



## 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEMINAR: PARLIAMENTARY FORUM ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

*“Key challenges and opportunities in the prevention of Small Arms and Light Weapons-related violence globally: The role of parliamentarians in contributing to more peaceful and sustainably developed societies”*

14 December, 2022

The Swedish Parliament, Stockholm

Final Report



## Executive Summary

On 14 December 2022, Hon. Olle Thorell, Member of Parliament in Sweden for the Social Democratic Party and member of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PFSALW) together with Hon. Magdalena Thuresson, Member of Parliament in Sweden for the Moderate party and member of PFSALW, hosted PFSALW's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary seminar in the Swedish Parliament in Stockholm. Approximately 40 persons participated in the seminar, including parliamentarians, representatives of the Government, civil society organisations, the diplomatic community and experts. The seminar highlighted key challenges and opportunities in the prevention and reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)-related violence globally, specifically the important role of parliamentarians in reducing illicit flows of SALW as to contribute to more peaceful and sustainably developed societies. The discussion focused on the main lessons learned from 20 years' of work for preventing SALW-related violence, as well as the key priorities looking ahead. The main conclusions from the seminar underlined the vital role of women in peace and security processes and the need for increased arms export control as to prevent illicit diversion of SALW. Moreover, it was concluded that parliamentarians have a vital role in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to contribute to peaceful and sustainably developed societies.

## Opening

The seminar was opened by **Hon. Olle Thorell, member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs** highlighting the devastating effects of armed violence and conflict on societies and humans worldwide, underlining the importance of parliamentary action to prevent and reduce illicit SALW flows. Based on the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, Sweden and all United Nations Member States have committed to the fulfilment of the SDGs, including SDG 16.4 on significantly reducing illicit arms flows across the world for peace and sustainable development.

## **Panel: Preventing Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)-related violence globally for more peaceful and sustainable developed societies**

Before introducing the panel, moderator **Ms. Karin Olofsson, Secretary General of PFSALW**, took the opportunity to briefly present PFSALW's [20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Publication](#) being launched at the seminar, and highlighted a selection of PFSALW's key achievements from the past 20 years of preventing SALW-related violence. Since its foundation, PFSALW has hosted approximately 130 key activities, including 45 regional and international seminars, 34 national seminars and 24 side events, and others. Through its activities, the organisation has reached nearly 1400 parliamentarians and over 2200 stakeholders. Over 390 parliamentary actions for the reduction of SALW-related violence have been taken based on support from PFSALW. The proportion of women members has

steadily increased to 30%, and on average, nearly 40% of participants in key activities have been women. Ms. Olofsson concluded by informing about the [opinion piece](#) on the topic of strengthening parliamentary action to prevent illicit SALW-flows, co-signed by Hon. Thorell, Hon. Thuresson and herself on behalf of PFSALW, which was published in connection to the Anniversary seminar. She also invited all participants present to participate in PFSALW's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary [social media campaign #WordsOverBullets](#).

**Secretary General of the Swedish section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (IKFF), Ms. Malin Nilsson** emphasised the continued importance of mainstreaming the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda in peace and security processes for enhanced impact and sustainability, as women are still underrepresented consistently in the fields of disarmament and arms control. Moreover, Ms. Nilsson explained that SALW are violence multipliers both in and outside of conflicts, increasing the risk for women and girls. While men constitute the majority of perpetrators and victims, SALW contributes to intensified levels of gender based violence affecting women and girls worldwide. She concluded by noting some key opportunities in efforts to prevent armed violence, including the recognition of the link between arms and gender based violence in multilateral instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Moreover, the Swedish National Action Plan on the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on WPS specifically points out disarmament as an important tool in conflict prevention.

**Mr. Dan Smith, Director of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**, affirmed that effective control throughout the life cycle of SALW is necessary, including post-shipment control. Issues that may cause diversion of SALW include weak state capacity, direct transfers by States to non-state groups and totally or partial State collapse. Mr. Smith identified five key priorities in preventing the flow of illicit SALW, including the need to strengthen the life cycle control of arms; gathering more data, including enhanced reporting from States; avoiding transfers to States with an increased risk of weapons ending up on the illicit market; building partnerships between arms exporting and importing States and increase ratification and implementation of international and regional frameworks relevant to SALW control.

**Ms. Carolina Sinisalo, founder of the organisation Fuck Våldet**, accounted for her personal experiences of being affected by armed violence, having lost one son to armed violence and having one son being severely injured. She shared her perspective from working to prevent SALW-related violence in Sweden through the organisation Fuck Våldet and within a political party. Ms. Sinisalo underlined the need to allocate more resources to preventive measures, including education, targeting young people engaged in violence, in particular in areas with high violence rates.

In his parliamentary response, **Hon. Olle Thorell** underscored that for parliamentarians to fulfil their legislative, oversight and awareness-raising functions; political will must be

strengthened based on increased awareness on the negative effects of illicit SALW flows, combined with enhanced access to adequate tools. Furthermore, parliamentarians have a vital role in safeguarding alignment between political priorities and budget allocation, in particular in ensuring adequate resources to the prevention of SALW-related violence. He concluded by emphasising the importance for Sweden to support war-affected Ukraine, including by sending weapons as decided by the Parliament, but that follow-up on where these weapons end up is crucial as to prevent diversion.

**Hon. Magdalena Thuresson, member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs**, took the opportunity to relate to the Swedish context and noted that the situation in Sweden today marked by armed violence linked to illicit SALW is different from 20 years ago when SALW-related violence was generally considered as an issue mainly in developing countries. Furthermore, she affirmed the key contribution of parliamentarians in tackling the problem of illicit SALW flows, and she noted positively the broad support across party-political lines for such efforts in the Swedish Parliament.

In the open floor debate, the discussion focused on the key trends related to armed violence over the course of the previous 20 years. It was noted that the number of armed conflicts has increased in the last years, along with the estimated number of firearms circulating worldwide. On a positive note, it was observed that several vital international frameworks relevant to SALW control have been put in place in recent years, and that aforementioned frameworks are increasingly being ratified and implemented.

The seminar was concluded by **Hon. Magdalena Thuresson** underlining the vital role of parliamentarians in reducing illicit SALW flows and the importance of applying a gender equality perspective in such efforts, and expressed encouragement to all participants to stay committed in efforts to contribute to more peaceful and sustainably developed societies.