GUIDELINES INTERPOL

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The International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO), known as Interpol, was founded in 1923, and it is based in Lyon in France. Interpol is the world's largest international police organization with 196 member states. The organization's aim is « Connecting police for a safer world », as reminded by its motto.

In order to do so, Interpol supports national efforts in combating crimes across four global areas: terrorism, cybercrime, organized crime and financial crime and anti corruption. Its strategy is driven by five key actions. First, connect through the I-24/7 system, a secure communications network that links all 196 member countries, enabling real-time access to databases and services. Second, empower by providing investigative support– such as forensic- to enhance the capabilities of law enforcement agencies. Third, alert through the issuance of Red Notices, which are international alerts for wanted persons- not to be confused with an arrest warrant-. Fourth, innovate by continuously developing new technologies and methodologies to stay ahead of emerging threats. Finally, advocate by representing global law enforcement interests on the international stage and promoting the importance of policing in maintaining global security.

This guideline will walk you through the key issues associated with two of the main problems facing Interpol: cybercrime and drug trafficking.

SUMMARY

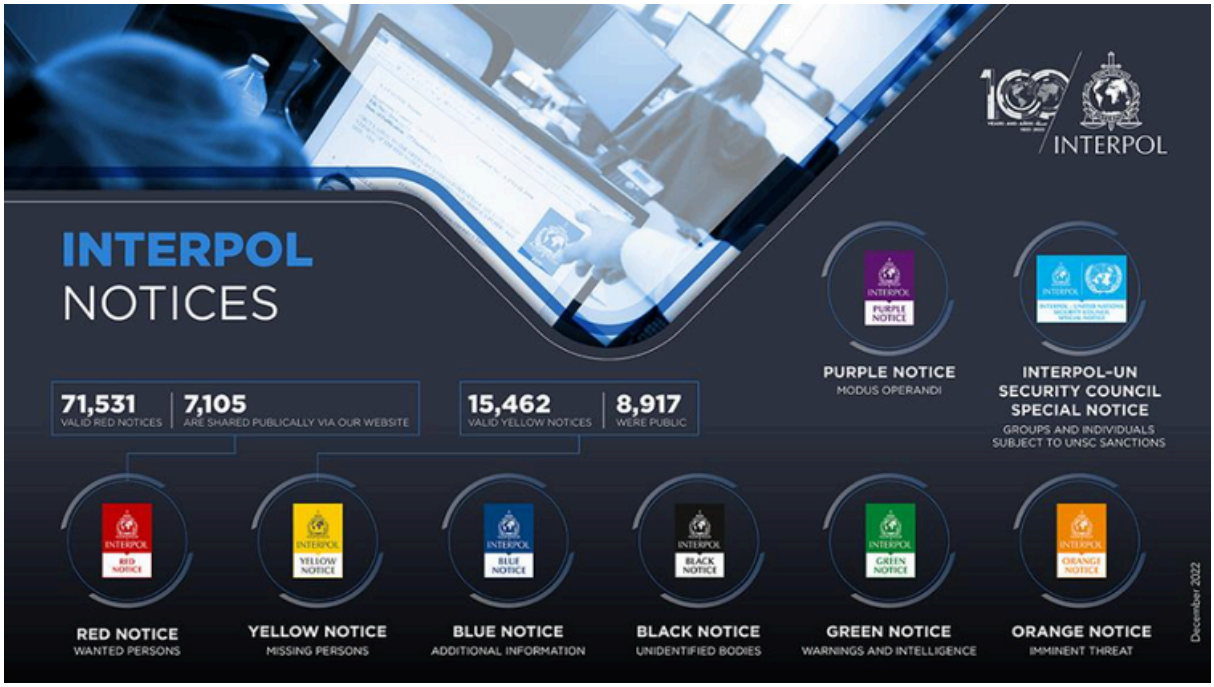
Topic 1 : Using New Technologies to Track fugitive

Introduction

In an increasingly hyper-connected world, the concept of a "border" has been fundamentally transformed. For international fugitives—ranging from high-profile white-collar criminals to terrorists and human traffickers—globalisation has historically provided a veil of anonymity.

Yet, as technology evolves, this once-protective shroud is being lifted by new investigative tools.

Today, the pursuit of justice is no longer confined to physical checkpoints and paper "Wanted" posters; it has migrated into the digital realm, utilising tools that were once the province of science fiction.



The Main Forms of “Fugitive Pursue” in the Digital Age

To eliminate safe havens for fugitives, INTERPOL has shifted to a technology-driven framework that prioritizes "Actionable Intelligence" and real-time identification. This centralized approach consolidates several sophisticated tools into a single operational response designed to bridge the gap between national law enforcement agencies:

- **The Biometric Hub (BioHub) & Facial Recognition**: This cornerstone system allows for the simultaneous cross-checking of fingerprints, DNA, and facial features from CCTV or social media images. Because biometric data is nearly impossible to change, it is the most reliable method for confirming identities when travel documents are missing or fraudulent.

- **Frontline Screening (ID-Check)**: Unveiled in 2023, this handheld tool provides field officers with instant verification capabilities. It is designed to eliminate the "latency period" fugitives previously exploited to evade capture at border checkpoints.

- **Project INSIGHT**: By leveraging Big Data and Natural Language Processing (NLP), this platform identifies hidden links in criminal networks through the "fusion" of travel patterns, financial transactions, and communication logs. These predictive capabilities help investigators anticipate a fugitive's next move.

- **Project CCISOM**: A specialized initiative focused on the Mediterranean region, it modernizes digital infrastructure and forensic cooperation to track fugitives specifically involved in organized human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

- **Emerging Technologies**: INTERPOL is continuously innovating to include Artificial Intelligence for automated digital footprint scanning, alongside drones, robotics, and the monitoring of virtual spaces like the Metaverse to locate hidden digital assets

Interpol's Response to Fugitive Hunt with New Technologies

INTERPOL has transitioned from traditional data-sharing methods to a technology-driven response framework designed to eliminate safe havens for fugitives. By leveraging cutting-edge biometric tools and advanced analytical platforms, the organisation provides 196 member countries with the capabilities to identify and apprehend suspects with unprecedented speed and accuracy.

- **Coordinated Forensic Response**: Central to this strategy is the **BioHub**, a system capable of performing up to 1 million forensic searches per day. By using "Integrated Comparison" software to simultaneously screen fingerprints and facial images, it provides a reliable identification method even when physical travel documents are missing or fraudulent.

- **Frontline Tactical Advantage**: The 2023 introduction of the **ID-Check** tool has moved pursuit to the frontline. By allowing officers to perform instant verifications in the field, it eliminates the "latency period" fugitives previously exploited to cross borders before their identity could be confirmed.

- **Intelligence-Led Policing**: INTERPOL utilizes Artificial Intelligence and Natural Language Processing (NLP) through **Project INSIGHT** to "connect the dots" between fragmented investigations and detect hidden criminal patterns. Similarly, specialized initiatives like **Project CCISOM** focus on high-risk regions to dismantle the organized networks behind human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

- **Adapting to Emerging Threats**: Through the **New Technologies Forum**, INTERPOL maintains a continuous dialogue with the private sector to explore innovations such as deepfake detection, robotics, and drones. This forward-looking strategy ensures that new tools are integrated within strict legal and ethical frameworks to protect human rights.

The Main Forms of “Fugitive Pursue” in the Digital Age

While technology has revolutionised the pursuit of fugitives, it has also introduced a complex set of legal, ethical, and operational hurdles. INTERPOL’s mission to "connect police" is often obstructed by the very technologies meant to assist it, as well as the diverse political landscapes of its 196 member states.

The Legal and Ethical Dilemma: Privacy vs. Security

The use of intrusive technology creates a constant tension with international human rights standards.

There are **mass surveillance concerns** with the deployment of facial recognition and AI-driven tracking; it is frequently criticised by civil liberties groups as a step toward automated mass surveillance.

Biometric algorithms, particularly facial recognition, have been documented to have varying accuracy rates depending on the demographic, leading to the risk of "false positives" and the wrongful detention of innocent individuals.

Sharing sensitive biometric data across 196 countries—each with different privacy laws (such as the EU's GDPR)—makes maintaining a unified and secure data protection standard extremely difficult.

Technological Complexity and the "Digital Arms Race"

As law enforcement adopts new tools, criminal networks are innovating even faster to bypass them.

Fugitives are increasingly using Artificial Intelligence to create "synthetic identities" or "deepfakes" to deceive biometric screening tools at borders. The rise of end-to-end encrypted messaging and the use of the Metaverse allows fugitives to coordinate their movements and hide financial assets beyond the reach of traditional digital forensics. There is a significant gap in the technological capabilities of member states. While some nations use advanced BioHub integrations, others lack the basic hardware or stable internet to utilise INTERPOL's I-24/7 system effectively.

Political Misuse and Cooperation Barriers

INTERPOL’s biggest challenge remains the "human element"—the willingness of member states to cooperate transparently.

There is also an **Abuse of the Red Notice System.** Some member states have been accused of using INTERPOL's notification system to hunt political dissidents or journalists under the guise of "fugitive pursuit," which undermines the organisation's neutrality.

Then, another barrier is the **Public-Private Friction.** INTERPOL often relies on "Big Tech" companies to access data for Project INSIGHT or CCISOM. However, many private entities refuse to cooperate due to privacy policies or commercial interests, creating "blind spots" in international investigations.

And the last point of friction is **Sovereignty Conflicts.** National laws often restrict the sharing of certain intelligence (like DNA or financial records) with international bodies, preventing the BioHub from reaching its full potential as a global identification tool.

Questions a Resolution could Address :

- Balancing Security and Privacy: How can INTERPOL ensure that the deployment of facial recognition and AI-driven tracking does not infringe upon international human rights or lead to automated mass surveillance?

- Algorithmic Accountability: What standards should be established to ensure the accuracy of biometric algorithms across different demographics to prevent "false positives" and wrongful detentions?

- Bridging the Digital Divide: How can the international community support member states lacking the hardware or stable internet infrastructure required to effectively utilize the I-24/7 system and BioHub?

- Preventing Political Misuse: What mechanisms can be implemented to prevent member states from abusing the Red Notice system to target political dissidents or journalists?

- Public-Private Cooperation: How can INTERPOL incentivise "Big Tech" companies to share necessary data for criminal investigations while respecting privacy concerns and commercial interests?

Topic 2 : How can international information-sharing mechanisms be enhanced to more effectively trace illicit firearms during times of conflict?

The Main Forms of International illicit firearms trafficking and the Current Tracing Mechanism

Main Forms of Illicit Firearms Trafficking

Trafficking is rarely a simple "point A to point B" transaction; it involves complex methods to circumvent international law:

- ***Diversion:***

This is the most critical threat during conflict, occurring when weapons intended for authorised end-users (government forces or legal entities) are diverted to unauthorised groups.

- ***Theft and Looting:***

Armed conflicts often lead to the loss of control over state armories, allowing stockpiles of small arms and light weapons (SALW) to be looted and sold on the black market.

- ***Modification and Reactivation:***

Criminals frequently purchase deactivated "keepsake" weapons or blank-firing "alarm" pistols and convert them back into lethal firearms.

- ***Illicit Manufacturing and "Ghost Guns":***

The rise of 3D printing and the assembly of weapons from "parts kits" that lack serial numbers (ghost guns) make weapons nearly impossible to trace through traditional means.

- ***Internet and Dark Web Sales:***

Firearms and components are increasingly marketed on encrypted platforms, using international postal services to cross borders in small, inconspicuous packages.

Current International Tracing Mechanisms

To counter these threats, INTERPOL and the United Nations have established a framework of tools designed to identify the history of a weapon from its point of manufacture to its last legal owner.

- ***The iARMS Database:***

The Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System (iARMS) is the only global platform for reporting and searching lost, stolen, and trafficked/smuggled firearms. It allows member states to query over a million records to see if a seized weapon has been reported elsewhere.

- ***The International Tracing Instrument (ITI):***

Adopted by the UN, the ITI is the primary political framework that requires states to ensure weapons are marked at the time of manufacture and import, and that records are kept for at least 20 years.

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- ***INTERPOL Firearms Reference Table (IFRT):***

To avoid confusion caused by different naming conventions across languages, the IFRT provides a standardised methodology to identify and describe firearms correctly.

- ***IBIS and IBIN:***

The Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS) and the associated INTERPOL Ballistic Information Network (IBIN) allow for the sharing of ballistics data—the "fingerprints" of a gun—allowing police to link a single weapon to multiple crime scenes across different countries.

- ***Tracing Requests:***

When a firearm is seized in a conflict zone, a tracing request is sent via INTERPOL's I-24/7 network to the country of manufacture or last known legal export to identify the exact point where the weapon entered the illicit market

Interpol's Response to International illicite firearms Trafficking

INTERPOL acts as the primary global coordinator for law enforcement units to prevent and combat the illegal movement of weapons. The organization's response is built on a multi-pillar strategy that combines specialized databases, standardized protocols, and cross-border operations to disrupt supply chains that fuel conflict and organized crime.

Centralized Information and Databases

The core of INTERPOL's operational response lies in its secure, real-time databases which allow for the immediate identification and tracing of illicit material:

- ***iARMS (Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System):***

This is the world's only global platform for reporting and searching for lost, stolen, or trafficked firearms. It contains over one million records, helping police identify smuggling routes and trafficking patterns.

- ***IBIN (INTERPOL Ballistic Information Network):***

This network provides a unique global source of ballistics data, allowing experts to compare "ballistic fingerprints"—the unique marks left on cartridge casings—to link separate crime scenes across international borders.

- ***IFRT (INTERPOL Firearms Reference Table):***

A standardized tool that helps officers correctly identify firearms by their make, model, and caliber using a library of thousands of high-quality images.

Standardized Recovery Protocols

INTERPOL has developed the Firearms Recovery Protocol to shift law enforcement focus from simple seizure to identifying the true source of weapons. This step-by-step approach includes:

- ***Initial Verification:***

Searching national registries and the international iARMS database for reported theft or loss.

- ***Forensic Examination:***

Conducting latent fingerprint and DNA examinations, followed by ballistic comparison via IBIN.

- ***Intelligence Analysis:***

Analysing gathered data for "indicators of trafficking" to uncover the networks behind the diversion of weapons.

Operational Coordination and Intelligence

INTERPOL coordinates targeted operations to seize illicit weapons and gather intelligence on criminal modus operandi:

- ***Targeted Operations:***

Initiatives such as Operations Trigger, Kafo, and KAFO II focus on high-risk regions like the Sahel, MENA, and Central America to intercept firearms and dismantle trafficking syndicates.

- **Purple Notices:**

These alerts facilitate the exchange of information on the specific methods, devices, and concealment techniques used by traffickers, such as reactivating "deactivated" firearms or using 3D printing.

- **Orange Notices:**

These are used to warn police about weapons or devices that pose a serious and imminent threat to public safety.

Capacity Building and Global Partnerships

To ensure long-term stability, INTERPOL invests heavily in empowering national authorities:

- ***Training and Empowerment:***

From 2020 to 2022, INTERPOL trained more than 450 officers in firearms identification, tracing, and related transnational investigations.

- ***Joint Initiatives with UNODC:***

Collaborative projects aim to strengthen national firearms registries and monitor diversion risks, specifically from conflict zones like Ukraine and Afghanistan.

- ***Project ENACT:***

Focuses on analysing how illicit flows of firearms intersect with other forms of poly-criminality, such as drug trafficking and maritime piracy.

The Various Challenges Facing Interpol in Relation to International Illicit Firearms Trafficking and Information Sharing to Trace Weapons in times of war

Tracing weapons in active conflict zones is one of the most difficult tasks for international law enforcement. While systems like iARMS and IBIN provide the framework for cooperation, their effectiveness is frequently hampered by the unique "opacity" of war zones and the rapid evolution of criminal tactics.

Operational Opacity and Land-Based

Trafficking War zones are often inaccessible to external monitors, making it difficult to identify illicit supply routes precisely.

- ***Land-Route Dominance:***

Unlike other forms of contraband that may use air or sea, the majority of trafficking into conflict zones occurs by land—either by vehicle or on foot—which is significantly harder to monitor through international mechanisms.

- ***Martial Law and Data Closures:***

Under martial law, state bodies often have limited transparency, and critical statistics regarding national registries and weapon losses may be closed to the public or international organisations.

- ***Physical Destruction:***

The destruction of national armouries and their associated paper or digital registries during combat eliminates the "paper trail" required for successful tracing.

Technical and Manufacturing Obstacles

The rise of untraceable weaponry is challenging the conventional methods of firearms tracing.

- ***The Proliferation of "Ghost Guns":***

The increasing use of 3D-printed firearms and weapons assembled from kits without serial numbers creates "throwaway guns" that completely disregard international tracing requirements.

- ***Serial Number Duplication:***

Some manufacturers repeat the same serial numbers for different models, requiring high levels of expertise and a centralised reference table (IFRT) to avoid misidentification during a trace.

- ***Tampering:***

Criminals in conflict zones frequently remove or alter serial numbers to prevent the weapon from being traced back to its original legal owner or country of origin.

Institutional and Legal Barriers

There is a fundamental "dichotomy" in how small arms are regulated compared to other criminal evidence.

- ***Military vs. Police Jurisdictions:***

INTERPOL is traditionally used by police for criminal investigations, but conflict weapons often involve losses from military stocks—an area where information-sharing protocols are less developed and more politically sensitive.

- ***Sovereignty and State Secrets:***

Decisions to share information about state-to-state transfers are often influenced by commercial, political, and security interests, leading to a lack of transparency that hampers tracing efforts.

- ***Non-State Actors:***

The involvement of non-state armed groups (NSAGs) creates a legal vacuum, as these groups operate entirely outside of the legal record-keeping frameworks established by the Arms Trade Treaty or the UN Programme of Action.

The Participation and Infrastructure Gap

Successful tracing depends on three pillars: marking, record-keeping, and cooperation.

- ***Voluntary Data Entry:***

The iARMS database is only as strong as the data provided by member states; in conflict-affected regions, the "quality data inputting" is often neglected as national police are overwhelmed by immediate security threats.

- ***The "Linkage" Problem:***

Firearms trafficking is often treated as an isolated incident rather than part of a larger scheme. Without sharing data on the location of recovery and the possessor, investigators cannot identify the specific "diversion point" where the weapon left the legal market.

Questions a Resolution could Address :

- Data Preservation in War Zones: How can national firearms registries be protected or backed up to prevent the loss of a "paper trail" during the physical destruction of state armouries?

- Tracing in Military Jurisdictions: Should international protocols be expanded to allow for the tracing of weapons diverted from military stocks, which are currently more politically sensitive than police records?

- Regulating "Ghost Guns": What international standards can be adopted to regulate 3D-printed firearms and "parts kits" that lack serial numbers and bypass traditional tracing?

- Information Sharing under Martial Law: How can transparency be maintained in conflict zones where state bodies often restrict data and statistics under the guise of national security?

- Standardising Marking and Recovery: How can member states be incentivised to consistently input high-quality data into the iARMS and IBIN systems, even when facing immediate security threats?

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