

## ARMING TEACHERS

### THE PROBLEM

A generation of children are growing up afraid to go to school, regularly going through lockdowns and live-shooter drills and experiencing mental and emotional trauma caused by the threat of gun violence.

### THE FACTS

- 91% of children in high-income countries who are killed with guns live in the U.S.
- Nearly 60% of high school seniors reported fears of a shooting in their school or community.
- More than 228,000 U.S. children at 234 schools have experienced school shootings since the 1999 Columbine school shooting.
- Nearly 40% of children exposed to a shooting will develop PTSD.

### THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

1. **RIGHT TO STAY ALIVE:** The state has a duty to prevent abuses of the right to stay alive by taking measures to address actual or foreseeable threats to this right, including in the context of gun violence.
2. **RIGHT TO EDUCATION:** Gun violence can impact the right to education, disrupting the functioning of schools through the presence of firearms on campuses and classrooms. Armed teachers would create an unsafe environment and have a direct psychological impact on millions of children. It is not in the “best interests of the child” to spend every day in a state of fear, heightened by the presence of armed teachers awaiting the next attack. This undermines the fundamental right to education.
3. **CHILDREN’S RIGHTS:** The U.S. signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1995. This means that the U.S. should recognize the particular vulnerabilities of children and provide “special safeguards and care” in order to protect them from gun violence, including strict regulation of the possession and use of firearms, and preventing access to firearms by those at risk of misusing them.

### AIUSA’S RECOMMENDATION

The U.S. should not implement laws or policies that’d result in arming teachers with guns, because:

- There’s no evidence to suggest that arming teachers will make schools safer.
- The presence of guns on school campuses will actually increase the risk of gun violence. Students may access teachers’ firearms; the risk of unintentional shootings increases with the presence of more guns; and armed educators could complicate law enforcement officers’ response to an active shooting.
- Arming teachers would normalize the presence of guns in everyday life and would constantly reinforce the perception for children that school is a dangerous place. Studies have shown that children exposed to chronic fear and stress associated with actual or perceived violence suffer from a range of mental health issues which undermine their right to education.
- The presence of armed educators could stigmatize schools in deprived areas where communities of color face racial disparities, reinforcing their sense of state repression and exposing them to elevated risks of violence.

Please contact [egv@aiusa.org](mailto:egv@aiusa.org) with any questions or to request citations behind any of this information.