

Operation Infra: INTERPOL's Global Manhunt

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TJMUN

High School Specialized Agency

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to Operation Infra: INTERPOL's Global Manhunt! INTERPOL (International Criminal Police Organization) is the world's largest international police organization, with 195 member countries. Founded in 1923, INTERPOL facilitates cross-border police cooperation and crime control. Unlike popular depictions in the media, INTERPOL does not possess its own agents who make arrests; rather, it serves as a global network that supports national police forces. Operation Infra (International Fugitive Round-up and Arrest) is one of INTERPOL's key global initiatives targeting high-profile fugitives and transnational criminal networks. Since 2009, it has provided a framework for international police cooperation, enabling coordinated manhunts across borders. As representatives of INTERPOL member nations, you will be tackling some of the most complex challenges in international law enforcement. We hope that you all will demonstrate diplomacy, professionalism, and creativity as you work to tackle pressing issues and make our world a safer place. We have an exciting, fast-paced weekend planned, and we are looking forward to meeting you all in person!

Shanna Chung and Justin Kim

Co-Chairs, Operation Infra: INTERPOL's Global Manhunt, 2025

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Operation Infra - Narc: Combating Transnational Drug Trafficking by Mafia Syndicates

Background

Transnational drug trafficking remains one of the most lucrative and destabilizing activities of organized crime groups, generating an estimated \$426-652 billion annually, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Multiple mafia syndicates, including the Italian 'Ndrangheta, Mexican cartels, and Balkan crime groups, dominate the global narcotics trade, leveraging vast expanses of logistical networks, economic corruption, and violence to maintain their underground operations. These groups ultimately hold the upper hand in controlling the production, transportation, and distribution of illicit substances, leading to the fueling of addiction crises, public health challenges, and widespread violence.

Such mafia organizations exploit weak governance, porous borders, and financial loopholes to sustain their drug trafficking empires. The stage of global narcotics trade is facilitated through well-established routes that span South America, West Africa, Europe, and Asia. Syndicates often utilize maritime shipping, private aircraft, and underground tunnels to evade law enforcement. The infiltration of legal economies—through money laundering, bribery, and intimidation—further enforces their power, making it extremely difficult to dismantle these organizations.

The consequences of unchecked drug trafficking extends beyond firsthand law enforcement concerns. Narcotics-related violence destabilizes entire regions, while corruption undermines judicial and political institutions. Additionally, the public health impact of drug abuse places a significant strain on medical systems, particularly in countries struggling with opioid, methamphetamine, and cocaine epidemics. As organized crime groups continue to refine their methods in narcotics trade, the international community faces growing challenges in

disrupting supply chains, dismantling trafficking networks, and addressing the root causes of the global drug trade.

Relevant Issues

The ever-evolving landscape of transnational drug trafficking presents countless challenges for law enforcement and policymakers. While traditional trafficking relies on large-scale shipments, criminal organizations have adapted by using decentralized networks, encrypted communications, and dark web marketplaces to distribute narcotics. Fentanyl and synthetic opioids which can be manufactured in small, understated labs, further complicate interdiction efforts due to their high potency and ease of distribution.

Corruption remains a critical enabler of drug trafficking. Criminal organizations, like robber barons, systematically bribe law enforcement officials, customs agents, and politicians to facilitate operations and avoid persecution. In regions where institutions are weak, traffickers effectively co-opt government structures, reducing the effectiveness and liability of anti-narcotics policies and law enforcement interventions.

Furthermore, the use of violence and intimidation to control territory and eliminate rivals exacerbates security crises. Countries like Mexico and Colombia have seen staggering levels of homicide linked to cartel conflicts, while European cities are experiencing increased gang-related violence tied to the cocaine trade. The social and economic costs of drug-related crime—ranging from prison overcrowding to the economic burden on healthcare and rehabilitation services—emphasizes the urgency of international cooperation in addressing the problem.

Past and Current Action

Countless international initiatives have sought to combat drug trafficking, but challenges have persisted due to the adaptability of criminal organizations and inconsistencies in global

enforcement. Agencies such as INTERPOL, the UNODC, and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) have led efforts in intelligence-sharing, coordinated law enforcement operations, and capacity building programs in affected countries.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has also played a significant role in targeting the financial networks of traffickers, working to prevent money laundering and cut off the flow of illicit profits. Regional initiatives, such as the EU's European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the African Union's Plan of Action on Drug Control, have aimed to address trafficking routes and public health implications within their respective areas.

Despite these efforts, drug trafficking remains a resilient enterprise, with traffickers continuously exploiting gaps in international cooperation and technological advancements. The need for innovative and adaptive strategies is greater than ever.

Possible Solutions

Given the transnational nature of drug trafficking, a multifaceted approach is necessary to combat its influence. Enhanced international cooperation, including intelligence-sharing agreements and joint task forces, can improve the detection and disruption of trafficking networks. Strengthening judicial and law enforcement institutions in vulnerable regions is critical to reducing corruption and enhancing prosecution efforts.

The role of technology in combating drug trafficking must also be considered. Machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) can assist in identifying trafficking patterns, while blockchain technology can be leveraged to improve transparency in supply chain monitoring. Law enforcement agencies must also improve their ability to monitor the dark web and encrypted communications, where many drug transactions now occur.

Additionally, addressing the demand side of the problem is just as crucial as disrupting supply. Public health strategies centered towards prevention, harm reduction, and rehabilitation programs can help mitigate the societal impact of drug abuse. Investments in economic development and alternative livelihood programs in drug-producing regions can further reduce the incentive for communities to participate in illicit economies.

Questions to Consider:

- 1) How can international agencies and national governments improve coordination to combat transnational drug trafficking more effectively?
- 2) What measures can be implemented to address corruption in law enforcement and government institutions that facilitate drug trafficking?
- 3) How can technological advancements be used to track and disrupt drug supply chains more efficiently, without interfering with border policies?
- 4) What strategies can be developed to combat the use of dark web marketplaces and encrypted communications for drug transactions?
- 5) How can economic and public health approaches be integrated into drug control strategies to create long-term solutions?

Helpful Links:

- 1) <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking/index.html>
- 2) <https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Drug-trafficking>
- 3) <https://www.unodc.org/southasia/frontpage/2012/August/drug-trafficking-a-business-affeting-communities-globally.html>

Operation Infra - Lux: Disrupting Money Laundering and Financial Crimes by Organized Crime Groups

Background

Money laundering – making illegally obtained funds appear legitimate – is critical to organized crime operations. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that 2-5% of global GDP (\$800 billion to \$2 trillion) is laundered annually. This flow of illicit funds undermines economies, distorts markets, and provides criminal organizations with resources to expand operations and evade justice. The three-stage process of placement, layering, and integration allows criminal enterprises to distance themselves from illegal sources of income while continuing to access and utilize these funds for both legitimate and illicit purposes.

Transnational criminal groups employ sophisticated financial operations, using complex corporate structures, offshore jurisdictions, and cryptocurrency to conceal criminal proceeds. These networks exploit regulatory gaps between national financial systems and inconsistent international standards. According to the Financial Action Task Force, globalization of financial markets and technological advances have created new opportunities for criminals to hide illicit funds. The rise of digital payment systems and virtual assets has further complicated detection efforts, as criminal organizations quickly adapt to emerging technologies that offer anonymity and cross-border capabilities without traditional financial oversight.

The consequences of unchecked money laundering extend beyond economic harm to threaten global security and stability. Laundered funds finance terrorism, corruption, human trafficking, and other serious crimes that undermine governance and social structures worldwide. In regions with already fragile institutions, these activities can severely impact development efforts and contribute to state instability. Additionally, legitimate businesses struggle to compete

with criminal enterprises that operate with artificially low costs due to their illicit funding sources, creating market distortions that harm economic growth and employment.

International cooperation represents the cornerstone of effective anti-money laundering efforts, as financial crimes increasingly transcend national boundaries. Organizations like INTERPOL, the Financial Action Task Force, and United Nations agencies coordinate global responses through information sharing, joint operations, and technical assistance programs. Despite these collaborative frameworks, significant challenges remain in harmonizing legislation across jurisdictions, addressing the risks of emerging financial technologies, and strengthening capacity in vulnerable regions. As criminal organizations continue to evolve their methods, the international community must enhance cooperation and develop innovative approaches to disrupt the financial lifeblood of organized crime.

Relevant Issues

The landscape of money laundering has transformed dramatically, with criminal organizations developing increasingly sophisticated methods. While traditional money laundering followed the three-stage process of placement, layering, and integration, modern techniques have evolved substantially. Cryptocurrency and digital assets have become powerful tools for obscuring illicit funds, offering pseudonymous transactions that can be difficult to trace. Criminal networks further complicate investigations by using mixing services, privacy-focused cryptocurrencies, and decentralized exchanges without Know Your Customer requirements. Simultaneously, trade-based money laundering represents another significant challenge, as criminals manipulate legitimate international trade to move value across borders through falsified invoices, phantom shipments, and complex multi-country transactions that exploit the overwhelming volume of global trade.

Professional enablers – including lawyers, accountants, real estate agents, and financial advisors – facilitate sophisticated money laundering operations by establishing complex corporate structures, creating offshore arrangements, and providing a veneer of legitimacy to criminal activities. The real estate sector has become particularly vulnerable, with criminals investing billions in property markets worldwide to launder large sums while generating legitimate rental income. In many jurisdictions, real estate transactions face less scrutiny than banking operations, creating opportunities for criminals to invest with minimal oversight, while high-value assets serve as effective vehicles for integrating criminal proceeds into the legitimate economy.

Fragmented international financial regulations and technological disparities create significant jurisdictional challenges for law enforcement agencies attempting to combat financial crimes that deliberately span multiple jurisdictions. Variations in legal definitions, evidentiary standards, and procedural requirements complicate prosecution efforts and create safe havens for criminal organizations. Furthermore, investigating modern money laundering schemes requires specialized digital forensics, advanced data analytics, and extensive training that many jurisdictions lack. These resource and capability gaps undermine the global financial system's integrity as sophisticated criminal networks strategically target the weakest links in the international regulatory chain, highlighting the critical need for enhanced international cooperation and capacity building in the fight against financial crimes.

Possible Solutions

Building on existing frameworks, delegates should consider how international cooperation could be enhanced to address the inherently cross-border nature of financial crimes.

The current patchwork of agreements provides a foundation, but gaps remain that criminals routinely exploit. Potential innovations in information sharing and joint operations could strengthen the global response while respecting national sovereignty.

Technology presents both challenges and opportunities in this fight, while the private sector plays a crucial role in both facilitating and potentially preventing money laundering. Delegates should explore technological solutions and new models of public-private partnership that go beyond current frameworks to create more effective collaboration against financial crimes.

Capacity building and legal harmonization remain essential components for creating a truly global response to money laundering. The significant disparities in resources and regulatory approaches create vulnerabilities that criminal organizations systematically exploit. Delegates might consider priority areas for greater consistency and sustainable approaches to strengthening capabilities in under-resourced jurisdictions while respecting different legal traditions and sovereignty concerns.

Questions to Consider:

- 1) How can countries better share information about suspected money laundering activities across borders while respecting privacy and sovereignty concerns?
- 2) What role should the private sector (banks, tech companies, real estate firms) play in preventing money laundering, and how can we encourage their cooperation?
- 3) How can the international community help developing nations build the technical capacity and expertise needed to combat sophisticated financial crimes?
- 4) What specific technologies could be developed or implemented to better track and prevent money laundering through cryptocurrencies and digital assets?

- 5) How might international standards for anti-money laundering be strengthened without imposing unrealistic burdens on countries with limited resources?

Helpful Links:

- 1) <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/money-laundering/overview.html>
- 2) <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/Financial-Integrity/amlcft>
- 3) <https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Financial-crime/Money-laundering>



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