



**Media Release 30 June 2006
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Lobbyists Sending UN Small Arms Conference Off Target

The International Coalition for Women in Shooting and Hunting (WiSH) today expressed concern that efforts to reduce the international illicit arms trade are being hindered.

Despite United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan's insistence that the Small Arms Review Conference should discuss the illicit arms trade, a number of campaigners have turned attention away from the purpose of the meeting.

WiSH Chairwoman Ms Samara McPhedran said that "Illicit arms trafficking and its underlying mechanisms and causes are pressing humanitarian issues. Unfortunately, the first days of the conference have featured various government representatives pushing their preferred model of national laws regarding private firearms ownership."

This position can be traced back to NGO's who are unwilling to rise to the level of international discussion, and who have lobbied governments to adopt a similarly narrow perspective.

"Focussing on legitimate civilian ownership of firearms does not tackle governments who flagrantly violate human rights, and it directly contravenes Secretary-General Annan's hopes that the conference can find solutions to the illegal arms trade," stated Ms McPhedran.

The United Nations Small Arms Review Conference 2006 runs from June 26 – July 7.

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WOMEN ON TARGET FOR POSITIVE CHANGE