



Media Release

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ICPRA conference focuses on law enforcement labour rights

The biennial conference of the International Council of Police Representative Associations, hosted by the Fraternal Order of Police in Baltimore on 20-21 March 2012, today issued a communique *[attached]* calling on governments worldwide to acknowledge that law enforcement officers should be entitled to the same labour rights, such as the right to bargain collectively, as other citizens.

“Collective bargaining and other labour rights are being threatened, eroded, or abolished in a number of ICPRA jurisdictions, often in the guise of austerity measures claimed to be in response to global economic conditions. This is a problem affecting members in diverse jurisdictions around the world – including some US jurisdictions, England and Wales, and European jurisdictions such as Hungary, Greece and Latvia,” ICPRA Chairman Greg O’Connor, who is also President of the New Zealand Police Association, said. Mr O’Connor was re-elected as Chairman for a further two years at the meeting.

“Governments at all levels – from municipalities to national governments – need to acknowledge that law enforcement officers are entitled to the same civil rights as other citizens, including the right to freely associate and bargain collectively.”

The importance of effective representation was highlighted by the challenges being faced by the nascent Kenya Police Union. Kenyan Police face problems with access to food, water and medical care, especially around their deployment to protect against incursions by the Al Shabaab terrorist group near the border with Somalia. In the absence of a union, police officers have faced problems having their issues effectively addressed. ICPRA is supporting the Kenya Police Union as it moves towards official recognition.

Keynote speakers at the conference included US Assistant Secretaries of Homeland Security Alan Bersin and Louis Quijas, who highlighted the importance of international connectedness and information sharing in effective law enforcement in the post 9/11 world.



These speakers welcomed that ICPRA embodies the necessary culture shift and emphasised the central role law enforcement unions and associations need to play in helping promote such a culture shift across law enforcement agencies worldwide.

“ICPRA is an organisation of growing importance to effective representation of law enforcement officers worldwide. The issues we face as representative associations, and also the issues we and our members face as professional law enforcement officers, are increasingly transnational in nature. As the Assistant Secretaries recognised, ICPRA provides an important vehicle for the building and sharing of the knowledge necessary to operate effectively in the modern, global world,” Mr O’Connor said.

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About the International Council of Police Representative Associations

The International Council of Police Representative Associations is an organisation comprising representatives of police and law enforcement associations and unions from around 40 countries, collectively representing more than 1.5 million law enforcement officers across North America, Europe, Africa, and Australasia.

Greg O’Connor

Chairman

International Council of Police Representative Associations