



# VOICES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

THE PEOPLE'S CONSULTATION 2007 – GLOBAL REPORT

**control arms**



# THE PEOPLE'S CONSULTATION FOR AN ARMS TRADE TREATY 2007

Millions of people around the world suffer because the arms trade is poorly regulated. Weapons get into the wrong hands and are used to attack civilians and persistently abuse fundamental human rights. It's often the poorest people that suffer most from such armed violence – by getting shot or seeing their chances for development slip away.

The conventional arms trade is an increasingly globalised business – but mostly without international, legally-binding controls. National laws are often riddled with loopholes and it is all too easy for abusers to acquire weapons and munitions.

At the United Nations last year, 153 governments voted to start work on a global Arms Trade Treaty. In early 2007 governments started submitting their views on the how the Treaty could work.

Governments were not the only people thinking about a global Arms Trade Treaty. Around the world the Control Arms Campaign mobilised its supporters at over 100 events to show there is real grass-roots support for a treaty.

Some people went to extraordinary lengths to get their voices heard. Two young Philippino men travelled for two days on decrepit vehicles to get to the arms consultation. They endured breakdowns, delays and pouring rain to add their voices to the call for an Arms Trade Treaty. Meanwhile in Malawi families walked for miles under the hot sun so they could explain to their government how illegal firearms blight their daily lives.

These ordinary people and campaigners held meetings, demonstrations, concerts and radio phone-ins. In Burkina Faso, a caller to Radio Jeunesse said: “Uncontrolled



Burkina Faso



Tanzania



Paraguay



South Africa



Argentina



Japan

arms are a big problem for our people. Everybody is a victim if our streets are full of arms. It's time for an international treaty.”

Police officers and local politicians attended the meetings – they can easily be the victims of the uncontrolled arms trade too. They were in attendance in the Ugandan city of Lira, which is plagued by the brutal gunmen of the Lord's Resistance Army. People came together to discuss how terrified they are having such a brutal insurgency on their doorstep – and how they feel the international community could do more to restore peace and security.

At consultations held in every region of the country, Brazilians living thousands of kilometres apart expressed their common support for stronger arms controls based on human rights. Even in Iraq, where hundreds of thousands of official weapons are unaccounted for, a civil society group managed to hold a discussion on controlling arms distribution.

Many Government ministers and other leaders clearly heard the call for immediate action to stop arms proliferation and abuse. In Tanzania the President himself listened to Arms Trade Treaty campaigners. In France the influential IRIS think-tank brought government officials and independent experts to discuss how the Arms Trade Treaty would work in practice.

The 100 events and messages from around the world showed there is vast support from ordinary people to be protected from armed violence resulting from the irresponsible arms trade. They demanded an effective global Arms Trade Treaty to help achieve this.

Now all governments must ensure it becomes a reality.