



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

**Newsletter May 2019**

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**Honourable Members and Friends of the Forum,**

Firstly, I want to take the opportunity to thank you all for your commitment! You as Members and Friends of the Forum play a key role in our work to reduce and prevent armed violence, by raising awareness and taking action to contribute to a more peaceful and sustainably developed world.

Since the last newsletter a new year has begun and the Forum is pursuing intensified efforts. 2019 means another important year to increase human security and sustainable development by preventing and reducing illicit flows of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). Sadly to say, the situation in the world related to conflict and armed violence continues to be serious, impacting negatively on human security and sustainable development globally. In these times we must join forces and focus our attention on solutions and possibilities to build and sustain inclusive peace.

With this letter I would like to share our key results for 2018 and give you an update of what has been accomplished so far in 2019, as well as plans ahead. As the Forum dedicates its efforts to enhancing national and regional implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN PoA), amongst our main activities for this year, you will find regional seminars: one focusing on the Middle East and North Africa and another one with specific focus on Latin America and the Caribbean.

As parliamentary participation and action is also highly valuable at international level, the Forum will be active in relation to international processes, given the three key roles of parliamentarians regarding legislation, oversight and awareness-raising. One opportunity is at the Fifth Conference of States Parties (CSP5) of the Arms Trade Treaty and another one is at the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) 141<sup>st</sup> Assembly. Kindly read more about past and upcoming events below.

Please do not hesitate to contact us and share updates on the important work you are doing with us!

Best Wishes,



Karin Olofsson, Secretary General

E-mail: [olofsson@parlforum.org](mailto:olofsson@parlforum.org)

Twitter: [@KarinOlof](https://twitter.com/KarinOlof) [@ParlForumSalw](https://twitter.com/ParlForumSalw)

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## Past events

### Key Results 2018

2018 was a productive year for the Forum in many ways, thanks to determined actions by you as Members of the organisation and in vital collaboration with partner organisations. Please let me share some highlights of achievements made during the year:

- **Seven key activities** were held: three regional, three international, including two side events and the General Assembly; and one national, directly involving **approximately 90 parliamentarians and 230 other stakeholders**;
- Persistent activity of Members contributed to **substantial policy advances in the implementation of** the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (**UN PoA**) and **ratification processes of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)** in six countries, including ATT sceptics;

- A noteworthy **policy outcome** was the parliamentary participation and contribution at the Third Review Conference of the UN PoA (**RevCon3**), since the phrasing of a strong cooperation with parliamentarians was included as part of the [final report](#) (please see p.10, a.3.) of the Conference, **acknowledging the key role that parliamentarians have** in the control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, SALW.
- Based on Forum support approximately **40 individual parliamentary legislative, oversight or awareness-raising actions** in line with objectives were taken by Members;
- **Further strengthened gender equality perspective**; promoting meaningful participation of women, reaching a total of 36% women parliamentarians participating in activities;
- **New collaborations** with for example the **Pan-African Parliament** and the **ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)** enabled vital, innovative work;
- **Policy expertise** was provided to parliamentarians by the adoption of **three Parliamentary Action Plans** and a **policy statement** on “Uncontrolled SALW, Terrorism and Organised crime” and more than 700 copies of publications distributed;
- Forum activities **featured in media over 20 times**, and **two successful social media campaigns** were undertaken reaching out to in total 250 000 viewers;

I am also pleased to state that during last year a **continued member expansion** took place, both in numbers and geographically, to a total of **257 Members**, including a broadened membership base in **Asia**. Indeed, this is positive as it signifies an even stronger platform for impact on parliamentary action for more peaceful and sustainably developed societies.

Let me also mention that we are **grateful for all of you contributing to our Annual Survey**, as it is essential to learn about the work you as a Members carry out in your various national and international contexts and to receive feedback as to further improve our work. **Your contributions to our surveys are vital** to sustain our future work to continue supporting this dynamic organisation of parliamentarians. We look forward to, and strongly encourage, your contributions to upcoming surveys.

#### Seminar in the Swedish parliament

On the 3rd of April **the Forum hosted a seminar at the Swedish Parliament** to discuss the updated regulations on export controls of military equipment which came into force a year ago, in April 2018. The Forum invited relevant stakeholders to participate in a panel discussion to highlight the different roles of the Swedish parliament, the Inspectorate for Strategic Products (ISP), the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and civil society and the interaction between them related to interpretations of, and position on, the updated regulations in relation **to Sweden’s commitments to Agenda 2030 and ATT** to reach sustainable development and peace by controlling SALW. **The seminar highlighted** many relevant perspectives including the positive cooperation across party political lines during the review process that led up to the updated regulations as well as the discrepancies between Sweden’s feminist foreign policy and its arms exports. **Please read more in the final report from the [seminar](#).**

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### **Ongoing and upcoming events**

#### Social Media Campaign - Words Over Bullets

One of the pillars of the Forum is **awareness-raising** and therefore a new round of our **#WordsOverBullets** campaign is a perfect opportunity to take part and spread the word. We need to **highlight the role of parliamentarians** together with other key stakeholders in contributing to more peaceful and sustainably developed societies. The purpose of the campaign is to contribute to **increased awareness** on the importance of reducing and preventing armed violence globally. **We encourage you all to participate in our campaign by** using your creativity and writing the campaign name **#WordsOverBullets** on a paper or what you have at hand, or print our [document](#) with the campaign name. Then take a picture of yourself with the hashtag and send it to [secretariat@parlforum.org](mailto:secretariat@parlforum.org) no later than May 27 2019. Please include your name and function, if applicable, in the e-mail text. Please stay tuned by following us on Twitter [@ParlForumSalw](#) and on [Facebook](#) to learn more!

#### Contribute with stories to the Forum

As part of our awareness-raising and communication work we are very interested in knowing more about all of the important initiatives for the reduction and prevention of SALW-related violence going on in villages, cities and countries around the world – and we would like to **share stories from you as our Members and Friends!** We therefore want to **kindly invite you to contribute with your concrete experiences and initiatives** that you are or/and have been part of in your local or national settings. **Please contact the Secretariat** if you have an initiative you would like us to share: [secretariat@parlforum.org](mailto:secretariat@parlforum.org).

#### Side-event Fifth Conference of States Parties (CSP5), Arms Trade Treaty

Parliamentary participation and action is highly valuable at international level, given the three key roles of parliamentarians regarding legislation, oversight and awareness-raising. In 2019 the Forum plans to ensure active parliamentary contribution at the **Fifth Conference of States Parties (CSP5) of the Arms Trade Treaty**, which will take place on **26-30<sup>th</sup> of August**. Stay tuned for more concrete information and **please do not hesitate to contact Program Manager: Ms. Teresa Dybeck** [dybeck@parlforum.org](mailto:dybeck@parlforum.org) for suggestions and questions.

#### Regional Seminar, Middle East and North Africa

As part of a project support from the Folke Bernadotte Academy – the Swedish agency for peace, security and development - **the Forum will realise a seminar in Amman, Jordan focused on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) - region with a global outlook**. The seminar will be held in collaboration with the Embassy of Sweden in Amman, Jordan **on 24-25 of September 2019** with the aim of facilitating a multi-stakeholder dialogue and to enhance parliamentary action for SALW control in the MENA-region connected to highly relevant agendas, specifically [Women](#),

[Peace and Security](#) as well as [Youth, Peace and Security](#). As Members in the region will notice, we are currently doing out-reach to you for interaction and participation in this project. We strongly welcome further suggestions, questions and ideas from you; **please do not hesitate to contact Program Officer Ms. Tove Södermark: [sodermark@parlforum.org](mailto:sodermark@parlforum.org)**

#### Side-event Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) 141st Assembly

A second key activity of the project supported by the Folke Bernadotte Academy is to be held in the form of **a side event at the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly in Belgrade, Serbia** that takes place on **13 – 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2019**. The objective of the side event is to share conclusions from the regional seminar aforementioned and to raise awareness and promote policy debate amongst parliamentarians at the international level.

#### Regional Seminar, Latin America and the Caribbean

The Forum continues its determined work on preventing and reducing SALW-related violence to increase human security by parliamentary action also in the Latin American and Caribbean region. For **the second half of 2019**, plans are underway together with our long-standing partner, the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (Parlatino) for a **regional seminar with specific focus on Latin America and the Caribbean**. We warmly welcome further suggestions, questions and ideas from you as Members in the region; please do not hesitate to **contact Program Manager Mrs. Teresa Dybeck: [dybeck@parlforum.org](mailto:dybeck@parlforum.org)**

#### Contributions to the Forum for a more peaceful world

Another way of contributing to the Forum's work is through donations, which allow us to further strengthen our important work to take continuous action until the uncontrolled flow of SALW is no longer an obstacle to sustainable development and human security. **Please read more at our [website](#) for information on how to support the Forum for a more peaceful and safer world**. Thank you in advance!

#### External impact evaluation

The Forum is currently undergoing an **external evaluation** on the initiative of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) - our main donor. **Knowledge is key and this as an invaluable opportunity** to identify our strengths and results, as well as receiving recommendations on how to adjust our work for an even stronger impact in the future. By continuously improving as an organisation we can work more effectively, together with all of you, to prevent SALW-related violence for a more peaceful and sustainably developed world. Warm gratitude to all of you that have contributed to the external evaluation by interviews with the evaluators!

**Please interact with us** and stay tuned for more information regarding our work and activities in 2019 at Twitter [@ParlForumSalw](#) and on [Facebook](#).

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