

## SEMINAR

# ILLEGAL TRADE OF SMALL ARMS & LIGHT WEAPONS: EFFECTS ON SOCIETY AND ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

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Organized by:

Indian Institute for Peace, Disarmament & Environmental Protection and the Parliamentary Forum  
on Small Arms and Light Weapons



**PARLIAMENTARY FORUM**  
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

*Mr. S Ravi Kumar, President, Nav Bharat Nirman Sangh* welcomed the delegates and made clear the intention of the Seminar to facilitate a discussion on control of Illegal Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons. He requested the delegates to come out with constructive advices to Parliamentarians to bring legislation to curb illegal weapons across the globe.

*Mrs Teresa Dybeck, Programme Manager of the Parliamentary Forum* thanked the organisers and started her presentation by giving some global figures on armed violence. There are 875 million of SALW in circulation the world today and of these 75% are in civilians' hands. 526,000 men, women, and children, die each year as a result of armed violence and it is important to highlight that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of those die in non-conflict settings.

Mrs Dybeck continued by emphasizing that armed violence is a complex and context specific phenomena and that availability of SALW is not the cause of violence but has a dreadful multiplying effect on coercion and violence. SALW are commonly used tools for armed violence because they are often inexpensive, portable and easy to use, and durable and easily maintained.

Regarding the consequences of SALW related violence Mrs Dybeck explained that there are both direct and indirect effects. The direct effects include loss of human life, injuries and permanent disabilities as well as long-term psychological damages, all of which have terrible consequences for the affected individuals and their families and relatives. Indirectly SALW related violence has consequences also for the society as a whole. It affects public health systems, generates increased costs for public security and deters national and international investment. Further, productivity levels are affected since the great majority of victims and perpetrators are derived from the productive population and removed from the labour force. To summarize the consequences of SALW related violence Mrs Dybeck stated that it drains public resources away from health, educational, social and economic development and result in a deterioration of individuals' quality of life.

Mrs Dybeck continued her presentation by addressing the issue of how armed violence can be stopped. She stated that better control and effort for disarmament are decisive to achieve a change. Control includes both regulations on SALW acquisition and possession as well as control and record-keeping of manufacture and selling. Regarding disarmament, it is important to target the demand for SALW by changing perceptions associated with SALW possession or increasing the level of compliance with existing laws. Mrs Dybeck emphasized that action can be taken at the domestic level through the tightening of legislation or at the national level through the implementation of armed violence reduction programmes. Further initiatives can and should also be carried out at regional and international levels. To effectively stop armed violence preventive action has to be taken.

Mrs Dybeck underlined the important work that parliamentarians can perform in addressing these issues and brought up the main responsibilities included in the role of parliamentarians: to introduce

and review legislation; to perform oversight of the government; to interact with the public; to allocate budget; and to ratify international treaties and convention.

Mrs Dybeck then presented the Parliamentary Forum on SALW and the work it is doing. The Forum is the only existing global network of parliamentarians related to the specific matters of arms control and violence prevention. The Forum has 250 members from 85 countries in Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and the Middle East and engages parliamentarians from all political fractions.

The aim of the Forum's work is to shape policy, influence public opinion, and support parliamentarians in their small arms related work and to provide a space for parliamentarians to meet and join forces with other stakeholders and actors. All activities arranged and conducted by the Forum is directed and owned by the members and include, among other things, capacity-building seminars, assistance in legislation reform and regional exchanges. The Forum provides support for parliamentarians through the Secretariat and cooperation with local NGOs. Assistance is also provided in areas such as: research on particular topics; development of concept papers; expertise; logistical arrangement of meetings; and initiation of national or sub-regional level activities as well as provide funding to support activities.

The Forum works with - and have carried out work on - several topics within and related to the SALW agenda, including: legislation reform; stockpile management; privatisation of security; violence against women; Security Sector Reform (SSR); new technologies (e.g. 3D printing); connection to illicit trade; bladed weapons and blunt objects.

Mrs Dybeck concluded by explaining that the Forum has several methods to achieve its goals. The methods include Model legislation and parliamentary handbooks that have been produced. Further, the Forum promotes enhanced dialogue between producing and affected countries and carries out activities on national level. The involvement of more women in the debate is another important method that the Forum deems important, women are underrepresented in parliaments in general and especially in work regarding security and defence. Hence this is an important aspect of the Forum's work. The Forum is also very active in international processes such as the UNPoA<sup>1</sup>; the Arms Trade Treaty; the International Tracing Instrument (ITI); the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM); and also other regional SALW control instruments.

Mrs Dybeck ended her presentation and thanked the audience for their attention.

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<sup>1</sup> UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA, 2001)

*Dr Balkrishna Kurvey, President of Indian Institute for Peace, Disarmament & Environmental Protection* presented a detailed Power Point on illegal trade, manufacturing, supply, sources of finance for non-state actors and insurgents, and the Indian scenario of illegal SALW. In his presentation Mr Kurvey addressed the problem of SALW in the world with special reference to South Asia.

Dr Kurvey described the current trends in SALW trade and stated that more than 8 million SALW are manufactured each year. Regarding production and trade of SALW there are thirteen dominating countries with USA, Russia and China in top. The trade in SALW amounts to 4-5 billion US\$ annually. He explained that it is estimated that 80% of all weapons are purchased by civilians and that the global quantity of SALW is 639 million, which corresponds to one weapon for every ten person on the planet

Dr Kurvey further underlined that SALW proliferation has severe impact on human development, including death and injury, the collapse of basic services, declines in economic activity. Every minute somebody is killed by a gun.

When examining the ratio of possession of SALW it shows that 37, 8 % is held by Government controlled armed forces, 2.8 % by the police, 0.2 % by insurgency groups, and the vast majority - 59.2 % is privately owned. Dr Kurvey further explained that there is a link between “small arms and big problems, big businesses, big damages, as well as global challenges”.

Dr Kurvey continued by stating that armed violence is a worldwide problem in developed, developing and underdeveloped countries and that we have to think on global, regional and national level to address this problem. In especially South Asia, he argued, this problem is interrelated and joint efforts must be made to address the problem.

Dr Kurvey claimed that violent intrastate and interstate conflicts create increasing demand for SALW in South Asia, violence between India and Pakistan, and internal violence in Sri Lanka, Kashmir, North East India and Nepal was brought up as recent examples of this. The numbers of small arms in South Asia increased also in the wake of conflicts outside the region in the 1970's and 1980's. It is estimated that 75 million firearms are currently in circulation in South Asia. 63 million of these are in civilian hands, of which 40 million in India, 20 million in Pakistan and 3 million in Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Dr Kurvey dealt in detail with the problem of SALW in South Asia region. The majority of small arms in the region does not originate from South Asia, but from the West and are transported across the Golden Crescent (Pakistan and Afghanistan) and through the Golden Triangle (Burma, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam). These transit routes are also important for the international drug trade which is progressively drawn into the destabilizing dynamics of organized crime and narco-terrorism, with hitherto unforeseen implications for peace and security far beyond the region. The link between the

drug trade and the problem of SALW also become clear when drugs or drug money are being used for purchase of arms.

Dr Kurvey continued by giving a country by country overview of the magnitude of the SALW problem in the region:

*In India* during the past ten years more than 75 000 people have been killed by SALW. In addition to this, the 30 years of violence between India and Pakistan over Kashmir has led to the death of tens of thousands more people. During the last ten years the authorities have managed to seize only 4500 illicit arms in India. The majority of illicit arms in India originates either from domestic production in the provinces of Uttar Pradesh or Bihar, or from foreign countries and smuggled through Mumbai via air and sea routes. It is estimated that 5 million arms (about 1 % of the total amount of SALW in the country) are in the hands of terrorists, insurgents, and criminals. Examples that illustrate these groups' usage of SALW are the Naxalite Maoist movement, the killing of Indira Gandhi and several acts of terrorism in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. Insurgencies and violence in Jammu and Kashmir as well as in North East India further illustrate the magnitude of the problem.

In Jammu and Kashmir more than 35 000 people have lost their lives during the conflict that started in 1989 and it is estimated that even today over 200 people are killed every month, many of which are innocent civilians, women and children. There are several factors affecting the situation in this region, including: the hilly area; smuggling of arms across borders from neighbour countries; the existence of terrorist training camps in Pakistan; and the presence of mercenaries from abroad.

North East India has been experiencing insurgencies ever since the 1950's. The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) supplied arms initially but recently arms acquired from neighbouring countries. Other factors that contribute to the problems are drug trafficking, training camps in Myanmar as well as the hilly terrain in the region.

Dr Kurvey further stated that also other states and provinces experience problems related to SALW and explained that in North India possession of firearms are considered a status symbol used by rich and famous people for protection. In other regions problems are linked to drug trafficking, mafia groups or corrupt officials.

*In Pakistan*, Dr Kurvey explained, it is estimated that 18 million weapons are illegally owned and used, that gives a ratio of 9 illegal weapons per 1 legal. During 18 months in 2001-2002 the authorities managed to recover 210 000 illegal weapons. Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations based in the country defy Pakistan authorities. Despite Pakistan's emergence as a frontline state, and the US' efforts to capture [Osama bin Laden](#) and eradicate his [Al Qaeda](#) network, Islamist extremism is rising in Pakistan since the 1980's.

Dr Kurvey argued that drugs, together with firearms constitute a major problem in Pakistan. With nearly 3 million drug users in a population of 110 million and due to proliferation of arms, Pakistan has become an international drug and arms market. The country is seeing armed violence and social unrest. The city Darra Adamkhel is the biggest manufacturer and supplier of low cost arms (fine imitations of weapons) with 900 illegal weapons factories and 150 arms and ammunition shops.

In Karachi alone, small arms were used to kill an estimated 20 000 people between the years 1992 and 1998. *In Sri Lanka* between 60 000 and 100 000 civilians, security force personnel, and LTTE cadres have lost their lives in two decades of ethnic conflict, which started in the nation in 1983.

*In the constitutional Monarchy Nepal*, the king and nine other members of the royal family were killed by firearms in the royal massacre in 2001. The country has also experienced several violent acts by Maoists groups where many civilians have been killed.

*In Bangladesh*, separated from Pakistan in 1971, the first Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was killed by firearm. The country, previously considered largely peaceful and free from terrorist violence, has recently seen an increase of religious extremism, armed attacks on political gatherings and street violence.

Insurgents operating in India's Northeast regions, remain the most serious threat not only to the internal security of the country but also to the regional security environment as a whole. Terrorist groups, on the run in India's Northeast under persistent pressure from army operations, have on Bangladesh territory found a much-needed breathing space to regroup and re-launch their offensive against the Indian state. A number of transnational Islamist terrorist groups, including the Al Qaeda, have established a presence in Bangladesh in alliance with various indigenous militant fundamentalist organizations.

*The hereditary monarchy Bhutan* that became independent in 1950 experience problems of refugees migrating to Nepal. Traditionally, Bhutan has remained largely free from terrorist violence. The militant groups United Liberation Front of Asom ([ULFA](#)) and National Democratic Front of Bodoland ([NDFB](#)) did set up camps in Bhutan after they were driven into the Bhutanese foothills by a major Indian military offensive during 1990 and 1991. Bhutanese army with support from India attacked the militant camps and flushed many terrorist camps from Bhutanese soil but still there are an estimated 4 000 ULFA and about 1 000 NDFB militants present in the country.

After this regional overview Dr Kurvey continued by mentioning the medical aspects of SALW. Firearm violence put a huge burden on the governments to treat the victims. This takes away vital funds from health departments needed for treatment of other diseases and afflictions. Further, firearm violence often leaves behind a trail of disabled persons who needs extra medical attention. Apart from the economic and administrative aspects firearm violence also entails psychological costs for victims and their families.

Dr Kurvey continued with efforts to reduce the uncontrolled proliferation of SALW and to prevent armed violence. NGOs operating in the region, he stated, have identified the uneasy relations between South Asia's neighbours as a primary hindrance to efforts to prevent SALW proliferation. A disinclination to address the problem has meant that South Asia lags far behind some other regions in its efforts to address small arms proliferation.

Because of the short-sightedness of authorities and religious and political leaders, South Asia is facing the problem of proliferation of SALW and its effects, which hampers the development of the region. To support insurgent groups, Dr Kurvey argued, has never been beneficial to any country. As a responsible member of the global community, it is important for each country to ensure that its territory is not used to encourage militancy in a neighbouring nation.

He brought up also the social aspects of the problem, stating that 1.33 billion people in South Asia are affected by the proliferation of SALW. In South Asia the highest per capita income is 800 US\$ per year but countries like Nepal and Bangladesh the per capita income is much lower, 260 US\$ respectively 430 US\$ per year. In this region, issues of drugs and illicit arms trade are interrelated. He further stated that it is estimated that between 30-50 % of the people in South Asia are below poverty line. Around 522 million people earn less than US\$2 in a day and 44 % of the world's poor population is living in South Asia.

Dr Kurvey further brought up the indirect effects of SALW proliferation and armed violence, which, among other things, includes: displacement, psychological trauma, insecurity, and a culture of violence and loss of opportunities. Indirect affect might also include that people are denied access to land, markets, schools, and hospitals, which further contributes to increases in malnutrition and disease. In the long term, he stated, these effects will increase poverty and derail development.

The social aspects of the issue include: the spread of fear among populations; hatred among various groups; and an increased burden on the economy. Further consequences are for example that the development of affected countries lags behind. Not only are funds diverted for compensate victims and fight armed groups instead of come the society to benefit, but also investments – both foreign and domestic – fails to be implemented.

Dr Kurvey then pointed out that the primary hindrances for addressing the problem is considered to be the uneasy relations between neighbour states and the disinclination to address the problem, which makes South Asia lagging behind. Another important issue is the common belief that weapons are essential for protection and survival, this leads to gun dependency, gun glorification, and a culture of violence, fear and hopelessness.

Before concluding his presentation, Dr Kurvey provided a brief overview of global efforts on SALW and worldwide campaigns. Example of such work was mentioned including the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate Illicit Trade in SALW in All its Aspects (UNPoA). Dr

Kurvey stated that there are many organizations are working on this issue and that one of the important organizations is the Parliamentary Forum on SALW. Since a Member of Parliament is the people's representative, they must work for the issue of SALW especially in the countries like South Asia and other parts of the world to address this issue.

Dr Kurvey explained that organizations in the region are seeking to: build a regional advocacy network; promote transparency of arms transfers; develop public education campaigns, and to shift state expenditures to human development.

In his conclusion Dr Kurvey stated that "it is time to act against gun violence" and that "together we can do it". He continued by stating that "we know the problem, we know what is to be done, we have technology for this in our reach". Dr Kurvey stated also that SALW need as much attention as weapons of mass destruction and that we have the willpower to resolve the issue, and that it is worth sacrificing monetary gains to have a much better world to live in.

***Hon. Bandaru Dathatreya, Minister for Labour and Employment, India.*** Mr Dathatreya started his intervention by stating that today is an important day, when terrorism and naxalism are threatening humanity as a whole.

He gave examples of bomb blasts and use of SALW in Gokul Ghat, Makka Masjid and Sil Sukhnagar and other parts in cities in India. He also said that we should not connect such incidents with any particular group or religion, because, if we think on this line the situation will aggravate more. Illegal trade of SALW is one the most serious issue in world and in India. Mr Dathatreya encouraged political parties and organisation all over the world to come together and work jointly to address this issue.

Mr Dathatreya stated that the illegal trade of arms and weapons is posing a great threat to the very existence of humanity. He said that 1 out of every 10 people being killed across the world is due to SALW. He further argued that terrorists do not have any religion and that it is not fair to link any religion with terrorists.

Mr Dathatreya reiterated that the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA-Act)<sup>2</sup>, introduced by the former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, should be strictly implemented. He requested civilians to support police to protect themselves and to check law and order in the country.

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<sup>2</sup> See [https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl-nat.nsf/0/70885ebca6462000c125770400454b71/\\$FILE/THE%20PREVENTION%20OF%20TERRORISM%20ACT,%202002.pdf](https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl-nat.nsf/0/70885ebca6462000c125770400454b71/$FILE/THE%20PREVENTION%20OF%20TERRORISM%20ACT,%202002.pdf)



Due to illegal transportation of firearms across the borders, India is paying a high cost, Mr Dathatreya argued, and he further explained that the present government headed by Shri Nareandar Modi is taking every possible step to curb such practices by our neighbours.

Mr Dathatreya stated that terrorism and naxalism are threatening to humanity as a whole and mentioned the appalling numbers of firearm related deaths globally and regionally. Mr Dathatreya also praised the work of Ms. Mallala Yousafzai, the Noble Peace Prize laureate, who has fought against the Talibans for girl's right to education and against women violence. He restated that terrorism is not related to any religion; it is disturbing peace and harmony of India. He also related the recent years' bombings in Hyderabad at Lumbini Park, Gokul Chart, Mecca Mazid, and Dilsukhnagar to illegal trade of small arms.

Mr Dathatreya argued that society should not encourage people who indulge in terrorism and terroristic activities; they should be ostracized and isolated irrespective of caste, creed, and religion. He further explained that the previous BJP government headed by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee brought legislation of POTA-Act to curb terrorism; and stated that every act of legislation should be stringent. India is a democratic and peace loving country, he argued, and even terrorists are given a fair opportunity in the court law to defend themselves. He explained that the Prime minister, Mr. Narender Modi is not having second thoughts in curbing terrorism; and that he definitely will not compromise anything for peace. Mr Dathatreya highlighted the importance of including women in the work on SALW and welcomed that more than 70 percent delegates are women, stating that it shows the important role of women to combat terrorism and promoting peace.

Mr Dathatreya assured on behalf of the Government that work towards a society free of arms will continue. He ended his presentation by thanking Mrs Dybeck, Parliamentary Forum on SALW, and Mr Balkrishna Kurveyji for taking up this issue.

Dr Kurvey expressed his gratitude to Labour and Employment Minister Hon. Bandaru Dattatrya for his participation in this important seminar, and explained that he knows the problem and hopefully he will become the member of Parliamentary Forum and spread the message to his M.P. colleagues.

Dr Kurvey thanked the audience and the discussion was opened up for questions from the audience.

**Mr Suresh Babu, Coordinator, Aware Group** said that strict legislations should be brought to control not only the illegal manufacturing of arms but also middle man who is trading weapons. Countries like Syria, Afghanistan and others are victims of illegal trade. Parliamentarians in South Asia, India and in the whole world should come forward to take this issue on humanitarian ground.

**Mrs Bharathi** requested the Parliamentary Forum to involve more women Parliamentarians into this fold; it will have a positive impact as women can be more responsible to family and society.

*Dr Sadie Johan, Cardiologist* stressed the need to highlight the issue of women and children. They are the mute spectator and sufferer due to small arms violence. Many a times guns are use to terrorize women and used as tool for rapes. Effective control of guns through dialogue in various platforms like the UN, involving all states of the world, is necessary. The Parliamentary Forum on SALW can play a very important role in this issue as parliamentarians are the peoples' representatives and know the ground situation of their constituency/areas and country.

Dr Kurvey thanked the participants and closed the seminar.

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

- 1) Dr. B. Vijayagopalan, Head of Department University College of Law, Osmaniya University.
- 2) Ms. Y. Usha
- 3) Ms. Eswarainh, H.J.P.S.S.
- 4) T.M.Shailash, Osmaniya University
- 5) V.Venkateshwarlu, Osmaniya University
- 6) Ms. A. Tanmaya, National Champion, Math's Olympiad
- 7) Ms. A. Shobha Rani, I.P.Y.G. Member
- 8) K Sagar, Student, Youth Leader
- 9) Ms. P Padma, Women Leader
- 10) P. Navneetha, Youth Leader
- 11) M.Shankar, Research Scholar, Osmaniya University
- 12) Y. Nandushawar, Business
- 13) Ms. S.Smitha, Principal, Shree Grammar School
- 14) Ms. Professor Ch. Sandhya Rani, Uni. College of Law, O.V.
- 15) Ms. Professor P.Lalitha
- 16) Ms. Professor S. Shankunthala, Uni. College of Law, O.U.
- 17) Ms. P.Harika, Chief of Youth Wing
- 18) Ms. Kinley Pem, PG Student of Osmaniya University, Bhutan
- 19) Karampuri Rekha, Greater Hyderabad. Padmashali Foundation
- 20) Ms. Bharathi, K.S.S.Doel Foundation

- 21) Sharada Ketineri,
- 22) Vanam Dushyautala, Greeter Padamshali Sangh
- 23) Gadipillay Sandhya, G.H.P.Sangham
- 24) Arjun Kumar Jaiswal, Arya Samaj
- 25) Anantpalli, S, Political Leader
- 26) Anashali Suhdha, Arya Samaj
- 27) Ms. T.V. Satyabhama, Research Scholar.
- 28) Ms. G. Madhavi, Youth Leader
- 29) E, Jai hind Kumar, Social worker
- 30) Kandagello Swami, President, Greater Hyd. Padmashali Sanghthana
- 31) Shivagi Rastogi, Hindu Chain of Newspapers.
- 32) Ms. Aparna, Uni. College of Law
- 33) Ms. Vijigeesha, Research Scholar
- 34) Shoaddha, Hindi Milap, Newspaper Reporter.
- 35) Ms. N. Vidya, Osmaniya University.
- 36) Sursh P. Babu, Aware Group, Chief Executive
- 37) Venu Gopal, Aware Group C.O. for Hospitals
- 38) V. Nga Rao, Aware Group Social Media
- 39) N. Venkateswarulu, Osmania University
- 40) N. Ravikumar, Political Leader
- 41) Ch. Srinivasa Chief Human Rights Cell in University
- 42) Ajay Srinivas Society for Social Cause
- 43) K. Madan Kumar, Social Scientist
- 44) Upender Sangam, Political Leader

- 45) S.B. Md. Irfan Ali Abbas, Research Scholar
- 46) M.A. Baig, Q Hospitals, Executive Director
- 47) Prof. Y. Vishnupriya, Osmania University .Social Science Department.
- 48) Dr. M.A. Ansari, Osmania University, Human Rights Cell
- 49) Dr. Sadiq Jahna, Cardiologist
- 50) M. Kiran Kumar, Professor of L.LM Department
- 51) Ms. B. Geetha Devi, Ph.D.Scholar
- 52) Ms. Pallalvi Thakur, Faculty of law.
- 53) Ms. B. Radhika Yadav, Asst. Professor
- 54) A. R .Ram Guram, Ph. D. Scholar.
- 55) Ravi Kumar, President, Nav Bhart Nirman Sangh
- 56) Sudhakar, Secretary, Nav Bharat Nirman Sangh
- 57) Venataramana, Professor of Commerce and political Leader
- 58) Ms. Bharahi, Women Wing Chief of Bharatiya Janata Party, A.P.
- 59) Ms. Sarla, Chief of women of Bhartiya Janata Party, Hyderabad
- 60) Binduji Maharaj, Hindu Religious Leader
- 61) Dr. Siraj-Ul Rahman, Professor in Religious seminary and Religious Leader.
- 62) Dr. Ansari, Political Leade
- 63) Dr. Habibuddin, Medical Doctor
- 64) Mufti Ahamuddin, Islamic Scholar and Religious Leader.
- 65) Dr. Balkrishna Kurvey, President, Indian Institute for Peace, Disarmament & Environmental Protection.
- 66) Teresa Dybeck, Manager, Parliamentary Forum on SALW.
- 67) Hon. Bandaru Dattatraya, Member of Parliament, Cabinet Minister of Labor and Employment, Government of India

