



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Axis of inaction: coalition of the unwilling blocks progress on controlling small arms**

#### **Traditional foes join forces to hold up progress on negotiations**

New York: After two weeks of talking, governments have achieved virtually no outcome from a UN conference on controlling the proliferation and misuse of small arms. During this time, approximately 12,000 more people have died at gunpoint and many more have been injured, bereaved or denied access to livelihoods, healthcare and education because of armed violence.

Usually at loggerheads on disarmament issues, the USA and Iran, Israel and Egypt are this week to be found on the same side of the table – holding up progress, and thus preventing thousands of lives from being saved every year.

These four countries were joined by some others including China, Syria, India, and Pakistan in undermining the status of the final conference document. While the document was far from ideal, it was the only option left on the table at the end of a difficult meeting.

'It is tragic that the many progressive governments have not stood up to the minority of states preventing any further controls on the movement of guns around the world. The majority of countries have already put a lot of time and effort into protecting men, women and children from gun violence. If they allow this to happen at the next meeting in June, it will be a betrayal of the millions of people whose lives are blighted by guns,' said Rebecca Peters, Director of the International Action Network on Small Arms

This meeting at UN headquarters in New York was intended to set the agenda for the second world summit on small arms in June 2006, at which the Programme of Action (PoA) on small arms will be reviewed. The PoA was the world's first agreement on controlling the proliferation of guns, signed in 2001. The original programme was a good start, but a lot more is required to make people safer from gun violence. The conference in June will be the only opportunity before 2012 for governments to make the commitments that will protect people, including:

- Global principles to control the arms trade, to prevent guns being transferred to place where they might be used for human rights abuses, to fuel conflict or to hinder development
- National firearm laws, since guns in the civilian population constitute a major supply source for the illegal traffic

But after these two weeks of debate, there is still no guarantee that these issues will even be discussed.

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**IANSA is a global network of more than 700 civil society organisations working to stop the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. [www.iansa.org](http://www.iansa.org)**