

G5 SAHEL



NUMBER 1 - AUGUST 2021

NEWSLETTER



Dear readers,

It is a privilege for me to introduce the first edition of the G5 Sahel Newsletter which provides a full overview of the G5 Sahel Project and its achievements. This project, implemented by INTERPOL under its Counter-Terrorism Directorate / Terrorist Networks Sub-Directorate (CT/TN), aims to support the five participating member countries in enhancing their capacity to deter the terrorist threat.

As the Assistant Director of INTERPOL CT/TN, it is a pleasure to cooperate and collaborate closely with the G5 Sahel Executive Secretariat to implement this important project and support the region by providing key INTERPOL policing capabilities.

The project started in 2019 after the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between the G5S and INTERPOL that defines our cooperation framework. Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, various activities have been successfully implemented since then, using innovative channels and new virtual cooperation networks. Operational support has also been provided both remotely and onsite whenever possible, allowing G5S law enforcement officers and key actors to be trained and use INTERPOL policing capabilities.

The Sahel is a crucial region with porous borders where terrorists can move easily from one country to another. Through INTERPOL operational support and databases checks, such dangerous individuals have been identified, monitored and arrested.

These initial successes show the importance of expanding the INTERPOL secure communications system I-24/7 which provides continuous access to INTERPOL databases at border crossing points and allows our law enforcement colleagues in the field to identify and stop criminals and terrorists whenever they try to cross borders.

The INTERPOL G5 Sahel Project team looks forward to continuous collaboration and support to the Sahel region in the coming months and years."

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EDITORIAL

The past five years have been marked by the terrorist threat in the Sahel. It has undermined the security of the Sahelian states and left their people bereaved. In reaction, the States have banded together to pool their efforts and create, among other global responses, the G5 Sahel Joint Task Force.

The Sahelian people welcomed the advent of this Joint Force with great hopes of seeing themselves freed from the yoke of terrorism. These expectations are so high that some opinions have been voiced asking what exactly the Joint Task Force and the allied partners of France and the MINUSMA are doing.

To help the people and decision-makers better understand the action of the Joint Task Force, especially its Police Component via the Security Cooperation Platforms (PCMS) in partnership with INTERPOL, the PCMSs are launching a newsletter, and this publication constitutes its first issue.

This first newsletter summarizes the main activities undertaken since the start of the Interpol-G5 Sahel project, both in terms of operations and training. It does not therefore replace the PCMS monthly newsletter.

It is important to remember that the PCMS is one of the regional and national security strategies whose aim is to increase information sharing and the development of criminal analysis.

This publication illustrates how the watchword in the fight against terrorism remains cooperation and coordination between all players - especially in the area of prosecutions - where long-term effort is required to succeed in breaking up the terrorist group networks.

Inspector General KAKA, Regional PCMS coordinator

THE INTERPOL G5 SAHEL PROJECT

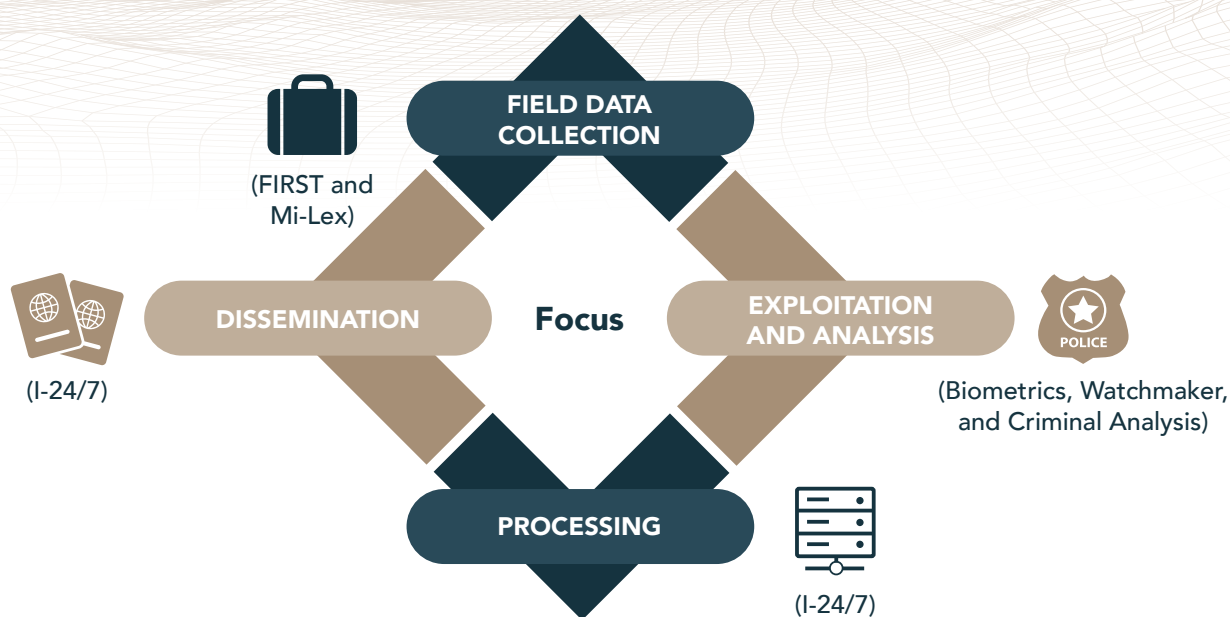
The "INTERPOL and G5 Sahel Joint Task Force (FC-G5S)" project is supporting the Police Component through a three-year project (2019-2022), implemented under the umbrella of the Regional Counter-Terrorism Node for West and Central Africa initiative, and funded by the German Government (EUR 9.328.955).

The main purpose of the project is to ensure effective use of INTERPOL policing capabilities in the five countries by the FC-G5S Police Component, along with INTERPOL National Central Bureaus (NCBs) and relevant specialized units and border agencies. This will help increase the exchange of police information and intelligence in the region.

Five countries are involved: **Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad.**

The project is divided into four different activity modules to achieve these objectives. The project cycle is shown in the graphic below:

NEWSLETTER



OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

FIRST

The aim of the FIRST module is to share biometric information collected when reporting terrorist fighters and allows judicial bodies to obtain admissible evidence of formal identification in order to pursue suspects for offences of a terrorist nature.

The FIRST roll-outs between 2019 and 2021 allowed us to train over 50 law enforcement officers in enrolling via electronic biometric devices; and also to enrol over 930 terrorist suspects held in Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania. This led to the publication of the same number of blue notices.

Deployment in Mauritania

The FIRST deployment at the end of June 2021 in Mauritania presented good results at the end of June 2021. This mission allowed us to train over 20 law enforcement officers to use electronic biometric devices, and then report over 30 prisoners detained for acts of terrorism, followed by drafting and publication of the same number of blue notices.

I-24/7 (EXTENSIONS)

The I-24/7 system is INTERPOL's secure global police communications network.

Extensions to INTERPOL's I-24/7 system are in progress for all five countries. These extensions will allow more efficient information-sharing between law enforcement agencies. The NCBs have received or are in the process of receiving equipment for the extensions, which will be installed during the course of 2021.

DONATIONS OF EQUIPMENT TO G5 SAHEL COUNTRIES

In the context of the G5 Sahel project, during 2021 all five countries have or will have received equipment that will help the various law enforcement units in the region to improve their counter-terrorism policing capabilities.

Some of the main equipment is:

- Criminal analysis software and hardware
- Kits to help with crime scene management and laboratory equipment
- Cameras and electronic biometric devices
- Chemical detection devices and kits to identify explosive residues

The donation ceremony to the Mauritanian national police and the regional and national PCMS, organized by the Nouakchott NCB, took place on 23 June 2021.

TRAINING

Despite the COVID-19 global pandemic, numerous activities were able to be initiated:

MILEX (ONLINE VIDEO)

Virtual training on 'initiation in crime scene management' was posted on INTERPOL's Virtual academy in April 2021. It is available in French, English and Arabic to countries in the G5 Sahel and beyond upon request. Law enforcement officers can access the training via their NCB.

WATCHMAKER (REGIONAL WORKSHOPS)

Four expert working groups were held between 2020 and 2021 to encourage sharing experiences among the G5 Sahel countries on matters relating to improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The events were attended by over 70 participants. They allowed us to expand the expert network and identify the key players in this field.

BIOMETRICS AND DATABASE (WEBINARS)

Fourteen successful webinars were held on INTERPOL's policing capabilities in terms of biometrics, discussing questions such as automated fingerprint identification, facial recognition, the role of the National Central Bureaus in the G5 Sahel as well as other topics, and were attended by over 100 participants from the forensic science police, specialist investigation units, etc. These webinars allowed information sharing between countries and a better understanding of biometric requirements in the region.

CRIMINAL ANALYSIS (WEBINARS/ROADMAP)

Three webinars were organized to raise awareness in the specialist investigation units, the PCMSs and other units in the region, of the importance of criminal analysis in the fight against terrorism and launch a roadmap to help decision-makers put in place analysis units and strengthen criminal analysis capabilities in the region.

EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

The region depends on a variety of international players in the counter-terrorism field and it is therefore important for INTERPOL to have joint activities in order to have more impact. The main partners are the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (ONUDC), the High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR), the European Union's Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell (RACC), Expertise France as well as several other implementation operators.

INTERPOL was part in the pilot training for the G5 Sahel Joint Task Force – Police Component, which took place from 15 to 19 November 2020 jointly with its partners. This training allowed the G5 Sahel Joint Task Force to be better prepared in its future missions.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The next events for law enforcement officers in the five countries are as follows (dates to be confirmed):

- **FIRST training and roll-outs**
- **Biometrics training**
- **Creation of crime analysis and training units**
- **Equipment donations and training in their use**
- **Installation of I-24/7 extensions**

CONTACTS

For more information about the project, you can visit the website:
www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Terrorism/Counter-terrorism-projects/G5-Sahel
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