

4th INTERPOL Conference on International Fugitives

Lyon, (France) 20 November 2007

Welcome Remarks by INTERPOL Secretary General [Ronald K. Noble](#)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of INTERPOL, I would like to welcome you to this 4th International [Fugitive](#) Conference here at the INTERPOL General Secretariat. We are honored and privileged to host top experts and specialists in fugitive investigations from Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia.

This year's conference will focus on new developments in technology and communication and how they can help police in bringing fugitive criminals and terrorists into the fold of the law.

The act of apprehending a fugitive is symbolic of an effective criminal justice system. It reaffirms the trust the public has in the justice system. It helps to keep our societies more secure as fugitives pose undeniable risks to the safety of our citizens. For all these reasons, bringing them to justice has therefore always been a priority for law enforcers and police worldwide.

For INTERPOL, the focus on apprehending international fugitives has been with us since the beginning. Indeed, when Prince Albert I of Monaco invited police officials from 23 countries for the first-ever International Criminal Police Congress in Monaco in 1914 (93 years ago), one of the major topics discussed was about bringing fugitives to justice. In the United States of America, the U.S Marshals Service is the oldest U.S. federal law enforcement agency created in 1789 to apprehend dangerous fugitives.

In 1924, INTERPOL published the first notice on a wanted person in its official international police magazine – the "Internationale Offentliche Sicherheit".

Even back then, INTERPOL's global reach could be seen. That first [NOTICE](#) was for a French national wanted for arrest by the New York City Police Department for theft with violence. This wanted person notice was published in French and German; it included the suspect's picture, his physical description, and the offences committed by him.

It became the forerunner of the present-day INTERPOL [Red Notices](#) that is now widely used by our [186 member countries](#) to seek the arrest or provisional arrest of a wanted person with a view to extradition based on an arrest warrant.

The basic elements for identifying fugitives have the same foundation in 2007 that they had way back in 1924. Police still need to know what fugitives look like; what names they use; date(s) of birth; physical description; and any other element(s) that could help to identify the person being sought for arrest. Advances in science and technology have added fingerprints and DNA profiles as basic elements for identifying fugitives in 2007.

While in 1924, a police magazine was used to inform police worldwide about who was wanted and for what crimes, now in 2007 we use INTERPOL's secure police communications system called [I-24/7](#); we use the

public Internet; we use Most Wanted lists at the national level published on police websites, at airports and post offices; and we use the media. In addition, the media has created television programs at the national level to alert the public as to dangerous criminals on the loose and to seek the public's help in apprehending them.

Our profession requires never-ending innovation to identify, to locate and to apprehend fugitives worldwide. Wanted criminals always take advantage of advances in technology to run faster; they take advantage of the increasingly integrated world to hide themselves wherever they wish worldwide; and they benefit from a myriad of communications options to remain up-to-date to our efforts. Finally, they benefit from a global financial network that allows money to be sent anywhere with the speed of light.

We in law enforcement especially here at INTERPOL have been doing our best to use technology and advances in sciences to help your efforts to apprehend fugitives. In 2002, we moved from paper to electronic Notices and reduced the time that it took for us to get you completed Notices from months to seconds. In 2003, we began our efforts to build a secure global police communications system (called I-24/7) that connected all of our member countries; so that fugitives would have no place to escape INTERPOL's global dragnet; we completed this effort in 2007.

Just last week, we had a [conference on DNA](#) that concluded with recommendations that member countries with unsolved crimes or member countries that were investigating non-nationals should develop standard operating procedures to consult [INTERPOL's databases](#) in order to help identify, locate, or apprehend international fugitives. But tracking fugitives today is much more challenging than twenty or fifty years ago.

Our belief is that the more information that INTERPOL member countries give one another about fugitives, the safer all INTERPOL member countries would be.

As of today, there are more than 13,500 valid Red Notices in circulation. The number of Red Notices issued on an annual basis has more than doubled between 2000 and 2006 (from 1,077 issued Red Notices in 2000 to 2,804 in 2006). For the same period, the number of arrests facilitated through INTERPOL channels increased from 534 to 4,259. This shows that the system that we have been improving together works!

But for INTERPOL and its member countries, this is not enough.

If we want to be steps ahead of the modern-day fugitive, we have to transform ourselves from a passive Organization into an active fugitive-hunting Organization of the 21st Century. This is why we created the Fugitive Investigative Support (FIS) Team at the General Secretariat to assist member countries in locating and arresting international criminals.

Likewise, we have also established the [Command and Co-ordination Centre](#) (CCC) to provide 24/7 support to police worldwide. Our CCC is proactive; it monitors the open media to learn of escaped criminals in 43 countries. Thereafter, we issued special alerts or Red Notices to help you keep your citizens safe.

Through these initiatives, INTERPOL has been able to provide direct assistance to its member countries on many occasions.

In June of this year, a [Rwandan man wanted for genocide](#) and crimes against humanity in connection with the 1994 Rwandan genocide was arrested by French police at Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris. This only occurred thanks to intense international co-ordination between law enforcement and Ministries of Justice on three continents and INTERPOL. The suspect had traveled from France to the US in possession of a valid French passport that he had hoped to use to enter the US. However, a check by immigration officials from the US Department of Homeland Security against INTERPOL's database of internationally wanted persons revealed that the man was wanted internationally.

As a result, the US was able to prevent his entry and placed him on a flight back to France. Through timely cooperation between INTERPOL's National Central Bureaus in the US, France and Rwanda, INTERPOL's Fugitive Investigative Support and Command and Co-ordination Centre, the genocide suspect was arrested as soon as he set foot on French soil.

Likewise, just last month, our Fugitive Investigative Support Team also assisted the [International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda](#) (ICTR) and the French Ministries of Justice and the Interior in the arrest of another genocide suspect who was hiding in France. He was the third fugitive wanted by the ICTR to be caught in the country since July.

INTERPOL does not limit itself to the traditional law enforcement approach in locating and arresting suspects of very serious crimes, particularly [child sexual abuse](#). The sexual abuse of children, child pornography and pedophilia on the Internet has become a problem of international proportion. According to a [UNESCO](#) report, child victims of this serious crime face a traumatic future and a life of acute psychological disorders. Therefore, there is a need for all of us to make every possible effort to stop the sex offenders.

In an unprecedented move and with the approval and cooperation of our member countries, INTERPOL, launched an operation, codenamed [VICO](#), to seek help from the general public in identifying a serial child sex offender believed to be sexually abusing Asian children since 2002. The decision to seek the help of the public and the media was made after extensive global efforts to identify and locate the individual through INTERPOL's network of 186 [National Central Bureaus](#) and specialist units had not resulted in his identification and arrest.

Let me tell you briefly about Operation VICO and its success:

On 08 October 2007, INTERPOL made a public worldwide request for assistance in identifying a man photographed sexually abusing children in a series of images posted on the Internet.

On 9 October 2007, a day after INTERPOL made the worldwide appeal; the INTERPOL web site received 30 times hits more than normal and was visited by 400,000 people. INTERPOL's initiative was featured in more than 15,000 press articles worldwide and more than 300 messages from citizens worldwide were received by INTERPOL in response to the said request. From the information of five different sources from three continents, the suspected child abuser was identified as a man teaching English at a school in South Korea.

On 11 October 2007, (within three days after the appeal), INTERPOL, working with its 186 National Central Bureaus around the world, had established the suspect's name, nationality, date of birth, passport number, and current and previous places of work, including his recent picture, taken by Thai immigration authorities, when he arrived at Bangkok International Suvarnabhumi Airport (BKK) from Seoul, Korea on that day.

On 18 October 2007, an INTERPOL Red Notice was issued against the suspect following the issuance of a national arrest warrant by Thai authorities for alleged sexual abuse of a Thai boy.

On 19 October 2007, (only 10 days after INTERPOL launched the worldwide appeal) the suspect was located and arrested by the Royal Thai Police in Nakhon Ratchasima in the northeast region of Thailand.

In line with the VICO approach, we are also developing a webpage of wanted sex offenders on the INTERPOL Website to inform and involve both the public and the police on their manhunt.

INTERPOL will continue to exert all possible efforts to help our member countries bring serious crime offenders to justice. We will employ all possible means available to us to achieve this goal. We will assist our member countries in creating an 'International Fugitive Investigations Contact Points' within their National Central Bureaus. These contact points will deal with the international search requests and

promote the international co-operation and mutual assistance necessary for the location and apprehension of international Fugitives.

Operation VICO and the arrest of the Rwandan genocide suspects are but two of the many success stories on how co-operation between INTERPOL, its police partners in 186 member countries and even the general public can work together to bring international criminals to justice.

INTERPOL's initiatives in fugitive investigation are designed to enhance capabilities of police in arresting international fugitives.

Once in place and fully operational, they will help make international police operations in the 21st Century, like the VICO case and the case of the two (2) Rwandan genocide suspects, become the standard in all international fugitive investigations by our NCBs worldwide – timely, effective and efficient police work, supported by the latest state-of the art technology to protect our societies from dangerous fugitives.

I wish you a successful conference.