

Gaddafi's Red Notice: Does It Matter?

By [Michelle A. Estlund](#) on September 12, 2011

A [Red Notice has been issued](#) for Muammar Gaddafi. This is not surprising given the crimes against humanity that he is alleged to have committed.

What would be surprising would be if he travelled in any manner that allowed a Red Notice to be of real service in his capture.

Red Notices are extremely useful for tracking and immobilizing persons who travel in fairly mainstream ways: via scheduled airline flights, ticketed ship cruises, and the like. Ports of entry and exit are where we would expect to see a passport swipe or a passenger manifest lead to a Red Notice hit.

But it's probably safe to say that Gaddafi is not booking a trip through a tour guide, and he is probably not using his passport. He is moving quietly, at night or in disguise, or both, with the help of loyal supporters, under circumstances that would terrify the average tourist.

When, and if, he is found, my guess is likely not much different from yours as to how it will happen: authorities (if he's lucky, it will be authorities who find him) will be led to him by piecing together bits of information gathered from various people who have heard gossip and seen movement related to his whereabouts. After numerous efforts and false leads, he will be found in a hole like Hussein or a compound like Bin Ladin. At that point, the Red Notice would be moot, and would be removed from INTERPOL's databases.

On the other hand, if my prediction is wrong, and INTERPOL is involved in the capture of Gaddafi, then that would be a major feather in INTERPOL's cap. It would also speak to the efficacy of the cooperative arrangement between the International Criminal Court (ICC) and INTERPOL. The next post will address that relationship.

As always, thoughts and comments are welcomed.