



Mr Jürgen Stock
Secretary General
ICPO-INTERPOL
200 quai Charles de Gaulle
Lyon 69006
France

13 November 2018

Dear Secretary General,

I am writing in response to your press statement on 8th November regarding changes to the Presidency of INTERPOL, and to request reassurances concerning the forthcoming General Assembly.

The disappearance and resignation of Meng Hongwei caused considerable concern, including amongst those who, like Fair Trials, are committed to seeing INTERPOL succeed in its important role in connecting the world's police in the fight against serious global crime.

We recognise that the operational control of INTERPOL sits with the Secretariat, whilst the role of the President and the Executive Committee is to provide broader strategic guidance to the organisation. We believe that such division of responsibilities is crucial for maintaining the independence and neutrality of the organisation, especially as the organisation continues its important work of implementing the reforms which were important first steps in preventing the abuse of its system of notices and diffusions

In light of this, we are calling on INTERPOL to increase the transparency relating to future Presidency appointments. It is clearly in the best interests of the international policing community to ensure that those appointed to such prominent and important positions are properly vetted beforehand. We would therefore urge you to consider ensuring more timely and public information about individuals who put their names forward for such roles to allow effective prior scrutiny.

Furthermore, as you said on 8th November, Meng was appointed not in a personal capacity but rather as "delegate of [China]." In light of this we believe that it is also imperative that the record of the country of which future Presidents are delegates is also subject to scrutiny. It would not be appropriate for a country with a record of violations of INTERPOL's rules (for example by frequently seeking to use its systems to disseminate politically-motivated alerts) to be given a leadership role in a key oversight institution.

You are no doubt aware that despite the limited role of the President in the day-to-day running of the organisation, Meng's appointment in 2016 drew intense public criticism, particularly given China's record of misusing INTERPOL Red Notices and Diffusions. While there is little to suggest that Meng has compromised INTERPOL's efforts to ensure better compliance with its rules relating to human rights and neutrality, it is our belief that his presidency and his recent 'resignation' have unfortunately undermined the organisation's reputation. Furthermore, we believe that INTERPOL needs strategic guidance and leadership from a President that is supportive of the organisation's reforms.

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In our new report, *Dismantling the Tools of Oppression*, we applaud INTERPOL for doing the right thing – by taking meaningful steps to make sure that countries do not use international police cooperation as an excuse to target dissidents. We believe these changes help to make the organisation a more effective tool in the fight against cross-border crime and other serious threats to international security. However, there is still so much room for improvement, and INTERPOL itself must be seen to be upholding its commitment to the reforms. This is why the appointment of the organisation's new president is so crucial.

Fair Trials remains committed to working with you and your colleagues to strengthening the safeguards against abuse of INTERPOL's systems and I am grateful for your continued cooperation. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our proposals in person.

Yours sincerely



**Jago Russell, Chief Executive
Fair Trials**