

Latest Events in the Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence 15-21 June 2009

Please tell us about the events in your countries as soon as possible so we can broadcast them to the NETWORK!

AFRICA

- Burundi: Radio interview on ATT
- Cameroon: Live TV discussion on war toys, banditry and the ATT
- DRC: Outreach to journalists
- Namibia: The Week of Action on breakfast radio
- Nigeria: Women call for government action
- Ghana: ATT in national media
- Uganda 'is on fire with the Week of Action'

AMERICAS

- Canada: Disarming Domestic Violence campaign launch
- USA: Seattle Times article on armed domestic violence
- USA: Crime guns transformed into 'Tree of Peace'

ASIA

- India: First national consultation on women and gun violence
- India: Young people in Rajasthan pledge to avoid guns
- Nepal: Research papers presented
- Thailand: 'Rule by the Gun', report on guns in civilian hands

EUROPE

- Cyprus: Destruction of MANPADS
- UK: Ambassador blogs on ATT

AFRICA

Burundi

The National Radio of Burundi interviewed Jacques Ntabarikure, legal representative of Colony of the Pioneers of Development (CPD), who stressed the importance of an Arms Trade Treaty. "We are convinced that the existence of an ATT would contribute to the reduction of violence in Burundi and the world," Jacques said. And, speaking on Bonesha FM, he noted that illicit weapons are the root cause of the country's problems with violence, and the sense of insecurity in society. "In Burundi, an effective civil disarmament must be done!" he said. "And the people must understand that peace and security are disturbed by their illegally held weapons. They must adhere to the policy of non- gun violence."

Cameroon

Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP) held a live television discussion about violence and arms on Vision4 TV. The programme was anchored by Loveline Ngeh, with panellists Eugene Ngalim (Executive Director of CAMYOSFOP), Patience Elango (CAMYOSFOP Press and Information Secretary) and George Kome (teacher at Central Bilingual Primary School, Yaounde). The debate covered the impact of war toys, firecrackers, video games and violent films; women and violence; the firearms law of Cameroon; the 'coupeur de route' (road bandits) on the highways of the Grand North and the cities of Cameroon; sources of illegal weapons; the situation of Chadian and Central Africa Republic refugees hosted by Cameroon; and the UN Arms Trade Treaty.

Democratic Republic of Congo

ASVOCO launched the Week on 15 June with a media briefing attended by Goma radio stations Okapi, Radio Suti ya Injili, Radio plaine évangile, Radio Kivu1, Radio Taina and the Congolese National TV and Radio. Representatives of student organisations are also involved in local activities against gun violence. Mwenebatende Dufina Tabu of ASVOCO said: "Since we live among people who are committing violence with guns, we must become aware and denounce the transgressors."

Namibia

The Week of Action started early in Namibia. On 4 June Felix Muchila, host of “The Ninth Hour” on the national Namibian Broadcasting Company (NBC), interviewed Pauline Dempers and Johanna Wilkie of NANGOF Trust. The radio interview centered on the problem of gun violence in Namibia and internationally. Pauline talked about the link between guns and violence against women, and announced the launch of the Disarming Domestic Violence campaign on 11 June. Panelists at the launch event included: Members of Parliament Hon. E Dienda and Hon. M Venaani, Ms R Namises, Director of Women’s Solidarity, and Mr. H Theunis, Director of De-mining Project. Pauline was also interviewed about the campaign, alongside a Windhoek police officer, on the Damara>Nama radio station, which broadcasts in the Nama language.

Nigeria

An Enugu based NGO, Women Information Network (WINET) has appealed to both the Federal and State governments to support IANSA’s Disarm Domestic Violence campaign, and take steps to keep women safe from gun violence. The statement, issued by WINET project Coordinator, Ijeoma Ogbonna, highlighted the experience of women who are threatened with violence in the home.

Ghana

Emmanuel Sowatey, a member of the National Peace Council in Ghana, urged the government in Ghana to actively promote a strong Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), in a prime-time breakfast interview for Unique FM, an English-language national radio station, on 15 June. He was also interviewed for an article in the Daily Graphic, the country’s largest-circulation newspaper. Three days earlier, Emmanuel promoted the Week of Action on Boss FM, an Akan-language regional radio station.

Uganda

‘Uganda is on fire with the Week of Action’ reports Richard Mugisha, chair of the Uganda Action Network on Small Arms (UANSA). This followed a press conference on 15 June, attended by 4 major newspapers, 3 TV stations and 5 radio stations.

AMERICAS

Canada

The Disarming Domestic Violence campaign was launched at the opening of the 1st Annual Canadian Conference on the Prevention of Domestic Homicides. On 15 June, Maribel Gonzales of Project Ploughshares gave a presentation which made the links between small arms proliferation and domestic violence. Her address also explained how small arms proliferation could be controlled (internationally and in Canada), and the need to attack the forces which drive demand for small arms, while promoting international advocacy on the issue. The conference took place at London Convention Centre in Ontario, on June 14-15. It was organised by the University of Ontario’s Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women and Children, one of five centres which make up the Alliance of Canadian Research Centres on Violence. The aim of the conference was to enhance research and practice collaboration to review and prevent domestic homicides.

USA

The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence has been urging newspapers to cover the launch of the Disarming Domestic Violence campaign. The Seattle Times has agreed to run an opinion piece by the group’s executive director, Nan Stoops.

USA

Weapons from the Los Angeles and New York Police Departments have been melted down to create a “Peace Tree” by the organisation Arms to Art. The "Olive Tree of Peace" was given to Prince Albert of Monaco and now resides in the Palace, to support the prince’s efforts to host peacemakers in Monaco.

ASIA

India

15 June: The Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network has released the first responses to an online consultation on the subject of 'Women and Gun Violence in India'. The consultation began at the start of June, using the United Nations Development Programme's online discussion group representing over 2500 women's groups in India. Groups were asked to make suggestions about how to prevent gun violence and rehabilitate survivors. Suggestions included: linking national and international laws on gun violence; working to reduce the sense of militarization in society; promoting the idea that women should not be viewed as victims of gun violence, but as valued participants in the process of reconciliation; and highlighting the voices of "gun widows" in the gun violence debate. "This is the first time that solutions for women and gun violence have been addressed in a nationwide forum in India," said Binalakshmi Nepram of CAFI (Control Arms Foundation of India). "This is an amazing beginning for us."

India

Around 250 people in Kota District, Rajasthan pledged to avoid the use of guns in their villages at youth rallies today. The gatherings in the villages of Mandargar and Jaspura were organised by the Rural Development and Youth Training Institute RD&YTI, a community group in Rajasthan.

Nepal

Parliamentarians, policy makers and representatives of the police and army heard evidence about the impact of small arms on innocent people at a meeting in Kathmandu. The meeting, jointly organised by the Institute of Human Rights Communications Nepal (IHRICON) and South Asia Peace Alliance (SAPA Nepal) featured two research papers, "Impact of Small Arms in the Peace Process of Nepal: Role and Responsibility of Policy Makers" and "Use and Impact of small arms on innocent people and Criminal Activities". Mr. Rudra Nepal, assistant Secretary at the Foreign Ministry was among the 65 delegates. The meeting heard calls for Nepal to support the Arms Trade Treaty process. Afterwards, survivors of armed conflict shared their experience in a live radio interview on Image F.M.

Thailand

A report released today (15 June) by Nonviolence International Southeast Asia has called on the Royal Thai government to end the creation of civilian defence volunteer forces and stop the supply of firearms to civilians in Southern Thailand. The report, "Rule by the Gun: Armed Civilians and Action Against Gun Violence", says that the Thai government's policy of expanding civilian volunteer forces and deregulating firearm sales to address the violent conflict in Southern Thailand has been counter-productive, leading to greater insecurity and ethnic and religious polarisation. The report suggests that the government's policy has increased distrust between Malay Muslim and Thai Buddhist populations, while fueling a "security economy" in which arms proliferation becomes a source of income.

EUROPE

Cyprus

Over 300 surplus military MANPADS (portable missile launchers) were destroyed on 12 June at the Kalo Chorio range in Cyprus. The Organisation for Security & Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) supported the disposal of the weapons, which is part of a policy of destroying surplus MANPADS to prevent them being diverted for use in terrorist acts. Ilia Giorgadze of Georgia, who chairs OSCE's Forum for Security Cooperation, said the shoulder-launched missiles required special attention "in the light of the potential for devastating loss of life, and the potential effect on the civil aviation industry".

United Kingdom

John Duncan, the UK Ambassador for Multilateral Arms Control and Disarmament has published a blog in support of an Arms Trade Treaty. "The humanitarian and moral case for regulation is unassailable," he wrote, "with hundreds of civilians being killed every day by weapons that have found their way into the hands of criminals, terrorists, insurgents and more recently pirates." He also stressed the importance of economic arguments, praising responsible arms companies that have supported international regulation of the global arms industry. "As someone whose job bridges both nuclear and conventional weapons proliferation, I am acutely aware that one of the key elements of making progress towards a World Free of Nuclear Weapons is to stop the uncontrolled proliferation of conventional weapons," he said.

