

## UNTOC Working Group on Trafficking in Persons

2-3 October 2023

### INTERPOL statement

**Topic:**

**a) Emerging knowledge and practice regarding the prevention of and response to corruption in the context of trafficking in persons**

Chairperson(s),

Distinguished delegates,

Corruption is one of the most significant enablers of organized crime. It facilitates the growth of criminal organizations internationally and hinders the efforts of law enforcement and judicial systems to enforce the law and deliver justice. When human traffickers corrupt officials to carry out their criminal activities, it becomes less likely and more difficult for victims to come forward. This contributes to low detection, investigation and conviction rates. It limits the understanding of the criminal phenomena and fosters mistrust of law enforcement and the judicial system in general.

Project Turquesa is a joint UNODC-INTERPOL project which fights human trafficking and migrant smuggling in the Americas. Within this project, INTERPOL provides operational support to Member Countries in human trafficking cases, including those where corrupt acts from law enforcement officials have been detected. The support INTERPOL provides includes the facilitation of secure information exchange, analysis and the coordination of investigative meetings and operations. The INTERPOL Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Unit always prioritizes cases that have a corruption element and collaborates with other INTERPOL Units, especially the INTERPOL Anti-Corruption Centre to provide holistic support.

Proactive investigations, rather than relying only on victim statements, are a useful tool to counter corruption in the context of human trafficking. Multi-agency collaboration, integrating stakeholders from different sectors, such as healthcare workers, social services, NGO helplines, puts more eyes in the different environments where human trafficking takes place. Further, focusing on key points, such as

borders, where human trafficking is most likely, and carrying out a thorough assessment of them, could highlight a need for a change in policy, or provide intelligence on suspected corruption. When INTERPOL provides training to law enforcement internationally, we always emphasize the importance of adopting proactive measures as an effective way to counter trafficking and undermine corruption.

INTERPOL supports the good practices and developments highlighted in paragraph 57 of the Working Group "*Background Paper*" which states that "in order to address transnational corruption in cases of trafficking, international cooperation among law enforcement agencies should be fostered". As the only global police organization entrusted by its 195 member countries to facilitate law enforcement cooperation and information exchange, INTERPOL plays a key role in this regard.

As such, in order to strengthen the prevention of, and response to, corruption in the context of trafficking in persons, the Working Group may elect to support the following recommendations:

- encourage Member States to promote the creation and/or continuous development of specialized units for corruption and human trafficking, and in particular, to strengthen links between them.
- encourage Member States to consider instigating proactive investigations and adopting a multi-agency approach to fight corruption in the context of trafficking in persons.
- encourage Member States to make greater use of INTERPOL policing capabilities - in line with UNTOC Resolution 11/5 (2022) which "urges States to make full use of the experience and tools of INTERPOL in combating trafficking in persons" (OP15), in particular by:
  - nominating a national law enforcement representative to INTERPOL's Human Trafficking Expert Group (HTEG)
  - supporting participation in INTERPOL initiatives to combat human trafficking
  - strengthening the collaboration between national specialized units and INTERPOL National Central Bureaus.

I thank you for your attention.