

International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)

MetMUNC XLVIII

Topic: Counterfeit Documents and Currency

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If one has the right amount of money and the proper documentation, they can get almost anywhere. This has become a large problem for the international community, as many criminals have the ability to forge both money and identification documents, allowing them to move themselves and goods across borders. As shown in Figure 1, the fake documents that criminals are able to produce look almost identical to the verified ones, and the differences cannot be seen with the naked eye. The



Figure 1: A comparative example between a real and counterfeit driver's license of California, U.S.A.

ability to create these documents, especially more realistic ones, has become much easier with the improvements made in technology. Since counterfeit documents and banknotes open a variety of doors for criminals, they have become necessary for committing most crimes. INTERPOL views stopping the creation and use of counterfeit identification and currency as a necessary step in the fight to suppress crime world-wide. By focusing on eliminating the ability of criminals to use these fake notes, INTERPOL in turn limits their ability to access resources and move across borders limiting their ability to commit crimes or escape prosecution.

The use of counterfeit documents falls under the umbrella issue of document fraud within INTERPOL. Here, the use of fake or altered documents are categorized into the following subsets: counterfeits (an unauthorized reproduction of a real document), forgeries (alterations of a genuine document), pseudo-documents (documents that are not officially recognized), unlawfully obtained legitimate documents, or misuse of a valid document (i.e using someone else's identity).¹ No matter the classification of the misuse of the document, each could be just as dangerous as the next.

Case Study- Sylwia Sulecka

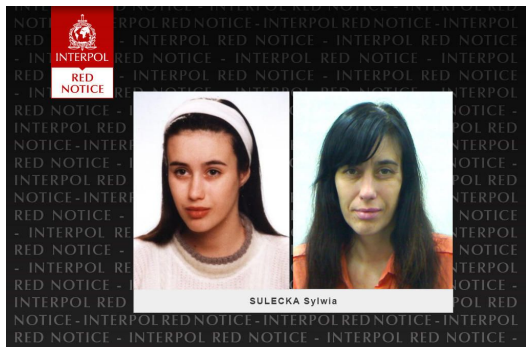


Figure 2: Pictures of Sylwia Sulecka

Take for example the case of Sylwia Sulecka.

INTERPOL published a red notice on Sylwia Sulecka (depicted in Figure 2) in 2011. At this point, Sulecka, from Poland, was a known drug dealer whose various crimes included trafficking cocaine from Chile to

Berlin and Warsaw.² Sulecka was able to evade capture and eventually acquired a new identity in Bolivia. She was able to obtain a slew of documents that identified her as “Monica Aireyu Bangeas,” and moved to Argentina. There, she created a life for herself and avoided capture for seven years.³ In 2018, authorities were able to match the photo identification of Bangeas to older pictures of Sulecka through INTERPOL’s facial recognition biometric service. Without this database, Sulecka probably would have escaped prosecution and finished her life as Monica Airewyu Bangeas of Argentina.

¹<https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Counterfeit-currency-and-security-documents/Identity-and-travel-document-fraud>

² <https://www.occrp.org/en/27-ccwatch/cc-watch-briefs/9014-argentina-catches-alleged-drug-trafficker-from-poland>

³ <https://www.interpol.int/en/News-and-Events/News/2018/INTERPOL-fugitive-probe-nets-most-wanted-suspect>

Cases such as Sulecka's show why it is so important that INTERPOL remains vigilant in regards to counterfeit documents. If the use and circulation of these fake documents does not diminish, the number of criminals and fugitives that escape justice will grow significantly.

In order to maximize efficiency whilst fighting the circulation of all counterfeit documents, INTERPOL separates its actions under two courses: prevention and investigation.

Prevention- Project S-Print

The first way INTERPOL tries to limit the use of counterfeit documents is preventing criminals from obtaining them. There are many private companies that operate within the security printing businesses, granting many opportunities for felons to acquire false banknotes. In order to combat this, INTERPOL has deployed Project S-Print. Project S-Print connects upwards of twenty-five companies and upholds them to a certain standard. The companies under Project S-Print follow the guidelines shown in Figure 3, as well as share data on potentially dangerous

Based on the approach adopted by national schemes, INTERPOL promotes the following due diligence guidelines:

- Maintain and retain full records of all transactions;
- Profile each new customer, verifying their information through independent and objective sources;
- Avoid supplying materials when in doubt about the legitimacy of the customer or their proposed use of equipment;
- Report suspicious orders to the police;
- Dispose of obsolete equipment responsibly and securely.

Figure 3: A description of INTERPOL's Project S-Print guidelines.

customers through an INTERPOL-monitored network. Project S-Print is one of the first projects of its kind, linking the private sector with a government organization to work against illegal activity. Aside from just the guidelines and the network, these companies also get support from INTERPOL itself through training classes and expedited background checks on suspicious customers. Although Project S-Print is not INTERPOL's only preventative measure, it is

currently the most effective. It also demonstrates a unique relationship that delegates should keep in mind regarding this issue: the bond between government institutions and the private sector.

Investigation/Proving a Fake

INTERPOL is also concerned with ensuring the validity of documents at the border. One way it is doing this is by funding a research project between 54 member countries (including

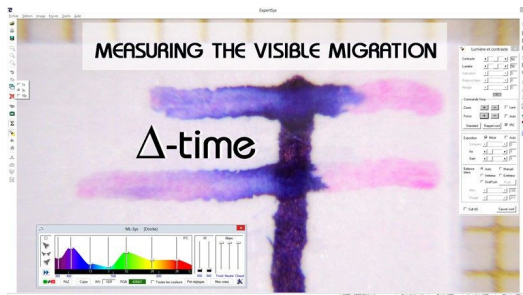


Figure 4: An example of measuring the visible migration.

Belgium, Croatia, Macedonia, France, Georgia, Latvia, Niger, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States). This project focuses on the physical and chemical characteristics of a document.

For example, experts study the differences in the visible and invisible migration in the document ink (as shown in Figure 4) to determine physical differences as well as differences in the composition of the inks on the chemical side.⁴

Aside from researching the validity of documents, INTERPOL also works to keep the world united in the fight against counterfeit documents and banknotes. Through a secure network that runs 24/7, INTERPOL sends out alerts on where, when, and what counterfeits are being used, as well as a forensic analysis, annual statistics, and an online database where documents can be run against verified images in order to be validated. INTERPOL also provides support through a forensics laboratory, where it helps source and analyze newly issued banknotes/counterfeits as well as provide technical analytical reports.

⁴<https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Counterfeit-currency-and-security-documents/Physical-Chemical-Study-of-Crossed-Line-Intersection>

In this session of INTERPOL, delegates must work together to analyze current strategies deployed against the use of counterfeits and determine the best ways to improve them as well as create new processes to help end the use of illegitimate documents. Delegates may also want to consider how the use of invalid documents may impact other crimes such as corruption and terrorism. It is our hope that delegates work to minimize the effect of counterfeit documents and banknotes on the world as a whole.

Questions to Consider:

1. How could an influx of counterfeit documents affect your country domestically as well as internationally?
2. To what extent is your country working internationally to help fight against illegitimate documents?
3. Why could getting involved with INTERPOL's plans to limit use of counterfeits negatively impact your country?
4. How do criminals use fake banknotes and documents of identification within your country's borders?
5. To what extent can your country provide resources to help in researching counterfeit documents?

Helpful Links:

- <https://www.interpol.int/en/content/download/10479/file/Identity%20and%20travel%20document%20fraud.pdf>
- <https://www.interpol.int/en/content/download/10489/file/Physical-Chemical%20Study%20of%20Crossed%20Line%20Intersection%20%282%29.pdf>
- <https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Counterfeit-currency-and-security-documents/Counterfeit-currency>