

WEB NEWS FEATURE

Venezuela

World Social Forum: Control Arms campaign collects faces in Caracas

Date: 27 January 2006

Index: AMR 53/002/2006

The World Social Forum (WSF) got underway in Caracas on 24 January with a march through the streets of the city. The march was vibrant, with colour, songs and thousands of different banners and flags representing countries across the Americas region and beyond.

Amnesty International (AI) has brought the campaign message of the Control Arms campaign to this WSF, giving visibility to AI's concerns on the proliferation of arms and the need for an international Arms Trade Treaty.

AI Venezuela has coordinated a strong AI presence at the Forum, mobilising a large number of volunteers who have taken to the streets with enthusiasm. They have also taken on the challenge of adding thousands more faces to the Million Faces petition, taking pictures of participants and asking them to commit to the Control Arms campaign.

AI Venezuela's stall, positioned in the centre of town where a lot of activities are taking place, is already swarming with people, many of whom are more than willing to have their photos taken for the Million Faces petition.

Along with a huge number of other events taking place, AI is holding two workshops on the Control Arms campaign. The first took place on Wednesday, 25 January, at La Carlota Airbase -- a military base that has been opened up to WSF participants. Right next to the runway, there are huge tents that will be used for the hundreds of workshops and seminars, which will fill up with thousands of people during the course of the next few days.

AI representatives have been interviewed by local, regional and international media.

"It's really gratifying for me to feel that I'm contributing to spreading such an important message such as the need for a control on the indiscriminate transfer of arms, which have caused massive human rights violations. People really don't understand the gravity of the problem. However, it is still possible for things to change," said Maria Eugenia Marin, an activist with AI Venezuela.