



INTERPOL



# ILLICIT GOODS AND GLOBAL HEALTH

Future-oriented policing projects



In keeping with its consistent support of international organisations to strengthen the global community, the United Arab Emirates – through the Interpol Foundation for a Safer World – is funding seven INTERPOL projects within seven crime areas, including Counter Terrorism, Cybercrime, Illicit Drug Trade, Illicit Goods and Global Health, Vehicle Crime, Vulnerable Communities and Protecting Cultural Heritage.



The INTERPOL Foundation for a Safer World is the rallying point for likeminded organizations to unite with INTERPOL to respond to today's crime challenges. It encourages an international commitment and partnership with the private sector to protect citizens, infrastructures, businesses and investments from the threats of terrorism, cybercrime and organized crime.



**ILLICIT GOODS AND  
GLOBAL HEALTH**



# THE ISSUE

The trade in illicit products represents a major challenge for the international law enforcement community and a huge risk to global public health. The term “trafficking of illicit products” encompasses practices such as falsification (pharmaceuticals), counterfeiting (trademark infringements), piracy (copyright infringements), adulteration of products, the smuggling of legitimate products, and tax evasion. The types of goods affected are many and include personal care products (e.g. cosmetics), medicines, medical devices,

food, alcohol, toys, electronics, engine parts, construction materials, pesticides and many others. The reality is that no product is safe from being falsified, counterfeited or adulterated.

Crimes related to the trafficking of illicit products have a negative impact on society at all levels. Counterfeiting harms businesses that produce and sell legitimate items, governments lose tax revenue from products manufactured or sold on the black market, and consumers



are at risk from articles that do not meet safety standards. Organized criminals manufacture and distribute illicit goods with a complete disregard for the often serious implications for the health and safety of consumers.

Counterfeit car and mechanical parts can cause fatal accidents while counterfeit building materials are known to be used in the manufacture of power plants, with potentially disastrous consequences.

Illicit food products and beverages can lead to serious consequences for the consumers with products being adulterated by toxic ingredients. As for illicit pharmaceutical products, they often contain the wrong amount of active ingredient (too little, or too much, or none at all), or harmful substances posing a major health risk. Patients across the world put their health, even life, at risk by unknowingly consuming fake drugs or genuine drugs that have been badly stored or that have expired. Fake medicines range from ineffective to highly dangerous (for instance, causing a heart attack or coma), and sometimes can be fatal.

Besides representing a threat to consumers, the trafficking of illicit goods provides a significant source of revenue for transnational organized crime. There is ample evidence to show that profits from the sale of illicit products are reinvested into other crime types including trafficking in human beings, drugs, firearms, environmental crime, cybercrime and terrorism.

The rapid evolution in technology, the relative freedom of movement of goods and money, and the growth of web-based trade have contributed to a massive rise in the availability of illicit products. Driven by financial gain, transnational organized crime groups have expanded in size, scope and menace. These criminal enterprises are complex. They may be based in one country, with products manufactured in a second country, then distributed via a third country. Illegal websites are often hosted elsewhere and finances moved through additional jurisdictions. Trafficking knows no boundaries, which makes the role of international police organizations key in preventing and curbing this trafficking.

# INTERPOL'S ROLE

INTERPOL combats the trafficking of illicit products because of the central involvement of organized crime. In recent years, INTERPOL has built up much experience and expertise in this fast-moving and life-threatening crime area. As evidence shows, the trafficking of illicit products is a global security concern, and INTERPOL is uniquely placed to connect stakeholders across the world with the ultimate aim of protecting consumers.

Among our established partners are police forces, customs agencies, international organizations, private sector companies, regulatory bodies, supply chain experts, academia, food and drug administrations, the banking industry, payment card facilitators, Internet service providers, legal experts and prosecutors. Through this network, INTERPOL works to support capacity building activities, the sharing of information, and operational initiatives on the ground, all of which combine to help reduce the quantity

of illicit goods on the market, disrupt distribution chains and arrest the criminals behind the activities. Practical training is complemented by e-learning resources, like the International IP Crime Investigators College (IIPCIC), which is a fully interactive online training facility on the subject of intellectual property crime developed by INTERPOL in partnership with Underwriters Laboratories. It provides leading-edge training for law enforcement, regulatory authorities and private sector investigators.

Enforcement operations in the field are vital in order to remove illicit products from circulation and to dismantle the illegal networks behind these crimes.

INTERPOL has a proven record of success coordinating and facilitating global and regional enforcement operations. These enforcement interventions led to the seizure of millions of illicit products and the dismantling of many criminal networks.



**GLOBAL**  
Operations Pangea and Opson

**CENTRAL AMERICA**  
Operation Maya

**SOUTH AMERICA**  
Operation Jupiter

**AFRICA**  
Operations Mamba, Cobra,  
Porcupine, Giboia, Lucrifac,  
Etosha

**SOUTH EAST ASIA**  
Operations Storm and Real





# LOOKING AHEAD

In order to address illicit trafficking and secure global health, INTERPOL will pursue the following objectives:

## › COLLECT DATA AND INTELLIGENCE

Collect data and intelligence in order to promote the prevention of crime, produce regional analytical reports and risk assessments relating to manufacturing 'hotspots', transit points, smuggling techniques, illegal supply routes and methodologies.

## › STRENGTHEN EXISTING CAPACITY BUILDING

Further strengthen existing capacity building activities, by delivering national and regional training sessions based on the needs of the countries, setting up a standardized framework, establishing a mentoring programme to promote 'train-the-trainer' concepts, developing partnerships with law enforcement to promote the International IP Crime Investigators College (IIPCIC).





## › IMPROVE COOPERATION

Support the creation of skilled multi-agency task forces, in order to improve cooperation between experts from law enforcement, regulatory bodies, customs and the private sector. Networks of experts are currently being established in Asia (Project Chain) and the Middle East (Project Qanoon). Other regions will be approached to follow the same model.

## › GATHER EXPERTS

Provide a platform for experts from the public and the private sector through the organization of the annual conference in order to stimulate dialogue among stakeholders and share best practices.



## › COORDINATE TRANSNATIONAL OPERATIONS

Coordinate transnational operations and support law enforcement agencies in making interceptions across the illicit global supply chain. Such interceptions and operations will aim to increase success rates in dismantling distribution facilities, seizures of illicit goods, suspension of illicit websites. Based on the operational results, cases involving several countries will be identified to organize Regional Investigative Analytical Case Meetings (RIACM). By fostering international cooperation, RIACMs will seek to identify criminal networks, detect links with other crimes and arrest criminals.

## › PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH

Raise awareness among the general public and governments on the dangers to public health in this area, notably the risks associated with buying illicit products online, in an effort to reduce the demand for such goods and to protect public health.



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