International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)
Report on Aiming for Prevention Program
Disarmament Research, Education and Training Activities July 2006-2008

Summary
In 1991, Nobel Peace Prize winner International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War’s (IPPNW) mission to work for the abolition of nuclear weapons as a global health imperative was broadened to include the prevention of conventional war, and the promotion of non-violent peace building and conflict resolution. Shortly after the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, IPPNW convened the first international health conference to address firearm violence as a public health crisis, Aiming for Prevention, in Helsinki, Finland, in September, 2001. Since then we have been employing the tools of research, education, advocacy and care and rehabilitation to ensure awareness about the human face of suffering from firearm violence, to mobilize the medical community to take action, and to influence public policies to prevent violence. From July 2006-2008 our physicians, medical students and allied health professionals in Africa, Latin America and South Asia have engaged in all of these areas, at times teaming up with federation colleagues from Europe, North America, Australia and elsewhere.

As part of our 58-member federation mission, we have been educating on the issue through a wide range of activities through conferences, publications, medical trainings, campaign materials such as our One Bullet Stories, the media, the IPPNW web site (www.ippnw.org), list-serves and other communication vehicles, and with personal visits to policy makers and government officials. As the coordinator of the IANSA Public Health Network, we have been participating in planning for the 2008 BMS and will be contributing another public health panel as we have at previous sessions, focusing on “Risk and Resilience Factors” relating to firearm violence. We have presented over two dozen papers on armed violence and health, as well as developed and presented plenary sessions and workshops at major international health conferences, including at the 2008 9th World Conference on Violence Prevention and Safety Promotion in Merida, Mexico, IPPNW’s 17th World Conference in Helsinki (attended by over 300), and the 18th IPPNW World Congress in Delhi, India (attended by over 600) health professionals. We have also organized regional conferences including the 6th African Regional Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, Healing The Wounds Of War In Africa The Role Of Health Professionals, the Latin America and the Way of Peace:Regional Medical Student Conference held at National University in San Salvador, and, in Kathmandu, Nepal the South Asian Students Meet – A Call from the Medical Community for the Prevention of Small Arms Violence. We have contributed information and expertise to a variety of publications, as well as published papers on firearm violence and health in international health and medical journals, including a special section of 5 papers in the Journal of Public Health Policy, and are currently working on a similar special section for the journal Medicine, Conflict & Survival. We also encourage the use of violence prevention curricula in medical and public health schools, including the WHO TEACH-VIP module.

Our research strategies have included conducting hospital-based violent injury projects, including documenting injuries around the Nigerian elections of 2007, as well as conducting a 5-country pilot study using the same protocol at hospital emergency rooms in Zambia, Nigeria, Uganda, DR Congo and Kenya, which yielded information on over 4000 violent injuries seen at these hospitals. Other such research has taken place by IPPNW colleagues and medical students in El Salvador, Nicaragua, India, Papua New Guinea and elsewhere.
Our international **media, awareness and collaborative activities** include being an active contributor to international health organizations including acting in a consultative status to the World Health Organization, participating in related groups such as the WHO Violence Prevention Alliance, and in collaboration with key organizations such as Small Arms Survey. Our activist physicians and medical students keep the issue in the minds of the public and policy makers via media interviews on such venues as the BBC, where our African physicians have appeared a number of times discussing arms control and how “Guns are bad for health,” or via the “Gun Free Africa” campaign featuring celebrity spokespeople. Or, in Latin America, via regional radio, television and newspapers such as in El Salvador, where last year a soccer match highlighting the need to prevent armed violence was co-sponsored by two radio stations in San Salvador.

At the **policy** level, IPPNW affiliates focus on bringing the issue to key people in government and civil society, including Ministries of Health. For example, IPPNW leaders met with policy makers in Pakistan in a continuing series of “Dialogues with Decision Makers” which included discussions on the medical consequences of conventional weapons, and how a “peace through health” approach can help. In another example, leaders of IPPNW Nigeria brought the health message to a two-day regional conference in Abuja, Nigeria, on the ratification of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials.

*End of Summary – more detailed version follows*

**International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)**  
**Report on Aiming for Prevention Program**  
**Disarmament Research, Education and Training Activities July 2006-2008**

**Aiming for Prevention Background, Program Overview**

In 1991, Nobel Peace Prize winner International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War’s (IPPNW) mission to work for the abolition of nuclear weapons as a global health imperative was broadened to include the prevention of conventional war, and the promotion of non-violent peace building and conflict resolution. Shortly after the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, IPPNW convened the first international health conference to address firearm violence as a public health crisis, Aiming for Prevention, in Helsinki, Finland, in September, 2001. Since then we have been employing the tools of research, education, advocacy and care and rehabilitation to ensure awareness about the human face of suffering from firearm violence, to mobilize the medical community to take action, and to influence public policies to prevent violence.

Aiming for Prevention (AfP) was founded on a human-centered ethic and public health approach to small arms and light weapons (SALW). It uses the tools of research, education, policy design and recommendations, and victim assistance to accomplish its goals. Our program responds to the 1996 WHO call to action for health professionals to become involved in preventing violence. It has been driven by IPPNW affiliates from the global South who live and work in areas where armed violence is a constant threat and consumes significant portions of health care budgets. These include three key regions - Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and South Asia – and the countries of Zambia, Nigeria, DR Congo, Kenya and Uganda; El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Mexico; India, Pakistan and Nepal.
A Public Health Approach

Engaging health professionals in reducing violence has been identified by the WHO as one of the 10 “best buys” for development agencies to invest in to reduce the consequences of violence. Violence impedes development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in many ways, from diverting resources from health improvement and disease prevention, to hampering poverty eradication.

Our work capitalizes on our worldwide membership’s health expertise, and utilizes a public health approach to preventing violence that is based on the scientific method of moving from problem to solution. It emphasizes collective action, acknowledging that cooperative efforts can have the most lasting impact. A public health approach includes:

- Collecting data and increasing knowledge of an issue – defining the basic causes;
- Using this knowledge, design intervention and prevention strategies;
- Monitoring and evaluating the programs for effectiveness;
- Implementing promising interventions in a wide range of settings, widely disseminating information, and determining cost-effectiveness.

With the right interventions, violence can be prevented and its impact reduced – prevent first, then cure

Accomplishments and Recent Focus

IPPNW has been a leader on the international stage as well as nationally, regionally and locally, drawing attention to the health impacts of armed violence, and pressing for policy changes to mitigate and prevent injuries and death.

Details of Activities – A Few Selected Highlights

Education and Training at Conferences and Meetings

International:

- At both IPPNW’s 17th IPPNW World Conference Helsinki (Fall 2006, attended by over 300 health professionals, physicians and medical students), and the 18th IPPNW World Congress Delhi (Spring 2008, attended by over 600), a public health approach to small arms violence was featured prominently in plenary sessions, workshops and strategy sessions.
- 9th World Injury Conference, Merida, Mexico – IPPNW members from 6 countries presented over a dozen papers and posters on violence prevention and public health. http://www.insp.mx/safety2008/memorias/. IPPNW attendees also participated in meetings organized by regional departments of the World Health Organization (WHO), the WHO Violence Prevention Alliance of which IPPNW is a member, and the International Society for Violence and Injury Prevention. We spread our message that “Guns are Bad for Health,” and released a press release with IANSA in which IPPNW co-president called for more international donor investment in violence prevention.

Regional:

Regional affiliates regularly conduct meetings at medical schools, hospitals, universities and in communities that draw from dozens to hundreds of attendees including physicians, students, allied health professionals, military personnel, educators, and policy makers. The forums are important vehicles for educating on the health consequences of violence and offering recommendations for alternatives to policy and decision makers. Examples of larger recent regional meetings include:
• The 6th African Regional Conference was held in Nairobi in Fall 2007, entitled Healing The Wounds Of War In Africa 'The Role Of Health Professionals', which brought together African health professionals to present and share experiences on the impact of war on health, with a view to prescribing preventive strategies. It was preceded by a medical student conference.

• Latin America and the Way of Peace, 4-day Latin American medical student Congress was organized by IPPNW in San Salvador at National University, and included presentations from representatives of PAHO and the El Salvadoran Ministry of Health, as well as student-led strategy workshops. The seeds of regional student cooperation, and Central America-wide IPPNW chapters, were sown at this conference.

• Regional student meeting in Nepal Fall 2007 - South Asian Students Meet – A Call from the Medical Community for the Prevention of Small Arms Violence was well attended by students from various medical and public health colleges of Nepal, India, Bangladesh and Germany. A regional campaign strategy for student involvement in this issue was formulated.

• Support for research training – We have supported and conducted training for health professionals on research relative to armed violence data collection, and facilitate communication throughout the federation of professional opportunities via WHO and other health agencies on this topic.

Aiming for Prevention Campaign/Educational Materials/Federation Communications
We have a series of campaign materials including posters and brochures that highlight our health-centered approach to armed violence, including our “Every Bullet Tells a Story” posters in 3 languages and our One Bullet Story PowerPoint presentations on the human, medical, community and societal costs of gun violence injuries, all available at www.ippnw.org, including stories from Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, Zambia, Nigeria, and Uganda.

We contribute small arms information regularly to the IPPNW newsletter Vital Signs and the monthly e-newsletters that are distributed throughout the IPPNW 58-country federation.

Peace through Health Education to Medical Community
IPPNW supports" Peace through Health” work in a variety of ways, including our periodic work with McMaster University Peace Studies program in Ontario, Canada. Other efforts have included supporting medical student exchanges to work on violence issues, encouraging affiliate use of violence prevention curricula such as WHO’s TEACH-VIP, and facilitating practitioner and student trainings. Specific examples include:

• Medical Peace Work SALW educational module - Facilitated an IPPNW-led SALW focus group in Canada (IPPNW physicians and students working with Peace through Health group) to develop a module on the health effects of SALW for a new European project at University Hospital of Norway (and IPPNW-Norway), called “Medical Peace Work.” This project aims to produce online teaching material (e-learning course and text book) on the health professional’s possibilities for preventing violence and promoting peace.

• IPPNW affiliates in El Salvador and associates in Puerto Rico have been utilizing the WHO TEACH-VIP curriculum to train medical and public health students. We are encouraging other affiliates to adopt the use of this excellent curriculum.

Papers/Publishing - Highlights
• Journal of Public Health Policy – IPPNW developed and contributed 5 papers on Armed Violence: A Health Problem, a Public Health Approach with input from affiliates from
11 countries to a special Fall 2007 section of the *Journal of Public Health Policy*. (www.palgrave-journals.com/jphp/journal/v28/n4/). This will help educate policy makers who might not otherwise read this information. These papers and hundreds of others were available for a limited time for free online as part of broader initiative by the Council of Science Editors, which organized a Global Theme Issue on Poverty and Human Development, in which 235 science journals throughout the world simultaneously published -- and made freely available -- more than 750 relevant articles.

Titles in *JPHP* include the following:
- Armed Violence: A Health Problem, a Public Health Approach
- Taming the Tools of Violence
- Gun Violence in Nigeria: A Focus on Ethno-religious Conflict in Kano
- Firearm Injuries in Nairobi, Kenya: Who Pays the Price?
- Data to Action: A Multinational Injury Surveillance Study

- **Medicine, Conflict and Survival** – We are currently developing a special section on armed violence based on certain papers presented at Safety 2008, due to be published Fall 2008.


### Violent Injury Research

- **Multinational Injury Research Africa**
  For six months in 2007 IPPNW affiliates conducted a 5-country violent injury pilot study using the same protocol at hospital emergency rooms in Zambia, Nigeria, Uganda, DR Congo and Kenya, which yielded information on over 4000 violent injuries seen at these hospitals and tested out the feasibility of implementing surveillance on armed violence at hospitals, an important public health approach to characterizing the problem in each area so that interventions can be designed.

- **Nigerian Injury Research Around Nigerian Elections**
  Injury research to document pre and post election violence as part of a larger Small Arms Survey research project was conducted at emergency rooms at 4 major city hospitals in Nigeria in early 2007.

- **El Salvador**
  IPPNW members in El Salvador continue to follow on their landmark armed violence health research that in coalition with others in civil society helped lead to policy changes at the government level. Recent work includes documenting the humanitarian affects of gun violence, including interviewing victims in rehabilitation centers; working on youth violence prevention programs and education; and conducting community health workshops on violence prevention and related socio-economic factors.

- **Nicaragua**
  Medical students in Nicaragua studied intra-family violence and maltreatment affecting children collectors of trash in “El Fortin” León, Nicaragua

### Media – A few selected highlights

Our activist physicians and medical students keep the issue in the minds of the public and policy makers via media interviews, internet postings and outreach to print and electronic media. A few highlights include:

- **BBC** – Our Zambian affiliate leader was interviewed for BBC in the first of a 4 part-series on the arms trade and health effects. Also covered in IANSA newsletter.
- **Reuters** – Our Kenyan Regional Vice President was interviewed by Reuters and other media at the Nairobi gun burning ceremony of 8000 firearms in March 2007.
• In El Salvador, members of *Aiming for Prevention* participating in several events for the IANSA 2007 Global Week of Action, were joined by two local radio stations (VOX FM and Radio Que Buena) who covered the events, and who also co-sponsored an IANSA/IPPNW soccer game at Gambeta Stadium in San Salvador to raise awareness on the impact of gun violence on Salvadorans.

**Advocacy, Policy**

IPPNW affiliates including medical students focus on bringing the issue to key people in government and civil society, including Ministries of Health. Examples include:

• IPPNW leaders met with policy makers in Pakistan in one in a continuing series of “Dialogues with Decision Makers” to discuss the medical consequences of nuclear and conventional weapons. How to prevent armed violence via a “peace through health” approach was discussed at a meeting with the Minister of Health and the Director General of Health in Pakistan. They expressed admiration for IPPNW and its mission and the *Aiming for Prevention* goals with respect to UNPoA, which include encouraging health representation on National Commissions on SALW.

• Leaders of IPPNW Nigeria brought a medical perspective to a two-day regional conference in Abuja, Nigeria, on the ratification of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials. The conference was organized by the West African Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The agenda was to develop strategies for lobbying the various governments of ECOWAS (15 West African states) to ratify the convention that was signed by regional leaders in June 2006.

• An IPPNW physician from Zambia and medical student from Germany brought the health message to the November 2007 conference *Preventing the diversion of arms—developing a pan-Europe architecture COARM-NGO Annual Conference* in Brussels.

• IPPNW students from the Bayero University Medical School in Nigeria paid a visit to the British Consulate and the Consul library at Kano, Nigeria. Highlights of the visits included presenting materials and books on *Aiming for Prevention* and small arms violence to the Consul.

**Care and Rehabilitation**

• As part of their regular medical work, as well as volunteer medical mission efforts, our affiliate physicians provide medical care and rehabilitation to victims of violence on a regular basis, and help make policy makers aware of the human consequences of gun violence.

• In areas of conflict, such as DRC, our affiliates contribute medical expertise to demobilization and reintegration of combatants.

# # #