

STIRLINGPRESS

PRESS PACK • INTERPOL ABUSE



Due Process is the head of internationally acclaimed *Detained in Dubai, Detained in Doha, IPEX Reform and Gulf Investment Monitor.*



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We Investigate INTERPOL ABUSE

Interpol can inadvertently expand the jurisdictions of authoritarian countries to a global scale. Recent years have seen a significant increase in cases of "Interpol Abuse" by Gulf countries, China, and Russia; primarily directed against political dissidents, debtors, or foreign business people and investors who have run afoul of local power players.

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RADHA **STIRLING**



Interpol's overall transparency and accountability require improvement to combat abuse

Interpol is an essential international law enforcement institution, as such its protocols and procedures must be beyond reproach.

When Interpol fails to uphold standards of fairness, transparency, and accountability; and when it is allowed to become a mechanism of injustice, persecution, and extortion, global law enforcement is in a worse position than if Interpol did not exist at all.

Abuse of the Interpol system has been increasing year on year since the beginning of the 21st Century. Non-democratic, Authoritarian, and transitional governments have equal access to utilise Interpol's mechanisms as stable, democratic states; and Interpol provides no procedures for filtering requests for inclusion of individuals in its database which do not meet Interpol's own criteria. Spurious Red and Blue Notices are issued upon request with little or no discrimination as to the integrity of the requesting state, nor that state's human rights record, nor even to the frequency of a state's habitual misuse of the Interpol system.

Thus, countries such as Russia, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Qatar, China, and others routinely report innocent individuals to Interpol for a range of unsubstantiated reasons. These individuals may find themselves restricted in their freedom of movement; they may be detained, and they may even face extradition to countries where they will face persecution, unfair trials, and even torture and grave human rights abuses.

IPEX seeks to advise, lobby, and achieve urgently needed reforms in Interpol's issuance of diffusion Notices, as well as to improve Interpol's overall transparency and accountability so that the organisation's crucial function in global law enforcement will no longer be compromised by abuse and manipulation; and so that no more innocent individuals will suffer the devastating consequences of being wrongfully included in Interpol's database.

– [Read more here](#)



Editor's Note

"Precise statistics are impossible to compile since Interpol is not a transparent agency, one of the primary issues that needs to be resolved in order to promote responsibility. Countries can choose whether or not to publish their notices on Interpol's website and most choose not to. We deal with at least 3-4 Interpol abuse cases each month and the most notorious for abusive reports are gulf nations, as well as Russia, Egypt, Turkey & China.

Interpol recently established a foundation that accepts donations while not being required to publish from where these donations have been made. The UAE donated an enormous \$50m to the foundation, while Qatar donated another \$10m. Both countries, who are already noted for Interpol abuse, noticeably increased their use of the database and in particular, for listing credit card debtors as fugitives for the purpose of pressuring loan settlements for their major banks. Without transparency, Interpol will remain complicit in allowing its member states to wrongfully list victims on their database.

These same countries, like in Hakeem's case, often use the database as a means to harass or punish dissidents. Even if they do not expect that the victim will actually be extradited, they are well aware that a red notice can lead to months of detention while entrenched in foreign judicial proceedings; in many cases, this is sufficient to satisfy the government or private entity who has sought vindication".

Radha Stirling

We investigate Interpol Abuse

Without proper screening of Red Notice requests, Interpol can inadvertently expand the jurisdictions of authoritarian countries to a global scale. Recent years have seen a significant increase in cases of "Interpol Abuse" by Gulf countries, China and Russia; primarily directed against political dissidents, debtors, or foreign business people and investors who have run afoul of local power players.

While Interpol operates according to an internal set of rules and protocols that should filter out such spurious Red Notice requests. Unfortunately, that filtering process usually occurs after the fact; when a Red Notice is being challenged by a targeted individual. Interpol's preliminary process for determining the validity of a Red Notice request is unclear, and the organization refuses to answer questions on the subject. While Interpol's rules state that politically motivated Red Notice requests will not be considered; and that requests arising out of private financial disputes do not warrant issuance of a Red Notice; and they have furthermore stated that Interpol will not entertain any Red Notice request pertaining to a refugee from the country from which he or she has fled; nevertheless, we frequently see Red Notices issued and acted upon that meet all of these criteria for disqualification. Detained in Dubai handles dozens of cases every year for Red Notices issued at the request of the UAE, Qatar, and other Gulf nations, that are essentially methods of debt collection or financial extortion by disgruntled local partners. While we have always been successful appealing for the removal of such Notices, the damage caused to our clients by the inappropriate listings can often be devastating.

In the UAE, bounced cheques are treated as crimes, not civil matters; categorized as "fraud" or "breach of trust", with this same standard applied even to late payments on a loan or even a utility bill. An individual may be in active negotiation with a creditor when they are nevertheless reported to Interpol. This is a clear violation of Interpol's rules on data collection, and a Red Notice should never be issued in such cases yet continue to be issued, again and again. This abuse of the Interpol system is being perpetrated primarily by authoritarian governments of Interpol member countries. While most democratic countries will often opt to not act upon Red Notices listed on behalf of totalitarian regimes, these regimes use the Interpol database to "jurisdiction shop" with the expectation that the individual they are seeking may eventually cross the border into countries with



In the UAE, bounced cheques are treated as crimes, not civil matters; categorized as "fraud" or "breach of trust", with this same standard applied even to late payments on a loan or even a utility bill.

less democratic leanings. What we are seeing is the creation of a kind of authoritarian nexus with a global jurisdiction. For instance, if the UAE wants to prosecute someone over an unpaid bill (something which most advanced nations do not treat as a criminal offence), they know that they can rely on a number of like-minded countries who will be willing to cooperate in the unreasonable arrest and extradition of that person if Interpol has listed them with a Red Notice or diffusion notice. Practically speaking, this amounts to a multi-jurisdictional alliance against otherwise accepted norms of justice, due process, and human rights; and all of this is made possible because Interpol does not carefully vet Red Notice requests and has failed to implement policies to end Interpol abuse.

Interpol is clearly in urgent need of reform.

There needs to be a process for ending misuse of the Interpol system. Habitual abusers of Interpol listings should be first warned, and then suspended if abuse continues. Countries with documented gross human rights violations; countries to which extradition is likely to result in an individual's torture or death; should be altogether barred from recourse to Interpol. Indeed, there needs to be international cooperation to implement human rights provisions in the extradition procedures of any nation. And finally, Interpol must implement a vetting policy on all listing requests; at the very least to determine whether or not the request even meets their own criteria for a listing. It is absurd that people wrongfully listed on Interpol have to apply for removal from the system themselves; it is Interpol's responsibility to ensure that their own rules are adhered to in the issuance of Red Notices and diffusion notices.

The following links contain several examples of the type of Interpol Abuse we have encountered:

- [What are Interpol Red Notices?](#)
- [Interpol Power Abuse](#)



UAE Interpol Abuse Sabotaging Visa and Immigration Applications

The United Arab Emirates misuses Interpol as a device for debt collection, regardless of the potential damage this can wreak on the lives, plans, and futures of innocent people.

Aside from the danger anyone listed on Interpol faces in terms of detention and extradition any time they travel; there can also be other severe, if less obvious, consequences as well. Detained in Dubai has seen an increase in cases of clients being denied entry or leave to remain in a country due to inappropriate issuance of Red Notices by Interpol due to civil matters, primarily debt-related.

Even if a country refuses to detain or extradite an individual, nevertheless, the existence of an Interpol Red Notice is unlikely to be overlooked by immigration authorities when considering admitting that person into the country, and the chances of being granted a residency or work visa can be seriously undermined.

Because the majority of these Red Notices are related to private debt matters which are not criminal offences in the country in which they are seeking entry, there is often little

danger of detention or extradition; however, the mere fact that a Red Notice exists can deter the authorities from granting entry or approving a visa. I have provided expert testimony to immigration authorities to assist them in their decision to grant entry to individuals subject to red notices."

Someone who falls behind in a loan payment in the UAE today can find doors closing on them in countries all over the world tomorrow. This is particularly perilous when the UAE treats debt as a criminal offence that can lead to imprisonment; leaving debtors with few options except to flee the Emirates to avoid jail. Leaving the UAE is often the only way someone can recover financially and find ways to pay back their outstanding obligations. When the UAE reports them to Interpol, hindering their ability to travel or to settle in another country, even this option becomes risky.

Detained in Dubai provides services for debt negotiation, Interpol Red Notice removal, and defence against extradition requests through expert testimony. At any stage of such cases, Detained in Dubai offers solutions; but it is imperative for matters to be addressed as quickly as possible to avoid the negative consequences spiralling out of control.

[— Read more here](#)

The truth about leaving a debt behind in Dubai

Some common myths explained by the debt team at Detained in Dubai.

Unlike Western countries, the United Arab Emirates treats debt as a criminal matter rather than a civil one. The result being that if a borrower is late with payments, they can be sentenced to jail for up to three years.

However, the debt is not cleared because of this sentence, only the "criminal" act of not paying it/the instalments due.

After the initial sentence the debtor is freed for thirty days to allow them to arrange payment of the money due. If they do not have the money to pay, a civil case is then taken by the creditor, and the debt victim is sent back into jail indefinitely, until the money is paid.

This doesn't make sense to a Westerner used to the protection of bankruptcy laws. After all, if the debtor is in prison, how can they ever earn money to pay the debt? Unfortunately the Dubai banks think differently to their Western counterparts. Instead of seeing the debtor as an income source they think of them as a hostage that some wealthy relative may sell a property to set free.

[— Read more here](#)

Qatar National Bank extradition request denied

Qatar National Bank (QNB) issued an Interpol Red Notice against an Australian citizen over "forged bounced cheque" he could not have authored.

The bank never communicated there were any issues with his account and the first he heard of the matter, was when he was arrested in Prague and jailed on the basis of the Interpol Red Notice. This is not the first time Prague has detained a foreign national on behalf of Qatar.

He was denied bail and forced to hire a lawyer to defend the extradition request. The last time Czech detained a foreigner on the basis of a Qatar notice, the courts ruled it was a violation of his human rights but it seems they have not learned their lesson. After months in prison, a judge finally denied the extradition request. It was not

Woman detained in Greece over Qatar issued Interpol Red Notice

Woman detained in Greece over Qatar issued Interpol Red Notice over an alleged £20,000 debt that she was not aware of. Her bank advised her that her end of service leave and salary would cover the loan facility.

They made no contact with her and two years later, she found herself detained over an almost 100,000 debt she had been convicted of in absentia.

[— Read more here](#)



possible that he had written the cheque in question and was not even in the country at the time.

"QNB is one of the most aggressive banks with their use of Interpol's database, frequently using the crime reporting system to extort, harass and punish customers", said Radha Stirling, Interpol expert and founder of IPEX. "We will be removing the Interpol Red Notice but urge anyone who could be at risk of red notice to check with us before travel. The notices are not published on Interpol's website and numerous people have been apprehended in Europe and abroad".

[— Read more here](#)



Greece denied the extradition request but the traumatic experience and wrongful Interpol notice have caused her no end of troubles.

[— Read more here](#)



Discussing Interpol Red Notice Abuse

Philip Wood, QC on Radha Stirling - Undeterred in Dubai

The relentless energy of the campaigners at Detained in Dubai continues to amaze as they take on one case of alleged abuse and miscarriage of justice after another.

The organisation's attention is now also engaged in countering the misuse of the Interpol notice system, including allegedly by banks such as HSBC Bank Middle East. Radha Stirling, the group's chief executive, seems fairly blasé about the risks involved challenging powerful state bodies.

"When you deal with clients whose lives are in crisis, often devastating situations; wrongly jailed, lost jobs, income, reputation, and with their families in a state of traumatic upheaval, you tend to focus on the risks and dangers they are dealing with rather than any risks involved with helping them," she says.

Full article available at [The Times](#)

[— Read more here](#)

Briton trapped in Mallorca, Spain facing extradition proceedings to Qatar over £30k debt

British father of 3 Steven Williams from Wales, is stuck in Mallorca, Spain pending extradition proceedings to Qatar over an outstanding debt, despite having made consistent monthly payments. If Steven is sent to Qatar, he could face decades in prison.

Like the UAE, Qatar has been increasingly misusing Interpol as an instrument for debt collection, though the international policing organisation has no remit to intervene in private civil disputes.

Radha Stirling, a leading expert on legal issues in the Middle East, extradition and CEO of Detained in Dubai & Detained in Doha, said, "It is absolutely astonishing that Interpol has not responded to calls for checks and balances to be placed on member countries when they list someone on the database." She said that Middle Eastern countries have long been abusing their membership with Interpol by misreporting debt under the category of fraud for the purpose of using the international organisation as their own personal debt collectors. "The threat of Interpol is used by Middle Eastern banks against customers to try to add pressure on them to settle their debts, without resorting to normal collection or bankruptcy procedures."

Stirling notes that Interpol's own financial dependence on Gulf funding may be a factor on the perpetuation of abuse. "The UAE and Qatar are the leading financial contributors to Interpol and it is no wonder that both of these countries are also the biggest abusers of their membership. Interpol seems unwilling to insist that these countries abide by the membership rules, presumably in case it affects their source of funding."

Detained in Dubai offers debt negotiation services to clients grappling with financial issues in the UAE and elsewhere; "We have been helping victims of Interpol abuse for over a decade now but like Steven Williams, the effects of such abuse linger. Steven has experienced a traumatic arrest, accompanied by the fear of extradition and financial losses incurred from being forced to remain in Mallorca and hire legal representatives to respond to an Interpol notice issued by the International Bank of Qatar for a mere a £30,000 debt. All this despite



Qatar has wasted Spanish taxpayer money on a wrongful Interpol report. Not only is Williams a victim, but so is any Interpol member country who is forced to waste taxpayer money to collect the debts of a private bank.

the fact that he never missed the scheduled payments. But these banks often arbitrarily decide to increase the instalment amounts, and alter the interest rates on loans without explanation or notification.

"Although the United Kingdom and United States are well versed in this type of abuse, many other European countries are not as experienced and assume that an Interpol notice has merit. This had led to a number of arrests throughout Europe; including one in Italy over a £15,000 credit card debt. Stirling says, "Interpol is seriously damaging its credibility in the international community with many countries choosing to ignore their fugitive alerts because frivolous cases are not being properly screened by the organisation". Stirling explains, "Debt is not a crime in Spain and ultimately, we expect that Mr Williams will be permitted to return to the United Kingdom but Interpol needs to be financially accountable for his losses as they are failing in their duty of care to protect and preserve human rights".

Steven contacted Detained in Dubai when he was first detained in Mallorca, Stirling says, "I am in touch with Steven & his family who are stunned that a bank debt could lead to arrest and extradition proceedings in Europe where it is wholly contrary to the region's principles of debt collection. The Spanish legal system can move quite slowly with extraditions but we are hopeful that Spain will grant authorisation to return to the UK to resolve the issue from his home country, given the obvious nature of the request. It's a real atrocity that Qatar has wasted Spanish taxpayer money on a wrongful Interpol report. Not only is Williams a victim, but so is any Interpol member country who is forced to waste taxpayer money to collect the debts of a private bank. False Interpol reports cost European countries millions every year and if Interpol abuse is clear, the cooperating country should also be compensated".

— [Read more here](#)

Power of UAE passport illustrates global silence over human rights abuses, crimes

The UAE passport today is the strongest in the world, reflecting a degree of global influence linked to SWF investments, tantamount to hush money to silence its critics.

The United Arab Emirates is reportedly now the world's most powerful passport, according to website passportindex.org (although the UAE passport is still listed as number 21 on the more reliable Henley Index. Emiratis can gain entry to 167 countries without obtaining a prior visa; 113 countries visa-free, and another 54 using visas on arrival. Conversely, the UAE only grants citizens from fewer than 70 countries visas on arrival.

The UAE has become an active investor worldwide, with real estate development and business projects financed by the nation's considerable Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs); it is believed visa-free access for Emirati citizens has expanded globally as more countries wish to facilitate investment from the oil-rich Gulf state. But there are concerns that the UAE is buying more than hassle-free travel across borders.

Radha Stirling, CEO of Detained in Dubai, and a leading expert on human rights and legal abuse in the UAE, says the country is using its wealth to purchase the international community's silence over its increasingly belligerent behaviour in the region.

"In just the past 9 months, the UAE has attacked an American sea vessel in international waters, abducted a US citizen, abducted a Finnish citizen, allegedly co-conspired in the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, falsely convicted UK academic Matthew Hedges of 'espionage' for doing PhD research, and sentenced him to life imprisonment," Stirling remarked.

"The UAE has defied a United Nations enquiry into the enforced disappearance of Princess Latifa, the daughter of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Makroum; and Emirates has repeatedly ignored the UN's concerns over their military campaign in Yemen. It is, frankly, disappointing that countries around the world offer the UAE such a remarkable degree of acceptance, while the UAE is increasingly exhibiting disregard for the most fundamental framework of international relations; namely, the rule of law."

The UAE controls 5 major SWFs worth a total of \$1.3 trillion; these are used to buy real estate and companies, and to fund investment and development projects around the globe. The UAE is also the



The UAE is using its wealth to purchase the international community's silence over its increasingly belligerent behaviour in the region.

top contributor to Interpol, giving the international policing organization \$54 million last year; more than all other contributions combined. The Emirates also spends millions of dollars on political lobbyists in Washington DC, more, in fact, than any other country seeking to buy influence in the US.

The same applies to their lobbying expenses in the UK. Combined with funding to think tanks and academic institutions, the UAE's SWFs give the country a tremendously powerful presence in the West and around the world.

"The UAE's Sovereign Wealth Funds appear to be flooding the international community with hush money," Stirling concludes, "The fact that the Emirati passport opens more doors than any other passport in the world is testimony to the level of influence the Emirates has acquired; but unfortunately, this influence is being used to cover up a corrupt legal system, to draw foreign investors into extremely risky business deals; to habitually misuse Interpol; and to buy immunity from accountability for criminal acts of aggression. It is time for the world, and Western governments in particular, to realise that this is a losing transaction for us, and we need to reassess our relationship with the UAE."

— [Read more here](#)

UAE legal abuse and wrongful convictions in absentia, Interpol and licensing repercussions

The dangers of investing and doing business in Dubai have been published worldwide, particularly since the country itself essentially went bankrupt during the global financial crisis of 2008. Expats left their sports cars at the airport, abandoning their properties and investments to avoid the real possibility of being jailed or held in the country for the downward spiral effect of the economic downturn.

Over the past ten years, Detained in Dubai, an international organisation and legal advisory has dealt with thousands of cases of foreigners who have been wrongfully accused of embezzlement, breach of trust and fraud as well as countless individuals who have been jailed over bounced cheques and debts. Radha Stirling, the organisation's CEO and UAE judicial expert in European and US courts, has specialised in the legal abuse of investors and professionals, having handled a number of high profile financial crime cases including Safi Qarashi, Matt Joyce, Marcus Lee, NC, Mohammad Haddad and David Haigh.

Stirling said "the UAE remains one of the world's riskiest places to invest. We have seen hundreds of millions of dollars blatantly stolen from the hands of foreign investors, usually through false allegations of misconduct that lead to a local business partner being able to seize entire companies and personal wealth, often leading to the incarceration of unsuspecting foreigners who have no way to defend themselves in the country's undeveloped and corrupt legal system. This is a country where an accusation alone is sufficient to secure a conviction."

With foreigners more aware of UAE judicial issues and corruption, many remain until they become suspicious that they may be subject to false allegations. If they sense something is wrong, they may leave the country and try to resolve any issues from the safety of their home country. In these situations, it is practically impossible to defend any criminal allegations and many are unfairly convicted in absentia, on hearsay alone. A conviction means that they will be unable to return to the UAE without facing immediate arrest leaving them at a disadvantage when it comes to any potential civil litigation claims; Their businesses, shares and



assets are open to theft by former business partners or vengeful and greedy opponents. They will also likely be subject to an Interpol Red Notice, branding them as a fugitive, again, in the absence of evidence. Stirling has written extensively about the practice of "Interpol Abuse" and has lobbied Interpol to instal checks and balances to prevent frivolous reporting. As if these shenanigans were insufficient, disgruntled parties who have secured wrongful convictions against professionals regulated by financial or legal bodies, have maliciously reported the conviction to the regulators. In such cases, the victim faces a suspension of their practicing licence and severe personal and professional consequences with seemingly no recourse.

Ms Stirling commented "The ramifications of a conviction in absentia in the UAE are not limited to the gulf region. It is disturbing to see just how many people have been severely affected by Interpol abuse and through regulatory bodies covering the finance and legal industries. Neither Interpol, nor regulatory bodies, should be taking convictions in absentia from the UAE into account. The UAE does not require proof to secure a conviction and this fundamental element is the basis of any credible judiciary."

"I have just returned from a hearing at the ACCA in London to defend a suspension request based on a frivolous conviction in absentia. Fortunately, my client's license was not revoked but it was not an easy fight. My client had a business in Ras Al Khaimah with two other British partners. When he offered

to buy the shares of one of the partners, for a very generous price, the partner agreed and they met to discuss the offer. Shortly thereafter, the partner made an allegation that my client had tried to "steal" his shares and opened a criminal complaint and on the basis of his verbal statement, my client was arrested. Between the parties, they agreed to mediate and to only resort to the use of commercial courts if an agreement was not possible."

"The partner had other plans though and fabricated a second criminal complaint for embezzlement while my client was outside of the country, resulting in a conviction in absentia. The criminal complaint has been used by the partner as a tool to try to extort funds from my client, more than he would have been able to achieve through mediation or civil litigation. The partner went so far as to inform the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) of the conviction and had hoped to have my client's license revoked, again, to exert unreasonable pressure on my client to settle for inequitable sums."

Ms Stirling has been representing clients in hostile situations since 2008. She has appeared as an expert for the defence in extradition cases across Europe and in civil litigation cases in Europe and the United States. She has been assisting clients in removing their Interpol Red Notices and helping them seek retribution for their grievances. Stirling said "in many cases, victims of injustice are unaware that there may be avenues available for them to seek remedy against UAE accusers and claimants, either through tactical

UAE Interpol Red Notice against Danish citizen is deleted

The UAE managed to have a Danish man arrested on several occasions. His name has finally been cleared and he is free to travel.

A Danish citizen who was scammed out of \$30,000 in the UAE and subjected to an abusive Red Notice as part of an extortion scheme, has had his name successfully removed from the Interpol database by Radha Stirling and Detained in Dubai. "This was a particularly outrageous case," Stirling said, "Our client hired an attorney in the UAE to help collect debts he was owed; but instead of carrying out the work for which he had been paid \$30,000, the attorney forged a document claiming my client owed him AED 13 million. He filed a police case, and proceeded to use the Power of Attorney granted to him by my client to have an associate plead guilty to fraud on my client's behalf – all after he had already left the UAE."

[– Read more here](#)

strategy in the UAE or through the jurisdiction of foreign courts. For example, the US and the UK have a reciprocal enforcement agreement for commercial judgments and the UAE counterpart can potentially be sued in a foreign court and an order then enforced within the UAE. Furthermore, in cases of wrongdoing, where extortion or other crimes have been committed against them in the UAE, the offending party may be subject to private prosecution in the United Kingdom, meaning the next time they enter the country, they could also be arrested and brought to justice. It is not always hopeless and the world's courts have become more accessible to foreign disputes in recent years. In some cases, the mere realisation that there are such avenues available, has been sufficient pressure to encourage an antagonistic party to resign to resolving a dispute amicably.

"In my client's matter, now that we have resolved the ACCA hearing, we intend to use the civil courts in Dubai to prove my client has acted with integrity. Once a favourable judgment is obtained, it can be used to overturn the criminal conviction that was secured without evidence. The partner in this matter will face criminal complaints for bribery and extortion in the UAE and private prosecution in the UK. It is time that victims of legal abuse fight back and let hostile parties know that false allegations and dirty tricks have real world consequences. They can no longer 'get away with it' and should not feel protected by the UAE's impaired legal system."

[– Read more here](#)

2 more “Interpol Abuse” victims removed from Interpol database

Two more “Interpol Abuse” victims removed from Interpol, as UAE continues reporting debts as fraud.

The UAE has come under widespread criticism in recent years for “treating Interpol as their personal debt collectors.” Whether it is a credit card debt, a personal loan or a bounced cheque in relation to a commercial or business transaction, Interpol is seen as a recovery tool by banks, government and the private sector.

Detained in Dubai had the pleasure of announcing the removal of two Interpol notices for clients last week. In both cases, the reports should never have been issued in the first place and are the result of the systematic abuse of Interpol’s database by the UAE and other Middle Eastern countries. Unlike in the Western world, UAE law regards debt as a criminal matter. If a customer is late with payments or

can’t pay, they go to jail. If a company’s cheque bounces, the individual who signs it will be subject to criminal prosecution, regardless of the circumstances. Individuals facing such circumstances in the UAE are (rightly) advised by their lawyers to leave the country to avoid imprisonment. Although they have acted in good faith, they are left with no choice. Following their departure, they will be convicted in absentia over what, anyone outside of the Middle Eastern would see, as a civil matter. Once a conviction in absentia is secured, the UAE can report the “crime” to Interpol by branding it as “fraud”. If a member country like the UAE reports a debt victim for fraud and issues a Red Notice, Interpol duly accepts it without assessing the merits of the case. Every week, Detained in Dubai receives multiple requests seeking to find out whether they are listed. Clients of many nationalities who have visited, lived in or had business dealings within the UAE. If the checks return positive and they find they are listed, formal submissions are made to Interpol to appeal the report.

Detained in Dubai’s clients are not international fugitives and like many others, have found themselves listed for very small financial matters such as a minor debt, a mortgage default or a bounced “security cheque”. The Red Notices are instigated by desperate debt collection agencies working on behalf of UAE banks such as Emirates NBD and Mashreq.

– [Read more here](#)

Expats shocked Qatar & UAE banks are getting away with using INTERPOL as debt collector

INTERPOL’s global reputation been damaged over the last decade due to their negligence in allowing member countries to misuse the international law enforcement organisation.

More specifically, serious questions have been raised regarding transparency, as Interpol’s top funders have proven to also be the leading abusers of its system. Interpol, as an international organisation, has largely escaped accountability through its complex setup and a level of inaccessibility that amounts to immunity from

scrutiny or redress. Interpol’s primary role is to communicate information between countries, often with a view to requesting a country to process an arrest and extradition of a wanted individual, through their domestic legal system. No comprehensive mechanism exists, however, to hold Interpol accountable to the public; and there is no “presumption of innocence” in the reporting process, nor even a substantial burden of proof required before an individual finds himself or herself listed on the Interpol database.

The public, any member of whom may wind up subjected to a Red or Blue Notice by Interpol, has no means of oversight and no channel for compensation if they have been wrongfully listed. Interpol is only accountable to its member countries

who provide hundreds of millions of dollars in donations every year. Interpol has previously had to refund donations to FIFA and has accepted donations from the private sector, including from corporate giant Phillip Morris, causing widespread controversy respecting their independence. It is more controversial however, to accept donations from countries who have the access and ability to report wanted persons

Interpol has vested interests in maintaining relations with all member states and has been reluctant to discipline countries who are known to abuse the system. Why would Interpol seek to risk an annual £50 million donation by requesting a country like the UAE to stop them from wrongfully reporting credit card debt as fraud?

British National - Theft of Business, Corruption.

Detained in Dubai warns “UAE is serious risk for foreign investors.”

“If your business is successful, it is at great risk of being stolen by Emiratis, facilitated by UAE Royals, corruption and a legal system that is owned by the Sheikh and his friends”.

Radha Stirling, founder of Detained in Dubai is warning investors, entrepreneurs and executives that they could lose everything at the whim of local partners, partners that are legally required. Stirling has debriefed the British Chairman of KM Holdings and says “While I am used to attending to matters surrounding the highest

levels of corruption and manipulation, Haddad’s story is a shock to anyone. Not only, Haddad shows us, do we have royals involved, we have major international law firms like Baker & McKenzie facilitating what is a serious breach of conduct and then enter Ernst & Young, another top international accounting firm, providing forged documents according to Mr Haddad and his legal analyst.

It seems that with the right connections, you can get anyway with anything.

Often the evidence is not available but in this case, we have meticulous records and evidence. Some of the documents were issued by the Government of Dubai and were divulged on Twitter and the parties involved tried to have it censored. It is about time that the world sees what can really happen to foreign investors”.

– [Read more here](#)

It is only the individuals who fall victim to this abuse after all and they are unlikely to be able to make Interpol compensate them. Interpol Abuse has been investigated and reported by Al Jazeera, Qatar’s own independent news broadcaster, in “People and Power”, where a number of cases were discussed, while Fair Trials International & Detained in Dubai have been campaigning for an end to Interpol Abuse for a number of years.

Radha Stirling, founder of Detained in Dubai and Detained in Doha, has been assisting clients remove their name from Interpol’s databases for over ten years. She also acts as an expert witness in extradition cases worldwide.

Ms Stirling said “There are three most common types of Interpol abuse. The first is where a civil matter, business dispute, credit card debt or bounced cheque, is reported to Interpol under the inaccurate category of “fraud”. Interpol accepts the report without

question. “The second involves reporting journalists, bloggers or those with a public opinion that does not support a government in power, as “terrorists” or similar. In most instances, the individual concerned is outside of the reporting country, exercising their free speech. Interpol accepts the report without question.

“The third involves completely fabricated allegations that are reported to Interpol by people who make use of a more corrupt or backward government’s legal system to make false reports for the purpose of extortion or even for spite, knowing that ultimately, the report will be removed but that it will cause the reported party to be temporarily detained. This is more common in less developed countries. Interpol accepts the report without question. “Once Interpol accepts and circulates a notice, it will likely lead to the arrest and detention of the subject.

– [Read more here](#)



The complicity of INTERPOL

Radha Stirling, Detained in Dubai’s founder, has been helping people clear the name from Interpol’s unregulated database for over a decade.

Interpol is complicit in numerous and serious human rights abuses and will soon be held to account. Interpol has become a pay to play organisation, open to manipulation and abuse by countries with poor human rights records. Countries like the UAE, Saudi, Qatar, Bahrain, Iran, Turkey, Russia, Egypt and China have been able to use the crime tool for their own personal vendettas. Countries such as the Emirates have used Interpol’s reach to extend their jurisdiction beyond their borders, causing the arrest, detention and prosecution abroad of many innocent victims. Innocent individuals have been listed on Interpol, arrested, detained and tried for “crimes” that don’t even meet Interpol’s minimum reporting criteria. Journalists, activists, businessmen and credit card debtors have been locked up in Western nations at the mere request of countries who repeatedly take advantage of their membership with Interpol.

– [Read more here](#)

Australia & FIFA must pressure Interpol, Thailand & Bahrain to secure pro footballer's freedom

Detention of Bahraini/Australian resident and pro footballer in Thailand highlights Gulf state Interpol abuse and international cooperation issues. Australia needs to pressure Interpol to withdraw the politically motivated red notice, Thailand to decline extradition & Bahrain to withdraw their extradition request.

Detention of Bahraini/Australian resident and pro footballer in Thailand highlights Gulf state Interpol abuse and international cooperation issues. Australia needs to pressure Interpol to withdraw the politically motivated red notice, Thailand to decline extradition and Bahrain to withdraw their extradition request. FIFA has also been a strong financial supporter of Interpol and should use their own channels to pressure for the removal of the red notice against their fellow sportsman. Radha Stirling, an expert witness in extradition proceedings to the Middle East, Interpol Abuse, Human Rights expert and Detained in Dubai's CEO, released the following statement on the detention and potential extradition of pro footballer Hakeem Ali Mohamed Ali AlAraib:

"If it were not for Interpol's irresponsible acceptance of Red Notices from Gulf States, Hakeem AlAraib would not be in the position he is now, fighting extradition from Thailand to Bahrain. Interpol makes no attempt to review Red Notices for their merit and accepts submissions from nations who have been consistently proven to abuse the system; including reports for political reasons, dissidents/journalists and even credit card debt. Interpol generally makes no attempt to contact the reported party to request their input but rather, waits for them to be captured at a border crossing.

Had Hakeem been arrested in Australia upon his departure, I am confident that he would not have been extradited to Bahrain and that we would have simply applied for the cancellation of his Red Notice. It would be advised that he didn't travel during this period and it may have a career impact, but he would certainly be safe. It is not automatic though, that all countries will process Interpol's data and thus, it is not guaranteed that Hakeem's passport would be alerted upon exit so traveling through border control in one country does not guarantee



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safety in another. The only way to check whether one is listed on Interpol is to apply directly to their headquarters in Lyon, France- Hakeem AlAraib was no fugitive. He was a prominent figure and professional footballer in Australia. It would have been no trouble for Interpol to locate Hakeem and request Australian police to notify him of the Red Notice, where it could have been resolved easily. The lack of process here has caused Hakeem to be arrested in a country where his extradition is extremely likely, a country who will not consider the potential for him to suffer human rights violations and torture. Australia installed human rights provisions in its treaty, for instance, with the UAE but it is unlikely Thailand will have afforded the same protection to prisoners.

Bahrain stands to be able to extradite someone who has previously complained that he had been tortured. Now that he has spoken out publicly about his torture, even worse should be expected. In my years of dealing with prisoners detained in the Middle East, especially those who would be considered dissidents, I can confidently say that Hakeem is at serious risk of being the next Jamal Khashoggi. What is sure is that if he is extradited, he will face grave human rights violations and potentially torture and death.

Bahrain has been criticised for human rights violations, lengthy and unfair detentions, unfair trials and torture. It is important to note that Interpol is responsible for this arrest. Interpol failed to notify Australian authorities of Bahrain's request and have not considered the human damage caused by a process that fails to consider human rights. Interpol allows countries like Bahrain to list notices in a country of their choice, for example Thailand where extradition may seem more likely than a country like Australia, essentially promoting "jurisdiction shopping". Interpol needs to review and terminate the Red Notice immediately, a notice that has clearly been created for political reasons, and

Thailand needs to act on the basis that Interpol has rejected the notice and Hashem should never have been arrested. Australian authorities should consider withdrawing their membership from Interpol's database or at least suspending their funding of this negligent data sharing agency.

Australian ambassadors will need to work with both Bahrain and Thailand to ensure the safety of Hakeem. Having already granted Hakeem asylum in Australia, the authorities have a duty of care towards him, and I have every confidence that with continued public support and pressure, Hakeem will be free soon. However, his arrest highlights ongoing systematic flaws in the Interpol & Extradition processes that need serious intervention."

Previous statement:

Hakeem Ali Mohamed Ali AlAraib was granted political asylum in Australia last year following a thorough investigation into his claims of political persecution in his home country of Bahrain; yet today Mr AlAraib is being detained in Thailand because Bahrain is seeking his extradition. This politically motivated request should have been immediately refused by Interpol; Mr Alaraib has already suffered torture at the hands of Bahraini authorities in 2012, and there is no question that he would face similar, or worse treatment if Thailand cedes to the extradition request.

We urge the Australian government to urgently intervene on Mr AlAraib's behalf and secure his release. This case serves to highlight what has become habitual abuse of the Interpol system by Gulf countries; and more broadly, it reveals severe systemic flaws in the way Interpol operates. Both Qatar and the UAE have repeatedly misused the international policing organisation as an instrument for debt collection, though private financial disputes fall well beyond Interpol's mandate. Red Notices are issued upon request, apparently without the slightest examination into the validity of the rationales for those requests.

Red Notices can be challenged, and their removal can be sought through official channels; but this can be an expensive and lengthy process, during which individuals are forced to cope with the often devastating ramifications of an Interpol listing. They may find themselves wrongfully detained and subjected to extradition proceedings, as in the case of Mr AlAraib. The lack of due diligence and transparency in the Interpol system is extremely problematic.

One cannot help but question the correlation between the UAE's persistent and unchecked abuse of Interpol and the fact that the UAE contributed around \$54 million to Interpol in 2017; more than every other contributor combined. When the organisation's highest donor is also the most prolific abuser of the system, without a transparent evaluation of Interpol's processes, it can only appear to outside observers that Interpol provides unquestioning service to the highest bidder. We have dealt with innumerable cases of individuals wrongly reported to Interpol by the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and now Bahrain.

[— Read more here](#)

External News Media

Ex-Olympic tennis ace Pancho Campo reveals his ordeal as he is removed from Interpol's crime watchlist after 15 years.

A former Olympic tennis player has told how he spent 15 years on an Interpol criminal watch list following a business dispute while living in Dubai. Pancho Campo was stopped by immigration authorities in over a dozen countries after his name was flagged up by the Interpol alert.

[— Daily Mail](#)

Interpol's 'red notices' are being abused. One ruined my life.

Leadership turmoil at Interpol over the past two months has brought long- overdue attention to the international police organization and how it allows authoritarian regimes to abuse its "red notice" alerts.

[— Washington Post](#)

Hakeem Al Araibi and the Pressing Case for Interpol Reform.

Hakeem Al-Araibi, a professional football player in Australia, was wrongfully detained in Thailand at the hands of Bahrain through an Interpol Red Notice. Once Bahrain had the Notice issued, Araibi was immediately arrested upon arrival at Thailand in Bangkok Airport while on vacation with his wife for their honeymoon.

[— Albawaba News](#)

"Don't deport refugee footballer Hakeem al-Araibi to Bahrain", activists tell Thailand.

Human rights activists are hoping the Thai government will adhere to its principle of "not sending anyone to die" by releasing Australia-based Bahrain footballer Hakeem al-Araibi, who remains in a Bangkok jail awaiting deportation while a Saudi Arabian asylum seeker is reportedly a step closer to freedom.

[— South China Morning Post](#)

Interpol: Red Alert! - People & Power

[— Al Jazeera investigative documentary](#)

Common Reasons for the issuance of Interpol Red Notices

A Red Notice is an international document against wanted persons, requesting law enforcement agencies around the world to locate and temporarily detain a suspect until their extradition, surrender, or other legal action. It is not an international arrest warrant. Currently, there are nearly 69,270 valid Red Notices issued and around 7,500 of them are public. Last year, Interpol issued 10,776 Red Notices.

Credit card or bank debt

In countries where debt is criminalised or where banks have sufficient influence to impose Red Notice's, the database is used as a pressure tactic to seek payment rather than using standard civil and bankruptcy procedures. It is an abuse of Interpol's Charter to issue Notices for debt so banks re-categorise it as "fraud" or "embezzlement" to get it through. The minimum threshold for a Notice is 15,000 Euros so in cases where there is a small amount owing, banks deliberately add unwarranted legal fees and interest to ensure it passes the threshold. Such abusive notices have led to countless arrests throughout the world. A British woman, for instance, was surrounded by a dozen Italian special forces officers at a restaurant in Rome and taken into custody over what was only a 5,000 Euro credit card debt. Others have been held in Spain for weeks or months before a frivolous extradition request was dismissed. Banks have used the system to have foreigners arrested while travelling to extort funds that are not even owed. Banks have said "Give us £50,000 and we will drop the Notice", even where no funds have been owed. Though seemingly unlawful, these are banks from countries where there is no avenue to seek justice against them.

Criminalisation of civil cases

As the banks do with debt, bounced cheques are still illegal throughout the Middle East, even where the circumstances have been beyond the control of the author. This often happens in the course of standard business operations in



Interpol abuse has caused victims to lose their reputations, businesses and ability to travel.

supplier chains and when awaiting customer payments. In many cases, companies have written cheques to suppliers to then find out the government itself is unfairly defaulting on companies. As a result of the default, their cheques may end up bouncing and they will be held personally responsible. It is automatic that they will be reported to Interpol. This has caused the arrest and detention of countless foreigners. We've seen people detained in prisons like Ukraine and Greece for sometimes in excess of a year before the Interpol Notice has been deemed abusive. Although there is a clear distinction in Western countries about what is civil and what is criminal, this line is blurred in many countries around the world.

False allegations & scapegoating

It is commonplace for business partners to manufacture a criminal case rather than deal with a civil dispute. This gives them many advantages. If their partner is outside of the country of business, they can obtain a judgement in absentia and Red Notice to prevent them from returning to argue within the civil courts. This means the accuser is able to disburse assets and steal from the business. A number of successful businessmen have lost hundreds of millions of dollars, their businesses and their freedom to this much abused tactic.

Harassment & political persecution

People with political influence, the wealthy and elite, as well as the rulers and politicians themselves, have direct access through their connections to list anyone they want on the Interpol database. We have seen an Emirati billionaire report an American to Interpol for "offending" him and a ruler report all of his political opposition to Interpol. Each time Interpol cancelled one of the notices, the Sheikh would issue a brand new one and Interpol allowed it without question. This kind of abuse has caused victims to lose their reputations, businesses and ability to travel. One Swiss victim has been fighting case

after case for more than seven years in Saudi Arabia where he does not usually live. Others were held in detention for more than a year in Georgia. Countries like Egypt, Russia, China, Bahrain, Saudi and Turkey are renowned for listing dissidents and journalists on the database. Even Dubai's ruler issued a notice against Hervé Jaubert for "kidnapping" his daughter who voluntarily and desperately had tried to escape. Footballer Hakeem Al Araibi was arrested in Thailand despite being a refugee from political persecution in Bahrain. Interpol should never have accepted a Notice but again, no checks and balances means all notices are published. Hakeem faced extradition back to the country from which he fled. Interpol Red Notices can result in the arrest in countries who do not consider human rights issues when processing extradition requests and this can be very dangerous.

Extortion and blackmail

Private individuals, companies and banks have all displayed on a regular basis that Interpol is open to being misused by hungry and abusive individuals. With no checks and balances, Interpol has proved itself to be a fraudster's dream. What better way to get something from someone than to threaten to ruin their entire life, reputation and even remove their freedom? In one such case, an abusive notice was issued against the victim. Fortunately, he discovered it while in England and was not subject to extradition proceedings. However, during the course of the year he had to stay in the UK, he was constantly phoned and harassed to pay more than \$1m to "make the Red Notice go away". Eventually the Notice was deleted by Interpol.

Designating dissidents or journalists as terrorists

Political activists and human rights activists, dissidents and journalists are at serious risk of being slapped with a politically motivated Interpol notice. The hope is they will end up detained in a foreign country or feel threatened into silence. Some issuing countries hope their opponent will be arrested in a "friendly" country who would likely agree to extradition. The Notice removes their freedom of movement and makes it extremely difficult to obtain entrance visas and even asylum. Interpol's charter does not permit politically motivated Notices but they have little ability to distinguish between political motivation and genuine terrorism or falsified criminal allegations.

Sanctions violations / Expansion of Jurisdiction

Interpol has been used by countries to expand their domestic laws outside of their territory. This is called universal jurisdiction or the extraterritorial application of domestic laws.

Although countries like Australia criminalised paedophilia related crimes abroad for Australian citizens, they generally relied on that person returning to Australia where they may be prosecuted. Under the radar, the concept of universal jurisdiction has been substantially expanded to include countries being able to charge or indict foreign nationals for crimes committed in foreign jurisdictions even where that person has nothing to do with the claiming country. While perhaps welcomed at first under the 'terrorism' sales spin, it has now expanded to include the most frivolous of alleged violations and puts people at great risk of abuse. If a country can place someone on Interpol who has never even visited the issuing country and in many cases, has not violated international or local law, then absolutely any country could misuse Interpol and anyone is at risk.

Interpol is allowing countries to export their domestic laws across borders and cause the arrest, detention and potential extradition proceedings of foreign nationals who have likely broken no law in the country where they actually are. This exact scenario occurred when the UAE issued a Red Notice against American citizen Hervé Jaubert who had committed no crime and had not been present in the UAE to commit any crime there either.

Most recently, it has happened in the case of British national Christopher Emms, who was arrested in Saudi Arabia after being issued with a Red Notice from the USA for attending a cryptocurrency conference in North Korea in 2019. Chris is a British citizen, did not violate any British or international laws, is not a US person and is not subject to US law. However, he can be arrested, harassed and damaged by a regime who seeks to export domestic policy abroad. Imagine if Saudi Arabia tried to do the same to a US citizen?

Jurisdiction Shopping

Some issuing countries will assess where they might want their target apprehended. Factors that come into consideration is whether there is an extradition treaty, whether they have agreed extraditions easily before, whether bail is granted, whether human rights considerations are likely to impact an extradition decision and whether they are a 'friendly' or 'flexible' nation. It is common for countries to keep an eye on targets, wait until they're in a favourable country and then urgently activate the Notice.

If a target is arrested in a non friendly jurisdiction, the issuing country will often not bother to submit documentation for extradition and wait for their target to be released. This does not stop the Interpol Notice and allows them to wait and pounce when they finally enter a risky country.

Some of Stirling's prominent Interpol cases



Conor Howard

British national arrested in Greece over Qatar issued Interpol Red Notice. Qatar alleged he had violated the law by taking a legal novelty herb grinder through the airport. Qatar had released Conor previously but later decided to issue a Notice. Conor was held in custody for four months before Greece denied his extradition. Conor's case became [front page news for some time](#).



Robert Urwin

British national detained in Ukraine for 14 months over an HSBC issued UAE Interpol Red Notice over a bounced cheque he did not author. Urwin was eventually released when the extradition was denied. The issue of Interpol Abuse was [raised at Parliament](#).



Alan Stevenson

A Czech court rules detention of [Detained in Dubai](#) client, dual British/Australian citizen Alan Stevenson was a violation of human rights; calling into question the legitimacy of Interpol's Red Notice system due to widespread abuse by authoritarian regimes around the world. Stevenson was held due to claims of unpaid debt in Qatar, despite owing no money. [The Royal Gazette interviewed Alan](#) following his release.



Pancho Campo

When a Spanish citizen was denied entry to the US, he realised he had been the target of an Interpol campaign by a former UAE business partner. Campo was finally removed from Interpol's database but his reputation and business suffered immensely. Campo was a prominent figure in the media and his competition jumped on the Notice when it was discovered, sharing it with journalists and ruining his livelihood. Campo has since rebuilt his reputation and has featured in several Spanish television shows and [international newspieces](#).



Najib Khoury

American citizen Najib Khoury made one mistake when he visited Dubai. He "offended" the CEO of the Al Habtoor Group by informing him that one of his staff members was on a cocaine flight and that he should be careful of his reputation. This was enough for Mr Habtoor to order an urgent Red Notice. Mr Khoury was notified while travelling but managed to avoid apprehension. The warrant was promptly removed.



Lauren Anderson

A British woman was surrounded by special forces in Italy after a Dubai bank issued an Interpol Red Notice against her over a 5,000 Euro credit card debt. Lauren was detained and later placed under house arrest while she successfully fought extradition proceedings.



Steven Williams

A British national was [arrested in Mallorca, Spain](#) after Qatar National Bank issued a Red Notice against him for a small debt that he was already paying off. The bank attempted to extort his parents into selling their property to pay for Steven's debt. Spain eventually allowed Steven to travel but he was so traumatised by the experience, he has vowed never to leave the UK again.



Herve Jaubert

A French/American citizen was [placed on Interpol](#) by the ruler of Dubai when he helped the Sheikh's daughter after she escaped the UAE. Jaubert was not in the UAE and nor did he commit any crime under international law, but Sheikh Mohammed said he violated Sharia law, despite not being in the Middle East at all. An Interpol Red Notice was issued against Jaubert for "kidnapping". Jaubert was not able to travel for almost a year before the frivolous Notice was removed.

Categories of Interpol notices

Interpol issues different types of international colour coded notices.

- **Red Notice**
Issued to seek the location and arrest of wanted persons for prosecution or sentencing.
- **Yellow Notice**
To help locate missing persons or to help identify persons who are unable to identify themselves.

- **Blue Notice**
To collect additional information about a person's identity, location, or activities in connection with a crime.
- **Black Notice**
To seek information on unidentified bodies.

- **Green Notice**
Warning about a person's criminal activities, if the person is considered a possible threat to public safety.
- **Orange Notice**
To warn about an event, a person, or process that poses a serious and imminent threat to public safety.

- **Purple Notice**
To collect or provide information on modus operandi, objects, devices, and concealment methods used by criminals.

Other cases

We have a varied collection of case studies including:

- Arrests all over Europe
- Extradition proceedings all over the world
- Sheikh issues multiple notices against former staff and rivals
- Famous and unreported cases
- [Cases in progress](#)

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PRESS PACK • INTERPOL ABUSE



180 City Road
London EC1 2NX
United Kingdom

+44 207 060 6900
www.linkedin.com/company/due-process-international
www.dueprocessinternational.com
info@dueprocessinternational.com
www.radhastirling.com



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