

## Side event report

***“From Insight to Action: Concluding Recommendations to Strengthen Global Parliamentary Action for Enhanced Universalisation and Implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty”***

Tenth Conference of States Parties (CSP10) to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

**21 August, 2024 13:30-14:45 CEST  
Geneva, Switzerland**

### **Executive summary:**

The side event took place within the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons’ (PFSALW’s) project *“Reducing threats to international security: Mobilising parliamentarians from Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Middle East to strengthen global parliamentary action for enhanced universalisation and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)”*, funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Canada (MFA Canada). The project activities included a regional seminar in Asia in collaboration with the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) on June 9-10 2022, and a regional seminar in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in collaboration with the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO) on June 30- July 1 2023, and in the Middle East on 12-13 June 2024, together with the Swedish Embassy in Amman. Additionally, an international side event was held at the Ninth Conference of States Parties (CSP9) to the ATT on 24 August 2023, co-hosted with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, and an international seminar was conducted on 13-14 December 2023 in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Geneva. The conclusions from the regional seminars, along with the global key recommendations for parliamentary actions, were presented at PFSALW’s side event on August 21, 2024 at the side lines of the Tenth Conference of States Parties (CSP10) to the ATT. The side event highlighted parliamentary perspectives and recommendations on actions for the implementation and universalisation of the ATT, linking to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. The side event was co-hosted with the MFA Canada and included the active participation of parliamentarians (MPs), international organisations, government representatives and civil society organisations (CSOs). Approximately 25 persons attended the side event.

**Ms. Karin Olofsson, Secretary General of PFSALW**, opened the side event by expressing sincere gratitude to all attendees for shared commitment to preventing the illicit flow of



Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). She also extended her gratitude to the MFA Canada for the financial support to the project, as well as for co-hosting the side event. Furthermore, Ms. Olofsson emphasised the significance of the side event in providing valuable input and reinforcing the impact of CSP10, highlighting the crucial role of MPs in advancing the universalisation and implementation of the ATT and its connection to the WPS Agenda, with the aim of reducing human suffering.

**Ms. Judy Korecky, Deputy Director, Export Controls Policy Division, Government of Canada**, opened her remarks by discussing the impact of SALW in the hands of civilians. She noted that Canada acceded to the ATT in 2019, following parliamentary approval, and highlighted the crucial role that MPs play in such process. She emphasised Canada's support for PFSALW's efforts to enhance engagement and facilitate the work of MPs related to their legislative, oversight, and awareness-raising functions in combating the illicit flow of SALW and promoting the universalisation of the ATT. Given their roles, parliamentarians are essential for increasing States' awareness of their obligations under the ATT and engaging with various stakeholders and policymakers. Additionally, such initiatives align with Canada's feminist international policies and reflects the broader commitment to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) and the WPS Agenda. Increasing women's meaningful participation and leadership in addressing security threats and conflicts is key to preventing gender-based violence (GBV) and protecting the rights of women and girls in conflict contexts. The aspect is particularly relevant to the ATT, as it is the first Treaty on the topic to specifically address GBV, making it a powerful global tool for protecting women. Canada's solid commitment to the aforementioned provisions is displayed by corresponding integration in national legislation, alongside other ATT obligations. Lastly, in consistency with Canada's dedication to foster a broad and comprehensive dialogue on the topic, Ms. Korecky encouraged participants to actively engage in the side event, which will contribute to the further development of policy guidance serving as a roadmap, including for MPs, in specific women MPs, working globally on the ATT.

**Ms. Maria Pia Devoto, Director Asociación para Políticas Públicas (APP) and Board Member of PFSALW** began by highlighting the 10th Anniversary of the ATT and the 75th Anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. She emphasised that the ATT is more relevant than ever, with the global arms trade estimated in 2020 at 112 billion dollars. Conflicts in Sudan, Myanmar, and Gaza, among others, have demonstrated that civilians are the primary victims of armed violence. According to a report by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the world is currently witnessing the largest number of armed conflicts since 1946. Ms. Devoto noted that the 10th Anniversary of the ATT offers a unique opportunity to reflect on and review the Treaty's implementation, particularly concerning International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and to honour its primary objective: to reduce human suffering. She also emphasised that the present side event



provides an excellent opportunity to discuss challenges and corresponding solutions as well as support each other during current uncertain times. Ms. Devoto praised efforts by countries like Canada, a leader in addressing humanitarian issues, and stressed the shared responsibility of civil society and parliamentarians to work together to maintain momentum in reducing and preventing SALW-related violence. From a Latin American perspective, Ms. Devoto pointed out that firearms are responsible for over 60% of violent deaths in the region, a longstanding issue exacerbated by subregional dynamics such as drug trafficking, criminal structures, and urban violence. Several regional instruments monitor armed violence, and the region holds a high rate of ATT ratification, with nearly 80% of Latin American countries having ratified the Treaty, though implementation levels vary.

Ms. Devoto underscored the urgency of taking concise and effective actions by all relevant stakeholders, including MPs. In light of this, she presented key recommendations from the Parliamentary Action Plan (PAP) adopted at the regional seminar in LAC 2023, organised by PFSALW, including:

- **Legislation:** Actively encourage groups with low political representation, especially women and young parliamentarians, to participate in drafting and promoting legislation, balancing youth and senior experience.
- **Oversight:** Promote and implement systematic gender-disaggregated data collection on firearm-related deaths and injuries to inform policies focused on preventing armed violence.
- **Awareness-Raising:** Make visible and increase understanding of the human, economic, and social costs of SALW and their effects on women, men, girls, boys, and adolescents.

**Hon. Elias Hankach, Member of Parliament in Lebanon, and Board member of PFSALW** emphasised the urgent need to address the uncontrolled proliferation of SALW in the Middle East, particularly in conflict zones such as Gaza and the Israel-Lebanon border. He highlighted the widespread availability of SALW, exacerbating regional conflicts, fuelling violence, and obstructing humanitarian efforts. Hon. Hankach expressed concern over the low rate of ATT ratification in the MENA region, as only two out of 20 countries have ratified the Treaty. He underscored the critical role of MPs in bridging the gap between international SALW control instruments, such as the ATT, and subsequent implementation at national and regional levels.

Key recommendations from the PAP adopted at the recent regional seminar in MENA, organised by PFSALW, were presented, including:



- **Legislation:** Ensure the universalisation and implementation of international frameworks like SDG 16, ATT, UN PoA, and UNSCRs 1325/2250, focusing on gender equality and youth inclusion in SALW control laws.
- **Oversight:** Strengthen parliamentary oversight of SALW control, ensuring financial sustainability and active inclusion of parliamentarians and civil society in UN processes, with a focus on inter-agency coordination and gender-disaggregated data collection.
- **Awareness-Raising:** Increase awareness of the socio-psychological impacts of SALW misuse, particularly on women, youth, and children, and encourage the integration of these issues into educational curricula.

In conclusion, Hon. Hankach highlighted the significant role parliamentarians play in preventing illicit SALW proliferation and urged for collective action as the ATT marks its 10th Anniversary.

**Mr. Callum Watson, Gender Coordinator, Small Arms Survey (SAS)** provided an overview of the gendered impacts of SALW and the crucial role of MPs. He underscored the importance of understanding firearms' contribution to various forms of violence, particularly GBV, stressing the importance of collecting and analysing disaggregated data on violent deaths, particularly in the context of GBV. Such data should encompass various aspects, including the type of violence, weapon status, and the relationship between victims and perpetrators. The data is essential for enabling more enhanced and informed policy-making and ensuring that interventions are targeted and effective. Mr. Watson pointed out that a large degree of the available data on violent deaths is outdated, with many datasets being more than six years old. Mr. Watson emphasised the critical role of MPs in the implementation of the ATT. He urged MPs to use disaggregated data to draft, oversee, and evaluate policies effectively. Additionally, he called for the harmonisation of policy provisions between the ATT and the WPS Agenda, noting that only about half of WPS National Action Plans (NAPs) mention arms control and concluded with key recommendations for complementing the ATT's focus on supply by addressing the demand for illicit arms. Mr. Watson stressed that eradicating the illicit flow in SALW is essential for preventing gender-based and sexual violence, calling for continuous efforts to align ATT implementation with the WPS Agenda, emphasising that a data-driven approach and interagency cooperation are vital for effective arms control and addressing the gendered impact of armed violence.

During the **open floor** discussion, **Ms. Devoto** highlighted that Argentina's national femicide register dispels the myth that violent deaths of women predominantly involve illegal firearms; as legal firearms, including police-owned, are often used. Disaggregated data is vital for understanding firearm use in femicides and shaping effective policies. **Mr. Watson** addressed the need for political will to support data collection systems, noting that while Argentina's 'Ni Una Menos' campaign exemplifies the impact of regional



collaboration, political will varies by region. He emphasised that international cooperation preserves knowledge and data despite shifting priorities, though adapting working practices remains a challenge in many countries. **Hon. Hankach** described Lebanon's approach, where MPs consult constituencies to counter government inaction on international treaties, including the ATT. Collaboration among MPs, CSOs, and the international community is essential in such contexts. **Ms. Korecky** noted that Canada uses GBV data to inform firearms legislation, illustrating that cost-benefit analysis is critical to regulatory decisions. Canada's delayed accession to the ATT underscores that arms control initiatives often face political hurdles, highlighting MPs' roles in advancing both legislative and regulatory measures on SALW control.

In her **closing remarks**, the **Ms. Olofsson** stressed the continued need for joint efforts for more peaceful and sustainably developed societies globally, across all entities independent of specific mandates. She highlighted the importance of long-term collaboration on SALW control, and expressed her gratitude to all participating in the side event, including the panellists. **Ms. Korecky** concluded the discussion by conveying gratitude to PFSALW for organising the event, and to the participants and panellists in shedding light on such critical topic. Finally, she emphasised the importance of the project for its contribution to reducing threats to international security by mobilising MPs globally on the matter.