

Blind Faith: INTERPOL's Relationship with Its Member Countries

By Michelle A. Estlund on July 20, 2011

In a continuation of the issue of INTERPOL's seemingly blind trust in the representations of its member countries, today's post concerns the application process of member countries requesting Red Notices from INTERPOL. And this just in . . . an [article by Libby Lewis, sponsored by the International Consortium for Investigative Journalists](#), wherein the author asks, "Are Some Countries Abusing Interpol?"

A great, and timely, question. It goes without saying that in any group of 188 countries, some of those countries necessarily will be governed more honestly or more corruptly than others. Lewis' article accurately points out that INTERPOL's Commission for the Control of INTERPOL's files cannot investigate cases on its own. Adding to that frustrating fact is another increasingly frustrating fact: law enforcement agencies now enter the information regarding Red Notice applications on their own. Not surprisingly, this change has coincided with a rise in applications for Red Notices.

As the numbers of Red Notice applications rise, so naturally do the instances of rules violations stemming from improper Red Notice Requests. The ICIJ has identified seventeen countries with a history of improperly utilizing Red Notices to persecute political opponents, economic targets, or environmental activists.

We do know, and the Lewis article recognized that, once INTERPOL becomes aware of a given member country's improper Red Notice request habits, INTERPOL takes notice and acts. An example discussed [here](#) previously is that of Venezuela. Raising that awareness, however, can require the considerable and repeated efforts of Red Notice subjects and their lawyers.

In the next post, look for a discussion of an idea proposed by Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions: the modification of INTERPOL's Red Notice request review process.

As always, comments and thoughts are welcomed.