



Mr Jürgen Stock
Secretary General
ICPO-INTERPOL
200 quai Charles de Gaulle
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France

13 October 2020

Dear Secretary General,

I am writing in response to recent media reports regarding the appointment of INTERPOL's new president at this year's General Assembly, and to express our concerns about what we know of this process.

As you know, there have been widespread concerns about Ahmed Nasser al-Raisi's candidacy, given criticisms of the United Arab Emirates' human rights record. In particular, there have been high-profile accusations regarding the use of torture by the UAE police whilst al-Raisi was Inspector General. The UAE has also been criticised for misusing red notices and diffusions in ways that violate human rights, and its relationship to INTERPOL's largest non-governmental funder, the 'Interpol Foundation for a Safer World' has been subject to increasing scrutiny.

We recognise that the General Secretariat is responsible for INTERPOL's operations, whereas the role of the President and the Executive Committee is to provide broader strategic guidance and to supervise the work of the Secretary General. We believe that this division of responsibilities is crucial for protecting the organisation's independence and political neutrality, and the trustworthiness of its most important tools - its notices and diffusions. Notwithstanding this, the President is INTERPOL's most prominent ambassador, and as such they are a representative of the organisation's values and its strategic direction.

We would reiterate that it is in the interests of the global policing community to ensure that those appointed to important positions at INTERPOL are properly vetted. As you know from experiences in the past few years, failure to do so could result in serious reputational harm for the organisation, which undermines its ability to fight cross-border crime and other threats to international security. You may recall that in November 2018, we wrote to you following the resignation of Meng Hongwei and reports about the likely election of Aleksandr Prokopchuk to call for more transparency relating to the election of future presidents, and to highlight the importance of proper vetting procedures. We urged you, in particular, to consider making information about potential candidates available to the public.

In response to our recent request for further information about the upcoming election, we were informed by the organisation that the details of the candidates could not be confirmed because candidacies can only be formally presented once the General Assembly has begun and that candidates can be proposed at any point before the election takes place. This process prevents any meaningful scrutiny of candidates (and of the countries they represent) by the public, or even by delegates from

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other member countries. It must also make it impossible for INTERPOL to implement any vetting procedure to ensure candidates prescribe to the organisation's constitutional commitments on human rights and neutrality, and that their election would not undermine the organisation's global standing.

Fair Trials remains committed to working with you and your colleagues to ensure that INTERPOL's systems for the global circulation of notices and diffusions are protected from misuse. To work effectively to fight crime, INTERPOL must respect its constitutional protections against politicisation and its commitment to observe international human rights standards to reinforce trust in the organisation and its systems.

We are strongly encouraged by the positive steps already taken by the organisation towards reform under your leadership. We hope that during your second mandate, you will continue this process by:

- Further strengthening internal review processes for notices and reviewing systems for disseminating diffusions;
- Increasing the organisation's transparency by publishing key data on notices and diffusions;
- Supporting continued reforms to the CCF to make it more independent and effective; and
- Providing more clarity on how INTERPOL's rules should be interpreted.

These efforts could be undermined significantly if INTERPOL is not supported by leadership that shares the underlying values of these reforms.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our concerns in further detail with you.

Yours sincerely,



**Jago Russell, Chief Executive
Fair Trials**