

## The INTERPOL–United Nations Ministerial Meeting

Opening speech by [Ronald K. Noble](#), INTERPOL Secretary General  
Singapore – 11 October 2009

*Mr Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs,  
Mr Chairman,  
Mr President,  
Mr Under Secretary General  
Honourable Ministers,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps  
Chiefs of Police,  
Esteemed members of INTERPOL's Executive Committee,  
Heads of Delegations,  
Heads of National Central Bureaus,  
Dear colleagues from the INTERPOL General Secretariat and Regional  
Bureaus,  
Delegates,  
Special guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,*



Organized criminal activities in countries recovering from conflicts are an obstacle to sustainable peace in these countries and a threat to security worldwide, INTERPOL Secretary General Ronald K. Noble told delegates.

Welcome to this the first-ever INTERPOL-United Nations Ministerial Meeting.

In behalf of INTERPOL, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to our gracious Singaporean hosts for their outstanding hospitality and organization.

[The video that you just saw](#) shows the INTERPOL of the 21st Century, an innovative organization that assists police in its member countries face the security challenges of today.

This impressive gathering is the result of the growing awareness of the threat posed to global security by countries recovering from conflicts.

Conflicts first and foremost affect the people living in the immediate areas. But in today's globalized and interconnected world, the ill effects of conflicts easily spill over to neighbouring countries; destabilize entire regions and even threaten global security. Furthermore, conflict areas can become havens for terrorists; open new routes for illegal traffickers of all kinds and fund the activities of organized crime.

INTERPOL recognizes that the concern about such conflict areas should and must be truly global.

In its latest Crisis Watch bulletin, the NGO International Crisis Group lists no fewer than 70 situations of current or potential conflicts around the world, leaving no single region immune.

The UN has historically been called upon to help bring peace to conflict areas. In particular, UN peacekeepers play a critical role in the recovery of countries emerging from conflicts. UN peacekeepers perform tasks that can be broken down into two major categories: maintaining peace and building peace.

Maintaining and building peace are indeed two distinct steps on the way to sustainable peace.

When we think of maintaining peace, we think of a military-like role and we think of peace as the ending of hostilities. Maintaining peace essentially means separating conflicting parties by occupying a buffer area. But when we think of building peace, we think of a civil-police-like role. We think of populations living under the rule of law where peacekeepers are required to perform police like functions within the community that is being protected. Increasingly, UN peacekeepers are being asked to perform police-like functions.

This ministerial conference is thus being held in recognition that UN peacekeepers throughout the world performing civilian police functions will need the help of ministries of interior and justice of INTERPOL member countries and of INTERPOL itself as they go about combating crime locally and transnationally.

Police play a central role in building peace in countries recovering from conflicts by doing just the same thing that they do in any one of your countries — by combating crime locally and transnationally.

We all know that serious and organized crime aggravates conflicts. And countries recovering from conflicts, as areas with little or no rule of law, are both vulnerable and conducive to crime.

On the one hand, organized international criminal activities such as drug, arms and human trafficking fuel wars by providing belligerents with the resources to finance their expensive illegal activities.

Consider the case of Afghanistan. There is clear and convincing evidence that the money generated by heroin trafficking, estimated at several billions of dollars, is largely funding the Taliban insurgency and is an important factor in the Taliban's resilience.

On the other hand, terrorists and organized criminals take advantage of the absence of law and exploit countries with weak institutions as safe havens for their criminal activities, promoting radicalizing individuals, feeding corruption, engendering further instability, and threatening well beyond that country's borders.

This is precisely the case in a number of West African countries that have become transit points on the cocaine route from South America to Europe.

Either way, organized criminal activities in countries recovering from conflicts are an obstacle to sustainable peace in these countries and a threat to security worldwide.

That is why countries recovering from conflicts need basic but critical police functions to be performed, such as securing borders, enforcing customs and immigration laws and combating organized crime.

By performing these missions, police peacekeepers often provide the necessary bridge from security and stability operations to sustainable security, prosperity and development.

Distinguished Ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

The reason why INTERPOL and the United Nations have convened this important meeting is because our organizations share the conviction that our individual and collective security requires from the international community to recognize and support the crucial role played by police peacekeepers in preserving peace worldwide.

The participation here today of ministers representing more than 60 countries and of police delegations from more than 150 countries is a true testament to the importance of police peacekeeping for global security.

But more importantly, the exceptional presence in one single place of both political decision-makers responsible for police and leaders of the law enforcement community provides us with a unique opportunity to send a strong political message that the security challenges that we face compels the international community to augment the role and capacity of police in peacekeeping operations worldwide, and in particular in countries recovering from conflicts.

INTERPOL and the United Nations are launching today a new partnership for that very purpose. The Organization I have the honour to lead is today capable of bringing considerable added value and field impact to UN police peacekeepers.

In the framework of our partnership with the UN, INTERPOL will be able to provide deployed police peacekeepers with:

- access to the world's only secure global police communications system;
- access to global police databases on a variety of crime-related information, including names of criminals, fingerprints, DNA profiles, stolen passports, and stolen vehicles;
- specialized investigative support in key crime areas, including fugitives, drugs, terrorism, trafficking in human beings and corruption;

and...

- regional support through INTERPOL's network of Regional Bureaus in Southeast Asia, Central and South America, and Africa.

INTERPOL's unique global police channels will also help the United Nations identify:

- member countries willing to second more police officers to the field;
- international experts that can bring their skills to support specific investigations;

and...

- specialized police trainers to help build the capacity of police in host countries.

INTERPOL's co-operation with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo — or UNMIK — is a good example of the added value that INTERPOL can bring to UN peacekeeping.

Co-operation with the UNMIK started in 2002 when INTERPOL provided direct access to its secure global police communications system and allowed UNMIK to request the publication of color-coded INTERPOL notices.

Access to INTERPOL's global database enabled UNMIK, in the last three years only, to conduct:

- more than 3,500 searches in INTERPOL's Nominal database, resulting in more than 130 hits;
- more than 180,000 searches in INTERPOL's Stolen Motor Vehicle database, resulting in more than 700 hits.
- over 70 searches in INTERPOL's Stolen and Lost Travel Document database, which generated several hits on stolen passports from countries ranging from Bosnia & Herzegovina to Colombia and the UK.

UNMIK also requested the publication of more than 45 INTERPOL Red Notices seeking the arrest of individuals with a view to extradition, with at least 12 of them resulting in the arrest and extradition of suspects.

Finally, international police investigations, with the support of INTERPOL, also led to the location of two fugitives in the United Kingdom and to the identification of a suspect captured by UNMIK thanks to fingerprints recorded in INTERPOL's databases by the Czech Republic.

These operational results clearly demonstrate how the global police data-sharing and investigative support services developed by INTERPOL efficiently assist police peacekeepers in post-conflict areas and contribute to the restoration of the rule of law.

UNMIK is just one of many examples of fruitful co-operation between INTERPOL and the United Nations.

In fact, the partnership that we are launching today comes after a long history of co-operation between our two organizations, a close relationship that was reinforced in 2004 with the creation of an INTERPOL Office at the UN headquarters in New York. This Office ensures that our two organizations develop the most effective synergies in fighting transnational organized crime and terrorism.

Distinguished Ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

The partnership that INTERPOL and the United Nations are launching today will only bear fruit if it is a partnership that involves the entire international community.

Through your presence and support, we have a unique opportunity to send a strong signal that police play a critical role in our common security through their contribution to building peace in countries recovering from conflicts.

In other words, when police perform classic policing tasks in the framework of UN peacekeeping missions, they enhance security not only in the host country, but also in every one of our countries.

The Outcome Declaration that will be proposed to you for your adoption endorses this vision and expresses our commitment to it. I would like to stress that this Declaration is not an INTERPOL-UN document but a collective one in which all countries were invited to provide their input, as all countries have a stake in seeing peacekeeping foster sustainable peace worldwide.

Before I leave the podium, I ask all of you to join me in paying tribute to the 11 Uruguayan and Jordanian UN peacekeepers who lost their lives tragically in a plane crash two days ago in the function of their peacekeeping duties in Haiti. The police community which INTERPOL represents is all too familiar with the ultimate price paid by these and other UN peacekeepers to keep us all safe.

Let me also express my sincerest condolences to the Minister of Interior of Pakistan following the treacherous terrorist attack against its military headquarters just a little more than 24 hours ago.

Let us keep a minute of silence for these brave peacekeepers and others who have paid the ultimate price to keep others safe.

Thank you.

So, Dear Ministers, thank you again for your participation in this historic conference. With your support and leadership, we will be able to find more police peacekeepers for the UN; to enhance their training and to provide them with additional tools and services from INTERPOL.

We do all of this with one overriding goal in mind — to increase the likelihood that their difficult missions will be successful and thereby move us all closer to a sustainable and lasting peace.

Thank you very much.