



Opening Address

by

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INTERPOL Secretary General

3rd INTERPOL Global Trafficking in Human Beings Conference

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Mr Salah Khamis AL JUNAIBI, Director of Institutional Communication and International Cooperation Bureau, Abu Dhabi Judicial Department;

Mr Romulus UNGUREANU, Chair of the INTERPOL Human Trafficking Task Force;

Mr Nicolas LE COZ, President of Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), of the Council of Europe;

Representatives from international organizations;

Participants from the private sector;

Distinguished guests;

Dear INTERPOL colleagues;

Good afternoon. Bonjour. Buenas tardes. A Salaam Alekoum.

As you know, after assuming office, this is the very first INTERPOL conference I have the opportunity to open. Ladies and gentlemen, it is my honour, as Secretary General, to welcome you all to INTERPOL's General Secretariat. I truly hope your experience here will be an enriching one.

The unique threat this crime area poses, its simply unbearable human cost and its very existence even in the 21st century, make it all the more critical for me to address this conference. Regardless of our nationalities, professions or affiliations, we can only look at this crime as an unacceptable transformation of human lives into commodities.

The threat is grave, and the challenges – many. We can only succeed in overcoming them by focusing on key issues for a concerted response.

The 3rd INTERPOL Global Trafficking in Human Beings conference intends to bring more focus on the perils of forced labour worldwide. Estimates suggest that about 21 million people are victimized, out of which 4.5 million are subjected to forced sexual exploitation.

Forced labour generates about USD 150 billion in illegal profits per year. Where and how this money flows, remains yet another concerning area for introspection.

INTERPOL also continues to identify new patterns. Transnational fisheries crime poses a threat not only to the environment, but also presents a dangerous avenue for forced labour. This is being introduced as a new topic at this conference. Fishing vessels at sea allow conditions for exploitation of workers, letting heinous crimes be committed, often going unreported. To pursue this dimension, INTERPOL's Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation unit is working along with our Environmental Security unit.

Online child sexual exploitation continues to be amongst INTERPOL's key areas for concern. Focus must be on how advertisements on child sexual prostitution continue to find their way on the Internet, while online sharing of images depicting children's sexual abuse is still rampant.

Finally, we need to remind ourselves where the endgame in any law enforcement operation lies. The need for far more convictions in cases of human trafficking cannot be over emphasized. Human trafficking simply must not be perceived as "low risk vs. high profit". Out of the "three P's" to combat it – Prevention, Protection and Prosecution – many resources and much focus have been given to the first two. While they are equally significant, INTERPOL feels the third P, 'Prosecution' merits more attention. With its tools and services, INTERPOL can contribute substantially to supporting transnational prosecutions.

Undoubtedly, the complexities this crime area presents are increasingly diverse and dynamic.

And therefore, INTERPOL constantly strives to improve its range of tools and services – to strike at the very heart of criminal activity.

Since 2009, INTERPOL's Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation unit has undertaken six operations in West Africa – targeting illegal gold mines and trades in cotton, cocoa and fisheries. Through these operations, we have been successful in saving almost 900 victims.

Let me share some operational results since the last INTERPOL Global Trafficking in Human Beings conference, held in November 2013:

- In February 2014, INTERPOL's Operation NAWA was conducted in Côte d'Ivoire with the assistance of 170 law enforcement officers. More than 75 children were rescued.
- Over May-June, Operation Spartacus II was conducted by INTERPOL's Regional Bureau in Buenos Aires, and approximately 650 victims were rescued in this operation that involved nine countries.

- Recently, more than 400 victims were rescued during Operation Libertad II, conducted by INTERPOL's Regional Bureau in San Salvador.
- In June, Bangladeshi authorities arrested three persons in connection with the sexual abuse of underage boys and the online selling of their pictures worldwide. It was an investigation that first began in 2010 in Australia, and was supported by INTERPOL.

Our operational work is complemented with INTERPOL databases. Most of you are familiar with our International Child Sexual Exploitation Database, or "ICSE". Through it, INTERPOL helps law enforcement agencies worldwide to identify abused victims and the offenders. With the cooperation of more than 45 countries presently, by now the ISCE has made the identification of over 5,400 victims and more than 2,700 offenders possible.

Another one of INTERPOL's time-tested tools, Notices remain a cornerstone of international police cooperation – trafficking in human beings makes no exception.

In January this year, INTERPOL issued Purple Notices at the request of South Africa, for both illegal fishing and for crew abuse under inhumane conditions aboard two vessels in the sea. INTERPOL Purple Notices are meant to provide alerts on *modi operandi*, objects, devices and concealment methods used by criminals.

Just about a week ago, in Monaco, INTERPOL's General Assembly voted to support a resolution encouraging member countries *"to seek the publication of green notices and diffusions in order to notify destination countries about travelling child sex offenders"*. A Green notice is issued for a person considered to be a possible threat to public safety. This can now be done with the aim of discouraging trafficking of children within destination countries – where potential/high-risk offenders might be travelling.

Lastly, I must reiterate that as trends within crime areas evolve, so should the way we respond. For doing so, training sessions prove valuable in exchange of best practices and experiences amongst experts.

For example, preceding this conference, about 25 police officers, prosecutors and judges from the United Arab Emirates have over the last two days participated in the 2nd INTERPOL Specialized Training on Trafficking in Human Beings.

Such exchange is vital for this fight against trafficking in human beings. Today in this room, your very presence here, from across multiple sectors – law enforcement, public sector, private firms, non-governmental organizations, international organizations – indicates how critical it is for global law enforcement to intensify its response to this crime. And to do so jointly with all who can help contain this crime.

Before I conclude, let me express our gratitude to the sponsors of this event. Consecutively for the second time, the INTERPOL Global Trafficking in Human Beings conference is being hosted by funding from the United Arab Emirates authorities. We would like to thank:

His Highness Sheikh Mansoor bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Deputy Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, Minister of Presidential Affairs, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department;
and His Excellency Counsel Yousef Al Ebri, Undersecretary of the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department;
for their generosity and support to INTERPOL and international police cooperation.

I am also grateful for the participation of Mr. Nicolas Le Coz, President of Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), of the Council of Europe. We view our cooperation as being extremely beneficial, particularly in the cyber space, and we look forward to developing even more synergy in the future.

Next, please allow me to recognize Mr Michael Moran, Assistant Director, Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation unit, and his team, for what INTERPOL has achieved over the years in this field, and for the successes which will stem from lessons learned and the alliances forged at this very conference.

From this team, I would like to also make a special mention of a very dedicated officer. Someone who had joined the police academy in his home country, Denmark, back in 1987, he has been actively involved in numerous initiatives for tackling Human Trafficking both before and after joining INTERPOL in 2011. I invite on stage Mr Jesper Lund.

In conclusion, on a personal note, back in the year 2004, then with the German Federal Criminal Police, BKA, I had witnessed a case that exemplified what international police cooperation can bring about.

Under that operation, termed VICO, authorities in Thailand were eventually able to arrest an individual on charges of child sexual abuse (in 2007). This was made possible thanks to INTERPOL channels, and to the efforts of my German colleagues who had worked day and night to un-swirl digital images, helping uncover his true identity.

It was the very moment from when my interest in working with INTERPOL had arisen. And today, in opening this conference as INTERPOL Secretary General, I know we have a lot more work ahead of us to truly fight the evil of human trafficking.

Together.

I wish you a very successful conference.

Thank You; Merci; Gracias; Shukran.