



# India Armed Violence Assessment



## Inaugural Event Summary Report

*New Delhi, 20 September 2011*

On 20 September, 2011 the India Armed Violence Assessment (IAVA) held its formal launch event in New Delhi. The IAVA was established by the Small Arms Survey, a Geneva-based research programme, in order to generate a robust baseline for evidence-based action on issues of armed violence, including violence prevention and reduction.

The audience of seventy-five included civil society, the diplomatic community, foundations, the media, and research organizations. The speakers put forward new issues to inform Indian debates on social policy, and older issues presented in innovative ways. The event was held in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - Regional Office for South Asia (UNODC ROSA) and the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) for India and Bhutan. Opening remarks were provided by Ms. Cristina Albertin, Representative, UNODC ROSA and Ms. Kiran Mehra, Director, UNIC India and Bhutan. His Excellency the Swiss Ambassador for India and Bhutan, Mr. Philippe Welti, was the chief guest of the occasion. Other speakers included Professor Keith Krause of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (Geneva) and Programme Director of the Small Arms Survey and IAVA researchers.

The event introduced the IAVA website and the first two *Issue Briefs*, *India's States of Armed Violence - Assessing the Human Cost and Political Priorities* and *Mapping Murder - The Geography of Indian Firearm Fatalities*, released in English and Hindi. The IAVA researchers presented and discussed the findings of their research, before opening the floor with a question and answer session. The discussion delved into questions about the comprehensiveness and reliability of the data utilized in the study, competing security concerns, key findings, and identifying knowledge gaps. These issues generated intense debate and a consensus about the urgent need for rigorous empirical analysis as a basis for mapping violence, in order to accurately assess rates of fatality and accident in India (both in conflict and non-conflict contexts) and to correctly diagnose their causes and consequences.

The first two publications set the stage for the next six *Issue Briefs* covering varying thematic areas of violence and security, which will be released over 2011 and 2012. Some of the forthcoming *IAVA Issue Briefs* are:

- *The small arms of the Indian state*
- *Perceptions of armed violence in Delhi*
- *The use of force by Indian law enforcement and domestic security agencies*
- *The Indian Arms Act: how the law shaped firearms ownership*

We are confident that the great interest shown at the event will awaken a new era in armed violence studies and policy-making in India, an era in which all forms of armed violence receive the attention they deserve. The India Armed Violence Assessment will continue to present cutting-edge research, news and reports on the complete spectrum of armed violence issues.

The India Armed Violence Assessment is a project of the Small Arms Survey

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## Press coverage of the IAVA launch event includes:

*The Asian Age*. 2011. "[40m civilian-owned firearms in India: UN](#)." 21 September.

Chauhan, Chetan. 2011 "[Domestic violence kills more than terror strikes](#)." *Hindustan Times*, 21 September.

*Indian Express.com*. 2011. "[Decline in deaths due to firearms by half: Survey](#)." 21 September.

Nandian, Trithesh. 2011. "[Gun-deaths pile up in UP](#)." *Governance Now*. 20 September.

Tandon, Aditi. 2011. "[Firearms behind 12% of murders in India - UP, Bihar, Jharkhand most unsafe; unlicensed weapons used in 92% of killings](#)." *The Tribune*, 22 September.

United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime – Regional Office for South Asia. 2011. "[India: Mapping the contours of armed violence](#)."

UN News. 2011. [Monthly Newsletter of the UN Information Centre](#), New Delhi. Vol. 7, No. 10, p. 20.

*Web India123.com*. 2011. "[Most firearm deaths in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand: Report](#)." 20 September.



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