Gun Violence: The Global Crisis

1000 die every day

campaigning for fewer guns and safer communities
A thousand people die every day by gunshots, and three times as many are severely injured. Spinal cords severed, bones shattered, families destroyed, hearts broken. If the death, injury and disability resulting from small arms were categorised as a disease, we would view it as an epidemic. As a man-made vector of injury, guns are manifestly bad for human health.

No country is immune

Why guns?

If 1000 people a day were dying from a global epidemic of bird flu, the world would sit up and take notice. But the numbers aren't being joined up: a high school massacre in the United States is seen as totally unrelated to a suicide in Finland, gang warfare in Brazil or armed rape in Sudan. The common denominator in all these cases is the type of weapon involved.

Guns may not be the root cause of violence, but they multiply it dramatically. Poverty, unemployment, injustice, frustration, fear, jealousy or depression can kindle the spark of violence; adding guns to such a volatile environment is like throwing petrol onto a fire.

When guns replace fists – or knives – the outcome is far more likely to result in death. So a mundane case of road rage turns into a homicide. An alcohol-fuelled argument leaves behind a corpse. Faced with the breakdown of personal relationships, such as an act of infidelity, a gun can turn a moment of blinding anger into a lifetime of regret. A dispute between neighbouring communities can erupt into a war once the first shots ring out.

The power to transform tension or anxiety into tragedy in an instant is a design characteristic of small arms. Guns are designed for the purpose of killing. Gunshot wounds are particularly severe compared with other injuries, because of the extensive damage to surrounding tissue. Guns, unlike knives, can kill at a distance, whether by direct aim or by a stray bullet. The presence of a gun also reduces the likelihood of bystanders intervening to assist the victim or to pacify the assailant.

A father’s hunting rifle is used by his teenage son to commit suicide. A small arm is equally deadly in the hands of a friend or an enemy, a civilian or a soldier.

Guns can have a functional lifetime of many decades, during which time they may move several times between owners and uses. Surplus military weapons find a market in a conflict-torn developing country. A household handgun becomes a crime weapon when a burglar steals it from the house. Armes supplied in good faith by a democratic government to ‘freedom fighters’ overseas are used against its own troops years later. A father’s hunting rifle is used by his teenage son to commit suicide. A small arm is equally deadly in the hands of a friend or an enemy, a civilian or a soldier.

An assault with a firearm is 12 times more likely to prove fatal than an assault by other means. The mere presence of a gun creates a mortal danger: a 2003 study conducted in the US showed that keeping a gun in the home increases the risk of somebody in the household dying – whether by homicide, suicide or accident – by 41%.

Guns can have a functional lifetime of many decades, during which time they may move several times between owners and uses. Surplus military weapons find a market in a conflict-torn developing country. A household handgun becomes a crime weapon when a burglar steals it from the house. Armes supplied in good faith by a democratic government to ‘freedom fighters’ overseas are used against its own troops years later. A father’s hunting rifle is used by his teenage son to commit suicide. A small arm is equally deadly in the hands of a friend or an enemy, a civilian or a soldier.

Borders are porous and guns – particularly handguns – are by nature extremely portable and concealable. In short, they are a smuggler’s dream and a law enforcement nightmare. Some guns are small enough to be hidden in a pocket and can be carried by a child as young as seven.

It is this combination of lethality and longevity that makes small arms such an efficient vector of the violence epidemic. To reduce the toll of death and injury we must bring the flood of guns under control.
Guns: facts and figures

Guns homicide rates by country

Source: WHO, UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for most recent year available.

Who owns the guns and who suffers?

Guns are closely associated with police and military forces in the public imagination. However, of the 875 million guns circulating on the planet today, 74% are owned by non-state actors or civilians. This means that weapons in private hands outnumber government arsenals by 3 to 1 (see diagram below right).

Just as the majority of gun owners are civilians, so too are the majority of gun victims. Of the estimated 1000 deaths by gunshot each day, around 250 occur in a war or armed conflict. The remainder are homicides (56%), suicides (14%) and unintentional gun deaths (5%). Nine out of every 10 people shot dead are boys or young men.

The AK-47: The world’s favourite killing machine

“I would prefer to have invented a machine that people could use and that would help farmers with their work - for example a lawnmower.”

Michael Klare, Professor of Peace and World Security Studies, Hampshire College, US

• Kalashnikov’s design has spawned many copies, such as the Chinese Type 56.
• There are 50-70 million AK-47s worldwide.
• At least 82 governments have them in their military armories.
• It is produced in at least 14 countries, including Albania, Bulgaria, China, Germany, Egypt, Hungary, India, Iraq, North Korea, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Venezuela.
• The average price is about $400, though in some African countries they are sold for as low as $12.

Small Arms and Light Weapons

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) are weapons that can be carried and used by one or two people, including handguns, assault rifles, machine guns, grenade launchers, anti-tank or anti-aircraft guns and light mortars. Light weapons, ammunition, grenades, landmines and explosives are also part of this category. The terms weapons, guns, small arms and firearms are used interchangeably in this publication.

International Action Network on Small Arms

IANSA is the global movement against gun violence and consists of 800 civil society organisations working in 120 countries to stop the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. IANSA seeks to make people safer from gun violence by reducing demand for weapons, improving firearm regulation and strengthening controls on arms transfers. It represents the voices of civil society on the international stage, for example in the UN process on small arms, and draws on the practical experience of its members to campaign for policies that will protect human security.
The movement of small arms across the world is a huge threat to human security. Around 8 million new small arms are manufactured every year, but far more significant is the movement of second-hand guns from one user to another. They last - and remain lethal - for decades.

For example, after the Cold War, Eastern European weaponry was brokered to freelance war merchants who continue to sell them on for use in conflicts today. Even when conflict officially ends, the weapons remain at large, where they can be used to commit crime by individuals or armed groups. At present, it is impossible to monitor or interrupt this deadly flow of weapons. This is because:

a) There are no agreed global standards for governments when authorising exports or transfers.
b) There are no international guidelines on regulation of gun ownership among citizens.
c) There is no legally-binding treaty to control the activities of arms brokers.
d) There is no legal requirement to maintain records linking guns to their location, or to trace guns used in crime.

The diagram (right) illustrates the many paths that a gun can take, and how it can transfer from the state sector to the private individual (or vice versa) many times over. It also shows how the same gun can pass from legal to illegal hands during its lifetime. The triangles show its potential misuse, while the circles show how misuse could be prevented.

**Consequences of the proliferation of small arms**

**War**
Small arms are the weapon of choice for most of the world’s conflicts, as they are small, cheap and easy to carry and maintain. They account for 60-90% of direct conflict deaths each year and are indirectly responsible for many more, due to the spread of disease and hunger caused by armed conflict. The absence of effective international controls makes UN arms embargoes unenforceable, so guns continue to flow into conflict zones.

**Uneasy peace**
Guns can remain in society for a long time after conflict, causing levels of interpersonal violence to remain high. The 36-year civil war in Guatemala ended in 1996, but rates of gun violence there are higher now than they were during the war. Twenty five people are killed or seriously injured every day by gunshots – in a country of only 12 million.

**Urban gun crime**
Levels of small arms violence in countries at ‘peace’ can be as high, or even higher than levels in war zones. For example, total gun deaths in the city of Rio de Janeiro between 1997-2000 exceeded conflict deaths in war zones such as Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Uganda during the same period.

**Domestic violence**
Domestic violence is more likely to be lethal if there is a gun in the home. For women, the risk of being killed by an intimate partner increases by 172% if there is a gun in the household.

**Suicide**
Suicide attempts involving guns are more likely to be fatal than other methods. A 2007 Austrian study showed a decrease in the overall national suicide rate after stricter laws on gun purchases were adopted.
Police and private security misuse

More human rights abuses are committed with small arms than with any other weapon. Small arms are the tools used by state security forces to stifle dissent, enforce repressive policies and commit human rights abuses.

Armed private security guards are a growing concern since they are not under state control.

Gun violence and poverty

All societies are affected by gun violence but poor countries suffer the brunt of the impact. Poor people are the most likely to be shot, yet they are the least likely to receive treatment and rehabilitation. An estimated 3000 people a day are left severely injured by guns – that’s three for every person killed. While being forced into a wheelchair is difficult and traumatic in developed countries, it is a devastating experience in the developing world, where equipment is scarce and expensive. Many disabled survivors cannot leave their homes unless a strong relative is available to carry them outside.

Because the direct victims of gun violence are overwhelmingly young and male, the death rate can have a serious impact on a country’s workforce, especially in regions where women are traditionally occupied with bringing up a family. The economic burden of supporting their families or becoming full-time caregivers then falls on them.

Gun violence destroys jobs and opportunities to escape poverty and it disrupts health and education services. On a wider scale, national and international companies can be driven out of operation, trade is reduced because transport cannot function, foreign direct investment diminishes, tourists stay away and the management of infrastructure and national resources is disrupted.

Gun violence has a direct effect on the causes of hunger – a survey by the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation showed that armed conflicts are the largest single cause of food emergencies, responsible for 35% of these emergencies between 1992 and 2003.
The end of the Cold War and the globalisation of the arms trade

The end of the Cold War released a flood of arms onto the world market, as the huge armies of the old Soviet Union were dismantled and their weapons became surplus. Since then the arms industry has become increasingly globalised, enabling arms deals to circumvent national regulation by passing through legal loopholes in different countries. Arms embargoes imposed by the UN have been violated several times.

This map shows how an Israeli broker, Leonid Minin, exploited the poor international controls on the arms trade to supply weapons to Liberia. Minin was arrested in a hotel in Italy in August 2000, and found to be in possession of diamonds, large amounts of cash and 1,500 documents in several languages related to transactions of oil, timber and arms. These transactions appeared to be mostly with Liberia – a country under UN arms embargo since 1992.

In 1999, Minin had bought 68 tons of surplus military equipment, including 3000 AKM assault rifles and 1 million rounds of ammunition, from a Ukraine arms marketing firm called Ukropsexport. This transaction was brokered by Engineering and Technical Company Ltd, a shell company located in Gibraltar but registered in the British Virgin Islands, and reportedly owned by Minin. He provided an end-use certificate to Ukraine attesting that the weapons’ ultimate destination would be Burkina Faso; however, that end-use certificate was forged.

The arms flew from Ukraine to Burkina Faso on an aircraft operated by a UK company, Air Foyle. Once it arrived, the cargo was transported directly to Monrovia, Liberia in several flights made by Minin’s personal business jet. Payments for the arms from the Liberian government were made to a Hungarian bank account associated with the shell company Engineering and Technical Company.

Amnesty International reports that some of these weapons were later supplied to rebels in Liberia’s neighbour, Sierra Leone, which was also under a UN arms embargo. Thus this arms deal by Leonid Minin led to at least one and possibly two violations of UN arms embargoes. Yet despite strong evidence against him, the Italian courts were unable to prosecute Minin for his trafficking activities because the arms transfer had not passed through Italian territory.

In late 2006, the UN General Assembly embarked on a process to draft an Arms Trade Treaty, a legally binding instrument to regulate international transfers of conventional weapons. The proposed ATT would require all requests for such transfers to be assessed in terms of their likely impact on human rights, international humanitarian law and sustainable development. The aim is to prevent international transfers from directly or indirectly putting weapons into the wrong hands. The ATT would make violation of UN embargoes a crime prosecutable in any country that ratifies the treaty.

If effective controls on international arms transfers had been in place when Minin conducted his deal, then the transfer could have been prevented, or at least successfully prosecuted. This is because the controls would have required authorisation by every state touched by the transaction (in this case Ukraine, the UK and Burkina Faso) before the deal went ahead. In addition, the likely end-user would have been more thoroughly investigated, especially since nearby countries (Liberia, Sierra Leone) were under embargo. And even if the deal had gone through despite these checks, then the violations of UN arms embargoes would have made Minin liable for prosecution in any country, regardless of whether the weapons had passed through its national territory.

A group of NGOs from the IANSA network have developed a set of six principles for the control of international arms transfers (see box). We are campaigning for an effective Arms Trade Treaty based on these principles.

Global Principles for International Arms Transfers

**Principle 1:** Responsibilities of states

All international transfers of arms and ammunition shall be authorised by all States with jurisdiction over any part of the transfer (including import, export, transit, transhipment and brokering) and carried out in accordance with national laws and procedures that reflect, as a minimum, States’ obligations under international law. Authorisation of each transfer shall be granted by designated State officials in writing only if the transfer in question first conforms to the Principles set out below in this instrument and shall not be granted if it is likely that the arms or ammunition will be diverted from their intended legal recipient or re-exported contrary to the aims of these Principles.

**Principle 2:** Express limitations

States shall not authorise international transfers of arms or ammunition that violate their expressed obligations under international law.

These obligations include:

1. Binding resolutions of the Security Council, such as those imposing arms embargoes;
2. The prohibition on the threat or use of force;
3. The prohibition on intervention in the internal affairs of another State.

**Principle 3:** Any other treaty or decision by which that State is bound, including:

1. Binding decisions, including embargoes, adopted by relevant international, multilateral, regional, and sub-regional organisations to which a State is party;
Gun Trafficking: how brokers navigate the legal loopholes

Principle 3:
Limitations based on use or likely use
States shall not authorise international transfers of arms or ammunition where they are likely to be used for violations of international law, including:
A. breaches of the UN Charter and customary law rules relating to the use of force;
B. gross violations of international human rights law;
C. serious violations of international humanitarian law;
D. acts of genocide or crimes against humanity.

Principle 4:
Factors to be taken into account
States shall take into account other factors, including the likely use of the arms or ammunition, before authorising an arms transfer, including the recipient's record of compliance with commitments and transparency in the field of non-proliferation, arms and munitions control, and disarmament.

States should not authorise the transfer if it is likely to:
A. be used for or to facilitate terrorist attacks;
B. be used for or to facilitate the commission of violent or organised crime;
C. adversely affect regional security or stability;
D. adversely affect sustainable development;
E. involve corrupt practices;
F. contravene other international, regional, or sub-regional commitments or decisions made, or agreements on non-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament to which the exporting, importing, or transit States are party.

Principle 5:
Transparency
States shall submit comprehensive national annual reports on all their international arms and ammunition transfers to an international registry, which shall publish a compiled, comprehensive, international annual report. Such reports should cover the international transfer of all conventional arms and ammunition including small arms and light weapons.

Principle 6:
Comprehensive Controls
States shall establish common standards for specific mechanisms to control:
A. all import and export of arms and ammunition;
B. arms and ammunition brokering activities;
C. transfers of arms and ammunition production capacity; and
D. the transit and trans-shipment of arms and ammunition.

States shall establish operative provisions to monitor enforcement and review procedures to strengthen the full implementation of the Principles.

NOTE:
The Principles above bring together States’ existing obligations under international law and standards in respect of the international transfer of arms and are proposed by a diverse group of non-governmental organisations. The Principles reflect many international instruments of a different nature: universal treaties, regional treaties, declarations of the United Nations, multilateral or regional organisations, regulations intended to be a model for national legislation, etc. Some of the Principles reflect customary and treaty law, while others reflect developing law or best practices gaining wide acceptance. The compilation indicates to states the best general rules to adopt in order to establish effective control of international arms transfers according to the rule of law.
A Comprehensive Approach

Governments have recently begun to make the paradigm shift away from a narrow concept of ‘national security’ (protection the state) and toward a broader vision of ‘human security’ (protecting people). This means recognising that weapons acquired for national security can be diverted or misused to increase suffering and poverty within their own country or region. Gun violence is a preventable problem. Stronger regulation of the legal trade would help keep guns out of the hands of those who are likely to misuse them, whether it is an armed rebel group committing atrocities during a civil war, a police force that uses live ammunition to suppress public demonstrations, or an individual with a history of domestic violence. The public health community has pointed out that gun violence is a preventable problem, much like a disease or injury.

First steps toward solving the gun violence epidemic

In July 2001 the first UN Conference on Small Arms produced an agreement called the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Those last four words, ‘in all its aspects’ are crucially important as an acknowledgement of the multidimensional nature of the small arms problem: it has multiple and diverse sources, and its impact varies in different geographic, political and social contexts. This means the solutions must also be multidimensional, incorporating measures at local, national, regional and global levels to control supply, reduce demand, remove existing weapons from circulation, stop diversion from legal to illegal users, close loopholes, improve detection and prosecution of offenders, among other steps. A subsidiary agreement is the 2005 International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Under the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms (PoA), every country has committed itself to:

- Establish a national agency to coordinate among all the government departments and organisations working on different aspects of the small arms issue. These include Customs, Justice, Defence, Security, Foreign Affairs, Interior, Health, Police, Women, Human Rights, Youth, Environment etc.
- Identify a specific person or office as a point of contact for officials in other countries requesting or providing information on small arms.
- Involve civil society organisations as partners in stopping the proliferation and misuse of guns.
- Harmonise national policies among states within each region; strengthen regional and sub-regional agreements on controlling small arms.
- Support the implementation and enforcement of regional agreements and moratoria on small arms.
- Make illicit gun production or possession a criminal offence under national law.
- Establish adequate laws to prevent illegal manufacture and trafficking in guns, or diversion to unauthorised recipients.
- Seek out and prosecute illegal gun producers and traffickers.
- Improve the enforcement of arms embargoes.
- Mark all guns at the point of manufacture to enable identification and tracing.
- Keep comprehensive and accurate records for as long as possible on the manufacture, holding and transfer of small arms.
- Assess all applications for export in accordance with ‘strict national regulations’ consistent with states’ existing responsibilities under international law.
- Require end-user certificates for exports and transit of small arms.
- Notify the original supplier nation if guns are being re-exported.
- Disarmament, Demobilisation & Reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants, including collection and destruction of their weapons.
- Destroy surplus, confiscated or collected weapons.
- Meet regularly with other countries to report on progress.
- Conduct public awareness campaigns on the small arms problem.
- Increase the international exchange of information on this topic.

The Programme of Action does not:

- Mention human rights.
- Indicate how to regulate small arms in the civilian population.
- Mention the problem of arms transfers to non-state actors.
- Mention the misuse of guns by state officials.
- Define ‘adequate laws’ or ‘existing responsibilities under relevant international law’.
- Recognise the gendered nature of gun misuse and gun injury.
- Recognise the role of the public health community in helping to solve the problem.
From Words to Action

Ensuring gun users are responsible

Gun possession is a privilege with associated responsibilities. In most countries, in order to drive a car, applicants must pass a test proving their fitness to drive before a licence is issued. If a car crashes killing a pedestrian, the owner of the car can be identified by checking the registration plate which will be linked to the owner’s name. Guns are specifically designed to kill. Yet the majority of countries do not have effective licensing or registration systems for guns. In some countries, gun laws also vary between provinces. The absence of harmonised legislation undermines the regulations of neighbouring provinces and countries.

- Limiting access to inappropriate guns. For example, prohibiting civilian possession of military weapons. Some countries also prohibit civilian possession of handguns, which are concealable so are used widely in crime.
- Strictly licensing every user. The user should provide proof that he needs the gun, and should undergo thorough background checks to ensure that the user does not have a history of violence.
- Registering every gun to its user or to the armoury where it is being stored. A central database would permit authorities to trace illicit guns to their last legal user, and so prevent future diversion.
- Training police and other officials to know when to fire their gun as well as how to fire it; and holding them accountable for any abuses committed with their weapons.
- Safely storing military, police and civilian weapons and ammunition to prevent theft, leakage onto the criminal market or accidents. Updating old or insecure warehouses with effective and modern safety devices and alarms. Storing guns safely at home to prevent gun accidents, suicide, misuse and theft.

Regulating the gun trade

Guns are a dangerous product requiring special regulation on manufacture and transfer. Because they leak so easily from the legal to the illegal sphere, regulation should be strong and consistent across the entire chain of commerce. The globalised arms trade requires strong regional and global standards preventing traffickers, criminals and abusers from taking advantage of loopholes.

- Regulating all aspects of the gun trade, including manufacturing, brokering, financing, transporting and also firearm dealers.
- Marking and registering all newly made guns, so that they can be traced. Any previously unmarked gun should be marked when they are encountered by police (eg on import or when making inventory of stockpiles).
- Prohibiting all private firearm transfers (loans, gifts, sales). All transfers must be through a licensed dealer and involve prior change of official registration details from first user to second user.
- Requiring users to have a licence before purchasing ammunition.
- Requiring an authentic certificate describing the intended use for all international small arms transfers. Prohibiting transfers if they are likely to be used to commit serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law, or undermine sustainable development.

Reducing the number of guns

Guns can be misused by their legitimate owner, even under the strongest regulations. Guns can also be stolen from their legal user, and in many countries this is a significant source of illicit guns. A society with fewer guns will reduce the risk of diversion and build confidence in the rule of law. This involves removing weapons from circulation and addressing the reasons why people want guns.

- Destroying surplus weapons, as well as those seized by police or collected in disarmament programs.
- Recovering weapons through amnesties and buybacks. For example in post-conflict countries such as Cambodia and Sierra Leone, weapons have been recovered in exchange for development incentives that reduce poverty and help to improve human security.
- Building police capacity so that citizens trust them to enforce the law and prosecute crime, and communities do not feel the need to arm themselves.
- Providing jobs for people who might otherwise turn to armed crime as a way of obtaining money.
- Educating the public about the real risks of having guns in the home.
- Providing alternative models of masculinity to break the perceived link between manliness and guns.
IANSA - the global movement against gun violence

The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) is the global movement against gun violence - 800 civil society organisations working in 120 countries to stop the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW). IANSA seeks to make people safer from gun violence by reducing demand for weapons, improving firearm regulation and strengthening controls on arms transfers. It represents the voices of civil society on the international stage, for example in the UN process on small arms, and draws on the practical experience of its members to campaign for policies that will protect human security.

Who we are
IANSA is composed of a wide range of organisations concerned with small arms, including:
- policy development organisations.
- national gun control groups.
- women’s groups.
- research institutes.
- aid agencies.
- faith groups.
- public health professionals.
- survivors of gun violence.
- human rights and community action organisations.

Where we work
The geographic distribution of IANSA members:
- North America – 8%
- Latin America – 15%
- European Union – 18%
- Eastern Europe – 12%
- Sub-Saharan Africa – 31%
- Middle East and North Africa – 1%
- Asia – 15%

Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence
This annual activity is the largest coordinated gun prevention event in the world. Activists in 65 countries took part in the 2007 Week of Action, which included rock concerts, photo exhibitions and public rallies. This culminated in the announcements of major government initiatives in Argentina and Sri Lanka.

Reducing secrecy in the Spanish arms trade
IANSA members in Spain are instrumental in the campaign for greater transparency in the Spanish arms trade, resulting in more stringent government reporting and stronger control mechanisms over export. The government adopted a motion to require parliamentary authorisation for all future Spanish arms exports in 2005.

Saving lives through gun law reform in Brazil
IANSA members have made considerable progress in Brazil, where women’s organisations have been particularly active. Their slogan “Choose gun free – your weapon or me” was used to confront notions of gun ownership and masculinity. National gun laws were strengthened in 2003 and 400,000 guns were taken out of circulation the following year through a government buyback. A year after the reforms, the gun death rate dropped 8%, which meant that 3,234 fewer people died by gunshot in 2004 than in 2003.

Gun-free elections in the Philippines
At the urging of IANSA members, the government banned firearms in public places from January 2007, hoping to reduce violence associated with the election in May. The national IANSA coalition then promoted the ban in communities and the media. The previous elections in 2004 had been marked by high levels of murders and other violence. Police reported a 60% drop in murders during the 2007 elections compared to 2004 (75 compared to 189).

Control Arms – towards a global Arms Trade Treaty
As a member of the Control Arms Campaign alongside Oxfam and Amnesty International, IANSA has been heavily involved in pushing for a global Arms Trade Treaty. The campaign has gathered the support of over one million people worldwide through the Million Faces Petition, which was delivered to the UN Secretary-General in 2006. A major victory was achieved in December 2006 when 153 of the world’s governments voted to start work on an Arms Trade Treaty in 2007.
Our goals
IANSA aims to reduce small armed violence by:

- raising awareness among policy makers, the public and the media about the global threat to human rights and human security caused by small arms.
- promoting civil society efforts to prevent arms proliferation and armed violence through policy development, public education and research.
- fostering collaborative advocacy efforts, and providing a forum for NGOs to share experiences and build skills.
- facilitating civil society participation in global and regional processes.
- promoting the voices of survivors, in solidarity with them and their families.

Exposing the gun culture myth in the Middle East
Research on the demand for guns in the Middle East undermines the claim that a gun culture is an integral part of Arab society. IANSA members surveyed people in Gaza, Lebanon, Sudan and the West Bank in 2006. They discovered that a clear majority of people wanted a society with fewer guns.

Partnerships with government in East Africa
Local civil society organisations are members of every National Small Arms Commission in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa. The 11 governments united against gun violence by agreeing the Nairobi Protocol on Small Arms. This treaty came into force in May 2006, and the National Commissions are involved in implementing the Protocol.

Weapons for Development in Sierra Leone
Community and church groups have been helping the government and UN carry out an 'Arms for Development' program since 2003. Weapons are exchanged for community-based development incentives. In areas that have benefited from the program, people traumatised by the conflict now feel more confident.

Linking domestic violence to guns in El Salvador
Legal firearms are the primary weapons used in domestic homicides, and for every woman killed or injured, many more are threatened. Members of the IANSA Women's Network collected 3500 signatures during the 2007 Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence, to petition Congress for a law stopping domestic violence offenders from owning guns.

IANSA Women’s Network
Members of the IANSA Women’s Network are working to stop gun violence in the home, on the streets and on the battlefield. They are using UN Security Council Resolution 1325 to increase women’s participation in disarmament processes and in the development of small arms policy and practice. They ensure that women’s interests are served by these policies and campaign to break the link between violence and masculinity. The network produces a quarterly bulletin called Women at Work: Preventing Gun Violence.

What’s ahead for IANSA?
- Campaigning for strong national gun laws, regional agreements and international initiatives to reduce the proliferation and misuse of small arms.
- Supporting the UN Small Arms process and the process for developing an Arms Trade Treaty.
- Increasing the engagement of civil society in national, regional and international action to reduce gun violence.
- Building awareness and understanding of the small arms crisis and its solutions.
3000 injured every day