

Global taskforce launched to hunt down overseas scammers

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UK drives international action to go after scammers at the Global Fraud Summit, hosted by the United Nations in Vienna on 16 - 17 March.

Fraudsters targeting the British public will be hunted down by a new INTERPOL Global Taskforce, launched at the Global Fraud Summit.

Codenamed Operation Shadow Storm, the new taskforce will combine the intelligence powers of INTERPOL's 196 member countries to take the fight directly to fraudsters. Jointly developed by the UK and INTERPOL, the new unit will target the scam compounds driving a growing share of global fraud, with an initial focus on dismantling criminal operations across South East Asia.

It comes as the UK led the convening of 40 ministers, over 100 countries and 300 industry leaders at the Global Fraud Summit in Vienna to drive action against fraud, in response to new figures showing that over two thirds of scams targeting the British public originate from abroad.

Working across borders, investigators will pool intelligence to trace where fraudsters are operating from and the bank accounts, crypto wallets, phone numbers and social media profiles they use. Under INTERPOL coordination, law enforcement agencies will move quickly to disrupt operations at source - freezing bank accounts, shutting down communication channels and carrying out coordinated raids to bring scam networks to justice.

The summit brings together governments, law enforcement, banks and tech giants to strengthen global cooperation to tackle fraud, as criminals increasingly exploit online platforms to target victims worldwide. Hosted by INTERPOL and the United Nations United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and sponsored by the UK, the 2026 summit was the largest gathering of its kind.

A first-of-its-kind global partnership between governments and major tech firms was also signed to drive the global response to fraud online. Signatories pledged to share more intelligence to better identify and act on emerging threats and coordinate to disrupt scammers operations before they reach victims. Those signed up include G7 countries, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Meta, Google, Amazon, Match Group, VMO2 Media and International Banking Federation.

Minister responsible for Fraud, Lord Hanson said:

Fraud is now a global crime run by organised networks operating across borders and targeting victims at industrial scale. With around two-thirds of fraud affecting the UK originating overseas, we cannot tackle this threat alone.

The UK has driven global leadership to crackdown on scammers at the Global Fraud Summit in Vienna.

Through a new taskforce that will disrupt and dismantle fraud networks worldwide, and a first of its kind global public and private sector partnership, we are protecting the British public from our country's most common crime.

The new taskforce builds on recent international action taken by the UK and partners to disrupt fraud networks operating overseas.

Agreements with Nigeria and Vietnam to share intelligence and boost their law enforcement capability to go after fraudsters has already resulted in arrests and the takedown of scam compounds in the past year.

Earlier this year, a joint operation involving the National Crime Agency, Meta and Nigerian authorities led to a scam centre being taken down in Delta State, with multiple fraudsters arrested. In a separate operation, international law enforcement partners worked together to dismantle a fraud call centre in India, which was responsible for costing UK victims nearly £400,000 before it was shut down.

Nick Sharp, Deputy Director of the National Economic Crime Centre at the National Crime Agency, said:

The Global Fraud Taskforce is an exciting and important step forward in our fight to tackle transnational fraud networks on a global scale. It will provide a platform for multilateral cooperation with law enforcement around the world to better target suspects and build on our strong public and private sector relationships to disrupt money flows and stop fraudsters in their tracks.

As these criminals continue to grow in sophistication and across borders, it is important law enforcement and industry works together to fight this threat and protect the public.

John Brandolino, UNODC Acting Executive Director said:

Today, we are facing a very different kind of fraud; one that is sophisticated, organized, and perpetrated across borders with breath-taking speed.

We are seeing a global criminal ecosystem that requires different skillsets and expertise to address - from tech companies, banks, private sector stakeholders and governments - all of them with a role to play.

This summit provides a unique setting to bring different perspectives and this range of expertise together, and to begin shaping a more coordinated global response.

The Global Fraud Summit builds on the launch of the Fraud Strategy 2026 to 2029 last week, which established a new online crime centre, uniting government, police, intelligence agencies, banks and tech firms to ramp up the disruption of fraudsters. Backed by £250 million, the new strategy sets out how the government will make the UK the hardest place for fraudsters to operate, as one in fourteen adults and one in four businesses have become victims.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/global-taskforce-launched-to-hunt-down-overseas-scammers>