



PARLIAMENTARY FORUM
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS



CYPRUS AYTERRA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
of the Republic of Cyprus

Inter-Parliamentary Seminar on

PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS –
RESPONSIBILITIES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MIDDLE
EASTERN AND NORTH AFRICAN STATES

18-19 February 2011, Nicosia, Cyprus

MINUTES





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Introduction

On the 18-19 of February 2011 the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus and the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons organised an Inter-Parliamentary Conference for Middle Eastern and North African States in Nicosia, Cyprus.

The seminar drew a lot of attention and approximately fifty participants attended the two-day seminar and among these were: Members of Parliaments from Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, the Palestinian territories, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Cyprus, Sweden, and Colombia, as well as representation from Governments, Embassies, International Organisations, Civil Society Organisations, Research Institutes, and the Media.

The proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons is a major threat to development, democracy and security in many parts of the world, and hence a serious concern for parliamentarians world-wide. For many states in the MENA region human security is becoming an urgent preoccupation. The increasing number of small arms in circulation is a threat to individuals and communities in everyday life. There is an estimation of 50-90 million small arms in the region, of which 80% are in the hands of the civilian population.

Parliamentarians have a key role in all aspects of the multi-dimensional approach needed to address proliferation of small arms and that of the complex problem of small arms proliferation. The MENA region has several ongoing conflicts, which increases the risks and proliferation of small arms and requires committed efforts by the international community for preventive diplomacy and to uphold international law.

The main topics of discussion were; Security Sector Reform (SSR), including presentations from the Police Sector, on Parliamentary oversight of Stockpile Management of Conventional Ammunition, the Role of Civil Society in Security Sector Reform and the Role of Parliamentarians in Security Sector Reform. Key note speakers from Small Arms Survey and Stockholm International Peace Resource Institute (SIPR) were also invited to present on Model Legislations on Firearms and Related Materials and on Arms Transfer related to the concerns and responsibilities for the MENA region.

At the end of the conference the participants adopted the 'Nicosia Declaration' taking into account the main issues addressed. Please see Annex. I.

Opening session

Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Mr Peter Weiderud opened the meeting by welcoming all participants and by saying that we are having this regional meeting for the Middle East and North Africa at a time when this region is experiencing its most overwhelming democratic development in modern times.



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The so-called Jasmine Revolution that started in Tunisia in January have so far led to the fall of decades of old regimes – in Tunis and Egypt – dissolved parliaments in other countries and ongoing popular protests in a number of other countries.

On the one hand, one may argue that we are organising this seminar at very unfortunate time, due to the recent political developments and last minutes cancellation.

On the other hand this meeting is extremely timely. The role of parliamentarians with integrity will be more crucial than ever in the years to come, and the Parliamentary Forum on SALW can be one of the needed frameworks for support and inter-parliamentary exchange.

Vice-president of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Hon. Ibrahim Sorie (Sierra Leone) addressed all participants at the seminar and on behalf of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons. He expressed his strong appreciation to the House of Representatives of the republic of Cyprus, with special thanks to Mr. Marios Garoyian, President of the House of Representatives, Mr. Socrates Socratous, Secretary General of the House of Representatives of Cyprus, and Mrs. Evie Hadjiyianni, Director of the International Relations Service, and her staff for hosting this event and making this gathering of parliamentarians possible, in the search for peaceful and secure communities.

The Parliamentary Forum is still a young, but growing organization of parliamentarians worldwide concerned with the un-controlled proliferation of small arms and the effects these weapons have on building and sustaining prosper and secure societies.

The work of the Parliamentary Forum originates from the aftermath of the Hurricane Mitch in Central America in the 1990ies. At that time, it became clear to many actors in the international community that the proliferation of small arms was a major obstacle to re-building societies; a reality that had been clear to parliamentarians in these countries for many years. Spanish and Swedish members of parliaments took the initiative to form a network to offer political, legal and financial support to their colleagues in Central America, how to deal with the problem. This concrete act of solidarity was strongly appreciated, and based on that experience, the need to have a more permanent network of parliamentarians was identified.

Gradually the work grew, geographically as well as qualitatively. The Forum has become a membership organization of parliamentarians, able to speak for and work with members in many parts of the world. At present, the Forum has approximately 200 members in 60 countries.

This is the first regional meeting held specifically for the Middle East and North Africa region, a region where cooperation and peaceful developments are crucial. It is the Forum's ambition to bring up the proliferation of small arms and light weapons as well as armed violence prevention on the political agenda in these countries. We are having our meeting at a critical time for the



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region. Several parliaments are recently dissolved and a new spirit of free elections is likely to change the political landscape. This is indeed a time for parliamentarians to come together for reflections and dialogue.

The method of bringing parliamentarians from different countries and continents together to share perspectives and learning from each other is crucial when dealing with issues of peace and international security. Parliaments have a key role in peace making, promoting and informing public debates, collaborating in policy development and implementation, monitoring and criticising government initiatives, and controlling the budget allocations of the public security sector.

Parliaments are the only bodies with authority to create and reform legislation and to ratify international treaties. As democratically elected representatives, parliamentarians have unique access to the public space and as such a possibility to create debate and to stimulate public opinion. Parliaments also serve as links between civil society and governments, thus assuring both the legality and legitimacy of policy initiatives.

Furthermore, Hon. Sorie said that since these weapons easily cross borders it immediately becomes a problem of international concern and, as such, requires commitments at a national, regional and international level. Therefore the Forum emphasizes the necessity of controlling international trade arms trade, both legal and illicit. The Forum is a strong advocate for a comprehensive international Arms Trade Treaty and part of our current work is to encourage parliamentarians worldwide in support for the upcoming ATT process.

The Forum is also a strong promoter of Security Sector Reform and consequently believes in strategies for the management of security functions that - in a democratically accountable, efficient and effective manner - to initiate and support reform of the national security infrastructure. The proliferation and unlawful use of small arms and light weapons poses one of the most pressing security problems in many of the world's poorer countries - it is therefore very important that the linkages between SSR and SALW Control at all levels are clearly identified and strengthened. The proliferation of weapons in one country or region improves the capabilities of criminal or warring factions' and fuels their activities, which has a possibility of creating instability in neighbouring countries or regions.

In his concluding remarks, Hon. Sorie stressed that armed violence is a complex issue, and that the parliaments and parliamentarians across all regions to jointly address these challenges is essential, particularly to ensure that the issue of small arms and light weapons is placed firmly within the wider security system reform agenda.

His full presentation is available on the Forum's website www.parlforum.org.



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Address of H.E. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus Mr. Markos Kyprianou, read by Ambassador, Mrs. Rea Yiordamlis, Political Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Kyprianou began by thanking the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus and the Parliamentary Forum on SALW for taking such an excellent initiative.

This initiative highlights the role of Cyprus in the prevention of the illegal proliferation of firearms.

The Forth Biennial Meeting of States in implementations of United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which was held in June 2010, is an important international process in promoting disarmament and combating the illegal arms trade. Moreover, the dedication of the EU and also Cyprus on this issue, and in particularly the issue of control of illegal arms transfer, was strongly highlighted.

The address concluded with an emphasis on that the recent developments in the MENA-region should be noted and acknowledged. Initiatives like this regional meeting highlights the importance of parliamentary work.



H.E. the President of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus Mr. Marios Garoyian, General Secretary of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus Mr. Socrates Socratous.

H.E. The President of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus Mr. Marios Garoyian started by welcoming all participants to the seminar and he emphasized the interest of Cyprus in the important field of global security.

He continued by stating that the circulation of hundreds of millions of small arms and light weapons all over the world and the impossibility of efficiently regulating and controlling their transfer and trading, are a serious threat to security, sustainable development and social cohesion.

This phenomenon is connected to major threats, such as armed conflicts with great human and material losses, displacement of populations, organized crime and terrorist acts. The existence of millions of weapons, especially in the hands of civilians, is fuelling conflicts, which can be seen in the Middle East and North Africa. He encouraged all initiatives undertaken in this region, such as those by the Arab League, as well as international and regional networks for SALW.



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In the light of the asymmetrical threats against global security, the international community has intensified its efforts, in the fields of both nuclear security and conventional weapons. Exhibiting the necessary political will is key to achieving the goal of the adoption of a legally binding Arms Trade Treaty in 2012. The exercise by Parliaments of their constitutional competences for the legislative regulation of the transfer and trade of conventional weapons, as well as at the exercise of parliamentary control to ensure its full implementation by the States, constitute essential conditions for the successful outcome of the whole venture. Parliaments and international parliamentary organisations can and must have a very important contribution to triggering the necessary signature and ratification by the States of the relevant international conventions.

He ended his intervention by congratulating the Parliamentary Forum on SALW for the substantial work it has accomplished and ensured the audience that the House of Representatives of Cyprus look forward to close cooperation also in the future with this Forum for inter-parliamentary dialogue, thus contributing to the goal of world peace and security.

For a full report please see document *Address by the President of the House of Representatives, Mr Marios Garoyian* on the Forum's website www.parlforum.org.

Session I: Security Sector Reform (SSR)

Hon. Rose Abunaw, Board Member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, Member of Parliament, (Cameroon) moderated this session and began by stating that there is a growing acceptance within the international development community that human security is an essential public need, like education, health and clean water. There is also little doubt that the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms presents a significant challenge to those governments and authorities struggling with weak governance structures and an unreformed security system.

Furthermore, she emphasized that the control of small arms and light weapons must therefore be a fundamental component to be considered during any security system reform.

Key note speaker: Mr. Christakis Mavris, Chief Superintendent, Director of the Criminal Investigation Department, Cyprus Police gave a presentation on the “*Law enforcement in Security Sector Reform (SSR) - the Police Sector*“.

Mr. Mavris began by informing the participants that the police force in Cyprus is the main law enforcement authority. The police have the jurisdiction to exercise its powers on the whole territory, although since the occupation the jurisdiction is in practise not extended to the whole territory.

The level of crime in Cyprus is one of the lowest in the EU and crimes related to illegal arms are almost non-existent.



Cyprus has very strict framework that inhibits the illegal arms trafficking. Cyprus has bilateral agreements with other states and a very strict control is being undertaken by the police who look very seriously upon the use of firearms. To carry a gun in Cyprus one must have a special permit, such permit may be issued for example for hunting. The illegal use of firearms can bring up to 15 years in prison.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Mavris pointed out that the Cyprus police recognise the importance of prevention of the use of firearms and he underlined that the key is to establish close cooperation with other countries regarding this issue. Seminars, such as this one, that provides exchange of best practices are very important in combating the illegal proliferation of firearms.

Key note speaker: Mr. Adrian Wilkinson, Director of Explosive Capabilities Limited gave a presentation on *“Parliamentary oversight of Stockpile Management of Conventional Ammunition”*.

Mr. Wilkinson began his presentation by stating that major contributory factors to explosions of ammunition stockpiles are inherent danger posed by ammunition and explosives, deterioration in ammunition after end of ‘shelf life’, poor storage conditions and standards, poor ammunition management, (stock surveillance), lack of appropriately trained technical staff, and legacy of past conflict. The main causes of explosions are due to human error.

The safety in storage of ammunition that is over 20 years old cannot be assessed, let alone guaranteed, without an effective national ammunition surveillance and in-service proof programme. From the moment it is purchased, ammunition is a depreciating asset. Once its performance or stability in storage cannot be guaranteed it is then an increasing liability.

In his presentation he also illustrated real explosions of storage of ammunition that have taken place, such as in for example in Yemen (2001, 2007, 2010), Afghanistan (2002), Lebanon (2005, 2009), Iraq (2003, 2006, 2009), Egypt (2009) and the Palestinian Authority Territories (2010), etc.

Moreover, he stressed that old stockpiles of ammunition are not a problem that can be ignored. Eventually they will degrade to such a point that explosive events are inevitable with resultant fatalities, injuries, stock loss and political fall-out. States’ that lack trained and qualified ammunition technical staff do not have the indigenous capability to effectively assess the problem that their aging stockpiles of ammunition present. They should request international assistance through the United nations, Regional Organization or bi-laterally.

Mr. Wilkinson ended his presentation by encouraging parliamentarians to establish internal standards and hence a legislative framework for safe and secure ammunition storage, engage the Security and Defence Committee in each country, initiate international cooperation by visiting ‘best practice’ ammunition storage, ensure compliance with appropriate international instruments



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relating to conventional ammunition stockpiles, advocate for budget necessary to ensure safe and secure ammunition stockpiles.

His full presentation is available on the Forum's website www.parlforum.org.

Discussion

Hon. Obidat (Jordan) made a brief intervention and began by stating that the illegal trade with SALW is a large threat. It is also a threat on the socio-economical level in a society and a country must be in control of this. Before becoming a Member of Parliament, Hon. Obidat was a General. The illegal trade with SALW is mostly due to smuggling. Jordan is a country with long borders and security forces are not able to completely control the border regions.

Regarding ammunition, Hon Obidat mentioned that stockpiling of ammunition poses an indirect risk and security threat for all citizens in society and that is it imperative that the government control this.

Mr. Wezeman (SIPRI) asked the participants to which extent the MPs present had already thought of this issue.

Hon. Sorie (Sierra Leone) explained that peace was achieved in Sierra Leone in 2002 and one of the things that had to be done was the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combats. With assistance from the international community they destroyed a lot of arms in the country. That was also the time when they became interested in Security Sector Reform (SSR) and in their case they got involved in the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN PoA) and signed a convention on small arms at a regional level (ECOWAS) that has also been approved in the national parliament.

Drawing upon his experiences from a post-conflict country he underlined the importance of arms destruction and said that arms that are not needed must be destroyed and that the control of SALW is very important.

Mr. Weiderud (Secretary General, Parliamentary Forum on SALW) said that the awareness among MPs is not high enough. He told about his own experience in getting involved in this matter and explained that there was a major explosion in Mozambique in 2007 and one of the Forum's members asked for help and asked the Forum to assist him in his work as an MP.

There is a lack of political attention and proper international regulation on stockpiling. Additionally, stockpiling is an area that traditionally has been in the hands and control of the military which complicates matters further. He referred to Mr. Wilkinson's presentation and



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agreed that the reason for stockpile explosions is lack of political attention and he stressed that we cannot blame the technical aspects and as well as it is a parliamentary responsibility.

Lastly, he mentioned that on the Forum's website (www.parlforum.org) information, policy statements and parliamentary handbooks on ammunition stockpiling are available for parliamentarians to use in their work.

Hon. Talabani (Iraq) told about the current situation in Iraq and said that as an Iraqi MP she has access to storages on Iraqi territories but not to storages on non-Iraqi territories, such as for example the storage belonging to private security companies. There is a problem with lack of parliamentary oversight in regards to private security companies in post-conflict areas. She also mentioned that a law has been passed in the Parliament recently that enables the MPs to have enhanced oversight regarding this matter.

Hon. Yarfaa (Algeria) asked Mr. Mavris for more details on when weapons are allowed in Cyprus and Mr. Wilkinson on how enhanced control could be achieved.

Mr. Mavris (Cyprus Police) explained that this seminar also relates to firearms used by the military and that he has no knowledge of what is occurring in the military camps. However, outside the military camps firearms are prohibited. Licenses for carrying firearms are issued rarely and one has to apply directly to the Chief of the Police. Hunting guns are allowed only for hunting.

Continuously he said that thefts from military camps are very rare, although they experienced an exceptional case last summer when 200kg of explosives was stolen from a camp. The stolen material was located.

Mr. Wilkinson (Explosive Capabilities Limited) answered the question on how to control stockpiling and said that it is a must to have individually trained people to operate a stock correctly. One has to be aware of that ammunition stockpile is a different commodity because it is such a hazard, because it is designed to kill. In order to safely run ammunition depots one must have at least 6 months of training.

Hon. Sorie (Sierra Leone) asked how accurate the laws on firearms are in Cyprus.

Mr. Mavris (Cyprus Police) explained that the current law was enacted in 2004 and it is an addition to the EU directive, the existing framework in all EU states. This law proved penalties to up to 15 years in prison. The previous law was from 1975.



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Discussion of the Final Declaration

Mr. Peter Weiderud, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW facilitated the discussion on the Final Declaration. He began by emphasising that the declaration presents the political message from the participants.

A draft declaration was distributed to all participants.

Discussion

Hon. Qawasmi (the Palestinian Territories) said that the recommendations in the draft declaration were too generalized and that they had to be more specific. She also believed that the role of governments in manufacturing firearms should be mentioned and also that the Final Declaration should reflect a vision for the future.

Hon. Talabani (Iraq) agreed with the comments made by Hon. Qawasmi regarding the need to make the declaration more specific as well as underlining the threat posed by stockpiling.

Mr. Allam (Permanent Peace Movement) said that a programme of control of transfer of SALW should be included in the declaration. International treaties such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) are important as well as the cooperation between parliamentarians and civil society.

Hon. Obaidat (Jordan) also commented on the declaration and said that the declaration should involve the threat of terrorism and SALW, since this phenomena poses a great risk in the countries in the MENA region.

Hon. Al Shdaifat (Jordan) expressed that this Forum, which provides space for parliamentarians and other stakeholder to meet and join forces, are very important. Also the discussion on stockpiling is very relevant and should be included in the final declaration.

Mr. Weiderud (Secretary General, Parliamentary Forum on SALW) thanked everyone for their interventions and said that the declaration will be made stronger and more specific according to the participants preferences expressed. The aim of the Final Declaration is that it presents a base on which can be built on in the future.

Mr. Weiderud also explained that the local host has good contacts with the media in Cyprus and that the declaration will be presented to the media in Cyprus. The challenge for all parliamentarians and other participants is to present this declaration in their respective national parliaments as well as trying to gain media coverage. The Parliamentary Forum on SALW will also upload the Final Declaration on the website (www.parlforum.org).



Session II: Arms transfer

Hon. Sahar F. Qawasmi, (the Palestinian Territories) moderated this session and started by thanking the Cyprus parliament, the participants and the organizers. She emphasized that these sorts of conferences are very important in order to secure security and also that in order to have real democracy it is very important to avoid conflict and to create peaceful coexistence. Before giving the floor to Mr. Wezeman, Hon. Qawasmi referred to the previous session and said that there may be around 20 countries that produce weapons, but all countries are involved in stockpiles of such weapons.

Expert speaker: Mr. Pieter Wezeman, Senior Researcher, Arms Transfers Programme, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) gave a presentation on the subject *“Transfers of SALW: MENA concerns and responsibilities”*.

Mr. Wezeman began by saying that there is a lot of focus on major conventional weapons flows to the MENA region. The region figures high in statistics about international arms transfers and this has caused worries about the risks that such high volumes of arms procurement may cause destabilizing arms build ups in a region full of tensions between states. Controlling transfers of major weapons are at the heart of efforts to preserve regional peace, security and stability.

The risk, as perceived in the region, is that flows of small arms may contribute to political destabilization. Governments in the region should be concerned about the risk that inadequately controlled international arms flows will contribute to easier access to weapons by groups that intend to use violence to change the existing political systems and/or threaten the existing government.

Furthermore, major arms exporters have indicated that arms transfers should be controlled to prevent a number of undesirable effects. In particular the EU and the USA have formal export policies which put certain, albeit in practice often limited restraints on their arms exports, including export to the MENA region. The key elements of these arms export policies are:

- Respect for human rights in the country of final destination as well as respect by that country of international humanitarian law. The risk that SALW may be exported might be used for internal repression; in serious violations of human rights; or serious violations of international humanitarian law;
- Internal situation in the country of final destination, as a function of the existence of tensions or armed conflicts. Export of arms or military technology could provoke or prolong armed conflicts or aggravate existing tensions or conflicts in the country of final destination;



- Existence of a risk that the SALW will be diverted within the buyer country or re-exported, intentionally or because of bad stockpile controls unintentionally to an undesirable end-user or for an undesirable end use.

Moreover, Mr. Wezeman stressed that although SALW flows can have negative effects on MENA states, MENA states also have responsibilities with regards to preventing that international flows of SALW will contribute to human rights abuses or fuel violent conflict elsewhere in the world. MENA countries can be involved in international flows of SALW in several ways whether wittingly, permitting such exports, or unwittingly, when enforcement fails and weapons are leaving the country illegally.

For both commercial and political reasons states and private entities are involved in transfers of SALW from or through the MENA in different ways:

- Production: In several MENA countries SALW and their ammunitions are produced. Major producers include Turkey, Israel, Iran and Egypt. Each is known to produce a range of small arms (rifles, machine guns, rocket launchers) and ammunition;
- Stocks and surplus: Several MENA countries have indicated in formal statements related to their potential role in international flows of SALW that they have no arms industry and therefore do not export arms. However all countries in the region have stocks of SALW and ammunition. Internationally there has been a lot of stress on the need to destruct surplus SALW to prevent that they will inundate the international arms market. There is very little known about what happens with surplus weapons in MENA countries.
- Brokers, transit, transport and transshipment: The countries in the region may also be involved in other activities related to SALW transfers. Brokers, entities that do not have direct control over SALW but are involved in arranging international transfers of SALW, can be based in MENA countries or have citizenship of MENA states. Furthermore weapons can be transported by air, land or sea by MENA based companies or through MENA states or transiting ports and airports in the MENA region.

Almost all MENA states have informed the UN, in the framework of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, that they have put in place legislation to control arms trade and institutions to implement the legislation. However little is known about the actual implementation of the regulations, or in other words what actually is exported by these countries. In general, transparency in arms exports by MENA countries is low or not existing. Therefore too little information is available to make a proper assessment of the practical implementation of export regulations and stated arms export policies. However participation on the global level is far from universal, and in 2010 an all time low in submissions was reached. Most MENA countries have never or seldom submitted information and even fewer have reported on transfers of SALW.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Wezeman stressed that the lack of transparency hampers discussion in multilateral fora, parliaments and civil society. Transparency is an essential first step



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in the direction of international arms transfer controls and the lack of it does not bode well for further serious and effective international agreements such as the proposed Arms Trade Treaty.

Discussion

Hon. Qawasmi (the Palestinian Territories) thanked Mr. Wezeman for his presentation and asked if a new international law regarding the relationship between trade and weapons is needed.

Hon. Abunaw Makia (Cameroon) asked Mr. Wezeman where the shipload of arms were kept.

Hon. Talabani (Iraq) asked for clarification regarding the illegal trafficking of arms. She also stated that it should not be forgotten that many of the governments in these countries suppress their people.

Mr. Wezeman (SIPRI) answered the questions and explained that the United Nation is not responsible for handling the found shipload of arms but it is instead under the responsibility of the country that detains the load to destroy it. In his view, it would be good to have a universal agreement but he believed it would be difficult to reach consensus between all the countries and in particular, there has been a substantial reluctance in the MENA region against such treaties.

A representative from the delegation of Jordan said that the superpowers often close their eyes regarding transfer of weapons cargos and allowing it in the Middle East.

Hon. Abbou (Morocco) thanked Mr. Wezeman for his presentation and said that the issue of arms transfers is interesting and relevant to all countries and especially to Middle Eastern countries. This region is characterized by instability and it is important to bring this issue to the whole region and to emphasize on the need to control the arms trafficking.

Mrs. Parker (Small Arms Survey) commented on what could be done at an international level. And said that most other regions have substantial regional agreements, but this region is an exemption. She also suggested that it could perhaps be helpful to follow other regions.

A representative from the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus explained that Cyprus is working against trafficking of arms and that this issue is the responsibility of the custom.

Representative from the delegation of Jordan, underlined the importance of governments controlling the arms trafficking and arms transfer.

Hon. Qawasmi (the Palestinian Territories) asked Mr. Wezeman how to solve this issue and what mechanism that should be used.



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Mr. Wezeman (SIPRI) answered that the first step should be regulation. The second step is more based knowledge and on how the system works and how decisions are made, without that comprehension it is hard to improve the system. There is a need to know what is being exported in order to give advice. In sum, more transparency, openness and regulations are needed.

Hon. Qawasmi (the Palestinian Territories) stressed that this is an important topic and that international laws are important and need to be complied.

Mr. Weiderud (Secretary General, Parliamentary Forum on SALW) agreed that this is a complex issue and said parliamentarians can make a real impact in the work towards an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The Parliamentary Forum on SALW points to the need of a strong and international agreement to control and restrict arms transfer.

He also informed the participants that there will be a preparatory meeting in the UN regarding the ATT in about two weeks in order to reach an agreement in 2012. Unfortunately there is not enough parliamentary presence in the process and that there is little interest from some governments. He then continued by saying that parliamentarians can play a key role: they can ask their governments to be more active. In the Middle East there have been some reluctance to the ATT but he stressed that the countries in the Middle East would benefit a lot from this treaty, especially the people and then he concluded by saying that there is a need to ensure universal respect for human rights and to ask for solid involvement in the ATT process. The Parliamentary Forum on SALW has been observer in previous meetings.

Hon. Qawasmi (the Palestinian Territories) said that NGOs and mass media should raise more awareness on this subject.

Hon. Talabani (Iraq) briefly remarked on that there are intergovernmental meetings that are important but that there is also a need for implementation of these treaties.

Mrs. Parker (Small Arms Survey) agreed with Mr. Weiderud's previous comments on what can be done by parliamentarians to promote the ATT and concurred that most regions have strong agreements already in place to combat the proliferation of SALW and the MENA region is an exception.

Hon. Qawasmi (the Palestinian Territories) ended the session by thanking everyone for their participation.



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Session III: Model Legislations on Firearms and Related Materials

Hon. Christer Winbäck, Board Member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, (Sweden) moderated this session.

Mr. Winbäck said that lawmaking is necessary to regulate society and as a parliamentarian it is useful to take part in inter-parliamentary exchange and to learn from others. Before introducing the introduction speaker Mr. Weiderud, he quoted Mr. Hans Blix, former U.N. weapons inspector, and said that *the real arms of mass destruction are small arms and light weapons (SALW) - they kill people all the time.*

Mr. Peter Weiderud, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW gave a presentation on *“Working with model legislations - the Latin America experience”*.

The basic methodology of the Forum has always been an exchange between parliamentarians, and liaison with Governmental Organisations, Non Governmental Organisations (NGO's) and International Organisations. Since its inception the Forum has strongly focused on providing practical support to parliaments and parliamentarians in renewing and improving national legislation.

This has partly been achieved by developing a Model Legislation on Firearms that has been successfully used in Latin America. The purpose of this Model Legislation is to provide a template with which countries can compare their own domestic arms legislation in order to identify areas for improvement as well as to aid the regional harmonisation of laws, regulations and common standards, controls and requirements for the possession of firearms, and to limit the stock and reduce legal and illegal flow.

The major advantage of this model law is that it combines the two paradigms of ‘control’ and ‘disarmament’.

The Model Legislation was commissioned by the Latin American Parliament and developed by the Forum in cooperation with the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (SweFOR) and the Latin American organisations Coalición Latinoamericana para la Prevención de la Violencia Armada (CLAVE) and Viva Rio.

In most Latin American countries national arms legislations are largely focused on control mechanisms. The authorities have only a regulatory role which grants any person who complies with the requirements (age, clean criminal record, knowledge to handle the weapon, etc.) the right to acquire arms. A system of control often leads to a notion where one only consider legal (registered) weapons and illegal (unregistered) weapons and where only the latter is seen as a problem. The authorities therefore have a simplified or neutral attitude towards possession of



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arms. The Model Law helps countries to consider a new and deeper way of thinking there are other elements are taken into consideration.

The aim of the Model Law is to encourage states to stop being neutral and instead establish mechanisms and formulate policies that reduce the spread of small arms and recognize that the availability of weapons *per se* - legal or illegal - is a major risk to public security. The Model Law establishes a number of different control mechanisms which include the whole life cycle of a weapon - from production to destruction, sanctions, parliamentary control, etc.

The Model Legislation is a project that has gradually gained ownership by the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino) and in October 2008 it was formally adopted by the Commission on Citizen Security during a meeting in Mexico City. The model has been enthusiastically received in the region and is currently being used in national legislation reforms in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Netherlands Antilles Panama and Uruguay.

A ppt-presentation on model laws is available on the Forum's website www.parlforum.org.

Hon. Winbäck (Sweden) made a brief remark on that laws normally reflects a nations culture and changing that takes a long time. Therefore, parliamentarians need support and a model law may be a very useful tool. He then introduced the next expert speaker, Mrs. Parker.



Mrs. Parker, Senior Researcher, Small Arms Survey.



Hon. Winbäck, MP Sweden.

Expert speaker: Mrs. Sarah Parker, Senior Researcher, (Small Arms Survey) made a presentation on *"Drafting Model Legislation: practicalities and pitfalls"*. During her presentation Mrs. Parker gave a background of the project *Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition*, supplementing the United Nations



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Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which was adopted in 2001 and came in to force in 2005:

The Model Law for the Firearms Protocol was developed by UNODC in response to the request of the General Assembly to the Secretary-General to promote and assist the efforts of Member States to become parties to and implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto. In October 2008, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Crime and its Protocols, urged States Parties to the Firearms Protocol to strengthen their national legislation in a manner consistent with the Protocol, and requested the Secretariat to facilitate, whenever possible, technical assistance to States parties facing difficulties in its implementation.

The group of experts that were put together to attend three workshops in order to review and discuss the various draft forms of the Model Law were a diverse range of people in the field of firearms manufacturing, licensing and trafficking prevention, from a variety of legal and geographical backgrounds, and included:

- government representatives;
- representatives from international and regional organizations;
- UN personnel;
- and civil society representatives, including people from industry, research institutions, and sports shooting associations.

The first draft of the Model Law started in September 2009 and the finishing touches on the document are done now. So, in all, the process has taken about 17 months,

The first recommendation is that it is vital to have a clear agreement on the aims and objectives of the exercise. The Firearms Protocol contains different levels of obligation. In general, provisions can be grouped into the following categories:

- (a) Measures that are mandatory (either absolutely or where specified conditions have been met);
- (b) Measures that States parties must consider applying or endeavor to apply;
- (c) Measures that are optional.

It is important to have the right level of ambition when drafting Model Law. On the one hand, it is important to meet the objective, and in our case, that meant including the minimum provisions required to satisfy the treaty requirements and be in compliance with the treaty. On the other hand, these sorts of processes – consultations to draft model law – are expensive and time consuming, why it is important to take advantage of the opportunity to create something more comprehensive and substantial, that perhaps goes beyond the treaty requirements and provides additional extras for any states or legislative drafters who are interested to go further and who welcome the additional guidance.



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States have limitations in terms of their capacity to enforce a very onerous or restrictive arms control regime which is why it is hard to make the perfect law that would solve all the small arms problems. There will also be political compromises or constraints and model law needs to be adaptable to the needs of each State, whatever its legal tradition and social, economic, cultural and geographical conditions. The suggestion is not that in drafting model law, one should not set the benchmark high. But there is value in allowing some pragmatism/reality to influence the process, because this will ensure the model law is and remains relevant to the context or audience that it is drafted for. This is more likely to make it useful.

One final point about the process of drafting model law, is to choose the experts engaged in the process wisely and carefully. It is important to have a wide range of people engaged in the process – including parliamentarians, legislative drafters, government policy experts, industry personnel, civil society and so on. It is equally important to ensure they have the requisite skills and expertise that is needed on the issue.

Mrs. Parker ended her presentation by asking the parliamentarians how useful the Arab Model Law is, to what level of detail it is relevant and how many of the parliamentarians present had been working with the model law.

Discussion

Hon. Winbäck (Sweden) thanked Mrs. Parker for an interesting contribution and said that all parliamentarians need help with this issue. Referring to his own country, he explained that one of the top arms producers in the world is Sweden and we are thus part of the problem. Swedish weapons have for example been found in the hands of the Guerilla in Colombia. He continued by stressing the importance of awareness-raising.

Mr. Weiderud (Secretary General, Parliamentary Forum on SALW) said that the need for model legislations varies between regions. In Latin America it has been very a helpful and successful tool for parliamentarians while in West Africa, for example, model legislations is not perceived as a very urgent tool since they have a tradition of cooperation with National Commissions and have reached harmonization through ECOWAS. He also said that he understood that it may be difficult for parliamentarians to understand how model legislations can be useful in their work. Since this is the first meeting held specifically for the MENA-region, the reactions of the participants will guide the Parliamentary Forum on SALW on how to best proceed in the future. He also mentioned it could be useful to have Latin America as an example.

Hon. Winbäck (Sweden) informed the audience that copies of the Latin American model legislation were available.



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Hon. Qawasmi (the Palestinian Territories) underlined the importance of the topic and said that there is a need for an international treaty restriction the illegal transfer of firearms.

Hon. Talabani (Iraq) believed that local laws are just as important as international laws. Many countries sign treaties but fail to implement them. She also made a remark that during the seminar there has not been many comments on prevention and/or banning the construction of weapons.

Mrs. Parker (Small Arms Survey) answered that banning of manufacturing does not appear in conventions.

Mr. Weiderud (Secretary General, Parliamentary Forum on SALW) agreed with Hon. Talabani that proper legislation and implementation is very important. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is also important in order to create a framework to regulate parts of the arms trade. Such a treaty will, however, not prohibit all arms trade. He continued by telling the current situation in Sweden and said that the supply of arms to other countries is high on the political agenda at the moment. Sweden is a producer country and has a strong export industry. Although Sweden has a solid legislation on arms export there are a various concerns regarding implementation. There is, for example, a current discussion on the present situation in Tunisia and the fact that Sweden has provided them with weapons in the past.

Hon. Winbäck (Sweden) thanked Mr. Weiderud for his comments and confirmed that there have been many discussions in Sweden recently regarding which sorts of weapons that have been transferred to North Africa. Sweden has the possibility to make exemptions to the legislation in exporting weapons to other countries, many of which are problematic. Lastly, he stressed the importance of more discussions on both national and international level and he also said that model legislations could be helpful in establishing frameworks in respective countries.

Mr. Wezeman (SIPRI) thanked Hon. Winbäck for illustrating the issue very well. Export controls exist but are not easy to implement and since it involves a lot of money it complicates the issue even further. The MENA region suffers from different obstacles though and banning arms trade or specific weapons will probably not occur. He said that many states in the region have still not signed nor ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) which is process that have been active for many years. In his view, it is better to try to control the weapons that already exist.

Mr. Mavris (Cyprus Police) reflected on the difficulties for a country to adopt new legislation. Legislative frameworks needs to be effective for each country and to take notice of each country's sensitivities. A new law can be conflicting between parties, social groups and groups with different economic interests and he stressed that without political will it is difficult to pass a law and he wondered how the prospects are for the MENA region.

Mrs. Parker (Small Arms Survey) answered that implementation is difficult. There are many factors that each country needs to take in to consideration and model legislations will not be



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adopted straight away. Having alternatives and options is important and everything is possible as long as it is appropriate for its context. All states should undertake the same risk assessment, yet it is a difficult task since there are great differences between countries. In for example Yemen and the USA it is a civil right to own a weapon while in other countries it may be a privilege, and in some countries hunting is a big industry. Model laws need to go around these differences.

A representative from the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus asked if there are model legislations combined with or parallel to other treaties within the United Nations or the European Union. He also wondered whether the Parlantino model law was a European agreement.

Mr. Weiderud (Secretary General, Parliamentary Forum on SALW) answered that the Parlantino model law is only for Latin American, but it also contains respect for Human Rights which is the same as in the United Nations concern. He recalled that Mr. Mavris asked about how to make legislations and there are mainly three aspects to keep in mind to understand the work of politics: the first is self-interest, the second is vision and idea, and the third is understanding the mature moment of when to do what. All of these three aspects have to be taken in to consideration. Model legislation can help and strengthen the vision to do politics. It can help politicians to strengthen their work and to sharpen the politics.

Hon. Winbäck (Sweden), ended the session by thanking the organizers.

Session IV: Civil Society in Security Sector Reform (SSR)

Mr. Peter Weiderud, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW moderated this session started by noting that there had been many casualties in Bahrain, Yemen and Libya during the past 24 hours in the search for democracy and human rights. This is the time for political wisdom, which is the core of parliamentary work.

He welcomed Mr. Fadi Abi Allam to take the floor.

Key note speaker: Mr. Fadi Abi Allam, President of Permanent Peace Movement, Lebanon, Member of International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) thanked Mr. Weiderud and started by saying that every day, thousands of people are killed, injured, raped and forced to flee from their homes as a result of conflict, armed violence, and human rights violations. There have been 128 armed conflicts since 1989 which have resulted in at least 250.000 casualties each year. An estimated 300.000 people die each year of firearms in a non-conflict area and according to Amnesty International about 60% of human rights violations involve the use of small arms and light weapons (SALW).



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The provision of security is the prime responsibility of a state. Structural reforms of the security sectors, the adoption and implementation of laws restricting the use of firearms as well as establishing programmes for arms destruction, are crucial elements of state policy to curb the misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and to guarantee standards of security for citizens.

Guns may not be the root causes of violence, but they multiply the violence dramatically. Adding weapons to a violent environment is very dangerous. About 875 million firearms are circulating on our planet today, of which 74% are in the hand of non-state actors or civilians. This means that weapons in the hands of civilians outnumber governmental arsenals by 3 to 1. Just as the majority of gun owners are civilians, so are the majority of gun victims. It is estimated that firearms kill 1000 people each day and around 250 of these occur in a war or an armed conflict.

Small arms are the weapon of choice for most of the population involved in the world's conflicts due to that they are small, cheap and easy to carry and to maintain. The level of small arms violence in countries at 'peace' can be as high as - or even higher than the level in war zones. Domestic violence is also more likely to be lethal if there is a gun involved. There is also a trend amongst young people to carry weapons since they are raised within a culture of violence.

More human rights violations are committed with small arms than with any other kind of weapon. All societies are affected by gun violence but poor countries suffer the most. Poor people are most likely to be shot, yet they are the least likely to receive treatment and rehabilitation and an estimated 3.000 people each day are severely injured by guns with no access to treatment.

In July 2001, the first UN conference on Small Arms produced an agreement called the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN PoA). The UN PoA recognizes the important role of civil society. The involvement of civil society organizations is central to address the proliferation of SALW. Civil society organisations are particularly useful and effective in awareness raising, monitoring of governmental policies, lobbying, advocating etc. Some of the challenges that civil society organisations face consist in limited access to information and restrictions by the governments to participate in policy developments and implementations. Donor-driven initiatives to reform the security sectors have focused on improving the technical capacity of security services. Adequate attention has not been given to the need of strengthening democratic governance. The involvement of civil society and other community stakeholders in reforms is very important and when reviewing and changing policy on laws and regulations of firearms, governments should collaborate with civil society.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Allam stressed that parliamentarians are not always experts in this area and that civil society can provide assistance.



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Mr. Weiderud (Secretary General, Parliamentary Forum on SALW) thanked Mr. Allam for his important presentation and emphasized that the interplay between civil society and legislative authorities are crucial.

Discussion

Hon. Qawasmi (the Palestinian Territories) said that weapons are sometimes considered to be a tool to achieve international peace and she underlined the need for prohibition of arms.

Mr. Allam (Permanent Peace Movement) argued that peace can be achieved by tackling the use of firearms and there is a need for a non-violence culture.

Hon. Sorie (Sierra Leone) thanked Mr. Allam for an interesting presentation and continued by concurring with previous speakers that parliamentarians need a strong collaboration with civil society. IANSA is an important provider of information regarding the small arms proliferation and he stressed that we all need to work together.

Mr. Allam (Permanent Peace Movement) thanked Hon. Sorie for the compliments and said that he was very satisfied that this inter-parliamentary seminar was taken place and he said that we all need each other to jointly create security.

Mr. Weiderud (Secretary General, Parliamentary Forum on SALW) congratulated the Board of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW for taking the initiative to work in this region. Then he asked Mr. Allam how many civil society organizations that are currently working in the MENA region and If they have any cooperation with parliamentarians.

Mr. Allam (Permanent Peace Movement) answered that there are several organizations in the region working specifically with these issues, both directly and indirectly. There are at least 100 organizations that functions in most Middle Eastern countries, for example MENANSA which is the regional branch of IANSA. The civil society in the MENA-region is relatively strong, although the majority of the Arab countries have strict regulation and totalitarian regimes that does not normally allow civil society organizations to exist.

Mr. Weiderud (Secretary General, Parliamentary Forum on SALW) ended the session by saying that permanent peace is indeed something to strive for and he stressed the link between peace and democracy in order to achieve peace, by quoting Immanuel Kant and his essay Perpetual Peace.



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The Role of Parliamentarians in Security Sector Reform (SSR)

Moderator: Hon. Christos Stylianides, Member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, (Cyprus) moderated this session and started thanking Mr. Weiderud and Mr. Socrates for their hospitality. He explained that he came in contact with the Parliamentary Forum on SALW as a member of the Cyprus delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly. The Forum makes an important work but there are many difficulties.

He said that he was very pleased that Cyprus hosts this important seminar. This session is dedicated to highlight the role of parliamentarians in Security Sector Reform (SSR). Parliaments have a responsibility regarding SSR, especially in the protection of citizens. Building peace and stability is crucial.

Regional specific comments: Hon. Ala Talabani, (Iraq) addressed all participants and said that she had learnt a lot during these past two days. There are many challenges within the field of SSR and it is important to secure stability for the people. The parliaments represent the people and one important task for parliamentarians is to legislate and legislation should thus reflect of the will of the citizens.

The Iraqi parliament has recently become more active in undertaking laws to enhance the control of the executive power. However, within the state budget there are enormous funds for re-establishing the military and the parliament have no choice but to secure such funds.



Hon. Talabani, MP Iraq.

Furthermore, Hon. Talabani underlined that it is not enough to pass laws in parliaments - they have to be implemented as well. Terrorism and the issue of private security companies are of great concern in Iraq today and the parliament have enacted a new law for foreign security companies. Information about these companies is now given as well as analytical data of the weapons they import to Iraq.

Referring to a previous session on Civil Society in SSR, she explained that it is not only civil society organizations that lack information on this subject. In Iraq there is little accessible information for parliamentarians as well.

Moreover, Hon. Talabani spoke about the recent election in Iraq where she was the only female candidate. One reason for this gender inequality is that men spend a lot of money on winning the



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electoral campaign and women normally lack funds for campaigning. Many male candidates handed out pistols to potential voter during the election campaign. Domestic lethal violence is also a great problem in Iraq and the violence is facilitated with firearms.

Lastly, she said that arms trafficking – both inside and outside of Iraq – is a great problem and that the governments should cooperate with civil society in order to curb this problem.

Hon. Stylianides (Cyprus) thanked Hon. Talabani for her presentation and agreed with her that parliamentary oversight and implementation of laws must be improved and that it is a weakness for parliaments all over the world.

Regional specific comments: Hon. Rose Abunaw, Board Member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, Member of Parliament, (Cameroon) thanked Secretary General, Mr. Weiderud, and the other members of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW. The sub-region of Central African is not aware of what Security Sector Reform (SSR) is or how to control it. It is vital that the MPs play an important role, although the lack of knowledge is widespread. The parliament on Cameroon does not have the knowledge how firearms are used nor how they are bought and there is little information accessible for MPs on military information.



Hon. Abunaw Makia, MP Cameroon.

Today Cameroon is a relatively peaceful country. We are, however, currently having problems with pirates in the area and we were also close to going at war with Nigeria regarding a conflict over a peninsula. The dispute was settled peacefully, although the military of Nigeria are still very offensive and she explained that the week before military officials were killed and people were held for ransom. Since the perpetrators have sophisticated arms there is a strong concern that the conflict break may out again.

Hon. Senator Roy Barreras, Board Member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, (Colombia), began by thanking the Parliamentary Forum on SALW and the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus for organizing such an important event.

Colombia has had internal conflicts during the past 40 years. The methods of the guerillas have created a need for self defence. The illegal trafficking of drugs and arms provides enormous resources to the guerillas, paramilitaries and other groups involved in organized crimes. The



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Government has managed to dissolve some paramilitary forces and various people handed in their weapons in order to be re-integrated in to society. Colombia has very strict laws on terrorism and approximately 90% of the population condemns it. Although the guerillas have no political support they have enough funding to continue their work. When various members of the guerillas (about 50.000) surrendered they became criminals instead of law-abiding citizens, and in effect criminal gangs have been created. These new gangs are working in similar ways to the guerillas and they are committing the same offences all over again. This is the situation that Colombia is facing today.

Weapons continue to be in the hands of the citizens in Colombia. About 450.000 licenses for carrying firearms have expired but these weapons have never been returned. These weapons belong to the state and since the state does not make any efforts to bring them back, it makes the state partly responsible for the illegal carrying of these weapons. Another dilemma is how to encourage the citizens to hand in their weapons since it is a criminal offence to carry an illegal weapon. Colombia has progressed and the criminal code has changed and the offense of carrying an illegal weapon is 1-4 years in house arrest and now there are discussions changing it to 4-6 years in prison.

Hon. Senator Barreras continued by saying that there is a new law proposal in Colombia for weapons amnesty. This will allow people to hand in their guns, guns that may belong to criminal gangs, and not be punished. Colombia is seizing a lot of illegal weapons and the destruction of firearms is very expensive, hence there is a need for international funding.

Furthermore, he explained that a new legal act regarding the possession of firearms is under way, which will make it more difficult to obtain a license. He also highlighted the importance of controlling the illegal trafficking of weapons.

Millions of people have become victims due to armed conflict during the last decades. In order to compensate the victims a new law proposal on compensation will be adopted next week. In addition, it is also important to avoid new victims. To disarm all the citizens is problematic since people feel that they are left without any defense. In order for the population in Colombia to hand over the weapons to the state, we must be able to guarantee freedom, security and peace, it is not an easy task but ultimately it is the responsibility of the state to protect its people. We have to change the situation of insecurity and the peoples need to arm themselves for protection. The state must have the monopoly of firearms and must secure security for the population. In some countries all citizens have the right to have arms, as for example in the USA, which is a form of legitimate self defense.

Hon. Senator Barreras concluded by urging everyone to work in the direction of promoting state monopoly of weapons. Colombia has made extensive efforts and has lost journalists, parliamentarians and others for this purpose. It is also important to have a dialogue with the producers of weapons and to restrict the trade of arms. Lastly, he said that the Parliamentary



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Forum on SALW has provided him with valuable knowledge in this area that he has made use of in his work of combating the proliferation of SALW.

Discussion

Hon. Stylianides (Cyprus) opened the discussion by saying that Colombia is an example to be avoided but also to be followed and that we have to praise Colombia for what it has achieved. The role of the Forum is prominent and it is clear that we - the parliamentarians - can play an important part.

Hon. Yarfaa (Algeria) thanked the organizers for this important gathering and continued by arguing that our presence in this forum reflects our will to change the situation in the region. SALW is one of the most important issues for this region and its proliferation is not controlled. Africa and the Middle East are still suffering from conflicts. There are about 875 million small arms and light weapons circulating in the world with no control, which results in thousands of victims and makes SALW one of the most dangerous and lethal tools in the world.

The lack of state control brings instability and the existence of illicit trafficking of weapons and drugs hinders development and the efforts made to recover. This reflects a tragic situation. The UNPoA is an important instrument that has raised awareness on this issue. SALW is feeding the groups dedicated to organized crime and terrorism. Algeria has taken steps to prevent the proliferation of SALW to terrorist groups, by for example enhancing border control and adopting laws that enable sanctions. The Algerian government has also been very dedicated to stopping and preventing terrorist networks.

Algeria has signed and ratified several international treaties and conventions such as for example the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, the UN Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition (Firearms Protocol), and the Arms Trade Treaty which will hopefully be an important instrument and provide a legal framework. *Hon. Yarfaa* then said that we need to urge our governments to adopt legal instruments in order to stop this phenomenon.

At last, he commented on the situation in Israel and Palestine and said that Israel has been very abusive and that peace in the region can only be reached when this comes to an end.

Hon. Qawasmī (the Palestinian Territories) made a brief remark that these two last presentations were extremely important.

Mr. Weiderud (Secretary General, Parliamentary Forum on SALW) commented that this is the first attempt to go in to discussion and dialogue with the countries in the MENA region for the Forum. The sharing of experiences and of wisdom between MPs may help to improve national legislations, receive political support and to change cultures. The Forum will find ways to



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continue working in this region and explore on how the Forum may be of great support in your work in order for you all to take on the responsibility in your respective home parliaments. Being a Member of Parliament means to make use of all political instrument that has been giving to you when elected and this Forum can help you strengthen some of those tools.

A Representative from the delegation of Jordan, said that all countries in this region are suffering from these problems and that they are in need of support from democratic countries. He also mentioned that in Jordan it is possible to rent a gun for celebration activity, which is part of the gun culture.

Hon. Abbou (Morocco) said that Morocco is a country characterized by insecurity. Legislation is needed to restrict the use of SALW and one have to have a license that needs to be renewed every year. Morocco has always been interested in enacting in accordance with international treaties, such as the prevalence of democracy, combating organized crime, preventing corruption, bribes, and the proliferation of SALW. He also emphasized that all of the above are interlinked and cannot be separated.

He continued by underlining the importance of this seminar. Based on the figures presented here it is clear that SALW are used in many conflicts and they cause many victims. In the light of stability it is important to address the issue of terrorism too. Before finishing, Hon. Abbou thanked the organizers for extending an invitation to the Kingdom of Morocco and said that Morocco will always contribute to these important meetings.

Hon. Stylianides (Cyprus) concluded the discussion by saying that there is an important role to be played by the Members of Parliaments and that we all should cooperate with each other. He ended the session by thanking everyone for their active participation.

Discussion of the Final Declaration

Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Mr Peter Weiderud facilitated the discussion on the Final Declaration.

The declaration was adopted, with a few amendments, by all participants. The Meeting Declaration represents the outcome of the seminar as well as a promise for future engagement in working with the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The Final Meeting Declaration will be printed in national newspapers in Cyprus.

The Final Meeting Declaration is available on the Forum's website: www.parlforum.org or please see Annex I. Meeting Declaration, adopted on the 19th of February in Nicosia, Cyprus.



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Closing session

Mr. Averof Neofytou, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Cyprus House of Representatives said that it has been a great pleasure to have hosted this seminar and that it has provided an excellent opportunity to gain more knowledge. This seminar has opened up for international cooperation and an exchange of information regarding this sector. New conditions and ideas have been promoted.

He continued by congratulating the Parliamentary Forum on SALW for taking this initiative and for their active role in working with legislative reforms. There is a need to secure the security of a nation's citizens and the Parliamentary Forum on SALW is therefore an important organization in that area.

The issue of SALW is a new topic for Cyprus that has not yet been dealt with. It is of utmost importance to organize these kinds of seminars and for Cyprus this will be a starting point to continue working with SALW and the joint meeting declaration will be proof that.

In his final words he referred to the ongoing political situation in the MENA region and said that the people in these countries are fighting a peaceful revolution and he hoped that the developments will not bring a lot of violence. He ended by saying that the problems in the region derives from issues of peace and security and that he hoped for a peaceful outcome.

Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Mr Peter Weiderud concluded the seminar by thanking the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus for hosting this important meeting and to all the participants for a most fruitful exchange during these past two days.

He also expressed his gratitude to MP Christos Stylianides (Cyprus) for bringing the Forum's first meeting for the MENA region to Cyprus. Hopefully this inter-parliamentary reunion will inspire us all to continue working with the issue of small arms and light weapons, and if nothing else, we have been able to put the item on the political agenda in Cyprus.

He then continued by saying the outcomes of the seminar is in the final Meeting Declaration that has been adopted.

In his final remarks he said that we should be optimistic – we are in the position to make a change.

END



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Annex I. Meeting Declaration, adopted on the 19th of February, 2011, in Nicosia, Cyprus.

**Inter-parliamentary Seminar
18-19 February 2011
Nicosia, Cyprus**

“Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons – Responsibilities, Challenges and Opportunities for Middle Eastern and North African States”

Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons
House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR THE CONTROL OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION, TOGETHER WITH MEMBER OF PARLIAMENTS FROM, CAMEROON, COLOMBIA, CYPRUS, SIERRA LEONE AND SWEDEN.

The proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons is a major threat to development, democracy and security in many parts of the world, and hence a serious concern for parliamentarians world-wide. For many states in the MENA region human security is becoming an urgent preoccupation. The increasing number of small arms in circulation is a threat to individuals and communities in everyday life. There is an estimation of 50-90 million small arms in the region, of which 80% are in the hands of the civilian population.

Parliamentarians have a key role in all aspects of the multi-dimensional approach needed to address proliferation of small arms and that of the complex problem of small arms proliferation. The MENA region has several ongoing conflicts, which increases the risks and proliferation of small arms and requires committed efforts by the international community for preventive diplomacy and to uphold international law.

We, parliamentarians from MENA region, Cameroon, Colombia, Cyprus, Sierra Leone and Sweden, gathered together with civil society organisations and others concerned with the violence and consequences that proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the



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region brings and have had the opportunity to discuss some of the areas where there is need for a stronger parliamentary approach.

We believe that the implementation of arms control and a disarmament programme including a small arms policy on national, as well as on the international level, is of crucial importance for the promotion of collective peace and security and that the fight against small arms proliferation requires a global coordinated and multi sector approach.

We address the following recommendations to our fellow parliamentarians and governments:

On Security Sector Reform (SSR)

- Contribute to the elaboration of a strategy to reform the security sector and thereby strengthen especially the police sector and other security forces;
- Improve oversight of the security sector by establishing appropriate parliamentary mechanisms;
- Urge governments to submit their national reports to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) within the framework of the UNPoA;
- Urge governments to consider establishing national commissions of SALW, as a first step to develop and implement national control of SALW;

On International Treaties

- Promote the ratification and domestication of international, regional and sub-regional instruments on small arms such as the UNODC Firearms Protocol;
- Encourage the development of further international conventions, particularly at UN level to address small arms related violence;
- Promote and urge for a strong and comprehensive Arm Trade Treaty (ATT) in order to improve oversight control and supervision of international arms trade;



- Call for a stronger presence of parliamentarians in national delegations to international, regional and sub-regional conferences for negotiations related to the small arms agenda;
- Urge the promotion of cooperation between regions and competent international organisations in the pursuit of strategies aimed at addressing the threat of armed violence, recognizing the essential role that parliaments and parliamentarians have in this regard;

On Stockpile Management of Conventional Ammunition

- Acknowledge the risks and hazards that unsafe stockpiles of conventional ammunition present to individuals, communities and society;
- Acknowledge the negative and dangerous impact unsafe stockpiles of conventional ammunition have on lives, livelihoods, housing and development;
- Encourage the development, implementation and enforcement of national legislation, supported by effective operational procedures, to ensure the safe, effective and efficient stockpile management of conventional ammunition in surplus;
- Recommend international cooperation to improve the control at national and international level related to the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus and the destruction in order to avoid the risks of theft, loss, explosion and pollution;
- Encourage parliaments and governments who have passed the appropriate national legislation on stockpiling of conventional ammunition, to share their experiences with other states, thus contributing to the effective implementation of the UN Programme of Action on SALW;

On Improving Parliamentary work and advancing the political agenda on small arms

- Request an improved parliamentary oversight of respective governments in the area of security and defense by calling for enhanced transparency and strengthening of parliamentary participation;



PARLIAMENTARY FORUM
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS



CYPRVS AVTEPNA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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- Propose legislation to respective governments to harmonize legislation to integrate domestic, regional and international instruments on small arms in national legislation;
- Urge respective governments to improve legislation by incorporating both a control and disarmament dimension;
- Work in parliamentary constituencies to raise awareness on the danger posed by small arms and stockpiles of conventional ammunition;
- Recognise the importance of bringing issues related to human security to public debate.
- Promote the concept of violence prevention and non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons in all sectors of society.
- Interact with civil society to assess the nature of small arms proliferation.