

# VOICES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

THE PEOPLE'S CONSULTATION 2007 – GLOBAL REPORT

**control** arms



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

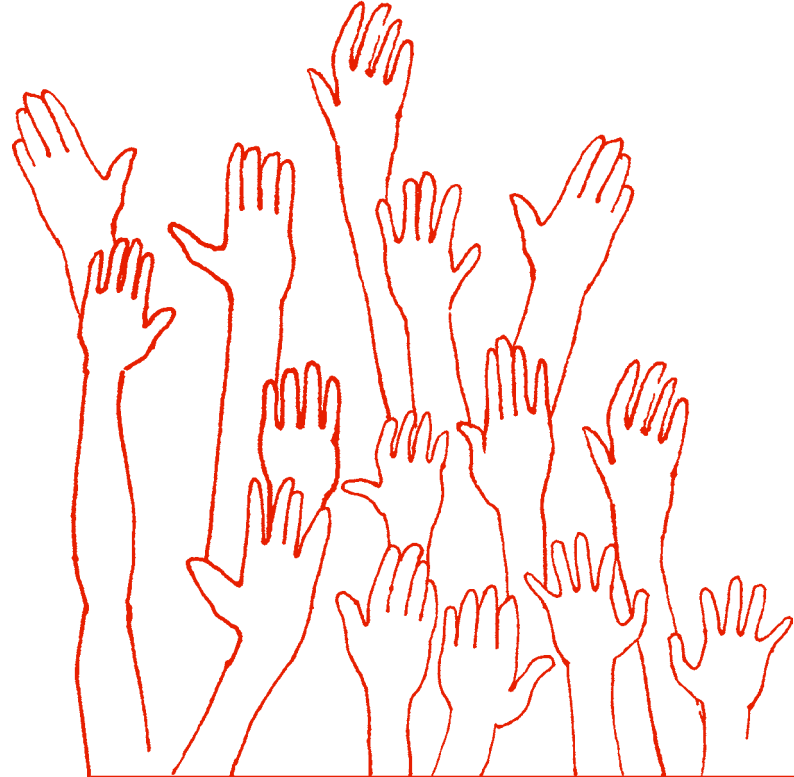
“

*On 27 February 2005, I heard someone shout that if I didn't open the door, they'd come inside and kill us all. So I got dressed and went outside. There was a man with a weapon. I was taken away. Later, five men raped me - and my daughter too. On 15 June, I went to the tribunal. Four months later, two of the men found my daughter in the street. They were the two of the men who the police hadn't caught. When I realised she hadn't come home, I started to search for her everywhere. I found her body in the morgue. She'd been taken to Lakou Mousin where she was killed. They murdered her, smashed her eyes and broke her arms. The police found two of the rapists who are in prison, but there are three more on the loose.*

”

Haiti





# control arms

Amnesty International is a worldwide voluntary activist movement working for human rights with more than 2.2 million members and supporters in over 150 countries and territories. AI is independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion.

[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) is the global movement against gun violence – a network of 700 civil society organisations working in 100 countries to stop the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

IANSA comprises a wide range of organisations concerned with small arms, including policy development organisations, women's groups, national gun control groups, research institutes, aid agencies, faith groups, survivors, human rights and community action organisations.

[www.iansa.org](http://www.iansa.org)

Oxfam International is a confederation of 13 organisations working together with over 3,000 partners in more than 100 countries to find lasting solutions to poverty, suffering and injustice: Oxfam America, Oxfam Australia, Oxfam-in-Belgium, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam Germany, Oxfam Great Britain, Oxfam France, Oxfam Hong Kong, Intermón Oxfam (Spain), Oxfam Ireland, Oxfam New Zealand, Oxfam Novib (Netherlands), and Oxfam Québec

[www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)

# INTRODUCTION



In early 2007, the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, asked the UN member states to submit their views on the feasibility, scope and parameters of a global Arms Trade Treaty. This follows the vote at the United Nations General Assembly in 2006, where 153 governments voted to start work on such a treaty.

This year, the *Control Arms* campaign ran a parallel People's Consultation – to enable the voices of people around the world to also be heard. In more than 50 countries, people took part in events facilitated by *Control Arms*.

Thousands of people – representing communities, young people, women's groups, faith groups, other social groups, local authorities, human rights organisations, peace networks, NGOs, the police, armed forces, and governments – took part in meetings, demonstrations, radio phone-ins, etc.

In every country, reports documenting the voice of the people – and their calls for immediate action – were presented to national leaders and/or nominated government ministers. There was overwhelming support for a treaty that would control arms transfers that would undermine human rights, international humanitarian law & sustainable development.

We do not have space to report every event, but the following pages feature some highlights.

We acknowledge the hard work and participation of everyone who organised events for the People's Consultation; everyone who attended making a valuable contribution; and everyone who continues to take actions to urge governments to establish the Treaty globally.

A global Arms Trade Treaty covering all conventional arms, including small arms, is entirely feasible. It is the will of the people to be protected effectively from armed violence. Now we need political action to make it happen.

## People's consultations took place in these countries:

Africa: Burkina Faso; Burundi; Democratic Republic of Congo; Kenya; Lesotho; Malawi; Mali; Mozambique; Rwanda; Senegal; South Africa; Tanzania; Uganda; Zambia.

Americas: Argentina; Barbados; Brazil; Canada; Chile; Colombia; Guatemala; Haiti; Mexico; Paraguay; Peru; Trinidad & Tobago; USA; Venezuela.

Asia: Bangladesh; Fiji; India; Japan; Mongolia; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Sri Lanka; South Korea; Thailand.

Europe: Czech Republic; France; Italy; Macedonia; Russia; Serbia; Sweden; Switzerland; UK.

Middle East: Bahrain; Iraq; Jordan; Lebanon; Syria.

[www.controlarms.org](http://www.controlarms.org)





# AFRICA

## Burkina Faso

In Ouagadougou, the capital city, Radio Jeunesse (“Youth”) broadcast a live forum, on which people of all ages shared their experiences and concerns. The crowd quietened as a young girl shuffled forward and bravely recounted the day she was held up and threatened with a gun. Another participant on Radio Jeunesse advocated:

*“Uncontrolled arms are a big problem for our people; everybody is a victim if our streets are full of arms... it is time for an international treaty.”*

*“How can people do business when they fear attack every time they transport their goods?” asked another.*

*“Some of our neighbouring countries are unstable, and weapons can cross the borders easily,” said one contributor. “The best thing about the People’s Consultation, was that it was the people themselves calling for an end to the proliferation of arms – not just the NGOs – whether live on the radio, or by attending workshops, or by sending postcards to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.”*

## Burundi

La Colonie des Pionniers de Développement (CPD), La Bonne Génération du Burundi (BGB) and DAGROPASS held People’s Consultations throughout Burundi, with support from the Youth for Security Club (YSC). Activities

included seminars, information sessions, a Control Arms tour, public demonstrations and interviews with the public. Photographs were collected for the Million Faces petition, alongside signatures for the *Have Your Say* petition.

## Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

People’s Consultations were held throughout the DRC, while the Congolese Action Network on Small Arms organised press conferences which were covered by TV and radio. Events were attended by civil society organisations, parliamentarians, local authorities, the army, the police, business and religious groups. A national consultation took place in Kinshasa and a report was later submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation.

## Malawi

The road to the consultation may have been long and arduous, but the baking heat and potholes didn’t prevent people from making their voices heard. Some explained how illegal arms threaten their day-to-day safety; others implored their government to participate in the control of small arms. Participating Members of Parliament then expressed their concern over the lack of legislation on controlling arms transfers.

*“As a result of [such] awareness programmes, we as a district Peace Committee have been able to support the government initiative through surveillance of movement of illegal arms in the Kenya-Somalia border”*

The Chairman of Hulugho District Peace Committee, Kenya

## Mozambique

A spectacular sculpture, made entirely from deactivated weapons by the artist Cristovao Kerster, was the centre of attention of the consultations in Mozambique. In some ways, this example of creativity arising from destruction said it all.

Officials came together to discuss concrete solutions – consultations were led by Força Moçambicana para Investigação de Crimes e Reinserção Social (FOMICRES), who formally presented the official report to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Interior.

## Tanzania

President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete granted the coalition his time to hear what representatives had to say. He received a thorough briefing on the civil-society campaign for a global and effective Arms Trade Treaty.

Community consultations throughout Tanzania brought together women, men, young people, health-workers, law-enforcement officials, school children and teachers. Civil society was represented by the Hurepi-Trust, the Tanzania Human Rights and Peace Education Network, and other members of the Tanzania National Action Network on Small Arms. Members of Parliament, the Parliamentary Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and the Tanzania Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance also attended.

## Uganda

The Uganda Action Network on Small Arms (UANSA) led the consultations and reported a gratifying level of support from participants. A highlight of the campaign was the principal consultation in Lira, the commercial centre of the region most affected by the brutal actions of the Lord’s Resistance Army. Women’s and youth groups, disabled people, community elders, police officers, district council members, security organisations, internally-displaced people and faith groups joined together. They expressed concerns and fears about the effects of the rebels’ insurgency on their community, and about the slow response of the international community to help restore security.

## Zambia

International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) launched the People’s Consultations with a national radio programme that explained the basics of the Arms Trade Treaty, and what it should include and achieve. A transcript of the broadcast was then presented to government officials.





# AMERICAS

## Argentina

To raise public awareness of Argentina's pro-Treaty position, Red Argentina Para el Desarme (RAD) and Amnesty International worked closely with the government. The most high profile event was a seminar on the Arms Trade Treaty, held at the Senate. Activists manned information stands in major cities – including Buenos Aires, Córdoba and La Plata, where they conducted surveys on arms controls and the idea of a global and effective ATT, and received popular support. Meanwhile, voices were heard in cyberspace too; an online version of the People's Consultation buzzed with ideas and personal stories.

## Brazil

Consensus of opinion can be summed up by the thoughts of supporters who took part:

*"... it is essential to avoid irresponsible exports – those that have great potential to damage the population of other countries"... "We participate in this process due to our pain"..."*

In collaboration with other NGOs from the Disarm Brazil network, Sou da Paz ran at least one consultation in every region of the country. Consultations encouraged participants to share their own experiences of armed violence, to think about existing arms controls and why they are not secure enough. Participants watched a scene from the film Lord of War, followed by presentations on the global arms trade and work towards an ATT.

## Canada

Amnesty International and Oxfam got creative here, by producing fake breakfast cereal boxes containing "free" toy guns for schoolchildren. It was a hard-hitting dig at how guns have become increasingly banal in many countries, even for the very young.

Consultations also took place online, via Amnesty and Oxfam-Québec websites. Determined to extend the message as far as possible, campaigns even braved the city's subway stations at rush hour, inviting busy commuters to send pro-ATT postcards to the government.

## Guatemala, Haiti and Mexico

To coincide with the People's Consultation, a video featuring eye-witness testimonies from victims of armed violence was presented to the media, governments and Members of Parliament. One extract from the video tells the story of a woman from Haiti, who was still too frightened to be named, see the quote on the opening page of this report.

The video was a sombre and humbling reminder of how a global and effective Arms Trade Treaty will help to prevent the atrocities that destroy the lives of so many people, such as the woman who shares her own horrific experience here. It is still being used to prompt discussions with diverse community and youth groups.

## Chile

Amnesty International Chile organised stalls to collect views and signatures on the need for a global and effective Arms Trade Treaty. The signatures have been delivered to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

## Colombia

Senators and congressional representatives agreed to meet representatives from RedePaz to hear about the workings on an ATT. A separate awareness-raising event was held for members of the general public. After a busy letter-writing campaign, aimed at civil society organisations, senators and members of congress, RedePaz handed over a formal letter to the national government, calling for its strong support of a global and effective Arms Trade Treaty.

## Venezuela

The People's Consultation achieved a high-volume response. At a concert in Caracas by UK rock band Motorhead, Amnesty International brought the ATT to the attention of 10,000 people. The audience signed banners to show support for the ATT. Awareness-raising sessions were also held in schools and universities around the country.

## Paraguay

It was an electrifying moment when 7,000 rock fans raised their hands in support of arms controls at a concert organised by the *Control Arms* alliance. The Concert of Paraguayan Rock Bands advertised its pro-ATT agenda by printing a call for the government to take action on the back of the tickets.

## Peru

The 500 children who threw away their toy guns were all smiles when they were reimbursed with brand new toys in front of the Peruvian media. Activities were organised by Instituto Peruano de Investigación de Familia y Probiación (IPIFAP), Amnesty International in Peru, and several other IANSA organisations. University students attended two round-table discussions at the San Martín de Porres University and the Catholic University in Lima. After the talks, many of the students signed action cards to urge the government to support the ATT, and during a screening of *Lords of War* at Barrano Municipal Park, petitions were signed.





# ASIA

## Fiji

Ambassadors from neighbouring Pacific islands – along with NGOs, civil-society organisations, representatives of the UN Development Programme and officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – attended a consultation in Suva, organised by the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC). PCRC delivered the consultation outcome document to Fiji's Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and sent copies to the Fiji UN mission in New York, the Pacific ambassadors and the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat.

## India

The Manipuri Women Gun Survivors Network's involvement at their local consultation event was a poignant highlight of the many and varied activities that took place throughout the country. Their shocking experiences and stories demonstrated the pressing need for an ATT.

Major events were held in Mumbai and New Delhi – organised respectively by SASA-Net and the *Control Arms Foundation of India* (CAFI). Consultations focused on the arms trade in India, the Indian government's position on the ATT, and grass-roots work to build support for an ATT.

At every consultation, participants demanded that state as well as non-state actors who have access to arms should act in accordance with human rights and international humanitarian

law. Resolutions passed during the People's Consultation were sent to the Government of India, and called for positive participation in the ongoing United Nations Secretary General's Consultations on the ATT.

## Mongolia

Amnesty International held a 'Make Some Noise' concert at Freedom Square in Ulaanbaatar. Supporters produced paintings and human rights messages, conducted a survey on arms control and collected signatures.

## Nepal

People's Consultations in Nepal were co-ordinated by the South Asia Small Arms Network-Nepal. Activities included a collection of signatures, public talks on the ATT campaign, translation of materials into Nepali, an action card campaign, an art competition and the launch of a paper entitled 'SAARC and Peace and Security in South Asia' at the People's SAARC Conference in Kathmandu. These activities will culminate in a national consultation in Kathmandu. AI Nepal collected 10,000 signatures in support of a global and effective ATT which were delivered to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

## Japan

All over Japan, origami cranes – a traditional symbol of peace – are being folded

*"One of the universities that hosted a consultation had lost one of its students a few weeks earlier,"*

Local Amnesty International campaigner, Philippines. This loss of life – a tragic case of mistaken identity – brought home the importance and urgency of a global and effective Arms Trade Treaty.

in preparation for 10 December 2007, International Human Rights Day. Japanese *Control Arms* partners will then send the paper cranes to the Tokyo embassies of the five permanent UN Security Council members.

## Pakistan

The Community Appraisal & Motivation Programme (CAMP) and the Sustainable Peace And Development Organisation (SPADO) conducted an opinion survey and raised awareness about the ATT. The two groups also co-ordinated a national People's Consultation in May. The outcome document – including recommendations – was presented to the Pakistani Foreign Office and media, along with the request that the recommendations be incorporated into the government's report to the UN Secretary-General.

## Philippines

In the Visayas islands group, women from a rural community thought that the Consultation would request the names of local gun owners in their village. They said that members of their families can lose their lives easily by mentioning owners by name. The forum suddenly became a venue for the City Police Chief and the indigenous community to discuss and take action. In most consultations where police and army personnel joined group discussions, most were very supportive of arms control measures.

The Philippines Action Network on Small Arms (PhilANSA) reports an inspiring story that demonstrates people's determination to make their voices heard: two young indigenous people from the Ifugao Youth Advocate for Active Non-Violence travelled for five hours to connect with transport going to the Consultation in Baguio. All vehicles were full. On the following day, they found a decrepit vehicle with vacant seats. On the ascent of one of mountains, their vehicle broke down during a heavy downpour. They waited more hours before the vehicle was repaired. Eventually, they made it to the Consultation – very late, very wet, yet determined to make their voices heard.

## Thailand

*Control Arms* supporters met the families of the Thai military during a sending-off gathering in a park, where they conducted surveys and interviews. The soldiers and their families were particularly interested to hear about how arms fall so easily into the wrong hands, and voiced their concerns and criticisms. Members of the police who were present also gave their responses to the survey.

From nearly 1,000 responses collected, 65 per cent expressed the need for regulating the supply of arms, and 84 per cent says that the Thai government should support an Arms Trade Treaty to control the flow of arms between countries.



Signature event participants, Nepal  
Credit: AI Nepal



Korea



Origami action event during the African festival in Tokyo. Credit: Aya Yukawa



Mongolia



TV report in the Philippines



# EUROPE

## Czech Republic

A *Control Arms* photography exhibition was staged in the lobby of Florenc, one of the busiest subway stations in Prague. “Caught in the Crossfire” showed examples of the suffering caused by the irresponsible transfer of arms.

## France

Most film stars opt for Armani or Gucci when treading the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival, but not Sara Forestier this year. The French film actress stunned onlookers and attracted the media’s cameras as she modelled a dress adorned with fake bullets, designed specially by the *Control Arms* alliance. This event was accompanied by a series of meetings at the Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques (IRIS), where government officials, research organisations, Control Arms campaigners and the arms industry discussed the process of developing a treaty based on international human rights and humanitarian law.

## Italy

In more than 100 town squares across the country, Amnesty International organised a two-day burst of activism which saw hundreds of people writing messages on cardboard weapons. To strengthen this creative call for an ATT, the Italian Control Arms network organised an online People’s Consultation and sent the opinions they collected to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

## Macedonia

Many people who supported the call for an ATT knew first-hand what it’s like to be the unwitting target of a stray bullet, while others were family members of victims.

Consultations took place in six towns noted for arms proliferation. Celebrity personalities included the Mayor of Debar, Argetim Fida, and the photographer Nehru Suleiman.

At the national Consultation in Skopje, young people handed in their toy guns, which were turned into a sculpture. Journalists for Children and Women’s Rights and Protection of the Environment in Macedonia (JCWE) spearheaded the People’s Consultations in Macedonia, organising a one-day training session on the ATT, attended by 63 journalists. Consultations also included public meetings, a media campaign and an official meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

## Serbia

All gun deaths are tragic, but the story of the death of a teenager who was killed by a round of bullets fired in celebration, brought a particularly poignant air to this Serbian Consultation. There were many moving stories here; most participants had experienced the pain of armed violence; some were mothers who had lost their children. The number of weapons and ammunition that remained in civilian possession in peacetime was a particular cause for concern here.

The Balkan Youth Union (BYU) and the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO) held consultations in Nix, Zajecar and Belgrade, with participation from civil-society and media organisations. An outcome report was sent to the Serbian government.

## Switzerland

A petition to urge the Swiss government to support a global and effective ATT was collected and delivered to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

## UK

UK participants summed up the overwhelming majority opinion, voiced at People’s Consultations:

*“An Arms Trade Treaty is necessary because when the arms get into the wrong hands, it is not the governments who are affected. Instead, it is the innocent civilians who get their villages torn apart. Let’s come together to at least put some guidelines on how the arms will be used.”*

*“World arms control means much less chance of human suffering, exploitation and injustice – and greater hope for world development, fairness and human rights.”*



Left: Sarah Forestier at the Cannes Festival. Credit Olivier Vigerie

Below: Serbian stickers





# MIDDLE EAST

## Iraq

The Iraqi Organisation for Rehabilitating Society and Environment held workshops to discuss the protection of children in armed conflict, and controlling the distribution of arms.

## Jordan

Jordan Television featured an interview about the People's Consultation, and a broadcast on Amman Radio Net advertised a youth march that was part of Jordan's People's Consultation.

400 students met at the University of Jordan, organised by Madaba for Sporting Development, attended by Members of Parliament and university officials. Participants signed a document that called for the government to support an Arms Trade Treaty based on international human rights and humanitarian law; this was presented to Jordan's Minister of Foreign Affairs.

## Syria

The Arab Network for Research on Landmines and Remnants of War and Al Yarmouk held community and national Consultations including public meetings, media work, lectures and an exhibition at Abaza Hospital Quneitra that focused on armed violence and health.

## Bahrain

A coalition of human rights organisations broke a SMS text message record in Bahrain, asking 40,000 people to text in "ATT" in support of a global and effective treaty.

## Lebanon

Participants from diverse political and religious backgrounds, as well several journalists and a delegate from the Iranian Embassy, took part in a People's Consultation organised by the Permanent Peace Movement in Beirut. Other events throughout Lebanon involved human rights and conflict resolution groups, Members of Parliament, media representatives, women, and youth organisations.

Participants worked in small groups to discuss arms trade issues and then signed a letter that was later delivered to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Campaigning material from Bahrain





