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Save lives: Stop gun running

All over the world, people are demonstrating their opposition to the unregulated trade in small arms – a trade that kills an estimated 500,000 people each year.

Throughout the month of June, from Brazil to Uganda and the Philippines, campaigners affiliated to the International Action Network on Small Arms Transfers (IANSA), with the help of Oxfam International and Amnesty International, will be organising global "Days of Action" against the unregulated trade in small arms.

Small arms and light weapons are pouring into violent conflict zones and insecure areas unchecked by effective governmental action. Beyond the massive death toll, many more people are injured, displaced or left destitute by gun violence.

IANSA unites more than 320 organisations from around the world working to prevent the uncontrolled spread of small arms. Many groups in IANSA, including Oxfam and Amnesty International staff and volunteers, have experienced the shocking impact of small arms first hand and have been trying to work with governments to shape an international control agenda.

"We are still calling on governments to agree effective measures to prevent small arms from reaching violent human rights abusers," said Brian Wood of Amnesty International.

As part of the "Days of Action" campaign, people in communities devastated by small arms are being encouraged to stage events and gather images of friends and family who have been killed or injured by guns. These images will be flown to New York for an exhibition to be staged at the first-ever United Nations Conference on Small Arms, from 9 to 20 July.

"The UN conference is a historic opportunity for the international community to do something about the scourge of small arms," said Jonathan Ellis of Oxfam. "The exhibition will be just one way of reminding delegates that thousands of lives are in their hands."

"Governments bear the primary responsibility for taking action to regulate the arms trade. There is an opportunity in July for UN Member States to agree a programme of action to reduce the supply of and demand for these weapons. We strongly urge Foreign Ministers and Government delegates to attend the Conference and take action now to save lives and stop gun-running", said Sally Joss, the IANSA Coordinator.
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