



PARLIAMENTARY FORUM
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS



CYPRVS ΑΓΓΕΡΙΑ
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“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
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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 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;
- 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.