

See Also: Community Response; Haiti Earthquake (2010); Hurricane Katrina (2005); Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004); Media; Real-Time Communications; Risk Communications; Technology.

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Interpol

Interpol stands for the International Criminal Police Organization. Interpol facilitates cross-border police cooperation and assists all organizations, authorities, and services with a mission to prevent or combat international crime.

After the United Nations (UN), Interpol is the largest intergovernmental organization with 187 member countries. In 2008, 562 law enforcement officers

from 82 countries worked together in Arabic, English, French, and Spanish at the headquarters in France, and seven regional offices located in Argentina, Cameroon, the Ivory Coast, El Salvador, Kenya, Thailand, and Zimbabwe. Interpol also has special representatives at the UN in New York and the European Union in Brussels. Each Interpol member country maintains a National Central Bureau (NCB) staffed by national law enforcement officers.

Interpol was originally established in 1923 in Austria as the International Criminal Police Commission. In 1938, Nazi Germany annexed Austria and moved the commission's headquarters to Berlin in 1942. European allied officials of World War II from Belgium, France, Scandinavia, and the United Kingdom revived the organization as the International Criminal Police Organization after the end of World War II in 1945 and shifted it to Paris. In 1989, the headquarters moved to its present location in Lyon, France.

The constitution of Interpol does not allow "any intervention or activities of a political, military, religious, or racial character." This is to facilitate international police cooperation even where diplomatic relations do not exist among countries. Action is taken within the limits of the local laws of the respective countries and following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

There are four core functions of Interpol. The first is to secure global police communications services by the I-24/7 system, which enables authorized law enforcement users to request, submit, and access vital police data instantly. The second function is operational data services and databases for police covering key data such as the names of suspected terrorists, child sexual abuse images, fingerprints, DNA profiles, stolen or lost identification and travel documents, and wanted persons. The third function is operational police support services in six priority crime areas: corruption, drugs and organized crime, financial and high-tech crime, fugitives, public safety and terrorism, and human trafficking. The last core function is police training and development for national police forces.

Disaster Relief Work of Interpol

Disaster relief work falls within the operational police support services function of Interpol. At its headquarters, Interpol has a Command and Co-ordination Centre (CCC), which links the General Secretariat, regional offices, and NCBs, and serves as the first point of contact.

When a member country faces a disaster, it contacts the CCC, which deploys incident response teams or disaster victim identification (DVI) teams to the sites of natural disasters or terrorist attacks. Interpol provides all its member countries with instant, direct access to a variety of databases, including DNA profiles and fingerprints to enhance the capacity of member countries to effectively combat terrorism, or for DVI. Interpol maintains lists of known or suspected terrorists and has implemented antiterrorist projects in vulnerable countries. A special unit at Interpol headquarters works with the close cooperation of regional offices and NCBs to implement various antibioterrorism projects.

When the earthquake-induced Asian tsunami caused devastation on December 26, 2004, the CCC proactively contacted the affected countries to offer Interpol's assistance. Interpol alerted its network of international DVI teams, and immediately deployed an international response team to Thailand to begin coordination and data management work on the ground. Later, Indonesia and Sri Lanka also accepted offers of teams. Interpol set up a crisis support group (CSG) at the General Secretariat, to coordinate resourcing and deployment of more than 2,000 personnel from 31 countries for the Thai Tsunami Victim Identification Information Management Centre (TTVI-IMC).

Joseph Scanlon, in his paper "Dealing With the Tsunami Dead: Unprecedented International Co-operation published in the *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*," details the initial problems of coordination faced by DVI teams from different countries, which were later resolved. The DVI teams had positively identified 3,000 of the 3,750 victims recorded by the TTVI-IMC. The Asian tsunami response was the biggest single operational response in Interpol's history, providing extensive coordination, logistics, communications, and forensic support to authorities in the countries hit by the tsunami. The CSG became the model for Interpol's future response to member countries in the event of large-scale disasters. However, the United States after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and Pakistan after its earthquake the same year, refused foreign DVI assistance.

See Also: Cooperation Between Civilian and Military Agencies; Domestic Corruption in International Disasters; Hurricane Katrina (2005); Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004); Police Departments; World War II.

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Istanbul Terrorist Attacks (2003)

One of the deadliest terrorist attacks in Europe in recent years, the Istanbul terrorist attacks are characterized by two separate bombings: the first on November 15, 2003, and the second on November 20, leaving 57 people dead and around 700 people wounded. Because the event occurred in Istanbul, the largest cultural and economic city in Turkey, the event was named the Istanbul Terrorist Attacks or the Istanbul Bombings. While some national, regional, and international terrorist groups claimed responsibility for the strikes, those claims were denied by Turkish officials, and it is still not completely clear today who stood behind the bombings.

The bombing on Saturday morning, November 15, targeted two synagogues, Neve Shalom and Beth Israel, which were exceptionally full on that day. The attack was carried out by two trucks filled with explosives made of ammonium sulfate and nitrate, mixed with fuel oil. The two blasts, which hit the synagogues almost simultaneously, killed 27 people (six Jews among them) and left approximately 300 others injured. Despite the fact that the blast targeted Jews, most of the victims were Turkish Muslims. Initially, a Turkish terrorist group called the Islamic Great Eastern Raiders Front (IBDA-C) claimed responsibility for the event, though Turkish officials denied it on the grounds that the group did not have the resources and was not capable of carrying out such an event. The Turkish Hizbullah was also among groups claiming credit for the strikes.