Detained on an INTERPOL notice: the first 24 hours

What the detainee and their family should do · Updated 8 October 2026

A detention on an INTERPOL notice is a temporary measure at another country's request, not a finding of guilt. But what a person says and signs in the first hours sets the frame for the entire defence that follows.

> A Red Notice is a request for provisional arrest pending extradition, not a court judgment. The country of detention runs its own procedure. Do not sign statements or discuss the substance of the case without a lawyer — even "for the record".

What to do right away

1. Calmly ask for the **basis of the detention** and, if possible, the number of the notice or request.
2. Ask to **speak to a lawyer** — your own or an appointed one — before any statement.
3. Ask for the **consulate** of your country of nationality to be notified.
4. Tell your **family** as quickly as possible about the detention and where you are held.
5. **Record the details**: time, place, names and positions of officers, the exact wording of the basis.

What to avoid

- Signing statements without a lawyer — even a "formality for the record".
- Giving detailed statements on the substance: the task of the first hours is to avoid harm, not to clear your name.
- Talking without an interpreter if the officers' language is not your own.
- Hiding the detention from your family out of shame or panic.
- Agreeing to "simplified" surrender without advice — it is a serious decision.

Rights you can rely on

A detained foreign national may

- Have their consulate notified and communicate with it — Vienna Convention 1963, Art. 36
- Be told the reasons for arrest in a language they understand — ECHR, Art. 5 § 2
- Have an interpreter — ECHR Art. 6 § 3(e); EU Directive 2010/64
- Have a lawyer before questioning — the procedure is set by the law of the country of detention

What family should do

- Find out where the person is held: an airport facility, a police station or an institution
- Contact the consulate of the detained person's country of nationality
- Find a local lawyer experienced in extradition — it is a distinct specialism
- In politically sensitive cases, agree any public statements with the lawyer

What no honest lawyer can promise

- Release or a refusal of extradition — the court of the country of detention decides.
- A particular length of custody or hearing date — these depend on national law.
- That there is no risk — sound conduct reduces risk but does not remove it.
- The effect of a CCF request on extradition — these are separate, unconnected procedures.

Sources: Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963), Art. 36 · ECHR, Art. 5 § 2, Art. 6 § 3(e) · Directive 2010/64/EU on the right to interpretation and translation · CJEU, Lanigan, C-237/15 PPU (16.07.2015). This material is for information only and is not legal advice; detention procedure and rights are governed by the law of the country of detention and may differ.

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