

DIPLOMATIC TIMES

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EUROPOL'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CATHERINE DE BOLLE IS EUROPE'S FIRST FEMALE TOP COP



Europe's Top Cop Faces Challenges

“She has had to develop tremendous strength to survive five years. No one wanted a woman at the head of the organization,” Saad Amrani, the chief commissioner and policy adviser of the Belgian Federal Police-*Politico.com*.

“The federal police is a boys club, and many conservatives were not happy to have a female boss.”

British Police Force Still ‘Institutionally Racist’

Chief Constable
Gareth Wilson.

INTERPOL and UN Combine Counter-terror Efforts

DIPLOMATIC TIMES

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INTERNATIONAL POLICING ISSUE

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The world is becoming an increasingly dangerous place with the growing menace of terrorism, transnational crime, and cybercrime. Biometric data use is increasing, including facial recognition, and fingerpring scanning, by international airports and railway ports to combat terror. There are some concerns use of biometric data such as facial recognition could violate privacy or civil liberties of ordinary citizens who have not committed a crime. The challenge will be for finding balance of protecting the public from terror and also safeguarding privacy. As facial recognition use grows, so do privacy fears. Facial recognition is playing an increasing role in law enforcement, border security and other purposes in the US and around the world. In the United States, the Transportation Security Administration released a broad based plan last October to turn U.S. airports into the first large-scale, comprehensive application of face surveillance technology on the American public. The plan has raised privacy fears. Other governmental security agencies are doing the same in Europe and other parts of the world. Meanwhile, in the United Kingdom, its large Metropolitan Police force continues to grapple with issues of race 25 years after the racially-motivated of Black teen Stephen Lawrence. In the European Union, the first female head of the EU's police organization, EUROPOL, Catherin De Bolle, took up her duties. Europol's top cop performed well in 2018 and will face new challenges in 2019 in her task to keep Europe secure as the United Kingdom exits the EU. Many are concerned about BREXIT's impact on the security of Europe and what exactly will the EU and UK security cooperation be after the breakup.



INTERPOL



Catherine DeBolle Appointed As First Female To Head The European Police Organization



Credit: EU Council news / Catherine De Bolle -new Executive Director of Europol

By Gary Raynaldo DIPLOMATIC TIMES

The new Executive Director of Europe's police organization Europol Catherine De Bolle has broken through many "glass ceilings" during her impressive law enforcement career. Today, De Bolle, 47, becomes the first female to take the top job as head of Europe's police organization. As the new Executive Director, De Bolle will oversee the administration of Europol, the management of its personnel and will be responsible for the performance of tasks assigned to it. De Bolle replaced Rob Wainwright. De Bolle made history in 2012 when she became the first woman appointed Commissioner General of the Federal Police in her native Belgium. Europol, the Hague-based EU law enforcement organization, coordinates the co-operation between member states' police forces in the areas of organized crime, terrorism, smuggling, drug trafficking and money laundering. De Bolle pledged to invest more in Europol's capacity to analyse security threats after being named as first woman to head the EU's chief law enforcement body.

“Europol has to invest even more in the analytical capacity,” De Bolle said in a video run on an EU Twitter feed. “We have to put the resources and the knowledge together to have a strategic view on the future on what are threats to the security of the European citizens,” she added.

New EU police boss has broken through many glass ceilings in law enforcement career

De Bolle became Belgium's first female Federal Police commissioner in 2012.

“I have always been the first (woman) in most of the jobs I have done,” De Bolle.



Credit: Getty / De Bolle is 47-years-old and a native of Belgium.

De Bolle believes women have to find a balance between family and career

“In the beginning, twenty years ago, when I started in the local police, it was more difficult. When I see that women in charge in different organisations are listeners and people come to us. It's important to listen to my people who are my ears and eyes on the street everyday. It's still often the case that young women choose their family over their career, but you have to have to find a balance and you have to help them find a balance,” De Bolle, as told to the Council of the EU.

Europol has a budget of nearly £100m and employs more than 1000 workers

Headquartered in The Hague, the Netherlands, Europol supports the 28 EU Member States in their fight against terrorism, cybercrime and other serious and organised forms of crime. It also work with many non-EU partner states and international organisations. As the EU's law enforcement agency, Europol has a mission to support its Member States in preventing and combatting all forms of serious international organised crime and terrorism. Europol's vision is to contribute to a safer Europe by providing a unique and evolving set of operational products and services to support law-enforcement authorities in all Member States.

UN Resolution Urges Greater Cooperation With INTERPOL In Countering Terrorism And Transnational Organized Crime



Credit: Interpol.int / United Nations And The International Police Organization (INTERPOL) Collaborate On Countering Terror And Transnational Organized Crime

By Gary Raynaldo DIPLOMATIC TIMES

United Nations – New York – The United Nations (UN) General Assembly has called for increased cooperation with INTERPOL in countering terrorism and combating transnational organized crime including human trafficking, migrant smuggling and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. On Nov. 21, 2016, the UN GA adopted Resolution (71/19): Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). The Resolution acknowledged that “INTERPOL has been a key actor since 1923 in enabling and promoting international police cooperation in order to prevent and combat transnational crime, in particular transnational organized crime, through enhanced police cooperation among its member countries as well as in fostering innovation in police and law enforcement matters.” INTERPOL Secretary General Jürgen Stock addressed the UN General Assembly Monday Nov. 26, 2018 to highlight some of the challenges with regard to Resolution (71/19).

“The fight against international crime is an instrument in bringing about global peace and stability. Its core lies in law enforcement, yet its roots and ramifications extend far beyond the strict boundaries of Ministries and agencies in charge of policing.”

INTERPOL Secretary General Jürgen Stock
– United Nations General Assembly Nov. 26, 2018.



INTERPOL Secretary General Jürgen Stock addressed the UN General Assembly which has endorsed increased cooperation with INTERPOL in countering terrorism and transnational organized crime. Credit: (UN Photo/ Loey Philipe)

In addition, the UN GA Resolution calls for the strengthening of cooperation between the UN and INTERPOL within their respective mandates, in tackling terrorism, including preventing foreign terrorist fighter travel, and combating transnational crime, in particular transnational organized crime, including smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons, drug trafficking, intentional and unlawful destruction of cultural heritage and trafficking in cultural property, piracy, illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. According to INTERPOL, by endorsing the review of GA Resolution 71/19 (2016), “UN member states recognized the importance of providing INTERPOL with information from battlefields, counter-terrorism military operations and national prison systems to increase the chances of positively identifying terrorists.” The INTERPOL Chief also highlighted that biometric data recovered from improvised explosive devices in the Middle East and North Africa, and shared via INTERPOL, has resulted in the identification of suspects in Europe and Asia. Stock said that since the Resolution’s first adoption in 2016, the transnational threat landscape has evolved to pose new and increasingly complex challenges, in large part driven by unprecedented technological advances and instability, worldwide. What remains a constant variable over time, however, is the determination of international criminal groups to seek to exploit national boundaries to evade the rule of law, he stated.

London's Metropolitan Police Seeks Diversified Force Amid Charges of Racism and Sexism In Department



Photo Source / Corbis / Matthew Styllanou / Former London Met Police Officer Carol Howard won a race and sex discrimination claim against the department and was awarded £37,000 in 2015. Later in May 2018, Howard lost the race claim as the Court reversed the 2015 decision.



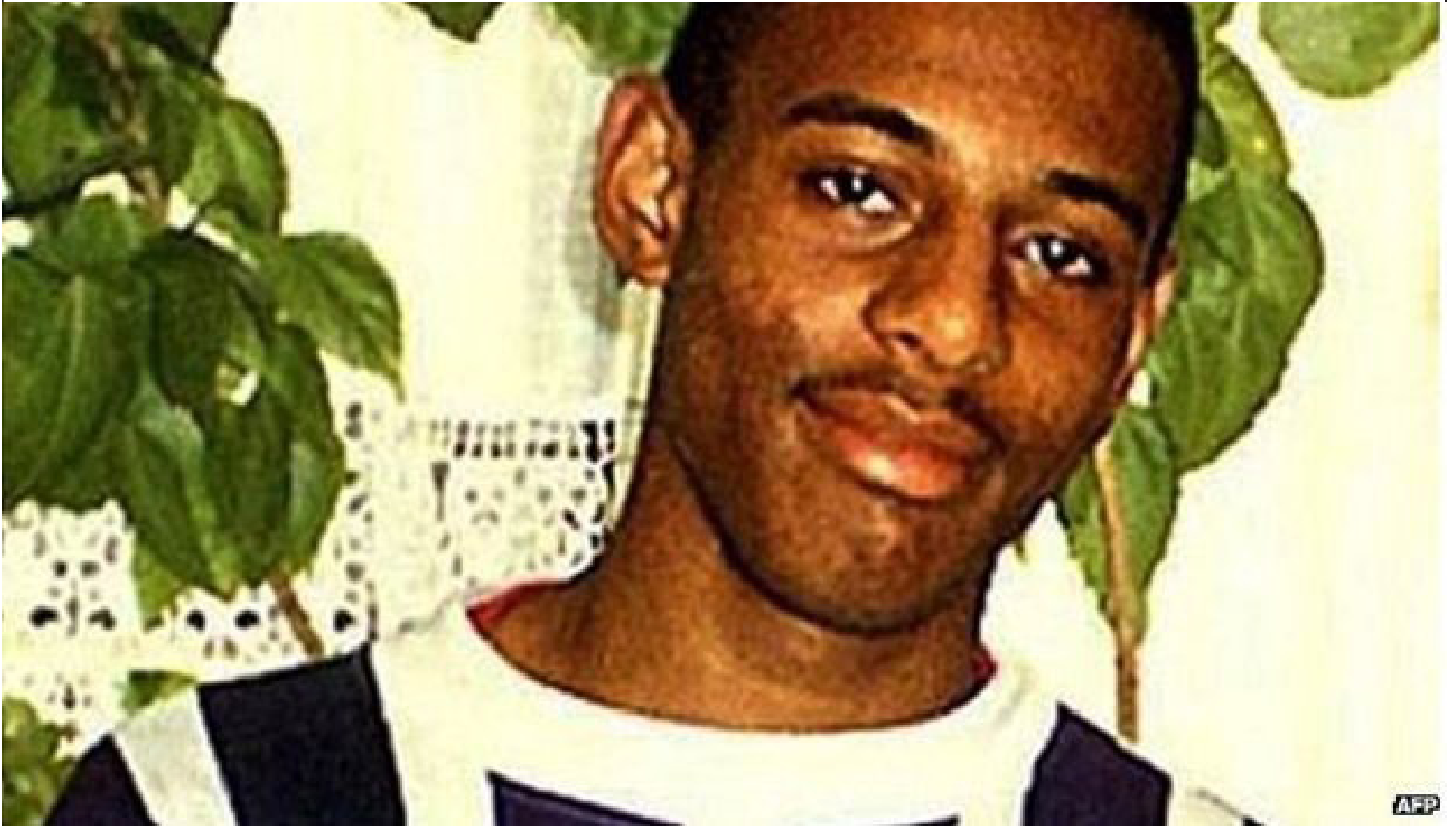
METROPOLITAN POLICE

By Gary Raynaldo DIPLOMATIC TIMES

The London Metropolitan Police continues to grapple with charges of racism and sexism as the U.K. seeks to add 17,000 Black officers to “reflect British society.” A public inquiry held in 1998, headed by Sir William Macpherson, that examined the original Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) investigation into the **death of Stephen Lawrence issued a damning report concluding the force was ‘institutionally racist’**. Lawrence, 18, was stabbed to death in an unprovoked attack in 1993 by a gang of white youths as he waited at a bus stop in Eltham, south-east London, with a friend. The case became a cause célèbre and one of the highest profile racial killings in U.K. history. After the initial investigation, five suspects were arrested but not convicted. It was suggested during the course of that investigation that the murder was racially motivated and that Lawrence was killed because he was black, and that the handling of the case by the police and Crown Prosecution Service was affected by issues of race. Years later, the Metropolitan Police is still struggling to shake off the institutionally racist label that remains tightly wrapped around the department. In 2015, the Met acknowledged ‘some justification’ to claims the force is ‘racist’ according to the BBC.

“ You’re very much more likely to be stopped and searched if you’re a young black man... I can give you reasons, but I can’t fully explain it,” Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, head of Metropolitan Police.

Metropolitan Police Still Struggling To Shake Off The 'Institutionally Racist Label' After Death Of Stephen Lawrence Smearred Department



AFP

Source wikipedia commons // In 2012, nearly 20 years after the death of Stephen Lawrence, (above photo) two men, Gary Dobson and David Norris, were found guilty of the 1993 racist murder of Lawrence and were jailed for life.

Number of Black and minority MET police officers stand at just 5 percent

With estimates suggesting the BME population of England and Wales will be 14 per cent by 2026, the service would need to recruit 17,000 officers from those communities in order to achieve a more representative profile, the Telegraph reported. Out of almost 130,000 full time police officers in England and Wales, just 6,500 came from an ethnic minority, representing a mere five per cent, according to the Telegraph. Speaking at the National Black Police Association's (NBPA) annual conference, Assistant Chief Constable Richard Bennett said the service needs to recruit 17,000 BME officers to be representative of the population by 2024.

Black female officer claimed racist and sexist harassment in lawsuit



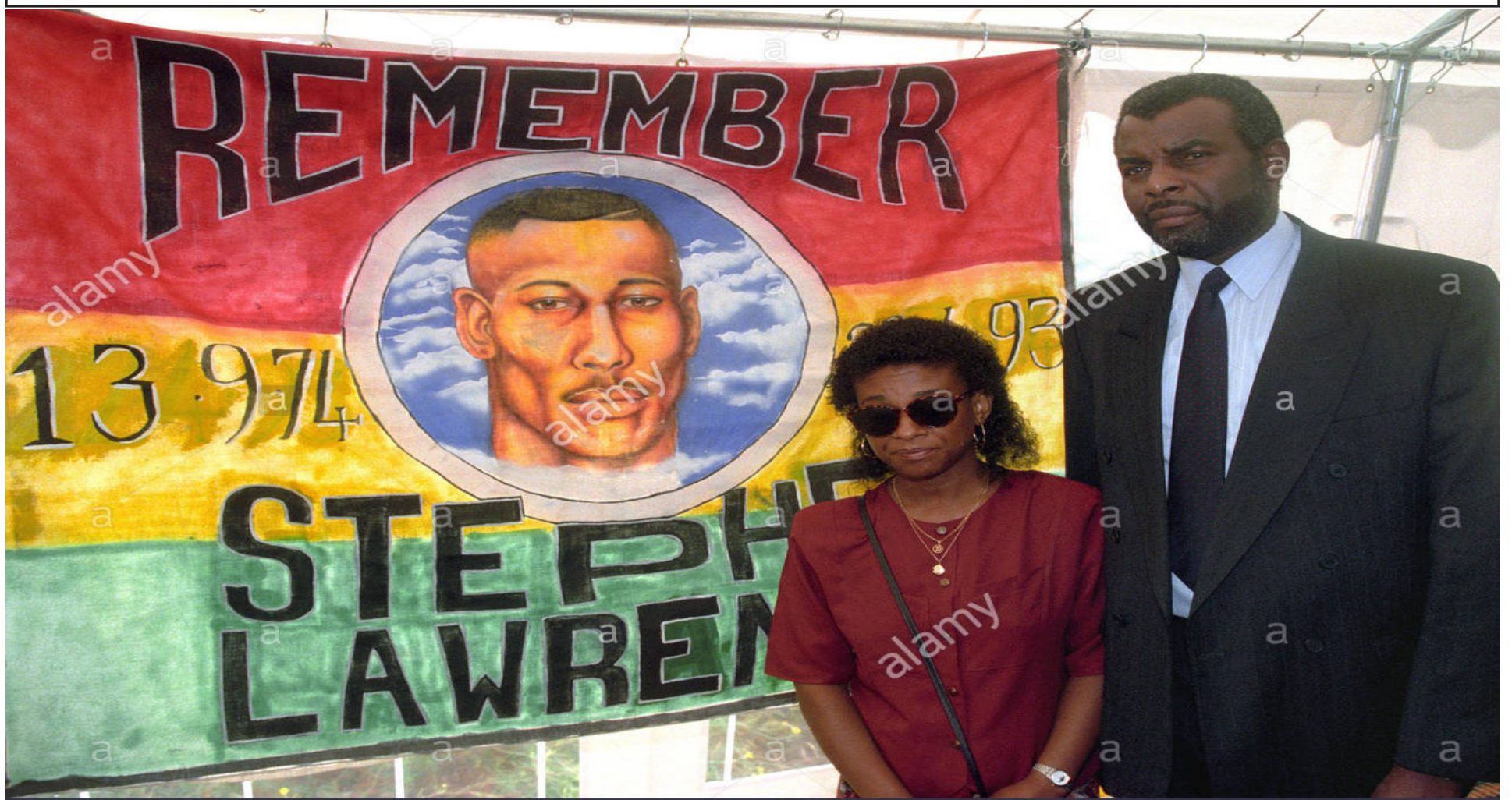
Photo Source / Daily Mail / Ex-MET police officer Carol Howard on way to court hearing in her lawsuit. Howard would win the lawsuit and was awarded £144,000 in the race discrimination claim



source: Wikipedia Public Domain / Scotland Yard-London headquarters of the Metropolitan Police Service, the territorial police force responsible for policing most of London. The Met also has significant national responsibilities, such as co-ordinating and leading on counter-terrorism matters and protection of the British Royal Family and senior figures of Her Majesty's Government. The Met is the largest police force in the UK, and one of the biggest in the world.

One in four new recruits into the Police Service must be from a black or ethnic minority community if policing is to be truly representative of the population in ten years' time, according to a senior officer, Assistant Chief Constable Richard Bennett.

Painful Memories Still Linger 25 Years After Murder Of Stephen Lawrence



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www.alamy.com

Doreen and Neville Lawrence outside Belmarsh Magistrates' Court, south London, for the first day of the family's private prosecution accusing four men of the race killing of their son 1995.

DIPLOMATIC TIMES STAFF

Stephen Lawrence was a black British teenager from Plumstead, south east London, in the United Kingdom who was murdered in a racially motivated attack while waiting for a bus in Well Hall, Eltham on the evening of 22 April 1993. The case became a cause célèbre; its fallout included cultural changes of attitudes on racism and the police, and to the law and police practice. It also led to the partial revocation of the rule against double jeopardy. Two of the perpetrators were convicted of murder in 2012. After the initial investigation, five suspects were arrested but not charged. It was suggested during the investigation that Lawrence was killed because he was black, and that the handling of the case by the police and Crown Prosecution Service was affected by issues of race. A 1998 public inquiry, headed by Sir William Macpherson, examined the original Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) investigation and concluded that the force was institutionally racist. It also recommended that the double jeopardy rule should be repealed in murder cases to allow a retrial upon new and compelling evidence: this was effected in 2005 upon enactment of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. The publication in 1999 of the resulting Macpherson Report has been called “one of the most important moments in the modern history of criminal justice in Britain”. Jack Straw, Home Secretary from 1997 to 2001, commented in 2012 that ordering the inquiry was “the single most important decision I made as Home Secretary”. In 2010 the case was said to be “one of the highest-profile unsolved racially motivated murders”.

On 18 May 2011, after a further review, it was announced that two of the original suspects, Gary Dobson and David Norris, were to stand trial for the murder in the light of new evidence. At the same time it was disclosed that Dobson's original acquittal had been quashed by the Court of Appeal, allowing a retrial to take place. Such an appeal had only become possible following the 2005 change in the law, although Dobson was not the first person to be retried for murder as a result. **On 3 January 2012, Dobson and Norris were found guilty of Lawrence's murder; the pair were juveniles at the time of the crime and were sentenced to detention at Her Majesty's pleasure, equivalent to a life sentence for an adult, with minimum terms of 15 years 2 months and 14 years 3 months respectively for what the judge described as a “terrible and evil crime”.** In the years after Dobson and Norris were sentenced, the case regained prominence when concerns of corrupt police conduct during the original case handling surfaced in the media. His mother, Doreen Lawrence, said, “I would like Stephen to be remembered as a young man who had a future. He was well loved, and had he been given the chance to survive maybe he would have been the one to bridge the gap between black and white

He saw people as people.” In 1995 a memorial plaque was set into the pavement at the spot where he was killed on Well Hall Road. The plaque has been vandalised several times since then.

Deep Wounds Slowly Healing 25 Years After Lawrence Murder

On 23 April 2018, at a memorial service to mark the 25th anniversary of his death, Prime Minister Theresa May announced that “Stephen Lawrence Day” would be an annual national commemoration of his death on 22 April every year starting in 2019. Stephen's mother Doreen Lawrence made a statement that Stephen Lawrence Day would be “an opportunity for young people to use their voices and should be embedded in our education and wider system regardless of the government of the day.

“The murder of the 18-year-old on Well Hall Road in Eltham, south-east London, left an indelible mark on British society, forcing the country to face up to endemic racism which resulted in two men being but only 18 years later and after a change in the law,” Alexandra Topping *wrote in the UK Guardian Apr. 21, 2018*. “But now, a quarter of a century after Stephen was killed, those who have watched the repercussions unfold warn that lessons hard learned are in danger of being lost,” Topping added in the UK Guardian.

“I get the sense there isn't the urgency around tackling incidents of racial harassment or racial abuse in the way that there was,” says Clive Efford, the MP here since 1997. “I think as you get further away from an incident as serious as the murder of Stephen Lawrence it has dulled the senses,” UK Guardian Apr. 21, 2018.

The landmark anniversary brings back painful memories for people in this quiet suburb, including the moment they realised they lived in such a deeply divided society. “We were horrified; no one I knew had ever thought about that type of thing. We hadn't needed to – no, we hadn't appreciated that we needed to,” says Judy Smith, a long-time community organiser and part of South Greenwich Forum,” *UK Guardian*.

Former Scotland Yard Police Officer Was A Rising Star In Coveted Diplomatic Corps



Photo Source / Corbis / Matthew Styllanou / Former London Met Police Officer Carol Howard won a race and sex discrimination claim against the department and was awarded £37,000 in 2015. Howard is photographed with her Heckler & Koch semi-automatic rifle capable of firing up to 800-rounds per minute.

Former MET Police Officer Was Poster Girl For A More Diverse London Force

The Ex-Scotland Yard Officer Loses £144,000 Race Discrimination Claim



Credit: / MET Police officer Carol Howard famously appeared as a Scotland Yard poster girl, complete with Heckler & Koch semi-automatic rifle, promoting efforts to protect London during the 2012 Olympics.

The Met really blew it with 35-year-old PC Carol Howard. With her cover-girl looks, yet steely persona, PC Howard was a poster woman for a more diverse London police force. Howard moved up the ranks during her 10 years with the Met, eventually joining the elite Diplomatic Protection Group, guarding VIPs including the Prime Minister. Howard exemplified the type of tough police officer assigned to protect London during the 2012 Olympics. Howard claimed her career came crashing down around her in late 2012 when she was assigned a new superior, David Kelly, who singled her out and harassed her for almost a year. Howard claimed Kelly constantly reprimanded her in an aggressive manner in front of colleagues, “telling me I wasn’t up to their standard.” Howard was the only black woman on the elite DPG team and only one of two in the entire DPG. Howard lodged a formal complaint against Kelly, who she claimed then retaliated with an intimidating verbal attack.

‘He cornered me, pointed his fingers in my face and shouted at me in a threatening manner. He was carrying his Glock pistol, and I was genuinely frightened about what he would do. By the time I left, I was in tears,’

Carol Howard told the *Daily Mail*.

“I was so proud that I’d made it as a firearms officer, but then it was wrecked. I couldn’t understand why, and why nobody listened when I tried to speak out. The Met just dismissed me, as if nothing I was saying mattered.”

Former London PC Carol Howard as told to *Daily Mail*.

In 2014, an employment tribunal ruled that the Metropolitan Police department’s treatment of PC Howard was *‘malicious and oppressive.’* The tribunal ruled Howard had been discriminated against because she was black and a woman and awarded her £37,000 including aggravated damages. Howard eventually left the police force.

Howard went on to join the IPCC as an investigator the following year. However, soon after winning her tribunal she alleged was subject to a “witch-hunt” which claimed she had physically assaulted her ex-partner and was in possession of indecent child images. The first allegation to emerge dated from August 2013 when her ex-partner, Robert McCabe, told police she had physically attacked him 14 months prior. She says that he repeatedly tried to retract his claims but was ignored. She left the IPCC after it decided against renewing her six-month contract in March 2017. The IPCC was replaced in January by the Independent Office for Police Conduct. The IPCC strongly refuted all the allegations made and vigorously contesting her tribunal claim. Police also discovered a picture on her phone of her younger daughter, then aged six, sleeping naked on her bed, before being accused of possessing an indecent image of a child. She told the *Daily Mail* it was “a blatant witch-hunt,” adding “I can only conclude it’s a punishment for my case against the Met.” For giving evidence against the IPCC, Howard said that her first application for a job was rejected without interview, but she was successful in October 2016 after re-applying under her married name Carol McCabe. According to Howard, the IPCC was worried that hiring her “could be regarded by the Met as an act of ‘revenge’ against the police,” and that she was banned for any cases involving the Met. Judge Joanna Wade dismissed all 33 allegations made by the single mother after learning that she lost her six-month role with the IPCC after underperforming and falsifying timesheets. Howard told Central London Employment Tribunal that she was kept out of investigations and treated as an “embarrassment”. She also alleged some IPCC staff secretly supported “racist” officers whom they were investigating. But Judge Wade suggested that her payout from the Met Police influenced her decision to make a claim against the watchdog.

Judge Reverses Former London MET Officer's Race Discrimination Award

The judge said of Howard:

‘We are left with the uncomfortable conclusion that the claimant has an unshakeable but incorrect belief that if she does not like what is happening or is prevented from doing the work she chooses, this is discrimination [or] victimisation.’ Wade also said Howard’s judgement throughout “was very poor.”

The Surrey resident is now being probed by the Information Commissioner after allegedly downloading sensitive information from the IPCC after she had left the organisation.

In a written ruling, she added:

“Her lack of perspective is astonishing. It gives rise to concern that winning a tribunal claim may have a detrimental effect on future judgement.”

The hearing heard how Howard was criticised for working on confidential cases while on the train and in Starbucks.



Howard said she was unfairly probed by the Information Commissioner after allegedly downloading sensitive information from the IPCC after she had left the organisation.

“The white managers I worked with are not independent and believe that their duty is not to investigate wrongdoing officers but to protect the reputation of the police force concerned and its senior officers in particular. They are corrupt,”

former Scotland Yard officer Howard said.

Institutional Racism Still Plagues British Policing 20 Years After McPhearson Report: Senior Officer



Credit: Wikipedia / The British Police force remains mostly white almost two decades ago after the Macpherson report into the failings that allowed the racist killers of the black schoolboy Stephen Lawrence escape justice. Recent figures show ethnic minorities make up 14% of the population but only 7% of police officers.

British policing is still “institutionally racist”, a senior police officer admitted while launching a drive to boost the number of recruits from minority groups, the *The Independent* (Oct. 12, 2018) reported. Chief Constable Gareth Wilson, the national lead for diversity, equality and inclusion, told *The Independent* the service has “come on leaps and bounds” in recent years but there is more work left to do.

“If you use the definition in the Macpherson Report you could argue policing is institutionally racist but we’ve moved on significantly since then,” he added.

Under new plans unveiled by the NPCC, performance reviews of top officers will be tied to their success in improving diversity, according to *the Guardian* Oct. 12, 2018. The diversity plan was announced as recent data showed police forces are much whiter than the populations they serve. This is despite promises made almost two decades ago after the Macpherson report into the failings that allowed the racist killers of the black schoolboy Stephen Lawrence escape justice, *the Guardian* Oct. 12, 2018. Wilson told the *Guardian* that police forces had been too slow to eliminate prejudice from the workforce and change the way officers treat the communities they serve. Wilson said the police had made progress but change had been too slow, and the measures would help make forces look more like Britain.

New Europol Executive Director Faced Challenges In First Year On

Job As Europe's Top Cop-Faced Criticism In Area Of Anti-Terror

-DIPLOMATIC TIMES STAFF

Barely just one day on her new job as Europe's top cop, Catherine De Bolle has faced an extraordinary amount of criticism and scrutiny regarding her fitness to perform her duties, particularly in the area of anti-terror. On Tuesday, De Bolle, 48, became the first female ever appointed as Executive Director of the EU's police organization Europol. Critics pointed to De Bolle's prior job as Commissioner General of the Belgium Federal Police.

"Citing her track record in Belgium, officials at Europol and several European security and intelligence services raised concerns about her ability to coordinate the Continent's counterterrorism efforts, which is the agency's main task," Politico reported. "Belgian law enforcement drew widespread criticism in particular for failing to share information, both across borders but within Belgium itself, and connect the dots about terror threats." De Bolle takes over the job from Rob Wainwright, a former intelligence analyst at MI5, Britain's domestic intelligence service, who left Europol to join Deloitte's Amsterdam cyber security unit.



Credit: Europol / Catherine De Bolle, Executive Director of Europol

Is Europe's new top cop being unfairly scrutinized because she is a woman?

In fairness to De Bolle, she has faced many obstacles in her law enforcement career as a woman in a male-dominated field.

Responding to criticism of her handling of the 2015 terror attacks in Belgium, De Bolle stated that Belgian authorities "responded swiftly and in a well-organized manner immediately to the attacks."

De Bolle's supporters suggest many critics have difficulty with a woman heading the EU's chief law enforcement body.

"Cops — it's a white man job," said Saad Amrani, the chief commissioner and policy adviser of the Belgian Federal Police. "She has had to develop tremendous strength to survive five years. No one wanted a woman at the head of the organization," added Amrami, who is of Moroccan descent. "The federal police is a boys club, and many conservatives were not happy to have a female boss."

De Bolle awarded France's highest civilian honour Légion d'honneur for fighting terrorism

In October 2017, De Bolle received her Légion d'honneur medal together with another Belgian, the Director-General of the Federal Judicial Police Claude Fontaine. De Bolle and Fontaine received their medals from the French Ambassador in Belgium. At the time of the awards, France stated:

"By giving two of Belgium's top police officers the Légion d'honneur medal, France wants to thank the Belgian police for the good cooperation that exists between our two countries' police services in the fields of fighting organised crime and terrorism. The cooperation has intensified since the terrorist attacks in both countries."



Credit: ukindependent.com / Soldiers guard rail station Brussels after terror attack

"It is with great enthusiasm that I take up the position of Executive Director of Europol today," De Bolle said after taking over as Europe's top cop. "Joining Europol is both an honour and a pleasure", De Bolle added. "Europol is seen as a pre-eminent law enforcement agency and I intend for that to remain the case. This means focusing on the support delivered to national law enforcement authorities, and ensuring that our services truly deliver added value to our stakeholders. The increasing scale of the flow of information to Europol is both our greatest asset and our most significant challenge. I want Europol to be recognised as a leading centre for criminal data analysis."

Covering The World Of Diplomacy
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12 Arrested In €1.5 million German-Lithuanian Luxury Car Criminal Gang Operation



Credit: EUROPOL / The organised criminal gang targeted luxurious cars in Germany and then sold them outside of the EU.

By Gary Raynaldo DIPLOMATIC TIMES

A joint anti-organised crime operation by Europol and Eurojust led to the arrest last week of 12 Lithuanians suspected of luxury car theft in Germany and Lithuania. Operation JIT EWALD resulted in the arrest of two suspects in Germany and eight in Lithuania, according to Europol. The European Union's law enforcement organization (Europol) stated that a total of six premises were searched in Germany and 11 in Kaunas and Vilnius, Lithuania. The German authorities initiated an international investigation in November 2018 after receiving information that Lithuanian citizens had been targeting luxurious cars in Germany and then selling them outside of the EU.

The damage done by this organised crime group is valued at over €1.5 million,

according to Europol



Credit: Eurojust

Europol, the European Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, supported the investigation by facilitating information exchange and deploying experts and a mobile office on-the-spot in Lithuania. A joint investigation team (JIT) involving German and Lithuanian officers was set-up with the support of Eurojust, the European agency dealing with judicial co-operation in criminal matters. According to Europol, JITs are teams formed

jointly by national law enforcement agencies to handle cross-border crime. Joint investigation teams coordinate the investigations and prosecutions conducted in parallel by several countries.

Borderless Criminal Gangs Target German Luxury Automobiles To Be Taken To Eastern Europe



Luxury Automobiles Like Mercedes Benz Are Target By Criminal Gangs Operating in Germany. Many vehicles are taken to Lithuania, beyond the reach of German law enforcement.

“As the crime does not recognize the state borders, there is no walls for investigations. This case has shown that joint action of the police officers, the prosecutor’s office and the court, alongside with the German officers brought great success,”

Danas Valkavičius, Kaunas district chief prosecutor, was quoted as saying in a statement released by the Kaunas police office.

According to Europol, Organised Property Crime is a highly visible crime that causes widespread feelings of insecurity among citizens. Motor vehicle crime, domestic and business burglaries, pickpocketing and ATM attacks are some of the most common forms of organised property crime conducted by cross-border organised criminal groups, Europol.

U.N. Security Council Biometric Data Resolution Seeks To Halt terrorism Travel

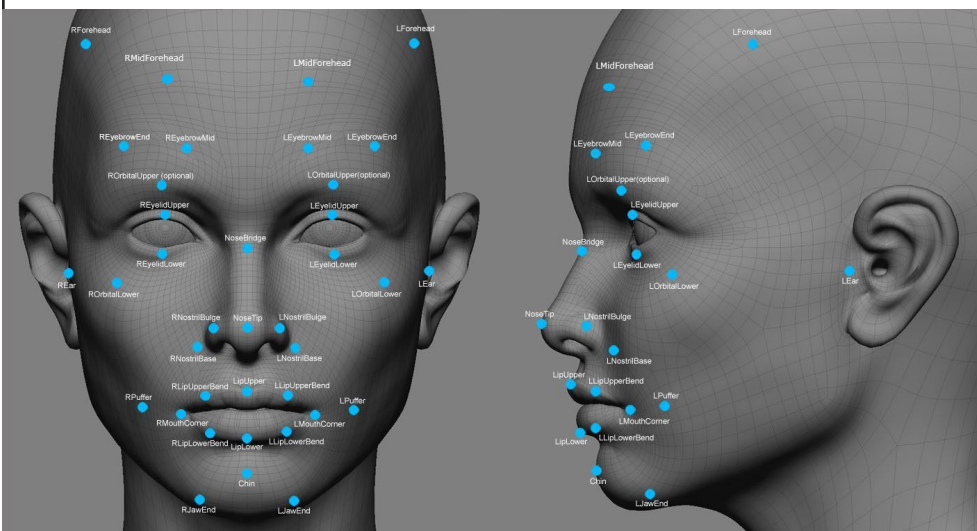


Credit: United Nations Media / Manuel Elias / UN Security Council meeting at world body's New York headquarters

DIPLOMATIC TIMES Staff Report

Last year, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution for utilizing biometric data intended to help Member States detect and counter the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), especially those returning from the conflict zone in Iraq and Syria. The mandate -(UNSCR resolution 2396 (2017)- creates new international obligations and provisions to strengthen border security and information sharing, including the use of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data, Advanced Passenger Information (API) p , and human recognition using biometrics to prevent terrorists from boarding airplanes. According to the U.N. Security Council, the resolution will strengthen judicial measures and international cooperation; ensure appropriate prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration of FTFs and their accompanying family members; and strengthen Member States' cooperation, including with the private sector, to protect public spaces and soft targets.

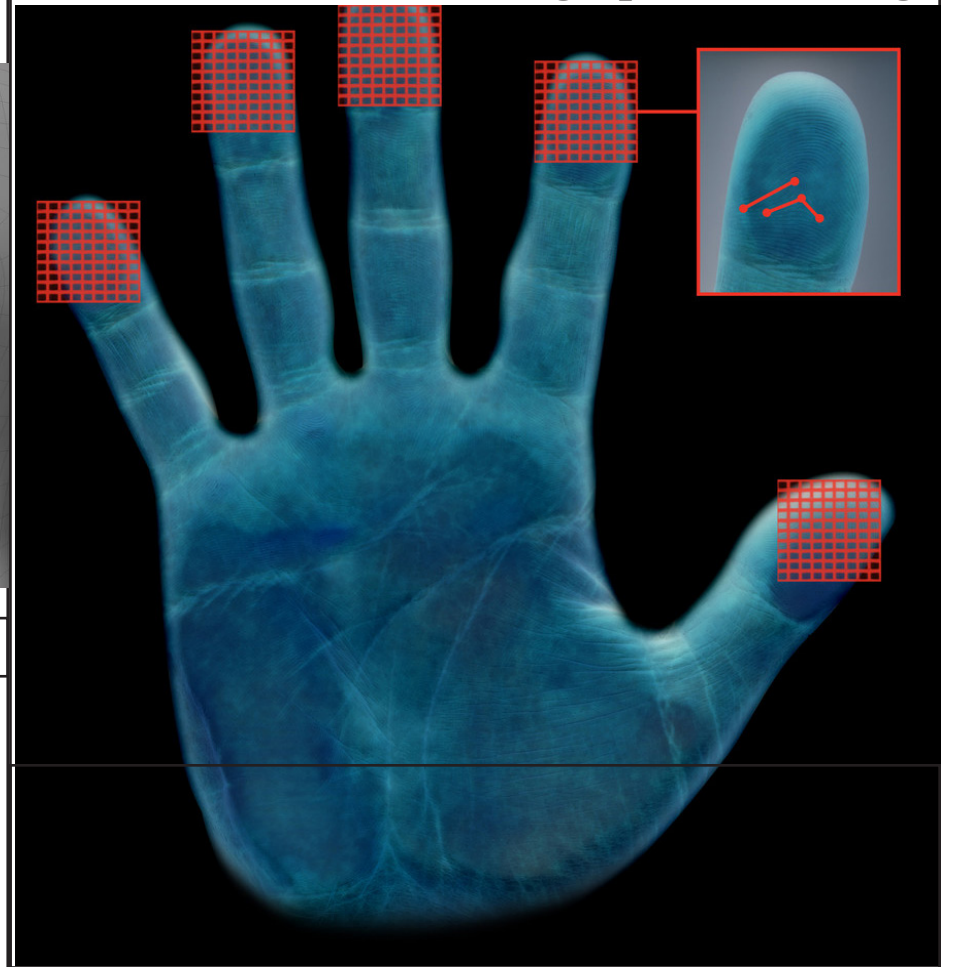
UN Security Council data resolution includes human recognition using biometrics



Credit: / eforensicsmag.com / Biometrics is the science of recognizing humans based on unique anatomical traits of the individual

Unanimously adopting resolution 2396 (2017), the Security Council, expressed concern that foreign terrorist fighters connected to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh), the Nusrah Front (ANF) and other cells, affiliates, splinter groups or derivatives, were returning to foster radicalization and attacks on soft targets. In addition, the Council called on Member States to strengthen measures to prevent the transit of terrorists. Those measures included ensuring that identity documents were not forged, as well as employing evidence-based risk assessments, screening procedures, and the collection and analysis of travel data to identify individuals who posed a terrorist threat, in accordance with domestic and international law, without resorting to profiling based on discrimination. The United States drafted and led the negotiation of the resolution, which requires all U.N. members to use Passenger Name Record data to stop terrorist travel. It further directs UN members to collect biometric data and develop watch lists of known and suspected terrorists. Resolution 2396 also calls for stricter aviation security standards and urges U.N. members to share counterterrorism information both internally and with each other.

Biometrics also include fingerprint scanning



U.S. State Department Welcomes U.N. Security Council Anti-Terror Resolution



Credit: CNN.news / U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson speaking before the United Nations January 2018.

“Resolution 2396 is particularly timely, given the collapse of ISIS’s false caliphate and its continuing efforts to commit terrorist attacks around the world, Rex Tillerson, U.S. Secretary of State said in a press release. “Working with our partners, the United States led the negotiation of this new set of international obligations and commitments,” Tillerson stated.

“These tools—which the United States has been using for years and which have now been embraced by the international community—will be critical in preventing the movement of ISIS fighters and other terrorists across the globe,” Sect. of State Tillerson.

Appeal of biometrics as identifiers is they are unique and never change

Biometrics are permanent and can’t be altered. For example, iris pattern is unique to each individual and remains constant throughout the lifetime of a person. According to experts, airport biometrics security would help to eliminate the problem of fake travel IDs and people traveling without real identification.



Source: Shutterstock / Biometrics, such as iris scanning, assist U.S. Department of Homeland Security TSA and facilitates rapid movement through airport security checks. Eye scans are rapidly replacing airline boarding passes.

Because every person’s biometric signature is unique and different from every other person’s in the world, there will be little that people can do to falsify who they are when they try to enter or exit an airport, according to experts.

International Movement is on the rise as people travel and constantly migrate, Digital Journal. According to a recent study, in 2015, 700 million border crossings were recorded and this number is going to be increased to 50% by 2023. Border crossings should be made smooth and as rapid as possible for travelers, Digital Journal reports. Automated Border Control gates are being deployed increasingly more and more to help make border crossings as swift and secure as possible for passengers. Currently, Europe is leading the market for Automated Border Control, according to Digital Journal.

British Airways became the first airline to trial self-service biometric boarding gates on international flights out of the USA, working in partnership with Los Angeles Airport (LAX). According to BA, the new technology, created by Vision-Box, will create a smoother journey for customers, as they will no longer need to present their passport or boarding pass at the gate – only at check in and security.

Ambassador Michele J. Sison U.S. Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations U.S. Mission to the United Nations stated after the resolution was passed:

“The time has come for airline passenger information and biometrics to protect not just those in America, Europe, or the Middle East, but to protect the international traveling public and to send a message to terrorists that they are about to lose any hope of being able to get on an airplane.”

U.S. Ambassador Sison added: “We who have had the benefit of these technologies since 9/11 now look forward to working with countries to make sure they have the assistance and means to fulfill these critical obligations.”

Biometrics Automated Border Control is also in use at international rail hubs including facial recognition-based Automated Border Control solution technology.

AVIATION FEATURE -

American Airlines Expands Flights To Cuba Despite US Restrictions On Travel To Island



Credit: American Airlines / AA crew members and employees celebrate after the airline was granted authority in August 2016 by the U.S. DOT to operate five daily flights to Jose Marti International Airport (HAV) in Havana- four from Miami International Airport (MIA) and one from Charlotte Douglas International (CLT). Flights between the US and Cuba resumed in 2016 after more than 50 years.

By Gary Raynaldo DIPLOMATIC TIMES

American Airlines will inaugurate a new daily flight between Miami and Santiago de Cuba starting in May 2019, its sixth destination in Cuba. AA recently launched a fifth daily flight between Havana and Miami. For its sixth destination in Cuba, AA will add a new daily flight from Miami International Airport (MIA) to Antonio Maceo Airport (SCU) in Santiago de Cuba starting May 3 with its Airbus A319 vessel. AA serves more destinations in Mexico, the Caribbean and Latin America from the U.S. than any other carrier. Santiago de Cuba is the island's second largest city. AA currently has 10 flights a day to Cuba, half of which are between Miami and Havana. The remainder service goes to provincial cities such as Camaguey, Holguin, Santa Clara and Varadero.

After More Than a Half Century, The U.S. Resumed Regular Air Service Between America and Cuba

The historic JetBlue Airways Flight 387 departed Wednesday Aug. 31, 2016 at 9:45 a.m. from Fort Lauderdale, FL and landed in the Cuban city of Santa Clara. The JetBlue flight was the first U.S commercial flight to Cuba since 1961. Prior to the historic flight, the U.S. government granted eight U.S airlines to begin scheduled commercial flights to Cuba. A full US economic embargo remains on Cuba. In 2017, Cuba welcomed 619,523 American tourists, up 217 percent over 2016, while 453,905 Cubans living in the United States visited their native country, an increase of 138 percent over a year. President Trump reversed Obama's previous deals with Cuba, placing tighter restrictions on Americans visiting the socialist island.

JetBlue and American Airlines battle it out for dominant position in the US/Cuba travel market

American says JetBlue has an 'overabundance of empty seats' on Havana flights

American Airlines slammed its competitor, JetBlue Airways, as the two are each making their case to the U.S. Department of Transportation as to why they should be granted additional flights to Havana, Cuba, *Dallasbizjournal reported.*

The historic JetBlue flight was the first U.S commercial flight to Cuba since 1961. Prior to the historic flight, the U.S. government granted eight U.S airlines to begin scheduled commercial flights to Cuba. Most of the flights are set to begin in the fall and winter. ***"Today marks a turning point in U.S. relations with Cuba as cheaper and easier commercial flights now make travel to Cuba an option for that many more Americans,"*** President of Engage Cuba, James Williams, declared in a statement following JetBlue's history making flight.



Source: JetBlue/ Aug. 31, 2016. Crewmembers at the Santa Clara Abel Santamaria International Airport in Cuba welcome JetBlue flight 387, the first commercial flight to Cuba from U.S. in more than 50 years. (Photo: Business Wire)

"This historic flight symbolizes our long-term commitment to provide affordable, award-winning service between Cuba and the U.S.,"

said Robin Hayes, president and chief executive officer, JetBlue.

"For the first time in decades, families separated by only a short stretch of water can easily and affordably visit a loved one, attend an important occasion or visit a special place," Hayes added. The resumption of U.S. flights to Cuba a milestone for aviation/tourist