CHSVMUN '25
Background Guide

INTERPOL

Agenda:
"Addressing the Global Proliferation of Fake Passports
and Identity Fraud in Transnational Crim."

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear Delegates,,

Welcome to the simulation of INTERPOL in CHSV Model United Nations 2025. It is our great pleasure to have you in our committee for two days of debate, discussion, deliberation, and diplomacy.

This agenda has multiple factors, various aspects, and many points of view. Therefore, we expect delegates to have not only researched their own stance, but other portfolios as well, since knowing the opponents' tactics and strategy is imperative to winning a battle or a debate.

The Executive Board is expecting a very fruitful two days owing to the fact that this committee is very speculative and allows for flexibility in many aspects. Delegates who are less experienced are always free to contact us and clarify any questions regarding this committee.. We are committed to making this committee a fun and educational experience for all in crisis aversion, critical thinking, and formation of foreign policy. We wish you the very best with your preparation and your interpretation of the timeline.

Warm regards,

Vibhu Narayan, Chairperson

Farhan, Vice Chairperson

Sahana, Director.

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected world, identity has become one of our most valuable currencies. With a single document, such as a passport, a visa, or a government-issued ID, you can cross continents, start a new life, access financial systems, or vanish into anonymity. For most of us, these papers are proof of who we are. For international criminals, they are tools to become someone else entirely.

Welcome to the world of identity fraud and fake passports, where truth is optional, image-editing software is powerful, and ink and paper can sometimes beat borders and biometrics.

At first glance, it might seem like a small issue. After all, how problematic could a single fake passport be? However, beneath the surface of everyday life is a vast criminal ecosystem that thrives on forged identities. Drug traffickers use them to cross international checkpoints without detection, human traffickers exploit them to smuggle victims across borders disguised as tourists or family members, terrorist organizations use them to embed operatives, and white-collar criminals use them to launder money and commit large-scale fraud all while hiding behind a name that does not legally exist.

What was once the domain of elite spies and Cold War defectors is now disturbingly accessible to anyone with the right contacts and enough money. And with the rise of the dark web, advanced printing technology, and weak identity verification systems in certain parts of the world, acquiring a convincing fake passport is often easier than getting your real one renewed at the passport office (and let's be honest, way faster).

INTRODUCTION

TThis challenge is not limited to one region or one type of crime, however; it is global, pervasive, and increasingly difficult to trace. In fact, INTERPOL's own database on Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD) contains over 100 million records from 175+ countries, and yet forged passports still routinely slip through the cracks of international airport security and border patrol systems.

Even more alarmingly, this is not just about travel. Fake documents are used to obtain jobs, register businesses, access restricted areas, or even claim asylum, allowing criminal enterprises to embed themselves deep within legal systems. The consequences are not just logistical, but human: refugees turned away because someone faked their identity, criminals masquerading as diplomats, and victims trafficked under false paperwork with no way to escape or prove who they really are.

This committee invites delegates to explore the full depth and complexity of this issue. This not only includes the technological and procedural loopholes that make fake identities possible, but also the legal, ethical, and human rights dimensions of identity verification. This raises multiple dilemmas: How do we balance border security with personal privacy? How do we stop crime without profiling communities? And how can INTERPOL and national governments work together to build systems that are not only hard to fake, but also fair?

Identity is no longer just about who you are, it's about who gets to say who you are. In a world where that decision can be manipulated, securing identity is essentially securing control.

HISTORY OF THE AGENDA

The story of identity fraud stretches far beyond the modern passport. In fact, it predates photography, computers, and border stamps. As long as societies have relied on written or physical markers to verify who someone is, people have tried to forge those markers. Ancient traders tampered with royal seals, medieval outlaws forged letters of safe passage, and by the 1800s, impersonation had already become a crime in many legal systems.

But the real boom in forged identities did not arrive until the world became truly international and deeply divided.

During World War II, forged identity papers became a lifeline. Resistance fighters across Europe relied on counterfeit documents to evade Nazi detection, andJewish families escaped the Holocaust using falsified birth certificates. Some of these forgers, like Adolfo Kaminsky, saved thousands of lives. In this era, the art of faking a passport was often viewed as an act of resistance, a quiet rebellion against tyranny.
But in the post-war world, as international air travel rose and borders hardened, forged documentation became a tool for something less noble: organized crime.
In the Cold War, both sides used fake passports to smuggle spies across borders. Intelligence agencies created entire networks for producing new identities. But these techniques soon leaked into the black market. By the 1980s and 1990s, forged passports had become widely available through criminal syndicates: drug cartels used them to move money and personnel; war criminals used them to flee prosecution; and even heads of state, such as Ugandan dictator Idi Amin , reportedly traveled under false names after being ousted.

Enter the 21st century, where globalization, technology, and terrorism collide.
In the early 2000s, identity fraud became a headline issue after several terrorist attacks were traced back to forged documents. The 9/11 hijackers used multiple fake IDs and aliases to move between countries. In the aftermath of this attack, global attention shifted sharply towards passport security and biometric verification. Countries rushed to adopt e-passports and invest in digital border control systems, while INTERPOL expanded its SLTD (Stolen and Lost Travel Documents) database, now one of the largest of its kind.

However, as systems got smarter, so did the criminals.

HISTORY OF THE AGENDA

Today, despite the fact that fake passports are printed in shady back rooms, they are also made with state-level precision, sometimes with the help of corrupt officials, hackers, or insiders at embassies.

Entire criminal organizations specialize in identity laundering, where individuals rotate between multiple identities across continents. Some countries have even issued legitimate passports to foreign nationals for a price, a practice known as "golden passport schemes," blurring the line between legality and manipulation.
Moreover, the problem has now expanded into the digital world. Synthetic identities, created by blending real and fake information, are being used to open bank accounts, commit online fraud, and bypass immigration filters. Deepfakes, facial recognition spoofing, and identity theft through data leaks are all creating new challenges for law enforcement and border control agencies.

From migrants stuck in limbo due to identity confusion, to terrorists evading red flags, to traffickers registering minors as their legal dependents, the consequences are not only administrative, but also deeply humanitarian, often with lives at stake. Every fake identity is a threat to global security, and a possible tragedy in the making.
INTERPOL, as the hub of global police cooperation, plays a crucial role in connecting databases, issuing notices, and helping member states detect forged documents in real time. But even with tools like MIND/FIND, I-Checkit, and the SLTD database, enforcement remains uneven with some airports failing to check INTERPOL's databases at all.

This agenda, therefore, is not only about catching criminals with fake IDs, but also about building a global framework that secures identities without sacrificing freedom, detects fraud without racial profiling, and helps governments cooperate without compromising sovereignty.

At the end of the day, a name on a document should not be enough to fool a system built to protect people, and yet, right now, it often is.

INTERPOL: Global Police Cooperation
INTERPOL, with 187 member countries, is the world's largest international police organization, facilitating cross-border cooperation to prevent and combat crime.

Core Functions:

1. Secure Communications: INTERPOL's I-24/7 network enables instant, secure sharing of vital police data across member countries.
2. Criminal Databases: INTERPOL manages databases on criminals, fingerprints, stolen documents, and more. The Red Notice helps with the arrest of fugitives internationally.
3. Operational Support: Focuses on priority crime areas like terrorism, human trafficking, organized crime, and corruption. It also operates a 24/7 Command Centre for crisis management.
4. Training & Development: Provides training and guidance to enhance national police forces' ability to fight transnational crime and terrorism.

Fake Passports: The Hidden Enabler of Global Crime

In today's world, fake passports and identity fraud are not only crimes in themselves, but more importantly crucial enablers of more serious and complex global issues. Criminals now have a ticket to go anywhere, and it is not just a simple travel document, but is a passport to chaos, smuggling, human trafficking, terrorism, and more. The rise of digital identity verification has made things even more complicated, as the risks of identity theft and fraud grow alongside technological advances.

A Gateway to Cross-Border Crime

Fraudulent documents often play a major, but hidden, role in many transnational criminal operations. Whether it's smuggling, human trafficking, or terrorism, fake passports allow criminals to navigate borders undetected, creating a seamless flow of illegal activity. For those looking to evade law enforcement, these forged identities act as a "get-out-of-jail-free" card, ensuring they can continue their operations with minimal disruption.

Digital Identity: A Double-Edged Sword

With the increasing reliance on digital platforms for identity verification, the scope for fraud has expanded significantly. What was once a straightforward process of checking paper documents has now become a battleground for cybersecurity experts and fraudsters alike. The digital age offers criminals an alarming number of opportunities to steal and manipulate identities, making it harder for authorities to distinguish between genuine and fake identities. This shift essentially gives criminals a new toolset: one that is far more advanced, and potentially far more dangerous, than what came before.

Facilitating Transnational Crime: The Perfect Cover

Fake passports are indispensable for transnational criminals, offering them a way to cross borders without raising suspicion. These forged documents allow illicit activities to thrive on a global scale. Whether it's moving money for illegal transactions, transporting weapons, or facilitating the movement of terrorists, fake passports offer criminals and terrorists a much-needed cover to operate freely, without fear of detection.

Human Trafficking: Exploitation Under a False Identity
One of the most horrifying uses of fake passports is in the trafficking of human beings. These documents allow traffickers to move victims across borders, often under false pretenses, setting them up for exploitation and abuse. Whether it's forced labor or sexual exploitation, fake travel documents make it easier for criminals to carry out these heinous crimes with a certain degree of anonymity. In the end, the real victims are often left voiceless, their identities erased, and their futures uncertain.

Terrorism: Moving Under the Radar
Terrorist groups, like any well-organized criminal operation, rely on the ability to move operatives across borders without attracting attention. Fake passports provide them with the perfect cover. These documents enable terrorists to travel freely, acquire resources, and plan attacks—all while staying under the radar of authorities. The consequences for national security are significant, as forged passports allow individuals to operate internationally, undetected, and with malicious intent.

Economic Impact: A Breach of Trust
The economic consequences of document fraud are far-reaching and costly. Beyond the immediate impact on security, fake passports and identity fraud undermine the integrity of legal systems and disrupt international trade. Businesses and governments suffer financial losses, and entire sectors are forced to deal with the aftermath. The erosion of trust in identity verification systems can also damage reputations and result in long-term financial instability for governments and companies alike.

1) How do we systematically decrease the burden of the negative impacts caused by the crimes committed involving this fraud?

2) How do we make sure that we take the right steps towards solving this problem?

3) How do we deal with each of the separate impacts caused under this agenda with utmost focus on each aspect, while utilising the resources of the international community judiciously?

1) https://www.interpol.int/How-we-work/I-Checkit?utm
2) https://fosterfreeman.com/document-fraud-an-engine-of-organised-crime/?utm
3) https://www.interpol.int/News-and-Events/News/2023/INTERPOL-operation-reveals-further-insights-into-globalization-of-cyber-scam-centres?utm
4) https://www.occrp.org/en/feature/trafficking-and-terrorism-how-organized-crime-thrives-on-passport-fraud?utm
5) https://www.rusi.org/publication/threat-posed-trade-stolen-passports?