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INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS
IN THE WORK OF INTERPOL

As national boundaries become increasingly meaningless to criminals, effective and timely police communication across borders is more important than ever before. In order to successfully fight transnational crimes, law enforcement organizations need to have information, and they need to share it, in the most timely and effective manner possible. With 'communication' as the fundamental condition for successful international cooperation, both within the international law enforcement community and beyond, INTERPOL encourages its member countries to take advantage of every

opportunity to utilize as well as contribute to these services, to include use of INTERPOL's numerous, varied and extensive databases.

The mandate and primary function of INTERPOL is to support the police services of its member countries in their efforts to prevent crime and conduct criminal investigations as efficiently and effectively as possible. Thus, together with the National Central Bureaus (NCBs), INTERPOL facilitates cross border police cooperation and supports and assists all organizations, authorities and services whose mission is to prevent or combat crime.

In order to achieve these aims, and to affect the channels of communication, INTERPOL conducts all of its activities within the framework of the following four 'core services' or 'functions':
- Secure Global Police Communications Services,
- Operational Data Services and Databases for Police,
- Operational Police Support Services,
- Training and Development [2].

The first of these services, *Secure Global Police Communications Services* is a fundamental condition for successful international police cooperation. It is essential for police forces to be able to communicate with each other, worldwide, in 'real time', and in a secure way. Two tools deliver this aim:

I-24/7 is a secure global police network linking all our member countries and giving access to information securely and rapidly;

I-link is a dynamic web application that allows officers in member countries to manage their data directly, and standardizes the format of the data exchanged [3].

Realizing the dire need for improved means of communication in today's highly technical world, INTERPOL subsequently designed and implemented a state of-the-art global communications system for the law enforcement community, called "I-24/7" "I" stands for INTERPOL; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The I-24/7 system was created in January 2003, and is an enhanced communication service and an innovative, user-friendly tool for international law enforcement. Information about suspected individuals and groups and their activities is exchanged between

INTERPOL's member countries and its General Secretariat in a fast, reliable and secure manner. I-24/7 provides a creative, modem and sophisticated way to make international law enforcement efforts more effective, and easier to perform. This type of system and exchange of information is absolutely essential in combating terrorism and other types of transnational crime.

I-24/7 is the network that enables investigators to access INTERPOL's range of criminal databases. Authorized users can search and cross-check data in a matter of seconds, with direct access to databases on suspected criminals or wanted persons, stolen and lost travel documents, stolen motor vehicles, fingerprints, DNA profiles, stolen administrative documents and stolen works of art.

This makes I-24/7 an indispensable tool, not only for the NCBs, but also for control, investigative and analytical units within national police forces. Furthermore, through INTERPOL's encouragement, many NCBs - all of which are connected to the I- 24/7 system - are now extending I-24/7 access to additional authorized law enforcement entities, such as border control units and customs officials. INTERPOL continues to provide technical assistance and support to further extending its I-24/7 system to additional authorized law-enforcement organizations. It enables authorized users to share sensitive and urgent police information with their counterparts around the globe, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Canada was the first of Interpol member countries to connect to the I-24/7 system on 23.01.2003. By the end of July 2006, 183 of Interpol member countries had been connected to the system, regional offices and other international organizations among them to which Interpol granted access. Interpol has come up with solutions to ensure all member countries can access the system regardless of financial or technical limitations.

There are some police services provided through I-24/7:

ASF Nominal database - This facility permits search on known international criminals, providing access to their criminal history, related notices, extradition arrangements, photographs, fingerprints, etc;

ASF Stolen Travel Documents ' database - Because stolen travel document are used essentially for illicit activities, they constitute a haven for organized groups particularly in the field of illegal immigration, drug trafficking, terrorism, economic crime and credit card fraud. Access to this kind of information is therefore particularly useful to international border control entities;

Stolen vehicles database - This database contains detailed information for vehicles reported as stolen around the world;

ASF Stolen Work s of Art - Information related to artwork and cultural heritage stolen in all parts of the world is stored and updated based on the information provided by the Interpol membership;

ASF Electronic Notices - Interpol notices are used to secure the arrest of fugitives wanted for crime or to serve a sentence, request information relating to the identification, crimi8nal record or location of a person, share data about a person who may commit offences affecting several countries, or alert on another to a missing person or an unidentified body;

ASF Fingerprints - This database contains the fingerprints of internationally wanted persons;

ASF database for person suspected in terrorism;

ASF database on child sexual abuse;

ASFDNA database. [3]

In consultation with member countries the General Secretariat's Forensic and Technical Databases sub-directorate (Operational Support Directorate) is already developing police features which, while not yet operational through I-24/7, will include improved and updated version of DNA, fingerprints, counterfeited and fraudulent travel documents and disaster victim identification (DVI) [1].

General Secretariat and NCBs use all technical means with the purpose of keeping the connection between each other as isolated as possible from the unauthorized third party. Each NCB is connected to I-24/7 communication system by means of an infrastructure whose security elements are the VPN with authentication, encryption and firewalls.

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