



## UNTOC Working Group on International Cooperation

### 14<sup>th</sup> session

11-12 September 2023

## Practical implementation of article 27 of the Organized Crime Convention (law enforcement cooperation)

### INTERPOL Statement

Chairperson,

i. We appreciate the opportunity to elaborate on some of the systems and tools of INTERPOL that are relevant to the implementation of Article 27 of the UNTOC pertaining to “law enforcement cooperation”.

ii. For the past century, INTERPOL’s mission has been to prevent and fight crime through enhanced police cooperation. It is the only global, neutral, intergovernmental organization entrusted by its 195 member countries to connect their law enforcement authorities. INTERPOL therefore has unique insight into international cooperation to counter transnational crime, and especially collaboration between law enforcement across the world.

iii. Given its unique mandate, INTERPOL serves as one of the main implementation mechanisms of Article 27 of the UNTOC. At the core of our services is indeed I-24/7, a global secure communication system that we deploy and maintain to connect law enforcement in INTERPOL’s 195 member countries.

iv. I-24/7 enables law enforcement to share crucial police data in real time, globally. This communication system is fully secured, which is the result of the significant support and resources that Member States have channeled into it since its establishment, 20 years ago. I-24/7 is continuously

maintained and enhanced using the statutory financial contributions of our 195 member countries – the same which are sitting in this room.

v. The I-24/7 communication system is accessible by National Central Bureaus (NCBs), which act as INTERPOL's single Point of Contact in each of our member countries – they are often designated units within the national Police Forces/Ministry of Interior and their equivalents. With the authorization of NCBs, access to I-23/7 can be expanded to other national authorities. This includes frontline officers at border crossing points to allow them making informed decisions in a matter of seconds by accessing, among others, our database our Stolen and Lost Travel Documents.

vi. Therefore, in line with Resolution A/RES/77/20 (2022) on the cooperation between the UN and INTERPOL, **the Working Group may elect to encourage State Parties to continue to extend access to I-24/7 to their frontlines – including airports, seaports and key border crossing points.**

vii. The INTERPOL I-24/7 communication system is widely used by law enforcement agencies and is the main channel for international communication between them. To give you an idea of the current ongoing information exchange passing through INTERPOL's communication system:

- In 2022 alone, more than 17 million messages have been exchanged between police via the I-24/7 system.
- Through the same system, law enforcement has, to date this year, made more than 5 billion queries to our 19 databases, which contain over 128 million records on wanted individuals, fake and fraudulent identity documents, stolen property, weapons, threats and more.

viii. Through I-24/7, law enforcement across the world can also issue **INTERPOL Notices**. Notices are international requests for information, cooperation or to warn of threats.

xix. A recent result of successful international cooperation through INTERPOL's channels is the arrest in Sudan of an Eritrean national wanted for heading a major criminal organization behind the kidnapping, extortion and murder of East African migrants. He had two INTERPOL Red Notices issued against him (by the Netherlands and Ethiopia) for trafficking and murder. He was arrested after the coordinated efforts by the UAE and Sudanese authorities based on intelligence gathered through INTERPOL's channels.

x. INTERPOL Purple Notices can also be issued by and disseminated among our membership to seek or provide information on modus operandi, objects, devices and concealment methods used by criminals.

xi. For instance, in South Africa, during an INTERPOL coordinated operation, crystal meth bound for Australia was found hidden inside sculptures of animals. South Africa requested that INTERPOL issue a Purple Notice to detail some of these different concealment methods and share this information with law enforcement in 195 countries.

**xii. The Working Group may therefore elect to reinforce established and proven mechanism for law enforcement cooperation. It may in particular encourage State Parties to make full use of the INTERPOL I-24/7 global police secure communications system to exchange criminal data and intelligence in a timely and secure manner; and to continue to further their use of INTERPOL's databases, notices and diffusions with a view to foster information exchange among law enforcement globally.**

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xiii. INTERPOL already has an explicitly recognized role in several international conventions pertaining to the use of our channels for transmission of Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) requests including UNTOC, UNCAC and <sup>1</sup> the 1988 Drug Treaty.

xiv. It is also worth pointing out that the capabilities of INTERPOL digital transmission channels referenced in previous conventions have been considerably enhanced since the formulation of these conventions over 20 years ago.

xv. The International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism<sup>2</sup> together with hundreds of UN resolutions (be it the UN General Assembly, the Conference of Parties to the UNTOC, the CCPCJ, etc) do also acknowledge and support the value of using INTERPOL's channels to exchange information and foster law enforcement cooperation. This includes the resolution on the

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<sup>1</sup> UNTOC Article 18(13), UNCAC Article 46(13), the UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs And Psychotropic Substances 1988 Article 7(8), and the Budapest Convention Article 27(9)(b)

<sup>2</sup> Art. 18: "States Parties may exchange information through the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol)".

cooperation between the United Nations and INTERPOL (A/RES/77/20) adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly in 2022.

xvi. As such, we hope that our main suggestions for this Working Group's discussions can receive due consideration with a view to help reinforce law enforcement cooperation through INTERPOL's established international cooperation mechanisms.

xvii. I thank you for your attention.