



**Communiqué of the
International Council of Police Representative Associations**

**Baltimore, United States
21 March 2012**

Preamble

At the 2012 conference of the International Council of Police Representative Associations, hosted by the Fraternal Order of Police, the following police representative groups were represented –

- Fraternal Order of Police, USA
- Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, USA
- The Police Union in Denmark
- The South African Policing Union
- British Transport Police Federation
- Police Federation of Northern Ireland
- Scottish Police Federation
- Canadian Police Association
- The Kenya Police Union
- New Zealand Police Association
- Portuguese National Police Union
- Police Federation of Australia
- European Confederation of Police

- jointly representing in excess of 1.5 million law enforcement officers.

The Kenya Police Union was granted Associate Membership of ICPRA at the meeting pending its formal recognition and registration as a labour union by the Kenyan government. This lack of official status prevents members of the Kenyan Police being able to raise their



legitimate and serious concerns about essential provision of food, water and medical assistance in addition to those of pay and other conditions; particularly those arising from police deployment to protect against incursion by the Al Shabaab terrorist group.

Within other ICPRA jurisdictions, several are seeing collective bargaining and/or other labour rights threatened, eroded, or abolished; often in combination with or as part of austerity measures claimed to be in response to global or local economic conditions. Affected jurisdictions include some US jurisdictions, England & Wales, and many European jurisdictions such as Hungary, Greece and Latvia.

A number of keynote speakers, including US Assistant Secretaries of Homeland Security Alan Bersin and Louis Quijas, 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.

It was also clear through conference contributions that, in some jurisdictions, moves are being made, apparently in response to the global economic situation, to introduce or increase the use of employees or volunteers who are not fully trained professional law enforcement officers in the delivery of public safety and security.

Law enforcement officers are a central element of a democratic society. A democratic society requires officers that are subject to the rule of law, can intervene in the life of citizens only under limited and carefully controlled circumstances, and is publicly accountable. Law enforcement officers are empowered to exercise coercive powers not legally available to other members of society: including legal use of force, use of covert surveillance, powers to stop, search, and deprive citizens of their liberty in accordance with the law and due judicial process.

Given the potential for abuse of such powers, law enforcement officers face numerous external and internal controls. External controls include Court scrutiny, government and parliamentary oversight and policy-setting, and oversight bodies such as commissions, auditors and ombudsmen. Internally, law enforcement agency systems and controls also



operate, together with selection, professional training, defined procedures, policy guidelines, and supervision arrangements.

It is vital that governments and parliaments do not extend law enforcement powers to those who are not fully trained professional officers, and are consequently not subject to the same oversight and control. Restricting such powers to professional, sworn law enforcement officers is ultimately for the protection of the public.

Collective bargaining – labour rights

The ICPRA Council –

Recognising that law enforcement officers ought to be entitled to the same civil and political rights as every other citizen in a free and democratic society; and

Recognising that fair pay and conditions are critical to minimising the risks of police corruption; and

Recognising that participation by law enforcement officers in democratic representative associations or unions, and the granting of labour rights to such officers and organisations, is a critical part of fostering within the institutions of state a rights culture which underpins the rule of law, democracy, and social stability: particularly in emerging and young democracies

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1. **Calls on** all national, federal, state and local governments to acknowledge universal labour rights, including the right of all workers to freely associate, and the right to bargain collectively: and to acknowledge that law enforcement officers worldwide should also be entitled to these rights;
2. **Deplores** moves by governments in some jurisdictions to limit, overturn, or deny labour rights, such as the right to bargain collectively, for law enforcement officers and other workers;
3. **Supports** the Kenya Police Union efforts to be recognised without delay as a labour union without conditions by the Kenyan Government.



International law enforcement cooperation

The ICPRA Council –

Recognising that, particularly since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, there has been a growing appreciation of the need for law enforcement agencies to be internationally connected and share information in order to effectively intervene to prevent terrorist attacks and disrupt transnational organised crime; and

Recognising that ICPRA, as an organisation representing and comprising of law enforcement professionals which already embodies a culture of international cooperation, has a role to play in helping lead culture change towards greater international cooperation and information sharing in the global law enforcement community at large –

4. **Calls on** law enforcement officers and agencies worldwide to embrace the shift towards a culture of cooperation and information-sharing across the international law enforcement community as a cornerstone of future public safety and security.

Professional law enforcement officers

Recognising that professional law enforcement officers occupy a unique and vital position in society, and are uniquely empowered and scrutinised in the delivery of public safety and security; and

Recognising that, in some jurisdictions, there are currently moves to utilise persons other than fully trained professional law enforcement officers in this vital role, despite the risks this pose to public safety –

5. **Calls on** governments and law enforcement agencies worldwide to ensure only fully trained and accountable professional law enforcement officers are engaged in delivery of public safety and security; and that governments and law enforcement



agencies do not undermine public safety by employing people who do not meet the standard of fully trained and professional law enforcement officers.

Social media – risks to law enforcement officers

The ICPRA Council –

Recognising that societies worldwide demand higher standards of conduct from their law enforcement officers than they do of the general public or other public employees; and

Recognising that the increasing use of Internet technologies across all aspects of life, and particularly social media, means that a great deal more private information is now publicly accessible; and

Recognising that law enforcement officers' private information may now be deliberately accessed by other parties who are interested in that information because of the nature of the officer's employment –

6. **Calls on** law enforcement officers worldwide to be conscious of the fact that placing personal and private information on the Internet, and particularly engaging in social media, may inadvertently expose them to considerable risks: not only to their professional employment, but also to their safety.

Greg O'Connor, Chairman

On behalf of the International Council of Police Representative Associations

Baltimore, Maryland, United States of America

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