

INTERPOL

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Source: *The Hindu*

Manifest pedagogy: This topic focuses on the functions and role played by Interpol in solving international crimes. It also deals with different notices dealt by Interpol. Hence it is important both from prelims and mains perspective.

In news: The Interpol had issued a Blue Corner Notice against self-styled godman Nithyananda in order to locate him.

Placing it in syllabus: International organisations

Dimensions:

- History, origin, structure and functions
- Different types of notice
- Criticisms against it

Content: History, structure and functions

- The **International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL)** is an international organization that facilitates **worldwide police cooperation and crime control**.
- It is headquartered in **Lyon, France**.
- It has **seven regional bureaus** worldwide and a **National Central Bureau (NCB) in all 194 member states**, making it the world's largest police organization.
- **India has been a member since 1956**.
- India maintains a NCB which serves as the national platform for cooperation between domestic law enforcement units and the international police community.

Note: UN member states without membership **are Micronesia, North Korea, Palau, Tuvalu**

History:

- It originated with the **first International Criminal Police Congress in 1914**, which brought officials from 24 countries to discuss cooperation on law enforcement matters.
- It was **founded in 1923 as the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC)**.
- In 1946, after the end of World War II, the organization was revived as the **International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO)** by officials from Belgium, France, Scandinavia and the UK.
- **In 1956, the ICPC adopted a new constitution and the name INTERPOL.**

Structure:

- The **General Assembly** is the governing body and it brings all countries together once a year to take decisions.
- The **General Secretariat** coordinates the day-to-day activities to fight a range of crimes.
- Run by the **Secretary General**, it is staffed by both police and civilians.
- In each country, an **INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) provides the central point of contact** for the General Secretariat and other NCBs.
- The NCB is run by national police officials and usually sits in the government ministry responsible for policing.



Functions:

- The General Secretariat provides a range of expertise and services to the member countries.
- It **manages 18 police databases with information on crimes and criminals** (from names and fingerprints to stolen passports), **accessible in real-time to countries.**

- It offers **investigative support** such as forensics, analysis, and assistance in locating fugitives around the world.
- The **expertise supports national efforts in combating crimes** across three global areas including **terrorism, cybercrime and organized crime.**
- Carry out **research and development** in international crime and trends.

The **Interpol doesn't have law enforcement powers such as arrest.** When a member nation approaches it with a specific request backed with court orders, the Interpol sends it out to other countries. The information received is sent back to the country.

The **role of INTERPOL** is defined by the general provisions of its **constitution.**

- To **ensure and promote the widest possible mutual assistance** between all criminal police authorities within the limits of the laws existing in the different countries.
- To establish and develop all institutions which contribute to the prevention and suppression of ordinary law crimes.
- It **cannot undertake any intervention or activities of a political, military, religious or racial character.**

Different types of notices:

The Interpol facilitates information exchange, knowledge sharing and research between nations by issuing **colour-coded 'notices' in four languages – English, Spanish, French, and Arabic.**

Red Notice: It is a request to locate and provisionally arrest an individual pending extradition. It is issued by the General Secretariat at the request of a member country or an international tribunal based on a valid national arrest

warrant. However, the arrest of the fugitive is based on the rule of the member nation where he or she is located.

Yellow Notice: It is issued to help locate missing persons, often minors, or to help identify persons who are unable to identify themselves. This is highly useful in cases of human trafficking or in case of missing persons due to calamities.

Blue Notice: It is issued to collect additional information about a person's identity, location or activities in relation to a crime. This does not guarantee extradition or arrest of the person.

Black Notice: It is a request to seek information on unidentified bodies in member nations.

Green Notice: It is issued to provide warnings and intelligence about persons who have committed criminal offences and are likely to repeat these crimes in other countries.

Orange Notice: It is issued to provide warnings about an event, a person, an object or a process representing a serious and imminent threat to public safety.

Purple Notice: It is a request to seek or provide information on the modus operandi, objects, devices and concealment methods used by criminals.

The INTERPOL-United Nations Security Council(UNSC) Special Notice is issued for individuals and entities that are subject to sanctions imposed by the UNSC. Its principal function is to alert national law enforcement authorities that sanctions such as assets freeze, arms embargo and travel ban apply to designated individuals and entities.

Criticisms against it:

- It has been criticized as its **international arrest-warrant system** has been found to be **abused** by countries

looking to **punish political opponents.**

- Interpol is being beholden to the nations who pay the lion's share of its budget, even if those nations are not democratic.
- The **number of Red Notices has increased** tenfold in the past fifteen years.
- Those targeted face the risk of arrest if they travel across borders, have difficulties obtaining visas and open bank accounts and suffer reputational damage.
- Interpol remains **opaque and lacks accountability** for its actions.
- It has been blamed as being hijacked, repurposed and weaponized by globalized authoritarian regimes.

Mould your thought: What are the functions of INTERPOL? What are the different types of notices issued by it?