

Human Trafficking: International and National Implications
10 a.m. – Noon
Thursday, March 25, 2010
INTERPOL and Human Trafficking Efforts

Introduction:

Mr. Co-Chairmen McGovern and Wolf: My name is Tim Williams, and I am the Director of INTERPOL Washington, (U.S. National Central Bureau), a component of the U.S. Department of Justice and co-managed with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. I officially became Director in October 2009. Prior to that time, I was the Deputy Director of INTERPOL Washington where I served for three years. I was detailed to INTERPOL Washington in 2006 from the U.S. Marshals Service where I have 25 years of federal government service in the law enforcement arena.

I want to first thank you for the opportunity to address the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission concerning the fight against human trafficking. Preventing crimes is the goal of all law enforcement agencies. Additionally, it is a priority for INTERPOL to provide quick and effective responses to all incidences of human trafficking crimes.

To fight human trafficking crimes, law enforcement agencies need to cooperate on a global basis because human trafficking is an increasingly global problem. INTERPOL, the International Criminal Police Organization, with 188 member countries and an established communications network for police cooperation, is ideally suited to serve in the role of combating human trafficking. INTERPOL's main work involves serving as a secure communications network for its member countries and coordinating international investigations. INTERPOL also manages databases containing law enforcement information. I will speak to a few of these databases in regards to human trafficking later in my testimony.

Each of INTERPOL's 188 member countries has a National Central Bureau, like the U.S. National Central Bureau, that serves as its representative to INTERPOL and is the point of contact for all INTERPOL matters for the countries' national authorities. These National Central Bureaus also serve as the main point of contact for facilitating and communicating information on human trafficking crimes to all of the member countries.

According to the latest INTERPOL statistics, *“Trafficking in human beings is a multi-billion dollar form of international organized crime, constituting modern-day slavery. Recent estimates by the International Labour Organization place its value at \$39 billion each year. Victims are recruited and trafficked between countries and regions using deception or coercion. They are stripped of their autonomy, freedom of movement and choice, and face various forms of physical, emotional, and mental abuse. Trafficking in human beings is a crime under international law and many national and regional legal systems. Trafficking in women for sexual exploitation, trafficking for forced labour, commercial sexual exploitation of children in tourism, and trafficking*

in organs are four of the many forms of trafficking but the one consistent pattern in all of these forms of trafficking is the inherent vulnerability of the victims.”

Forms of Human Trafficking:

Trafficking in women for sexual exploitation is one of the most prevalent forms of human trafficking that affects every region in the world, either as a source, transit or destination country. Women and children from developing countries and from vulnerable parts of society in developed countries are lured by promises of decent employment into leaving their homes and travelling to what they consider will be a better life. Once they are lured away into these new lives supposedly, they are provided with false documents and an organized network is used to transport them to the destination country where they are then forced into sexual slavery and live in inhumane conditions under constant fear for their lives.

Trafficking for forced labor is also a form of human trafficking that is primarily found in developing countries. Victims are recruited and trafficked using deception and coercion and find themselves held in conditions of slavery in a variety of jobs. The majority of the jobs these in which victims find themselves working are primarily in agriculture and construction work, domestic servitude (maids and menservants) and other labor intensive jobs.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children in tourism is a type of human trafficking that has been most apparent in Asia for many years and has now become more prominent in Africa as well as Central and South America. This form of human trafficking is promoted by the growth of inexpensive air travel and relatively low risk of prohibition and prosecution for engaging in sexual relations with minors.

Trafficking in organs is also a growing phenomenon where humans are trafficked for the purpose of using their organs, especially kidneys.

All of these forms of human trafficking have sparked an opportunity for INTERPOL to continually collaborate and build partnerships around the world.

INTERPOL's resources to combat Human Trafficking:

Because of the sophisticated nature of the crime of trafficking in human beings, there is an increased need and requirement for international law enforcement cooperation. I would like to outline for you today a few of the resources INTERPOL provides to its 188 member countries in the area of human trafficking.

- On an operational level, INTERPOL offers assistance to member countries with training and support in tactical operations.

- The INTERPOL Expert Working Group on Trafficking in Human Beings meets annually to raise awareness of emerging issues, promote prevention programs and initiate specialized training.
- Project Childhood addresses the issue of sex tourism in a trafficking context and aims to develop partnerships with police authorities and other stakeholders in Asia in order to promote the prosecution of abusers and the rescue of victims.
- INTERPOL's Notices and Diffusions system enables global cooperation between its member countries for tracking criminals and suspects as well as locating missing persons or collecting information.
- INTERPOL's Human Smuggling and Trafficking Message system provides a standardized format for reporting cases of trafficking between member countries and to INTERPOL's database.
- MIND/FIND technical solutions enable frontline law enforcement agencies, such as border police or immigration authorities, to receive responses for queries on stolen or lost travel documents, stolen motor vehicles and wanted criminals. All authorized users of INTERPOL's 1-24/7 global police communications system have access to these databases.

International collaboration on the law enforcement aspect in the persecution of traffickers:

In 2009, the European Council adopted the Action Oriented paper to strengthen the commitment and coordinated action of the European Union and its member states to prevent and fight trafficking in human beings for the purposes of all forms of exploitation in partnership with third countries, regions and organizations at the international level, including INTERPOL.

The Action Oriented paper is based on the recognition that in order to effectively address human trafficking, an integrated, holistic and multidisciplinary approach is needed, having as its basis respect for human rights and the rule of law, including a gender and child rights perspective.

INTERPOL is also engaged with the United Nations Open-ended Intergovernmental Meeting of experts on possible Mechanisms to Review Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the associated protocols.

INTERPOL systems currently in place:

INTERPOL cooperates with other international organizations such as Europol, Frontex, Osce, Eurojust, and the UNODC as part of its ongoing efforts in combating Trafficking in Human Beings. There are already a number of tools in place through these organizations. INTERPOL tries to avoid duplication and instead uses and develops existing strategies.

What, if anything, can be done to strengthen them?

- INTERPOL's goal is to create a greater sense of awareness among the Judiciary so they have a greater understanding of the nature and extent of this type of criminal activity.
- INTERPOL seeks to create a positive atmosphere and cooperate with NGOs and the private sector also working in these areas to combat human trafficking crimes.
- INTERPOL has a victim-centered approach. This approach has also been on the agenda in ministerial meetings involving the UNODC and the EU.

How does INTERPOL go about, in general terms, investigating trafficking situations?

INTERPOL facilitates and coordinates the flow of information between the investigative entities of the member countries involved and helps create an awareness of the investigative assistance available through INTERPOL and its 188 member countries.

Instruments INTERPOL utilizes to enforce these operations:

INTERPOL's role is not to enforce but to support, and in this capacity, INTERPOL's global policing tools such as our secure Global Communication System I-24/7 and range of databases, including nominal, DNA, SLTD (stolen and lost travel documents) and fingerprints can be used to assist member countries with their operations/investigations.

Recent Significant INTERPOL case in Human Trafficking:

A joint international manhunt between Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) and multiple law enforcement agencies in the United States and overseas led to the arrest of a fugitive by the name Jorge Torres-Puello, aka Jorge Torres Orellana on March 19, 2010, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic at 8 p.m.

Torres-Puello was wanted in El Salvador for crimes against children, sexual exploitation for minors for pornography and prostitution, organized crime and human trafficking. In the United States, he was wanted in Vermont on alien smuggling offenses and in Philadelphia for probation violations for fraud.

In February, law enforcement authorities in El Salvador were notified that an individual acting as the legal advisor to the U.S. missionaries in Haiti bore a strong resemblance to Jorge Torres Orellana, the man wanted by El Salvadorian authorities. Authorities contacted INTERPOL requesting assistance, and an INTERPOL Red Notice was issued to law enforcement agencies worldwide.

Because INTERPOL Washington had been in previous contact with authorities in El Salvador, immediately Jorge Torres Orellana was confirmed to be a fugitive from justice and was also wanted in Canada and the U.S. INTERPOL Washington served as the intermediary in coordinating efforts between multiple agencies in the United States and overseas resulting in the apprehension of Torres-Puello.