

BORDER SECURITY REPORT

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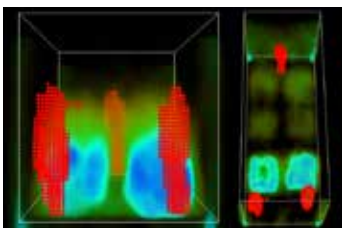
THE JOURNAL OF BORDER SECURITY AND TRANSNATIONAL CRIME FOR THE WORLD'S BORDER
PROTECTION, MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY INDUSTRY POLICY-MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS

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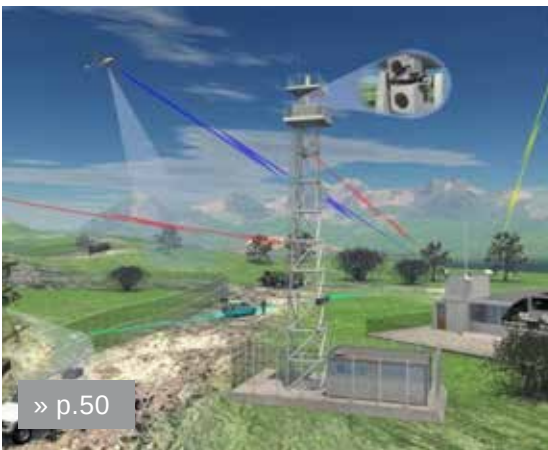
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What Political Change Means on the Border



In this year of elections, in Europe and the USA, migration and illegal migration in particular, like it or not, plays a pivotal role.

Six countries in Europe already have elected right-wing governments, Italy, Finland, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia and the Czech Republic, and the Dutch are forming the most right-wing government in their modern history as a result of Geert Wilders, far-right Party for Freedom (PVV) gaining the most votes in their recent election.

In France, chaos seems reign as the rise of Marine Le Pen's far right National Rally (RN) party, scared enough people in France for a leftist coalition to come together in the countries parliamentary elections to win the most votes.

So, whether it is right-wing anti-immigration parties taking power, or left-wing parties coming together to defeat the right, there's no denying that immigration seems to be turning the old centrist political certainties upside down.

The only possible exception to this is the UK, where a centre left Labour party has just been elected.

But look a little closer and you will see that anti-immigration party Reform UK, split the centre-right conservative vote and on the other side, the Labour party have had to make lots of promises about tackling illegal migration to make themselves electable.

How all these political upheavals will affect border management policy going forward is uncertain. The election of a Labour government in the UK has already resulted in the termination of the Rwanda deal, but this will have no practical effect as almost no illegal migrants had been sent to Rwanda anyway.

However, the idea of "asylum offshoring", like in Rwanda and the deal between Italy and Albania, is likely to be an attractive option for some countries looking to do something radical about illegal migration despite the cost, difficulty and seeming failure of these policies so far.

The political change could also lead to policy changes like the increasing moves towards the securitization of migration, focussing on increasing border controls and deterrence.

When it comes to the US election in November, and with so many twists and turns and so much drama, it's too early to call.

But the Democrats record on illegal migration and President Trumps promises to get tough on migration, 'again' could well be decisive in determining the outcome.

Only time will tell!

Tony Kingham
Editor

Report Outlines Key Elements for Effective Border Operations Amid Rising Humanitarian Protection Needs

As publics in Europe, the United States and beyond become increasingly vocal in their dissatisfaction with the management of their nation's borders, governments face the challenge of designing border systems that prevent the outbreak (or perception) of chaos, even as major displacement crises and the complexities of mixed migration strain outmoded infrastructure. A Migration Policy Institute (MPI) report out examines the challenges in shaping processes that can respond to current border pressures and are resilient to future changes in migration patterns while protecting the right to seek asylum.

In *Managing International Protection Needs at Borders*, analysts Lucía Salgado, Susan Fratzke, Lawrence Huang and Emma Dorst examine strategies for creating adaptable border systems that can efficiently process mixed humanitarian, economic and family reunification migration flows; it also assesses the conditions under which these operations can be successful.

The authors' analysis of the broad array of approaches implemented by governments in recent years points to several elements that are central to the creation and execution of an effective and protection-sensitive border system:

- Having differentiated procedures that can help move people through border crossing points quickly and efficiently based on their varying case profiles—with straightforward asylum cases, for example, completed entirely at the border while more complex cases (such as unaccompanied children or victims of trafficking) would unfold away from the border and with access to a broader range of services.
- Rapid screening and triage capabilities to ensure differentiated procedures are used to the greatest effect; these are essential to prevent processing backlogs.

- Flexible infrastructure and staffing capacity that can be rapidly scaled up or down is necessary to handle fluctuations in arrivals and resources, along with the use of well-designed forecasting and contingency planning protocols.

- Strong coordination and communication mechanisms among stakeholders in government, international organizations and civil society.

Even as countries experiment with moving access to protection closer to asylum seekers' countries of origin and expand the availability of lawful migration pathways, national borders will remain vital sites for accessing protection and processing mixed migration flows. They also will continue to be key focal points in the public and policy discourse around migration. Without appropriate strategies to handle humanitarian and migration crises at borders, policymakers may be tempted to respond to public concerns with harsh measures that foreclose access to asylum.

"Governments have experimented with a range of measures to manage mixed migration at their borders, many of which have been established or evolved in reaction to large or sudden upsurges. Faced with constant fluctuations in resourcing, migration drivers, public sentiment and political will, border management in many receiving countries has taken a whack-a-mole approach, prioritizing whatever problem seems most urgent in the moment," the report finds. "Instead, what is needed is a well-functioning set of basic competencies capable of operating effectively regardless of shifting geographic and seasonal conditions, arrival numbers and migrant profiles."

Read full the report at: www.migrationpolicy.org/research/international-protection-needs-borders.

DHS SHOWS RESULTS IN THE FIGHT TO CRIPPLE CARTELS AND STOP FENTANYL FROM ENTERING THE U.S.

New Actions Announced by the Biden-Harris Administration Build on and Support Ongoing DHS Efforts to Keep Illicit Opioids Out of Our Communities

DHS is on the frontlines fighting against cartels and Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) that are flooding our communities with illicit synthetic drugs, like fentanyl. The Department has stopped more illicit fentanyl and arrested more individuals for fentanyl-related crimes in the last two fiscal years than in the previous five years combined. We are doing this through enforcement actions, including seizures of fentanyl and precursor chemicals, along with stopping

southbound guns and money, and supporting prosecutions to prevent future illicit acts. This whole-of-DHS effort supports President Biden's Unity Agenda and the recently announced new actions. DHS's work is built on 1) breaking up drug cartels and disrupting illicit supply chains globally; 2) intercepting drugs and chemicals at our borders and ports of entry; 3) keeping fentanyl out of our communities through state and local partnerships; and 4) identifying and deploying new

technology to fight fentanyl. We continue the effort and reiterate our call on Congress to provide more resources and authorities to bring to bear our Department's full strength and expertise to the fight.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, DHS has:

- Arrested over 3,600 subjects connected to fentanyl seizure events, which directly hits the organized criminal networks responsible for bringing fentanyl into our communities.
- Seized over 2,200 pill presses.
- Seized over 27,000 pounds of illicit fentanyl to stop it at our borders and in our communities before it can hurt the American public. These seizures were conducted by DHS component agencies U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).
- CBP fentanyl seizures so far in FY2024 amount to 738.5 million doses.
- Initiated 5,874 narcotics-related investigations at HSI.
- Continued deploying new non-intrusive inspection (NII) technology to interdict even more fentanyl before it enters the United States and invested millions of dollars in advanced analytical solutions to include artificial intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning to target and dismantle TCOs and their illicit supply chain.
- Engaged and partnered with state and local law enforcement through task forces, like HSI's



Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST), which eliminate the barriers between federal and local investigations (access to both federal and state prosecutors) and improve international partners in multinational criminal investigations.

Building on these efforts, today the Biden-Harris Administration is seeking legislation in Congress to increase penalties on those who bring deadly drugs into our communities and close loopholes that drug traffickers exploit.

- The Biden-Harris "Detect and Defeat" Counter-Fentanyl legislative proposal would give border officials the tools they need to more effectively track and target the millions of small-dollar shipments that cross our borders – closing a loophole that drug traffickers exploit.
- The legislative proposal would help DHS, and particularly CBP, effectively go after the abuse of "de minimis" shipments, some 4 million

low-value shipments every day that are currently subject to less rigorous reporting requirements than higher value shipments. CBP would be granted the authority to demand additional documentation and other information about de minimis packages and would impose a corresponding penalty on violators. The change would enable customs officials to more effectively analyze risk, identify patterns of concern, and take action against those who try to abuse our system. The legislation would also add a user fee for de minimis packages to help pay for the staff and equipment needed to better identify, and seize, illicit fentanyl being shipped in small packages into our country.

- It would establish a registry of pill presses and tableting machines so that our law enforcement officials can keep track of these machines and take action against their illegitimate use.
- Beyond serializing and tracking pill



presses, industry partners would be empowered to identify and report suspicious behavior. The legislative proposal also includes reinstating subpoena authority to investigate suspicious packages.

- It would permanently regulate fentanyl-related substances as “Schedule I” drugs – subjecting the distribution and possession of these drugs to heightened penalties– and would also increase penalties on those who unlawfully manufacture and distribute precursor chemicals and associated machinery.

The National Security Memorandum (NSM) asks federal departments and agencies to do even more than they are already doing to stop the supply of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids in our country. DHS and our partners across the Administration continue to build on and accelerate efforts to detect and seize illicit drugs and hold drug traffickers accountable.

The enforcement data for the first three quarters of FY2024 reflects a fraction of the whole-of-DHS effort already underway. Through capacity building - including harnessing new technologies, increasing state, local, and international partnerships, and consistently developing new techniques and tactics, DHS will continue to build on this progress.

Breaking up drug cartels and supply chains globally. DHS is supporting the federal effort to combat fentanyl internationally, through information-sharing, multinational enforcement operations, and global cooperation and partnerships.

- Over the past three years, DHS has focused not just on illicit fentanyl. but the tools and materials TCOs use to make it. We are interdicting and seizing precursor chemicals, pill press machines, die molds, and pill press parts used in the manufacturing process. We are

targeting pill press supply chains, pill press brokers, TCOs and U.S. recipients who are producing and moving fentanyl, and the money launderers who help facilitate this illicit trade.

- In April 2024, CBP launched Operation Plaza Spike to target plaza bosses and cartels that facilitate the flow of deadly fentanyl, as well as its analogs, precursors, and tools to make dangerous drugs. Plaza bosses are Cartel operatives who supervise and control the flow of illicit products in their specific geographic corridors. On July 18, 2024, CBP expanded the operation to El Paso and Juarez.
- In June 2024, HSI indicted 47 alleged members of an Imperial Valley-based, Sinaloa Cartel-linked fentanyl distribution network; and in July, the de facto head of the Sinaloa Cartel was arrested, the culmination of over a decade-long collaboration between various HSI offices, foreign partners and U.S. Department of Justice prosecutors' offices, serving a significant blow to the one of the main producers of fentanyl plaguing U.S. communities.
- The CBP Strategy to Combat Fentanyl and Other Synthetic Drugs, released in October 2023, aligns resources, partnerships, intelligence collection, and lessons learned from CBP's success this year. It complements the HSI Strategy for Combating Illicit Opioids, released in September

2023, an intelligence-driven approach that leverages HSI's extensive expertise in investigating cross-border criminal activity and its unique access to customs and financial data.

- Under President Biden's leadership, the United States is attacking the epidemic at every level, including where it often starts, with China-based entities that manufacture and distribute the chemicals used to make the fentanyl that is fueling American overdose deaths. The Administration has stepped up counternarcotics cooperation with key government partners across America and around the world, including China, India, as well as Mexico, and Canada – and launched the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats, which unites more than 140 countries in the fight against drug trafficking cartels and illicit finance. DHS participates in that and participated in the National Security Council-led launch of a new Counternarcotics Working Group with China to disrupt the manufacture and flow of illicit synthetic drugs, delivering on the commitments made during President Biden's meeting with President Xi in November 2023. DHS also contributes to the Trilateral Fentanyl Committee with the Governments of Mexico and Canada.
- DHS helps partners in the Western Hemisphere and Asia build their own capacity.



- Transnational Criminal Investigative Units: HSI partners with vetted foreign law enforcement officials and prosecutors in Transnational Criminal Investigative Units (TCIUs), which support investigations and prosecutions abroad. HSI has established 16 TCIUs worldwide. In FY 2023, efforts by the Mexico TCIU resulted in the seizure of 64,138 pounds of precursor chemicals and more than 59 criminal arrests.
- Information Sharing: We are working with shippers to provide more data to CBP. The Section 321 Data Pilot helps us work more closely with non-traditional trade partners to identify and interdict illicit shipments in small packages, without inhibiting cross-border e-commerce.
- More than 90% of interdicted fentanyl is stopped at Ports of Entry (POEs) where cartels attempt to smuggle it primarily in vehicles driven by U.S. citizens. CBP and HSI throughout the past two years have run operations that mobilized hundreds of personnel – special agents, CBP officers, import specialists, and intelligence analysts – through surges and deployments at Southwest Border POEs, airports, express consignment facilities, international mail facilities, container stations, and warehouses across the country.
- Launched in October 2023, Operation Apollo is a CBP counter-fentanyl operation that disrupts drug and chemical supplies, collects and shares intelligence, and leverages valuable state and local law enforcement partnerships in southern California. In the last two weeks, CBP announced Operation Apollo X to expand that collaboration to El Paso, Texas.

Intercepting drugs and chemicals at our borders and ports of entry. DHS personnel is on the front lines to detect and prevent fentanyl and its precursor chemicals from flowing into our country.

Other recent operations include:

- Operation Blue Lotus, launched in March 2023, surged CBP and HSI resources to Southwest Border POEs and worked with state, local, Tribal, and territorial partners to expose networks. Operation Four Horsemen was a complementary United States Border Patrol (USBP) operation to stop fentanyl between POEs and at checkpoints near the border. As a result of these two operations, DHS seized nearly 10,000 pounds of fentanyl, and more than 10,000 pounds of other narcotics like cocaine and methamphetamines.
- CBP's Operation Artemis, supported by HSI, targeted the illicit fentanyl supply chain, leveraging multidisciplinary interagency "jump teams" at strategic locations. The four months Operation Artemis led to over 900 seizures, including over 13,000 pounds of fentanyl precursor chemicals.
- Operation Rolling Wave surged inbound inspections at Southwest Border checkpoints, covering every sector and employing predictive analysis and intelligence sharing.

Keeping fentanyl out of our communities. DHS is partnering with federal, state, and local stakeholders to share information and track and disrupt fentanyl networks within our communities.

- DHS is a department of partnerships, and sharing information with state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement and community partners is fundamental

to our work. State, local, tribal, territorial, and international law enforcement are also in integral part of the success of DHS task forces, most significantly HSI's Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST). The primary mission of HSI's BEST is to combat emerging and existing TCOs by employing the full range of federal, state, local, tribal, and international law enforcement authorities and resources in the fight to identify, investigate, disrupt, and dismantle these organizations at every level of operation. BESTs eliminate the barriers between federal and local investigations (access to both federal and state prosecutors) and close the gap with international partners in multinational criminal investigations.

- State, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement also support efforts to disrupt TCOs by nominating individuals to the Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) watchlist through DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A). The TOC watchlist, maintained by the FBI, is a list of individuals known or reasonably suspected to be involved in transnational organized crime.

Identifying and deploying new technology to fight fentanyl. DHS is working on developing new technology to support better detection and apprehension of synthetic drugs and their precursors.

- The President has prioritized deploying cutting-edge drug

detection technology across our southwest border and continues to call on Congress to pass the bipartisan border bill, which would deliver 100 more high-tech drug detection machines that could scan 20 times as many vehicles to stop fentanyl from crossing our border.

- Non-Intrusive Inspection: We are dramatically expanding non-intrusive inspection (NII) technology at our southwest border to screen and detect not only drugs, but also currency, guns, ammunition, and illegal merchandise, as well as people being smuggled or trafficked into the country, while minimally impacting the flow of legitimate travel and commerce. By installing 123 new large-scale scanners at multiple POEs along the southwest border, CBP will increase its inspection capacity of passenger vehicles from two percent to 40 percent, and of cargo vehicles from 17 percent to 70 percent.
- Forward Operating Laboratories: CBP is operating 16 Forward Operating Laboratories to provide onsite, rapid testing for fentanyl to frontline personnel. A process that once would have taken weeks now takes seconds for quicker law enforcement actions, prosecutions, and intelligence collection.
- Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning at Ports of Entry: CBP is innovating with the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence at our POEs. This year alone, machine learning models that help CBP Officers determine which suspicious vehicles and

passengers to refer to secondary screening have led to 240 seizures, which include thousands of pounds of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and fentanyl.

- HSI Strategic Network

Dismantlement Project: HSI is using Artificial Intelligence to illuminate fentanyl networks, known and unknown to authorities, operating throughout the U.S. and abroad. The HSI Strategic Network Dismantlement Project partners

data engineers and data scientists with HSI investigators who leverage the HSI-owned RAVEN platform to analyze raw data, derive meaningful investigative insights, and enable disruptions of the global fentanyl supply chain.

- HSI Innovation Lab: HSI is utilizing the HSI Innovation Lab to provide data analytics and cutting-edge technologies (machine learning and artificial intelligence) to combat fentanyl.

Mauritania joins the Global Vulnerable Targets Programme: UNOCT and CTED conclude in-depth consultations to identify national needs and priorities



Under the United Nations Global Programme on Countering Terrorist Threats against Vulnerable Targets ("Global Vulnerable Targets Programme"), the United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) the support of the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office in Nouakchott.

This event represents the first stage of UNOCT's technical assistance package for Mauritania in the area of strengthening security and resilience of national critical infrastructure and "soft targets" against terrorist threats and challenges.

The consultations' methodology builds on CTED's and UNOCT's mandates aimed to identify Mauritania's needs and priorities in the area of safety and security of vulnerable targets. The three-day substantive discussions on relevant legal, institutional, and operational frameworks brought together 20 officials from 8 national ministries and agencies under the leadership and coordination role by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mauritania.

As a result of these discussions, UNOCT and CTED will support the elaboration of Mauritania's national plan of action (or "roadmap") on vulnerable targets protection, which will include concrete recommendations to support national ministries, entities, and other relevant stakeholders. The document will identify strengths, needs and priorities for enhancing the country's national capacity in support of the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 2341 (2017) and 2396 (2017) and following the recommendations of the 2018 Addendum to the Madrid Guiding Principles on Foreign Terrorist Fighters (S/2018/1177) PDF, as well as the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its Review resolutions.

THE QUESTION OF WHO YOU ARE

The Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) have joined forces to issue digital credentials using openly developed, free to implement internet standards. Here's what this means and why it matters.

One of the critical challenges of our technology-driven, interconnected world is identity.

Without even speaking a word, we identify ourselves every day and in many different ways. Perhaps you enter a PIN to sign-in to a bank account or use a password to login to your health benefits. You scan your own face to unlock your phone to access some of the apps running on it. You swipe an ID card with a magnetic stripe to enter your office

building. And of course, when you travel or work abroad, you must identify yourself with a passport. But what are you sharing when you identify yourself? Where does that identifying number or document come from, and who controls access to it?

S&T is working to help make your identity more secure, and to put control over your privacy and personal information into your own hands. Jared Goodwin, Chief



Mockup of a U.S. Permanent Resident card as a digital credential. Photo credit USCIS

of the Document Management Division within the Office of Intake and Document Production (OIDP) at USCIS, was also working on these issues. OIDP is tasked with the production of all immigration documents—they design the documents and acquire the vendors to produce them. USCIS wants to be able to issue digital credentials, like a green card, to a smartphone, which would be easier to carry and use, more secure, and it could be supported online. Actions like renewing and modifying immigration

status would not require standing in line at an office somewhere.

Jared discovered S&T's Silicon Valley Innovation Program was exploring similar solutions. "They're going out to industry to look for ways to partner with agencies to prevent forgery and the counterfeiting of certificates and licenses," he said. Jared contacted SVIP and the solution that they settled on together is to use two openly developed, global standards called Verifiable Credentials Data Model (VCDM) and Decentralized Identifiers (DID).

Created by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), a global standards development organization, with the support of S&T, USCIS, and many other like-minded partners, these standards describe how a secure, privacy respecting digital credentialing process can be implemented.

DIDs are unique identifiers that can be assigned to organizations, devices, or people. A DID, unlike a social security number, functions solely as an identifier and cannot be used for verification, as that role is deliberately separated and implemented using public key cryptography.

VCDM is a way to express credentials in a way that is cryptographically secure, privacy respecting, and machine verifiable. In addition, this standard enables a person to minimize the disclosure of personal data by implementing selective disclosure capabilities.

Selective disclosure allows digital credentials to contain many pieces of information but gives the user discretion to share only the specific information required for a particular transaction with the government or non-government entities, rather than disclosing the entire contents of the credential. So, the ability to selectively share, with consent, only pieces of information needed for a particular encounter is a highly desired capability.

Consider this example: a customer attempts to purchase a six-pack of beer at a convenience store. The way it works now, the cashier asks for an ID to verify the customer is old enough to buy liquor, but when they hand over their driver's license... what else are they handing over?

Think about that very common transaction for a moment: a state-issued document from a department of motor vehicles, which is intended to demonstrate the qualification to drive a car, is presented to verify that you are older than 21. This document shares your date of birth, address, ID number, organ donation status, if you need to wear glasses, even your height and weight.

Part of the promise of the W3C standards is the ability to share only the data required for a transaction. In the scenario above, when the cashier asks for proof that you are older than 21, the customer could use the digital Permanent Resident Card on their phone to prove their verified age without sharing any other information (not even a specific

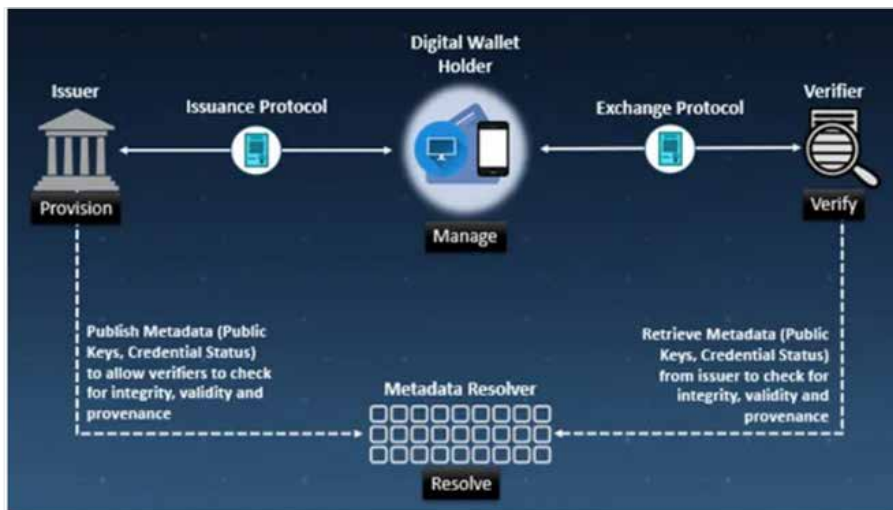


Diagram of a DID/VCDM Credentialing process. Photo credit USCIS

date of birth). This is an important step towards putting privacy back in the hands of the people.

The DHS Privacy Office, charged with “embedding and enforcing privacy protections and transparency in all DHS activities,” has been brought into the process to review the W3C VCDM/DID framework and advise on any potential issues.

“Beyond ensuring global interoperability, standards developed by the W3C undergo wide reviews that ensure that they incorporate security, privacy, accessibility, and internationalization,” said SVIP Managing Director Melissa Oh, “by helping implement these standards in our digital credentialing efforts, S&T, through SVIP, is helping to ensure that the technologies we use make a difference for people in how they secure their digital transactions and protect their privacy.”

“Going forward, the government wants to ensure individuals have agency and control over their digital

interactions,” said Goodwin. “The user should be able to own their identity and decide when to share it, and we don’t want a system that has to reach back to an agency for verification.”

Thanks to the work of SVIP, USCIS and many others, digital credentials using W3C VCDM and W3C DID standards are going to become more and more common in the near future. The work will make a big difference preventing identity theft and forgery, allowing individuals to control their own personal information and privacy, especially online.



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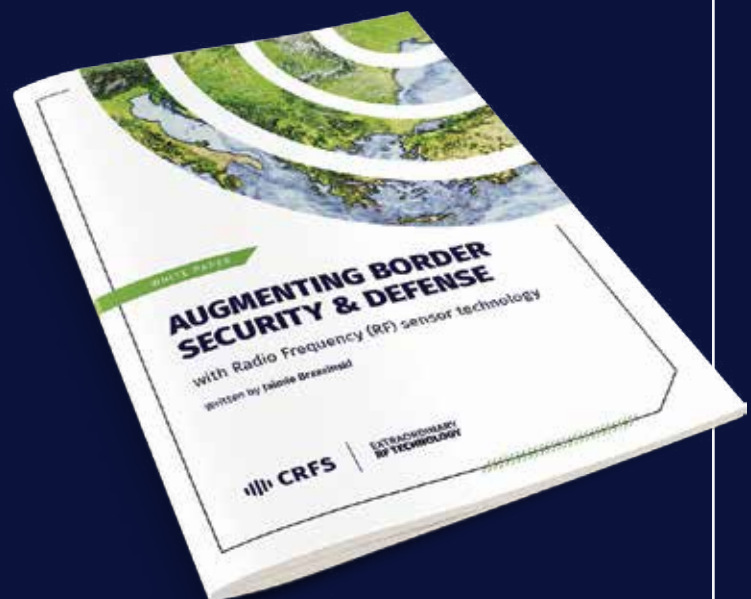
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50 arrests after cocaine-laden sailboat intercepted in the Caribbean



39 individuals were arrested on 24 June in Spain, Norway, Poland and UK after cocaine worth an estimated EUR 45 million was seized from a vessel at sea in 2023. The crew of 8 people were also arrested during that initial interception. Simultaneously, a total of 47 house searches

were carried out in Bulgaria, Colombia, Norway, Panama, Portugal, Spain and Trinidad and Tobago. Subsequent weeks saw three other individuals detained, bringing the total number of arrests to 50.

Authorities intercepted a sailboat in international waters off the coast of Martinique with 1 500 kilos of cocaine on board. Eight individuals, including the crew members and some involved through other means, were arrested.

Following this operation, in the framework of intelligence activities underway with its operational counterparts, Europol has been able to develop actionable intelligence regarding the drug trafficking activities of this organised crime group. This led to further investigations and operational activities involving 10 countries..

85 arrests and over 6 400 objects recovered during annual operation against international art trafficking

Operation Pandora against international art trafficking saw the involvement of customs and law enforcement authorities from 25 countries. Led by Spain (Guardia Civil), with the support of Europol and INTERPOL, the operation led to the arrest of 85 persons and recovery of over 6 400 cultural goods.

During Pandora VIII, several thousand checks were carried out at countless airports, ports and border crossing points, as well as in auction houses, museums and private residences. Law enforcement also patrolled

the web and conducted over 6 000 online checks, which led to the recovery of 580 stolen goods. Across the involved countries, around 113 criminal and 137 administrative cases are still ongoing, with more arrests and seizures anticipated.

As a co-leader of this operation, Europol played a key role by facilitating information exchange and providing analytical and operational support to the individual national investigations.

Nine members of high-risk drug trafficking organisations arrested in Montenegro

Montenegrin authorities have arrested nine High Value Targets holding key positions in Western Balkan drug trafficking organisations. In total, 19 individuals were targeted in this action. Four received charges while in prison, and five others are still on the run. This action is the result of national investigations, cooperation, and information exchange through Europol between the Australian Federal Police and New South Wales Police, the Montenegrin Special Police Division (Specijalno Policijsko Odeljenje), and the United States Drugs

Enforcement Administration (DEA). The investigation was initiated after law enforcement intercepted 1.8 tonnes of cocaine shipments from Europe to Australia.

The targeted individuals were closely linked to various Montenegrin criminal cells active within a larger drug trafficking network spread across the Balkan region and beyond.



219 criminals arrested and 1,374 victims identified in action week against human trafficking

A large-scale joint operation against human trafficking has led to 219 arrests and the identification of 1,374 potential victims, including 153 children, across 39 countries.

Operation Global Chain, which was led by Austria and coordinated by Romania, Europol, Frontex and INTERPOL, aimed to disrupt high-risk criminal networks, focusing on cases of sexual exploitation, forced criminality and forced begging.

The operation encouraged national authorities to conduct targeted activities in their respective countries, to facilitate cross-border cooperation and to raise public awareness. The approach involved police forces and border guards from several continents, focusing on the criminal networks behind the trafficking of human beings, with particular attention paid to cases involving child victims.

276 new investigations launched

Inspections were carried out at hotspots around the world, with officers looking for signs of trafficking and forged travel documents. Checks against INTERPOL's global databases yielded 12 hits, including two subjects of INTERPOL Red Notices.

In order to cross-check data collected on the ground and allow for the exchange of information between participating countries, officers worked together at a coordination centre at Frontex headquarters in Warsaw, Poland.

A total of 276 new investigations have been launched as a result of the action week, with an additional 362 suspects identified. Authorities also seized 2,074 criminal assets such as cash or devices, and detected 363 fraudulent documents.

Mexico and Colombia dismantle transnational sex trafficking ring



Authorities in the Americas, supported by INTERPOL, have successfully dismantled a criminal network involved in the trafficking of Colombian women to Mexico, arresting its leaders and safeguarding eight victims.

In a coordinated operation between the specialized prosecutor's offices, investigative police and INTERPOL National Central Bureaus of Mexico and

Colombia, authorities arrested the group's main leader, a Cuban-Mexican citizen, in Medellín, Colombia, and his main associate in Yucatan, Mexico.

Investigations uncovered that the victims would then receive 'official' letters of invitation to facilitate their access to Mexico. Upon arrival, the women were greeted by members of the criminal group, who took them to safe houses and confiscated their passports. They were then forced to sign contracts bonding them to unaffordable debts, which would be paid off by performing sex work in bars allegedly owned by the group's leader.

In Colombia, authorities found that the suspected ringleader had been leading an ostentatious lifestyle in a luxurious country house and travelling in high-end armored vehicles with a security detail.



OSCE Facilitates Needs Assessment Mission to Uzbekistan on Cross-Border Electronic Evidence Requests



OSCE Transnational Threats Department, jointly with the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, facilitated a needs assessment mission to Uzbekistan, focusing on requesting electronic evidence across borders. The

mission was held as part of the E-VIDENCE project dedicated to building the capacity of law enforcement in requesting electronic evidence across borders for investigating online criminal matters, including terrorism-related.

The expert-level meeting supported ongoing national efforts to harmonize the regulatory frameworks related to electronic evidence, enhance scientific research on digital forensics conducted by the Law Enforcement Academy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and introduce good international practices for requesting electronic evidence from internet service providers based in other jurisdictions in a manner compliant with human rights and international laws.

OSCE facilitates engagement with and empowers border communities in Tajikistan in border security and management

The purpose of these meetings was to educate the local population about potential security threats from Afghanistan and the importance of promptly reporting any unusual or suspicious incidents related to border security. Over 400 individuals, including local administration officials, students, teachers, and residents (more than 50% of whom were female), gained a better understanding of working together for border protection

during these meetings.

The OSCE Programme Office also provided hotline numbers and printed more than 1,000 calendars to help the local population near the Tajik-Afghan border report any border-related violations. Engaging with communities residing in remote border areas near Afghanistan can provide valuable information to enhance overall situational awareness.

OSCE Special Representative Johnstone welcomes France's collaborative efforts in the fight against trafficking in human beings

Kari Johnstone, the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Human Trafficking, concluded her two-day visit to France where she engaged in constructive discussions with government officials, anti-trafficking stakeholders and civil society organizations.

During her visit, Johnstone commended France's collaborative efforts led by the Interministerial Mission for the Protection of Women Against Violence and the Fight Against Human Trafficking (MIPROF). She also emphasized initiatives such as dedicated training organized with the National Magistrate School (ENM)

to address human trafficking risks in the context of the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Special Representative welcomed innovative partnerships to engage the hospitality sector in the fight against trafficking in human beings.



Africa-Americas Dialogue on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration



The United Nations Network on Migration for West and Central Africa, co-chaired by the IOM and the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), in coordination with the Government of The Gambia, hosted an interregional dialogue on the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in Africa and the Americas. This event brought

together nine Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms on Migration (ISCMS) to discuss their concrete contributions to the implementation of the GCM.

“Our collective goal is clear: to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the GCM’s footprint across Africa and the Americas to co-create a joint declaration that will significantly contribute to the GCM Regional Reviews,” said Karl Frédéric Paul, UN Resident Coordinator in The Gambia. “Let’s not forget the human stories behind the statistics – migration is about people, their aspirations, and their journeys and has the potential to be a driver of development, economic growth and positive change.”

Key areas discussed included the issue of missing migrants and related data, enhancing regular pathways while ensuring the protection of migrants, the increase in climate mobility and the need for adaptive solutions, and the benefits of harmonizing regional policies and legislation, among other topics.

IOM Welcomes Further Protection of Migrants in Greece Under Landmark Partnership

Following a two-day visit to Athens, Greece, Amy Pope, Director General of the IOM, welcomed a landmark agreement to further protect migrants in the country.

The new Host Country Agreement signed with the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs will allow IOM to continue providing services including life-saving

protection and health, mental health support, and pathways for regular migration, integration, relocation, and voluntary returns.

This reinforces IOM’s close partnership with the Greek Government, supporting migrants in need and working to achieve safe and regular migration in order to protect the dignity of people on the move.

IOM Organizes Meet to Chart Course for Enhanced Africa-Europe Migration Pathways

The IOM is organizing a meeting (24-25 July) on ‘Regular Pathways for Human Mobility’ in Rabat, Morocco under the Africa Pillar of IOM’s Africa-Europe Flagship Initiative, which aims to facilitate the orderly movement of people within Africa and between Africa and Europe. The meeting is an ambitious milestone towards achieving a consensus on the scope and operationalization of the IOM Africa-Europe Flagship Initiative on regular pathways, reinforcing the importance of safe, orderly, and regular migration as a driver of sustainable development.

Africa has a youthful population with 40 per cent of its 1.4 billion people under the age of 15, 62 per cent of which are projected to be of working age by 2050. This demographic shift presents both opportunities to be harnessed and challenges to be addressed for the continent’s labour market development.



Frontex provides record number of officers to support security at Olympic Games



Between July and September, an average of 230 Frontex officers will bolster the efforts of French authorities in border management. These officers will primarily be

deployed as Border Guard Officers to perform first-line checks on travellers crossing the external borders at key locations, including international airports, seaports, railway and road stations. Their duties will include managing massive passenger flows, detecting ineligible individuals, and facilitating the smooth crossing of bona fide travellers. Just at the Paris airports, over 125 Frontex officers will support border control measures.

In addition to Border Guard Officers, Advanced-Level Detection Officers will be present at critical points to enhance security measures, focusing on document and identity fraud. Frontex Tactical Support Officers will coordinate this significant reinforcement, ensuring efficient operational support at various border crossing points in France.

Simulation exercise in cooperation with Polish authorities

Frontex teamed up with Polish authorities, led by the Polish Ministry of the Interior, to test and improve Poland's contingency plans for guarding its external borders.

Frontex regularly organises such simulation exercises across EU Member States to assess and enhance the readiness of border management systems. By doing so, we ensure high and consistent levels of security at

Europe's borders. If any issues are identified, Member States can address these vulnerabilities, often with support from Frontex.

Given Poland's challenges at its eastern borders in recent years, the need for robust contingency plans has never been more apparent. This exercise provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen cooperation and mutual trust between Frontex and Polish authorities.

EU external borders: Irregular border crossings fall one third in the first half of 2024

The number of irregular border crossings into the European Union in the first six months of 2024 fell by almost a third (30%) to roughly 94 000, according to preliminary data collected by Frontex. Among the main migratory routes, the Western Balkans and the Central Mediterranean recorded the largest decreases in detections of irregular border crossings (-72% and -61% respectively), while the West African and the Eastern Land Border have seen the largest increases (+174% and 148% respectively).

The Central Mediterranean route, which saw the largest number of irregular crossings a year ago, continued to show a downward trend of recent months. Despite

a decrease of 61% compared to last year, it remained the most active route this year with almost 26 000 detections. In June, the number of arrivals fell to 4 500, a decrease of more than 71% compared to last year.

Meanwhile, the Western African route continued to record unprecedented numbers of detections, with the total of irregular migrants arriving in the Canary Islands in the first half of the year increasing by 174% year-on-year to almost 20,000. In June, there were 2,600 arrivals.



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HUMAN PRESENCE DETECTION SYSTEMS

According to the recent Migration Outlook Report 2024 by the ICMPD: The world has entered a period of increasing volatility, characterised by systemic rivalry between the world's great powers, a polymodal international order, greater state fragility, an increasing number of violent conflicts, rising terrorism, the weaponisation of energy and food insecurity.

It also says that: The number of armed conflicts has almost doubled over the last decade, correlating to a doubling of the number of forcibly displaced persons, both internally and across borders. Their number reached 114 million in 2023, the highest since the beginning of the century.

Whilst it's not just conflict that drives migration; natural disasters, economic and educational opportunities also play a key part, conflict remains the primary factor. And with no resolution of the many ongoing conflicts in sight, the prospect for a decrease in irregular migration numbers remains small.

None of this is news to anyone that watches the television, let alone to those of us directly or indirectly involved in the wider border security community.

But what has changed since the first wave of the current migration crisis back in 2015 when Angela Merkel famously welcomed over a million asylum seekers into Germany, is a hardening of attitudes to irregular migration and a growing desire by the public to see their governments exert far greater control of irregular migrants crossing their borders illegally.

And that's a difficult job. Because

border agencies are immediately faced with the usual conflicting aims of 'facilitating the free flow of goods and people', whilst increasing their ability to stop illegal migrants crossing their border.

Whilst the largest numbers of illegal border crossings on the US/Mexico border are made on foot, and in Europe are made by boat via the Mediterranean. Thousands more are making the dangerous journey, hidden in the backs of cars, vans and trucks, and sometimes with tragic results, as we saw back in 2019, when the 39 Vietnamese migrants were found suffocated in the back of a refrigerated truck in the UK.

So, how do you check thousands of trucks and other vehicles for clandestines whilst minimising delays to the flow traffic, and of course, do it safely?

Physically searching vehicles is simply out of the question because it takes too long and requires too many trained search officers to be practically and financially feasible.

This is one of those areas where technology is crucial, and in this article, we will look at some of the main human presence detection systems currently available, as well as some of the new tech on the block.

Human Presence Detection Systems is a term that covers a range of technologies but probably the technology most associated with the term, are the so called 'Heartbeat' detectors.



MAGUS HPB Product

These systems have been around for a couple of decades now and are well established both on borders and in prisons. They work by using geophone sensors, like those used to measure earthquakes, to measure the tiniest movements or vibrations, both voluntary (body movement) and in-voluntary (heartbeat) transmitted through the vehicles body and suspension system. An important factor is that, because these systems only measure sound and vibration, they are intrinsically safe for the user and the clandestine alike.

In operation, once the driver and legitimate passengers have vacated the vehicle, operators attach at least two magnetic sensors to the vehicle. This is important because, as I understand it, a single sensor will not be able to eliminate the background noise you will expect in a normal busy working environment such as a port, and this will result in an unacceptable number of false positives. Some systems also

include ground sensors, again these are to eliminate the problem of background noise.

There are several manufacturers of these systems on the market and some of the most active of these include, US company Geovox with their Avian system and Mira Technologies based in Vienna. Mira's system, Magus HBD is driven by AI, the system can be integrated in a national network or can be used as a stand-alone. They report that they are currently preparing research to develop a system which is not only wireless but also contactless, meaning no sensors have to be placed manually on the inspected vehicles.

Another manufacturer, ClanTect, that came out of the Institute of Sound & Vibration Research in the UK, has gone a stage further in their efforts to eliminate the problem of false positives generated by environmental noise and vibration. In addition to including ground sensors, ClanTect have also



Image courtesy: ClanTect Ltd

developed a proprietary wind-frame for their mobile wireless version, which is able to effectively 'block' out the vibration resulting from wind excitation, thereby enabling accurate searches to continue, even on busy roadside locations. They have also developed a wireless multi-vehicle scanning version and 'ClanConnect' connecting a network of remote terminals, with the head office host system. This provides for the rapid and tamper-free two-way transmission of data, system updates and programs.

Another US company, ENSCO produce the MicroSearch Human Presence Detection System (HPDS). They have gone on to develop the MicroSearch Contactless Vehicle Sensor (CVS) System, a new technology that builds off the current MicroSearch (HPDS). The new option allows the current vehicle sensors that are magnetically attached to the vehicle to be replaced with vehicle sensors that do not require any contact with the vehicle at all. The sensors themselves can be housed in a protective speed bump to

allow for mobility and movement, or can be permanently installed, recessed below pavement grade, and covered with anything that will protect the sensor from damage but still provides direct access to the sensor. This new technology eliminates the requirement for an officer to attach a sensor to the side or undercarriage of the vehicle being inspected, improves officer safety, and eliminates the requirement for direct access to and contact with the vehicle.



Sensors housed in speed bumps permanently affixed to the search area surface

Thomas Plutt Director, MicroSearch Systems said, "This innovative proprietary technology enables state of the art human presence detection without any physical contact with the vehicle."

Moving away from sound and vibration technology, another US company, Decision Sciences International Corporation (DSIC) recently announced a breakthrough in passive human detection capability for their product Discovery®

DSIC has developed a ground-breaking Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) capability based on Charged Particle (Muon) Tomography technology, capable of detecting contraband and anomalies such as drugs, weapons, chemicals, unshielded and shielded radiological and nuclear materials, even inside bulk truck cargoes and containers, penetrating cover loads such as ice and water, salts, gravel and aggregate, steel and lead.

Now, in response to customer requirements, Decision Sciences has developed a new algorithm to safely detect human beings hidden inside containers and cargoes. As Kevin Davies, DSIC's Chief Commercial Officer stated: "DSIC's passive Discovery® system does not generate any harmful radiation like x-ray, and is intrinsically safe for the user, the cargo, and any human beings that may be hidden in the cargo. This is a real game-changer in the fight against human trafficking globally."

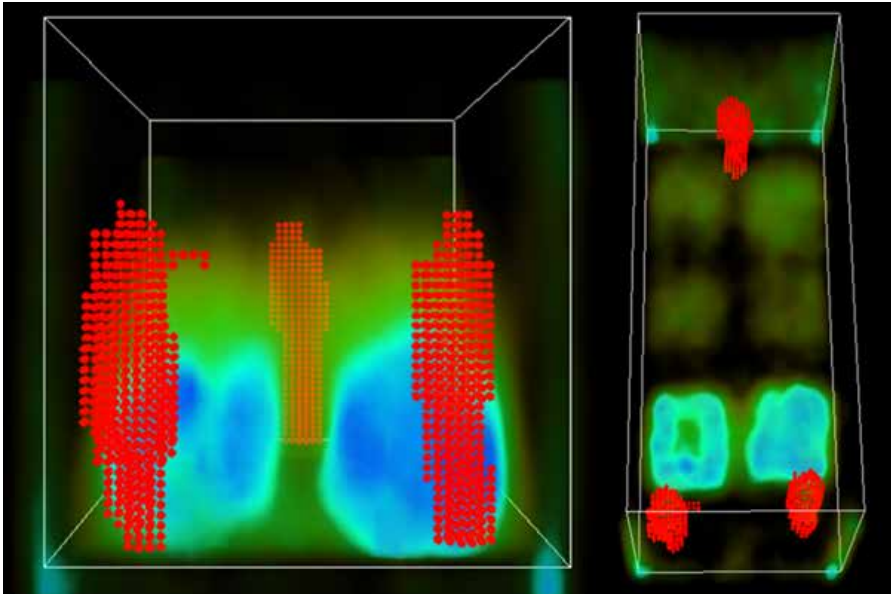


Image courtesy: Decision Sciences International Corporation (DSIC)

Our last technology choice is X-Ray backscatter. Unlike potentially harmful X-ray's, which rely on the transmission of X-rays through the object, backscatter X-ray detects the radiation that reflects from the object and forms an image.

This technology is utilized in the unival MBX mobile x-ray backscatter van which can image cars, trucks and people. X-Ray backscatter technology is highly sensitive to organic materials such as drugs, explosives, cash, and of course humans. Since the unival MBX does not have a tunnel to restrict scanned objects, it can scan any sized object including passenger vehicles, trucks and ULD containers. unival quote: that with its unique NanoDose technology, unival MBX delivers high performance while maintaining the lowest X-Ray dose of any cargo or vehicle inspection scanner.

These systems are particularly suitable tool for managing high-throughput environments, because they can be driven up and down a queue of vehicles or even be used in mobile roadside vehicle checkpoints to scan moving traffic.

Of course, these backscatter systems do not have the penetrating power of their big

brothers, the Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) X-Ray scanners, so are more suited to scanning cars, vans and soft skinned trucks. But they are incredibly fast, mobile and versatile.

Whilst the none of these technologies on their own represent a technological 'silver bullet', together they should part of a multi-layered security approach that will help in tackling illegal migration and the scourge of human trafficking.



Image courtesy: © unival group

Interconnected and digital: how migrant smugglers and human traffickers operate



The new report by Europol's European Migrant Smuggling Centre (EMSC) looks into the latest developments and main threats in migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, based on the most recent operations supported by Europol. The report highlights the main challenges presented by the current criminal landscape, and aims to help law enforcement step up the fight against criminal networks, who not only rob individuals of their dignity but directly threaten peoples' lives.

Migrant smuggling and human trafficking networks are highly adaptive and exploit geopolitical events, including economic and social crises to maximise their illegal profits. These networks swiftly identify criminal opportunities offered by the digital environment and take advantage of them to increase their illegal proceeds. Criminals abuse social media platforms, mobile applications, and cryptocurrencies to offer their illegal services, manage logistics and payments, and secure profits.

In 2015, the European Union was confronted with an unprecedented migratory crisis. In response, in 2016, Europol increased its support to national law enforcement authorities with the creation of a dedicated hub – Europol's European Migrant Smuggling Centre – to facilitate closer cross-border cooperation and the rapid exchange of operational information.

In 2023 alone, Europol supported 223 operations against migrant smuggling and human trafficking networks. The agency also provided national law enforcement authorities with 1 231 operational reports to advance their investigations in 2023. Europol has further developed the concept of Operational Task Forces (OTFs) in this crime area, with 11 OTFs targeting migrant smuggling and human trafficking networks.

Main threats and developments

Investigations into migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings reveal a complex and dynamic criminal environment in which actors take advantage of existing infrastructures and engage in multiple illegal activities. These criminal networks also engage in a number of other criminal activities, such as drugs and arms trafficking, document fraud and violence. Migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings are interconnected, especially in cases where irregular migrants are in debt to their smugglers and end up in labour or sexual exploitation schemes to pay the smuggling fees. The links between migrant smuggling, terrorism and the financing of terrorism are of particular concern.

The main characteristics of the criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling and human trafficking:

- Strong links to other crime areas and crime enablers;
- High flexibility and adaptability;
- Abuse of geopolitical, economic, environmental and social crises;
- Intense cooperation with other criminal networks across borders within and outside the EU;
- Extension of violence towards irregular migrants, law enforcement, competitors and within the criminal networks themselves;
- Increase in the digitalisation of core components of criminal activities.

Strong partnerships to combat criminal networks globally

In April 2024, Europol hosted the conference “Tackling migrant smuggling in the digital domain” under the umbrella of the European Commission initiative Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling. During this event, over 100 experts from EU Member States, third party countries, agencies and international organisations met to discuss the challenges and possible responses to migrant smuggling enabled by the use of online platforms.

In June 2024, the Spanish National Police hosted the Europol’s European Migrant Smuggling Centre’s Annual Conference in Madrid, attended by representatives from law enforcement authorities in the Member States and operational partner countries, from EU agencies and bodies, international organisations, as well as from the private sector. The meeting focussed on the current threats and challenges faced by investigators. The conference also furthered the exchange of good practices and difficulties in investigating the digital dimension of migrant smuggling, aiming to strengthen the EU’s tools in the fight against this criminal threat.

WCO Smart Customs Project releases results of the global survey on disruptive technologies

The WCO Smart Customs Project publishes the results of the survey launched in April 2024, aimed at gauging the global adoption of disruptive technologies among WCO Members, identify capacity-building needs, nominate National Contact Points (NCPs), and foster the exchange of experiences and best practices.

The survey’s main outcome is the identification of key technologies / application of technologies that may be adopted by Customs administrations in the near future and that have been selected as the focus of the Project: Artificial intelligence and Machine Learning (including relevant components of Big data and Data analytics), Blockchain, and Cloud computing.

The survey achieved a notable 62% participation rate from WCO Members, with 116 submissions. The results demonstrate broad participation and balanced representation from all six WCO regions, ensuring that the WCO Smart Customs Project effectively addresses digital gaps among Customs administrations and targets the right technologies for transformative impact.

The survey also shows that an IT Strategy is in place in 92% of cases among respondents, and that the top areas where Members reported capacity-building needs include technical skills, cybersecurity awareness, IT policy and governance, and strategic planning and change management.

The WCO Smart Customs Project will continue

to address the digital gaps among Customs administrations by targeting the identified technologies. Detailed reports and further knowledge sharing through the Smart Customs Community Portal and regional workshops will ensure the dissemination of best practices and successful integration of these technologies.

One of the aims of the WCO Smart Customs Survey was to define up to three technologies as the focus of the Project, and on which the Project team would prepare detailed reports about the minimum technical specifications (for implementation/integration), costs and trends, as well as use cases, business processes, policy arrangements, and legal requirements.

To this end, Members were asked to identify the top three key technologies/application of different technologies that might be adopted by their administration in the near future, and which they would like to see as the focus of the Smart Customs Project.

The top three technologies identified by Members were:

- Big data and DA
- AI/ML
- Blockchain

The selection reflects the technologies with the highest ‘development potential’, bringing together technologies that Members are planning to develop or are considering for development.

USD 257 million seized in global police crackdown against online scams



A global police operation spanning 61 countries has delivered a financial blow to online scam networks by freezing 6,745 bank accounts, seizing assets totaling USD 257 million, and disrupting the transnational organized crime networks involved.

Targeting phishing, investment fraud, fake online shopping sites, romance and impersonation scams, Operation First Light 2024 led to the arrest of 3,950 suspects and identified 14,643 other possible suspects in all continents.

Police collectively intercepted some USD 135 million in fiat currency and USD 2 million in cryptocurrency. Fiat currency, such as the US Dollar, Euro, or Yen, is official currency issued and regulated by governments.

Other assets worth over USD 120 million were seized, including real estate, high-end vehicles, expensive jewellery, and many other high-value items and collections.

Operation First Light 2024 led to the arrest of 3,950 suspects, such as here in the Philippines, and identified 14,643 other possible suspects in all continents.

Authorities in Hong Kong, China, arrested multiple suspects as part of a global effort to combat phishing, investment fraud, fake online shopping sites, romance, and impersonation scams.

In Brazil, the Federal Police seized a wide range of assets belonging to suspected scammers, including luxury brand products, expensive jewelry, laptops and phones as part of Operation First Light 2024.

Brazilian Federal Police seized many items of expensive jewellery, including these high value watches.

Almost 4,000 suspected scammers were arrested during Operation First Light, including this suspect apprehended in Brazil.

During Operation First Light, authorities seized assets thought to belong to suspected scammers, including this high-end vehicle in Brazil.

Data contained in the hand devices, computers and telephones seized during Operation First Light, such as here in Hong Kong, were handed over to the INTERPOL General Secretariat headquarters for analysis.

Upon request, INTERPOL's General Secretariat headquarters sent specialized officers into the field – such as here in Namibia - to support local police in coordinating their national leg of the global operation.

First Light operations are funded by China's Ministry of Public Security, which hosted this year's operational conclusion meeting in Tianjin.

Using INTERPOL's Global Rapid Intervention of Payments (I-GRIP) mechanism to help them trace and intercept the illicit proceeds of crime, both in fiat and cryptocurrency, police intercepted USD 331,000 in a business email compromise fraud involving a Spanish victim who transferred money to Hong Kong, China.

Likewise in another case, authorities in Australia successfully recovered AUD 5.5 million (USD 3.7 million) on behalf of an impersonation scam victim, after the funds were fraudulently transferred to bank accounts in Malaysia and Hong Kong, China.

Director of INTERPOL's Financial Crime and Anti-

Corruption Centre (IFCACC), Dr Isaac Kehinde Oginni, said:

“The results of this global police operation are more than just numbers—they represent lives protected, crimes prevented, and a healthier global economy worldwide.

“By confiscating such large amounts of money, and disrupting the networks behind them, we not only safeguard our communities but also deal a significant blow to the transnational organized crime groups that pose such a serious threat to global security.”

On behalf of China’s Ministry of Public Security, Yong Wang, Head of the INTERPOL National Central Bureau in Beijing, said:

“The world is grappling with the severe challenges of social engineering fraud, and organized crime groups are operating from Southeast Asia to the Middle East and Africa, with victims on every continent.

“No country is immune to this type of crime, and combating it requires very strong international cooperation.”

Notable achievements from the operation include the dismantling of a sophisticated international scam network in the Namibian capital. In this operation, 88 local youths, who were forced into conducting scams, were rescued. Authorities seized 163 computers and 350 mobile phones, and the data they contained

handed over to INTERPOL General Secretariat headquarters for analysis.

Similarly, coordination between Singapore Police Force’s Anti-Scam Centre, and Hong Kong, China, Police Force’s Anti-Deception Coordination Centre and local banks prevented an attempted tech support scam, saving a 70-year-old victim from losing SGD 380,000 (USD 281,200) worth of savings.

Joint investigations between Brazilian and Portuguese authorities disrupted several scam networks operating globally.

Operation First Light was strengthened by the participation of four regional policing bodies: AFRIPOL, ASEANAPOL, GCCPOL, and Europol.

First Light operations are funded by China’s Ministry of Public Security, which recently hosted the concluding meeting in Tianjin, bringing participating countries together under one roof to analyze results, share intelligence, and plan future operations.

Operation First Light 2024 commenced in 2023 and culminated in its final tactical phase from March to May 2024.

INTERPOL has been coordinating First Light operations since 2014 to bolster cooperation and intensify efforts by member countries in fighting social engineering and telecom fraud.

IOM Welcomes New EU Multi-Billion Pledge for Syria

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has welcomed the USD 5.4 billion pledged to support millions of people still affected by the Syrian war, both within its borders and in neighbouring countries.

“We must stand with the people of Syria,” said IOM’s Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, Othman Belbeisi. “The humanitarian needs remain high as millions of Syrians continue to live outside their home country, often relying on humanitarian aid to survive. Last year’s tragic earthquake - while briefly spotlighting this ongoing crisis - only exacerbated an already fragile situation. Sustained support is crucial to promote the

self-reliance of displaced persons and socio-economic stability as well as ensure adequate access to relevant services.”

Millions of Syrians continue to be affected by ongoing hostilities, water and food shortages, protection issues, and lack of access to basic services. During the Conference, the European Union (EU) committed EUR 2.12 billion for 2024 and 2025, which includes EUR 560 million already promised for 2024 for Syrians displaced inside the country and in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, in addition to another EUR 560 million pledged for 2025.

DHS Shows Results in the Fight to Cripple Cartels and Stop Fentanyl from Entering the U.S.



Migrant smuggling is inherently a transnational crime because it involves the movement of people and profits across borders. For this reason, an effective response to this crime requires a joint international effort.

Migrant smuggling is the facilitation of irregular entry into a foreign country in exchange for money.

Smugglers are motivated by material gain. They arrange transportation, guidance, forged documents or other illegal services for migrants, but often have little regard for their rights, safety and lives.

Why does migrant smuggling occur?

For many migrants, the question is often not whether to leave, but how difficult the journey will be.

In situations of war, persecution, poverty, violence, crime or climate-related disasters, staying is sometimes not even an option.

These dire circumstances, combined with limited regular migration opportunities and the difficulty of migrating independently, compel desperate individuals to turn to smugglers for help.

Many are prepared to take enormous risks out of desperation and a lack of alternatives. In some cases, smugglers actively advertise their services, leading potential migrants to believe that the journey will be quick and easy.

The grim reality is that thousands perish every year along smuggling routes. Most migrants drown at sea, sent in large numbers in old boats.

They also suffocate in truck containers, fall from cliffs, die of thirst in deserts or are attacked by wildlife in jungles.

Violence is not uncommon. Migrants are killed by smugglers or other criminals, such as armed groups, terrorists and human traffickers.

A boat near the Darien gap, where thousands of migrants pass each year.

Why can migrant smuggling not be solved without international cooperation?

International cooperation implies that governments, organizations and individuals work together to achieve common goals and resolve shared problems, especially those that traverse borders and cannot be addressed within one country.

Migrant smuggling is precisely this kind of issue. Migrants begin the journey in their home country and pass through intermediate countries in their quest to reach the country of destination.

Combating migrant smuggling without cooperation between these types of countries would be like treating the symptoms and not the cause of the problem.

Smugglers, who often stay one step ahead of law enforcement, operate flexibly, as either loosely connected networks or highly sophisticated syndicates, constantly adapting their tactics.

It takes an organized response to beat organized crime. Countries should be able to promptly exchange information on routes, means and methods used by criminals.

The UN Migrant Smuggling Protocol – the world's primary legal instrument to combat this crime – promotes collaboration between countries as one of its main objectives.

What does international cooperation against smuggling look like?

Law enforcement agencies from different countries work together to monitor smuggling routes and conduct intelligence operations using scientific and technological information.

They seek to detect fake travel documents, analyse suspicious financial transactions and investigate the role of smugglers along migration pathways.

Criminal justice experts work to prosecute smugglers, trace and disrupt illicit profits that they earn from their activities and refer vulnerable migrants to protection and assistance services.

At the regional and international levels, countries of origin, transit and destination share information on smuggling trends and practices.

They identify and address evolving migration challenges through dialogue in international fora, such as that offered by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Where do we go next?

Migrant smuggling can be prevented or at least mitigated.

Often, closing borders merely pushes migrants into the hands of smugglers. The fight against this crime should extend beyond border security and law enforcement activities to encompass a broad range of comprehensive measures across various policy areas.

Providing more channels for regular migration and tackling corruption address the reasons why migrants turn to smugglers in the first place.

A significant way to tackle the root causes of migrant smuggling is through development cooperation. Increasing economic opportunities, promoting good governance and combating crime and violence in migrants' home countries reduce the necessity for them to resort to smugglers.

Effective awareness-raising campaigns are essential for preventing this crime, providing information that empowers migrants to make safer travel decisions.

MAOC-N supports French operation in Caribbean – 1255 Kg of cocaine seized



French forces stationed in the Caribbean conducted a maritime operation resulting in the interception of a sailing vessel located approximately 600nm NE of Martinique.

Upon boarding the target, the French authorities were able to find several bales scattered inside the vessel,

totalling 1255 Kg of cocaine. The prompt intervention of the French navy made it possible to seize this significant quantity of cocaine, which otherwise would have been transferred to another vessel before reaching its final destination in Europe.

Besides the intervention of the French forces in the Caribbean, this international operation was made possible through extensive exchange of information carried out within the scope of MAOC-N, involving the French Customs (DNRED), the French anti-drugs office (OFAST), the UK National Crime Agency (NCA) and the US Drugs Enforcement Administration (DEA).

So far this year, the MAOC-N partner countries were able to seize over 40 tonnes of cocaine in operations supported by the Centre.

AGENCY NEWS AND UPDATES

BOC NAIA seizes PhP 7.3 million worth of illegal drugs



The Bureau of Customs Ninoy Aquino International Airport (BOC NAIA), in partnership with the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and the NAIA Inter-Agency Drug Interdiction Task Group (NAIA-IADITG), successfully intercepted three air parcels containing illegal drugs at the Central Mail Exchange Center (CMEC) in Pasay City.

A physical examination of the parcels revealed 96 disposable vape cartridges filled with cannabis oil, 468 grams of kush (a high-grade marijuana), and 957 grams of methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu), with a total estimated street value of PhP 7,386,672.

The parcels, originating from the USA and Pakistan, were addressed to various recipients in Cebu City, Bacolod City, and Naga City.

Tragic Shipwreck of 20 Migrants off Yemen Coast Leaves 12 Dead and 4 Missing



A new shipwreck occurred off the coast of Yemen resulting in the death of 12 migrants and leaving four individuals missing. According to the survivors, the vessel, carrying 20 Ethiopian migrants predominantly from the Tigray region, capsized near the Dubab district in the Ta'iz governorate.

The boat, which departed from Djibouti capsized early morning due to strong winds and a malfunctioning engine.

Of the 22 passengers, six survived, including the Yemeni boat captain and his assistant. Two bodies of a man and a woman were recovered and buried by local authorities, with the remaining individuals still unaccounted for.

The recent military campaign in Yemen targeting smuggler networks and increased coastal patrols have led to a significant decrease in migrant arrivals from Djibouti and Somalia. Despite these crackdowns, smuggling operations continue to thrive, demonstrating the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to dismantle these networks and protect vulnerable migrants.

Ringleader of gang Convicted which attempted to smuggle cocaine worth £11 million in bananas

The ringleader of an organised crime group which attempted to smuggle 139 kilos of cocaine into the UK hidden in a consignment of bananas has been convicted.

His criminal associates had been apprehended while unloading a shipping container they believed contained the £11m pounds-worth of drugs at a storage company.

The container had arrived at London Gateway port from Ecuador a few days before. Here, unbeknownst to the gang, Border Force officers who were working with the NCA found the cocaine packages in the roof area, removed them and resealed the container.

Ciggye smuggling scheme stymied by ABF officers



A male Japanese national landing at Perth International Airport has been fined and refused entry into Australia after Australian Border Force (ABF) officers found more than 34,000 cigarettes in his luggage.

ABF officers stopped the man – who was travelling on a tourist visa – for a baggage examination after he arrived in Perth on a flight from Singapore.

Officers found a total of 34,620 cigarettes in his luggage, which the passenger had failed to declare, with an estimated duty evaded valued at \$44,250. The man admitted he expected to be paid to smuggle the undeclared cigarettes into Australia.

The traveller also illegally filmed the search of his luggage and continued to do so despite numerous requests and warnings to stop. He was subsequently issued with a \$626 infringement for filming in a restricted area.

After seizing the cigarette haul, the traveller's visa was cancelled and he was detained under s189 (1) of the Migration Act 1958.

CBP officers in Arizona seize more than half a ton of fentanyl in largest seizure in agency history

U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers at the Port of Lukeville recently seized approximately 4 million blue fentanyl pills - weighing more than 1,000 pounds - in the largest singular fentanyl seizure in CBP history.

"This is the largest fentanyl seizure in CBP's history, and reflects our unwavering determination to protect our nation and to disrupt the criminal activities of ruthless drug cartels," said Troy Miller, CBP Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Commissioner.

A 20-year-old Arizona man, who is a U.S. citizen, arrived at the Port of Lukeville driving a pick-up truck which was hauling a sport recreational vehicle on a utility trailer. CBP officers performing the inspection for entry to the U.S. sent the driver and vehicles aside for a more intensive inspection.

While conducting a thorough inspection of the pick-up truck, trailer, and sport utility vehicle, CBP officers noticed anomalies throughout the frame of the trailer. With the assistance of a CBP canine team, officers discovered 234

packages of drugs concealed within the frame of a trailer. The packages contained approximately 4 million blue fentanyl pills, which is the largest fentanyl seizure in CBP history.

ICE removes foreign fugitive wanted for sexual offenses



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Enforcement and Removal Operations Atlanta, ERO Honduras and the Honduras Security Alliance for Fugitive Enforcement removed an unlawfully present foreign fugitive wanted by Honduran authorities.

ERO facilitated the removal of Elvis Jose Cabera Martinez, a 42-year-old citizen of Honduras with a final order of removal from the United States.

Cabera is wanted by law enforcement authorities in Honduras for sexual offenses and was taken into custody upon arrival at Ramon Villeda Morales International Airport in San Pedro Sula.

ERO conducts removals of individuals without a lawful basis to remain in the United States, including at the order of immigration judges with the Justice Department's Executive Office for Immigration Review.

42 arrested for smuggling migrants across the Danube



A cross-border investigation led by the Romanian Border Police (Poliția de Frontieră), supported by Europol and involving the Bulgarian General Directorate Combating Organised Crime (Главна Дирекция Борба с организираната престъпност) and the German Police (Bundespolizeiinspektion Waidhaus), has resulted in the dismantling of an organised crime group involved in migrant smuggling. The group were smuggling migrants from Bulgaria to Romania, across the Danube river, and then toward Western Europe.

The investigative activities established that the criminal network, composed mainly of Bangladeshi, Iraqi and Romanian citizens, was formed in the beginning of 2023. The suspects recruited migrants from Middle-East who wanted to reach Western European countries, especially Germany.

In the first phase, the suspects picked migrants up from Bulgaria and transported them in boats across the Danube river. The migrants would then be taken in groups of 20-30 via cargo transport to the western part of Romania, mainly the areas of Timișoara/Arad and Caraș Severin

Bulgarian customs officers at Lesovo BCP found cigarettes in a truck with furniture



The customs officers at Lesovo BCP found 80 000 pieces (4000 boxes) of contraband cigarettes in a truck transporting furniture to France.

The truck with a foreign registration arrived at Lesovo BCP on an inbound route into the country. The driver, a Turkish citizen, submitted documents that he was transporting furniture from Turkey to France via Bulgaria. During the customs inspection with specialized X-ray equipment, the inspectors mark a suspicious area in the cargo. A physical inspection was carried out, during which undeclared 80 000 pieces (4000 boxes) of cigarettes of various brands were found hidden among the declared furniture in the marked area. The contraband cigarettes were seized. Against the driver with initials I.D. an administrative violation act was drawn up.

Since the beginning of February alone, the customs officers of the Lesovo BCP have discovered 67 attempts to smuggle cigarettes, and a total of 339 900 cigarettes (16 995 boxes) have been seized.

Major blow to Albanian drug trafficking network: 59 arrests across Europe



Italian and Albanian authorities have taken decisive action against a major drug trafficking network operating from both countries. With the support of Eurojust and Europol in a large-scale operation, 59 suspects were arrested, including in Albania, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom, and 10 suspects were subjected to other precautionary measures in Italy. The network mainly smuggled heroin, cocaine, hashish and marijuana into Germany and Spain using cars with double bottoms or secret compartments.

Last year, 21 suspects were arrested in a first operation against the same Albanian-led organised crime group (OCG). That operation also led to the seizure of drugs worth an estimated EUR 2.7 million.

15 arrested in intercontinental crackdown against Nigerian crime syndicates

Europol coordinated a massive international operation targeting Nigerian criminal networks active in the EU and abroad. 16 partners from four continents joined forces to fight poly-criminal



Nigerian criminal networks responsible for a multitude of serious crimes.

This unprecedented international operation, supported by EMPACT, was conducted by law enforcement from across Europe, Africa, South America and North America. 468 law enforcement officers took part in the action day. The crackdown targeted Nigerian criminals responsible for crimes such as the smuggling and distribution of drugs, trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation, fraud, illegal waste smuggling, and money laundering.

BOC NAIA seizes Php 4.5M worth of kush

In its continued efforts to strengthen the anti-illegal drug campaign, the Bureau of Customs-Ninoy Aquino International Airport (BOC-NAIA), in collaboration with the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and the NAIA Inter-Agency Drug Interdiction Task Group (NAIA-IADITG), seized a parcel containing 323 grams of kush, a high-grade marijuana, with an estimated street value of Php 4,524,800 at the Central Mail Exchange Center (CMEC) in Pasay City.

Upon profiling and examination of shipments, the parcel, which was

misdeclared as “gift,” was found to contain high-grade marijuana from Toronto, Canada, and consigned to an individual in Quezon City. Field testing conducted by the Customs Anti-Illegal Drug Task Force (CAIDTF) and PDEA confirmed the substance as kush marijuana.

French Authorities Seize 406kg of Cocaine in the Bay of Biscay



A significant narcotics operation conducted led to the seizure of 406 kg of cocaine in the Bay of Biscay. The operation, led by the French authorities, saw the French Customs Patrol Vessel KERMORVAN, based in Brest, intercept a sailing vessel named LE DAHU, flying the Polish flag.

The French National Directorate of Customs Intelligence and Investigations (DNRED) initiated the detection of the vessel in the Caribbean and tracked it into the Bay of Biscay, in collaboration with OFAST, the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) and the Spanish National Police, with coordination through MAOC (N).

The two crew members of LE DAHU, after attempting to destroy the vessel and its cargo by setting it on fire, were rescued by the KERMORVAN crew.

The drugs, found in 19 bales aboard the vessel, were handed over to OFAST under the authority of the Public Prosecutor at the Brest Judicial Court, supported by the Atlantic Maritime Gendarmerie Group.

Border Force bolster security measures in general aviation space



Pilots, owners and operators of private aircraft will now be liable for fines of up to £10,000 if they do not provide Border Force with advance passenger information online before they depart to or from the UK, under new regulations to strengthen border security.

The new regulations – which were laid in Parliament at the end of November 2023 and came into force on 6 April - will mean that Border Force and the police can better identify potential security threats, prevent and detect crime, and monitor immigration status. Previously, advance passenger information could be submitted by email, fax or other manual methods.

They will also ensure that Border Force can prevent people they have security concerns about from travelling to the UK, and that they can deploy resources more effectively. Where notified of a general aviation flight, Border Force clears 100% of flights either in person or remotely, in line with standard protocols.

ECONOMIC VELOCITY: THE TECH FRONTIER OF BORDER OPERATIONS

*By Mathieu Guillebaud, Product
Development Director, Leidos*

In today's evolving global landscape, border management has never been more important, nor more of a balancing act between the competing priorities of security and trade facilitation. The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) expects global trade in goods and services to grow by 2.3% this year and 3.3% in 2025

– more than double the 1% growth seen in 2023. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) puts world trade growth at 3% this year and 3.3% in 2025.

Border Management organizations are not only responsible for ensuring the security of their nations' borders but also for facilitating the efficient movement of people and cargo.

Advancements in technology, data, and innovative workforces have enabled border management and customs organizations to merge these dual missions into one common goal: velocity.

A popular adage in border management and trade facilitation communities is that “cargo at rest is cargo at risk.” Idle goods represent not only a significant cost to businesses but are also more vulnerable and exposed to a variety of risks – be it theft, damage, or illicit activities.

“Cargo at Rest is Cargo at Risk.”

Border management organizations are on the brink of a significant transformation in which they are no longer merely “border guards”, but the catalysts and support systems for economic growth. We are rapidly approaching a world in which border management processes are seamlessly interconnected; data flows between government entities, skilled personnel are augmented by artificial intelligence, and cargo moves frictionlessly. This reality is being made possible through intentional and innovative collaboration between the public and private sectors.

Technology is transforming every facet of the border enforcement mission and expanding the limits of what was previously thought possible. The convergence of operational technologies (OT) with information technologies (IT) and

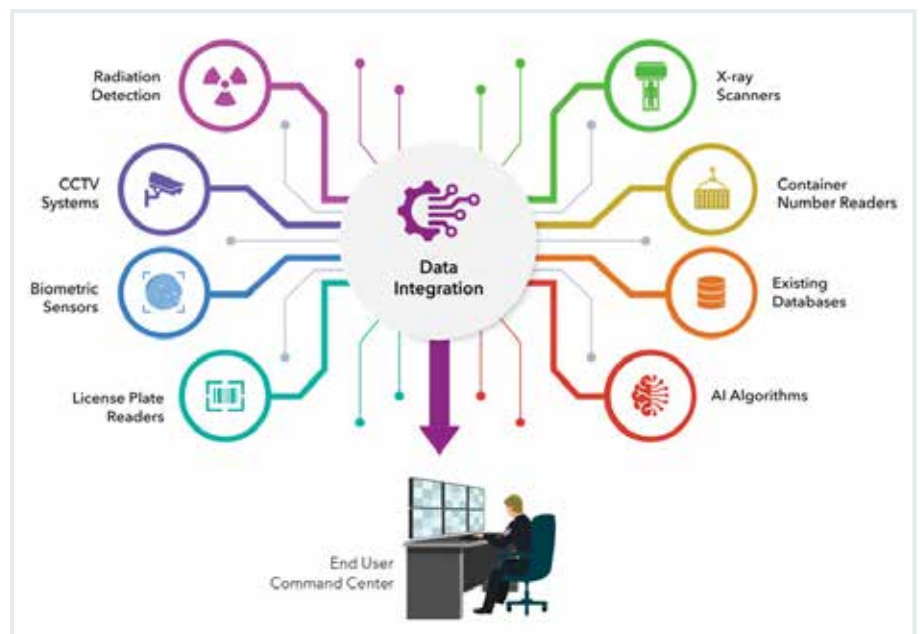


Figure A: Illustration of data sources that could be integrated into a centralized management system

the automating force of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are automating operational workflows, including the analysis of images. Non-intrusive inspection (NII) systems are becoming increasingly capable of detecting objects in every modality of trade, and correlating technologies – machine vision systems, biometric systems, RFID, QR Code, and other sensors - are enabling x-ray imagery to be linked to commercial data such as shipping manifests and declarations. Standards necessary to ensure data privacy, cyber-physical security, and robust governance are also paving the path forward for integrated decision systems to collect, store, and disposition data. Everything is increasingly connected and

shareable, and everything is getting smarter and more secure.

The value proposition offered by these technologies used to be that the whole will at least equal the sum of its parts; likely, the sum will equal a lot more. Innovation empowers border management organizations to build unprecedented internal capacities and, therefore, the possibility to lean farther forward, facilitating trade and travel in unprecedented ways. By identifying risks early in the supply chain, customs administrations make informed decisions with their stakeholder partners swiftly and efficiently, accelerating cargo movement across the globe. Reducing trade frictions and inefficiencies through technological innovation leads to increased

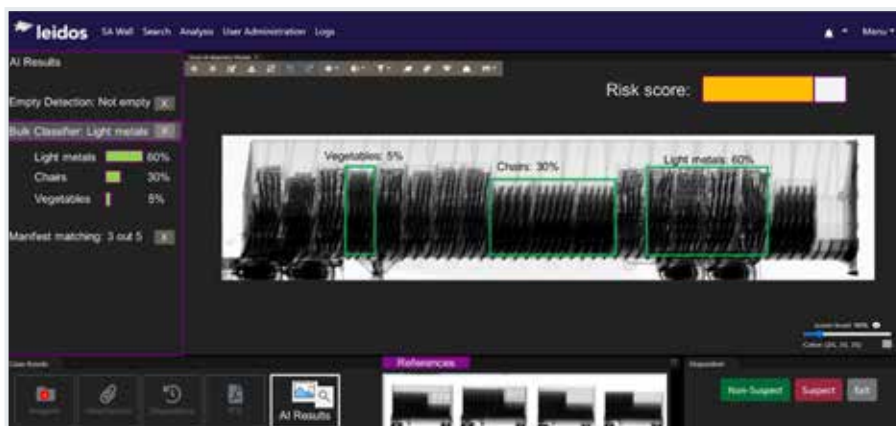


Figure B: Illustration of screening software with bulk classifier capability to distinguish different items in scanned cargo

participation in the global economy by local firms, increased knowledge flows, the creation of new jobs, and an expansion of national innovative capacity.

How will border management organizations realize the value offered by transformative technology? To help illustrate the ways this can be done, we consider a few notable examples on the horizon including the port of the future, single window systems, and expanded risk management systems.

Port of the Future

The Port of the Future model has gained popularity in governmental and academic circles recently. This concept focuses on creating ports of entry that blend the use AI, advanced analytics, human capital, and innovative technologies to result in a highly efficient port.

To achieve this, the many different technologies operationalized at ports

and borders need to communicate seamlessly. Integration technology has enabled data from biometric sensors, license plate readers, closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems, manifests, container number readers, NII systems, and radiation detection systems to be connected and available immediately to customs officers.

To enable the centralized data management of cross-border movements, providers of these technologies should have a proven, configurable commercial off the shelf (COTS) application capable of ingesting, transporting, managing, storing, and sharing NII data, in a standardized format, to end-user command centers. Highly trained image adjudication analysts can have images and data from multiple sites transmitted to them for review, which allows scanning and processing to occur at the speed of travel without unnecessary stops or delays. Image adjudicators, with

the assistance of AI/ML technology, can provide almost instantaneous feedback on high-risk shipments, miscategorized cargo, and guidance on what requires further review by an in-person officer.

In the Port of the Future model, collaboration is essential. Stakeholder dynamics are increasingly complex as data sharing between cross-border government entities, international organizations, and private sector stakeholders becomes the norm. Harmonized policies and procedures, innovative standards, and agreements for information sharing are the foundation for such system. Border management agencies must experiment through pilot programs or other means to incubate new solutions and adjust as necessary.

Figure B shows how AI/ML can augment manifest and scanning data with commodity identification capabilities. A trained AI/ML system can identify that the cargo being scanned is composed of light metals, chairs, and vegetables. This evaluation is then automatically cross referenced with the manifest. If any discrepancies are identified, the officer can quickly direct the cargo for secondary inspection.

Single Trade Window Systems

Since the 1990s, single trade window (STW) systems have aimed to expedite the customs clearance processes, reduce bureaucratic hurdles, and enhance efficiency in cross-border trade. Historically,

the interests of governments and commercial companies at borders have been characterized as in opposition. Importers, exporters and trade facilitators want to move goods efficiently across borders at minimum cost, while government agencies need to enforce regulations and legislations. This can require companies to provide data multiple times in different formats, slowing trade.

STWs dissolve this opposition by building a system that benefits all users – companies and governments. Traders enter data into a single system, saving them time and providing greater visibility of shipping status to inform planning and increase operational efficiency. That transparency further benefits government agencies by automating enforcement processes and holding all border-related data in a single, easily searchable IT system, rather than in siloes, to reduce risk and support revenue collection.

Beyond just supporting seamless travel and international trade, STW's have the potential to identify and mitigate potential security and terrorism risks by facilitating data sharing between government agencies, thereby improving risk identification and management, interoperability, and traceability of goods. The most ambitious STWs define their mandate even more broadly than uniting all government services. With the Networked Trade Platform (NTP), for example, one



country's STW allowed companies to fulfill a range of state requirements such as customs declarations, while also accessing private services such as freight booking and cargo insurance. In building the NTP, this customs service also worked with the monetary authority to share data from customs permits with private banks, helping financial institutions monitor fraud and mitigate the risks associated with trade-based money laundering. Meanwhile, traders can give consent through the NTP for their data to be shared directly with financial institutions, reducing the amount of information they subsequently need to provide to their banks about goods entering or leaving that country.

The internet of things (IoT), edge/cloud devices and AI technologies have enabled STWs to now converge with risk management and NII functions, allowing agencies to target suspected cargo and traders, assess relevant inspection data from multiple control points, and deploy

mitigating resources methodically and efficiently. AI/ML approaches can augment risk management capabilities and enable customs to transform from a reactive posture to a predictive posture, predicting potential compliance risks by analyzing current and historical trade and inspection data.

The integration of innovative technologies into border processes is deeply intertwined with a fundamental shift of border management organizations from their traditionally regulatory role to one that is a force driving economic growth and productivity. In this new role, border management organizations drive international trade and economic development for their respective countries by reducing the time that cargo is idle, helping minimize the costs and risks to businesses with cross-border trade, all while building capacity within their border management organizations to achieve a "forward-leaning" approach.

Summary

While the above provides examples of how technology transforms the border management mission, the corollary is that without these capabilities, border control agencies and businesses will be burdened.

Technology will continue to improve the speed and quality of trade and border controls.

However, border management agencies must ensure that they acquire capabilities in a way that yields effective results, maintaining performance over time, and most importantly, that AI/ML algorithm results are trusted.

Deployment of AI/ML into an operational environment at scale will require more than the algorithms themselves and should not be viewed as a “Commercial Off the Shelf” acquisitions. Agencies will need to apply a holistic view to deploy performing, sustainable AI/ML capabilities, requiring consideration of infrastructure requirements such as the physical and cyber security of the technology ecosystem, strategies for data storage and processing, and planning for how AI/ML results will be delivered.

In addition to infrastructure considerations, agencies will need to adopt best practices around the use

of AI/ML. Notably, these will include an approach to AI governance, data standards application, data curation strategy, and development operations and machine learning operations pipelines.



WorldBorderSecurity.net

World Border Security Network (**WorldBorderSecurity.net**), a global network for agency officials at the borders.

The purpose of the network is to encourage and facilitate inter-agency co-operation and communication. Members of the network will be able to:

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- keep up-to-date with the latest technology developments
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WorldBorderSecurity.net is open to all World Border Security Congress government agency delegates past and present.

Access is restricted to government and intergovernmental personnel; border, customs, immigration agency officials and specialist law enforcement officers.

Non-delegate agency officials will also be welcome but by member invitation only.



NAPTIP Promises Improved Strategies to Tackle the Evolving Trend of Human Trafficking

The Director General of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Prof. Fatima Waziri-Azi, PhD, has pledged that the Agency will continue to develop new strategies, expand cooperation, and foster more collaboration to keep pace with the evolving trends in human trafficking.

Prof. Waziri-Azi made this commitment at the Agency's Headquarters in Abuja while unveiling the activities planned for the 2024 World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, themed "Leave No Child Behind in the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons".

The World Day Against Trafficking in Persons was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2013 to be observed annually to promote comprehensive, coordinated, and consistent responses at national, regional, and international levels to counter trafficking in persons. It aims to promote a human rights-based, gender- and age-sensitive approach in addressing all factors that make people vulnerable to trafficking, and in strengthening the criminal justice response necessary to prevent trafficking, protect victims, and prosecute perpetrators.

According to the United Nations, the 2024 World Day Against Trafficking urges accelerated action to end child trafficking, recognizing that children represent a significant proportion of trafficking victims worldwide, with girls being disproportionately affected.

Prof. Waziri-Azi announced that the activities lined up for the 2024 World Day Against Trafficking in Persons in Nigeria in collaboration with UNODC, IOM, ICMPD, and OHCHR have been carefully selected to reflect the theme of the celebration. These activities aim to create the needed awareness and impactful sensitization to address the concerns of all and reduce the vulnerability of potential trafficking victims.

"I am pleased to state that our activities and interventions in the fight against human trafficking in Nigeria are inclusive, involving various categories of stakeholders. For the first time, NAPTIP will commemorate the World Day together with the National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP), our counterpart agency that would be visiting from The Gambia", Prof. Waziri-Azi said.

Young People warned of dangers of modern slavery abroad

Thousands of young people travelling to popular holiday destinations including Ibiza, Majorca and Menorca to work in bars and clubs have been given advice on the dangers of labour exploitation.

Border Force officers have been running Operation Karetu at 22 airports across the UK, targeting young people travelling to work in Mediterranean destinations who could be at risk of exploitation, criminality and illegal working.

The month-long operation has so far seen officers engage with over 1,000 young Brits, providing them with leaflets and guidance on how to avoid the risks involved

as unofficial public relations (PR) reps – work that involves touting people into clubs and bars.

Young holidaymakers who travel abroad every year to work in the hospitality industry risk being forced to work long hours for low wages. Risks include working illegally due to a lack of knowledge about EU employment regulations or being exploited by serious organised criminal gangs.

Many cases of labour exploitation go undetected, and Border Force continue to run Operation Karetu every year as an important preventative operation to protect young people.

ENHANCING AFRICA'S BORDERS: MAKING A CASE FOR API-PNR ON THE CONTINENT

By Renaud Irminger, CEO & co-founder, Travizory developers of the Travizory API-PNR Targeting System™

International travel inevitably opens countries to risks and threats, regardless of their geographic location, the number of visitors, or the level of national development. While terrorism and drug trafficking may present quasi-universal challenges, every region also faces a set of unique threats to contend with. The African continent, which faces many challenges including displacement of people, extensive land borders, and health crises, is no exception.

Despite these challenges, most African countries continue to under-utilize technology to secure the border and enhance national security. Both Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) systems have been mandatory since February 2021, following recent amendments to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)'s Annex 9, which sets international standards for border control and passenger data.

Yet, according to data from the ICAO and the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Africa lags behind other regions in adopting these mandatory systems.

At the end of 2023, just eleven out of 54 (20.3%) African countries had implemented API, and a mere eight (14.8%) had adopted PNR. This sits in stark comparison to Europe, for example, where 29 (69.0%) European countries have adopted both API and PNR while another 2 (4.76%) are expected to implement them imminently.

While not a silver bullet, API-PNR systems are a key part of an integrated border security system. Expert analysis shows that when combined with other elements, such as an eVisa or electronic Travel Authorization, API-PNR can enhance security at the border 20-fold. Importantly, these systems also offer significant economic benefits - by streamlining border processes and improving security, countries can attract more tourists and business travelers.

Africa's delay in adopting digital border technologies since the pandemic in 2020 has hindered its ability to capitalize on the global trend toward simplified and secure travel. While much of the world has embraced digital solutions, many African nations remain tied to outdated manual systems. Introducing API-PNR systems can modernize border management, making travel to and within Africa



more appealing and boosting economic activities tied to tourism and trade.

Tackling Africa's unique challenges

A shared area of concern on the continent, poorly managed borders have contributed to the rise of transnational crime and terrorism across Africa. "Borderlands in Africa are typically characterized by low state presence, mistrust between local communities and the state, and high levels of crime, insecurity and poverty," states the African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)"

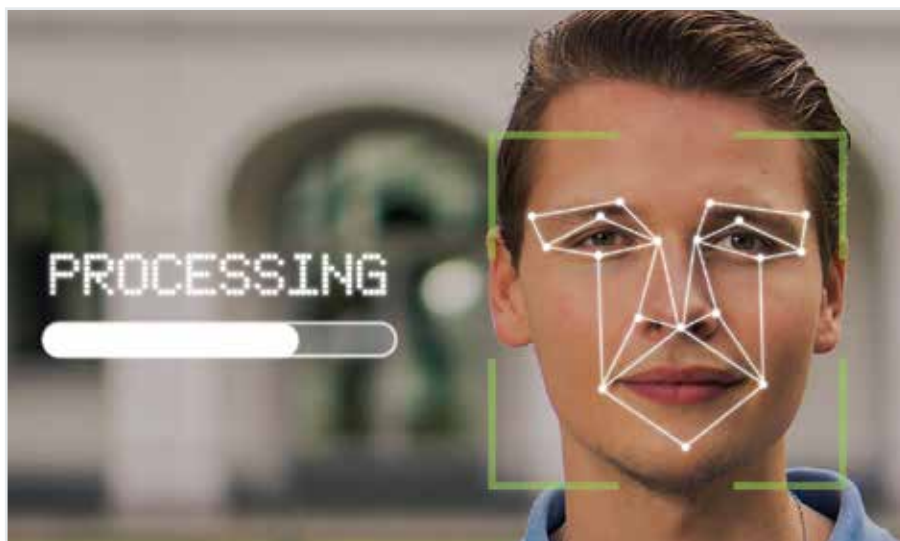
According to the UN, the Sahel region now accounts for almost half of all deaths from terrorism globally. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for the trafficking of 12% of the world's enslaved population, while drug trafficking by land, air and sea is also on the rise. In addition, research has found that 43% of people in Africa

rely on "informal cross-border trade" for income or goods. At a time when African nations need to increase revenue, customs authorities lack tools to fight illicit movements of goods across borders.

These figures paint a worrying picture and highlight the urgency for African governments to implement measures to tighten control and increase oversight at the borders. Without strong border control, national security remains at risk as countries are vulnerable to outside threats.

Examining current approaches

In past years, strict visa regimes have been relied upon to improve security and support pre-travel screening. Traditional at-embassy visas and visa-on-arrival have been deployed across Africa, but instead of opening up borders, they have acted as a significant barrier to freedom of movement.



Research has shown that 57% of travelers select their travel destination based on whether they expect border processes to be simple and quick. Successes from around the world demonstrate this, China recorded a 152% increase in tourism numbers after simplifying visa procedures, while Seychelles - a visa-free African nation - recorded the fastest post-COVID recovery in the region through digitalization of its borders.

Despite these examples, just 24 African countries have implemented eVisa systems, many of which face serious issues. For instance, in 2023, the South African Department of Home Affairs reported that 58% of eVisa applications were rejected due to the travel dates having already passed. Barriers to intra-African travel are no different, the African Development Bank found that in 46% of country-to-country travel scenarios, Africans are still required to obtain visas at departure

to travel to other African countries. These barriers have contributed to Africa being one of the slowest regions to recover from the impact of COVID-19 on inbound arrivals achieving just 80% recovery by the end of 2023.

While traditional visa regimes made sense previously, these policies have proven ineffective in combatting the rising rates of transnational crime. The growing urgency at the border reinforces the shortcomings and inefficiencies of traditional visa systems for combatting criminal activities. In today's competitive tourism landscape, API-PNR systems offer an attractive middle ground, offering both open borders and robust security.

Lessons from early adopters in the region

Seychelles, Rwanda and South Africa stand out as pioneers on the continent. These nations have recognized the importance

of technology when navigating a modern threat environment, and deployed sophisticated solutions, including API and/or PNR, to do so.

South Africa introduced iAPI in 2009 ahead of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The sheer scale and visibility of the event triggered an upgrade of border systems, as South African Authorities had to think out of the box and move towards a more effective system for managing high-risk travelers.

Small island state Seychelles has surpassed South Africa by successfully implementing both API and PNR, maintaining visa-free regimes, and boosting tourism numbers. A key pillar of Seychelles' Electronic Border System, the API-PNR module enables robust risk assessment and flagging of high-risk individuals before they arrive at the border. Since introducing the system, approximately 80% of the successful interventions by Customs at Seychelles International Airport against drug trafficking have been informed by the pre-travel data.

Both countries combine the API-PNR data from airlines with data collected from travelers via electronic Travel Authorization systems - a strategic move to increase security at the border while maintaining seamless transit and arrival processes. Circumventing the cumbersome visa process, both countries' next-generation electronic Travel Authorizations offer travelers a simplified and expedited experience

while collecting much more information for risk assessment.

What is clear in all of these cases is that technological innovation can deliver far-reaching, tangible benefits for nations. By adopting a solution designed specifically for African countries, governments stand to make significant advancements toward the ambition of a more secure, and inter-connected, continent.

Adopting state-of-the-art technology

API-PNR systems offer an effective means of managing borders and preventing threats from entering the country. At their most basic, API-PNR systems improve the upstream visibility of travelers and enable more effective planning and intervention at the border. At their most advanced, API-PNR systems offer a sophisticated toolkit for border officials including risk-assessment, watchlist matching, and profiling to prevent threats from ever reaching the border. When integrated with biometric eVisa or eTA regimes they open up new capabilities for border security agencies, going far beyond the capabilities of stand-alone systems.

A new generation of border security companies, provide innovative, flexible solutions for implementing API-PNR at land, sea, and air border crossings. Unlike public sector solutions, private companies can rapidly deploy advanced technologies, ensuring timely



and effective integration with existing systems. By collaborating with transport operators, these companies enable authorities to identify high-risk travelers before they arrive, and access to this data upstream transforms the border management experience.

Accessing the data from carriers is just one part of the puzzle. API-PNR data is only effective when presented as actionable intelligence, empowering border officials to make real-time interventions. Governments must consider how the data is accessed, viewed, and shared between agencies, the quality of automated analysis, and the accuracy of the risk engine.

Selecting the right partner

While many institutional suppliers promise to support implementation, anecdotal evidence shows that more often than not these projects suffer from lengthy delays, siloed technology, and lack of innovation.

Homegrown solutions usually fall into the same traps, despite being developed by the government itself or donated. Often lacking advanced knowledge or experience, in-house teams are notorious for developing systems that are difficult to maintain or cumbersome to manage. In addition, already stretched teams must ensure adequate data center capacity, offer ongoing technical training, and maintain security standards. By comparison, the Seychelles API-PNR system was operational just 4 weeks after the go-ahead from the government.

Another vital consideration is the extent to which the system can be customized to country-specific needs or ways of working. Countries that have relied on “free” solutions provided by the public sector often find themselves “locked in” to outdated legacy technologies and having to pay for change requests that are delivered months later. This



latest technologies and fostering continuous improvement through network effects, African nations can enhance their border security and move closer to the vision of open borders and a visa-free continent.

reliance hinders innovation and leaves these countries unable to leverage the latest technology.

In Zambia, for example, updating the list of visa-waiver countries within its eVisa system took several months to implement. Maldives has reported issues integrating new eVisa systems with existing border tools, including the Border Management System. This incompatibility creates blind spots and further entrenches a siloed way of working.

Private sector solutions offer several advantages over public sector alternatives. An agile way of working enables faster deployment times, cutting-edge technologies like cloud computing provide scalability and resilience, while a modular approach seamlessly integrates with existing systems. Additionally, a network effect ensures that enhancements are immediately available to all users, driving a collective improvement in security and efficiency.

The agility, scalability, and cutting-edge capabilities of private companies can significantly enhance border security and operational efficiency compared to traditional public sector approaches. This ensures governments can better protect their citizens, and foster economic growth through increased security and more efficient border management.

The case for adopting advanced API-PNR systems in Africa is compelling. While the challenges are significant, the benefits of these systems are clear. Countries that embrace innovative, private-sector solutions can achieve greater security, efficiency, and integration in their border management processes. The success of nations like Seychelles illustrates the potential for transformative change.

As Africa continues to develop and modernize, the adoption of state-of-the-art API-PNR systems will be crucial. By leveraging the



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An important step against organised crime: Eurojust signs Working Arrangements with five Latin American countries



To fight the increasing threat of criminal activities globally, Eurojust has signed Working Arrangements with the Prosecution Services of Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru. The new arrangements will make strategic cooperation between these authorities and Eurojust more effective. The prosecutors generals of the five countries and of Panama, which already has a Working Arrangement with Eurojust, attended the signing of the arrangements.

68% of the most threatening criminal networks operate globally, with 36% of these networks engaged in drug trafficking, according to a report from Europol. These networks launder the proceeds from their activities on a global scale, with 32% of networks laundering money in both the EU and abroad.

To dismantle these networks, international cooperation is essential. Eurojust supports national authorities in the EU to work together with third countries. The Working Arrangements with Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru will strengthen cooperation in the fight against organised crime and terrorism. A similar Working Arrangement with Panama, signed in January 2024, has already increased the use of Eurojust's judicial cooperation tools by Panamanian authorities.

Participants to the El Pacto meeting The EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime highlights the importance of Eurojust's cooperation beyond the European Union to

disrupt global criminal networks and transport routes. At the signing of the working arrangements, European Commissioner for Justice, Didier Reynders, stated: "Today, we open a new chapter in the cooperation between the EU and six strategic partners in this field. By building on our shared values and common strategic interests, we can equip judicial authorities with the necessary instruments for safeguarding the rights of our citizens while enabling effective cooperation "on the ground". I regard the conclusion of Working Arrangements with Eurojust as a milestone in this process. And I look forward to advancing our joint work to build a common response to organised crime."

Eurojust president Ladislav Hamran said: "Drug trafficking is the most lucrative criminal activity in the EU, creating illicit market with yearly earnings of at least 31 billion euros. To mitigate and halt the enormous harm to societies and individuals in both the European Union and Latin America, our response needs to be effective and collaborative. It is essential for prosecutors from Europe and Latin America to unite and devise strategies for closer cooperation, enabling us to not only disrupt criminal networks but also hold them accountable in court. I am honoured for Eurojust to serve as a platform to build this architecture, and I look forward to putting in practice the Working Arrangements Eurojust is signing with the prosecution authorities from Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru following the Working Arrangement we signed with Panama in January 2024."

The Working Arrangements will strengthen cooperation in crime areas that affect both the EU and Latin American countries, such as drug and arms trafficking, money laundering and cybercrime. It is vital that judicial authorities work together to combat the growing problem of drug trafficking, especially by dismantling the transport routes that allow large quantities of drugs to enter the EU via its ports. With the support of Eurojust, EUR 25.6 billion worth of drugs were seized in 2023, more than double the amount of 2022.

In a joint declaration, the prosecutors generals from Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama and Peru, expressed their concern about the impact of organised criminal groups on the security, economy and well-being of their citizens. To strengthen the joint judicial response to organised crime, they are committed to implementing the working arrangements with the crucial support of the EL PACCTO 2.0, the EU cooperation programme aimed to strengthen the

EU-LAC partnership in the fields of justice and security to combat transnational organized crime. The working arrangements reflects the commitment of both regions to address the challenges posed by criminal networks that operate across borders.

The prosecutors generals will also work towards the conclusion of International Agreements with Eurojust, representing the next step in the cooperation process.

ASEANAPOL and TikTok's - "TikTok Support for Law Enforcement."



ASEAN National Police (ASEANAPOL) Secretariat, under the leadership of Executive Director David Martinez Vinluan, and TikTok Pte. Ltd., Singapore, jointly organized a webinar titled "TikTok Support for Law Enforcement." The event featured Ms. Elisabeth Potuijt, the Law Enforcement Outreach Manager for the Southeast Asia region at TikTok, as the Subject-Matter Expert. The primary goal of the webinar was to equip law enforcement officers with the knowledge and tools necessary to leverage TikTok's support for law enforcement efforts, particularly within the ASEAN region.

TikTok, a social media platform launched in September 2016 by ByteDance, has transformed the way people create, share, and engage with short-form video content. The platform allows users to create videos ranging from 15 seconds to three minutes, featuring various music, sound effects, and visual effects. Key features include a user-friendly interface, creative tools, viral challenges, diverse content, and an algorithm-driven feed that curates personalized content for users. With over a billion active users, TikTok has become a cultural phenomenon, influencing trends in music, fashion, and entertainment,

and providing opportunities for influencers and content creators to build large followings and launch successful careers.

Law enforcement officers, particularly police station desk officers and investigators, often receive complaints from constituents about cybercrimes such as cyber libel, scams, posting Child Sexual Abuse Materials (CSAM), endorsement of radical ideology, and terrorist recruitment campaigns. These crimes undermine the norms of a peaceful and orderly society. Cyber law offenders exploit platforms like TikTok for their activities, presenting significant challenges for law enforcement officers on how to seek support from social media companies. The webinar addressed these issues, providing practical guidance on collaborating with TikTok to effectively combat such cybercrimes.

The webinar saw participation from about 189 virtual attendees from ASEANAPOL member countries, including the Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Laos PDR, and Thailand, along with participants from Brazil, Timor Leste, and the USA. Following Ms. Elisabeth Potuijt's presentation, an open forum allowed participants to ask questions, which the Subject-Matter Expert addressed, clarifying challenges faced by law enforcement officers. The ASEANAPOL Secretariat will continue to engage with other social media and related organizations to conduct similar capacity-building and training activities as part of its Police Information and Continuing Education initiative. This initiative aims to ensure law enforcement professionals are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to support and assist constituents, ultimately striving to create a safer environment for living, working, and conducting business.

SECURING NIGERIA'S BORDERS AGAINST DRUG AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A MULTIFACETED APPROACH

*By: George-Okoli, Francisco Chidi,
Director of Programs, West Africa
Action Networks on Small Arms
-Nigeria*

In recent years, Nigeria has grappled with increasing challenges in securing its borders against the scourge of drug and human trafficking. The country's strategic location and extensive, often porous borders make it a prime target for traffickers. The situation is further compounded by corruption, inadequate resources, and the presence of transnational criminal networks that exploit these vulnerabilities. As Yury Fedotov, then Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and

Crime (UNODC), remarked in 2018, "Nigeria's borders are not only a gateway for illicit drugs but also a transit point for human trafficking, posing significant challenges to national security and public safety."

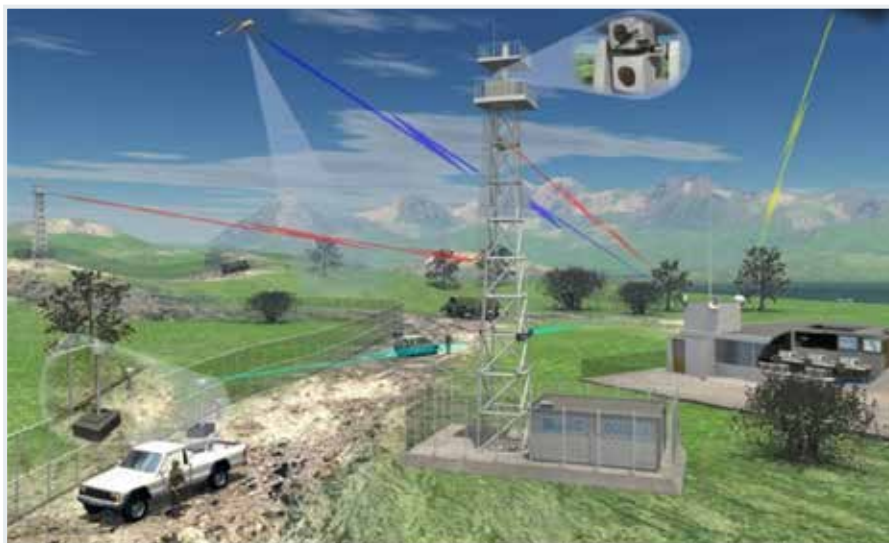
The issue of border security is not solely a matter of physical barriers or surveillance technology; it also encompasses the "trans-human factors"—the psychological, social, and cultural elements that influence individuals' decisions to engage in or combat trafficking.

These factors include the socio-economic conditions that drive people into the arms of traffickers, as well as the attitudes and behaviors of those tasked with securing the borders. As Ahmadu Giade, a former chairman of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), emphasized in 2015, “Understanding the human dimension is crucial; corruption and economic desperation often lead individuals to compromise border security measures.” Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive strategy that includes regional cooperation, technology integration, capacity building, and community engagement. This article explores the current state of Nigeria’s border security, the recent trends in trafficking, and the strategies being implemented to counter these threats.

THE CHALLENGE OF POROUS BORDERS

Nigeria’s borders, spanning over 4,000 kilometers and including both land and maritime boundaries, are often described as porous. This porosity results from inadequate surveillance, insufficient physical barriers, and difficult terrain, making it easy for traffickers to move drugs and people across the borders undetected. The expansive and often under-monitored border areas pose a significant challenge for security forces.

In a recent interview, Mohammed



Asisguard Border Security in Nigeria: Cutting-Edge Songar Drones in Nigeria.
(<https://www.military.africa/2023/05/asisguard-awarded-36.5-million-contract-to-enhance-border-security-in-nigeria/>)

Buba Marwa, the Chairman of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), highlighted the severity of the issue, stating, “The porous nature of our borders remains a critical challenge in the fight against drug trafficking. Our inability to effectively monitor these extensive borders has made Nigeria a transit point for various illicit substances” (Marwa, 2023).

Furthermore, the country’s extensive borders make it challenging to deploy sufficient security personnel and technological resources. The difficult terrain and remote areas exacerbate this issue, limiting the reach of law enforcement and increasing the likelihood of illegal crossings. As a recent report from the Nigerian Institute for Security Studies (NISS) emphasized, “The sheer size and complexity of

Nigeria’s border regions, coupled with inadequate infrastructure, have rendered many areas vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers” (NISS, 2024).

Recent reports indicate that Nigeria has become a significant transit hub for drug trafficking, with substances such as cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamines being smuggled through the country. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has made several high-profile seizures in recent months, highlighting the scale of the problem. For instance, a notable incident involved the “seizure of cocaine at Lagos Airport and the arrest of the syndicates of the smuggling ring”. Punch online Newspaper, Wednesday July 31, 2024 (<https://punchng.com/ndlea-nabs-syndicate-over-cocaine-seizures-declares-couple-wanted/>)

CORRUPTION AND TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

Corruption within law enforcement and border control agencies significantly hampers efforts to secure Nigeria's borders against drug and human trafficking. Traffickers often exploit corrupt officials, using bribes to facilitate the illegal movement of goods and people. This corruption undermines the effectiveness of border security measures and enables transnational criminal networks to operate with relative ease.

In a 2024 statement, Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Abdulrasheed Bawa, remarked, "Corruption remains a formidable challenge in our fight against drug and human trafficking. It not only erodes public trust but also strengthens the resolve and capacity of criminal networks operating across our borders" (Bawa, 2024).

These criminal networks are highly sophisticated and involve actors from multiple countries, complicating efforts to dismantle them. The transnational nature of these crimes requires a coordinated response that often extends beyond Nigeria's national jurisdiction. As noted by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Executive Director Ghada Waly, "Transnational crime networks thrive on the weaknesses of border security systems and the complicity of corrupt officials. To effectively combat these threats, international cooperation and

stringent anti-corruption measures are essential" (Waly, 2023).

REGIONAL COOPERATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Recognizing the limitations of unilateral action, Nigeria has increasingly focused on regional cooperation. The country is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which has been active in promoting joint efforts to combat trafficking. Through ECOWAS, Nigeria has participated in regional training programs and joint operations aimed at improving border security. An ECOWAS official highlighted the importance of these initiatives, stating, "Our collaborative efforts are critical in strengthening border security across the region, as no single country can tackle these challenges alone".

Capacity building is another critical aspect of Nigeria's strategy. The NDLEA, along with other security agencies, has been working to enhance the skills of its personnel through specialized training in areas such as intelligence gathering, surveillance, and the use of advanced technology. This training is essential for staying ahead of traffickers, who are constantly adapting their methods. An NDLEA spokesperson mentioned, "Continuous training and capacity building are vital to equipping our officers with the necessary skills to counter the evolving tactics of traffickers".

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION AND SURVEILLANCE

The integration of advanced technology into border security operations is a crucial element of Nigeria's strategy to combat drug and human trafficking. By leveraging modern surveillance tools such as drones, biometric systems, and data analytics, the country aims to enhance its capacity to monitor and secure its vast borders effectively.

Recent initiatives have seen the deployment of surveillance drones along critical border regions, providing real-time data and significantly improving the monitoring of these areas. In a 2024 briefing, Femi Adesina, Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to the President, stated, "The deployment of drones and other surveillance technologies has revolutionized our border security operations. These tools enable us to detect and respond to illegal activities more swiftly and accurately than ever before" (Adesina, 2024).

In addition to surveillance, the implementation of biometric systems at border checkpoints is another vital component of this strategy. These systems help in verifying the identities of individuals crossing the borders, thereby preventing the movement of traffickers and illegal immigrants. As noted by the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) Comptroller General, Idris Jere, "Biometric verification systems are instrumental in strengthening our border controls. They provide an

additional layer of security, ensuring that those crossing our borders are properly identified and monitored” (Jere, 2024).

Furthermore, the integration of data analytics into border security operations allows for the analysis of patterns and trends in trafficking activities. This analytical capability helps predict potential trafficking routes and enables preemptive action. The Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Isa Pantami, emphasized the importance of this approach, stating, “Data analytics offers invaluable insights into trafficking patterns, allowing us to allocate resources more efficiently and disrupt criminal networks before they can act” (Pantami, 2023).

The continued investment in and deployment of advanced technologies are essential for maintaining the integrity and security of Nigeria’s borders. These technologies not only enhance the country’s ability to detect and prevent trafficking but also serve as a deterrent to those who would seek to exploit its borders for illicit purposes.

The integration of technology into border security is a key component of Nigeria’s efforts to combat trafficking. The use of surveillance drones, biometric systems, and other advanced technologies can significantly enhance the monitoring of border areas. However, the high cost and need for technical expertise



pose challenges for widespread adoption.

Recent initiatives have seen the deployment of surveillance drones along key border points, providing real-time data to security forces. Additionally, there has been an emphasis on improving data sharing between agencies and with international partners. This includes the use of shared databases to track and analyze trafficking patterns, helping to predict and prevent future incidents. A recent report from Nigerian Security News noted, “The deployment of surveillance drones has significantly improved our ability to monitor border areas and respond to suspicious activities promptly”.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT

The fight against drug and human trafficking in Nigeria cannot rely solely on law enforcement; it also requires robust community

engagement and attention to the underlying socioeconomic factors that drive these issues. Trafficking thrives in environments where poverty, unemployment, and lack of education leave individuals vulnerable to exploitation.

As Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria, noted in a recent public forum, “Addressing the root causes of trafficking involves tackling poverty and creating opportunities for our youth. Without improving the socio-economic conditions in our communities, we cannot hope to end the cycle of exploitation and trafficking” (Obasanjo, 2023).

Community engagement plays a crucial role in this regard. By raising awareness about the dangers of trafficking and encouraging the public to report suspicious activities, communities can act as the first line of defense. Grassroots

organizations and local leaders are vital in disseminating information and providing support to vulnerable populations. A 2024 report by the Nigerian Civil Society Coalition (NCSC) emphasized, “Effective community engagement not only helps in preventing trafficking but also fosters a sense of collective responsibility and resilience against the influence of criminal networks” (NCSC, 2024).

Moreover, socio-economic interventions aimed at improving education, job creation, and social services are essential. These measures help to reduce the vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit. By investing in human capital and providing viable alternatives to illegal activities, the government and non-governmental organizations can significantly diminish the appeal of trafficking networks.

In summary, tackling the socio-economic roots of trafficking and engaging communities in preventive measures are crucial components of a comprehensive strategy to secure Nigeria’s borders and protect its citizens from exploitation.

CONCLUSION

Securing Nigeria’s borders against drug and human trafficking is a multifaceted challenge that demands a comprehensive and coordinated approach. The nation’s extensive and porous borders, coupled with pervasive corruption and the influence of transnational criminal networks, necessitate robust

strategies that include regional cooperation, technology integration, capacity building, and community engagement.

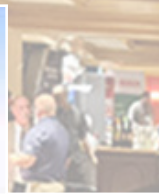
As Nigeria’s Former Minister of Interior, Rauf Aregbesola, recently stated, “Ensuring the security of our borders is not just a matter of national interest but a regional and global priority. We must strengthen our laws, enhance international partnerships, and invest in our communities to effectively combat trafficking” (Aregbesola, 2024). His remarks highlight the interconnectedness of local and global efforts in addressing these complex issues.

By addressing the root causes of trafficking, such as poverty and unemployment, and by fostering a culture of accountability and transparency within law enforcement, Nigeria can make significant strides in protecting its borders and its citizens. The country’s commitment to enhancing technological capabilities and engaging communities is vital for creating a resilient and secure environment.

In conclusion, the path to securing Nigeria’s borders requires a holistic and sustained effort. As the challenges evolve, so must the strategies, ensuring they are adaptive and comprehensive. The success of these initiatives will depend not only on governmental action but also on the active participation of civil society and international partners. As UNODC

Executive Director Ghada Waly emphasized, “The fight against trafficking is a shared responsibility that requires a united front. We must work together to build a future free from exploitation and crime” (Waly, 2023).

As the World Border Security Congress convenes, it is imperative to recognize that no single country can tackle these challenges alone. International collaboration, sharing of best practices, and continued investment in border security infrastructure are essential for creating a safer and more secure world.



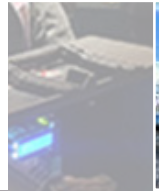
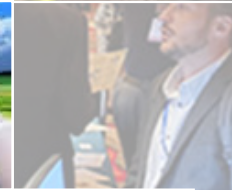
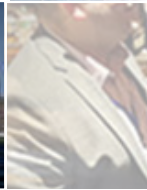
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2025 WORLD BORDER SECURITY CONGRESS: PATROLLING THE PERIPHERY

The 2025 World Border Security Congress will be hosted in Madrid, Spain on 25th-27th March 2025, cohosted by the Ministry of Interior, National Police and Guardia Civil.



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Spain's vast coastline and strategic location between Africa and Europe present unique challenges for the National Police and Guardia Civil.

Spain has long experience and hard-won expertise in managing one of the world's most complex border environments, facing multiple border challenges.

Spain has approximately 8000 km of coastal borders, both on the Atlantic and Mediterranean, and major island groups in both, the Balearic and Canary Islands. It has

land borders with four European nations Portugal, France, Andorra, and the UK, and two separate land borders with Morocco through its territories of Ceuta and Melilla.

Its main challenges stem from its proximity to the African coast. With only thirteen kilometres of ocean at the narrowest point between Punta de Tarifa in Spain and Point Cires in Morocco, this is the closest point between the European Union and Africa, making it an irresistible target for migrants, as well as human and drugs traffickers and other bad actors trying to gain entry to the world's biggest market.

Migration routes from sub-Saharan Africa transit through Morocco and Algeria to reach Spain. Known as the Western Mediterranean route, irregular migrants try to enter Spain, both via the Mediterranean Sea and by land to the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla.

Irregular migrants also try to enter Spain via the Canary Islands. Migrants depart mainly from Morocco, Western Sahara, Mauritania, Senegal, and The Gambia and embark on dangerous Atlantic journeys, a distance of 100km from the nearest point but anything up to 1600km from The Gambia.

That thirteen-kilometre crossing is also a massive draw for drug traffickers. The easy availability of powerful speed boats and jet skis makes a point-to-point, high-speed crossing to a waiting vehicle, in a remote bay on the Spanish coast an irresistible opportunity. Increasingly capable drone technology adds a whole new dimension to the border challenges. Modern off-the-shelf drones can make the crossing with 20kg or more of drugs and be across the ocean in minutes.



In recent years we have even seen submersibles and semi-submersibles making the perilous crossing from South America to reach Spain.

Spain's deep experience, expertise, and rich historical connections make its capital, Madrid, an ideal place to re-convene for the next meeting of the World Border Security Congress.

Governments around the world need to continue to invest in their border security, as a wide range of threats, such as combating terrorism, controlling the movement of goods and monitoring personnel across international borders,

continue to pose challenges requiring round the clock monitoring.

With new products and technologies continually being developed and introduced to tackle increasing and new security threats, the value of the global border security market is estimated at almost £20bn annually.

Despite the expansion of international agreements in Europe and Asia, reducing the number of secured international borders, threats from international terrorism continues, and cross-border crime and illegal immigration continues to remain a top priority for border security.

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The border security market is likely to feel the impact of cuts in public spending, particularly in Europe and the US, however with concerns over homeland security likely to remain high, means that whilst growth may slow, the market will continue to steadily grow.

Investment in border security in the developing countries of Asia and

the Middle East will also continue to grow, supporting the increased spend, whilst international sporting events taking place in developing countries will also drive market growth.

The World Border Security Congress is a high level 3 day event that will discuss and debate current and future policies,

implementation issues and challenges as well as new and developing technologies that contribute towards safe and secure border and migration management.

Join us in Madrid, Spain on 25th-27th March 2025 for the next gathering of international border security, protection and migration management professionals.



UN Network Coordinator urges High-Level Political Forum in New York to improve migration governance for the benefit of all

As the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) meets in New York, the Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) – in her role as Coordinator of the UN Network on Migration – is calling for greater recognition of the crucial role that migration plays in benefiting all communities.

“The world is facing a series of complex, converging and unprecedented challenges – conflict, climate change, demographic shifts and economic downturn, to name just a few,” said Amy Pope, Director General of IOM, addressing Member States in her capacity as Coordinator of the UN Network on Migration on the opening day of the 2024 HLPF. “It is important to recognize that migration – and migrants – are at the heart of these challenges, and that their role is key to resilient communities, stronger economies and lasting solutions.”

An analytical report on the implementation of the five Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under review this year at FPAL highlights that migration is a multifaceted

reality that contributes significantly to human development and global prosperity. These findings underscore the need to integrate migration more deeply into the development agenda.

The analysis reveals that removing mobility restrictions could increase GDP by 11.5 to 12.5%. Nearly half of remittances to developing countries go to rural areas, which are home to 75% of the world's poor and food-insecure populations. Diasporas contribute to the green transition through skills transfer and innovation. Migrant participation in policy consultations strengthens integration while multi-stakeholder partnerships connect policy areas that influence migration dynamics.

Through the UN Network on Migration, the UN System has made progress in aligning the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the 2030 Agenda, working with governments, UN country teams and key stakeholders to include migration in development planning.

Passport-Less Immigration Clearance to be Rolled Out Progressively at Changi Airport from August 2024

Travellers will enjoy passport-less immigration clearance at Changi Airport, Singapore starting from August 2024. This is part of the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority's (ICA) plan to strengthen border security, and at the same time enhance the traveller experience, by digitalising border clearance. Under the New Clearance Concept (NCC), all travellers will enjoy automated clearance^[1], and all Singapore residents and eligible foreign travellers will enjoy immigration clearance without having to present their passport.

Passport-less Immigration Clearance

There are two types of passport-less immigration clearance, to provide travellers with hassle-free and faster clearance.

- Token-less clearance at air and sea checkpoints: Singapore residents^[2] at both arrival and departure, and all foreign travellers at departure, clear immigration

using simply facial and iris biometrics, without the need to present their passport.

- QR code clearance at land checkpoints: Travellers use a QR code, instead of presenting their passport, during immigration clearance.

Token-less clearance is possible at the air and sea checkpoints as ICA would know beforehand, the travellers who are coming through the checkpoints, from the advance manifests submitted by airline and ship operators.

At the land checkpoints, such traveller information is not available beforehand. As such, ICA has introduced the QR code as a token of identification in lieu of the passport, for faster and more convenient border clearance for both individuals and groups of travellers. Group QR codes can be stored and reused for future trips if the travel group remains the same.




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Smiths Detection Selected by Zurich Airport to Trial Advanced CT X-Ray Scanners

foster+freeman has announced the VSC9000, a Smiths Detection have announced that it is partnering with Flughafen Zürich AG (Zurich Airport) to trial the use of the industry-leading HI-SCAN 6040 CTiX Model S carry-on baggage X-ray scanners and the iLane A20 ATRS, the smart automatic tray return system, at two security lanes in the airport.



The 3D images produced by Smiths Detection's HI-SCAN 6040 CTiX will allow some of Zurich's 2.7 million* monthly passengers to leave their liquids and electronics in their carry-on luggage as they pass through security, resulting in a more convenient and streamlined security screening experience.

In addition to providing more efficient and effective security screening, the HI-SCAN 6040 CTiX is the most energy efficient scanner of its type available in the market, featuring low noise levels, zero vibration, and a 30% higher belt speed than other CT X-ray scanners

– helping to promote a calmer checkpoint. The iLane ensures a consistent flow of trays and provides a seamless checkpoint journey for passengers. Alongside passengers, employees at security checkpoints will also benefit from the installation of the CT scanners via the addition of "remote screening" capabilities. This means that security staff no longer have to check the images of the baggage contents directly next to the devices, but can work from a separate room, facilitating a quieter and more concentrated work environment.

Zurich Airport starts trial operation of Rohde & Schwarz security scanners

Trials of two digital security scanners produced by German manufacturer Rohde & Schwarz have begun at Zurich Airport. The long-term plan is to equip all security checkpoints at the airport with the new technology.



Flughafen Zürich AG is currently testing two R&S QPS201 security scanners. They are in use on two of a total of 26 passenger-screening lanes in the security inspection building. During the trial phase, the new devices will not replace conventional metal detectors, instead serving as supplementary inspection devices. Passengers stand in the security scanner for a short time, while possible threats on their body are displayed on a standardized digital avatar without revealing personal attributes.

The Rohde & Schwarz security scanner is attractive due to its market-leading safety performance combined with high efficiency and intuitive operation for passengers. The scanner works with millimeter-wave technology. It renders the captured image data anonymous, while also analyzing it in order to detect prohibited items on passengers quickly and accurately. The automatic detection function is based on AI algorithms that aim to identify a wide range of object classes of all materials.

Teledyne FLIR Boosts Boson+ Infrared Thermal Camera Performance with Embedded Software Upgrade

Teledyne FLIR, part of Teledyne Technologies Incorporated, today announced the next-generation embedded software for the ITAR-free Boson+ thermal camera module, delivering high performing uncooled thermal imaging technology for defense, firefighting, automotive, security, and surveillance applications.



Preventing illegal immigration, drug trafficking and potential terrorist activity is a core border force concern, particularly when small, unregistered vessels that are so difficult to detect, target entry points that are unsupervised by border control or other security responders.

Featuring industry-leading thermal sensitivity of ≤ 20 mK, Boson+ has been upgraded to provide even sharper thermal imagery and improved spatial filtering. Continuously improved thermal performance and proven market-leading reliability make Boson+ the low-risk integration choice for unmanned platforms,

security applications, handhelds, wearables, and thermal sights.

"Boson+ shares the industry-leading size, weight, and power (SWaP) of the widely deployed and real-world-proven Boson thermal camera module, simplifying integration and shortening time to market for our customers," said Dan Walker, vice president, product management, OEM cores, Teledyne FLIR. "With software updates including new color palettes, low gain mode, and an updated GUI, the AI-ready Boson+ continues to be the go-to thermal module for defense, industrial, and commercial integrators."

Successful Installation of Soter RS X-ray Body Scanners at Cayman Islands Airport

ODSecurity announce the successful installation of two Soter RS X-ray body scanners at the Cayman Islands Airport for the Customs and Border Control Service.



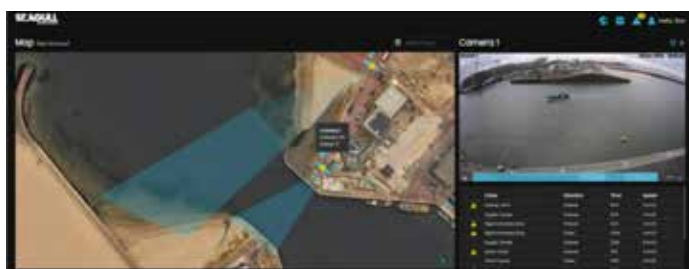
These advanced scanners, developed by ODSecurity, are designed to detect contraband inside and outside the body using a very low dose of X-ray, enhancing the airport's security measures.

The Customs and Border Control Service has expressed their satisfaction with the performance of ODSecurity and our involved partners, Installation Technology International (ITI) and AVCOM. The collaborative effort ensured the scanners were installed efficiently and effectively.

A spokesperson said "We extend our gratitude to the Cayman Islands Customs and Border Control Service for their trust and to everyone who contributed to this successful project. Together, we are making the world a safer place."

Enhancing Maritime and Border Security with AI Solutions

Island nations and countries with considerable lengths of coastline and sea-facing ports and waterways, are today facing increasing waterborne security threats.



SEAGULL Surveillance is a new and unique software offering that uses AI to analyse video footage from waterside cameras in real-time, to visually detect vessels of any size or type up to 1 nautical miles away, and automatically alert operators of abnormal movements in critical areas. Where AIS is not activated, or small craft fall under radar detection, SEAGULL bridges the gaps in vessel surveillance to ensure that nothing

goes unnoticed. Images of vessels, their type, size, sailing direction and speed along coastlines, in ports, harbours and waterways are captured, logged and analysed to assist in deterring threats and managing security incidents effectively.

As the maritime industry evolves, AI-driven solutions like SEAGULL Surveillance will play a crucial role in safeguarding our coasts and waterways.

OSI Systems Receives \$10 Million Order to Provide Mobile Cargo and Vehicle Inspection Systems

OSI Systems has announced that its Security division received an order from an international customer for approximately \$10 million to provide the Company's Rapiscan Z Backscatter® Van (ZBV®) cargo and vehicle inspection systems including follow on maintenance, training and support.



These inspection systems are expected to be deployed for border customs applications. OSI Systems' Chairman and CEO, Deepak Chopra, commented, "We look forward to delivering one of our most advanced and widely deployed security solutions. Our ZBV systems play a crucial

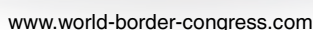
role in enhancing border security, and we are excited to support our customer's mission to ensure safe and secure borders."

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SAVE THE DATES

Spain's vast coastline and strategic location between Africa and Europe present unique challenges for the National Police and Guardia Civil.

Spain faces a constant influx of migrants seeking a better life in Europe. The Canary Islands and the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, bordering Morocco, are popular entry points. Patrolling these vast stretches, especially maritime borders, requires significant resources.

Spain is also a key entry point for hashish from Morocco and cocaine from South America destined for other European countries. The decentralized nature of trafficking groups makes it difficult to infiltrate and dismantle them.

The country, and region's, border security landscape is constantly evolving. By addressing these challenges through international collaboration, innovative technologies, and strategic resource allocation, the international border security community can strive towards a more secure future.

The World Border Security Congress is a high level 3 day event that will discuss and debate current and future policies, implementation issues and challenges as well as new and developing technologies that contribute towards safe and secure border and migration management.

Join us in Madrid, Spain on 25th-27th March 2025 for the next gathering of international border security, protection and migration management professionals.

www.world-border-congress.com

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