



INTERPOL

NUMBER 14 | APRIL 2020

WAPIS

NEWSLETTER



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This Programme is
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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

Since achieving independence, Côte d'Ivoire has made international cooperation a cornerstone of its development. Over and above the open diplomacy our country has now embraced, international cooperation has become a key tool in our sub-region when it comes to security. Organized crime, trafficking of drugs and illegal goods, illegal immigration networks and terrorists all operate across borders and are a threat to the national, sub-regional and global equilibrium. Terrorist acts in our community territory, such as the attack at Grand-Bassam on 13 March 2016, have confirmed this evidence and reinforced the Ivorian Government's commitment to establishing an effective security policy and implementing Security Sector Reform (SSR) that includes active participation in the subregional and continental architecture.

In this context, implementing the West African Police Information System (WAPIS) is a worthwhile initiative. WAPIS is a reliable way to share police data between our services, offering an effective and coherent response to the security concerns in our region. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the European Union, our financial partner, for its unwavering support of the Programme and, more generally, for its commitment to the fight against insecurity in Africa, especially in the subregion.

The Ivorian Government with the President of the Republic, Mr Alassane Ouattara, at its head, is more committed than ever to implementing this System in order to clean up the security environment, which will ensure economic and social stability.

We are therefore acting on his instructions in taking some preliminary steps to implement WAPIS: appointment of a national focal point, signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between INTERPOL and the Ivorian Government, and allocation of a building to house the future Police Data Processing Centre (PDPC).

The Ivorian Government and its security forces have therefore fully signed up to the WAPIS project and intend to take additional measures to get the System up and running, as recommended by the various Programme Steering Committee meetings and confirmed by the various ECOWAS bodies, including during the 55th ordinary session of the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government, which was held in Abuja on 26 June 2019.



Given the security threats that, now more than ever, threaten to endanger the life of our States and our community territory, the effectiveness of our fight will depend largely on our common capacity to gather and share information in real time about these criminals: WAPIS gives us the opportunity to do so, let's grasp it with both hands!

Terrorism has no regard for colour, religion, nationality or ethnicity and it is therefore more important than ever that our countries are solidly united in taking concerted action.

Finally, at this tumultuous time for the whole world with the health crisis caused by COVID-19, we remain convinced that the various measures implemented by our governments will allow us to contain and eradicate this pandemic. Faced with this situation, it is important to remain vigilant at all times as regards security, to prevent criminals creating a more widespread security crisis in our region. Implementing WAPIS must continue to be our main priority at all times.

Thank you.

LEAD STORIES

The WAPIS programme hands over equipment to the government of Côte d'Ivoire during an official ceremony.

On 24 February 2020 at the National Police Academy in Abidjan, an official ceremony was held to mark the donation of equipment to the government of Côte d'Ivoire, presided over by the Minister of Security and Civil Defence with participation from INTERPOL's Director for Planning and Development, and representatives of ECOWAS and the European Union.



Handover Ceremony of equipment at the Police Academy, 24 February 2020, Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)

In his speech, the Minister of Security commended ECOWAS for initiating the WAPIS programme, the European Union for funding it and INTERPOL for its professionalism in implementing the programme. He reaffirmed the government's commitment at the highest level to supporting the programme's implementation and adopting it. Finally, he called on the end beneficiaries, especially the director-generals of the law enforcement agencies, to make very good use of the equipment.

This gift of equipment, consisting of 40 scanners, 40 desktop computers, 40 Uninterruptible Power Supplies, 40 external hard drives and a video projector, marks the start of the practical implementation phase of the WAPIS programme in Côte d'Ivoire. To this end, a training course for 15 officers drawn from the National Police and the National Gendarmerie was organized from 24 to 28 February 2020 at the National Police Academy.

LEAD STORIES

The legal context for WAPIS in Mali on the agenda at the Standing Committee on Legislation (CPL) session.

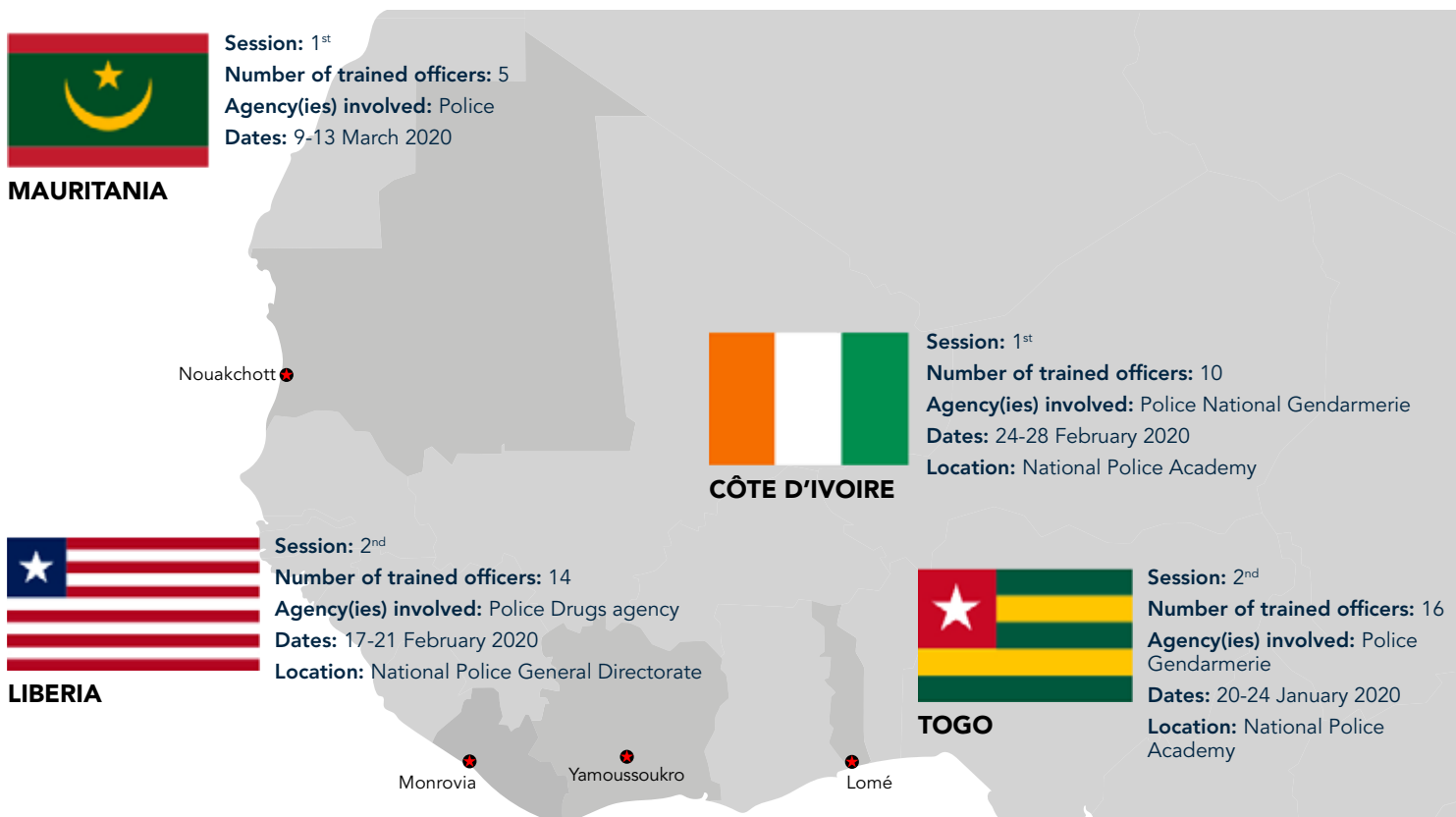
On 21 January 2020, the Standing Committee on Legislation (CPL) session was held in the presence of experts from the WAPIS programme team chaired by the National Director of the Judicial Administration and Justice Reform department (DNAJS), with participation from sixteen national legislation experts and services involved in implementing WAPIS, as well as Mali's international partners, specifically MINUSMA and EUCAP Sahel Mali.

Its aim was to read through and approve the draft text for creation of the National Documentation Centre (CNDC) drafted by the WAPIS National Committee. The INTERPOL team was able to guide the experts as regards the central model to be implemented for optimum operational efficiency.

At the end of the session, the legal texts were finalized and made available to the Malian authorities so they could continue with the adoption process. In line with the recommendations of the 4th session of the Programme Steering Committee, Mali will need to adopt these texts before the next Steering Committee in June 2020.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Law enforcement officers from Togo, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Mauritania trained to use WAPIS.



OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

INTERPOL's Director for Planning and Development visits the site of the future Police Data Processing Centre in Côte d'Ivoire.

While on his visit to Côte d'Ivoire on 24 February 2020 to attend the ceremony marking the donation of equipment to the government, INTERPOL's Director for Planning and Development, Dirk ALLAERTS, took the opportunity to visit the site of the future Police Data Processing Centre in Côte d'Ivoire.

During his visit with the Head of INTERPOL's Regional Bureau for West Africa and the WAPIS programme director, he was able to see significant progress in the work, which is due to finish in April.

The Police Data Processing Centre in Côte d'Ivoire will act as a data collection and registration centre (DACORE) and will be at the heart of the WAPIS system in Côte d'Ivoire.



Visit of the sites of the Police data Processing Centre by Director for Development and Planning, 24 February 2020, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Mauritania approves the 2020 action plan for implementing WAPIS during the National Committee meeting.

The WAPIS National Committee (WANACO) held its 2nd session on 19 February 2020, chaired by the Director General of National Security and with participation from the security authorities and representatives of the European Union and INTERPOL.

During its session and after presentation of the 2020 action plan by the WAPIS National focal point, the Committee approved the plan unanimously, and reassured the financial and technical partners of their commitment to implementing WAPIS in Mauritania.

Other decisions were also taken during this meeting, including:

- confirmation of the French language as the language for entering data in the system;
- an invitation to the National Gendarmerie to attend the next training session, and installation of a work station for data entry on its premises;
- the need to set up agreements concerning data sharing at regional and international level which should not be automatic;
- centralization of procedures within the Police and the Gendarmerie.



Family photo of the SIPAO National Committee meeting, February 19, 2020, Nouakchott, Mauritania

EXPERTS' CORNER

A key element of WAPIS, but what is a DACORE?

The WAPIS national system is installed in a Data collection and registration centre (DACORE) on the premises of a designated law enforcement agency. The term "DACORE" is the generic name for an entity which will take a specific name in each State, as decided by each of the authorities concerned.

The creation of a DACORE constitutes a major event that will have a considerable influence on progress in implementing the WAPIS system for the beneficiary State, and especially for the administration in charge of creating it. The DACORE will be the regulatory body managing the system, and should therefore be set up with particular care by the supervisory authority.

This creation should be made official by means of a statutory text, which will stipulate how it is organized and how it operates. The DACORE should be an administrative, technical and operational support service capable of bringing together the representatives of all the law enforcement agencies involved in the programme.

A DACORE should have its own budget heading to ensure that its operation, development and that of the overall system is permanent. It will be important for the beneficiary State to set up this arrangement as soon as possible in order to be prepared when the programme ends.

The responsible authorities need to be aware that it is up to them to roll out the WAPIS system throughout the territory for the benefit of the services using the system, and to keep it operational.

The first step, for the administration in charge of creating a DACORE, consists of making premises available that are suitable for the functions to be performed by this new service.

The second step consists of selecting and assigning the staff who will work in the DACORE. This is a very important step, during which particular care must be taken since the diversity of tasks performed by this service requires a high level of professionalism, or even specialist technical, legal, financial management or administrative skills.

A DACORE is not simply a building housing computer equipment, but an entirely separate entity, with specific missions, its own hierarchy and rule book, that operates 24 hours a day.

The WAPIS National Committee (WANACO) constitutes the decision-making body in terms of implementing and operating the West African police information system, and the DACORE, irrespective of what it is called, becomes its executive and functional body. It will be the nerve centre linking all the components and on which they depend.

The DACORE needs to perform four essential functions to ensure that the WAPIS system works properly:

- administrative and financial management;
- operational support;
- technical maintenance;
- training.

Each of these functions involves specific missions and requires the DACORE to have its own organization and infrastructures.

THE MEN AND WOMEN BEHIND THE SYSTEM

Liberia joined the WAPIS Programme during the 3EDF Phase in November 2017. The country has signed the MoU and is taking the necessary steps towards implementing the system at the national level. The engagement of the local authorities is an example that needs to be shared with the other countries for the success of WAPIS in the region. To shed light on this fruitful collaboration, Charles Blake, Commissioner of Police for Crime Services, Intelligence and INTERPOL Affairs of the Liberia National Police, Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Liberia, shared some thoughts with us.

1. Can you introduce yourself? Since when have you been working on the implementation of WAPIS?

I have spent the past 25 years as a career police officer for the Liberia National Police. I served 10 of those years as Head of NCB (INTERPOL Monrovia) and introduced the standard operational procedures of INTERPOL to the NCB prior to my appointment as Commissioner of Police.



Mr Charles Blake, WAPIS SPOC in Liberia

With my experience of the activities of INTERPOL, I liaised with the INTERPOL WAPIS team during their two strategic missions to Liberia to introduce them to the local authorities. In fact, I organized the meetings for the WAPIS team with the Committee on National Security at the Senate, with the Minister of Justice and Heads

of national law enforcement agencies, as well as the Liberia Revenue Authority, to explain the vision of the West African Police Chiefs Committee (WAPCCO) to share police information in real time by turning from manual paper-based police information to digital police information.

2. What was the starting point of WAPIS Programme implementation in Liberia? What were the different steps?

The strategic meetings paved the way for the implementation of the WAPIS Programme in Liberia, as part of the 3EDF phase in 2018. Subsequently, I was appointed by the Minister of Justice to serve as Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Liberia.

I immediately called a meeting with all stakeholders and requested them to select, from among their various agencies,

a technical and a legal expert to work alongside me to ensure the successful implementation of the Programme in Liberia.

Liberia was the first country to sign the MoU with INTERPOL on 24 October 2018 after several visits to the country by the Programme director, country officer, and other coordinators from ECOWAS and INTERPOL.

With the SPOC appointed and the legal and technical experts selected, we established the WAPIS National Committee (WANACO), headed by the Minister of Justice, and held a first meeting to explain the WAPIS Programme to members of the WANACO.

Selections of officers from law enforcement agencies were vetted to form part of the DACORE and workstations that will be trained and deployed.

Subsequently, the first set of IT equipment was delivered to Liberia and officially handed over to the Liberian authorities on 5 July 2019, and the first WAPIS user training session for 20 officers was held from 2 to 6 September 2019. We deployed and set up 13 WAPIS workstations in 8 law enforcement service locations for the new users to begin data digitization. The WAPIS Programme has conducted a second series of user training sessions and deployed more workstations for the scanning stations.

Our request for the WAPIS Programme to help us renovate the DACORE was granted, and the DACORE is 99 per cent complete. We express our thanks and appreciation to the Europe Union, ECOWAS, INTERPOL and the country officers past and present for the support given to Liberia to get this far in the WAPIS Programme implementation.

3. What are the challenges you face during the implementation of WAPIS?

For now, our challenges are numerous, and I think that we should prioritize budgetary allocation for the operationalization of the WAPIS system with its different structures, including the WANACO and the DACORE. This will also enable us to sustain the system at the end of the Programme in 2022. The Internet connection is also a major issue that we are also trying to handle.

4. What advice would you give to other WAPIS participating countries?

The situation in the entire world is alarming due to the Coronavirus and most countries are affected. My advice to the WAPIS participating countries is that, while governments and relevant organizations are putting in place measures to contain this scourge, we should not ignore the security issues that our region is facing and give up the implementation of this regional initiative. The implementation of WAPIS should remain one of our priorities.

CONCLUSION



Richard GOTWE
WAPIS programme director

Dear colleagues,

Our region is no more immune than the rest of the world to the threat that the Covid-19 pandemic represents. We therefore wish to express our solidarity with all the beneficiary countries of the WAPIS programme.

This difficult situation, with borders closed and the social distancing measures required, has led us to suspend all our missions in the field.

This may have an impact on some of our activities, such as promoting the programme, training users, implementing the legal frameworks for the WAPIS system in countries, as well as setting up DACOREs and expanding WAPIS.

The next Steering Committee, which was scheduled to be held in Niamey, Niger, on 9 and 10 June 2020, has been postponed to a later date. However, a follow-up meeting of the Programme restricted to the European Union, the ECOWAS Commission and INTERPOL

will be held on 9 June 2020. Taking the form of a conference call, the purpose of this meeting will be to:

- assess whether the recommendations of the last Steering Committee, held in Abidjan in November 2019 have been implemented;
- assess the impact of the pandemic on activities, and
- define the Programme's priorities once things return to normal, which we all expect to be as soon as possible.

Despite this difficult situation the team is continuing, using communication methods such as the conference call system, to try and achieve the expected results.

Over the past three months, the following main results have been achieved:

- Signature of the Memorandum of Understanding on implementing the WAPIS programme between INTERPOL and the Government of Cape Verde. Signature of this memorandum by Ghana is the last piece of the jigsaw needed to finalize this process;
- Completion of renovation of the DACORE in Liberia. The renovation work in Côte d'Ivoire should be completed in the next few weeks;
- Formal establishment of the WAPIS National Committee in Sierra Leone, the first Anglo-Saxon country to have formalized it in a statutory text. This text will serve as a model for other AngloSaxon countries;

- Signature of the I-24/7 extension agreement between the Freetown NCB and the Criminal Investigation Department (CrimeSync) in Sierra Leone;
- Signature of the I-24/7 agreement between the Ouagadougou NCB and IRAPOL in Burkina Faso. After appointing a new national focal point, the national authorities also appointed a national technical expert who will work in collaboration with the Programme;
- Reform of the Programme implementation framework in Benin, with the signature of a text by the Minister of the Interior establishing the WAPIS National Committee, presided over by the Director of the Republican Police. A new director of Benin's Public Security Documentation Centre (CDSP) has also been appointed;
- Starting to develop a budgeting model for DACOREs, with external support which should be available in June 2020: this budgeting model incorporates aspects of system operation such as the cost of human resources, maintenance of equipment and premises, and the estimated investment budget.

In the hope of meeting you in the field in a few months' time once the storm has passed, we urge you to comply with the essential protective measures against Covid-19 and we send you and your families our very best wishes for your good health.

CONCLUSION

	MAURITANIA	GUINEA BISSAU	GUINEA	GHANA	THE GAMBIA	CÔTE D'IVOIRE	CABO VERDE	BENIN	BURKINA FASO	SIERRA LEONE	SENEGAL	NIGER	NIGERIA	LIBERIA	MALI	TOGO
SIGNED AN MOU ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WAPIS PROGRAMME	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DESIGNED THEIR SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT (SPOC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DATA COLLECTION AND REGISTRATION CENTRES (DACORE) ARE UP AND RUNNING				✓				✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	
OPERATIONAL OUTPOSTS CONNECTED TO THEIR RESPECTIVE NATIONAL SYSTEMS								✓	✓	✓		✓				
WAPIS WORK STATIONS HAVE BEEN DELIVERED IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2020		✓				✓		✓			✓		✓			
ORGANIZED TRAINING SESSIONS ON THE WAPIS PROGRAMME IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2020	✓					✓								✓		✓
SIGNED THE COOPERATION AGREEMENT ON DIRECT ACCESS TO AND USE OF I-24/7 SYSTEM				✓					✓	✓		✓			✓	
CONNECTION WITH INTERPOL'S I-24/7 SYSTEM												✓				



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