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Programme **GLOBAL SHIELD**

An unprecedented international effort to counter the illicit diversion and trafficking of precursor chemicals used by terrorists and other criminal organizations to manufacture explosive devices



A World Customs Organization programme supported by INTERPOL and the UNODC



Background

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are the most prevalent form of explosives employed by terrorists around the world. They are manufactured using widely available precursor chemicals. It is a cheap and easy way to inflict harm on infrastructures, economies, and populations.

According to NATO's Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism (COE-DAT), there were 2991 IED attacks in the world in 2012. These attacks claimed 4000 lives.

The threat of IEDs is not only applicable to armed forces and to zones of conflict. IED attacks are a worldwide, daily occurrence. In 2012, 69 countries were subject to IEDs and there was 1 IED attack every 3 hours.

To combat the increasing illicit use of precursor chemicals to manufacture IEDs, Project Global Shield, an unprecedented, six-month multilateral law enforcement operation aimed at combating illicit diversion and trafficking by monitoring cross-border movements of precursor chemicals was set up.

Spearheaded by the WCO, the project was run in partnership with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The six-month operational phase of the project began in November 2010 and concluded in April 2011. During the operational phase, more than 70 participating countries shared real-time information on cross-border movements of high-risk explosive precursor chemicals identified as those most prevalently used in IEDs. Participants provided information on the movement of just over 2 billion kg of precursor chemicals (see table).

Global Shield leads to seizures and arrests

Project Global Shield was doubly successful, both in interdicting a number of suspicious shipments as well as providing investigative leads on the smuggling of precursor chemicals:

- 19 seizures of explosive precursors
- Over 30 metric tons seized; enough material to potentially produce 100s of IEDs
- 13 arrests reported by participating countries

Due to the success of the project, particularly the fact that it undoubtedly saved lives by keeping bomb-making materials out of the hands of terrorists, in March 2011 the WCO endorsed a proposal for the project to become a long-term programme within the WCO; enabling Customs Administrations and the Police to continue multilateral efforts to combat the illicit trafficking and diversion of precursor chemicals.

Customs Administrations from 85 countries have now committed to participate in this truly global collaborative initiative.

By April 2013, the accomplishments include:

- **62 seizures** of IEDs, explosives and precursors
 - Over 194 metric tons of solid precursors
 - 34,000 litres of fluid chemicals
- **56 arrests**

What key players are saying

Kunio Mikuriya, Secretary General, World Customs Organization

"With the establishment of the Programme Global Shield, we have put the threat of diversion of precursor chemicals and explosive triggers as a priority of the WCO and the global Customs agenda. Since Customs is the only agency that has a capability to monitor the cross-border movements of all goods, it has a prominent role to play in detecting this threat and in cooperation with other agencies, taking adequate measures."

Moumouni Dembele, Director General, Mali Customs Administration

"Recent developments in the Sahel region and particularly in Mali call for strengthened security measures from the Customs Administration by taking into account international initiatives. Programme Global Shield constitutes a real opportunity for cooperation in order to safeguard the international supply chain. The Mali Customs Administration fully intends to play its part in this common battle against criminal organizations. We believe, by participating in Programme Global Shield, that we can truly reduce the security threat against our citizens, specifically through the reinforcement of border capacities in order to prevent the Sahel region from becoming a storage or transit zone of dangerous materials to other destinations."

Mohammed Riaz, Director General, Pakistan Customs

"Ensuring security of the global chemical supply chain is vital to protecting all nations from devastating weapons that may be developed using certain dangerous chemicals. Establishing Programme Global Shield by the WCO in association with other international organizations is an important step towards preventing these chemicals from falling into the wrong hands - both at home and abroad. The customs and border security communities participating in Programme Global Shield are the front line of our collective defense against transnational crime, terrorism, and illicit trafficking. The customs administrations must realize that in the emerging international scenario, they are mandated to secure international borders. They are in the advantageous position of reaching out across borders to their counterparts for evolving effective strategies to thwart illicit flow of precursor trafficking."

Pierre Reuland, Special Representative of INTERPOL to the European Union

"This very effective cooperation in a spirit of complementarity and trust has led to considerable results in the fight against organized crime and terrorism in common projects and operations and INTERPOL will continue to strongly support these international efforts with our global network of 188 member states."

Yury Fedotov, Executive Director, UNODC

"Precursor chemicals are used in the manufacture of deadly explosive devices that kill or maim in the cause of terrorism and crime. Stopping the movement of these precursors means strengthening security in the international supply chain and UNODC is proud to be part of the Global Shield Programme which is helping to achieve this goal."

More information:
globalshield@wcoomd.org

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