

Latest events in the Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence: Wednesday 17 June

Please visit www.iansa.org/woa to see photos, posters and more information about the Week's events

Add the Week of Action banner to your website! Click here: <http://tinyurl.com/mvcj7f>

AFRICA

- Benin: media coverage
- Burkina-Faso MP: Invest in development, not weapons!
- Cameroon: Submission to the SG is on the way
- Cote d'Ivoire: Call for vigilance on small arms
- DR Congo: Focus on Uvira in South Kivu
- Liberia: Lively meeting demands practical action on ATT
- Niger: Call for creative thinking
- Somalia: Survivors of gun violence share their experience
- South Africa: Public meeting hears harrowing evidence of gun violence
- Sudan/Uganda: Cross-border campaign and memorial mass

AMERICAS

- Antigua and Barbuda: Youth group in the news
- Brazil: Seminar on gun control
- Canada: Disarm Domestic Violence campaign
- USA: Student spreads the word in Florida
- Venezuela: Gun-shaped candle to be burned

ASIA

- India: Violence "from womb to tomb"
- Pakistan: Risk to women from illegal firearms

EUROPE

- Macedonia: SOS helpline launched
- Sweden: Campaigning in parliament

AFRICA

Benin

A press statement from West Africa Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA) was covered on the Canal 3 channel in Cotonou on 16 June. The statement invited the Benin government to push harder for a strong Arms Trade Treaty.

Burkina-Faso

Mariam Liehoun, national coordinator of WAANSA (Burkina) hosted a press conference in Ouagadougou, attended by members of parliament, small arms campaigners, journalists and other officials. MP Fankani Nitiebo urged the parliament to vote for development rather than the purchase of arms. See a photo of the press conference at <http://tinyurl.com/kosu6u>

Cameroon

Eugene Ngalim, executive director of Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP) called for the firearms law to be updated when he appeared on the radio show "Morning Safari" on 16 June. He also congratulated Cameroon MP Bujung James for signing the parliamentary declaration in support of the ATT. CAMYOSFOP and the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms visited two orphanages in the capital city, Yaounde where they distributed IANSA badges and leaflets. (See a photo at <http://tinyurl.com/kqvfr>) In the afternoon the activists visited the Ministry of External Relations to ask about Cameroon's submission on Armed Violence and Development and participation in the UN Open-Ended Working Group on the ATT in July. The group was told that Cameroon's submission to the UN Secretary General is finished and about to be sent to the UN; and that government supports the ATT and will definitely participate in the OEWG.

Cote d'Ivoire

At a press conference in Abidjan on 16 June, Ismaila Kangoye of Amnesty International Cote d'Ivoire stressed the need for civil society to challenge the government on the proliferation of small arms. "We must also challenge the armed groups," he said.

DR Congo

Janvier Kabwe, coordinator of the child protection group AVREO (Association des Volontaires pour la Réhabilitation des Enfants Orphelins) called for the Week of Action to concentrate on the proliferation of small arms in the territory of Uvira, South Kivu province. His statement was carried on several radio stations, including Radio Messenger of the People, Community Radio of Sande and Kiliba Radio.

Liberia

A crowd of more than 300 attended a meeting in Monrovia to discuss the ATT process and the background to the treaty. The meeting was organised by Liberians United to Expose Hidden Weapons (LUEHW) and the Center for the Exchange of Intellectual Opinions (CEIO). It discussed the emerging consensus on the treaty, its scope, and the criteria for regulating international arms transfers. Participants included the Liberian National Commission on Small Arms (LiNCSA), Federation of Liberian Youth, Youth United for Development, Foundation for Democracy in Liberia, Tubmanburg Women Network, University professors and students, and Christian and Muslim clerics. There was a strong media presence including Star Radio (Moses Wenyu), UN Radio (Jack Davis), Kings FM Radio (Darlington Pelenah and Ziamah Zigler) and The In-Profile Newspaper (Fredrick Gaye and Jacqueline Dennis). The meeting concluded with a set of demands: support for a comprehensive ATT during the OEWG meeting in July; A Yes vote for the next ATT resolution during the First Committee of the UNGA in October; and the appointment of a national focus person or group on the ATT.

Niger

At a meeting in Ndjako-Seku organised by WAANSA on 15 June, coordinator Apha Abdoukadi Oumarou said that ideas were more powerful than arms, for solving the problems of development and peace. He stressed the importance of the ATT.

Somalia

Somali Women Education Campaigners (SWEC) hosted a well-attended public forum in Mogadishu on the impact of gun violence. The event, on 15 June at the Nasahablood Hotel, attracted over 50 participants, including representatives from international NGOs, religious leaders, lawyers, women's groups, the private and public sectors, community elders, Somali writers, youth leaders, and the media. Survivors of gun violence shared their experiences and emphasised the need for trauma counselling, protection, advocacy, awareness-raising and capacity-building in this country where gun violence affects millions. SIMBA Radio and the local newspaper Ayaamaha reported on the event.

South Africa

Laura Pollecut of Ceasefire Campaign led meetings in Pietermaritzburg, in the province of KwaZulu Natal, on 15 June. She discussed gun violence with the Coordinator, staff and residents from The Haven, a women's shelter. "In a province known for its traditional approach to women," Laura noted, "it was not surprising that women related well to the issues I put on the table." Speaking in isiZulu, at least three women recounted harrowing stories of their experience of gun violence. One talked specifically about domestic violence. The Shelter coordinator confirmed that gunshots are often heard in the area, and has asked Ceasefire to arrange further events.

Ceasefire was also involved in a Youth Day event with PACSA (Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Action) with at least 300 young people. Laura Pollecut spoke about non-violence, guns and the value of being part of an international campaign. She also explained how South African law can be used to ensure that domestic violence abusers are denied access to guns. But more resources are needed to make sure that the law is implemented properly, she added. Ceasefire also did a national radio interview on 15 June.

Sudan/Uganda

In Nimule, Southern Sudan, on 15 June, the South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms (SSANSA) teamed up with the Ugandan Action Network on Small Arms (UANSA) to launch a cross-border campaign advocating gun-free elections. They were hosted by the local Catholic Church, where a memorial mass was held for those affected by gun violence. The two parties then led a peaceful march in remembrance of those who killed in Uganda and Sudan.

AMERICAS

Antigua and Barbuda

De'ann Helen Brodie, President of Antigua's youth empowerment group COPPY (Civil Organisation Promoting Peace in Youth) gave an interview on the increasing levels of gun violence on the 'Good Morning Antigua' breakfast show of Antigua Broadcasting Station (ABS). Clips of the interview were also shown as the lead item in the 7pm evening news on 15 June.

Brazil

The Brazilian Disarmament Network organised a successful seminar about gun control in Brasilia. Over 50 representatives from the government, NGOs and civil society participated. They discussed the implementation of Brazil's gun control laws.

Canada

The international Disarm Domestic Violence campaign was backed by Canada's Coalition for Gun Control on 16 June. Coalition president Wendy Cukier said: "Although gun violence takes different forms in different countries, there is a common theme: where there is easy access to firearms, there are higher rates of women and children killed with guns. The Global Week of Action is a good opportunity to draw attention to the fact that in spite of the differences, whether in Canada, South Africa, Australia, Trinidad or Brazil we share common goals: safe communities." <http://tinyurl.com/m76mju>

USA

Gladys Momanyi, a student at Nova Southeastern University in Florida, has initiated an outreach programme in prominent locations including at the main library and university centre to explain the global gun crisis to students, staff and visitors. <http://tinyurl.com/mlptjm>

Venezuela

Members of Amnesty International Venezuela were interviewed about their Week of Action activities by radio stations Fe y Alegria and Magica. The national newspaper Talcual included details of the AI event on Saturday 20 June in Caracas. The group plans to melt a gun-shaped candle, and collect signatures to petition the Venezuelan government to support the ATT and tighten national gun laws. See the candle on the WoA Materials page at <http://tinyurl.com/l7yeo7>

ASIA

India

At a meeting of the Manipur Gun Survivors' Network, Mrs M Sobita, Secretary of Women's Action for Development, highlighted the difficulties faced by women. "Domestic violence for a woman starts from womb to tomb, with the practice of abortion if it is a girl child," she said. Mrs Sobita praised the Manipur group's work in fighting domestic violence, noting that a large proportion of Manipuri women face violence every day. The meeting included moving testimonies from gun survivors, concluding with a resolution to stay vigilant and continue working towards curbing domestic violence in Manipur. See a photo of the Manipuri women at <http://tinyurl.com/n2ke96>

Pakistan

At a briefing in the Multan Press Club organised by the Awaz Centre for Development Services, Awaz chief executive Muhammad Zia-ur-Rehman highlighted the launch of the Disarm Domestic Violence campaign. He pointed out that huge numbers of illegal firearms were being used in violence against women, with rifles being used to beat women, as well as threaten them with shooting. He said that in 85% of domestic violence cases the police were reluctant to intervene, as they considered it to be a private matter. Superintendent Shaukat Abaas of the District Police Office suggested that government should reduce the risk from firearms

by launching weapon-destruction programmes, establishing gun-free zones and toughening the rules on gun ownership.

EUROPE

Macedonia

On 16 June, Journalists for Children and Women Rights and Protection of Environment in Macedonia (JCWE) launched a national SOS helpline for victims of armed violence. The helpline number is 141700. The launch was attended by 15 NGOs working on women's rights.

Sweden

The halls of the Swedish Parliament were the venue for campaigning activity by the Swedish Action Network on Small Arms (SANSA) and the Parliamentary Association for the Combat of the Uncontrolled Spread of Small Arms. Over 200 folders were distributed and information was displayed to encourage parliamentary involvement in the Control Arms movement and in the forthcoming UN discussions on the ATT.