

15th Anniversary Seminar

15 years of contributing to the achievement of more peaceful
and developed societies by parliamentary action against
armed violence

October 11, 2017, in the Swedish Parliament, Stockholm

Final Report



Executive Summary

On October 11, marking its 15th anniversary, the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (the Forum), in cooperation with the Swedish Social Democratic Party and the Swedish Moderate Party, organised a seminar in the Swedish Parliament in Stockholm. Approximately 80 persons participated in the seminar, among them 7 Parliamentarians, representatives of the Government and civil society organisations and experts. The seminar highlighted main developments and challenges of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)-related armed violence, and identified opportunities for future action. The main conclusions from the seminar underlined the need to shift focus from national security to human security, acknowledging the human, social and economic costs of the uncontrolled proliferation of SALW. The necessity for adopting a multilateral approach with involvement of civil society in global disarmament efforts, as well as of encouraging countries to ratify and implement international disarmament and arms export control instruments was also brought up. Finally, women and youth were acknowledged as important actors that need to be included in peace and security efforts. Consideration of the negative impact of SALW on women's security and rights is key, including in arms export control.

Opening

The seminar was opened by Hon. Kenneth G Forslund (S), Chair of the Swedish Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hon. Maria Andersson Willner (S), member of the Swedish Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Vice President of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, and by Ms. Karin Olofsson, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW.

MP Kenneth G Forslund recalled the terrible shooting in Las Vegas on October 1, 2017, and the following debates on gun control worldwide. He pointed out that legal weapons are rarely used in crimes in countries where there is extensive legislation on arms control. Sweden is one example of where an increasing number of lethal shootings in the past years are closely linked to an increased influx of illicit SALW. He emphasised the need to strengthen regulation and making use of the strong support in the Swedish Parliament to regulate global illicit flows of SALW to prevent and reduce armed violence.

MP Maria Andersson Willner, Vice-President of the Forum, highlighted that the Forum has grown and matured since its foundation 15 years ago, becoming an important actor in tackling SALW issues globally. Although a lot of work remains to be done, the past years have offered some important achievements such as the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA), the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the explicit mentioning of reducing illicit arms flows in the 2030 Agenda, Sustainable Development Goal 16.4. The upcoming UNPoA Revision Conference in 2018 will be an excellent opportunity to further engage in the advancement of the arms control agenda.

Secretary General of the Forum, Ms. Karin Olofsson, took the opportunity to illustrate the serious situation of SALW-related armed violence worldwide. She presented figures highlighting how it

constitutes an obstacle to sustainable development and a common denominator both in conflict and non-conflict settings. According to Small Arms Survey, nearly a quarter of a million persons die in SALW-related armed violence each year. Armed violence has also high economic costs, amounting to 400 billion USD in conflicts, and up to 0.14 % of the annual global GDP in terms of lost productivity in 90 countries for non- conflict armed violence.

An overview was provided of some of the Forum's key achievements from the past 15 years of serving as a platform for parliamentary capacity building. Over the years, nearly 1000 parliamentarians and over 1200 stakeholders from the civil society, governments and academia from 120 countries have taken part in its activities. Regarding policy-building, the Forum has contributed to the development of a Model Law on Firearms and Ammunition, adopted by the Latin American Parliament in 2008 and used in legislative reforms in eight countries. Moreover, members have been provided with substantial policy support to enhance ratification and implementation of the ATT and the UNPoA, contributing to the ratification of the ATT by six countries.

Session 1: An overview of the global context of armed violence - challenges and opportunities – Lessons learned and stock-taking on the global situation of armed violence reduction & prevention

Ms. Karin Olofsson, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW (moderator)

Hon. Karin Enström (M), Swedish Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, co-founder and member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW

Hon. Vincent de Paul Emah Etoundi, Member of Parliament in Cameroon and Board Member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW (video message)

Ms. Margareta Wahlström, Chair of the Swedish Red Cross

Mr. Robert Egnell, Professor at the Swedish Defence University and Editor-in-chief of "Mänsklig Säkerhet"

Mr. Göran Holmqvist, Director of the Department for Asia, Middle East and Humanitarian Assistance, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, SIDA

H.E. Gabriel Busquets, Ambassador of Spain, one of the Parliamentary Forum's founding countries

MP, Karin Enström, co-founder and member of the Forum, explained that the foundation of the Forum was spurred by the ambition to bring together parliamentarians from across the globe and across party-lines to engage in dialogue on SALW- issues. Parliamentarians play a key role in influencing political parties, governments and international bodies to move the arms control agenda forward. Considering the high human, economic and social costs of armed violence, work to prevent and reduce the proliferation of SALW need to speed up. The 2030 Agenda is an important instrument in these efforts, encouraging every country to act in their national contexts.

MP Vincent de Paul Emah Etoundi gave an overview of efforts to advance the arms control agenda in Cameroon, where the Kinshasa Convention concerned with regional control of SALW has been ratified following advocacy and lobbying on decision-makers. As a result, a law on arms and ammunition was adopted in Cameroon in 2016. However, much remains to be done to eradicate armed violence, such as the realisation of the 2030 Agenda and the adoption of a National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women,

Peace and Security, strengthening women and young people's involvement. This road is vital to follow so as to reach sustainable development and the consolidation of peace.

Ms. Margareta Wahlström, Chair of the Swedish Red Cross, emphasised that the safe delivery of humanitarian aid is threatened by uncontrolled proliferation of SALW in conflict and non-conflict areas, a reality pointed out by the Red Cross as early as in the 1990's. Armed violence prevents humanitarian workers to safely operate in vulnerable areas with serious consequences on human lives, an issue further highlighted in a recent Red Cross campaign. In responding to this reality, the Red Cross offers trainings to its staff on how to handle armed violence. States need to implement international instruments to reduce and prevent SALW-related armed violence.

Professor at the Swedish Defence University, Mr. Robert Egnell, highlighted the financial gains for states and non-state actors from arms trade, as well as the common perception that proliferation of SALW is not a pressing issue, in explaining why such a large number of weapons are circulating worldwide. Mr. Egnell further commented that there is a need to shift focus from the traditional notion of national security defined in military terms, to human security, acknowledging human, social and economic costs of uncontrolled proliferation of SALW. In arms export, it is crucial to not only consider whether a buying country is at war, but also to take into account violent structures in said country, so as to not strengthen oppressive structures.

Mr. Göran Holmqvist from Sida briefed on the relevance of SALW-issues to the work of Sida. Armed violence is a fundamental development issue, weakening institutions and resulting in high social and economic costs. An increasing number of partner countries to Sida are affected by conflicts, where rule of law is disrupted and regulation of SALW becomes impossible. Women, youth and children are particularly vulnerable in terms of armed violence, adding to the importance of the issue. Bringing weapons under control is important to restore peace and security. Sweden needs to make use of its influence in the Security Council, co-chairing an expert group on Women, Peace and Security, to further highlight the issue.

The Ambassador of Spain, H.E. Gabriel Busquets, elaborated on Spain's conviction that parliamentarians from different regions need to exchange best practices on armed violence prevention, in explaining the rationale for founding the Forum in the Spanish Parliament 15 years ago. H.E. Busquets continued by pointing out that the majority of SALW that are in the hands of criminals and terrorists were once legal and that the control of the legal arms trade and the illicit arms flows are two sides of the same coin. Parliamentarians have a responsibility to ratify international treaties and instruments. A multilateral approach is needed to encourage implementation, in which civil society as well as women needs to be actively included.

The final discussion and conclusions focused on the importance of achieving adequate control over the legal trade, and to acknowledge the link between SALW, poverty and structural violence. Here, reintegration of former combatants is crucial. Globally, there is a need to work actively with masculinity and gender norms, as well as other factors resulting in people resorting to armed violence. Reallocation of resources to socially and economically vulnerable areas and groups is one aspect, as well as cutting off supply of weapons to these areas.

Session 2: Armed violence prevention and reduction - actions & ways forward - Synergies in implementing international instruments: Agenda 2030 (SDG 16.4); United Nations Programme of Action on SALW and the Arms Trade Treaty: including gender-based action to curb arms proliferation and young people's role as peace-builders

Ms. Hannah Laustiola, Parliamentary Forum on SALW (moderator)

Ms. Malin Nilsson, Secretary General, the Swedish section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, WILPF

Mr. Ulf Lindell, Minister Counsellor, Department for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

Hon. Daisy Tourné, President of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW and Senator, Uruguay (video message)

Ms. Rosaline Marbinah, Vice Chair of the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations

Mr. Markus Derblom, Director, Department for Prevention, Peacebuilding and Governance, Folke Bernadotte Academy, FBA

Hon. Sofia Damm (KD), Swedish Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW

Secretary General of the Swedish section of WILPF, Ms. Malin Nilsson, explained that the use and effects of SALW are connected to gender roles. In line with masculinity norms, many men own weapons in trying to live up to the notion of being the family protector. Ms. Nilsson pointed to the irony in that women and children are more likely to be killed by those men possessing guns claiming they want to protect them, than by violence committed by an outside intruder. Ms. Nilsson encouraged parliamentarians to consider the negative impact of SALW on women's security and rights in arms export. Moreover, women need to be included in disarmament and security processes, their voices and experiences being highly relevant to the advancement of the arms control agenda.

Mr. Ulf Lindell, Minister Counsellor at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, discussed how existing frameworks to reduce armed violence relate to each other and possible synergies. He pointed out that all the Sustainable Development Goals are interlinked, and that Goal 16.4 on reducing illicit flows of SALW has implications for the realisation of sustainable cities, poverty reduction and gender equality. Moreover, the 2030 Agenda is closely linked to UNSCR 1325, the UNPoA and the ATT. A priority in Swedish Foreign Policy is to highlight the connection between arms control, sustainable development and gender issues, and support universalisation and implementation of international instruments.

Senator Daisy Tourné, President of the Forum, illustrated the obstacle that armed violence constitutes to sustainable development by stating that countries with high level of violence are 30% poorer than peaceful ones. However, armed violence is not necessarily related to armed conflict. Although less affected by conflict today, Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the most violent regions in the world with the highest rate in homicide. Parliamentarians need to use their voice and their vote, given their legislative, oversight and awareness raising functions, to adopt laws and take action to promote the change necessary to reach just and peaceful societies.

Ms. Roslaine Marbinah, Vice Chair of the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations, elaborated on the role youth play in peace and security processes, pointing out that young people's voices and needs have to be included in order to realise a prosperous future. An important challenge relate to the lack of implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. Here all states, including Sweden, have a responsibility. UNSCR 2250 needs to be integrated in all policies and not be treated as a separate issue. Participation is an additional aspect to prioritise; young people need to feel that they are a part of society so as to not organise in alternative societal formations, such as terrorist groups.

Mr. Markus Derblom, Director at FBA, gave an overview of FBA's priorities in carrying out their work in supporting international peace and security. The FBA mandate focuses on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) of former combatants, Security Sector Reform (SSR), rule of law and Women, Peace and Security. SALW are relevant to all those priorities. One example is the importance of finding synergies between DDR programs and international instruments on arms control, where regional implementation mechanisms of UNPoA can prevent flow of arms between bordering countries. Efforts to reduce the uncontrolled proliferation of SALW will intensify in the near future, in light of the new Swedish Government strategy explicitly linking sustainable peace to SALW, which will steer the work of FBA.

MP Sofia Damm, member of the Forum, expressed her view on the responsibility of parliamentarians globally to encourage fellow colleagues to actively work towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. These goals allow countries to measure achievement, and to put pressure on each other to implement them. The work needs to be done on all levels; including the local. In the city of Malmö in Sweden, an increasing number of young people carry guns. As the entry point from Europe, the region Skåne (where Malmö is located) is important in combating the illicit arms flows. Although legislative measures are important, social and economic dimensions contributing to marginalisation of certain areas and groups should not be forgotten.

The final discussion and conclusions highlighted the importance of parliamentarians using their vote to make arms export legislation more responsible in Sweden and in other exporting countries, and the relevance of international treaties and agreements in this regard. Sharing best practices between countries and addressing the issue from several angles are important aspects in preventing and reducing armed violence globally. In Sweden, there is also a need to apply a national perspective in relation to global efforts to reduce and prevent armed violence.

MP Karin Enström, concluded the seminar by underlining that all relevant actors and perspectives brought up during the day are important in preventing and reducing SALW-related armed violence, as part of the international peace and security agenda. In these efforts, all relevant instruments, including the 2030 Agenda and goal 16.4, the ATT, the UNPoA, UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 2250, as well as other international treaties, need to be implemented. The Forum plays a key role in the continued work as a platform for dialogue, capacity-building and policy-building.