB), Ottawa had entered his fingerprint records into our AFIS database in 2012 for suspicion of trafficking in drugs and for illegal immigration in Canada.

Consequently, we knew that the same person was being investigated for two sets of serious crimes by law enforcement on two different continents, but under two different identities.

On 14 June 2013, the very next day after the match, INTERPOL’s National Central Bureau in Nairobi, Kenya confirms that the murder and drug trafficking suspect has been located, identified and arrested in Kenya – based, in large part, on fingerprint comparisons.

Imagine if Canada had not involved INTERPOL in its investigation in 2012, or if the UK had not submitted the fingerprints of its murder suspect as part of its request of INTERPOL to issue a Red (Wanted Person’s) Notice in 2013 – or if INTERPOL’s fingerprints AFIS database did not exist in the first place to make such comparisons. This wanted murderer, would then have been able to roam freely in Kenya or in any one of your countries simply by using false or fraudulent identity documents.

Law enforcement is often called upon not only to solve crimes, but also to help identify or locate missing persons. We were, for example, an integral part of the effort to identify the remains of persons following the Tsunami in southeast Asia and capsized ferries in the Philippines. In these cases families are often desperately in search of knowing what happened to and finding their loved ones. It helps to bring them closure.

In December 2013, came the closure for one such family in Colombia, when INTERPOL issued a Yellow Notice at the request of NCB Bogota for a young man, 33 year old Juan Carlos

VILLAMILAGUDELO. His fingerprints were identified with those sent on 1 October 2013 by NCB Panama – for a Black Notice request, issued by INTERPOL for an unidentified dead body.

Once again, a simple fingerprint check via INTERPOL was behind helping a family to get a sense of closure.

The point I make here is very straightforward. In an interconnected world where people cross borders so easily, the need for police to cooperate across borders – especially in sharing fingerprint data – is very high.

This sentiment was reinforced just five years ago at INTERPOL's General Assembly in Singapore, when a resolution was adopted to "encourage the development of standard operating procedures" by our member countries to "systematically share and update Fingerprints."

But the thought and the deep conviction supporting this resolution was not new. It has been deeply rooted in the very conscience of international police cooperation since the very beginning. At the First International Criminal Police Congress held at Monaco in 1914, "the need to know biological features of professional criminals" was emphasized. Under one of the "12 wishes" that emerged from that Congress was the need for "an international identification file" and "a classification system for such files."

Biometric technology in criminal investigations has evolved much since then, but the need for sophisticated fingerprint recordkeeping and systematic comparisons of these records remains as strong as ever.

Since last year, INTERPOL's I-24/7 global communications system can now be used directly by our member countries for searching fingerprint records through our AFIS gateway interface. Next is the ability for records either to be stored in our database or compared through this gateway interface. My colleagues from INTERPOL's fingerprint unit shall elaborate on it in detail later.

But, that is not all.

The connection of mobile biometric devices also forms part of INTERPOL's strategy to maximize the use of information sharing for biometrics. We have already successfully used two such mobile devices during an INTERPOL Major Events Support Team (IMEST) that we deployed recently in Myanmar during the South East Asian (SEA) Games. In addition, the INTERPOL Integrated Border Management Task Force (IBMTF) successfully used these mobile devices in INTERPOL operations in Kenya (MWEWE, November 2013) and Ecuador (FORTALEZA, March 2014).

Come 2016, have the ambitious goal of combining our fingerprints database with Facial Recognition.

I am sure that for an audience with skilled experts from this field such as yourselves, it is obvious that the near future is likely to witness the application of biometrics in services ranging from airport security, online banking and work place issues to social and medical domains. Our 30 speakers from law enforcement agencies and the private sector will speak in depth on what the future holds for all of us.

INTERPOL sees it is to be a future where the demand for our services is set only to grow. And we are ready.

Ready to integrate new technologies with our systems as responsiveness and faster turnaround become increasingly key to Turning Back Crime in the 21st century.

Innovation is in the DNA of INTERPOL. We will open the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation this September in Singapore. It will focus on cybercrime and capacity building and training.

INTERPOL believes, however, that innovation and new technology cannot be developed effectively without building on solid, coherent systems already in place. And thus, to maximize the gain for criminal investigations, INTERPOL continues to request that the recording of fingerprints systematically follows specified international standards.

So that when crime strikes anywhere in the world – INTERPOL and its member countries will be able to link it back to the perpetrators and have the evidence of such linkage be admissible in court.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues:

This is the fifth time I am participating in this bi-annual International Fingerprints Symposium as INTERPOL Secretary General – and it will be so for the last time. Next year, I will conclude my mandate as your Secretary General. Fifteen years will have gone by so quickly by then.

But I do not want to leave any of you on a sad note. So let me share with you a video that has been prepared to announce that the internationally renowned film star and martial artist, Mr. Jackie CHAN, has been named as the first Ambassador of INTERPOL's Turn Back Crime campaign.

(PLAY THE VIDEO)

You heard Jackie Chan say:

*“That In the movies, (he) always takes down all the criminals...*

*He always wins.*

*But in the real life, it's totally different.”*

That is where INTERPOL and you come in.

INTERPOL's Turn Back Crime initiative attempts to make it possible to “take down” criminals and prevent all forms of crime in the real world through a collective effort that links law enforcement, private sector entities and the public.

Through “Turn Back Crime”, we don't tell anyone how they should do it. We ask them to be creative and innovative and tell us how we can do it...together.

INTERPOL hopes you will also spread the message of our Turn Back Crime campaign when you return home to your respective home countries.

Thank you.