

You Can't Always Get What You Want: INTERPOL's Rejection of Red Notice Requests

By [Michelle A. Estlund](#) on October 06, 2011

There's been [lots of talk](#) lately surrounding the idea that INTERPOL is issuing Red Notices almost automatically, with no actual review of the request taking place. Some say that INTERPOL is ripe for abuse by certain member countries, while [INTERPOL counters](#) that it has procedures in place to avoid such abuses.

Support for INTERPOL's position is found in one recent example of INTERPOL rejecting a Red Notice request from Thailand. The ex-prime minister, Thaksin Thongphakdi, was the subject of a warrant issued after he was sentenced to a prison term, but the country's [request for a Red Notice in his name was rejected](#) by INTERPOL. The stated reason for the rejection was that the request did not meet INTERPOL's criteria, which could mean anything from the paperwork not being properly submitted to the request being obviously politically based.

Another example comes from [India](#), where Red Notice requests for wanted terrorists were reportedly rejected by INTERPOL. In an [article](#) discussing the Indian cases, the author writes that Indian officials complain that "It is very difficult to build a strong case and provide the exact details that Interpol is looking for."

That last line would honestly astound some Red Notice subjects, who complain that the information submitted to obtain a Red Notice typically does not require much detail at all about the underlying charges, nor does it require any details regarding the strength of any given case. Nonetheless, it seems that in certain cases, this particular part of the application process has frustrated Indian officials.

There does appear to be some anecdotal support for INTERPOL's assertion that it not only possesses but utilizes mechanisms to prevent member country abuses and improper Red Notice requests. There also appears to be anecdotal support for the position of many Red Notice subjects, which is that member country abuse occurs with some frequency.

Without a more transparent process or judicial oversight, INTERPOL will likely continue to find itself on the defensive. When it comes to INTERPOL's decision-making processes, criticism from both member country applicants and Red Notice subjects can be expected as long as those processes remain relatively mysterious.