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# Supporting Taiwan's participation in INTERPOL as observer

November 17, 2023 in Tribune

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**A**fter the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic, many people lost their jobs due to confinements and have been desperately seeking financial support. So, if a tempting job opportunity presented itself, it would naturally be hard to resist. However, they are at risk of falling victim to human trafficking, a new form of transnational crime that preys on people around the world.

Fraud is a crime with a long history. It arose in parallel with the advent of human language and the development of human civilization. In modern times, with the advancement of information and communications technology, this ancient crime is taking on new dimensions and posing an incalculable threat to global security. As INTERPOL Secretary General Jürgen Stock said, the need for strong international police cooperation is more vital than ever to tackle new forms of transnational crime such as human trafficking and fraud. Criminal organizations now operate under highly organized corporate-style models that rely on sophisticated divisions of labor,

to work with their counterparts around the world to fight crime. Their goal is to close the gap in the global security network and work for a safer world.

As the world's 21st largest economy and 17th largest exporter, Taiwan serves as a critical link between Northeast and Southeast Asia and a hub for the flow of people, goods and capital. According to Expat Insider's 2023 annual survey, Taiwan was the fifth best country for expatriates. Taiwan's overall quality of life also ranked second globally, surpassing countries such as the United States, Australia and Thailand. In addition, according to the 2023 safety and crime rankings by database website Numbeo, out of 142 countries, Taiwan ranked third in safety and had the third lowest crime rate of all countries evaluated, better than all other Asian countries.

Recognizing Taiwan's consistent efforts, for 14 consecutive years the U.S. State Department has ranked Taiwan as a Tier 1 country for combating human trafficking among more than 180 countries and regions worldwide.

However, Taiwan is not resting on its laurels. Given the increasing risks caused by new types of transnational crime, Taiwan continues to surpass its own outstanding public safety record. By participating in INTERPOL and working in partnership with global law enforcement authorities, we can all fight transnational crime together.

### **Without Taiwan, INTERPOL is incomplete and insecure**

International organizations function as important platforms for global governance. Participating in these organizations allows Taiwan to connect with the world, providing a way to utilize its soft power and give back to the global community. However, for political reasons, Taiwan has been unable to participate in INTERPOL for more than 39 years. And at the same time, as transnational crime expands in this era of globalization, Taiwanese passports, which enjoy visa-free access to 145 countries and territories, have become prime targets for transnational criminals. This is a threat that should not be underestimated.



information shared through INTERPOL's I-24/7 system and its database of stolen and lost travel documents. Taiwan's prolonged exclusion from INTERPOL means that vital information exchanges are often outdated and uneven. And Taiwan's inability to participate in INTERPOL-associated meetings, activities and training has created a significant gap in the global security and counter-terrorism network.

In 2022, Taiwanese law enforcement authorities uncovered a shocking new type of human trafficking that was occurring in Cambodia and Myanmar. Operating under highly organized corporate models, criminal syndicates had used online platforms to recruit people from around the world, promising overseas job opportunities as bait. In reality, victims were held captive, forced to work in fraudulent call centers and subjected to such inhumane treatment as electric shocks, beatings, drugs and sexual violence. Taiwan had to rely on the police forces of friendly countries to pass on information and cooperate in the investigations. Taiwan also mobilized a national intergovernmental anti-fraud team to carry out prevention, deterrence, rescue and investigation operations and prevent more Taiwanese from being forced into fraudulent activities. As of July 2023, a total of 478 victims have been successfully rescued.

Accordingly, I ask everyone to support Taiwan's participation in INTERPOL's annual General Assembly as an observer. This is not a political issue. Global security concerns us all. Let Taiwan and INTERPOL work together.

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