Action Against Small Arms

A Resource and Training Handbook
International Alert, Oxfam GB, and Saferworld

International Alert is a UK-based non-government organisation, committed to the just and peaceful transformation of violent conflicts. It works with partner organisations to identify and address the root causes of conflicts and to conduct research on the control of light weapons, security-sector reform, the role of the private sector, the impact of development, and women’s contribution to peace-building. Alert seeks to influence practice and policies at all levels, bringing into the policy arena the voices of those most affected by conflict.

www.international-alert.org

Oxfam GB, founded in 1942, is a development, humanitarian, and campaigning agency dedicated to finding lasting solutions to poverty and suffering around the world. Oxfam believes that every human being is entitled to a life of dignity and opportunity, and it works with others worldwide to make this become a reality.

Oxfam GB is a member of Oxfam International, a confederation of 12 agencies of diverse cultures and languages, which share a commitment to working for an end to injustice and poverty – both in long-term development work and at times of crisis.

www.oxfam.org.uk
www.oxfam.org.uk/publications

Saferworld is an independent non-government organisation working to identify, develop, and publicise more effective approaches to tackling and preventing armed conflicts. Its Arms Programme aims to foster greater international restraint over transfers of arms; at the same time, it aims to work with governments and civil society on the ground in regions of conflict, to better control the flows of arms and to reduce demand for them.

www.saferworld.org.uk
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The rebels had threatened to kill the boys for hiding in a tree during an early morning attack on the village. The mother asked that she be killed instead. In her presence, one of the boys was asked to pull the trigger against his mother; he refused and was shot in the leg. The younger child was then asked to shoot his mother, and he did so. He was conscripted as a hard, fearless fighter.

The attack on the city of Freetown saw the death of more than 5000 people. Vultures continuously fed on human bodies, as there were no people to bury the dead. People were pressed at gunpoint into houses, which were sprayed with petrol and set on fire. Whoever tried to escape was immediately shot.\textsuperscript{1}

Issac Lappia – Amnesty International, Sierra Leone

In recent years, campaigns against landmines, for debt relief and for an International Criminal Court have demonstrated the extraordinary capacity of ordinary people to band together behind a cause and fundamentally change the policies of governments. Surely, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons deserves similar attention.\textsuperscript{2}

UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan

The uncontrolled spread and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW) is a global problem which results in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children every year. Factors driving demand for these weapons include poverty, underdevelopment, the abuse of human rights, crime, conflict, and competition for resources. It is estimated that there are more than 639 million small arms and light weapons in circulation\textsuperscript{3} around the world. More than 1000 companies are involved in the production of small arms, and at least 98 countries have the capacity to produce such weapons and ammunition for them.

The global trade in small arms is huge: its value is estimated to exceed US$ 335 million – and it involves governments, companies, and individuals from around the world.\textsuperscript{4} The human cost of the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons is impossible to estimate. It destroys lives, intensifies and prolongs conflict, kills and injures. Millions of people are forced to flee their homes. The Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, speaking in 2001, declared:
Small arms ...exacerbate conflict, spark refugee flows, undermine the rule of law, and spawn a culture of violence and impunity. In short, small arms are a threat to peace and development, to democracy and human rights.5

Representatives of civil society – journalists, non-government organisations, community groups, religious organisations, and academics – are committed to acting to reduce the catastrophic impact of small arms and light weapons. International initiatives such as the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons have been developed partly as a consequence of concerted action by civil society at all levels. And around the world, in conflict-affected regions and cities threatened by violent crime, and in countries that dominate SALW production and export markets, organisations and individuals are working for change. However, this work is undermined by the failure of governments to prevent the proliferation, availability, and misuse of the weapons.

This manual aims to help civil-society organisations and others to persuade governments and others to take positive action to address the problem. It is based on the experiences and expertise of people around the world who have taken practical, imaginative action on the issues. The book consists of four parts:

- Part 1: The policy context
- Part 2: Planning for action
- Part 3: Taking action
- Part 4: Contacts

The book is intended to be used in two primary ways:

- as a resource for individuals and organisations seeking to develop a programme of action; and
- as a training and resource guide for organisers of planning or training workshops.

It offers a set of sequential steps to help the user to understand SALW-related issues, to select the appropriate course of action, and to act with maximum impact. Alternatively, its separate elements may be used selectively to complement existing skills and experience.

Each part of the handbook is divided into separate stand-alone sections. Part 1 aims to provide a thorough introduction to the issues. Parts 2 and 3, which are illustrated with examples, are designed to be used to enhance planning and action on a range of social-justice issues. However, representing the experiences and knowledge of all those working on SALW is impossible in a single publication, so Part 4 provides the details of organisations featured in the handbook and also addresses of others who can provide more detailed support and information upon request.
Acknowledgements

This manual is based on the experiences and opinions of individuals and organisations working to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in a wide range of countries around the world. It was researched and written over a period of 18 months, involving consultations with more than 112 civil-society organisations from 41 countries. The consultations took place at the UN Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons in New York, and at the conference of the Humanitarian Coalition on Small Arms and Light Weapons in Nairobi, Kenya in 2001; at workshops for non-government organisations from South Asia in India, from east and west Africa in Kenya and Senegal respectively, in the Philippines, the Balkans, and Central and Eastern Europe in 2002, and in Kosovo in 2003.

The manual features case studies based on the experiences of organisations which have developed effective programmes of action to address the problems of small arms. The authors and publishers are grateful to them all for their contributions. Details of how to contact them appear in Part 4 of the manual, along with addresses of many other organisations with expertise in campaigning against small arms and light weapons.

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- African Security, Dialogue and Research Agency
- AKBKAYAN! Citizens Action Party
- ALTERNAG
- Alternative Planning Initiative
- Amnesty International, International Secretariat
- Amnesty International Czech Republic
- Amnesty International India
- Amnesty International Indonesia
- Amnesty International Lithuania
- Amnesty International Nepal
- Amnesty International New Zealand
- Amnesty International Philippines
- Amnesty International Poland
- Amnesty International Slovakia
- Amnesty International Slovenia
- Anti War Campaign (ARK)
- Arias Foundation
- Association des Femmes pour les Initiatives de Paix (AFIP)
- Association des Femmes pour la Paix en Casamance (KONKETOR)
- Association for Democratic Initiatives
- Balkan Youth Action
- Black Sea Law Community
- Bulgarian Red Cross
- Campaign for Conscientious Objectors
- Campaign for Good Governance (CGG)
- Catholic Justice and Peace Commission
- Center for Peace and Economic Empowerment
- Centre for Anti-War Action
- Centre for Conflict Resolution (GANSA)
- Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)
- Centre for Democratic Empowerment (CEDE)
- Centre for New Visions
- Centre for Peace Studies
- Centre for the Study of Democracy
- CERES
- Coalition Nationale de la société civile pour la lutte contre la proliferation des armes légères
- Collectif Cadres Casamance
- Commission Nationale du Senegal
- Croatian Helsinki Committee
- Ecumenical Commission for Displaced Families and Communities (ECDFC)
- Enseignante CESTI
- European Institute for Risk, Security and Communication
- Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearances
- Far Eastern University
- Forum-Centre for Strategic Research and Documentation
- Forum i Inicivts Qytetare (FIQ)
- Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA)
- Foundation Help
- GZO Peace Institute
- HANDICAP International
- Human Rights Watch
- IANSA
- Institute for Security Studies
- Institute of War and Peace Reporting
Abbreviations and acronyms

ATT: Arms Trade Treaty
BASIC: British American Security Information Council
CEDE: Centre for Democratic Empowerment
COIB: Conscientious Objectors in Bosnia
DDR: disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration
DRP: demobilisation and reintegration programme
ECOSOC: Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States
EU: European Union
FIQ: Forumi I Iniciativs Qytetare
FOSDA: Foundation for Security and Development in Africa
IANSA: International Action Network on Small Arms
ICBL: International Campaign to Ban Landmines
KYPPEDE: Kibera Youth Programme for Peace and Development
LPO: licensed production overseas
MALAO: Mouvement Contre les Armes Légères in Afrique de l’Oest
NISAT: Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers
OAS: Organisation of American States
OAU: Organisation of African Unity (now African Union)
OSCE: Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PoA: UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects
PPDI: Pastoralist Peace and Development Initiative
SADC: Southern African Development Community
SALW: small arms and light weapons
SIPRI: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SSRP: security sector reform programme
SWOT: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
UKWG: United Kingdom Working Group on Arms
UNDDA: United Nations Department of Disarmament Affairs
UNDIR: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research