

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: POL 30/029/2006 (Public)  
News Service No: 179  
7 July 2006

## **Control Arms: UN world conference on small arms collapses without agreement**

Control Arms Campaign: Oxfam International, Amnesty International and International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA)

The UN world conference on small arms has collapsed without agreement, despite the majority of governments, including the European Union, and many African and Latin American governments, backing tougher controls on the international trade in small arms and light weapons.

The conference, which ended on Friday 7 July, collapsed after a small number of states, most prominently the United States, blocked key issues so consistently that no agreement was possible.

During the conference, moves to agree global controls on the small arms trade were blocked by Cuba, India, Iran, Israel and Pakistan.

"The world has been held hostage by a tiny minority of countries. At the current rate, up to 12,000 people will have been killed by small arms during this two-week conference. They have been betrayed," said Anna Macdonald, Oxfam International's Control Arms Campaign manager.

The Control Arms Campaign is now taking its call for tougher global arms controls to the UN General Assembly in October. There, decisions are frequently put to a vote meaning that a small minority of governments cannot block progress. Several governments have already indicated that they want a resolution to be put to the UN General Assembly first committee calling for negotiations to begin on a legally-binding global Arms Trade Treaty.

"The world desperately needs a tough and well-enforced Arms Trade Treaty to stop the present flow of weaponry to serious abusers of human rights," said Brian Wood, Amnesty International's research manager for the arms trade.

The Control Arms Campaign has called on the governments to establish such a treaty and to agree global guidelines for small arms sales to stop weapons fuelling human rights abuses and poverty around the world.

"By allowing this meeting to fail, governments have squandered the opportunity to take action that would have saved lives around the world. It is unacceptable for two weeks of talking to produce no outcome, particularly when 1000 people are still dying at gunpoint every day," said Rebecca Peters, Director of

IANSA.

Over one million people from 160 countries backed the Campaign by joining the Million Faces Petition, which was presented to UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, on the first day of the conference, Monday 26 June.

Julius Arile, who presented the Million Faces Petition to Kofi Annan said: "I came to this conference to ask the world's governments to stop guns flooding into the area where I live in northern Kenya. I have lost many friends and even my brother to armed violence. I'm deeply disappointed that the world has done nothing to help me and the millions of people like me."

For more information or to arrange an interview, call:

In New York:

Anthea Lawson, IANSA: +1 347 220 2916. From Sunday: +44 7900 242 869.

Clare Rudebeck, Oxfam International: +1 646 512 4674. From Sunday: +44 7769 887 139.

In London:

James Dyson, Amnesty International: +44 7795 628 367

Public Document

\*\*\*\*\*

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

For latest human rights news view <http://news.amnesty.org>