



Foreign Affairs Committee

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Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Foreign Secretary
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Home Secretary
Home Office

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Dear Foreign Secretary, Dear Home Secretary

We write to you on the issue of Interpol's leadership. It is a matter of great concern to us and the committees we chair that Interpol looks set to elect Major General Alexander Prokopchuk of Russia as president of Interpol only months after the current president Meng Hongwei stepped down from his position under suspicious circumstances.

Interpol plays a vital role in supporting the UK's efforts to investigate crime and capture criminals who have left the country. But this system, set up to support law enforcement cooperation, has become increasingly abused by a number of states, in particular Russia:

Since it can be a "crime" in member states like Russia, Iran, or Venezuela, to engage in anti-government activism or even just journalism—these states have abused the Interpol system to their political ends. Interpol's constitution has a provision against such activities - banning "any intervention or activities of a political, military, religious or racial character". But this provision has proven largely useless. Interpol has frequently allowed its Red Notice procedure to be used as an instrument of persecution not least by Russia.

The election of General Prokopchuk, the Russian government's nominee, to the post of President of Interpol would be the latest nail in Interpol's coffin. The fact that General Prokopchuk has for the past decade been head of the Russian interior ministry department dealing with Interpol affairs, a period that has seen a stream of politically motivated Red Notice requests issued in the name of his government, speaks for itself.

The leadership change at the top of Interpol should prompt a British rethink of the system of international law enforcement cooperation. We will want to remain part of Interpol. And we will need a strong post-Brexit set of cooperation arrangements with Europol.

But the time has come for new thinking. The UK should work with other countries to develop a new transnational organisation comprising rights-respecting states that can ensure more effective but also more legally-grounded cooperation between law enforcement organisations, where we can share more information, learn from each other but also be comfortable that we are advancing a form of law enforcement cooperation, which derives its legitimacy and effectiveness from being based on democratic foundations.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you and your officials in the nearest future.

Tom Tugendhat MP
Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee

Yvette Cooper MP
Chair, Home Affairs Committee