



Department of Justice

STATEMENT OF

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

BEFORE THE

**UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
(THE HELSINKI COMMISSION)**

AT A HEARING ENTITLED

**“OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO LOCATING AND IDENTIFYING MISSING
PERSONS AS A RESULT OF ARMED CONFLICT, NATURAL OR MAN-MADE
DISASTERS, GENOCIDE, AND OTHER CAUSES”**

PRESENTED

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**Statement of
Shawn Bray
Deputy Director
United States National Central Bureau, INTERPOL
Department of Justice**

**Before the
United States Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
(The Helsinki Commission)**

**At a Hearing Entitled
“Overcoming Obstacles to Locating and Identifying Missing Persons as a Result of Armed
Conflict, Natural or Man-Made Disasters, Genocide, and Other Causes”**

February 28, 2012

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and other distinguished members of the commission. It is an honor to appear before you today to discuss how INTERPOL, the International Criminal Police Organization, is helping overcome obstacles to locating and identifying missing persons around the world as well as here at home.

My name is Shawn Bray, and I am the Deputy Director of the United States National Central Bureau of INTERPOL, which is also known as INTERPOL Washington. I come to INTERPOL Washington as a Senior Criminal Investigator detailed from United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, where I have served for more than 20 years.

A component of the Department of Justice that is co-managed by the Department of Homeland Security, INTERPOL Washington is the statutorily-designated representative to INTERPOL on behalf of the Attorney General. As such, it is the official point of contact for all INTERPOL-related matters in the United States.

Although known primarily for its work in locating and apprehending transnational criminals and fugitives, INTERPOL plays an important role in responding to requests for humanitarian assistance that may involve such matters as missing persons, victim identification, death notification, threatened suicides, and health and welfare checks on United States citizens overseas, and foreign nationals in the United States

Using a sophisticated communications network, INTERPOL provides the world’s law enforcement authorities with access to a variety of tools and resources that are being used to great effect in these humanitarian efforts, either as part of an individual inquiry or investigation, or in response to a large-scale disaster.

One of INTERPOL’s most important functions is to enable the world’s police to exchange investigative information quickly and securely. Accordingly, INTERPOL has developed “I-24/7”, an encrypted, Internet-based communications network that facilitates police-

to-police interaction in real time, and enables users in 190 member countries to share crucial police data and access INTERPOL databases and services.

Services that are currently available through I-24/7 include a secure messaging capability and direct access to INTERPOL databases containing Nominal information – fingerprints, photographs, DNA profiles, and biographical details contained on subjects of INTERPOL Notices. Color-coded to indicate their specific purpose, INTERPOL Notices are distributed to law enforcement authorities in INTERPOL member countries for purposes that include, but are not limited to, locating and seeking the arrest of fugitives (red), locating missing persons or helping identify persons who are not able to identify themselves (yellow), and seeking information about unidentified deceased persons (black).

These very systems, which have allowed INTERPOL to locate and apprehend serious and violent criminal offenders around the world, also enable the organization to provide real-time assistance in locating and identifying missing persons, as well as others who are of official interest or concern to law enforcement.

For example, INTERPOL is currently implementing the “FAST ID” system. This system began with a realization that no centralized, truly global police database existed for use in identifying missing persons and/or unidentified bodies (“MPUB”). Accordingly, INTERPOL began development of an MPUB database with the objective of providing decentralized access to it, through I-24/7, for use in conjunction with large-scale disasters and regular policing activities.

Data used in the FAST ID system will be obtained from INTERPOL’s Ante-Mortem and Post-Mortem Disaster Victim Identification (“DVI”) forms, together with information provided in the corresponding Yellow Notice and Black Notice, as appropriate.

Once entered, the data will be processed through three separate components designed to establish a positive identification. The system integration component merges data collected from the notice. The secondary identifier component collects important secondary identifying information such as clothing, body markings or piercings, jewelry, or facial recognition. The main identifier component collects primary identifying information such as fingerprints, DNA, and dental records.

INTERPOL launched the prototype of the FAST ID system in 2011. Interactive testing of the system is currently being conducted with the objective of moving to the full test phase with volunteer member countries starting in 2012. When fully operational, FAST ID will be accessible to assist police and DVI teams in all 190 INTERPOL member countries through I-24/7.

DVI is another well-developed capability offered through INTERPOL. DVI involves the process of identifying victims of major disasters such as terrorist attacks or earthquakes where visual recognition is not possible, or is severely limited. Under these circumstances, comparison

of fingerprints, dental records, or stored DNA samples are typically required to obtain a conclusive identification.

INTERPOL's DVI services include command and coordination assistance, and fully-deployable Incident Response Teams that can provide on-site investigative support or direct connectivity to INTERPOL's investigative and forensic databases.

INTERPOL's DVI activities are led by the organization's Standing Committee on Disaster Victim Identification. This committee is comprised of forensic and police experts from around the world that meet regularly to discuss improvements to standards and procedures in DVI matters. INTERPOL's standards and guidelines for DVI are backed by specific training programs that include Victim Care and Family Support; Compliance with International Standards and Forensic Quality Assurance Controls; Information Sharing and Exchange, and Operational Assistance to Countries Which Lack DVI Capacity.

I am also pleased to report that in 2014, INTERPOL will open its INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation, or IGCI. This state-of-the-art facility will focus on innovative research and capacity building for law enforcement agencies world-wide. One of its primary functions will be to enhance INTERPOL's DVI forensic capabilities, which will serve as a global resource for ensuring adequate levels of disaster preparedness.

INTERPOL actively supports its member countries' law enforcement efforts to investigate serious transnational crimes, including genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. INTERPOL's Fugitive Investigative Support ("FIS") sub-directorate focuses on three key areas of assistance to support its member countries in the investigation of these crimes: operational support, networking, and training.

While operational support is achieved through the publication of INTERPOL Red Notices, an international alert for locating and apprehending fugitives and wanted persons, training support is also provided that enhances law enforcement agencies' proficiency in processing forensic evidence related to mass atrocities – skills that are necessary in locating, recovering, and identifying victim remains, and successfully prosecuting the perpetrators of these horrific crimes.

Within the United States, INTERPOL Washington utilizes I-24/7 and the INTERPOL Notice System to support domestic and foreign law enforcement efforts to locate missing and abducted children, missing adults, and unidentified deceased persons.

For example, within the framework of its Missing and Abducted Children's Program, INTERPOL Washington publishes Yellow Notices and diffusions to seek the location and safe return of missing children to their parents. Similarly, incoming requests from our foreign law enforcement counterparts are entered into appropriate United States indices, including notification to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children ("NCMEC"). This

information is promptly shared with law enforcement agencies in regard to children who are missing, removed from, or brought to the United States by a non-custodial parent. In furthering these efforts, INTERPOL Washington coordinates with the State Department's Office of Children's Issues, which manages complimentary Hague Convention cases.

Through its International Missing Person Program, INTERPOL Washington's Alien/Fugitive Division uses Yellow Notices to facilitate the location and identification of persons over the age of 18 who have been reported missing by domestic and foreign law enforcement agencies. Similarly, through its International Unidentified Dead Body Program, the Alien/Fugitive Division uses INTERPOL Black Notices and direct inquiries to assist in identifying the remains of unidentified deceased persons recovered by law enforcement authorities worldwide.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of this commission, the theme of today's testimony is how we can overcome obstacles to locating and identifying persons who have become missing due to a variety of causes. As we are all aware, efforts to locate and identify missing persons oftentimes have an international dimension that requires a truly international response.

In order to respond effectively, United States law enforcement authorities and their foreign counterparts must be able to overcome the very real linguistic, cultural, and legal barriers that complicate the exchange of investigative information and support across national administrations and boundaries.

As the world's largest international police organization, INTERPOL provides the necessary communications network, framework for police cooperation, and investigative tools and services that are essential to success. As the United States National Central Bureau of INTERPOL, INTERPOL Washington is an active partner in domestic and international law enforcement efforts to ensure the timely location and identification of persons who become missing for any reason.

Thank you.