



## 10th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

### Item 2 (c). Smuggling of Migrants Protocol

#### **Statement by INTERPOL**

Migrant smuggling is ever-present, as criminal groups continue to prey on migrants to make substantial illegal profits. INTERPOL's duty is to connect police across continents, and along smuggling routes to ensure that migrants do not fall victim to false promises of well-organized trips to a new life.

We do so by putting at the disposal of INTERPOL's 194 Member countries our global, secured communication system, called i-24/7, which allows law enforcement across the world to exchange data in real time. A key tool in helping countries protect their citizens and territory, i-24/7 provides access to INTERPOL's databases containing above 100 million records. These databases were searched more than 7 billion times last year by law enforcement worldwide enabling frontline officers to obtain data on wanted persons, vehicles and stolen and lost travel documents (SLTD) in just seconds.

Access to and sharing of criminal data is key in all operational activities conducted by INTERPOL. Last year, INTERPOL-led operation TURQUESA, conducted with the support of UNODC, targeted organized crime groups behind key smuggling routes to the USA and Canada. Over only 5 days, this operation led to 152 arrests and the identification of about 800 irregular migrants from 30 different countries.

A major outcome was the arrest of a Bangladeshi national believed to be behind one of the largest migrant smuggling networks into the United States. Brazilian authorities dismantled his entire network, which is alleged to have facilitated the illegal passage of more than 200 South Asians. Authorities, which froze 42 bank accounts, estimate that the group made transactions totaling around USD 10 million.

This give us an idea of the scale of the ‘business’ generated by these criminal organizations.

Operation TURQUESA is a model of cooperation that drew on the complementarity of two international organizations - INTERPOL’s policing capabilities, operational activities and investigative support on one side; UNODC’s expertise in research, legislative and judicial technical assistance on the other. By joining forces, INTERPOL and UNODC successfully helped strengthen the investigative capacity and coordination mechanisms among police investigators and prosecutors in Latin America. Because this approach showed significant results to tackle organized crime groups involved in migrant smuggling, we are hoping to replicate it in other regions of the world.

INTERPOL is committed to support Member States fulfil their international commitments and reiterates its engagement in the fight against migrant smuggling along with States Parties to the Protocol.