

BORDER SECURITY REPORT

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THE JOURNAL OF BORDER SECURITY AND TRANSNATIONAL CRIME FOR THE WORLD'S BORDER
PROTECTION, MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY INDUSTRY POLICY-MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS

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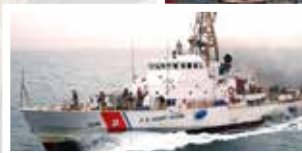
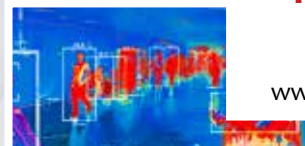


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the rise of transnational crime, including human trafficking and smuggling, adds another layer of complexity to border security. Austrian authorities must balance the need for stringent controls with the imperative to uphold human rights and international obligations.

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T: +44 (0) 7786 270 820

Bruce Bassin
Americas
E: bruceb@torchmarketing.co.uk
T: +1 702.600.4651

Jerome Merite
France
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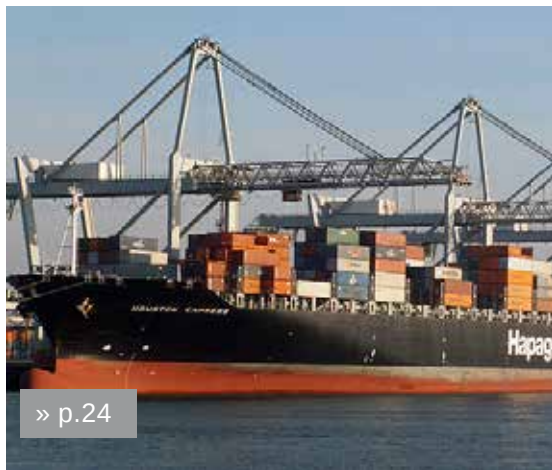
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CONTACTS

Editorial:

Tony Kingham

E: tonyk@border-security-report.com**Assistant Editor:**

Neil Walker

E: neilw@torchmarketing.co.uk**Design, Marketing & Production:**

Neil Walker

E: neilw@torchmarketing.co.uk**Subscriptions:**

Tony Kingham

E: tonyk@border-security-report.com

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Are we ready for the next pandemic?



As memories of the COVID-19 pandemic begin to fade and, other seemingly more pressing crises take our time, attention and resources, are we losing sight of the fact that pandemics are the biggest threat to life and the pursuit of happiness? After all, COVID-19, with 7 million deaths, is arguably the single biggest killer since WWII, and the next pandemic could be something worse.

In recent weeks, a new highly contagious strain of Covid-19, known as NB .1.8.1 first identified in China, has now appeared in the US and Europe, raising fears of a new wave of COVID.

So, are we ready for the next pandemic?

Well, in some ways of course we are better prepared. We learnt a lot about developing and distributing vaccines, about prevention and response within societies once a pathogen takes hold. We also learnt some hard lessons about the logistics associated with managing large scale outbreaks. Who can forget the unseemly international scramble for PPE and the distribution of vaccines once they became available!?

We also now have emerging technologies such as AI, which will become increasingly important in speeding up the process of developing vaccines, early warning systems, modelling the spread of new diseases, assessing the effectiveness of intervention strategies, and in predicting hotspots for the allocation of resources.

But it is clear from the data, that those countries that closed their borders quickly and imposed strict quarantines on arrivals, fared much better than those countries that waited.

So, it seems obvious that there is a need for international collaboration and agreement on how to manage future pandemics, with border closures as part of an agreed policy to slow the spread of pathogens. But there seems to be very little consensus and no development in international border management protocols.

Some progress has been made, including the WHO International Health Regulations the Joint External Evaluation, the Global Health Security Agenda and finally the Pandemic Agreement, but none of these have resulted in any agreement on border management policy.

Without an international agreement on a set of border protocols that are implemented on an agreed set of triggers, we all remain vulnerable.

Maybe we won't see another pandemic in our lifetime, but it could be next month or next year, nobody knows!

Tony Kingham
Editor

Government of Nigeria Validates the 2025 National Migration Policy



In a significant milestone for migration governance, the Government of Nigeria has officially validated the revised National Migration Policy (NMP) 2025 and its Integrated Implementation Plan during a high-level meeting held in Abuja on April 29, 2025—demonstrating its unwavering commitment to harnessing the promise of migration for national development.

The validation followed a one-day Technical Working Group meeting which brought together multiple representatives from key Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), civil society organizations, and the United Nations Network on Migration.

“The revised Policy seeks to strengthen institutional coherence, mainstream international best practices, and reinforce national ownership of migration governance”, said the Honourable Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, Professor Nentawe Yilwatda, represented by Dr. Yusuf Tano Sununu, Honourable Minister of State, during the validation ceremony.

In Nigeria, with over 216 million people, both internal and international migration are growing in complexity. These migration dynamics, characterized by an increase in rural-to-urban migration, the rise of “Japa” phenomenon, and labour migration, among others, are driven by multiple factors including economic aspirations, environmental challenges, insecurity, and the desire for social mobility. The potential for migration in Nigeria is also evident in the ever-growing volume of remittances, which in 2023, amounted to a staggering USD 19.5 billion — money that sustains families and contributes to the country’s development.

The first National Migration Policy was developed in 2015,

marking a foundational step in Nigeria’s effort to build a comprehensive and coordinated approach to migration management. Since then, the country has recorded numerous successes, including the establishment of migration governance structures, the creation of numerous migration-related policies and agencies. Notable among them are the revision of the National Policy on Labour Migration in 2020, the establishment of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM) in 2017, and the strengthening of inter-agency collaboration through platforms like the National Migration Working Group. These achievements have enhanced Nigeria’s ability to respond to complex migration challenges and protect the rights of migrants.

Shaped by data and developed through a consultative process, the 2025 National Migration Policy and its Integrated Implementation Plan aim to respond to the contemporary challenges of migration in Nigeria, while developing innovative approaches to harnessing its potential. The revision of the policy was guided by the Principles of the Sustainable Development Goals and Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), offering a contemporary framework that accurately represents the current migration landscape in Nigeria.

Speaking on the methodology behind the revised framework, Mr. Aliyu Tijani Ahmed, Honourable Federal Commissioner of the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), remarked:

“It is noteworthy that the Integrated Implementation Plan was developed following the United Nations Network on Migration’s six-step guidance for implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)”. He further emphasized the strategic alignment of the policy and the plan, adding “This integrated approach ensures that Nigeria’s migration policy framework is not only nationally driven but is also in alignment with global migration governance principles”.

Upon validation from stakeholders in the technical group, both documents will be forwarded to the Federal Executive Council (FEC) for adoption.

The review and the validation of the National Migration Policy and Integrated Implementation is supported by the Migration Multipartner Trust Fund (M-MPTF).

SMART BORDERS, SAFER PATHWAYS: LEVERAGING AI AND SHARED NON-SENSITIVE DATA TO COUNTER SMUGGLING NETWORK

By Donato Colucci, Head Border and Identity Solutions Unit, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Document and identity fraud have become key tools used by transnational organized crime syndicates to facilitate irregular migration. Fraudulent or counterfeit passports and identity fraud enable smugglers to move migrants illegally across borders. Globalization and unprecedented mobility have accelerated migration flows, often outpacing the ability of many States

to respond effectively. Critical gaps in reliable data and analysis further hinder efforts: law enforcement agencies frequently lack timely, comparable information on smuggling patterns. When data do exist, they are typically siloed by country or agency. As IOM notes, “data collected by various actors lack comparability and interoperability,” and are seldom shared beyond narrow bilateral

channels. These gaps in data collection, analysis, and information sharing significantly hamper the identification of vulnerable migrants and the coordination of investigations into organized smuggling networks. In short, while criminal networks adapt quickly, authorities remain constrained by limited data and fragmented collaboration.

Smuggling of Migrants: a global phenomenon

Despite national efforts, document and identity fraud continue to underpin large-scale irregular migration in the Asia-Pacific region, often orchestrated by highly adaptable smuggling networks. High-profile cases, such as the dismantling of a transnational ring in Southeast Asia in 2023 that forged travel documents for labour migrants headed to Australia and Japan, show how organized crime exploits weaknesses in border control and visa systems (Interpol, 2023). These networks use counterfeit visas, stolen or altered passports, and fraudulent breeder documents, exploiting border systems that are not equipped to address the complexity of transnational smuggling modus operandi, further exacerbated by insufficient verification tools. Many frontline officers lack specialized training and real-time access to international databases needed to detect sophisticated forgeries, particularly as criminals increasingly rely on digital manipulation and identity theft (UNODC, 2023).

In the Western Balkans, the region's



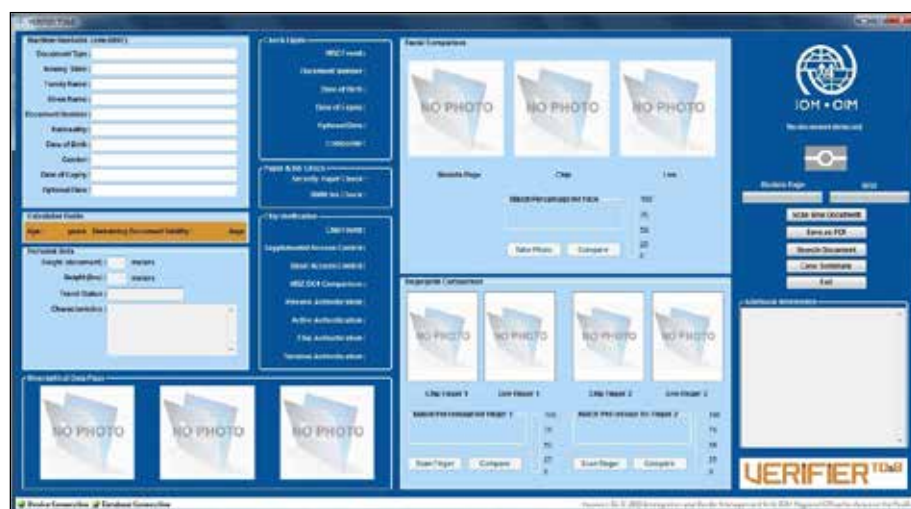
role as a major transit route into the European Union makes it especially vulnerable to document fraud. Smuggling networks frequently exploit inconsistencies in travel document standards, language barriers, and varying levels of technical infrastructure among border agencies. In 2024, Europol supported operations targeting a Balkan-based syndicate that produced high-quality fake identity cards for use along the Eastern Mediterranean route (Europol, 2024). These actors stay ahead of enforcement by constantly shifting their routes and exploiting bilateral blind spots between countries. The lack of standardized data-sharing protocols and limited access to advanced document inspection tools further delay timely threat detection (Frontex, 2024).

Similarly, in Latin America, false identities are commonly used by

smugglers facilitating northbound migration. In late 2023, Mexican authorities uncovered a scheme involving forged national IDs and counterfeit passports used to smuggle migrants from South America toward the U.S. border (Reuters, 2023). Criminal networks exploit weak civil registration systems, under-resourced migration authorities, and delays in cross-border intelligence exchange. Many border agencies struggle to keep pace with the speed and digital sophistication of these operations, which often involve remote coordination, online recruitment, and payment via encrypted platforms (IOM, 2023).

IOM's Data Exchange Solution for Counter-smuggling (DESC)

To address these challenges, IOM launched the Data Exchange Solution for Counter-smuggling (DESC), a



global initiative that enables real-time sharing of non-sensitive data on irregular migration trends and smuggling methods. By leveraging AI-powered dashboards, DESC transforms raw migration statistics into actionable intelligence – for example, by identifying emerging smuggling routes or spikes in document and identity fraud – and makes these insights available to law enforcement and policymakers globally.

DESC serves a dual purpose: on one hand, it supports law enforcement by streamlining border processes for legitimate travellers and enabling intelligence-driven operations against smugglers; on the other hand, it provides policymakers with reliable data that offer a comprehensive and accurate understanding of migration dynamics, facilitating the development of well-informed, targeted and effective policies.

DESC rests on four interconnected pillars that strengthen border security:

- 1) **Capacity Development and Training:** DESC provides targeted training for immigration and law enforcement officials to enhance skills and know-how in document examination, data collection, and identity verification. Through training, peer-to-peer exchanges and expert mentoring, border authorities learn to detect fraudulent documents and understand transnational crime patterns. Training is regionally harmonized to allow data comparability and cross-border intelligence sharing. Importantly, all capacity development efforts are grounded in a rights-based and gender-sensitive approach, ensuring effective and humane governance of migration and borders.
- 2) **ICT Tools for Document Verification:** DESC offers a

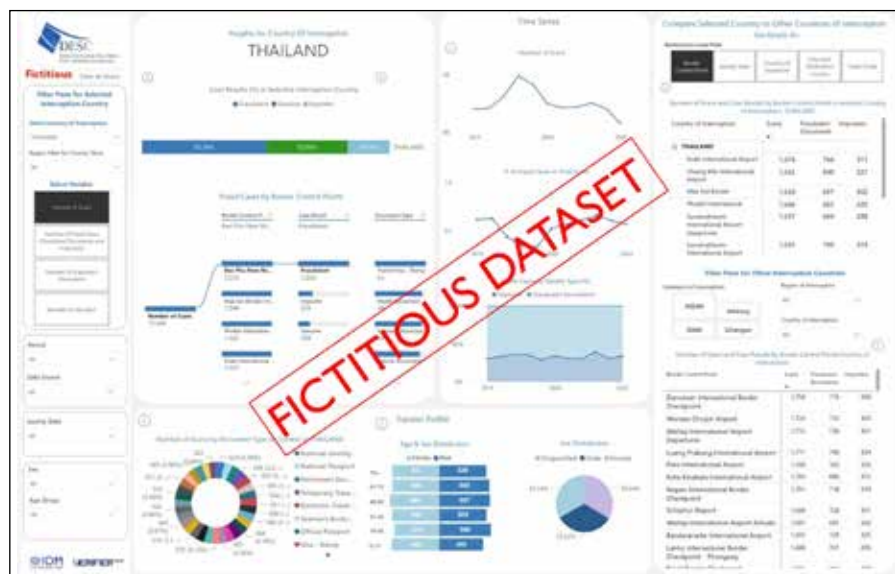
comprehensive suite of digital tools to improve officers' ability to detect fraudulent travel documents and imposters during both primary and secondary line inspections – including document inspection equipment and access to digital reference libraries. The VerifierTD&B (Travel Document & Bearer), for example, is a robust offline application that allows officers to run automated checks on travel document security features, including biometric comparisons, for in-depth secondary screening. It flags inconsistencies that may document forgery or identity fraud and, if requested, can interoperate with INTERPOL's Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD) system. VerifierTD&B also anonymizes detected fraud cases, enabling non-sensitive, disaggregated data to be shared via DESC online eDashboards, which support operational investigations and regional trend analysis. It is worth noting that deploying VerifierTD&B is not mandatory – countries can still benefit from DESC while using their own existing systems or tools.

- 3) **Regional Collaborative Platform:** DESC facilitates the establishment of Regional Networks of Document Experts (RNDE), operational fora where senior experts from participating countries meet regularly to share best practices in document fraud detection, discuss evolving smuggling methods

and set the strategic direction of DESC's agenda. RNDE members coordinate approaches to identity fraud, harmonize responses, identify synergies, and align counter-smuggling strategies. This networked approach ensures that new threats or successes in one country are quickly communicated to neighbouring states, ultimately functioning as a fast and effective knowledge management platform.

4) Data Management and eDashboards: At DESC's core is a shared online platform featuring AI-driven dashboards. Through IOM, participating countries upload standardized, anonymized data on intercepted fraudulent documents and imposters modus operandi, as well as travel routes involved. The eDashboards provide instant analytics for rapid risk assessments. Users can filter data by region, country, or time to visualize trends in document fraud, smuggling routes, and demographic breakdowns. These visual reports allow officials to anticipate shifts in smuggling tactics and allocate financial and human resources accordingly. The platform handles only non-sensitive information, ensuring security while protecting the identities of smuggled migrants.

Together, these pillars create a comprehensive, data-driven ecosystem for counter-smuggling, combining trained officers, modern verification tools, expert networks,



and shared analytics. This enables border agencies to move from reactive enforcement to proactive policing.

IOM's Added Value and Partnerships

IOM is uniquely positioned to lead the DESC Global Initiative. Its international mandate and presence allow it to work directly with governments across regions. Since its inception in 2012 with six Southeast Asian countries, DESC has attracted interest from over eighty others worldwide. IOM's trusted relationships facilitate long-term implementation and capacity development. As a not-for-profit initiative, developed by a leading intergovernmental organization within the UN system – and grounded in humanitarian, evidence-based and human rights-centred approach – DESC is well-positioned

to foster partner confidence and ensuring its responsible use.

IOM avoids duplication by forging strong partnerships:

- A recent Statement of Partnership with UNODC ensures coordination on migrant smuggling, border security, and data analysis.
- DESC's tools are also designed to interoperate with existing systems, such as linking VerifierTD&B to INTERPOL's SLTD database.
- IOM works closely with UNOCT on travel data programs and with regional bodies like Frontex.

IOM's convening power across UN agencies and collaboration with INTERPOL, Frontex, and others fosters synergy and trust, ensuring DESC adds value rather than overlap.

Global Expansion of DESC

DESC is global in scope. In the Asia-Pacific region, twenty-four countries



are already active, with Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tonga preparing to join the Regional Network of Document Experts (RNDE). Kazakhstan deployed VerifierTD&B in 2004, and Armenia's entry in 2025 has spurred growth across Central Asian.

Eighteen European countries are now engaging with IOM on DESC. Finland and the Netherlands have signed agreements, while IOM and Luxembourg have already begun legal steps to formalize cooperation. In-country workshops are scheduled in the Balkan countries.

In East Africa, Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia have expressed interest, and advocacy is ongoing in West and Southern Africa.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, interest is especially strong: thirteen countries are actively discussing participation, with Paraguay leading by scheduling VerifierTD&B installation for early May. Bilateral

meetings with IOM on DESC are pending with more than twenty other countries in the region. DESC is thus well-positioned to connect information flows from Latin America to global partners.

In summary, DESC now spans Europe, Central Asia, East Africa, Asia-Pacific, and the Americas, with each new participant strengthening the global network through data-sharing, context-specific insights and expertise.

Why DESC Matters

- **Operational Impact:** DESC equips law enforcement with tools that if effectively deployed, can dismantle smuggling networks. VerifierTD&B enhances fraud detection, exposes imposters, and aids evidence collection. Shared dashboards and RNDE fora have supported targeted joint operations and transnational case-building.

- **Global Reach and Flexibility:** DESC operates across five continents and adapts to local contexts. From a six-country pilot in 2012 to dozens of active and interested countries today, its flexible, modular approach allows countries to tailor tools and training to national needs while benefiting from collective knowledge.
- **Innovative, Data-Driven Approach:** DESC uses AI and advanced analytics for real-time trend monitoring and risk alerts. Its dashboards answer complex queries instantly, such as identifying the most commonly linked document-issuing countries for fraud. With continuous updates, DESC helps law enforcement agencies stay ahead of smugglers.
- **Sustainability and Resilience:** DESC builds long-term institutional memory and resilience through country-led governance and local data collection. Each country generates national trend reports and contributes to regional insights. DESC fosters communities of practice that outlast any single project cycle.

To conclude, in an increasingly connected world, under IOM's neutral leadership, DESC demonstrates how international cooperation, and innovation can turn data into actionable border security, strengthening border integrity and dismantling criminal networks.

Revised timeline for the EES and ETIAS



EU Home Affairs Ministers endorsed a revised timeline for the implementation of the Entry/Exit System (EES) and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS). The EES is expected to become operational in October 2025. ETIAS is expected to follow in the last quarter of 2026.

The Entry/Exit System (EES) is a new digital border management system for registering non-EU nationals travelling for a short stay, each time they cross the external borders of 29 European countries using the system. The EES will modernise border management

of the Schengen countries, gradually simplify border controls and prevent identity fraud. ETIAS travel authorisation is an entry requirement for non-EU visa-free nationals.

General Approach on the progressive start of operations of the Entry/Exit System

At the same time, on 5 March EU Home Affairs Ministers endorsed Council's General Approach on a progressive start of operations of the EES. Once adopted by the co-legislators, 29 European countries will gradually introduce the EES over a period of six months. This would give border authorities and the transport industry more time to adjust to the new procedures.

Next Steps

Once the Regulation on the progressive start of operations of the EES is adopted and the remaining Member States declare readiness, the Commission will decide on the specific date of the progressive start of the EES, guided by the timeline endorsed by the Home Affairs Ministers.

MAOC-N Strengthens Cooperation with Suriname in the Fight Against International Drug Trafficking

MAOC-N recently visited Suriname to foster closer cooperation in the fight against international drug trafficking.

During the visit, MAOC-N's Executive Director, Sjoerd Top, and the Centre's Dutch Liaison Officer, were received by Suriname's Chief of Police, Bryan Isaacs, and the Attorney General, Garcia Paragsingh.

Discussions focused on developing a strong and effective partnership between MAOC-N and

Surinamese authorities, reinforcing joint efforts to disrupt transnational criminal networks operating across the Atlantic.

Since the visit, initial contacts and exchanges have already taken place, demonstrating a shared commitment to translating dialogue into action. This mission marks a significant step forward in strengthening operational collaboration and international efforts against drug trafficking.

BEYOND FINGERPRINTS: SHOULD EUROPE CONSIDER USING DNA AT ITS BORDERS?

*Exploring Lessons and Options from
Global Practices*
*By Kyle Schroeder is the Regional
Director for Europe/CIS at GTH
(GTH DNA)*

As migration flows continue to test border security worldwide, the use of biometrics for identification has expanded dramatically. Fingerprints and facial recognition systems have become central to migration and border control regimes across many regions. Yet one biometric identifier remains underused in most border environments: DNA.

DNA offers a highly reliable means of identification, particularly valuable in verifying claimed family relationships, uncovering human trafficking networks, contributing to

the resolution of identity fraud cases, and even screening for criminals. In some countries, DNA collection for immigration-related enforcement has been implemented for years, offering potential insights into how this tool can be integrated effectively and responsibly. For Europe, ongoing reforms in migration and asylum policy present a timely opportunity to evaluate whether DNA could play a broader and more complementary role in border security, anti-trafficking efforts, asylum verification, and humanitarian identification efforts.

A Case Study in Operational Deployment: DNA Use in Immigration Contexts

In the United States, legislation enabling traditional DNA collection from immigration detainees was passed in 2005. Implementation advanced gradually, and since 2019, the effort has scaled significantly. According to a 2023 report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), nearly one million DNA samples were collected by immigration enforcement agencies between fiscal years 2020 and 2022.

These samples were collected as part of intake procedures at detention facilities and submitted to the FBI for analysis and subsequent searching against the unsolved crimes or missing persons index in CODIS, the U.S. national DNA database. While the volume of samples is notable, the GAO also reported that only about 37% of individuals encountered by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) had their DNA collected during the fiscal year 2022. The shortfall was partially attributed to the fact that some individuals encountered may not have been subject to the CBP collection mandate. But some of the shortfall was also attributed to operational challenges, including staffing limitations, lack of collection kits, logistical barriers, and varying levels of agency implementation.

Lack of full implementation allows some offenders to fall through the cracks. One publicly reported example was the 2023 case



involving the murder of Rachel Morin in Maryland. The suspect, a Salvadoran national with multiple prior illegal entries, did not have his DNA collected during previous detentions and deportations by DHS. Had DNA collection occurred during these detentions as required by law, authorities likely would have identified him for a separate assault he committed earlier that year before Rachel's murder, thereby possibly preventing her death.

While this particular policy framework is specific to one national context, it offers useful operational lessons. Collection workflows must be standardized and adequately resourced. Moreover, mechanisms must be in place to ensure that DNA profiles are managed in accordance with the rights of migrants, especially those who are later granted asylum or other lawful statuses.

Countries considering similar models must also ensure public

transparency. Public confidence in biometric systems—particularly those that involve sensitive genetic data—depends on clear guidelines around access, retention, and deletion. Without such safeguards, even well-intentioned programs risk losing legitimacy or triggering legal challenges.

Applications of Rapid DNA Technology

Beyond traditional DNA processing, the emergence of Rapid DNA technology has added a new dimension to border operations. Rapid DNA instruments, which can process buccal swab samples and generate profiles in ninety minutes, are being used in certain migration and enforcement settings to verify claimed family relationships.

Where adults and children present themselves as familial units but doubts arise regarding the validity of the relationship, Rapid DNA testing



can be used to assess biological relatedness. Public reporting from the U.S.'s pilot efforts in 2019 indicated that, in some locations, up to 13% of claimed parent-child relationships tested were not biologically accurate. Moreover, after the program was implemented, the CBP saw a dramatic decrease in the number of fraudulent families being detected, highlighting the program's deterrence value.

This technology enables timely determinations, which is especially relevant in high-volume or high-risk environments. Without Rapid DNA, traditional lab-based testing may take weeks or months. During that time, individuals are often released into communities while awaiting outcomes. Rapid DNA reduces this window, potentially mitigating fraud and improving child protection.

In Europe, some countries already conduct familial relationship verification using standard DNA methods in asylum and migration contexts. However, logistical delays in sample transport and laboratory processing can significantly slow down the response. In some jurisdictions, results may take weeks or even months—well beyond the period during which detained migrants are typically held. Introducing Rapid DNA in targeted scenarios—such as at migration hotspots or for cases flagged for possible trafficking—could enhance both speed and accuracy. It could also mean that fraudulent family units are not released into the EU while awaiting traditional DNA results to arrive.

Moreover, the application of this technology could prove particularly useful in protecting vulnerable

populations. Minors arriving at the border unaccompanied or accompanied by unrelated adults are at heightened risk for exploitation. Rapidly verifying claimed family relationships could serve as a protective mechanism—one that aligns with broader child welfare objectives. As with all tools, its implementation must be carefully circumscribed and accompanied by appropriate ethical oversight.

Legal and Ethical Considerations in a European Context

In the European Union, any use of DNA for migration enforcement would need to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (and perhaps even the Law Enforcement Directive - EU Directive 2016/680), which sets stringent requirements for the collection, processing, storage, and deletion of biometric data. Any proposed framework should be:

- Purpose-limited: Restricted to specific, clearly defined objectives such as fraud prevention, protection of minors, or screening for criminals.
- Time-bound: With mechanisms for automatic expungement after a defined period or upon change in immigration status.
- Oversight-enabled: Subject to monitoring by independent data protection authorities.

The EU already maintains a continent-wide DNA data-sharing infrastructure under the Prüm

Convention, primarily used for criminal investigations. Extending the use of DNA to migration contexts would represent a policy shift and would require careful calibration to respect individual rights while supporting broader public interest goals.

Any expansion of DNA use in border contexts would also need to navigate national laws. In some EU member states, domestic legislation restricts the collection of DNA to cases involving suspected criminal offenses. A multi-layered governance framework would be necessary to ensure that DNA collection is lawful, proportionate, and subject to both national and EU-level oversight.

The European Court of Human Rights has previously ruled on the importance of proportionality in biometric data retention (see *S and Marper v. United Kingdom* [2008] ECHR 1581 and *Aycaguer. France* [2017] ECHR (8806/12), ruling that indefinite retention of DNA samples or profiles (taken during arrest) after acquittal or charges being dropped violates the European Convention on Human Rights. In other words, DNA sample and profile retention periods must be defined and proportionate to the underlying crime. Within the context of DNA at borders, one possible policy to address the implications of *S and Marper v. United Kingdom* and *Aycaguer v. France* is either not retaining the DNA profile (in the case of Rapid DNA) or only retaining DNA profiles until a migrant is granted asylum or legal status (traditional DNA).



Current Trends in EU Border Biometrics

The EU recently expanded its border biometrics under the Pact on Migration and Asylum (2024), improving technology platforms like Eurodac, which is central to the processing of asylum seekers and irregular migrants. Reforms to Eurodac under the Pact include expanding the range of individuals subject to biometric collection, collecting additional biometric data (such as facial images), and improving data-sharing mechanisms across member states within the Eurodac system.

However, Eurodac still only includes fingerprints and facial images, which are effective for identity verification of an individual but do not establish biological relationships. This leaves a gap, an inability to quickly confirm familial links or detect attempts to misrepresent identities in kinship-based asylum claims. Integrating

DNA—especially Rapid DNA—into this toolkit could help close a critical gap in the processing of asylum claims involving minors, cases of suspected trafficking, or fraudulent documentation. It could also assist in identifying deceased individuals and facilitating family reunifications in cross-border contexts.

Operational Blueprint: How DNA Could Be Applied at Borders

Should EU policymakers choose to explore this capability further, several technical and operational components could be considered:

1. **Pilot Programs:** Targeted use of DNA testing at specific high-risk entry points such as Lampedusa, Lesbos, or Ceuta/Melilla. These pilots could focus on verifying family units or screening in trafficking investigations.
2. **Limited Scope Deployments:** DNA testing could be reserved for secondary screening processes



where red flags arise—rather than as a blanket requirement.

3. **Data Retention Policies:** Adoption of auto-expungement policies after results are generated, a certain period, or after legal status is granted to ensure proportionality and minimize long-term privacy risks.
 4. **Interoperability with Prüm:** Consideration of how migrant or asylum DNA profiles meeting certain requirements might qualify for sharing within the Prüm network, whether for criminal or non-criminal reasons, or even through INTERPOL's non-criminal sharing network called I-Familia.
 5. **Training and Resources:** Border agencies would require some training and logistical support to integrate DNA collection—particularly Rapid DNA—into their workflows without disrupting primary processing responsibilities.
- The EU could even pool resources

to establish several mobile Rapid DNA response teams (Rapid DNA instruments and workflow installed inside of a van) for deployment to hotspots across the continent. This would provide European countries with Rapid DNA capabilities while sharing costs with other nations that may not need their own equipment but value occasional use when conditions require.

The implementation of these measures would require multi-stakeholder engagement, including border agencies, data protection authorities, civil society organizations, and technical experts. Collaboration would help ensure the development of balanced protocols that align operational effectiveness with human rights principles.

A Technical Tool with Targeted Benefits

DNA is not a standalone solution for migration management, but its unique ability to verify biological

relationships and identify criminal offenders makes it valuable in specific contexts. It can help distinguish legitimate families from those formed under coercion or fraud—supporting both security and humanitarian goals.

As Europe adapts to changing migration dynamics, DNA offers a tool for faster, more accurate decisions in complex cases involving exploitation or identity uncertainty. It could also help screen for criminals entering the continent. With proper safeguards, it could enhance the EU's biometric systems while balancing enforcement needs with human rights protections.

IOM Helps 80,000 Migrants in Libya Through Voluntary Humanitarian Return Assistance



The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Libya has helped 80,000 migrants return home voluntarily and safely since 2015 under its Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) programme which has been a critical lifeline for stranded migrants from 49 different countries across Africa and Asia, offering them a safe and dignified way to return home and rebuild their lives.

The migrants who benefited from VHR included 2,733 victims of trafficking, 843 unaccompanied or separated children and 5,144 migrants with medical needs. Returning migrants receive post-arrival reception assistance in the countries of return

as well as comprehensive reintegration support through individual reintegration assistance packages, including economic, social, and psychosocial support.

“IOM Libya’s staff work around the clock to assist vulnerable migrants in Libya that are in need of urgent protection assistance” said Tauhid Pasha, IOM Libya’s Acting Chief of Mission. “Enabling migrants to make informed choices and ensuring their right to return home is advocated for, the VHR programme offers a glimmer of hope in the face of extreme adversity”.

Libya has long been a key transit and destination country for migrants arriving from across Africa. Unfortunately, many migrants encounter severe hardships and find themselves stranded in Libya with limited options to return home if they wish to do so.

The Voluntary Humanitarian Return Programme provides lifesaving, safe, dignified, and expedited return assistance to migrants in the context of emergency operations with complex security and operational contexts. The programme is funded in Libya by the European Union as well as the Governments of Italy and Switzerland.

Latest study on Europe’s ecstasy market reveals new trends in production and trafficking

Criminal groups in Europe are adapting and expanding MDMA production, refining trafficking methods and extending their reach to new countries and regions. These are among the issues explored in a new analysis — EU Drug Market: MDMA — released by the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA) and Europol.

The joint analysis from the two EU agencies

describes the European market for MDMA (ecstasy), from production and trafficking, to distribution and use. It also details the processes, materials and criminal actors involved at different stages and levels of the market. The findings draw on data and information from the EUDA’s drug monitoring system and from Europol’s operational information on serious and organised crime.

80 arrests and more than 37 700 cultural goods seized in major art trafficking bust



The ninth edition of Operation Pandora, an international operation targeting the trafficking of cultural goods, has led to 80 arrests and the seizure

of 37 727 items including archaeological pieces, artworks, coins and musical instruments.

Codenamed Pandora IX and led throughout 2024, the operation involved law enforcement and customs authorities from 23 countries. It was coordinated by Spain (Guardia Civil), with operational support from Europol, INTERPOL and the WCO through its Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Eastern and Central Europe.

Authorities also confiscated 69 metal detectors and 23 tools commonly used for illegal excavations, underlining the persistent threat of looting to cultural sites.

15 migrant smugglers arrested in multi-stage operation

During an action day conducted in Belgium and Germany, coordinated by Europol, seven suspected members of an internationally operating smuggling network were arrested. One person was arrested in Germany, six in Belgium. This action follows previous hits against migrant smugglers conducted in Poland over the last months, which saw eight individuals arrested in total.

The German investigation began with a routine immigration check in September 2024. Due to irregularities in a driver's documentation, he was

suspected of attempted illegal entry and taken in for questioning. Investigators then found evidence that the driver may have already smuggled and dropped off three non-EU nationals on the same day.

Subsequent investigations gave reason to believe the person was part of an internationally operating migrant smuggling network. There are indications that the network might be responsible for facilitating the illegal entry to Germany and other EU Member States of up to 300 non-EU nationals between 2022 and 2024.

Clandestine lab producing drugs at industrial-scale dismantled in Belgium

A massive laboratory producing synthetic drugs at industrial-scale has been dismantled in a coordinated operation involving the Federal Judicial Police of Limburg, the Belgian Lab Dismantling Team (CRU) and the Forensic Lab Specialists (NICC), supported by Europol. The action day led to the arrest of 3 suspects.

The lab was located in a mansion in a remote area. Two Dutch nationals, who were identified as chemists, were responsible for the drug production, while one Belgian national facilitated the production process. Investigators believe the lab had been operating for more than a year and that it had the capacity to produce hundreds of kilos

of amphetamine and methamphetamine every month.

On the action day, two Europol experts supported national authorities in the field, both members of Europol's Drug Lab Dismantling Team (ELDT). The ELDT is a unique service deployed upon request to assist national specialists and provide on-site technical assistance, chemical detection and operation support. It is equipped with state-of-the-art detection tools and staffed by experts in chemical identification and lab safety.



INTERPOL targets stolen vehicle trafficking in West African police operation



An international police operation targeting vehicle crime in West Africa has led to the detection of approximately 150 stolen vehicles and the seizure of more than 75 vehicles.

Coordinated by INTERPOL and carried out by national

law enforcement agencies in 12 West African countries, the operation – codenamed ‘Safe Wheels’ – also initiated 18 new investigations and uncovered the involvement of two organized crime groups.

Most of the stolen vehicles detected through INTERPOL’s Stolen Motor Vehicle (SMV) database were trafficked from Canada, while many had also been reported stolen in France, Germany and the Netherlands.

INTERPOL’s SMV database allows police in the Organization’s 196 member countries to run a check against a suspicious vehicle and find out instantly whether it has been reported as stolen.

In 2024, around 270,000 vehicles were identified as stolen globally through the SMV database.

Critical measures needed to fight money laundering and terrorist financing

Countries need to take critical measures to target the huge illicit profits generated by drug trafficking, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and frauds and scams, international organisations urged today, warning that behind every dollar laundered is a victim – a family destroyed, a life lost, a community damaged.

This was the urgent call to action by leaders from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), INTERPOL and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna today, at a high-level side event on the first day of the 34th Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention

and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ).

Prioritising an economic and financial crime approach to crime prevention is critical to reduce the harm that crime causes to our societies, and to ensure financial stability and economic growth.

CCPCJ, FATF, INTERPOL and UNODC collectively called on governments to improve asset recovery efforts to remove organized crime and terrorist groups’ ability to expand value and territory, and to cooperate internationally to make financial investigations more targeted and effective.

Human trafficking-fueled fraud ring dismantled in joint Côte d’Ivoire-Ghana operation

Two suspected traffickers have been arrested and 33 people rescued from a criminal network that sequestered victims and forced them into exploitative pyramid schemes.

The successful operation was carried out by police in Côte d’Ivoire, following a joint investigation with Ghanaian authorities and support from INTERPOL.

The case was brought to the attention of police in Ghana by the father of two victims who had been lured

through fake job ads online. His daughters had paid nearly USD 9,000 to travel to Canada for work via a recruiter that used a Canadian phone number, giving the employment offer a sense of legitimacy.



OSCE strengthens Montenegro's border security with training on arms and human trafficking



The OSCE is helping strengthen Montenegro's ability to combat arms and human trafficking through targeted training for border and criminal police officers. The OSCE Transnational Threats Department (TNTD),

in close co-ordination with the OSCE Mission to Montenegro, trained 15 officers from Montenegro's Police Directorate as part of its ongoing support for border security and management.

The course marked another deployment of the OSCE-led Mobile Training Team (MTT). It brought together expert trainers from the national police forces of North Macedonia and Tunisia, the OSCE Forum for Security and Co-operation, and INTERPOL's I-Force Project as well as national experts from the Ministry of the Interior, the criminal police and the Forensic Centre of Montenegro, along with representatives from the US Embassy including the Director of its Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

OSCE boosts Tajikistan's ministry of interior capacities in combating cybercrime

The OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe conducted two specialized practical training courses focused on strengthening cybersecurity measures in Tajikistan. Thirty-two law enforcement officials from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) participated in two intensive courses focused on enhancing their capabilities in usage of open-source cybercrime intelligence and modern investigation techniques. This comprehensive initiative aimed to equip participants with advanced

skills and knowledge essential for effective cybercrime intelligence gathering, by incorporating global best practices into their methodologies.

Both courses were facilitated by experts from the General Directorate of Security and Turkish International Academy Against Drugs and Organized Crime (TADOC), by the request of Tajikistan's MIA in co-operation with the Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye in Tajikistan.

First aid and emergency response in focus of OSCE Training of Trainers Course for border guards in Turkmenistan

An OSCE-organized Tactical Medical Training of Trainers (ToT) Course, took place in Ashgabat. The course brought together thirty-one participants, including border guards who work in remote areas serving as first responders to emergencies and incidents, and specializing in rescue operations as well as doctors from the Central Hospital for Border Guards.

The course aimed to enhance trainees' practical skills focusing on tactical medical content, pre-hospital emergency medical care, modern and effective methods of first aid and emergency response. Participants were

trained in first aid skills with simulation of various injuries in demanding environmental and emergency conditions complemented by practical training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and procedures for moving patients to the next level of care.



IOM and NAUSS Strengthen Regional Cooperation on Migration and Border Governance



The IOM has signed a Letter of Intent with the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences (NAUSS) to establish the framework for the second phase of the Arab Center for Technical Cooperation on Migration and Border Management (ACTC-MBM).

This milestone builds on the achievements of a longstanding collaboration between IOM and NAUSS—the academic body of the Arab Interior Ministers Council—and reaffirms the shared commitment to advancing regional cooperation on migration and border governance across the 22 Arab States.

“This partnership with NAUSS and other key institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is strategically important to IOM’s global and regional mission. ACTC-MBM has already made a real difference in how migration and border management are addressed,” said Ugochi Daniels, IOM Deputy Director General for Operations. “The next phase offers a clear and ambitious path to deepen our cooperation through data, technology, and innovation, and IOM remains fully committed to advancing this shared vision.”

IOM Strengthens Humanitarian Lifeline for Displaced and Deported in Haitian Border Towns

The IOM is urgently scaling up its humanitarian response in the border towns of Belladère and Ouanaminthe amid a sharp rise in deportations by land, with about 20,000 vulnerable Haitians returned in April — the highest monthly figure recorded this year.

Especially alarming is marked increase in the number of highly vulnerable people – including women, children, and newborns – being forcibly returned. At the Belladère and Ouanaminthe border crossings, IOM, in collaboration with the National Office for Migration

(ONM) and other state agencies, has been helping an average of 15 pregnant women and 15 lactating mothers per day. In total, 3,500 deportees have received help since 22 April.

These deportations coincide with a separate humanitarian emergency in the Centre department. Gang violence that erupted in late March in Mirebalais and Saut d’Eau has displaced more than 51,000 people, according to the latest IOM displacement tracking data.

Nearly 110,000 Afghans Returned from Pakistan in a Month

Amid a sharp increase in the number of Afghan nationals returning from Pakistan – including 109,891 between 3 April and 3 May – the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and partners have launched an appeal to scale up urgently needed support at border and neighbouring areas.

This appeal for additional funding by the IOM-led Border Consortium in Afghanistan seeks to address the needs of between 600,000 and 1.5 million Afghan returnees – most of whom are undocumented – driven by the second phase of Pakistan’s Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan (IFRP), which is expected to continue

triggering large-scale returns in the coming months.

In April, an average of 3,000 people per day returned through key border crossings in Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces, according to the latest IOM data. Women and children make up most of these crossings, which until that month were averaging just 100 per day.



Frontex Leads International Effort to Tackle Child Trafficking in Europe



Europe today the trafficking and exploitation of children. The event gathered more than 60 participants from 24 countries, including representatives from EU institutions, national authorities, international organisations, and civil society.

Children are being trafficked across borders, exploited in silence, and too often go unseen. Behind every statistic is a young life stolen from safety, freedom and dignity. This week in Warsaw, Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, brought together experts from across Europe to take a stand.

Frontex hosted a major international conference focused on some of the darkest crimes facing

The conference focused on practical solutions: how to detect, protect, and respond. Discussions covered early identification of child victims at borders, protection during migration, and ensuring that traffickers are held to account through robust justice systems. Attendees explored how to improve cooperation between national authorities, international bodies, and NGOs.

EU external borders: Irregular crossings down a quarter in first 4 months of 2025

The number of irregular border crossings into the European Union fell by 27% in the first four months of 2025 to nearly 47 000, according to preliminary data collected by Frontex.

Declines continue on all major migratory routes into the EU, ranging from 58% on the Western Balkans route to 3% on the Central Mediterranean route.

Frontex currently has 3 200 officers deployed along

the EU's external borders, working together with the national authorities safeguard the Europe's borders and save lives at sea.

Many risk their lives to reach Europe, embarking on the perilous journey across the Mediterranean in unseaworthy boats. The International Organization for Migration estimates that in just the first four months of this year alone, 555 people lost their lives at sea. For the whole of last year, this tragic figure reached 2 300.

Counterfeit Crackdown: Fake Fashion Seized at Bulgaria–Turkey Border

Bulgarian authorities and Frontex scored a victory against cross-border crime this month by stopping a haul of counterfeit goods at the Lesovo border crossing with Turkey. In a joint operation, the Bulgarian Border Police and Customs officers, supported by Frontex Standing Corps officers, intercepted two vehicles loaded with fake designer clothing and footwear. More than 1,400 garments and 900 pairs of shoes bearing logos of famous brands were seized – items that would have been worth an estimated €70,000 on the black market had they slipped through. Some illicit products even carried

price tags up to €600 for a single T-shirt, a sign of how convincing the fakes appeared.

This success at the EU's external border was a direct result of vigilant cooperation. As one Frontex officer put it, "It is not easy to tell a fake from an original when it comes to counterfeit goods. But working together with professionals every day, we have become a serious obstacle for smugglers."



630kg of Cocaine Seized in French-Led Operation Targeting Maritime “Drop Off” Method



A large-scale international operation has led to the seizure of 630 kg of cocaine, the coast of northern France. The drugs were transferred at sea using the “drop off” method, involving a cargo vessel from Brazil and smaller vessels operated by French nationals.

The successful operation was the result of a long investigation by French authorities, supported by MAOC (N) and in close coordination with the UK’s National Crime Agency.

The operation uncovered the use of the “drop off” method, whereby cocaine is transported across the

Atlantic aboard a cargo vessel before being covertly transferred at sea to smaller boats near European coastlines.

French authorities tracked both the cargo vessel, which was coming from Brazil, and a local fishing vessel that had departed from Normandy. Surveillance confirmed that the transfer of drugs took place several nautical miles offshore, where bales of cocaine were passed from the larger cargo vessel to the fishing boat under the cover of night.

The fishing vessel then returned towards the French coast and transferred the cargo once more to a go-fast, which headed to the port of Tancarville. Coordinated police operations were launched overnight leading to the arrest of six men. Additional arrests were made at sea and on land.

This marks France’s first successful interception of this transatlantic “drop off” trafficking method, which has become increasingly common along European coastlines. It underscores the essential role of international coordination in maritime law enforcement.

Portuguese Authorities Intercept 6.5 Tonnes of Cocaine on Semi-Submersible in Remarkable Operation in the Atlantic



In an extraordinary operation, Portuguese authorities have successfully intercepted a semi-submersible vessel carrying approximately 6.5 tonnes of cocaine,

marking a significant victory in the fight against transnational drug trafficking.

The operation, codenamed NAUTILUS, was supported by MAOC-N and involved a swift and coordinated effort between the Portuguese authorities – Judicial Police (PJ), Navy, and Air Force – and the Spanish Guardia Civil, the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the UK National Crime Agency (NCA).

The vessel, located approximately 500 nautical miles South of the Azores in the Atlantic Ocean, had departed from Brazil and was carrying not only a massive haul of illicit drugs but also five crew members from Brazil, Colombia and Spain. The drugs were destined for Europe.

STRENGTHENING GLOBAL CUSTOMS TO PREVENT CHEMICAL DIVERSION

By Christina McAllister - Research by Braden Holt

From soaps, to fertilizers, to pigments, flame retardants, and more, chemicals underpin global agriculture, medicine, manufacturing, and everyday life. At the same time, some of the same chemicals so foundational to modern life can prove malign – damaging the environment if not managed responsibly, or risking diversion for illicit purposes – illegal manufacturing and trafficking of drugs or explosives, for example, even chemical weapons development.

The availability of weapons or drugs precursor chemicals, especially the “dual-use” chemicals that have legitimate and even vital roles in the global economy, means we need constant vigilance against the illegitimate acquisition and use of such substances. In addition, growth in international chemical trade, valued at \$2.39 trillion in 2022, and projected to expand by 2.6 percent a year globally between 2024 and 2031, makes the effort to control the

chemical precursors of explosives, narcotics, and chemical weapons one of truly global scope and importance.

A number of international conventions, arrangements, and other legal and political regimes – as well as national legislation – contribute to the framework for the governance of international trade in chemicals for these different purposes. The Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions, for example, seek to control the trade in hazardous chemicals and wastes as characterized and listed in Annexes to each Convention, among other objectives. The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) controls transfers (as well as production and use) of chemicals covered by its three Schedules. The UN Convention Against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substance identifies narcotic precursors and obliges states parties to establish and maintain a system to monitor international trade in those substances. And UN Security Council Resolution 1540 requires all UN member states, among other obligations, to establish export and trans-shipment controls to prevent access by proliferators to chemical and other weapons of mass destruction and related materials. Several voluntary multilateral arrangements complement these legally binding instruments and also feature lists of chemicals and other items of control. The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), for example, a non-binding



political understanding among 35 likeminded countries to adhere to a common export policy (the Guidelines) applied to a common list of items that includes propellant chemicals for missiles (fuels, oxidizers, and additives like binders, plasticizers, stabilizers, and burn-rate modifiers). The voluntary Wassenaar Arrangement and Australia Group also feature lists of chemicals and equipment that members undertake to control for export.

While not every country has fully enacted trade and licensing controls, countries that have done so rely on relevant national authorities (in most cases Customs supported by licensing authorities) to enforce compliance. Given the volume and pace of global trade, these officers are under significant pressure to determine – often in a matter of minutes – whether a chemical listed in trade documentation is potentially

subject to import or export licensing requirements by checking the chemical identifying information provided against a national or international control list. Such lists typically feature a single name for each substance and/or a unique number assigned by the American Chemical Society's Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS), known as the CAS Registry Number® (CAS RN®).

But what if trade documentation uses one of dozens or even hundreds of synonyms for the chemical? Or doesn't include the CAS RN®? In fact, this is often the case. In a sample Bill of Lading (BoL) dataset consisting of 6,000 items, for example, only 10 percent of entries included the CAS RN® for the substance. And what if the chemical is a variant of the listed controlled chemical? Or a newly created member of a family



of chemicals listed on one of the CWC's Schedules? Even chemical experts, much less front-line officers without chemistry expertise, may be hard pressed to determine rapidly whether a particular chemical listed for export is part of a controlled family. And how is a non-specialist customs officer to distinguish the relevant identifiers from the wide variety of information our research indicates is provided to customs? A random sample of 100 entries, taken from one country's customs declarations associated with chemical shipments, included information ranging from general descriptions (i.e. "reagents for lab research use") to brand names to systematic chemical names (e.g. 1,3-Distearoyl-2-chloropropanediol-d5), in many cases mixed with a substantial amount of other information about the form, weight, and number of units of the substance. Similarly, the BoL dataset included information such

as the number of bottles or tablets of a substance, the purpose of a shipment, and molarity (a measure of concentration) in the "Packages and description of goods" field.

Given the multitude and complexity of chemical control regimes that customs authorities enforce, states should consider imposing a legal obligation requiring inclusion of at least one of the two most precise chemical identifiers in the import or export customs declaration for chemicals—a systematic chemical name based on chemical structure or a CAS RN®—to help compliance officers determine whether the chemical is controlled. Ideally, a systematic name, such as the IUPAC name, should be the primary requirement, with the CAS RN® as the required backup. As part of this requirement, a systematic name and CAS RN® should be included for chemicals that meet or exceed the national concentration threshold

for control as part of a formulation (mixture).

Many countries already require this information: several countries of the European Union (EU), which use the Single Administrative Document as a common customs declaration, require customs declarants to include the CAS RN® in the declaration's box 44 (Additional information/ Documents produced/Certificates and authorizations). India issued regulations in 2023 requiring CAS RN® and IUPAC names for all "bulk and basic chemicals" imported to the country and for the "main/ active ingredient" of a formulation or mixture. For the sake of strengthening international regimes against toxic pollution, illicit trafficking of narcotics and explosives, and preventing the proliferation of chemical weapons, it is a change other countries should find worth making as well.

Sydney woman jailed over heroin in hammocks import plot

A Sydney woman has been sentenced to nine years' imprisonment for attempting to import a commercial quantity of heroin into Australia within the lining of two hammocks.

An investigation began when Australian Border Force (ABF) officers at Sydney Airport stopped the woman after she arrived on an international flight.

They identified anomalies in two hammocks she was travelling with and found about 7kg of a white powdery substance hidden inside them.

A presumptive test returned a positive result for heroin.

Forensic testing by the AFP subsequently determined the substance was about 3.94kg of heroin, with a purity of 73.8%.

AFP Detective Acting Superintendent Davina Copelin

said the AFP remained steadfast in its commitment to protecting Australia's borders and communities from the devastating impact of illicit drug importation.

"Organised crime syndicates continue to attempt to exploit our airports and seek to smuggle dangerous substances, such as heroin, into the country by concealing them in luggage," Detective Acting Superintendent Copelin said.

"Through rigorous screening, intelligence sharing, and targeted operations, we are disrupting criminal supply chains and ensuring airports are not gateways for drug trafficking. We will continue to pursue those who seek to profit from misery and will bring them to justice.

"Together with our partners, we are determined to intercept these drugs before they can harm Australian lives."



WorldBorderSecurity.net

World Border Security Network (**WorldBorderSecurity.net**), a global network for agency officials at the borders.

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Access is restricted to government and intergovernmental personnel; border, customs, immigration agency officials and specialist law enforcement officers.

Non-delegate agency officials will also be welcome but by member invitation only.

Main organisers of large-scale drug transports to Nordic countries arrested in Serbia

In an operation coordinated via Eurojust, the Serbian authorities arrested five suspects for organising the long-term, large-scale transport of illicit drugs to Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Norway. Previously, eight fictitious owners of haulage companies used for these transports had already been detained in Serbia. This week's successful action is the result of a joint investigation team (JIT) between Serbia and the four Nordic countries, set up and supported by Eurojust.

The criminal network that has now been brought down was responsible for transporting large quantities of narcotics, such as cocaine, amphetamines and cannabis, from Spain and the Netherlands to Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Norway. The network mainly arranged drivers and the lorries for transports via France and Germany. The drugs were hidden in secret compartments in the trucks, occasionally together with firearms.

Locally operating criminal groups were responsible for selling and distributing the illicit drugs. Over the last few years, several suspects have been arrested and, in some cases, convicted in Sweden, Denmark

and Norway for their involvement in the drug trade via the transport network.

The total volume of drugs handled is not available, but the Serbian authorities estimate that at least 1.6 tonnes of various narcotics and approximately 62 000 tablets and pills were transported. Investigations had been ongoing as of 2020, when in April 2024 a JIT was set up to consolidate the investigative efforts. Eurojust provided logistical, organisational and financial support to this JIT. The Agency also organised a series of coordination meetings to prepare for the action this week.

During the operations in Serbia, several encrypted mobile phones were seized, as well as a firearm, ammunition and documents referring to the foundation of the Serbian transport companies. The coordination and cooperation between all countries involved was also facilitated by the fact that both Serbia and Norway are among the twelve countries outside the European Union to have a Liaison Prosecutor at Eurojust.

Major strike against Italian-Albanian drug trafficking network: 52 suspects targeted



With the active assistance of Eurojust, the authorities in Italy and Albania have dealt a major blow to three linked organised crime groups (OCGs) involved in large-scale drug trafficking and money laundering.

During a joint action day, arrest warrants were issued against 52 suspects, including individuals believed to be at the highest levels in the hierarchies of the OCGs. Eurojust supported the cooperation between the Italian and Albanian authorities by setting up a joint investigation team (JIT).

During the action day, authorities in both countries seized assets worth at least several millions euros, including apartments and companies, as well as various luxury vehicles. Large amounts of cash and quantities of cocaine and heroin were also seized. A full and complete evaluation of the seizures will be carried out in the coming days.

No complete estimate of the total profits of the cooperation between the three OCGs is available. However, information obtained through the JIT shows that the criminal networks were involved in payments, often in cash, of close to EUR 5 million and the trafficking of at least 1 800 kilos of cocaine and heroin.

Investigations into the linked criminal organisations were initiated in 2016 by the Public Prosecutor's Office of Bari and the Special Anti-Corruption and Organised Crime Prosecutor's Office of Tirana and the Albanian Police. On the Albanian side, one OCG, which operated from Durres, was responsible for the transport and wholesale distribution of large quantities

of cocaine, heroin and cannabis trafficked between the Balkans, Northern Europe, South America and Puglia in Italy.

Two Italian-led criminal gangs carried out the cutting and packaging of illicit drugs and supplied cocaine and heroin from Latin America and Turkey to local gangs in organisations in Bari, Brindisi and Lecce.

The arrests in Italy and Albania are the result of a long-term collaboration through the JIT. This involved the use of wiretaps, intensive video surveillance, the monitoring of suspects and the analysis of encrypted chats. These chats were decrypted following intensive cooperation through Eurojust.

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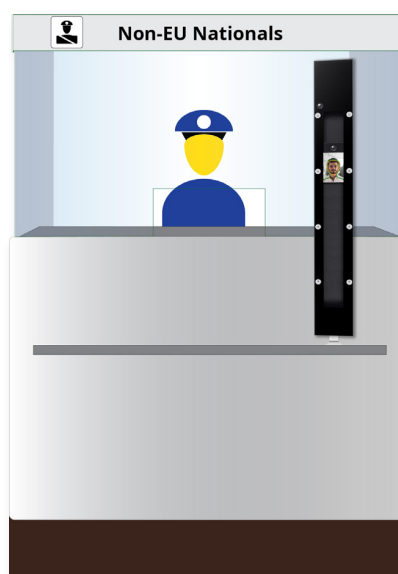
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ENHANCING GLOBAL SECURITY: A SUMMARY OF THE PASSENGER AND CARGO CONTROL PROGRAMME ANNUAL REPORT 2024

In an increasingly interconnected world, managing borders effectively has become paramount to ensuring security and facilitating legitimate trade. The Passenger and Cargo Control Programme (PCCP), under the auspices of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

(UNODC), has been at the forefront of this effort, adapting to evolving challenges posed by transnational crime and terrorism. The PCCP's Annual Report for 2024 provides a comprehensive overview of its initiatives, achievements, and future directions.

Merging Programmes for a Unified Approach

A significant development highlighted in the 2024 report is the merging of the Airport Communication Programme (AIRCOP) and the Container Control Programme (CCP) into the

PCCP. This strategic integration aims to create a holistic approach to managing both passenger and cargo security. By combining the strengths and experiences of both programmes, the PCCP seeks to streamline operations, enhance communication, and foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders involved in border management.

A Global Reach with Local Impact

The PCCP operates in 89 countries, collaborating with 192 national frontline law enforcement units. This extensive reach allows for a coordinated response to the challenges posed by international criminal networks. In 2024, the PCCP established 13 new national units, reflecting a commitment to expanding capacity and improving the ability to interdict illicit activities.

The report emphasizes the importance of effective border management in safeguarding security while facilitating the flow of goods and people. With over 90% of global trade being containerized, the PCCP recognizes the need for innovative solutions to address the complexities of modern trade dynamics.

Notable Achievements in 2024

The 2024 report showcases several significant achievements that underscore the effectiveness of the PCCP's initiatives:



1. **Increased Interceptions:** The PCCP reported a remarkable 38% increase in the interception of high-risk passengers. This achievement can be attributed to improved profiling and targeting strategies, enabling law enforcement to identify potential threats more effectively.
2. **Seizures of Illicit Goods:** The programme documented a 17% rise in the volume of seized drugs and other illegal commodities. Notable increases included 27% more cocaine and 685% more cannabis, highlighting the success of operational strategies implemented by national units supported by the PCCP.
3. **Capacity Building:** Training remains a cornerstone of the PCCP's efforts. In 2024, thousands of frontline officers received training in risk management, intelligence

sharing, and advanced detection technologies. This focus on capacity building ensures that law enforcement agencies are well-equipped to tackle the challenges posed by evolving crime patterns.

The Role of International Cooperation

The report emphasizes the critical importance of international cooperation in combating transnational crime. The PCCP has facilitated regional training sessions, joint operations, and information exchange frameworks that strengthen collaboration among countries. Key initiatives include:

- **Joint Training Programs:** Collaborative workshops focused on wildlife trafficking, fisheries crime, and drug trafficking have been organized across multiple regions, allowing countries to share best practices and strategies.

These programs enhance the collective capacity to address common challenges.

- **Public-Private Partnerships:** The PCCP actively engages with private sector players to enhance information sharing and facilitate smoother trade flows while maintaining security. By fostering partnerships with businesses involved in trade, the programme aims to create a comprehensive approach to border management.

Addressing Challenges and Future Directions

While the PCCP has made significant strides, the report acknowledges ongoing challenges, including geopolitical conflicts, evolving trafficking routes, and the impact of emerging technologies. To address these challenges, the PCCP outlines several strategic priorities for the future:

1. **Enhancing Adaptability:** The PCCP aims to become more adaptable and responsive to new threats. This includes continuously assessing risks and adjusting strategies to stay ahead of criminal networks that exploit vulnerabilities in border management.
2. **Expanding Focus:** The programme plans to broaden its focus to include land and maritime borders, recognizing the interconnected nature of global trade. By addressing security at all points of entry, the PCCP will

strengthen its ability to combat trafficking effectively.

3. **Fostering Innovation:** The PCCP seeks to leverage emerging disruptive technologies to improve border management. By adopting innovative solutions, the programme can enhance its operational capabilities and better respond to the evolving landscape of transnational crime.

The Pact for the Future

The PCCP aligns its goals with broader initiatives aimed at safeguarding global security, health, and economic stability. The “Pact for the Future” emphasizes the role of effective border management in protecting communities from criminal activities while supporting legitimate trade and travel. By focusing on safeguarding human rights and facilitating the movement of goods, the PCCP aims to create a balanced approach to border security.

Conclusion

The 2024 Annual Report of the Passenger and Cargo Control Programme illustrates a proactive and comprehensive approach to border control, emphasizing collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to addressing the complex challenges of modern border security. As the programme looks ahead, it remains dedicated to enhancing global security while facilitating legitimate trade and travel.

Through its collaborative efforts, the PCCP is poised to continue making significant strides in combating transnational crime and ensuring the safety and security of communities worldwide. The ongoing commitment to training, capacity building, and international cooperation will be essential in navigating the challenges of the future and achieving the shared goals of member states and partners alike.

To read the full report go to: https://www.unodc.org/documents/Container-control-programme/25-04-07_-_PCCP_Annual_Report_2024_EN_web.pdf

Critical Infrastructure Protection Week *in Europe*

14th-16th October 2025 - Brindisi, Italy



critical infrastructure
PROTECTION AND
RESILIENCE EUROPE



INVITATION TO ATTEND

Securing the Inter-Connected Society

The International Association for CIP Professionals is delighted to be hosting the 2025 CIP Week in Europe with the patronage of the City of Brindisi.

The premier event for the critical infrastructure protection and resilience community, Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resilience Europe (CIPRE) brings together leading stakeholders from industry, operators, agencies and governments to collaborate on securing Europe.

The recent implementation of The Critical Entities Resilience (CER) and NIS2 Directives, which lays down obligations on EU Member States to take specific measures to ensure that essential services and infrastructures, for the maintenance of vital societal functions or economic activities, are provided in an unobstructed manner in the internal market, enhancing security requirements, reporting obligations, and crisis management capabilities.

Compliance with the CER Directive and NIS2 Directive are crucial for businesses operating in the EU to safeguard their systems, mitigate threats, and ensure resilience. Penalties are enforceable on agencies and operators for non-compliance.

Join us in Brindisi, Italy for the next CIP Week in Europe and the 10th Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resilience Europe discussion on securing Europe's critical infrastructure.

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Paul Gloc

(Rest of World)

E: paulg@torchmarketing.co.uk

T: +44 (0) 7786 270 820

Bruce Bassin

(Americas)

E: bruceb@torchmarketing.co.uk

T: +1-702.600.4651



New law will strengthen Panama's capacity to combat human trafficking



Panama is a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking. But combating this crime remains a challenge.

The number of cases detected and victims identified has steadily declined in recent years, as has the capacity to prosecute and convict traffickers.

In a significant step forward, Panama, with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), has enacted a new law to strengthen its capacity to combat human trafficking.

“The new law represents a crucial step to align Panama’s national regulations with the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol and other international standards,” said Carlos Perez, Programme Coordinator of the UNODC Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section in Latin America and the Caribbean.

“We expect that it will significantly enhance Panama’s ability to combat trafficking and move towards a fairer, more effective and humane justice system that prioritizes victim protection and their rights.”

What is new?

The new law (458) reforms the former anti-trafficking law (79) and introduces several key improvements.

To ensure that Law 458 aligns with the best international practices, UNODC provided important technical guidance to Panama, including tailored advice on the necessary legislative changes to enhance the law’s

effectiveness in combating human trafficking. “Sustained international cooperation and robust legislative reforms are crucial to disrupt transnational trafficking networks,” said Carlos.

The new law refines the definition of human trafficking and distinguishes it from related crimes, such as migrant smuggling and identity-related offences, ensuring a more precise application of the law and justice for victims.

It addresses evolving criminal dynamics, including the use of digital technologies and financial systems in trafficking activities.

Law 458 equips the authorities with better tools and mechanisms to prevent and detect trafficking. It allows for more comprehensive care for victims, promoting their social reintegration and ensuring compensation for those affected.

It also fosters deeper collaboration among government agencies, as well as with civil society organizations and survivors of trafficking, to improve prevention and response efforts.

Human trafficking in Panama

In Central America and the Caribbean, trafficking for sexual exploitation remains the most prevalent form of human trafficking, followed by forced labour. Panama reflects this regional trend, with women consistently making up the majority of victims.

Criminal networks operating in the region range from individual traffickers to complex, business-like organizations that use digital technologies and sophisticated financial systems to recruit and exploit their victims.

In 2022, the Panamanian authorities detected 22 cases and identified eight victims of trafficking who were exploited for sex or forced labour. Five of them were girls. By contrast, in 2019, authorities had identified 34 cases and 36 victims.

Critical measures needed to fight money laundering and terrorist financing, say leaders of FATF, INTERPOL and UNODC



Countries need to take critical measures to target the huge illicit profits generated by drug trafficking, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and frauds and scams, international organizations urged today, warning that behind every dollar laundered is a victim – a family destroyed, a life lost, a community damaged.

This was the urgent call to action from leaders of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), INTERPOL and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna today, at a high-level Side Event on the first day of the 34th Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ).

Prioritizing an economic and financial crime approach to crime prevention is critical to reduce the harm that crime causes to our societies, and to ensure financial stability and economic growth.

At the CCPCJ the leaders of FATF, INTERPOL and UNODC collectively called on governments to improve asset recovery efforts to remove organized crime and terrorist groups' ability to expand value and territory, and to cooperate internationally to make financial investigations more targeted and effective.

Finance ministers have called for greater efforts to fight crime and terrorism by cutting off the profits which enable them. The FATF, the global watchdog on illicit finance covering over 200 jurisdictions, responded to this call by tightening standards for asset recovery.

Assessments of the FATF Global Network found that almost 80% of countries – more than 200 - are at low or moderate level of effectiveness on asset recovery.

"This is a call to action to define innovative and scalable solutions to combat economic crime," said UNODC Executive Director Ghada Waly. "Let us work together through our partnerships and use the opportunity of this CCPCJ and the 15th UN Crime Congress in 2026 to accelerate collective responses against criminal and terrorist financing to ensure our financial systems are drivers of peace, security and prosperity."

FATF President Elisa de Anda Madrazo said: "The FATF is committed to providing countries with the tools and the international forum to collectively tackle the challenges we all face today. This is critical to financial stability, development, peace and security. Global defences against illicit finance are only as strong as our weakest link, so we are sounding the alarm so that all countries work together to meet the complex, transnational threats of today. We cannot let crime thrive."

From the operational perspective, INTERPOL has implemented its recently launched Silver Notice, designed to improve the speed and effectiveness of international cooperation in targeting criminal assets. Currently, 51 countries that are part of the pilot have indicated they will make use of the new Notice to request information on assets worldwide.

INTERPOL Acting Executive Director of Police Services Cyril Gout said: "Illicit finance is not just one of many criminal threats — it is the enabler of them all. This is why INTERPOL focuses on developing and delivering innovative tools to facilitate international law enforcement cooperation and tackle illicit financial flows. We are proud to serve as a bridge between international commitments and national action."

AGENCY NEWS AND UPDATES

BOC and CDC Launch New System to Fast-Track Aircraft Parts Processing in Clark



The Bureau of Customs (BOC) and the Clark Development Corporation (CDC) have launched a new system that will simplify and accelerate the *admission and re-exportation* of aircraft parts for aviation businesses operating in the Clark Freeport Zone. The initiative supports broader efforts to improve government service delivery, reinforcing the national push for ease of doing business as championed by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. through Proclamation No. 818.

The system, called MRO–F.A.S.T. (Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul – Facilitated Access for Services and Trade), was officially launched on May 30, 2025 during CDC's

culminating activity for Ease of Doing Business (EODB) Month. As part of the launch, BOC and CDC signed a Joint Memorandum Order and a Manifesto of Support to formalize their partnership in implementing this reform.

MRO–F.A.S.T. is designed to help businesses engaged in aircraft maintenance, repair, and overhaul operations by cutting down on paperwork, removing bond requirements, and allowing auto-approval for recurring shipments of aircraft parts. This is especially critical during Aircraft-on-Ground (AOG) scenarios, where fast access to replacement parts is essential to avoid costly delays.

BOC and Guess Group Strengthen Fight Against Counterfeit Goods

In line with the directive of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. to eliminate illegal trade and protect Filipino consumers, the Bureau of Customs (BOC), in partnership with global brand Guess, continues to ramp up its campaign against counterfeit goods



and intellectual property rights (IPR) violations.

The BOC, through its Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service – Intellectual Property Rights Division (CIIS-IPRD), together with Atty. Kristian Nico Acosta, Legal Head of Guess Group in the Philippines, revisited several warehouses in a commercial complex in Divisoria, Manila, where the Bureau had uncovered and seized over 1.727 million pieces of counterfeit products amounting to an estimated P15.8 billion. The fake items included bags, clothes, and accessories illegally using the trademarks of well-known global brands such as Guess, Michael Kors, Coach, Louis Vuitton, and Tory Burch.

Representatives from Guess Group confirmed that a significant portion of the seized goods bore unauthorized reproductions of their brand.

Spanish Authorities Seize Over Half a Tonne of Cocaine in the Atlantic

The Spanish Navy, in coordination with the Spanish National Police, has successfully intercepted a sailing vessel carrying over 600 kilograms of cocaine. The operation, a collaboration between the French (DNRED), UK (NCA), and US (DEA) authorities, targeted maritime drug trafficking.

The vessel, flying a Polish flag, was en route to the Canary Islands when it was located 800 nautical miles west of Tenerife.

Following a coordinated operation supported by MAOC-N and led by Spain's Centre for Intelligence against Terrorism and Organised Crime (CITCO), the vessel was boarded by the Spanish GEO (Special Operations Group) agents. They arrested the two crew members and seized 19 bales of cocaine, along with documentation and electronic devices.

Master forgers gave fake identities to the criminal underworld



A pair of master forgers who made over £1 million supplying fake UK identity documents to high-profile criminals have been jailed.

Their convictions follow an extensive National Crime Agency (NCA)

investigation.

Bilal Iqbal, 25, and Ummad Ahmed, 32, both from east London, pleaded guilty to a total of five charges, including making false identity documents and money laundering.

The duo's criminal enterprise came to light during a separate NCA investigation into international drug trafficker Eddie Burton.

He purchased a fake ID from Iqbal and Ahmed, and used it to travel across borders in mainland Europe. From there he imported over 300 kilos of Class A drugs into the UK.

Scammer fooled 80-year-old man into smuggling class A drugs



A Nigerian national who duped elderly victims - including an 80-year-old - into smuggling class A drugs has been jailed, following a National Crime Agency investigation.

Tonny Ezech custody shot "Callous" Tonny Iheoma Ezech, 51, convinced innocent drugs mules they were entitled to huge, legitimate windfalls and they had to travel abroad to get paid.

Ezech, who holds Nigerian, Canadian, and Jamaican passports, fooled two German men aged 80 and 67 into carrying methamphetamine hidden in

sweets into the UK for onward flights to Hong Kong.

The 67-year-old was stopped on 18 October last year and three days later the 80-year-old was stopped. Both had flown into Heathrow Airport and were each unwittingly carrying around 3kg of methamphetamine.

CBP officers seize \$78K in unreported U.S. currency at the Brownsville and Matamoros International Bridge



U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers working at the Brownsville and Matamoros International Bridge Port of Entry seized \$78,040 in bulk, unreported U.S. currency.

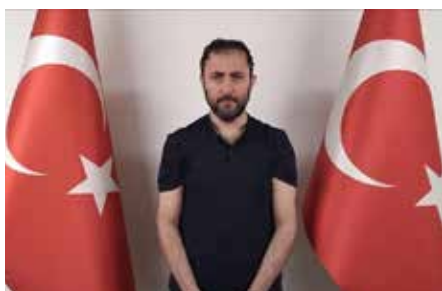
"Our CBP officers continue to secure our borders, and their vigilance led to this significant currency seizure," said Port Director Tater Ortiz, Brownsville Port of Entry. "Outbound bulk cash seizures like these, often proceeds from illicit activity, help to further disrupt criminal enterprises by depriving them of their economic resources."

The seizure took place when CBP officers working at the Brownsville and Matamoros International Bridge encountered a 31-year-old male Mexican citizen driving a 2018 BMW which was selected for a routine outbound inspection. In secondary,

CBP officers discovered bulk U.S. currency totaling \$78,040 hidden within the vehicle.

CBP officers seized the currency along with the vehicle, arrested the driver, and turned him over to the custody of Homeland Security Investigations special agents for further investigation.

S operative captured at Pak-Afghan border in joint Pak-Türkiye intelligence operation



An operative of the militant Islamic State group (IS) was captured at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border in a joint intelligence operation conducted by Pakistan and Türkiye, the latter's security sources said.

Pakistan and Türkiye, which share strong bilateral relations, reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing defence and security cooperation during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to Istanbul.

Ozgur Altun, also known by the codename "Abu Yasir Al Turki", was arrested in a precision operation jointly conducted by the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Türkiye's National Intelligence Organisation (MIT).

Following intelligence sharing, the ISI

had been briefed on Altun's presence in Afghanistan and his intent to cross into Pakistan. After his arrest, he was deported to Türkiye for further investigation.

Two charged in NSW over plot to import cocaine hidden on board international flight



Two men have been charged with drug importation offences following an AFP and NSW Police Force Multi Agency Strike Team (MAST) investigation into trusted insiders smuggling illicit drugs into Sydney on commercial flights from overseas.

A MAST investigation started in January, 2025, following intelligence provided by a foreign law enforcement agency about a drug trafficking syndicate allegedly using trusted insiders to conceal quantities of cocaine on international commercial flights destined for Australia.

Australian Border Force (ABF) officers searched a commercial international flight and found six 1kg packages of cocaine (6kg in total) wrapped in duct tape hidden on the aircraft.

The man allegedly told officers the suitcase contained plaster. MAST investigators will allege he had opened

the suitcase and handled the substitute material.

Suspected €7.9m drugs haul seized in cross-border crackdown



A suspected €7.9 million (£6.5 million) drugs haul has been seized following a cross-border operation.

Cannabis, cocaine and ketamine are believed to have been discovered concealed within food packaging following the search of premises in the Mallusk area of Newtownabbey, Co Antrim.

It came as detectives from the Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána worked together as part of the Joint Agency Task Force.

Illicit trade is bringing new security risks to the Balkans

Counterfeit and contraband tobacco products represent a bigger health hazard than regulated tobacco, while porous borders are a security risk for NATO's eastern and south eastern flanks.

A unnamed smuggler operating at the Romanian Ukrainian border spoke

to a local media outlet some years ago confessing something everyone already knew, namely that poverty speaks for itself.

“As long as people remain poor, demand for smuggled cigarettes will never go away. And neither will we,” he said.

From Greece to Romania trading in illicit goods has repeatedly proven to constitute a social, economic and security risk for the entire region.

The Western Balkans has long been part of a route through which smuggled goods especially cigarettes make their way to Western Europe. Recent data has revealed that about 11 per cent of smokers in the Balkan region buy tobacco products on the grey market.

Border Patrol apprehends known MS-13 gang member with international warrant

United States Border Patrol (USBP) Agents arrested a Mara Salvatrucha gang member (MS-13) illegally present in the United States. The State Department, in Public Notice 12672, designated MS-13, amongst other organizations, a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). This marks the 2nd arrest of a confirmed MS-13 gang member in Houlton Sector this fiscal year.

U.S. Border Patrol Agents encountered the subject during a vehicle stop. Throughout the investigative process, agents discovered the subject was wanted by Interpol for Aggravated Murder in El Salvador. The El Salvadorian national, confirmed to

be a known member of the of MS-13 Foreign Terrorist Organization and present in the U.S. illegally, was turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO). ICE Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Special Agents were also called, interviewed the subject, and are currently investigating the event.

About 1.2 Tonnes of Illegally Imported Fresh and Processed Produce Seized Following Joint SFA-ICA Operation



The Singapore Food Agency (SFA) has seized around 1.2 tonnes of fresh and processed produce illegally imported from Malaysia.

The SFA and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) conducted a joint operation on delivery trucks which typically transport produce intended for direct distribution to retailers and customers. During the operation, ICA officers at Tuas Checkpoint noticed discrepancies in the consignment transported by two trucks and referred them to SFA for further checks.

SFA found undeclared and under-declared produce such as spring onion, potato, bayam and cut cabbage imported by two importers in the trucks. All illegally imported produce were seized.

42 Cases of Animal Smuggling, Involving Both Wildlife and Pets, Detected at Singapore's Borders



42 cases of animal smuggling, involving both wildlife and pets, were detected at Singapore's borders in 2024 by the National Parks Board (NParks) and partner agencies such as the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA). Following detection, a man was charged and sentenced to 16 months' imprisonment for the attempted smuggling of 58 Indian Star Tortoises when transiting through Singapore at Changi Airport in August 2024.

In 2025, eight of such cases were also detected between January and April. These cases included a variety of animals including dogs, cats and wildlife, including scheduled species under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). These cases are under investigation.



GEOVOX ► **SECURITY**

Heartbeat Detector was developed by United States Department of Energy and Oak Ridge National Lab to provide quick, accurate, easy and portable human traffic detection in vehicles of any size, including fully loaded tractor-trailers.

FOR OVER 25 YEARS, THE HEARTBEAT DETECTOR IS THE GOLD STANDARD



PRISONS - BORDERS - MILITARY - NUCLEAR

The US Department of Energy and Oak Ridge National Lab developed the Heartbeat Detector to detect people hiding in vehicles of all varieties by detecting the movements of a beating heart. **In use for 25 years, it is proven 99%+ effective** by Oak Ridge, Sandia, and Thunder Mountain Nat. Labs—and operates daily for the British, French, Spanish, Chinese and others. The US Army, US Air Force and US Bureau of Prisons have been using it for 15+ years. The Heartbeat Detector has negligible maintenance, takes 10 minutes to train, returns a decision in 10 seconds and has a life of 15 years.





FLEURY MEROGIS PENITENTIARY / PARIS, FRANCE

HOW IT WORKS

The Heartbeat Detector operates on a military-spec computer connected to four sensors. Once the vehicle is turned off and the driver exits, each sensor is placed on a flat surface of the tested vehicle. The four sensors “listen” for 10 seconds and can “feel” the vibration of a human heartbeat inside the vehicle. Then it provides a simple green “PASS” or a red “SEARCH” result. **The entire search process takes 30 seconds.** The Heartbeat Detector is a “non-intrusive inspection”.

ALTERNATIVES

Current methods used to detect people in vehicles include dogs and x-ray (or similar) systems. Dogs are temperamental, imprecise, expensive and work only a few hours a day. X-ray or similar systems much are slower, significantly more expensive, require highly-trained personnel and radiate vehicle occupants. The Heartbeat Detector allows operators to quickly, inexpensively and accurately search high volumes of tractor-trailers and catch human trafficking and smuggling operations, preventing fatalities from heat exhaustion and dehydration, while keeping occupants safe from x-ray radiation.

CLIENTS:

- » US Army Disciplinary Barracks, 1999
- » Cheyenne Mountain NORAD, 2008
- » Fleury Merogis Penitentiary, 2013
- » EDF Nuclear Facilities, 2009
- » US Air Force Ramstein, 2018
- » US Air Force Aviano, 2018
- » Ukraine Prison Service, 2014
- » Lithuania Border Police, 2012
- » Slovenia Border Police, 1994
- » Port of Tanger, 2010
- » Texas Department of Corrections, 2004
- » New York Department of Corrections, 2014
- » Tennessee Department of Corrections, 1998
- » Kansas Department of Corrections, 2005
- » Missouri Department of Corrections, 2006
- » Florida Department of Corrections, 2002
- » Indiana Department of Corrections, 1999
- » German Prison Service, 2012
- » Czech Prison Service, 2001
- » Hong Kong Prison Service, 2009
- » USA Federal Bureau of Prisons, 1999
- » Spanish National Police, 2001
- » Guardia Civil Spain, 2000
- » French Ministry of Justice, 2013
- » Hellenic Police, 2016
- » Washington State Department of Corrections, 2002

IDMC Report: Record 83 Million People Living in Internal Displacement Worldwide



This 10th edition of the Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID) once again presents record-breaking figures, with a global estimate of 83.4 million people living in internal displacement at the end of 2024 – more than twice the number reported in the first GRID a decade ago. Conflicts and violence have left 73.5 million people displaced and disasters 9.8 million, in both cases the highest

figures on record. Behind each of these internally displaced people (IDPs) is a life uprooted and a future jeopardised.

The ever-increasing number of IDPs results in part from the insufficient support they receive to put an end to their displacement by returning home or making a new home elsewhere and addressing their related needs. Several countries dealing with crises that have lasted years or even decades, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Yemen, recorded their highest ever number of IDPs in 2024. In Sudan, which is home to one of the world's most neglected humanitarian crises, 11.6 million were living in displacement at the end of the year.

Such figures are also the result of a collective failure to address the underlying causes of displacement.

Issues such as poverty, inequality, instability and climate change drive movements year after year, adding newly displaced people to those already living in displacement and forcing many IDPs to move again, increasing their vulnerabilities with each new flight.

In Palestine, nearly all of the Gaza Strip's population has been displaced, often various times. DRC accounted for 5.3 million internal displacements associated with conflict and violence in 2024, the

country's highest figure on record and 27 per cent of the global total of 20.1 million.

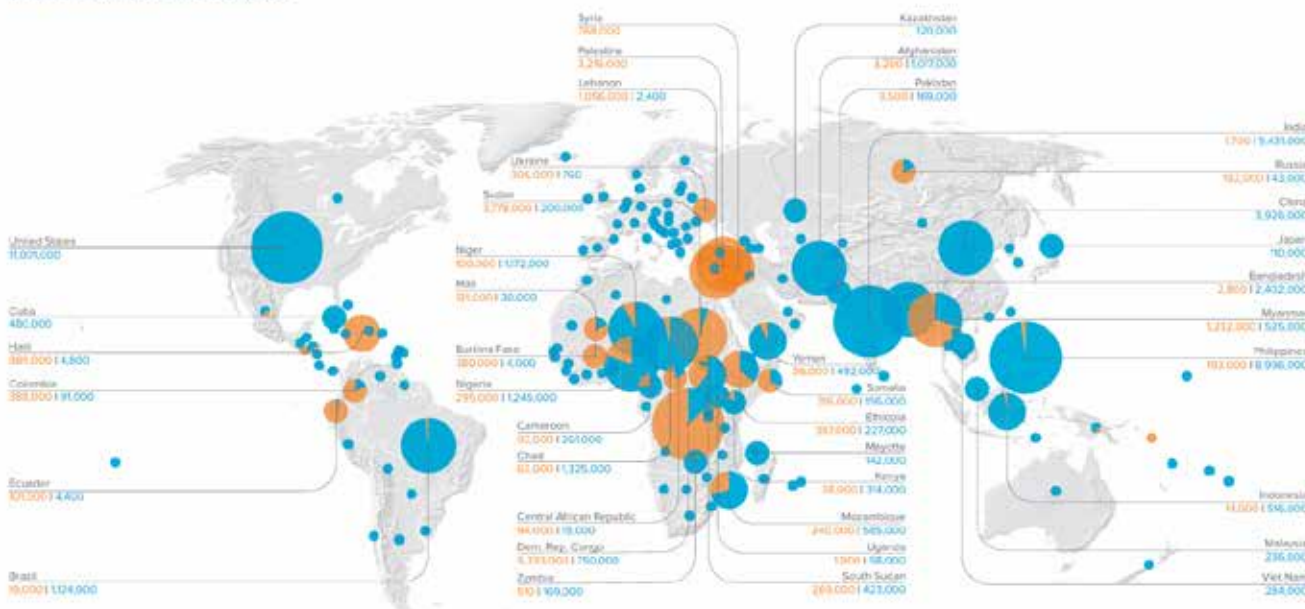
The number of internal displacements associated with disasters also reached its highest ever in 2024, and many countries reported record figures. The United States accounted for more than 11 million movements after several major hurricanes prompted mass evacuations. Many of the 45.8 million disaster displacements recorded around the world took the form of government-led pre-emptive evacuations, but they still come at a human and financial cost that could be reduced with further investments in preparedness and disaster risk reduction.

Issues such as poverty, inequality, instability and climate change drive movements year after year, adding newly displaced people to those already living in displacement.

Internal displacement is not only affecting more people. It is also recorded in an increasing number of countries and territories. The growing scale, spread and impacts of the phenomenon justify it receiving more visibility and attention in national and international policy debates.

With the UN Secretary General's special adviser on solutions to internal displacement ending his mandate in December 2024, and as crises become more and more complex without the financial resources needed to address them, it becomes more imperative than ever to scale-up efforts to prevent further movements and resolve IDPs' plight.

Internal displacements by conflict and disasters in 2024



This GRID's coverage ends in 2024, but the first months of 2025 have brought significant new shifts that are likely to have profound impacts on the lives of millions of displaced people around the world. Fewer financial and human resources across the humanitarian and development sectors, reprioritisation

and reduced availability of data for some crises will all have repercussions on our collective ability to account for IDPs, identify and respond to their needs and make informed decisions to support them in achieving durable solutions.

Fast-approaching global targets, such as those of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, could be jeopardised as a result.

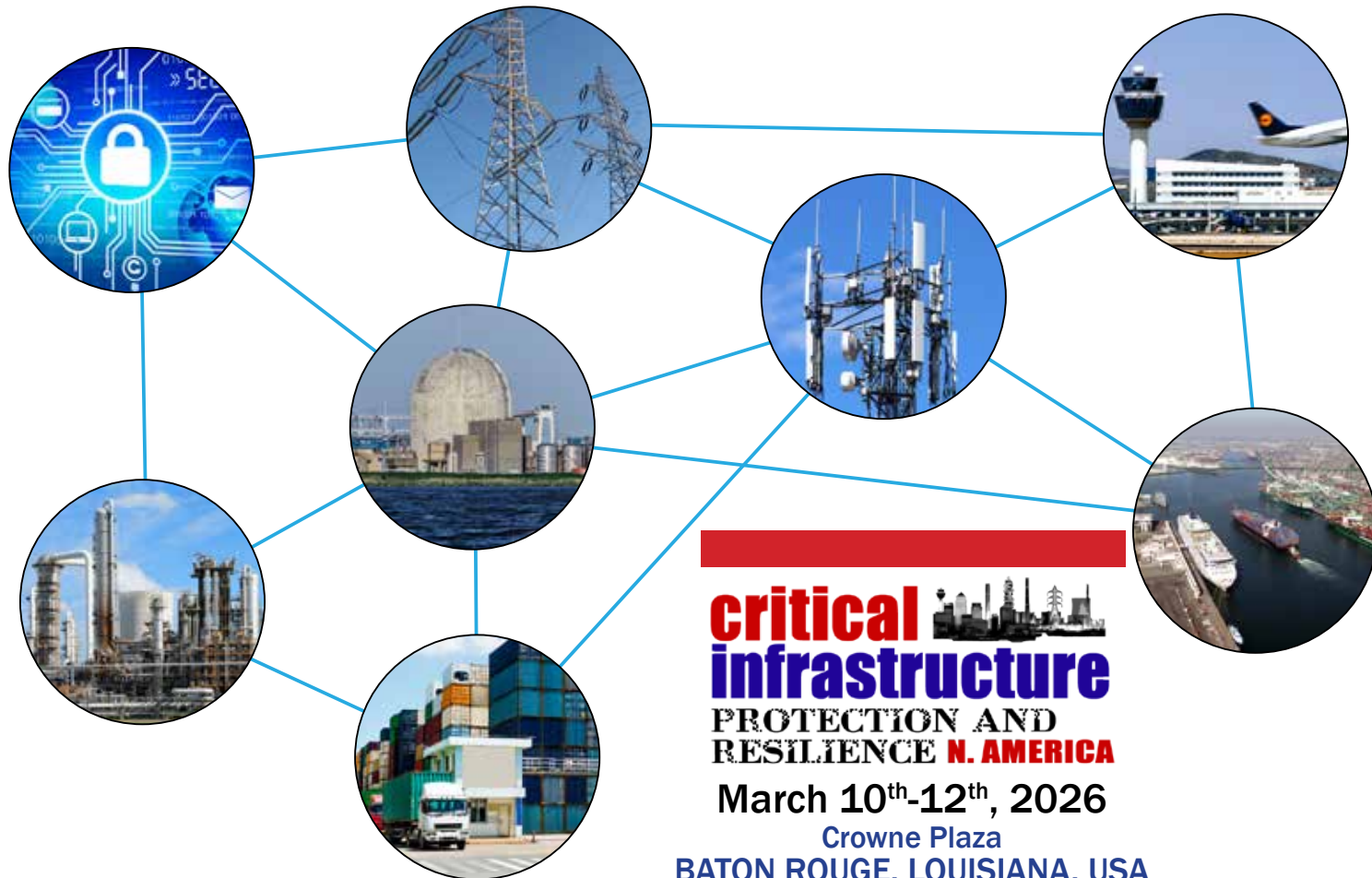
Demonstrating the immediate and longer-term consequences of internal displacement on affected people, societies and economies is ever more important to make the case for investments in solutions and prevention. Highlighting the links between displacement and other structural issues, such as urbanisation and

education, is essential to ensure its inclusion in national priorities. Establishing robust evidence on these links and their impacts and scale is a necessary first step to inform discussions.

In an evolving landscape for humanitarian and development data users and producers, IDMC is refocusing its efforts to continue to provide the most essential metrics and analyses to guide governments and their partners in developing displacement-inclusive policies and plans, and to secure the financial resources they need to implement them.

Maintaining a strong evidence base, reporting on the world's most salient displacement situations and identifying which interventions have been most impactful will be our objective in 2025 and beyond. Building on our extensive network of national and global partners, and on our 27 years of expertise and

progress towards ever more comprehensive data, we are committed to preserving what has become an independent global baseline that is essential for maintaining awareness of, and accountability for internal displacement.



CALL FOR PAPERS

Securing the Inter-Connected Society

Abstract submittal deadline - 30th June 2025

The ever changing nature of threats, whether natural through climate change, or man-made through terrorism activities, either physical or cyber attacks, means the need to continually review and update policies, practices and technologies to meet these growing demands.

The 8th Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resilience North America brings together leading stakeholders from industry, operators, agencies and governments to debate and collaborate on securing America's critical infrastructure.

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A Milestone Victory Against Human Trafficking



In a landmark operation that spanned multiple regions of Italy, the Polfrontiera di Aosta, under the leadership of Manager Nadia Roggia, has successfully dismantled a major human trafficking network exploiting vulnerable migrants across European borders.

The investigation, initiated in 2022 by Nadia in Aosta, uncovered a sophisticated system of illegal transports through Mont Blanc, Frejus, and Great St. Bernard tunnels using various international bus companies. Migrants without valid documentation were forced to pay illegal “surcharges” ranging from €100 to €250 to cross borders undetected.

According to investigators, this network—active since 2022 across at least nine Italian provinces, including Milan, Brescia, Bergamo, Varese, Monza and Brianza, Novara, Teramo, Aosta, and Turin—relied on bus drivers bribed by so-called “aiders” to transport irregular migrants across the Italian-French and Italian-Swiss borders without checks or complications.

The investigation revealed that many of these individuals were approached at the Lampugnano hub, already intending to reach other Schengen countries—most often France—despite lacking the legal right to do so. Nadia confirmed that Aosta played a central role in coordinating the investigation, helping expose how hundreds, possibly thousands, of non-EU foreigners may have been moved across borders through this illicit scheme.

“There were touching moments,” explained Nadia, “such as when in the middle of winter buses with a dozen migrants dressed in light clothes on board were stopped. We certainly could not leave them on the square in the cold.” These situations highlighted not only the logistical challenges of border enforcement but also the moral responsibility faced by law enforcement officers on the ground.

We commend Nadia Roggia and her team for this exemplary achievement in safeguarding the dignity and safety of migrants. Her recent completion of the 36th Senior Staff Course at the OSCE Border Management Staff College (BMSC) in May 2024 played a pivotal role in strengthening the skills and strategies that contributed to this operation.

The OSCE Border Management Staff College’s Senior Staff Course is a one-month intensive program that equips senior border officials with the skills and knowledge needed to address today’s complex transnational threats. Covering all three OSCE dimensions, the course promotes strategic thinking, operational planning, and international cooperation. Nadia’s success is a strong example of how BMSC course translates into real-world impact, preparing leaders to manage high-stakes border security challenges with professionalism and empathy.



78 Rescued Human Trafficking Victims Arrive in Nigeria



Director General of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Binta Adamu Bello, OON, says the Agency shall employ all available means and strategies to arrest and prosecute members of the organized human trafficking syndicate responsible for the recruitment and trafficking of Nigerian girls for sundry exploitation anywhere around the world.

She stated this in Lagos while receiving Nigerian

victims of human trafficking recruited and trafficked to Côte D' d'Ivoire who were rescued and evacuated with the support of partners. The victims were brought to Nigeria by the Air Peace Airline.

It would be recalled that the popular social media influencer, Vincent Otse (AKA VeryDarkMan), during his visit to the Country, had expressed concern about the plight of Nigerian girls who are victims of human trafficking and are presently stranded in Abidjan.

In a swift response to the situation, Operatives of NAPTIP had few weeks ago arrested two high-profile individuals mentioned by some of the victims, as their traffickers. They were arrested inside their high-wired mansion located within one of the sprawling estates in Lugbe Area of Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory.

In addition, the Agency commenced discussion with partners in Abidjan, leading to the identification, profiling, and the eventual rescue of the victims.

NAPTIP Receives 231 Victims of Human Trafficking from Ghana



Director General of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Binta Adamu Bello, OON, has promised to scale up collaboration with State and Non-State Actors within the West African corridors with a view to arresting and prosecuting, and dismantling the human trafficking syndicate operating within the Region.

The Director General stated this in Lagos while

receiving over 200 victims of human trafficking who were rescued by Ghanaian Authorities through its Economic and Organized Crimes Office (EOCO) in partnership with the Agency, at the NAPTIP Lagos Command Office, Ikeja.

It will be recalled that in a letter addressed to the Director of NAPTIP by the Executive Director of the Economic and Organized Crimes Office, Ghana, Abdulai Bashiru Dapilah, the Agency titled "Request for Assistance to Screen Suspects of Human Trafficking for Possible Prosecution in Nigeria", the Ghanaian authorities disclosed that report indicated that "a gang of people suspected to be Nigerians were engaged in human trafficking and prohibited cybercrimes and related activities within Kumasi at Oyanfa, a suburb of Accra, Ghana.

"Out of approximately 50 houses in Kumsark Estate at Oyarifa, about 30 are occupied by the traffickers and their victims. The victims are mainly young men, some of whom are minors".

IOM Urgently Seeks Funding to Repatriate Victims of Trafficking for Forced Criminality Stranded along Thai-Myanmar Border



The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is urgently appealing for USD 2.5 million to facilitate the safe and dignified return and reintegration of around thousand presumed victims of trafficking (VoTs) for the purpose of forced criminality. These individuals have been stranded along Thai-Myanmar border since February 2025, after escaping exploitative cyber scamming compounds in Myanmar.

Last week, IOM staff was at the border ensuring assistance to Ghanaian and Namibian nationals who had been waiting for safe passage home for months. Since February, IOM in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Thailand, and embassy consulates, has facilitated the return of 67 individuals back to their home countries. In 2024, IOM supported the voluntary return of 316 VoTs rescued from scamming centres.

“These victims have endured extreme forms of exploitation and coercion. While they were able to escape from the clutches of the traffickers and scamming compounds, these individuals now face prolonged uncertainty in Myanmar, waiting in difficult conditions for assistance to return home,” said Géraldine Ansart, Chief of Mission at IOM Thailand.

IOM is working closely with the Royal Thai Government, embassies, civil society and other protection partners in Myanmar and Thailand to assess needs and facilitate voluntary, safe and dignified return for those stranded along the border areas. However, without additional

funding to support direct assistance and travel home, the victims of trafficking are at a real risk of being re-trafficked, with both conflict and the recent earthquake adding uncertainty to foreign nationals stranded within Myanmar.

“We have a narrow window to act. These survivors need an urgent and safe pathway home and a chance to rebuild their lives,” added Ansart. “We remain committed to ensuring that all victims are able to return home safely and given the opportunity to recover with dignity.”

The presumed victims — including men and women from more than 35 different countries — were trafficked through deceptive online job offers and coerced into carrying out online fraud, romance scams, cryptocurrency investment schemes, and other cybercrimes in the scamming compounds. Reported forms of coercion included threats of violence, confinement, torture and psychological abuse. Most are now being held in camps managed by various ethnic armed organizations in Myanmar, living in precarious conditions with limited access to food, water and bedding, and are in need of immediate protection, shelter and assistance to return home safely.

Trafficking for forced criminality has emerged as a fast-evolving trend in Southeast Asia where criminal syndicates operate large-scale online scam centres. This phenomenon is growing in scale not only across Southeast Asia but is now having a marked impact worldwide, targeting victims from Canada, the United States, Australia, Europe and Asia.

Victims are lured via social media and recruitment websites with promises of lucrative jobs and higher income. Majority of the individuals reported having arrived in Thailand, only to be trafficked across border into Myanmar through irregular channels. Many were moved multiple times between countries and guarded compounds, losing access to their documents and communication.

2024 is Deadliest Year on Record for Migrants, New IOM Data Reveals



At least 8,938 people died on migration routes worldwide in 2024, making it the deadliest year on record, according to new data collected by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The 2024 toll continues a five-year trend of more deaths each year and last year's toll tops the previous record in 2023, when 8,747 migrant deaths were recorded.

"The tragedy of the growing number of migrant deaths worldwide is both unacceptable and preventable. Behind every number is a human being, someone for whom the loss is devastating," said IOM Deputy Director General for Operations Ugochi Daniels. "The increase in deaths across so many regions in the world shows why we need an international, holistic response that can prevent further tragic loss of life."

In addition to globally, 2024 was the deadliest year on record across most regions in the world, including in Asia (2,778 people recorded dead), Africa (2,242) and Europe (233). The 2,452 deaths documented in the Mediterranean Sea in 2024 are not the largest annual total ever, but the large number shows the need for adequate search and rescue systems as well as the need for safe and regular migration routes as alternatives to this risky journey.

Final data is not yet in for the Americas, but at least 1,233 deaths occurred in 2024. That includes an unprecedented 341 lives lost in the Caribbean in 2024 and a record 174 deaths of migrants crossing the Darién.

Across the world, deaths due to violence remained prevalent for people on the move. Since 2022, at least 10 per cent of all migrant deaths recorded occurred because of violence. In 2024, this was due in large part to violence against those in transit in Asia, with nearly 600 lives lost on migration routes across South and South-eastern Asia.

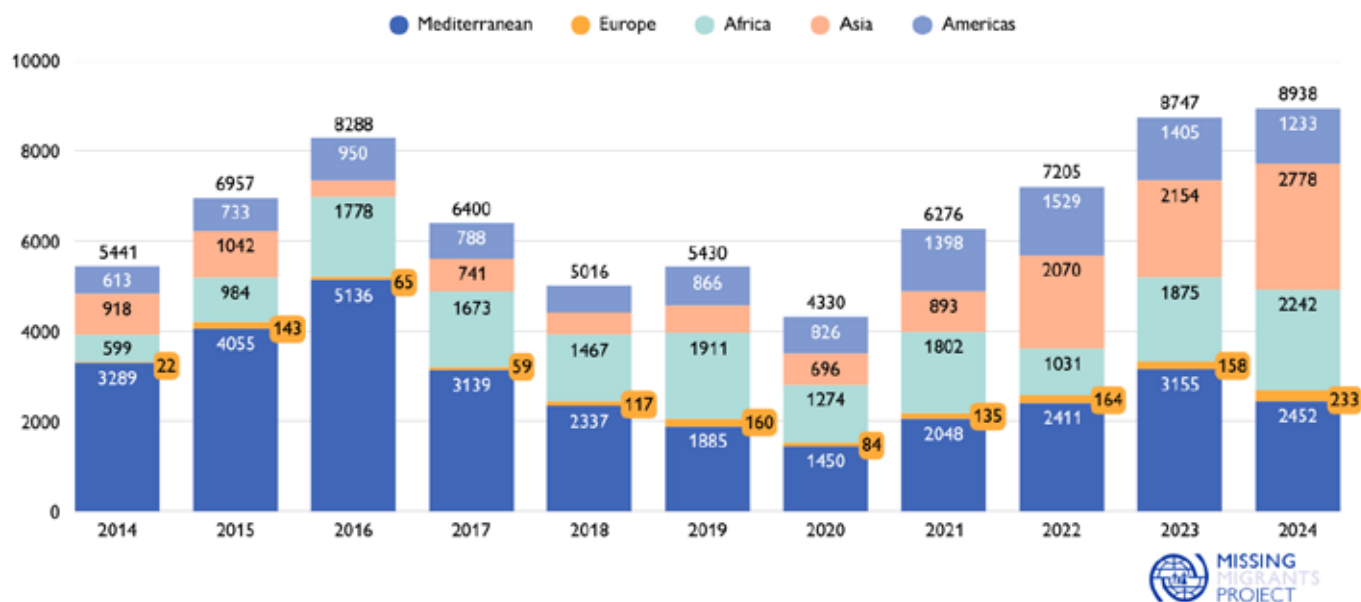
The actual number of migrant deaths and disappearances is likely much higher, as many have gone undocumented because of the dearth of official sources. In addition, the identities and demographic characteristics of the majority of people who have died or gone missing are unknown.

"The rise in deaths is terrible in and of itself, but the fact that thousands remain unidentified each year is even more tragic," said Julia Black, coordinator of IOM's Missing Migrants Project. "Beyond the despair and unresolved questions faced by families who have lost a loved one, the lack of more complete data on risks faced by migrants hinders lifesaving responses."

To help address this gap, the Missing Migrants Project's upcoming annual report provides detailed analysis of data on migrant deaths in 2024, as well as new analysis on missing migrants in humanitarian crises. The rising death toll detailed here and in the forthcoming report highlights the need for safe, legal routes for people on the move: the only sustainable solution to the crisis of migrant deaths.



Migrant Deaths by Region, 2014 - 2024



TELEDYNE
FLIR

DETECT AND PROTECT

Borders are at risk all over the world, and advanced EO/IR capabilities are needed for a variety of threats and challenges. The Ranger HDC MR helps detect illegal activities even in degraded weather conditions, utilizing embedded analytics and image processing to reduce the cognitive workload, enabling operators to distinguish quickly between true threats and false alarms.

LEARN MORE [FLIR.COM/BORDER25](https://www.flir.com/border25)



Seven people arrested for trafficking migrants and using fake passports in Brazil, Bolivia, and Spain

As part of the operations led by AMERIPOL's Specialized Center against Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (CTT), seven individuals linked to criminal networks dedicated to migrant smuggling and document forgery were arrested. The operations took place in Brazil, Bolivia, and Spain, with the support of the Brazilian Federal Police, the Spanish National Police, and the Bolivian National Police.

The arrests were made possible thanks to the operational coordination of the CTT, through the joint work of focal points and liaison officers from the countries involved, with the technical and operational support of their respective specialized units.

Iranian Migrants Attempted to Leave Brazil with Forged European Documentation

Five Iranian citizens were detained at Guarulhos International Airport in São Paulo in different operations carried out during April and May 2025. In all cases, the perpetrators used the same modus operandi: they legally entered Brazil with their Iranian passports, passed through immigration control for a return flight to their country, but avoided boarding that flight and went to another departure gate, where they attempted to leave the country using falsified European documentation.

Two of them were headed to Spain with forged French passports; one was headed to Italy with a fraudulent Austrian passport, and the other two were seeking to reach the United Kingdom using forged European identities.

An early warning issued by the Spanish National Police liaison officer at the CTT thwarted the latest departure attempt. Investigations indicate that each person allegedly paid up to 9,000 euros to the criminal network responsible for providing the documents and

coordinating international transit.

Arrest in Spain for facilitating illegal migration

In the city of Murcia, a Bolivian citizen was arrested for document falsification and facilitating irregular migration. The detainee had sold her passport to another woman, who used it to attempt to enter Spain illegally from Brazil.

These arrests were made possible thanks to the coordinated work between the Brazilian Federal Police focal point, the Spanish liaison officer at the CTT, and immigration authorities.

Coordinated Action on the Bolivia-Brazil Border

A Bolivian woman was arrested in flagrante delicto in the Corumbá border area while attempting to enter Brazil with a false Spanish passport. Her final destination was Spain.

Following an urgent request, the Spanish liaison officer at the CTT confirmed the document's falsification in less than 30 minutes. Simultaneously, the Bolivian National Police confirmed her true identity, allowing immediate action by the Brazilian Federal Police.

Investigations continue to identify and dismantle the transnational criminal structure responsible, which is reportedly charging between \$7,000 and \$9,000 per person. The network reportedly operates from Bolivia as its country of origin, using Brazil as a transit route to Europe.

These operations confirm the effectiveness of the cooperation mechanisms promoted by AMERIPOL through the CTT, strengthening the response capacity of law enforcement agencies to combat migrant trafficking, a crime that affects people in vulnerable situations and requires a coordinated and timely response.

Eurojust supports successful operation against human traffickers



Authorities have tracked down and dismantled a human trafficking network operating in Switzerland. The criminal group recruited young vulnerable women in Romania for sexual exploitation. The close cooperation between investigators from both countries, supported by Eurojust and Europol, culminated in an action day, during which 18 suspects were arrested.

The criminal group targeted individuals from disadvantaged communities in Romania. The perpetrators approached their victims on social media, luring them with false romantic promises or offers for them to perform sex work abroad under favourable conditions. Once the victims accepted these offers, they were taken abroad to provide sexual services on escort websites and in rented flats. They were kept under constant surveillance by the criminal group and subjected to appalling conditions, working long hours in degrading and unsafe circumstances. The victims were expected to work continuously, regardless of their mental or physical state. Even visibly pregnant women were forced to work without rest.

Investigations into the group uncovered a large-scale network that had been operating across Europe for over seven years. In 2022, its members moved to Switzerland to continue their activities in several Swiss German-

speaking cities, particularly Zurich. The suspected leader of the group started to recruit new members, setting up his own criminal school, where he taught techniques enslaving and exploiting victims. In some cases, victims were traded between members in exchange for money or used as stakes in gambling.

A joint action day to dismantle the criminal group took place on 3 June. Authorities arrested 13 suspects in Romania and five in Switzerland. The alleged victims were brought to safety and given support from a counselling service specialising in human trafficking. In addition to targeting the members in Switzerland, the investigations also focused on individuals in Romania who provided logistical support and laundered the proceeds from the criminal activities.

The successful operation was made possible through close cooperation between Romanian and Swiss authorities under the coordination of Eurojust and Europol. A joint investigation team, set up and funded by Eurojust, ensured the authorities could work together quickly and efficiently. Europol supported the national authorities throughout the investigation by facilitating the exchange of critical intelligence and providing expert analytical support, including the preparation of link charts on the organised crime group. On the action day, Europol provided remote assistance to investigators by cross-checking operational data in real time.



EU SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME THREAT ASSESSMENT (EU-SOCTA) 2025 SUMMARY

The EU-SOCTA 2025 report provides an in-depth analysis of the evolving landscape of serious and organised crime affecting the European Union (EU). This assessment is crucial for understanding the complexities of criminal networks, their operations, and the impact of these activities on society. The report emphasizes the need for a coordinated and

intelligence-led response to combat these persistent threats effectively.

1. The Changing Nature of Serious and Organised Crime

The report highlights the changing DNA of serious and organised crime, identifying three key dynamics that drive its evolution:

- **Destabilisation of Society:**
Serious and organised crime

undermines political, economic, and social stability within the EU. Criminal networks generate illicit proceeds that perpetuate violence and corruption, eroding trust in institutions and the rule of law. This destabilisation is further complicated by the intertwining of criminal activities with hybrid threats, where criminals act as proxies for external actors.

- **Online Nurturing of Crime:** The internet has become a pivotal arena for organised crime, facilitating various illicit activities. Criminal networks exploit digital platforms for recruitment, communication, and executing illegal transactions. The online environment allows for anonymity, making it increasingly difficult for law enforcement to track and apprehend offenders.
- **Acceleration by Technology:** Advancements in technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), have transformed the methods employed by criminals. AI enhances operational efficiency, enabling criminal networks to automate processes like phishing attacks and to create convincing deepfake content for scams.

2. Tactics of Organised Crime

The report categorizes the tactics employed by criminal networks into several key areas:

- **Criminal Finances and Money Laundering:** Money laundering remains the backbone of organised crime, allowing criminals to convert illicit funds into legitimate assets. The report details various sophisticated techniques used to launder money, including the establishment of shell companies and the exploitation of legal business structures.
- **Corruption:** Corruption is identified as a critical enabler of organised crime. Criminal networks often seek to bribe officials to gain protection



or facilitate their operations, undermining the integrity of law enforcement and judicial systems.

- **Violence and Intimidation:** Violence is a common tactic used by criminal networks to maintain control, settle disputes, and intimidate rivals. The report notes an increase in violent incidents linked to drug trafficking and gang conflicts, raising concerns about public safety.
- **Exploitation of Vulnerable Populations:** Criminal networks increasingly recruit young individuals, exploiting their lack of legal exposure and knowledge of broader criminal operations. This tactic shields the higher echelons of criminal organisations from law enforcement scrutiny.

3. Key Criminal Markets

The report identifies several key criminal markets that pose significant threats to the EU:

- **Cybercrime:** Online fraud schemes have proliferated, targeting individuals, businesses, and governmental institutions. The rise in cybercrime is attributed to the growing sophistication of techniques employed by criminals, including social engineering and ransomware attacks.
- **Drug Trafficking:** The drug market remains a dominant area of concern, with cocaine, heroin, and synthetic drugs being widely trafficked. The report highlights the extensive networks involved in drug trafficking, their adaptability to law enforcement efforts, and the associated violence and corruption.
- **Human Trafficking:** The exploitation of individuals for labour and sexual exploitation is a persistent issue. Criminal networks manipulate victims' vulnerabilities, making it difficult for them to seek help and escape their situations.



- **Firearms Trafficking:** The illegal trade in firearms poses a critical threat, exacerbated by geopolitical instability. The report calls attention to the need for enhanced measures to combat trafficking and prevent the proliferation of firearms.
- **Environmental Crime:** Activities such as waste trafficking and wildlife crime have significant negative impacts on the environment and society. The report emphasizes the need for stricter regulations and enforcement to address these crimes.

4. Geographic Dynamics

The report underscores the transnational nature of organised crime, where criminal networks operate across borders with relative ease. The EU's geographic position makes it a hub for various illicit activities, with connections to criminal markets in regions such as:

- **The Western Balkans:** This region serves as a key transit point for drugs and other illicit commodities, with criminal networks exploiting its proximity to the EU.
- **Eastern Europe:** Countries in this region are sources and destinations for various illicit goods, including tobacco and firearms, as well as trafficking in human beings.
- **North Africa:** This region is a significant source of cannabis and serves as a transit point for migrants entering the EU.
- **Latin America:** The report highlights the growing cocaine production in Latin America, which feeds into the European drug market.

5. Future Directions and Recommendations

The EU-SOCTA 2025 concludes with several recommendations for addressing the challenges posed by serious and organised crime:

- **Enhanced Intelligence Sharing:** Improved cooperation and intelligence-sharing mechanisms between EU Member States and international partners are essential for tackling transnational crime.
- **Public Awareness and Engagement:** Raising public awareness about the dangers of organised crime and promoting community resilience against recruitment into criminal networks are vital.
- **Legislative Adaptation:** As criminal methods evolve, so must legislative frameworks to ensure effective law

enforcement responses.

- **Focus on Prevention:** A proactive approach that emphasizes prevention, victim support, and dismantling criminal networks before they establish a foothold in communities is critical.

Conclusion

The EU-SOCTA 2025 serves as a vital resource for understanding the complexities of serious and organised crime in the EU. By identifying key threats, analyzing criminal tactics, and emphasizing the interconnectedness of various crime areas, the report provides a framework for effective responses. The insights gleaned from this assessment are intended to foster collaboration, enhance resource allocation, and ultimately improve the security and safety of communities across Europe.

To read the full report go to: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/EU-SOCTA-2025.pdf>

In the Face of a New Migration Reality in the Americas, U.S.-Mexico Cooperation Remains Indispensable



The new administrations of U.S. President Donald Trump and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum have ushered in a changed era of migration management and style of bilateral relations. An earlier era of hemispheric cooperation over migration controls and legal pathways has been supplanted by a U.S. strategy based on large-scale deportations and threatened tariffs. Yet dramatic changes to migration patterns in and through the Americas and evolving regional challenges around immigrant integration and other issues underscore a basic truth: the U.S. and Mexican governments fundamentally need each other to accomplish their policy objectives. No country has been more critical to U.S. border enforcement efforts than Mexico, which at times in 2024 recorded more migrant encounters in its territory than did the U.S. Border Patrol.

A new Migration Policy Institute (MPI) policy brief out today examines a period of shifting migration in the Western Hemisphere in which it has become clear that no country, including the United States, can effectively manage large-scale migration and humanitarian protection needs on its own. For the first time, almost all countries across the Americas are facing migration management challenges, whether hosting and integrating new arrivals or managing transit through their territory.

In Facing New Migration Realities: U.S.-Mexico

Relations and Shared Interests, Ariel G. Ruiz Soto, Doris Meissner and Andrew Selee provide an account of the shifts in unauthorized migration and humanitarian protection trends in recent years, and the role the U.S.-Mexico relationship has played—and will continue to play—in responding to critical migration challenges.

Drawing on in-depth interviews and roundtables with U.S. and Mexican policymakers, researchers and leaders of international and civil-society organizations, the policy brief examines regional uncertainty over maintaining existing cooperation levels in the face of growing U.S. pressure and escalating demands, especially if irregular migration spikes again in the future.

To overcome future challenges in migration management, the authors argue, Mexico and the United States should work together to:

- Establish a transparent, shared border infrastructure at the Mexico-Guatemala border, with U.S. support, to manage irregular migration and accomplish labor and protection screening at and beyond the Mexico-Guatemala border.
- Combat cross-national migrant smuggling organizations, using follow-the-money strategies that have proven effective in counter-terrorism investigations.
- Strengthen labor pathways between Mexico and the United States to help meet U.S. labor needs and reduce the economic pressures that drive unauthorized migration from Mexico.

Whether termed border control and migration management or national security, understanding shared challenges and differing capacities will be crucial for bilateral, and likely hemispheric, negotiations and goals in the long term.

SMARTER BORDERS: HOW TECHNOLOGY AND STRATEGY MUST WORK TOGETHER

By Mira Technologies Group

Securing a national border today is far more complex than building a wall, a fence or installing a row of cameras. Modern challenges — from illegal migration to organized crime and smuggling — demand more sophisticated solutions. Static defenses alone are no longer sufficient. As threats evolve, so must the methods to detect and deter them.

A central question arises for policymakers and security professionals: Is a single technology enough to protect a border?

The answer, based on years of field experience and case studies, is a clear no. Effective border security requires a multilayered detection and response ecosystem, one that combines different technologies to close every possible gap.

Is One System Enough? The Risk of Single-Point Failures

While traditional security measures such as walls, fences, and video surveillance cameras have been widely used, modern border breaches often involve sophisticated tactics to evade detection. Smugglers and illegal crossers exploit blind spots, low-visibility conditions, and sensor limitations.

For example, cameras, while vital, have clear constraints: they rely heavily on lighting and line-of-sight. Environmental factors such as fog, heavy rain, or rugged terrain can drastically reduce their effectiveness. Similarly, while radars can detect movement over long distances, they may struggle to differentiate between animals, humans, and vehicles without complementary systems.

The result? A critical need for layered, overlapping security solutions.

Layered Security: Defense in Depth

The concept of layered security — often called “defense in depth” — offers a robust alternative. By deploying multiple overlapping technologies and systems, each with distinct capabilities, authorities can dramatically increase the chances of detecting and intercepting threats.

Instead of relying on one sensor, one fence, or one patrol, a layered approach ensures that even if one line of defense is compromised,



others remain active and effective. Redundancy isn't a weakness — it's a design principle that recognizes the unpredictability of real-world threats.

Key Layers of an Effective Border Protection System

Buried Sensors, Fiber Optics, and Sensitive Cables

Installed underground, these systems detect subtle vibrations caused by movement — footsteps, digging, or vehicles. Sensitive fiber optic cables can differentiate between an animal and a human intruder based on signal patterns. When integrated properly, they offer a hidden, hard-to-bypass detection layer.

Radars and LIDAR Systems

Radars provide wide-area monitoring, detecting movement across open terrain day and night,

in all weather conditions. LIDAR adds high-resolution scanning, capable of creating detailed images and movement profiles. Together, they extend surveillance over vast areas that static cameras cannot adequately cover.

Video Surveillance and Smart CCTV

Fixed and mobile cameras, enhanced with AI-based analytics, recognize suspicious behavior patterns and track movement automatically. Thermal imaging can reveal activity even in total darkness. However, cameras must be strategically placed and actively monitored to be truly effective.

Human Being Detection Systems

Specialized technologies such as vibration-based heartbeat detectors (e.g., Magus HBD) are critical at vehicle checkpoints, container inspections, and border crossings.



These systems can detect hidden individuals without needing invasive searches, providing a fast and discreet screening tool.

Mobile Patrol Units and Drones

Ground patrols remain an essential human element. Drones add another dynamic layer, quickly covering difficult terrain, following suspicious activity in real time, and providing immediate eyes on the ground where sensors raise an alarm.

Command and Control Centers

At the heart of an integrated system lies a command center that collects, filters, and visualizes data from all sensors and surveillance systems. Only with centralized situational awareness can security teams make fast, informed decisions.

Choosing the Right Configuration: One Size Does Not Fit All

Every border environment is different: desert, forest, mountain,

urban frontier — each presents unique operational challenges. There is no universal “perfect solution.”

Selecting the right combination of technologies requires professional assessment, balancing factors like terrain, threat profiles, climate conditions, and operational logistics.

Sometimes buried fiber optics are ideal; in others, wide-area radar combined with drones may be the better choice. Critical to success is the expertise in designing a tailored multilayer solution that fits local needs and realities.

Case Example: Lessons from the Field

Across Europe, multi-agency border security programs have emphasized the necessity of multi-layered detection solutions. One of the most prominent initiatives, the European Border Surveillance

System (EUROSUR), integrates various technologies such as coastal radars, ground sensors, fiber optic monitoring, mobile surveillance units, and satellite imagery. This system, coordinated by Frontex (the European Border and Coast Guard Agency), enhances situational awareness and response capabilities across land and maritime borders.

Similarly, national projects at critical borders demonstrate the effectiveness of combining buried sensors, surveillance radars, and video systems to detect and deter illegal crossings.

These examples underline a key lesson: single-layer detection leaves gaps; multiple, integrated layers close them.

Professional Configuration is Critical

Choosing the right combination of technologies is not a one-size-fits-all process. Each border environment — whether desert, forest, mountain, or coastline — poses unique challenges. Therefore, security professionals must carefully assess threats, terrain, weather conditions, and operational goals before designing a solution.

For example, a desert border might prioritize radar and fiber optics, while a heavily forested frontier may benefit more from buried seismic sensors combined with LiDAR. A modular, customizable approach ensures that resources are allocated

efficiently, and that no single technology is overburdened.

Professional integrators and security consultants bring value by designing tailored architectures, avoiding costly redundancies, and ensuring seamless interoperability between various technologies.

In conclusion, modern border protection requires more than just fences and cameras. In an era of evolving threats, a resilient, effective defense strategy depends on deploying multiple layers of complementary technologies, each covering the gaps left by the others.

Relying on a single system is not just risky — it's inadequate. The future of border security lies in integrated solutions that combine



buried sensors, fiber optics, radars, LiDARs, and advanced video analytics to create comprehensive, intelligent, and adaptable security networks.

The right technology, properly configured by experts, ensures not just detection — but timely action and secure borders.

ABF destroys three foreign fishing vessels and apprehends 27 fishers in Australian waters

Australian Border Force (ABF) has apprehended 27 foreign fishers and destroyed three vessels in Australia's northern waters recently, affirming its commitment to take decisive action against those engaged in illegal fishing in Australia's waters.

All interceptions occurred before the crews had a chance to fish and cause damage to Australia's fishing resources, when authorities detected an Indonesian vessel near Cartier Island.

Officers boarded and identified six crew members with a variety of fishing equipment.

In consultation with the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) and after consideration

of the operational circumstances, authorities seized the fishing equipment. The foreign fishing vessel was disposed of at sea in accordance with Australian law.

Officers detected and apprehended another Indonesian vessel near Ashmore Reef, where they boarded and identified 12 crew members, 6 reef fish, 65kg of salt used to preserve catch, and a variety of fishing equipment.

ABF officers also detected and apprehended a third Indonesian vessel near Scott Reef, where they boarded and identified 9 crew members, 150kg of salt used to preserve catch, and a variety of fishing equipment. The foreign fishing vessel was disposed of at sea in accordance with Australian law.

New SmartGate Kiosks go live at Sydney Airport fast-tracking international arrivals



Sydney Airport has announced the installation of eight new Australian Border Force (ABF) SmartGate kiosks at the T1 International Terminal, in a move that will boost inbound international passenger processing capacity by 640 travellers per hour.

The rollout stems from a joint 2024 agreement with the ABF, under the government's new procurement policy, for Sydney Airport to procure 40 additional SmartGate units, which the ABF will operate. This approach helps airports manage growing passenger numbers, maintain border security and provide a smooth passenger experience.

The eight new kiosks complement the consolidation of existing SmartGate units into central clusters in Pier B and Pier C. This combination helped reduce wait times by 10 per cent in Q1 2025 compared to Q4

2024, with 90 per cent of inbound passengers clearing immigration within 36 minutes. This represents a 12-minute improvement over the past 18 months, with international passenger volumes increasing 14 percent over the same period.

By early next year, a further 32 new SmartGate kiosks will be deployed across the international precinct, doubling the total number of kiosks in the terminal. With the full network operational, passenger flows will accelerate further, freeing up frontline officers to assist travellers requiring extra assistance.

The deployment of additional SmartGate kiosks is part of Sydney Airport's wider capital investment program at the T1 International Terminal, with upgrades to security screening well underway.

Seven of fifteen new CT scanning lanes are already operational, with the balance to be completed by year-end, with the works anticipated to boost screening capacity by nearly 30 per cent and allow passengers keep laptops, liquids and aerosols in their carry-on bags.

Combined with a \$200 million T2 Domestic transformation and a T3 food and beverage refresh, this investment underlines Sydney Airport's commitment to streamlining operations and enhancing the traveller experience across the entire precinct.

BOC-NAIA Intercepts PhP4.43 million Worth of Illegal Drugs from Six Parcels

Following President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s directive to intensify the campaign against illegal drugs and bolster border security, the Bureau of Customs – Ninoy Aquino International Airport (BOC-NAIA), in coordination with the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and the NAIA Inter-Agency Drug Interdiction Task Group (NAIA-IADITG), successfully intercepted six parcels containing illegal drugs with a total estimated street value of PhP4,433,000 at the Central Mail Exchange Center (CMEC) in Pasay City.

The seized parcels, originating from Ireland, the Netherlands, and Thailand, were misdeclared as

items such as skincare products, a board game, and plumbing materials labeled as "Sistema/Shower Set/ Pipe Set" and "Kitchen Water Purifier." Upon physical examination, customs personnel discovered a total of 1,330 tablets of Ecstasy and 362 grams of heroin concealed within the packages.

The confiscated illegal drugs were turned over to PDEA for further investigation and case build-up against the individuals involved, in possible violation of Republic Act No. 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002) and Republic Act No. 10863 (Customs Modernization and Tariff Act).

Combating drug trafficking along the Mauritania-Senegal border requires youth empowerment and strengthening cooperation



To eradicate drug trafficking and its use in the border region between Mauritania and Senegal, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Regional Office for West and Central Africa (UNODC ROSEN), in coordination with national authorities, has launched innovative initiatives aiming at empowering the most vulnerable, particularly young people, and strengthening cooperation between the two neighboring countries.

In the border regions of Mauritania and Senegal, drug trafficking and consumption continue to pose serious threats to security and social stability. These challenges demand more than just law enforcement responses, they require innovative, community-driven solutions that empower those most affected, particularly young people. Rather than being seen as part of the problem, youth are proving to be a key part of the solution, taking active roles in raising awareness and strengthening community resilience.

To reinforce cross-border cooperation and address these issues, the Regional Office for West and Central Africa of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC ROSEN) has implemented targeted initiatives bringing together local actors, security forces, and civil society organizations. The realities on the ground highlight significant obstacles. Drug networks exploit porous borders, making it difficult for authorities to control illicit flows. Security forces on both sides have historically operated with limited coordination, and community's trust

in law enforcement remains fragile. At the same time, the absence of specialized addiction treatment centers in Mauritania leaves those struggling with substance abuse without access to the support they need.

One of the most impactful initiatives launched by UNODC has been the mobilization of young leaders to take ownership of drug prevention efforts. A training session in Rosso brought together youth representatives from civil society organizations across the region, equipping them with the tools to lead awareness campaigns within their own communities. Their efforts are already making a difference, shifting perceptions and promoting preventive measures at the grassroots level.

Another breakthrough has been the facilitation of direct exchanges between security forces from both countries. Previously unfamiliar with one another, officers are now actively sharing intelligence and coordinating responses, marking a significant step toward more effective cross-border governance.

As Dr. Amado Philip de Andrés, Regional Representative of UNODC ROSEN, stated, “securing stakeholders’ engagement and gathering valuable insights through collaboration with local counterparts — including law enforcement, community leaders, and local populations — is key. These initiatives represent a promising journey towards cross-border cooperation, fostering mutual understanding, inclusion, and enhanced collaboration between Mauritania and Senegal, with borders becoming bridges to peace and prosperity for all”.

Despite these advances, long-term solutions require sustained investment. The establishment of an addiction treatment center in Mauritania remains a priority, as well as continued support for youth-led initiatives that reinforce prevention efforts. By strengthening institutional collaboration, fostering trust between communities and authorities, and empowering young people as agents of change, these UNODC-led initiatives are laying the groundwork for a safer and more resilient future along the Mauritania-Senegal border.

Five ways countries can work together against firearms trafficking



Firearms trafficking is one of the most dangerous forms of organized crime. It fuels conflicts, fosters violence across borders and enriches and strengthens criminal networks.

Its transnational nature – with multiple criminal groups operating in different regions – makes it difficult for countries to combat it alone. A weapon may be manufactured in one country and transported to a second country by a citizen of a third on a vessel registered in a fourth.

To make matters worse, firearms trafficking often overlaps with other offences such as corruption, money laundering or obstruction of justice. Legitimate businesses, including manufacturers, dealers, brokers, and security firms, may also unknowingly or knowingly contribute to this crime.

Addressing the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms and related items requires strong law enforcement and judicial cooperation.

International law, including the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, provides powerful criminal justice tools to help investigate, prosecute and convict gun traffickers. Used alongside the UN Firearms Protocol, these instruments support countries in disrupting the circulation of illegal weapons.

Here are five concrete and practical ways in which countries can cooperate to fight against the illicit arms trade:

1. Special investigative techniques: from informants to controlled deliveries and undercover operations

Standard investigation methods are not always sufficient for dealing with firearms trafficking. This is where special investigative techniques come in.

These are sophisticated methods that allow investigators to gather crucial evidence without alerting the suspects. Here are some examples.

Electronic surveillance involves monitoring suspects' communications, tapping phones, tracking GPS and using spyware. Given its intrusive nature and potential violation of fundamental rights, such as privacy, electronic surveillance requires strict judicial oversight.

Informants are members of criminal groups who offer insights to law enforcement into the workings of that group, including its structure, individual members and financial resources. The Convention against Transnational Organized Crime supports collaboration with informants and allows for mitigating their punishment or granting them immunity and protection in exchange for information.

Undercover operations take place when officers infiltrate firearms trafficking rings using false identities to gather intelligence and evidence.

In certain cases, officers may have to commit minor criminal acts to gain trust and maintain cover – a practice accepted in some countries but not permitted in others.

New forms of undercover operations include online investigations and cyber-patrolling on the dark web, with officers posing as buyers or sellers to expose gangs.

Controlled deliveries involve allowing a suspicious shipment to proceed under the supervision of officers to track its path and identify key actors along the route.

A controlled delivery is a highly delicate operation. Poor planning or an unexpected event can

compromise the whole mission and lead to the loss of illegal weapons.

Therefore, investigators are encouraged to conduct them together with other tools, such as GPS tracking or physical surveillance, while maintaining close communication across borders.

2. Extradition: chasing criminals across borders

Firearms traffickers may try to escape justice by fleeing abroad. Extradition allows one country to hand over an accused or convicted individual to another for trial or punishment.

However, extradition can be complicated. It depends on whether the same act is considered an offence in both countries. It also depends on whether an extradition agreement exists between them.

The UN Convention can serve as a legal basis for two countries to extradite gun traffickers even with no formal extradition treaty in place.

3. Mutual legal assistance: exchanging information and evidence

When investigators in one country are unable to gather evidence or question witnesses from another, they can request help through mutual legal assistance.

These requests cover financial details, court documents, surveillance footage, witness statements, forensic expertise, searches of suspicious locations and seizures of items.

The Convention provides a legal basis for mutual legal assistance, particularly when no other agreements exist. Along with formal requests, it encourages informal and spontaneous information sharing between law enforcement agencies.

4. Joint investigations: teaming up to tackle transnational networks

In cross-border cases, countries may conduct parallel investigations. But if these efforts are not coordinated, the whole process can be jeopardized.

While mutual legal assistance can help to share evidence from parallel investigations, establishing joint



investigation teams can be an even more effective approach to investigating serious trafficking cases.

These are temporary teams of law enforcement agencies or prosecutors from different countries set up to investigate and prosecute cross-border crime. Joint investigations allow for real-time communication, rapid decision-making and information sharing, reducing delays and other obstacles.

Some countries are going further. They set up joint investigation bodies to address specific types of crime over extended periods.

The Convention encourages countries to conduct joint investigations through bilateral or multilateral agreements.

5. Criminal records: Tracing Firearms and checking suspects' histories

The Convention encourages authorities to cooperate to trace illicit firearms and to check a suspect's criminal record in another state. This can help track illicit arms flows and prevent the issuance of firearms licenses to applicants who have committed crimes in other countries.

In a globalized world, access to this information across borders helps to prevent perpetrators from acquiring firearms after they have moved to another country.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: THE AGE OF PASSPORT-FREE TRAVEL

By Renaud Irminger, CEO and co-founder at Travizory - Developers of digital tools that facilitate paperless border crossings

Technological advancements are reshaping every facet of our lives, and international travel is not immune to this transformative shift. The traditional passport, a symbol of national identity and mobility, is gradually being supplemented—and in some cases, replaced—by biometric systems and digital travel credentials. This evolution promises not only more robust security but also a more streamlined and efficient

travel experience.

The Rise of Biometric Identification at the Border

Facial biometrics, particularly, have catapulted to the fore as more countries incorporate facial matching technology in border security protocols. From contactless corridors to automated border control gates, technology at the border is increasingly sophisticated

and accessible to governments and transport carriers worldwide.

The rapid proliferation of biometric solutions on entry and exit can perhaps be understood within the context of changing traveler preferences, as seamless travel and expedited processing become a growing demand. According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA):

- 89% of passengers would join a trusted travel program for faster security
- 86% prefer obtaining visas pre-travel
- 73% want to use biometric data instead of passports

With sectors like insurance and banking migrating entirely online, governments are playing catch-up to deliver against traveler expectations to position their destinations as modern, safe, and above all, seamless. Industry stands ready to work with governments to realise this ambition without compromising national security and screening protocols.

Trialling the Technology of Tomorrow

Recognising this global paradigm shift, several countries have launched high-profile trials of passport-free systems. So far, these trials facilitate contactless entry or exit and target a specific subset of travelers. As we get more confident with these systems, they will inevitably be rolled out to all



travellers, either as a default or for an additional “convenience fee”.

Singapore’s Changi Airport

Automated immigration sits at the centre of the Singaporean Immigration & Checkpoints Authority’s (ICA) New Clearance Concept, which aims to have 95% of travellers using automated systems by 2026. As of September 2024, Changi Airport implemented passportless clearance across all four terminals for citizens and residents, while some foreign travellers can use biometrics on departure. The system incorporates facial biometrics and QR code technology, reducing the average clearance time to 10 seconds. The trial is ongoing, and some limitations remain in place, such as first-time travellers and those re-entering on a different passport.

Dubai International Airport

The “Smart Tunnel” at Dubai International Airport (DXB) is a system that uses biometric technology, specifically facial and iris recognition, to streamline passport control for passengers. This “smart passage” system can also allow for seamless navigation through check-in, immigration, and boarding processes. To date, however, the service has only been rolled out for First and Business class travellers arriving or departing on Emirates. This targeted application emphasises the commercial opportunities for these technologies, through paid-for services such as frequent flyer or “fast-track” programmes.

KLM & Canada

Beyond biometrics, Digital Travel Credentials (DTCs) are emerging as a revolutionary approach to



international travel. Developed under the guidance of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), DTCs are digital representations of a traveler's identity, derived from their existing passport information.

A notable pilot project involving DTCs is the collaboration between KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and the governments of Canada and the Netherlands. In this trial, eligible passengers on flights from Canada to the Netherlands can upload their passport information and facial photo via an app before travel. Upon arrival at Schiphol Airport, they pass through a dedicated DTC "Tap & Go" border gate, where a facial scan retrieves their digital credential, streamlining the immigration process. During the trial phase, the service was only available to certain nationalities travelling on specific routes. Once again, demonstrating the limitations of such technology in a real-world setting.

Seychelles International Airport

Rolling out its contactless corridor as early as 2021, the Seychelles continues to champion facial biometrics at the border. Combined with a Biometric Travel Authorization (eTA), a walk-through corridor matched the traveler on arrival to their eTA profile and flags any alerts to the front-line in real-time.

Low-risk travellers present as green and can proceed to passport control, while all others are sent to secondary processing. Unlike other trials, Seychelles has rolled the system out for all travellers, whether foreigner or citizen. This efficient passenger screening system has helped the International Airport achieve ACI Level Accreditation for the first time in its history.

Starting in June 2025, a second corridor will enable passport-free entry for all Seychelles citizens. Integration with the National

Population Database enhances security checks upstream, verifying travel documents before arrival to eliminate the need for manual passport control and replace the physical passport stamp.

Challenges and Considerations

While the shift towards passport-free travel offers numerous benefits, it also presents challenges that must be addressed. Firstly, the passport and traveler identity must be authenticated and verified remotely, which poses significant security risks if proper checks and balances are not in place.

Privacy concerns are also paramount, as the collection and storage of biometric data raise questions about data protection and potential misuse. Ensuring robust cybersecurity measures and transparent data handling policies is essential to maintain public trust.

Additionally, biometric systems and digital credentials often require significant investment in infrastructure and technology. As showcased in Seychelles, new technology must integrate with existing national systems and databases to support a smooth and effective rollout. Adopting an iterative, step-by-step approach allows governments to build confidence and trust in these new systems, identifying bottlenecks and challenges as you go and pausing to reflect and adapt as needed.

The Need for Regulation and Coordination

As the transition toward passport-free travel accelerates, it brings to the forefront a critical need for international regulation, coordination, and standard-setting. The successful adoption of biometric corridors, digital travel credentials (DTCs), and contactless immigration technologies depends not only on innovation but also on harmonized policies, robust governance frameworks, and cross-border interoperability.

At present, many of the biometric trials and DTC pilots—such as those at Changi Airport in Singapore, Dubai International Airport, and the joint KLM–Canada initiative—remain fragmented. They are often limited to specific routes, nationalities, or travel classes. While valuable in proving technical feasibility, their real-world impact will remain limited unless such systems can communicate across jurisdictions, airports, and border agencies.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has taken early steps in defining standards for Digital Travel Credentials (DTCs). These are foundational in ensuring that digital identities derived from passports are trusted, secure, and machine-readable across different states. However, the pace of implementation remains uneven. Without broader buy-in from national governments, airlines, and security agencies, global adoption risks

becoming patchy and exclusionary.

There are also substantial legal and ethical implications. The collection, storage, and sharing of biometric and travel data must comply with data protection regulations such as the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Yet, many countries lack clear legislation governing biometric use at borders, leading to public mistrust and legal uncertainty. Questions around consent, data ownership, third-party access, and retention periods remain unresolved in many jurisdictions.

To that end, multilateral forums such as ICAO, IATA, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), and the African Union should intensify their collaboration. Public-private partnerships—like those seen with Trivizory and governments in the Seychelles and St. Kitts & Nevis—offer promising models for ethical, secure, and inclusive rollout. But sustained progress depends on clear regulatory frameworks and global coordination.

Without it, the dream of seamless, secure, passport-free travel risks being realized only in isolated pockets, rather than as a universally accessible reality.

The Road Ahead

The trajectory of passport-free travel is clear: as technology continues to evolve and traveler preferences shift towards more convenient and efficient processes, the adoption



of biometric identification and digital credentials will become more widespread. Border tech firms are leading the charge in developing efficient, secure, and effective passport-free solutions. While traditional passports may not disappear entirely, their role in international travel is undoubtedly changing.

For border security professionals, policymakers, and travelers alike, staying informed about these developments is crucial. Embracing innovation while addressing the associated challenges will be key to shaping a future where international travel is more secure, seamless, and accessible.

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2025 WORLD BORDER SECURITY CONGRESS REVIEW PATROLLING THE PERIPHERY

The World Border Security Congress (WBSC) took place in Madrid in March 2025.

This was the 14th Congress to take place and was a fantastic event attracting representation at the highest levels of Government, Border Agencies, Industry and Academia from over 70 countries alongside the attendance of 400 plus delegates and 38 exhibitors.

The conference was Chaired by John Donlon QPM FSyl and detailed below are his closing comments reflecting on the success of CIPRNA 2025.

It has been an enormous pleasure to be able to bring the WBSC back to Madrid. We were last here in 2018 and we were delighted to be invited back – and are extremely grateful for the support we have received from our Hosts - The Ministry of Interior - the National Police and Guardia Civil.

We are also grateful to our exhibitors and sponsors without whom it would be almost impossible to deliver a conference on this scale.

Events such as these provide a fantastic opportunity to network with like-minded friends and colleagues and I always go away having learned something new and worthwhile and I do hope you have found the last few days to have been informative, enjoyable and of real value.

We have had some insightful presentations by some very distinguished and experienced professionals and some great discussions across a whole range of issues which are affecting the

management of our borders across the globe.

There was a stellar line up for the keynote session on the afternoon of day one. This included the Spanish Minister of the Interior, the Chief Commissioner of the Spanish National Police, the Commander of the Borders and Maritime Police Command with the Guardia Civil and the Executive Director of Frontex.

The Minister spoke passionately about the responsibilities of government to make people as secure as possible facilitating the safe movement of people and

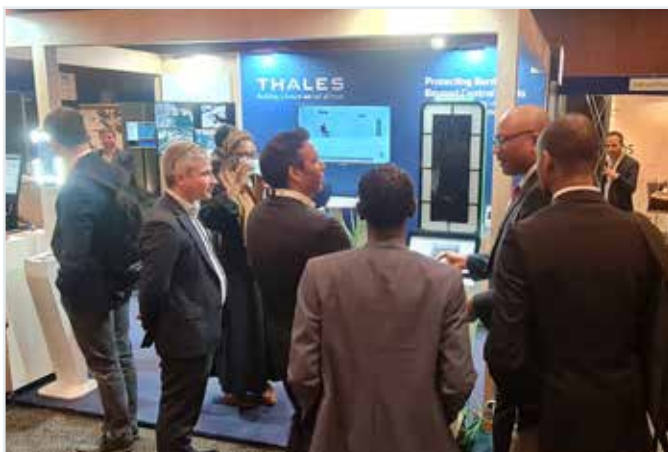
goods. He, and all of the keynote speakers referenced the significant challenges of irregular migration and human trafficking alongside the continual drive to stamp out the smuggling of drugs, weapons and other illicit goods.

Hans Leijtens, the Executive Director of Frontex reemphasised the fact that there is no respect for borders where smuggling is concerned. He provided evidence of how criminal networks adapt quickly to circumvent new processes and technologies that are introduced. He stated that countries can no longer afford to

rely on business as usual but must continue to develop a risk based and intelligence led approach, which is anchored in the rule of law, to help move towards a safer and more resilient world.

A strong theme from our first afternoon was one of delivering on effective international cooperation. The Minister led with his personal commitment in developing collaboration, coordination and cooperation, across agencies, across countries and across the private sector. This continued as a major topic of discussion





throughout the conference with numerous references for the need to enhance effective partnerships and intelligence sharing. One speaker even going so far as to say that perhaps it is time to clearly define what cooperation is so that it is clear to all and can be measured effectively.

As expected, illegal migration also continued to be seen as a key concern for all. It was recognised that people will always move around the world and that will only continue to increase, with climate change

and international conflicts being a growing factor as drivers of human displacement.

It was mentioned that many countries are seen to be introducing new legislation and employing new tactics to disrupt people smuggling gangs cramming people into small boats and risking their lives and only time will tell if any of these measures will be seen to be truly effective.

We have covered a wide range of topics over the last three days. We have gone from terrorism and training to maritime and big rivers.

We have explored the impact that border management can have on environmental stability with a fascinating insight into the illegal wildlife trade. We have had a series of technology workshops highlighting the emergence of many new 'gadgets' that will help us all in the future and had some very interactive closed agency workshops.

One of the 'stand out' sessions for me was the very moving presentation on the horrors of human trafficking and how digital forensics is helping to save the

lives of many people. This graphic depiction of what is happening around the world and what can be done to make a difference really captured everyone's attention.

We obviously heard a great deal about Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Machine Learning and the impact that Quantum Computing would make but there was very little focus on the potentially crippling effects that a major cyber attack could have on a border agency or a major port. I do think this is something that we will explore next year.

There was an incredible range of presentations delivered with lots and lots of slides as you would expect at any big conference event. There was, however, very little evidence of AI generated slides with everything being carefully crafted by the speakers own fair hands.

Just before I finish, I always like to mention the use of acronyms, even though I promise myself that I won't do it next year. They are just too good not to highlight. We have had plenty this time around. There were two new ones mentioned this morning which I really liked:

SOCMINT – Social Media Intelligence and IMINT – Imagery Intelligence.

However, my favourite has to be from Bhisham from the Indian Coast Guard when he referred to SAGAR – which demonstrates the part they play in delivering 'Security And Growth for All in the Region'.

On that note let's finish up.

I do hope that you have all had a great time this week and that you all go away having learned something new and importantly made new friends and professional contacts.



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I want to thank all the organisations and Associations that have supported us in helping to bring the World Border Security Congress to you here in Madrid. I also want to thank all of our speakers for giving up their time to share their views, experiences and professionalism with us but most of all thank you for your attendance and your active participation.

Next year we are in the beautiful city of Vienna, between the 14th and 16th of April. I hope to see you there.

Thanks again and have a safe journey home.

John Donlon QPM FSyl
Chairman WBSC



Mira Technologies Completes Successful Border Security Project for Police Authority in EU Country – 20 Magus HBD Systems Deployed

Mira Technologies has successfully completed a key project with the Border Police of an EU member state, delivering and commissioning 20 Magus HBD (Human Being Detection) systems.



This strategic deployment enhances the country's border security by enabling rapid, non-intrusive detection of hidden individuals inside vehicles and containers — a crucial step in combatting illegal immigration and cross-border criminal activity.

The project was initiated to modernize and strengthen border screening capabilities at key crossing points. The client, a national law

enforcement authority, required a reliable, field-proven solution that could be deployed rapidly and operated by front-line personnel with minimal infrastructure.

Mira's Magus HBD system was selected for its high detection accuracy, portability, and ease of integration into existing checkpoint workflows.

RT's Advanced Aerostat Technologies Targets the US Border Security Market

RT LTA Systems showcased its full range of advanced aerostat solutions at the Border Security Expo in Phoenix, Arizona.



The company will present its innovative mobile aerostat platforms, offering critical solutions to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and other security agencies. RT's persistent, elevated surveillance and communications solutions provide 360-degree coverage over vast areas, delivering real-time intelligence, early warning alerts and enhanced situational awareness. With nearly three decades of operational experience and over six million flight hours, RT has established itself as

a trusted provider of combat-proven aerostat systems. Designed for extreme weather conditions, these systems prioritize multi-domain versatility and user-friendliness—critical factors when securing a nation's extensive borders. Each aerostat system consists of a ground control station, a ground system module, a tether, a lighter-than-air platform, a stabilized payload platform and an advanced sensor suite. The systems can be rapidly deployed by a small crew, making them ideal for border security missions.

Solving Border Control Staffing Challenges: Regula Launches an Ecosystem for Remote Document Examination

Regula introduces an innovative solution designed to transform document examination processes, particularly in border control operations.



Based on high-resolution photospectral scanners from the Regula 88XX product line, it enables highly accurate and reliable remote document authentication, effectively addressing the pressing issue of staffing shortages in border security.

Traditionally, document authenticity experts needed to be physically present at each checkpoint. However, this requirement has become increasingly challenging due to current staffing constraints. For example, a recent European Commission report highlights gaps in the availability of certain

specialized experts, notably advanced-level document officers (ALDOs), within the Schengen area's standing corps. The report states that this gap could be fixed with long-term recruitment and training efforts on the pan-European level. However, Regula suggests a faster and more cost-effective solution.

Regula 88XX high-resolution photospectral scanners introduce a conceptual shift in second-line border control operations.

foster+freeman's VSC90: The All-in-One Solution that Redefines Border Control and Immigration Security

foster+freeman, a manufacturer of advanced technology for the examination of questioned documents, has announced the launch of the VSC90, a compact and comprehensive document examination solution designed to redefine border control and immigration security.



Available in two distinct hardware configurations, the VSC90 and VSC90-Mobile are engineered to provide rapid and accurate authentication of travel and identity documents, including ePassports, in both fixed and mobile environments.

The systems innovative design combines multi-spectral inspection technology with forensic-level RFID eChip interrogation, which surpasses all known compact systems to deliver a complete, all-in-one platform for identifying

suspect, counterfeit, and fraudulent documents.

"In today's increasingly complex security landscape, the need for advanced yet accessible document examination technology has never been greater. The VSC90 is our response to this challenge, providing a powerful, versatile, and user-friendly solution that empowers examiners to detect even the most sophisticated forms of document fraud." Bob Dartnell, CEO at foster+freeman.

SRC Deploys SR Hawk Surveillance Radars to Southern Border to Support USCBP Program

SRC Inc. have announced a partnership with Benchmark Electronics to upgrade previously deployed mobile video surveillance systems (MVSS) along the southwest border as part of U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Border (USCBP) Surveillance Systems program.



Benchmark has already begun integrating SRC's SR Hawk radar system onto the MVSS systems in high-risk border regions, seeking to enhance border security effectiveness and efficiency.

The addition of SRC's SR Hawk radar on the MVSS-R program — "-R" indicating the addition of radar — introduces a powerful force multiplier, extending surveillance capabilities to 7.5 miles, providing persistent, real-time, 360-degree wide-area situational awareness. The radar detects and tracks

moving ground vehicles, individuals on foot and littoral targets in the most extreme environments. By enabling remote data transmission from tactical devices, the SR Hawk radar enhances border agents' ability to detect and respond to threats more efficiently while reducing the need for manual oversight. Once a threat is detected, the data is automatically sent to a command station where it can be assessed effectively.

OSI Systems Receives \$56 Million Contract for Cargo and Vehicle Inspection Systems

OSI Systems has announced that its Rapiscan Security division received a contract award for approximately \$56 million from an international customers.



The agreement includes the deployment of multiple units of the Eagle® M60 ZBx multi-energy, mobile cargo and vehicle inspection system with combinational imaging to scan large trucks, buses and cargo containers and the ZBV® Z Backscatter® vehicle screening system, which will be used to screen for threats like explosives, drug smuggling, currency, and trade-fraud items. These systems are expected to be used for international port and border security

applications. The Company has also been contracted to provide maintenance and training support.

Ajay Mehra, President and CEO of OSI Systems, commented, "We are honored to receive this award and provide two of our leading platforms for managing cargo and vehicle security using the latest transmission and backscatter technologies. Our systems are crucial in enhancing global trade security and safety."

Blighter achieves a series of contract wins for its ground-based border surveillance radars

Blighter has achieved a series of contract wins for its ground-based border surveillance radars – for fixed and mobile surveillance applications – from customers in three different continents.



In the Middle East and North Africa, Blighter secured contracts to deploy multiple long-range radars along extensive national borders. Two further orders were for radars integrated into mobile surveillance vehicles, one in Southeast Asia

and another to monitor a European Union land border. In addition, a Five Eyes customer ordered twenty-two ground surveillance radars for deployment on its armoured vehicles.

James Long, CEO at Blighter, says, "It

has been a record breaking 12 months for the company with orders totalling more than £25 million for our border surveillance radars. This growth is being driven in part by the increasing geopolitical tensions and border disputes globally as governments look to monitor and secure their boundaries effectively from illegal crossings, smuggling, people trafficking and other security breaches.

"However, our success is also fuelled by governments and homeland security experts understanding

the compelling business case for investing in COTS-based electronic-scanning radars for border surveillance. The Korean Army's deployment of around one hundred of our radar units on the 250km Korean Demilitarised Zone over a decade ago is testament to this."

Blighter's solid-state, non-rotating, low power and near zero maintenance radars have been operational in South Korea since 2011.

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Jina Lawrence
(UK and RoW)
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T: +33 (0) 6 11 27 10 53

Bruce Bassin
(Americas)
E: bruceb@torchmarketing.co.uk
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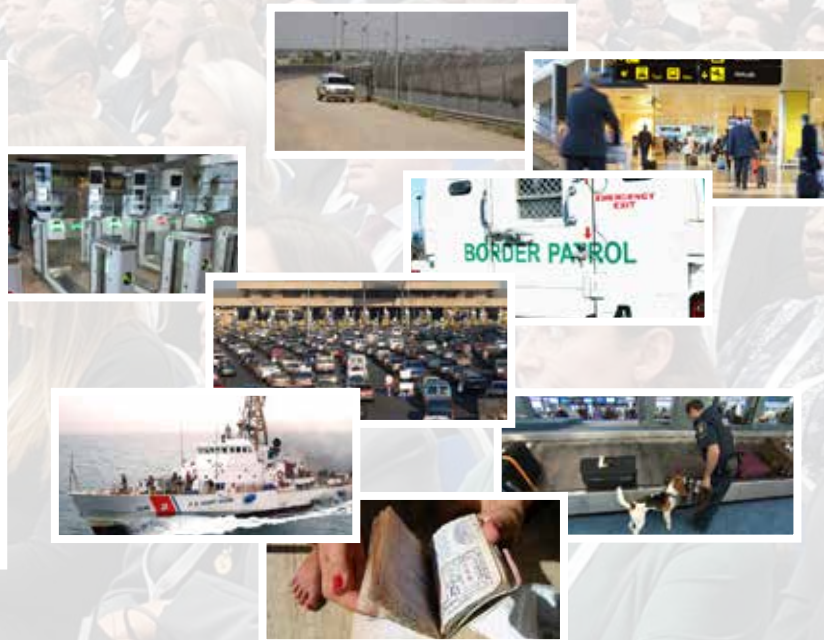


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You are invited to submit your abstract for consideration for inclusion in the 2026 Congress agenda - deadline 18th July 2025

Austria's border security faces a complex set of challenges, largely stemming from its geographical location and its participation in the Schengen Area. A primary concern is managing irregular migration flows, which fluctuate significantly due to geopolitical instability in various regions. This puts pressure on Austria's capacity to effectively screen and process asylum seekers.

the rise of transnational crime, including human trafficking and smuggling, adds another layer of complexity to border security. Austrian authorities must balance the need for stringent controls with the imperative to uphold human rights and international obligations.

The evolving security landscape, with threats such as terrorism and hybrid warfare, also requires constant adaptation of border security measures. This necessitates investment in advanced surveillance technologies and enhanced intelligence sharing. The need to maintain public confidence in border security, while respecting the principles of open borders within the EU, creates a delicate balancing act for Austrian policymakers.

The World Border Security Congress is a high level 3 day event that will discuss and debate current and future policies, implementation issues and challenges as well as new and developing technologies that contribute towards safe and secure border and migration management.

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Paul Gloc
Rest of World
E: paulg@torchmarketing.co.uk
T: +44 (0) 7786 270 820

Bruce Bassin
Americas
E: bruceb@torchmarketing.co.uk
T: +1 702.600.4651

Jerome Merite
France
E: j.callumerite@gmail.com
T: +33 (0) 6 11 27 10 53

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