

## **INTERPOL's contribution in preparation for the preparatory meeting for the Tenth meeting of the United Nations Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of Sea**

Acts of maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia are crimes involving multiple jurisdictions, and to be effective police efforts need to be coordinated across these jurisdictions. INTERPOL, as a global police organization with National Central Bureaus in all its 187 member countries, including all countries involved in anti-piracy efforts off the coast of Somalia, is in a position to bring significant added value to international efforts to combat this type of crime. In addition, in a 1987 Resolution, the Organization's General Assembly, its highest decision-making body, has urged its member countries to cooperate through INTERPOL channels in combating maritime piracy.

Furthermore, on 6 January 2006, INTERPOL and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) signed a cooperation agreement focusing on activities relating to: unlawful acts against the safety of maritime navigation and in combating, among other things, terrorism, piracy and armed robbery against ships; the transportation of illegal migrants by sea; the smuggling on board ships and trafficking of drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals; the resolution of stowaway cases and pollution from ships. This agreement provides INTERPOL and IMO with the necessary legal framework to exchange information and engage in technical cooperation and joint initiatives

INTERPOL is the lead international organization to facilitate international police cooperation and assist law enforcement. As a result, INTERPOL is both willing and able, as part of a larger international effort in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, to offer the use of its global tools and services, such as the I-24/7 global secure police communications network, its Command and Coordination Centre for multi-lingual support to international efforts and the investigative expertise available in both its General Secretariat and its Regional Bureau in Nairobi, that caters to specific regional policing needs in Eastern Africa.

Currently, INTERPOL does not hold sufficient specific and actionable law enforcement information relating to maritime piracy, its perpetrators or the groups behind this activity, but a number of measures are underway to address this situation. It is envisaged that, once more information becomes available to INTERPOL, all identifying details of perpetrators of acts of maritime piracy (including nominal information, photographs, fingerprints, and travel and identity documents – as far as made available) will be entered into INTERPOL's (already existing) global police databases, enabling the global law enforcement community to directly access this information for investigative purposes. However, key to this effort is a joint approach by all involved stakeholders and the development of mechanisms, with the support of the United Nations, to ensure that specific information is made available to law enforcement in a manner that will enable police at the national, regional and global level to act upon that information. *INTERPOL considers the UN Security Council-endorsed' UNODC proposal to put forward international agreements allowing law enforcement agencies from the Horn of Africa region to join warships as 'ship riders' as an important*

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<sup>1</sup> Security Council Resolution 1851 (2008)

*step in enabling law enforcement efforts against maritime piracy, and is committed to support that effort and provide any needed assistance to ensure that these officers are in the best possible position to effectively fulfil their duties.*

Other specific services INTERPOL is willing to offer include:

- INTERPOL's Regional Bureau in Nairobi can organize and host operational meetings for Maritime Police Units in the region (Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania and Djibouti have such units) and create a network of dedicated contact officers.
- In cooperation with the regional centers to combat piracy, INTERPOL can assist in the collection of intelligence about organized piracy groups and *explore whether it is feasible, and on the condition that the UN would support such an effort, to become a contact for any intelligence collected by the military (in the course of their patrolling activities) that is destined for law enforcement.*
- At a later stage, other police support activities could be considered to enhance INTERPOL support to law enforcement efforts against maritime piracy. These could include:
  - Development of a training guide destined for Maritime Police to enhance investigative capacity.
  - Providing investigative and analytical training to dedicated staff within Maritime Police Units, and assisting them in creating a criminal database on maritime piracy.
- Reactivate and strengthen INTERPOL's global secure police communication system (I-24/7) at the INTERPOL National Central Bureau in Mogadishu to enhance communication with Somali law enforcement.
- Production of regular alert bulletins for law enforcement on Modus Operandi and suspected vessels.

It is believed, through the action items listed above, INTERPOL can play a role, along with regional and other global partners, in ensuring that the global law enforcement community will be in a stronger position to bring perpetrators of maritime piracy to justice.