

“WORDS OVER BULLETS” CAMPAIGN

The Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons took the initiative to the social media campaign is “Words over Bullets” for the first time in 2016, and has since then relaunched the campaign on multiple occasions.

The campaign highlights the problem with Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)-related violence around the world. **The objective** is to contribute to global awareness on the importance of preventing and reducing SALW-related violence to reach sustainable development and human security. It includes short films, photos and messages on this subject from parliamentarians, civil society and other relevant actors that represent different regions of the world.

The Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons is an international organisation gathering parliamentarians globally across party political lines. As established in the **Strategic Plan 2016-2018**, the overall objective is to contribute to the achievement of more peaceful and developed societies through parliamentary action against armed violence for increased human security. The Forum is the only global organisation that gathers parliamentarians with the purpose of reducing and preventing armed violence, by specifically targeting illicit SALW.

The uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of SALW has wide-spread human, economic and social costs; it hinders sustainable development and threatens human security. Furthermore, it threatens democracy and good governance, facilitates violations of human rights, and contributes to the persistence of armed conflict in all parts of the world. The issue of SALW was acknowledged internationally by the inclusion of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 in the 2030 Agenda, which recognises the reduction of illicit arms flows as vital for **sustainable development and peace**.

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Methodologically the Parliamentary Forum’s work rests on two main pillars: **Policy-shaping, capacity-building and awareness raising**. The work is continuously coupled to relevant national, regional and international frameworks and processes.

The point of departure of the work of the Forum is the three key roles that parliamentarians possess to reduce and prevent SALW-related violence: the legislative, the over-sight and the awareness-raising functions. We provide a forum for parliamentarians, representatives from civil society, governments and international organisations to meet and discuss; as well as provide a valuable support for parliamentarians in their work.

Definition of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), as based on the 1997 UN Panel of Governmental Expert ([available on www.un.org](http://www.un.org)) that considers portability a defining characteristic.

The Panel’s list includes civilian, private, and military weapons that fire a projectile with the condition that the unit or system may be carried by an individual, a small number of people, or transported by a pack animal or a light vehicle. The Panel’s list is organised into 'small arms' and 'light weapons':

- **Small arms:** revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, assault rifles, sub-machine guns and light machine guns.

- **Light weapons:** heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems; portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems (MANPADS) and mortars of calibres of less than 100 mm.

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