

PRESS RELEASE

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Global commitments to small arms controls under threat from US at United Nations World Summit

Activists around the world today condemned US attempts to remove all references to controlling the small arms trade from a United Nations document due to be signed by more than 170 world leaders next month.

With less than three weeks before heads of state arrive in New York for the unprecedented summit on poverty and UN reform, the US has taken an axe to the proposed outcome document for the summit, requesting the deletion of the only two commitments on small arms:

- To "adopt and implement an international instrument to regulate the marking and tracing, illicit brokering, trade and transfer of small arms and light weapons."
- To implement the 2001 UN Programme of Action. This agreement was an early step by the international community towards controlling the trade in small arms.

More than 140 States have expressed support during the last few months of negotiations for the inclusion of one or both of these commitments on small arms in the measures to be agreed by the summit.

"The World Summit will set the agenda on security and development for the years to come. The uncontrolled proliferation of guns is the missing link for both of these issues. How can people work their way out of poverty when they can't step outside for fear of bullets? The majority of governments who are beginning to recognise this must not allow the US to let arms control slip off the agenda," said Rebecca Peters, Director of IANSA.

Small arms kill at least 300,000 people a year and injure over a million more. They prevent access to healthcare, education and humanitarian assistance and fuel the conflicts that destroy economies and employment opportunities. IANSA members are calling for a new global legally-binding treaty to control the arms trade.

The World Summit will take place at UN headquarters in New York on 14-16 September. Negotiations on the outcome document are now in their final stages. The text of the US proposed amendments is available at www.reformtheun.org.

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IANSA is a global network of more than 600 civil society organisations including victim support groups, human rights activists, public health professional and research institutes.
www.iansa.org