



**11-13 MARCH
2026**



**THE 12TH IAP ASIA-PACIFIC
REGIONAL CONFERENCE,
NEW DELHI, INDIA**

CALL FOR SPEAKERS

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Transcending borders, securing justice: Prosecutorial responses to illegal immigration and cross-border crime in a globalised world

In the light of migration accelerating across regions due to conflict, poverty, climate change, and opportunity gaps, countries face unprecedented challenges in regulating unlawful cross-border movement. For prosecutors, the task lies in discerning criminal intent, safeguarding national security, and ensuring that justice systems uphold the rule of law and international human rights obligations. Illegal immigration today is no longer a localised issue—it is transnational in form, deeply embedded in organised criminal networks, and frequently intersects with digital identities, statelessness, and trafficking.

This conference convenes prosecutors worldwide to address how cross-border crime is evolving in the context of migration, and how legal systems must adapt through evidence-based, cooperative, and humanitarian-centred strategies. It calls for strengthening prosecutorial capabilities, inter-jurisdictional trust, and a collective imagination for a global legal architecture capable of balancing sovereignty and solidarity.



INSTRUCTIONS

The deadline for proposals is **Friday 23 January 2026**.

All proposals should state:

- The name and job title of the speaker;
- The plenary session to which the proposal relates;
- The title of the proposed presentation;
- A short description of the proposed presentation for consideration by the Professional Programme Team. Presentations must relate to the specified theme of the relevant plenary session.

All proposals must be submitted in English. The working language of the conference is English. There will be simultaneous translation into Hindi during the conference.

Priority will be given to proposals that have a strong practical and operational focus. Presentations illustrated with operational outcomes at an international, national, organisational and/or individual case level are particularly welcome. Presentations should not focus on academic research and should not simply be a summary of the legal framework in a specific jurisdiction, as this will not be of universal application to other jurisdictions.

Presentations should last for no longer than 12 minutes.

All speakers and other active contributors to the conference must pay a registration fee.

Proposals must be submitted to **gc@iap-association.org**

If you have any questions, please contact **gc@iap-association.org**

PLENARY ONE


Illegal immigration and the prosecutor's mandate: From border crossings to criminal accountability

Several distress factors, such as conflict, poverty, persecution, and economic pressures, have driven the expansion of irregular migration in both scale and complexity worldwide.

Today's prosecutors face a significant challenge of sifting through vast swathes of irregular migrant populations to distinguish criminal wrongdoing from genuine humane vulnerability. This is often observed in environments where border pressures exceed the state's administrative and investigative capacities.

The difficulty of discerning coercion from complexity, mixed migration flows, and gaps in evidence is observed in many jurisdictions, despite the presence of various legal tools in these jurisdictions. As a result, organised networks exploit these state and prosecutorial pressures to facilitate unlawful entry, forge identities, or recruit vulnerable people while concealing their identity behind swift cross-border operations.

Therefore, in addition to clear legal frameworks, refined guidelines, trauma-informed assessments, and greater coordination among migration, social welfare, and border agencies, all contribute to strengthening prosecutorial responses to the persisting problems in this regard.



The balancing act of maintaining firm justice institutions, which are also sensitive to humane issues, is essential for maintaining the rule of law in an era where mobility and migration seldom fit neatly into defined categories or boxes.

This sub-theme will primarily explore how prosecutors of the modern age can navigate these pressures and deal with these multidimensional issues while upholding fairness, accountability and humanitarian safeguards. It will explore how jurisdictions can improve screening, decision-making, and evidence gathering in complex and interwoven migration settings.

It will also look at how charging standards can evolve to better distinguish between traffickers, facilitators, and individuals in need of protection.

Speakers may wish to explore the following dimensions:

- Prosecuting fraud relating to unlawful entry, overstays, and identity manipulation
- Distinguishing victims of trafficking from criminal participants in mixed migration contexts
- Developing prosecutorial guidelines for simultaneous flows of asylum seekers, migrants, and smugglers
- Ethical dilemmas and humanitarian safeguards in charging decisions involving vulnerable persons

PLENARY TWO

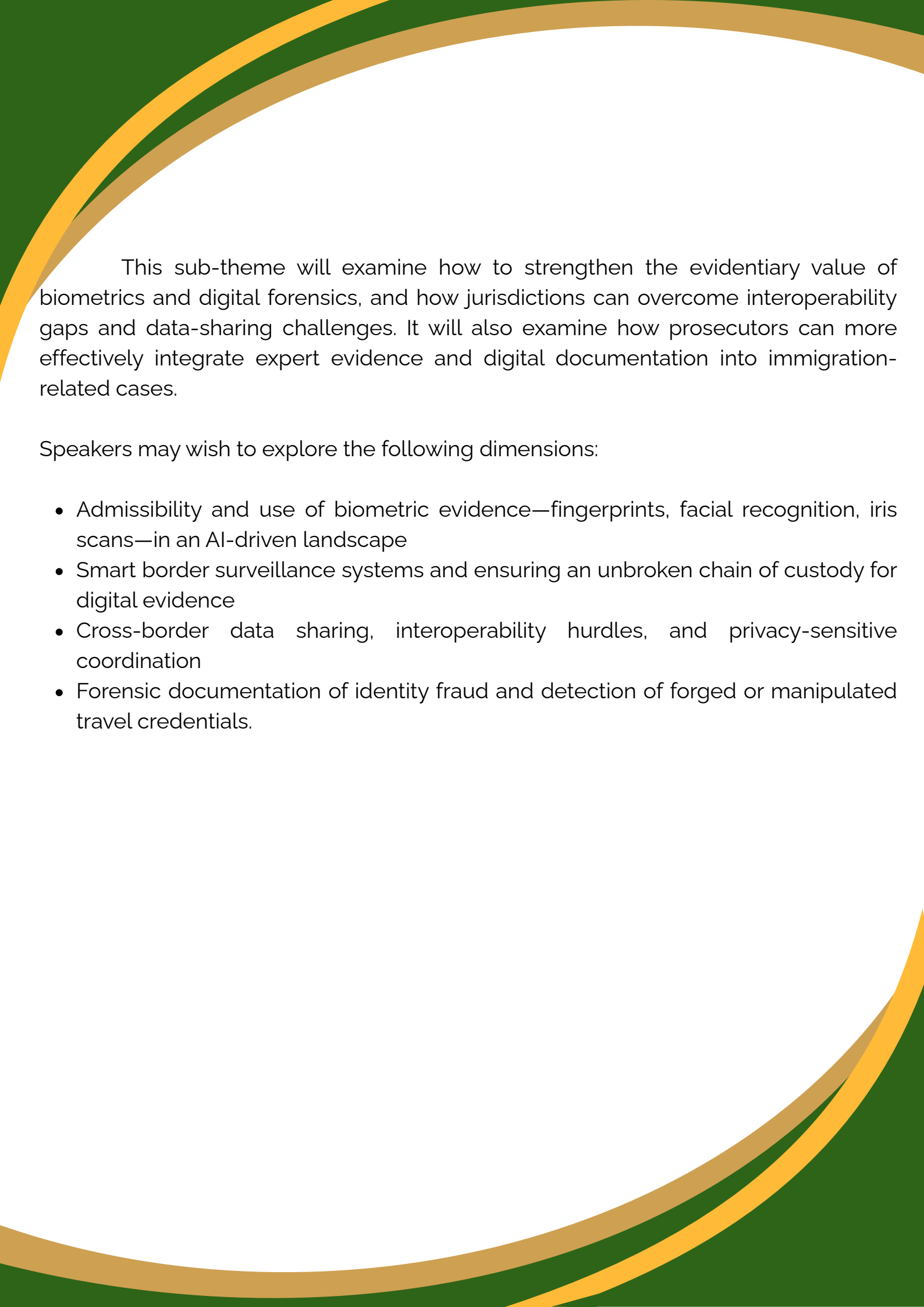
Evidence in immigration prosecution: Digital identification, biometrics, and forensics

Technology - particularly AI-driven identification tools - is central to the ways in which states manage borders and investigate immigration related offences in several jurisdictions today.

However, despite their promise, the effective use of technologies such as biometrics, automated surveillance, and digital forensics can be highly uneven across regions, particularly posing challenges for developing jurisdictions or jurisdictions with more limited technological capabilities.

Further, concerns regarding privacy, reliability, restrictions related to data transmission and sharing, and chain of custody considerations complicate the use of digital evidence in prosecutions. Criminal groups exploit fragilities in verification systems and manipulate identities and systems to obscure their activities. Stronger institutional capabilities, consistent standards, and cross-border cooperation are all crucial facets in ensuring that prosecutors can confidently handle digital evidence in courts and create a solid foundation for deterring violations of the rule of law.

In the absence of these foundations, the full potential of modern identification tools remains untapped, while access to the same would remain limited in order to fight immigration-linked crimes.



This sub-theme will examine how to strengthen the evidentiary value of biometrics and digital forensics, and how jurisdictions can overcome interoperability gaps and data-sharing challenges. It will also examine how prosecutors can more effectively integrate expert evidence and digital documentation into immigration-related cases.

Speakers may wish to explore the following dimensions:

- Admissibility and use of biometric evidence—fingerprints, facial recognition, iris scans—in an AI-driven landscape
- Smart border surveillance systems and ensuring an unbroken chain of custody for digital evidence
- Cross-border data sharing, interoperability hurdles, and privacy-sensitive coordination
- Forensic documentation of identity fraud and detection of forged or manipulated travel credentials.

PLENARY THREE

Persistent crimes and risks of porous borders: Regional lessons in prosecuting transnational movement offences

Many regions continue to struggle with porous borders—whether long coastlines, difficult terrain, or fluid cultural and ethnic ties that transcend national boundaries. These vulnerabilities are exploited by smuggling groups, traffickers, and organised criminal networks that operate seamlessly across neighbouring jurisdictions.

Prosecutors are often hampered by uneven resources, overlapping mandates among enforcement agencies, and difficulties obtaining evidence from border zones where state presence is limited. Even when legal frameworks exist, weak inter-departmental coordination or jurisdictional disputes can delay or derail prosecutions. Learning from regional experiences—especially those confronting similar border pressures—can reveal practical strategies for building robust, coordinated responses to crimes that thrive in areas of high mobility.

This sub-theme will explore how prosecutors, border forces, and regional partners can collaborate more effectively to detect, investigate, and prosecute cross-border movement offences. It will also examine lessons from land and maritime borders where cultural ties and geography complicate enforcement.



Speakers may wish to explore the following dimensions:

- Case studies from land and sea crossings illustrating the criminal risks of penetrable borders
- Prosecutorial cooperation with border patrol, Coast Guard, and immigration enforcement agencies
- Regional innovations and international standards shaping border-related immigration law
- Prosecuting in areas of overlapping jurisdiction, shared ethnic communities, and fluid cultural identities.

PLENARY FOUR


Statelessness, identity, and legal protection in the context of prosecuting without borders

Individuals who move without clear nationality, documentation, or state protection across several regions pose significant legal and humanitarian challenges for criminal justice systems. These individuals, categorised as “stateless”, often struggle to prove identity, cannot access legal assistance, or assert procedural rights granted to them by virtue of domestic or international law.

Children, refugees, trafficked persons, and other persons who are at crossroads with the justice system due to problems such as illegal, irregular or mixed migration, require special safeguards that several jurisdictions lack, or lack the capacity to implement fully, in line with international standards.

Prosecutors must necessarily navigate obligations designed to protect individuals from harm. Principles such as non-refoulement are non-negotiables in ensuring humanitarian safeguards inherent to international regulations and their frameworks dealing with migration or otherwise. However, accountability for criminal conduct is also of utmost importance. Herein arise tensions, which may result in hesitation, inconsistent practices, or uneven treatment of people across jurisdictions.

Clarity in determining the legal status of persons, trauma-informed approaches, and effective cooperation among agencies handling vulnerable groups are thus crucial in ensuring stronger legal responses to these challenges.



This sub-theme will consider how prosecutors can manage cases involving stateless individuals, minors, and displaced populations while maintaining both legal integrity and humanitarian protections. It will also explore opportunities for harmonising practices across jurisdictions to ensure dignity and fairness.

Speakers may wish to explore the following dimensions:

- Determining the legal status of undocumented and stateless individuals during criminal proceedings
- Understanding the needs of children, trafficked persons, and refugees who come into conflict with the law
- Balancing prosecutorial duties with non-refoulement obligations under international norms
- Developing cross-jurisdictional approaches that protect human dignity and rights while allowing effective enforcement.

SPECIAL SESSION

Towards a common legal framework: Treaty-building and regional consensus on prosecuting immigration-linked offences

Transnational crimes linked to migration have exponentially expanded, while the cooperative frameworks meant to address them have failed to keep pace. Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs), extradition agreements, and immigration-related conventions of today often leave critical gaps in evidence sharing, the return of fugitives, and the handling of emerging digital offences in a complex legal landscape. Regional differences in procedures and inconsistencies in thresholds and legislative approaches hinder swift prosecution, allowing criminal networks to exploit legal differences and delays. Building a shared legal foundation, through treaty reforms, model laws, and harmonised prosecutorial protocols, could significantly strengthen regional capacity, while balancing sovereignty with humanitarian and operational realities of the legal system. Cooperation, though, must necessarily take into account resource disparities, political sensitiveness and varied legal traditions.

This sub-theme will explore how jurisdictions can collectively envision new frameworks, improve existing cooperation instruments, and develop practical tools that support prosecutors in addressing immigration-related crime.



Speakers may wish to explore the following dimensions:

- Gaps in MLATs, extradition arrangements, and immigration-related treaties that hinder cooperation
- Feasibility of a Southeast/South Asian convention on immigration-linked offences
- Balancing sovereignty, humanitarian obligations, and resource limitations in regional cooperation
- Developing model legislation or shared prosecutorial protocols to facilitate harmonisation

**VISIT THE CONFERENCE
WEBSITE**



*If you have any questions,
please contact
gc@iap-association.org*