

Latest events in the Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence: 26 June

This has been the most successful Week of Action yet, with more than 300 events in over 90 countries. The week included the successful launch of the Disarm Domestic Violence campaign, and global support for a strong and effective Arms Trade Treaty.

IANSA Director, Rebecca Peters said: “We’ve seen a wonderful series of activities this year, with organisations and individuals around the world demonstrating their commitment to stopping gun violence in their communities and in their countries. IANSA Network members insist that this problem can be prevented if governments and civil society work together.”

Media coverage during the week has been extensive, with at least 350 items so far. Many government departments and UN agencies have been involved, including UNICEF and UNDP country offices. Events this year have included rock concerts, rallies, memorials for victims and school visits.

AFRICA

- Mozambique: Monitoring gun control
- Nigeria: ATT could reduce gun violence in Niger Delta region
- Rwanda: Gun availability restricts peacebuilding in North
- Senegal: Rally in Casamance conflict zone
- Sierra Leone: Peace march and drama highlight dangers of small arms
- South Africa: Campaigners defend gun law
- Uganda: Domestic violence treated as a “normal thing”

AMERICAS

- Belize: UN urges ratification of Firearms Protocol
- Chile: AI presses government on ATT and remembers victims
- Colombia: Fathers pedal for disarmament
- Colombia: Peace rally and a ban on carrying guns in Bogota
- Ecuador: Quito by candlelight
- El Salvador: Ballistics training
- Honduras: Students mobilise against gun violence
- Panama: Campaign to revive gun law reforms
- Peru: Survivor testimony, ATT advocacy
- Venezuela: Candlelight events in 8 cities

ASIA

- Afghanistan: Small arms conference
- Bangladesh: Call for peace commission
- India: Gun survivor network; ATT support from government
- Nepal: Film on children in conflict
- Pakistan: Schools highlight domestic violence
- Pakistan: Rally and seminar on armed violence

EUROPE

- Austria: Letter-writers urge US support for ATT
- France: DDV campaign launch
- France: Focus on Mafia crime
- Portugal: Gender and armed violence

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

- Algeria: Online petition for ATT
- Bahrain: Call for ATT action
- Egypt: Workshop on gun-free elections
- Iraq: Posters highlight dangers of guns
- Lebanon: Rap stars against guns

AFRICA

Mozambique

FOMICRES (Mozambican Force for Crime Investigation and Social Reinsertion) contacted government officials to collect information about recent gun control activities. The information will be presented at a press conference to help publicise the National Commission on Small Arms. FOMICRES also sent an opinion piece in support of the Arms Trade treaty to printed media.

Nigeria

The government should support a strong Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) at upcoming discussions at the UN, urged Dickson Orji, president of the Nigerian Action Network on Small Arms (NANSA). Reported on the Leadership Nigeria website, Dickson Orji said: "This treaty will impose a law against manufacturing countries' transfer of weapons to non-state actors where it would be abused, particularly as it is happening in the Niger Delta." The Niger Delta region is one of the most gun-affected parts of West Africa.

Media: www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/Africa.htm#Nig

Rwanda

On 17-18 June, Saferrwanda organised a seminar for community leaders in Kimonye Sector, Muasanze District, in the gun-affected north of the country. Participants discussed options for removing guns from circulation in the region, and disarming domestic violence (DDV) within the community and the role of women as peacebuilders.

Report: www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/Africa.htm#Rwa

Senegal

Campaigners took part in a rally for the Arms Trade Treaty, in Ziguinchor in the gun-affected Casamance region on 20 June. Organised by MALAO, RABEC and the CV/AV Movement, it received coverage in Le Soleil and Agence de Presse Sénégalaise.

Photo: www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/Africa.htm#sen

Sierra Leone

Campaign for Peace and Non-Violence (CPN) concentrated on how small arms undermine peacebuilding and development. The events included a Peace March in Makeni City and a drama performance in Bo Town about the dangers posed by small arms on security and human rights.

Photo: www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/Africa.htm#Sie

South Africa

Gun Free South Africa campaigners displayed their solidarity with the police, defending the Firearms Control Act from a legal challenge in the High Court in Pretoria, on 23 June. An association of gun owners is attempting to challenge the 30 June deadline for obtaining a firearms license under the stricter terms of the Firearms Act, rather than the more permissive conditions for a license under the previous law. The Firearms Control Act was the result of GFSA campaigning, and implementation started in 2004. Gun owners have had 5 years to obtain a new licence.

Photo: www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/Africa.htm#SA

Uganda

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CECORE) and Uganda Action Network on Small Arms (UANSA) co-sponsored the national launch of the Disarm Domestic Violence (DDV) campaign at the Royal Imperial Hotel in Kampala on 19 June. Rose Othieno of CECORE and Richard Mugisha of UANSA represented civil society, while former minister and gender activist Miria Matembe and current National Focal Point director Joe Burua gave the government's response. Rose explained that the DDV campaign aims to remove guns from the hands of known domestic violence offenders through laws to block firearm ownership without spousal notification. Miria concurred that domestic violence in Uganda is treated as almost a "normal thing" and that the legal authorities have been hesitant to deal with it. The event received coverage on several local radio stations and appeared in an article in Monday's edition of The Daily Monitor.

Photo: www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/Africa.htm#Uga

AMERICAS

Belize

The country offices of UNDP and UNICEF issued a media release for the Week of Action, urging the government of Belize to ratify the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime and its Firearms Protocol. "Our efforts to create safe spaces in communities must continue to be accompanied by other actions to curb the movement, availability and use of weapons", said Rana Flowers, UNICEF Country Representative. On 15 June, Channel 5 TV news included an interview with UNICEF's program coordinator.

Media: www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/Americas.htm#Bel

Chile

During the Week of Action Amnesty International Chile pressed the Chilean government to promote the ATT in the upcoming UN meeting in July. On 28 June, a giant artificial candle was placed at Plaza Italia in Santiago to remember gun violence victims. This event was organised in coordination with CLAVE. The web news service Adital reported on the event.

Media: www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/Americas.htm#Chi

Colombia

Colectivo Dignidad Humana held rallies in Plaza de Caycedo, the central park in Santiago de Cali and in the government square, which attracted over 150 members of the public on 16 and 17 June. On 18 June they held an awareness day at Garces Luis Horacio health centre, with over 50 medical staff, paramedics and patients. Awareness-raising also took place at the Colegio Hogar school with students and teachers. On 19 June a discussion was held at the University on armed violence, especially the impact it has on the lives of women within the home. On 21 June (Father's Day in Colombia) the prevention message was promoted at a sports facility in Caleña. They urged men 'to pedal for disarmament' and distributed campaign materials to over 1000 people. Colectivo spokesperson Gissella Salazar was interviewed by Channel Telepacífico.

Photo: http://www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/Americas.htm#Col

Colombia

A peace rally was held in Bogota on June 19 to mark the Week of Action. Community leaders, women's groups, gun violence victims and NGOs marched down the streets of Ciudad Bolívar, a neighbourhood seriously affected by armed violence. Local music bands and dance groups also joined the march, which was organised by Redepaz and the local government, in coordination with CLAVE. The Bogota municipal government has banned the carrying of guns in public places until 3 July. At the same time the city will hold a gun buyback and a full program of seminars and cultural activities on the theme of disarmament.

Ecuador

More than 1000 people gathered in Plaza de la Independencia in Quito on 24 June to light candles in memory of gun violence victims. During the event, SERPAJ activists gave out postcards about small arms control and collected information about people's ideas on security issues. The answers will be used to write a letter to the government and conduct media outreach work. During the week, SERPAJ sent a letter to the Minister of Government urging him to tighten the national firearms legislation. The candlelight event was organised in coordination with CLAVE.

El Salvador

UNDP El Salvador is hosting a training program on the identification of guns and ammunition, aiming to improve the processing of evidence for criminal cases in the courts. The course ran on 23 June, with another session on 4 July, with participants from the Ministry of Defence, the National Police, the Prosecutor's Office and the Supreme Court of Justice. It is part of a program supported by UNDP called 'Strengthening institutional capacity to prevent armed violence'.

Honduras

Throughout the week UNDP Honduras organised events in high schools in four regions of the country: Juticalpa, Choluteca, Comayagua and Comayagüela. Activities included workshops on gun violence and poetry, painting and sport competitions. Students also attended film screenings and participated in marches and balloon release events in their cities. On Friday 19 June, more than 1200 students travelled to the capital (Tegucigalpa) and participated in the march that had been jointly organised with CIPRODEH.

Photo: http://www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/Americas.htm#Honduras

Panamá

Civil society organisations have joined with parents' groups, the police and the Episcopal Church in demanding that the new government revive the reforms to the gun law which died when the national election was held in May. Vicente Blake of SERPAZ (Servicio y Paz Panamá) said the reforms had been about to go through the Congress when the government changed. He hopes the new government will respond to popular pressure and agree to move quickly on gun control.

Peru

450 community leaders and educators attended a workshop organised by Amnesty International Peru on 19 June at El Callao, the city with the highest gun violence rates in the country. Mayerlis Angarita, who coordinates a gun violence victims' group in Colombia, was the main speaker. She talked about the consequences of gun proliferation and met with local leaders. Mayerlis and AI members also spoke to university students in Lima and were interviewed by Radio San Borja and the dailies La Primera, Perú21 and El Peruano. On 18 June, AI held a meeting with the First Vice-president of the Peruvian Congress who pledged to support the Arms Trade Treaty and to examine Peru's firearms laws in light of the principles advocated by the Control Arms campaign. The following day AI visited Juan Pablo Guerrero and Vitaliano Gallardo from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to discuss Peru's participation in the next OEWG meeting. Both officials stated that Peru will attend the meeting and will support a strong ATT.

Venezuela

On 20 June, 8 Venezuelan cities – Caracas, Anzoátegui, Aragua, Carabobo, Lara, Nueva Esparta, Táchira and Zulia – held simultaneous events to mark the Week of Action. Participants wrote messages on a giant poster asking for tighter gun control and formed the word “13 thousand” with candles to highlight the number of gun violence victims in Venezuela during 2006. Signatures were also collected on a petition to the government to support the Arms Trade Treaty, create stronger national firearms laws and release official numbers of gun violence victims. This activity was organised in coordination with CLAVE members in nine other Latin American countries. The event was featured by the television channel RCTV, the dailies El Nacional, Talcual, Noticias 24 and the radio stations Magica, Fe y Alegria, 750 RCR and 92.1 Valencia.

ASIA

Afghanistan

On 22 June HEWAD in Kabul held a conference about the use, manufacture and impact of small arms. Speakers included Nasrat Amanullah, Director of HEWAD and representatives of cultural, educational, political and social organisations. This was followed by a Q&A session with the media.

Bangladesh

A national commission on peace and security was recommended at a consultation held at the Dhaka Reporters Unity Auditorium on 21 June. Speakers included the country representative of South Asian Alliance for Poverty Alleviation (SAAPA) and the former president of the Bangladesh Medical Association. The consultation was organised by BANSAs and BDPC, whose director, Sharif Kafi, presented a discussion paper. Sharif urged the government to create a National Action Plan to implement the UN programme of Action on Small Arms, and stressed the need for regional cooperation to address the problem. Media coverage included three TV channels, two FM radio stations, seven Bangla and two English newspapers, including the Daily Star.

Media: www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/Asia.htm#Ban

India

Binalakshmi Nepam of CAFI (Control Arms Foundation of India) has received agreement from the Government's Department of Disarmament and International Security Affairs (DISA) to continue discussions about supporting the UN Process for an ATT. In a further meeting on 19 June in the village of Moraing, a gun survivor, Mr Phillam Johnson, announced his plan to set up a Youth Guns Survivor Network, as part of the week of Action events. There has also been collaboration between CAFI and women journalists over the past year to cover stories about gun violence in armed conflict areas.

Nepal

Gauri Pradhan, parliamentarian and member of the Human Rights Commission, was the guest of honour at a film screening in Kathmandu on 20 June. The documentary *Ujyalotira (Towards The Light)* shows how children are victims of conflict. It was launched by the Ban Landmines Campaign Nepal (NCBL) and Women Development Society (WODES). The audience included parliamentarians, human rights defenders, religious leaders and journalists.

Pakistan

In Peshawar, Community Initiatives Support Services (CISS) campaigned to raise awareness of the problem of guns in the home. On 15 June they organised a drawing competition at Rose Model Primary School, followed by a competition for middle-level students at Khyber Islamic Model School on 16 June. On 18 June, CISS held a community gathering with emphasis on youth involvement, Their activities ended on 20 June with a walk through Peshawar led by Syed Iqbal Jafri, Col.(R) Iftikhar Ahmed Qazi and Imdad Khan Afridi (Executive Members of CISS). Personnel from the local administration and the police also joined in. CISS gained extensive media coverage for the Disarm Domestic Violence campaign, with items in *The Nation*, *The Frontier Star*, *The Frontier Times*, *Voice of Peshawar*, *Daily Surkhab Peshawar*, *Daily Il Haq*, *The Daily Awam Un Nass* and *The Daily Pakistan Peshawar*.

Report: www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/Asia.htm#Pak

Pakistan

More than 100 people, including government officials, doctors, teachers, students, political leaders and NGOs, attended a seminar on 'Armed Violence and Peace' organised by STEP in Khushab, Punjab Province. Tabinda Qamar from the Community Participatory Initiative said: "Civil society must mobilise, organise and resist gun violence at all levels". The seminar was preceded by a rally through Khushab on 17 June, and a press conference on 16 June. Media coverage was extensive, including the *Express*, *Jinnah*, *Islam*, *Dawat-e-amal*, *Jang* and *Tijarat*.

EUROPE

Austria

Amnesty International Austria organised a letter-writing campaign to the US embassy in Vienna throughout June. The campaign urged the US administration to openly support an effective Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

France

AP Peace Fellow Rebecca Gerome and fellow activists organised an event on 20 June to publicise the Disarm Domestic Violence campaign in Paris.

France

Terra del Fuoco and FLARE (Freedom, Legality And Rights in Europe) ran an information stand in Place D'Italie in Paris, highlighting their fight against transnational organised crime. They handed out IANSA badges, FLARE materials, and Global Crisis folders. Three days of meetings followed, culminating in a round-table discussion on the influence of the mafia on society.

Portugal

On 29 June the Observatory on Gender and Armed Violence (OGAV) based at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, will launch the Disarm Domestic Violence campaign and screen the premiere of the documentary 'Luto como Mãe' (Right to Mourn) directed by Luis Carlos Nascimento. On 26 June Tatiana Moura from OGAV, Luis Carlos Nascimento and Elizabeth Paulino were interviewed on RTP (national television) and Antena 1 (national radio) for the regional news programme about the campaign and the documentary. Tatiana said it is important to recognise the gender dimension in armed violence (public and private), highlighting the link between guns and domestic violence.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Algeria

Amnesty International Algeria called on the public to support the online petition asking US President Obama to support the Arms Trade Treaty.

Petition: www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/mena.htm#Alg

Bahrain

Amnesty International called for Bahrain to take an active role in the forthcoming UN discussions on an Arms Trade Treaty. AI's Nasser Burdestani said: "Weapons acquired for national security can be diverted or misused to increase suffering and poverty within their own country or region. An ATT will be a crucial step to prevent this, and Bahrain support is urgently needed." Al-Waqt newspaper featured the story on 21 June. Media: www.iansa.org/campaigns_events/WoA2009/mena.htm#Bah

Egypt

Parliamentarians, journalists, youth activists and grassroots human rights organisations were among the participants in a workshop on gun-free elections. The elections will be held in 2010 at the latest. The workshop was organised by the Egyptian Organisation on Human Rights (EOHR) in Cairo on 28 June.

Iraq

Posters were distributed to schools, government institutions, ministries and other public spaces in Basra, from 15-17 June. The posters included messages about the dangers of small arms, and the problem of child soldiers, citing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is 20 years old. The campaign was organised by Hadya Society for Human Rights & Community Development In Cooperation, in partnership with the small arms focal point at the Ministry of Interior.

Lebanon

People enjoying a music festival in Beirut heard anti-gun hip hop songs and received flyers promoting the Control Arms Campaign for an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). 21 June was a music festival in the city, and 5 of the stages included singers promoting the campaign, organised by the Permanent Peace Movement (PPM). The anti-gun message received coverage on national TV and in newspapers, and on 25 June Future TV featured a 15 minute interview with members of PPM about this campaign.