



Statement by Education International on School Shooting in Newtown, USA, on 14 December 2012

The international community of educators and school employees, represented by Education International, is deeply shocked by the killing of twenty children and six adults in the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, USA, yesterday. Schools should be safe places of learning and sanctuary, where children are encouraged to grow and develop to their full potential, not places of mindless violence in which their young lives are cut short. The fact that the massacred children were so young renders the situation all the more tragic. We have no records of a massacre of this size ever hitting a school population outside a warzone.

We commend our colleagues in Newtown, who made extraordinary efforts to bring children and staff to safety during the horrifying moments when the tragedy unfolded, and extend our heartfelt sympathies to them and to the parents and families of the murdered children and adults.

In 2009 Education International called upon the international community to declare schools safe sanctuaries to protect the safety and security of school communities everywhere, whether against attacks in areas of military conflict or against acts of violence by individuals. In the past five years we have been confronted too often, and in too many countries, with senseless acts of violence against students, educators and school employees. Although it may not be possible to prevent every act of violence, public authorities of all nations should at least take measures to limit and regulate the access which citizens have to weapons generally and, in particular, enforce effective gun control.

Meanwhile, we mourn over the loss of so many lives and express our deepest condolences to the whole community of the Sandy Hook Elementary School and to all our American colleagues, who are still in shock and disbelief over this meaningless and unprecedented act of violence in an elementary school.

Brussels, 15 December 2012
Fred van Leeuwen,
General Secretary.