



*** EMBARGOED 00.01 Monday 13th March 2006 ***

DUNBLANE 10 YEARS ON. CHILDREN CONTINUE TO DIE IN SCHOOLS AROUND THE WORLD

Since 1996 when the Dunblane school massacre occurred, at least 256 children and 198 adults have been gunned down in schools around the world. Another 840 children and adults have been injured in school shootings.

Figures released today by the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) reveal that despite worldwide shock and calls for action following Dunblane, many more school classrooms have become murder scenes.

On the 13th March 1996, sixteen children and their teacher died when a man carrying legally owned guns entered their school in Scotland and opened fire. Twelve more children and two more teachers were wounded.

This led to a ban on handguns in the UK and the country has seen a drop in gun deaths as a result. But the figures released by IANSA show that the continued availability of firearms globally has led to the needless deaths and injuries of hundreds of children.

49 of the children died in 20 separate school shootings in the US which has one of the highest levels of gun ownership in the world, with nearly one gun for every man, woman and child in America.

Deaths also occurred in school attacks in Yemen, Canada, the Netherlands, Argentina, Germany and Russia, where 176 children and 155 adults were killed in the siege at Beslan.

The global epidemic of gun violence kills 1000 people every day, and for every person killed three more are seriously injured. Every single one of those incidents is completely preventable.

Rebecca Peters, Director of IANSA said, "Small arms spread around the world as readily as any disease, yet the international community has been slow to mobilise for prevention. Once again we must mark this anniversary with a sadness made heavier for the knowledge that school children continue to die needlessly, as a result of guns."

2006 is an important year in the quest to halt the flood of guns in the world and stem this global crisis. In June the United Nations will host a global meeting to discuss how the world's governments should cooperate to tackle the gun epidemic. Rebecca Peters, "It is crucial that government representatives assembling for the meeting understand that the public want action. The US has lost at least 49 children to gunfire in schools since 1996

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yet is one of the major opponents to improvements in global measures to stem small arms. It will fall to the UK and other countries which acknowledge the crisis facing us, to ensure that they do not succeed.”

Notes to Editors:

- The United Nations Small Arms Review Conference takes place at UN headquarters in New York between 26 June and 7 July 2006.
- The UN first discussed small arms in 2001, when governments signed the Programme of Action, a non-binding agreement to control the illicit trade in small arms. This limited agreement, which can best be described as ‘only a start’, comes up for review at the meeting in June.
- The next opportunity to tackle the small arms epidemic at a global level will not be until 2011, by which time another 1.8 million people will have died at the barrel of a gun and millions more will have been injured.

IANSA is a global network of more than 700 civil society organisations including human rights activists, democracy campaigners, development organisations, public health and humanitarian agencies, and victim support groups. Its members work for controls on the international arms trade and for laws to make people safer from gun violence.
www.iansa.org

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