

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Governments not doing enough to tackle spread of guns – UN Conference must take action**

As governments gather at the United Nations in New York this week to review progress on the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms, an independent global research project shows that four years after this agreement was signed, little has been achieved.

The report, *Examining the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action*, released today at UN headquarters, indicates that across the Middle East, North Africa and much of Asia almost no small arms commitments have been put into action. Other states, including some in East Africa, East and Central Europe and the Americas have made limited progress, but there is still much to be done. The report was released by IANSA and the Biting the Bullet Project.

IANSA members from around the world are attending the meeting this week to put pressure on governments to meet their commitments. Every week thousands of people die as a result of small arms violence, and each year millions more are injured, raped, tortured or displaced.

'Governments made commitments in 2001 to address the proliferation of guns, and they are not yet fulfilling these promises. The uncontrolled availability of guns is costing lives and undermining any attempts to alleviate poverty,' said Rebecca Peters, Director of IANSA.

The new report finds that:

- Less than 40 countries have laws controlling arms brokers, and many countries' controls on arms transfers are inadequate or out of date.
- More than 100 states have failed to establish governmental bodies to coordinate national action on small arms – a minimum step towards implementation.
- Only 18 states have developed specific national strategies on small arms, and only another 14 states have got as far as discussing one.
- More than 120 states have failed to review their laws and regulations governing small arms

The report highlights a number of countries where positive steps have been taken, particularly on stockpile management and weapons collection. But the scale of the interventions is likely to have only a local or marginal impact on the hundreds of thousands of gun deaths that occur each year.

The report calls on governments to take urgent action including:

- Developing detailed national action plans for small arms control
- Establishing National Commissions to coordinate action on small arms that involve all key government ministries and civil society organisations
- Cooperating to trace the lines of supply of illicit small arms, and the points at which they are diverted from the legal to illegal trade

“It is unacceptable that four years after the agreement of the UN Programme of Action, so little concrete progress has been made. While governments have been stalling, hundreds of thousands of people have died. We are looking to governments to take urgent action to address this tragedy,” said Paul Eavis, Director of Saferworld.

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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 professionals and research institutes.

**Biting the Bullet** is a joint project between International Alert, Saferworld and the University of Bradford in the UK.