

Who Owns the Information in INTERPOL's Files?

By Michelle A. Estlund on June 13, 2011

It is a given that a certain level of trust, even if for limited purposes, must exist between INTERPOL and its member countries. Member countries send requests for Red Notices to INTERPOL in hopes of obtaining Red Notices against wanted persons. The requests then become part of INTERPOL's files.

With 188 member countries, there is a fair likelihood that, at any one time, several member countries are in the position of having strained relations with other member countries. As a consequence, such requesting countries may prefer that the other member countries not have access to the information they submit to INTERPOL.

Luckily for them, INTERPOL does not own the files that it receives from member countries.

The information sent in by member countries belongs to the submitting member countries. [INTERPOL acts as a depository](#) for that information, and is not allowed to modify it absent the member country's request or consent.

INTERPOL has strict rules regarding who may have access to its files, and under what circumstances. Unless another member countries submits a qualifying request for such access, the information will not be released.

As always, thoughts and comments are welcomed.