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PRESS RELEASE

An Enugu based non-governmental organisation, Women Information Network (WINET) has appealed to both the Federal and State governments to use the occasion of the Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence campaign that commences on the 15th of June 2009 to announce its support for strong and effective policies to Disarm Domestic Violence saying that many people especially women were suffering from gun violence in the country.

WINET is also demanding from the government's policies which would keep women safe from gun violence because for every woman killed or physically injured by firearms, many more are threatened.

In a statement in Enugu to mark the commencement of the Global Week of Action Against Violence, the NGO condemned the indiscriminate use of guns across the country in the spate of kidnappings of both women and men, as well as sexual abuse of women.

In the statement signed by the project Co-ordinator of WINET, Miss Ijeoma Ogbonna, the NGO recalled the experience of Mrs. Chinwe (not real name) who is now separated from her husband because of his threats to shoot her. The woman's husband who is a senior security officer had been using his service pistol to threaten her each

time they had a misunderstanding in the home. This happened until their children who had witnessed several of such incidents advised their mother to move out of the house as these threats could one day culminate in actual shooting.

This is just one of the stories of what some women go through in their homes, the statement said.

WINET regretted that of the nearly 900 million small arms in the world today, more than 75% are in the hands of private individuals – most of them men. Given this, the statement observed, women are paying a disproportionately heavy price for the multi-billion naira trade in small arms.

The statement emphasized that Disarming Domestic Violence is the first international campaign aimed at protecting women from gun violence in the home and the society at large. The main goal is to ensure that people with a history of domestic abuse are denied access to firearms, or have their licenses revoked.

One of the focus areas of the 2009 international Campaign is to address one of the most serious, but least known, aspects of violence against women, which are deaths, injuries and fear caused by guns in the home.

The organisation said it is using the week to draw attention to the human toll of small arms proliferation and misuse.

Women Information Network is a member of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Nigeria Chapter, the global movement against gun violence that is pressing for spouses and partners to be consulted before a gun license is granted, as an essential measure to protect women. IANSA is a network of 800 civil society organizations working in 100 countries including Nigeria to stop the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons

Ijeoma Ogbonna (Miss)
Projects Coordinator