



INTERPOL

**CONTEMPORARY CRIMINAL THREATS
AND CHALLENGES TO POLICE
COOPERATION**

Presented By Hon. Cde Kembo

Mohadi (MP)

Minister of Home Affairs (Zimbabwe)

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GUIDELINES

CONTEMPORARY CRIMINAL THREATS AND CHALLENGES TO POLICE COOPERATION

Challenges to Police Cooperation

- Criminals and criminal enterprises no longer restrict their activities to the existing geopolitical boundaries.
- Due to globalization, It is now easier for criminals, terrorists and motivated offenders to leverage their illicit operations at a greater distance.
- These extensive distances provide both physical and legal protection for criminals while complicating law enforcement efforts to detect, disrupt and investigate transnational crimes.
- Although the need for international cooperation is apparent, bringing about successful cooperation is a very difficult process.
- This is because nations differ in the structure and procedures associated with their justice systems.
- Countries have different standards and rules on how their justice systems work. They also have varied political systems for creating and enforcing laws.

- There are varying levels of sophistication within their policing systems and differing capacities in funding national security operations. All these factors complicate developing international cooperation among nationals even where there is a predisposition to unite.
- Because law enforcement is one of the most visible and intrusive forms of the exercise of political sovereignty, countries have traditionally been reluctant to cooperate with other foreign law enforcement agencies. Fortunately this attitude is slowly changing with the growing understanding both of shared interest in combating organized crime and terrorism.
- One of the reasons affecting international police cooperation, particularly in Africa, is that the majority of countries are still to harmonize their domestic legislation with the international instruments.
- The Southern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization [SARPCCO], an organization of Police Chiefs in Southern Africa, has put ^{into} place various initiatives to enhance regional police cooperation after noting that the threat of transnational organized crime was not only real but devastating and hard for individual countries to detect and stop.
- Although Mutual Legal assistance Treaties [MLATs] are a positive step in advancing the guiding principles of bilateralism, their primary drawbacks as a tool of

international Police Cooperation are that they take time to negotiate.

Contemporary Criminal Threats

- It is a known fact that Law enforcement officials around the world have reported a significant increase in the range and scope of international criminal activities since the early 1990s.
- International criminal networks have taken advantage of the opportunities resulting from the revolutionary changes in the world politics, business, technology and communication.
- The end of the cold war ushered in the breakdown of political and economic barriers, not only in Europe but also around the World. This change opened the way for substantially increased trade movement of people and capital flows.
- These developments have allowed international criminals to expand their networks and increase their cooperation in illicit activities and financial transactions.
- Economic and trade –liberalization has remarkably enhanced economic interdependence amongst countries.
- Criminals have taken advantage of the transitioning and more open economies to establish front companies and quasi-legitimate businesses that facilitate smuggling,

money laundering, financial frauds, intellectual property crime and other illicit ventures.

Technological Advances

- Through the use of computers, international criminals have an unprecedented capability to obtain, process protect information and side step law enforcement investigations.
- They use the interactive capabilities of advanced computers and telecommunication system to market drugs and other illicit commodities. These devices [computers] are also used to find the most efficient routes and methods for smuggling and moving money in the financial system
- More threateningly, some criminal organizations are now using technology for counter-intelligence purposes in order to circumvent law enforcement authorities.
- Although revolutionary advances in information and communication have brought the countries close together, regrettably this has also brought a plethora of challenges being exploited by criminal networks.
- The state of the art communication equipment greatly facilitates international criminal transactions including making deals and coordinating the large volume of illicit trade.

- Explosion of international travel have also facilitated criminal activity. The break down of international political and economic barriers and the globalization of business has enhanced freedom of movement and the transportation of goods and services.
- The proliferation of air transportation connections and the easing of immigration and visa restrictions in many countries to promote international commerce especially within regional blocks have also facilitated criminal activity.
- Criminals now have a wider choice of travel routes and can arrange itineraries to minimize risk. Border controls within many regional economic blocks are often non existent.

Globalization [The shrinking world].

- The dynamics of globalization have enabled international organized crime groups to expand both their global reach and criminal interests.
- Due to globalization international crime groups are able to operate increasingly outside traditional parameters, take quick advantages of new opportunities and move readily in geographic areas.
- Globalization has bred a more professional criminal element. International criminals make use of the latest

commercial and technological developments to expand and improve the efficiency of their operations.

- Criminals have the financial resources to obtain whatever access, know-how and technology they may need or desire.
- They are capable of engaging individuals with specific expertise to facilitate their operations hence they are able to quickly identify and adapt to market changes e.g. major drug smuggling groups used transportation specialists and legal experts to research commercial flows and learn about tariff laws and administrative procedures in the world's commercial ports.
- Criminals now use financial experts [some trained in the world's best business schools] to identify money laundering mechanisms to manage investments and establish fronts that can be used as covers for smuggling and fraud schemes. This has allowed criminal groups to increasingly diversify their financial operations on a global scale.
- Legal expertise is effectively used by international criminals to protect themselves from the investigations and prosecutions. Lawyers manipulate judicial systems to protect criminal interests.

Conclusion

International Police cooperation is the only way to thwart global criminal threats. Given our experiences to date in policing transnational crime, two principles immediately suggest themselves for guiding our attempts to do better in the future.

First, we should found our international police working relationships on properly negotiated agreements--that is on mutual respect, benefit, and consent.

This should evolve according to a three-step process that Professor Ethan **NADELMAN** has termed "harmonization":
i.e.

- (1) regularization of relations;
- (2) accommodation of different systems to each other;
- (3) harmonization toward a common norm.
