



Summary Report of Breakfast Seminar in the Swedish Parliament:

**Uncontrolled Small Arms and Light Weapons: A Threat to Global Development? A Panel debate on the role of Swedish Actors in contributing to peaceful societies (SDG16)**

**Tuesday 17 December 2019, 10.00 – 11.30**

**The Swedish Parliament, Mittpoolen, Riksplan, Norrbro 1A  
Stockholm, Sweden**

**Executive summary:**

The seminar in the Swedish Parliament organised by the Parliamentary Forum on Small and Light Weapons (PFSALW) and IM Swedish Development Partner was hosted by Hon. Karin Enström (M) and Hon. Olle Thorell (S). The objective of the seminar was to discuss prevention and reduction of armed violence and its links to gender equality for global development. Specifically, the seminar highlighted how parliamentarians, civil society, private sector and government can contribute to preventing and reducing Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)- related violence.

**Introduction:**

The seminar was opened by **Hon. Karin Enström (M), member of the Committee on the Constitution, Member and co-founder of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, Member of the Advisory Board Humanium Metal** who highlighted the importance of parliamentarians joining forces with other actors and forming innovative partnerships to tackle the challenge that uncontrolled SALW pose. Illicit SALW have devastating costs for individuals, families and communities worldwide. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.4 on significantly reducing illicit arms flows and SDG 5 on gender equality, all United Nations (UN) member states have committed to work towards more peaceful and sustainable societies globally.

Facilitator **Ms Karin Olofsson, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW**, introduced the scale and magnitude of the issue, with 1 billion firearms circulating worldwide, of which 85% are in civilian hands, causing the tragic death of 210 000 people every year according to Small Arms Survey. The uncontrolled proliferation of SALW has widespread human, economic and social costs. It is a threat to human security and impedes sustainable development. Furthermore, overcoming gun-violence is economically smart, as the UN and World Bank in the Pathways for Peace study estimate that 5-70 billion USD per year could be saved in the world by focusing more on prevention of violence.

**Panel I: Armed violence - A threat to human security and sustainable development**

- \* Hon. Olle Thorell (S), Committee on Foreign Affairs
- \* Hon. Håkan Svenneling (V), Committee on Foreign Affairs
- \* Ms Sabine Ghoubantini, Political Communication Consultant, former Member of Parliament in Tunisia, former member of the Defence and Security Committee
- \* Ms Elin Liss, acting Secretary General, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Sweden

The first debate focused on the current situation related to SALW violence globally and its links to gender equality, as well as the main challenges and opportunities in armed violence prevention and reduction.

**Hon. Olle Thorell (S), Committee on Foreign Affairs** highlighted that preventing the prevalence of illegal SALW is crucial for sustainable development and the achievement of 2030 Agenda. From the perspective as a parliamentarian in the Government, the Swedish feminist foreign policy is very relevant along with the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, as the inclusion of women and women parliamentarians into disarmament and peace processes is key. Parliamentarians play a vital role in national and regional implementation of international arms control and disarmament instruments to increase national ownership and ensure that a gender perspective is incorporated. However, a key challenge is to find appropriate funding to armed violence prevention and reduction work. In Sweden, the discussion focusses on criminal gangs; while it is important to take this issue seriously, it is also key to embed it into the bigger picture - a task for society and parliamentarians. Armed violence is a global problem and its scale is devastating, with regions such as Central America suffering from very high casualties.

**Hon. Håkan Svenneling (V), Committee on Foreign Affairs** stressed the importance of including women into disarmament and of paying increased attention to gender equality in arms export laws. He highlighted that the economics behind armed violence must be considered in efforts to address it and that livelihood opportunities for youths are crucial for effective violence prevention. Furthermore, improved international legislation is needed to stop the proliferation of arms, especially in a time when countries are increasingly disregarding peace and human rights agendas. There is a need to raise our voices against this development to reduce the flow of illicit SALW, therefore an active civil society and brave politicians would be needed to embrace this challenge.

**Ms Sabine Ghoubantini, former Member of Parliament in Tunisia** took the opportunity to highlight the Tunisian context where substantial progress has been made towards achieving the SDGs of 2030 Agenda as well as the regulation of SALW. Moreover, women have a strong role as Members of Parliament in Tunisia. However, illicit SALW, in particular at the border to Libya, continue to pose a threat to human security. She highlighted the importance of increasing women's and youth's participation to combat armed violence and emphasised the need for strong national legislation. She also underlined the relevance of civil society action to support peace and security efforts, as the Government is overwhelmed while trying to prevent violence and support the survivors.

**Ms Elin Liss, acting Secretary General of WILPF Sweden** underlined that gendered perspectives on disarmament issues are very relevant, since there are gendered patterns in the use and impact of SALW as well as power relations in who is shaping legislation regulating SALW. While men face more violence in the public sphere, women are more threatened by violence in their own home. During and after conflict there is often an increase in domestic violence, where the prevalence of weapons at home is linked to an increased risk of a deadly outcome. Often the justification for the prevalence of SALW is that women must be protected by men from other men. However, women are more likely to be attacked by a partner or family member than by an intruder. It is therefore relevant to understand the underlying gendered dimensions and to include a gendered perspective in disarmament in order to stop the flow of illicit arms and gender-based violence.

### **Panel II: Paving the way for peace and security**

- \* Ms Sabine Ghoubantini, Political Communication Consultant, former Member of Parliament in Tunisia, former member of the Defence and Security Committee
- \* Mr Anders Ankarlid, CEO and founder of A Good Company
- \* Mr Robert Lejon, Desk Officer, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

In the second debate, the panellists discussed what concrete steps could be taken by a variety of actors to reduce violence committed by SALW.

**Ms Sabine Ghoubantini, former Member of Parliament in Tunisia** noted that it is necessary to further increase the representation of women in the Tunisian Parliament and in the region, as well as in senior management positions. Furthermore, she affirmed the importance of national implementation of international legislation and instruments. Tunisia, for example, has approved a national action plan on UNSCR 1325. She also underlined the relevance of regional commitments, mentioning as example the Parliamentary action plan elaborated by parliamentarians at the seminar organised in the MENA-region recently by PFSALW, in order to join forces and address shared challenges.

**Mr Anders Ankarlid, CEO and founder of A Good Company** suggested that private sector partners could support armed violence prevention and reduction efforts if involved much more than they currently are. A Good Company is working on sustainable products that send a positive and meaningful message, and a high interest among consumers for businesses that contribute to the good has been noted. The company will be launching a pen made out of Humanium Metal by IM, a metal that is won out of illegal seized firearms, and re-invest the income into violence prevention. There is already a high demand for the product, reflecting the opportunities for social businesses in creating change. His vision is that the Humanium Metal pen is used for signing international treaties on stricter arms control, climate change prevention and peace agreements.

**Mr Robert Lejon, Desk Officer, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs** underlined that combating illicit SALW is challenging, as the effects of SALW manifest in various ways, and as there is such a variety of issues to tackle including rampant violent escalation, insecure storage facilities, re-activation of de-activated weapons, illegal and legal production, regulation for private security firms, prevalence of SALW in post-conflict settings, domestic violence, stockpile management and longevity of small arms. Furthermore, he stressed that ammunition is a major related challenge that is often overlooked, given that a majority of the produced ammunition does not fall under any export regulations. He highlighted that integrated approaches are required to solve the described challenges, and that all approaches need to include gendered perspectives. A key problem when it comes to working towards a solution is that SALW disarmament and prevention is an underfunded field, in Sweden and globally.

#### **Discussion with participants:**

The discussion with participants following the panel presentations circled around the question of involving youths in peace and security, as well as the problem of low funding for SALW-related civil society interventions.

#### **Concluding remarks:**

In closing the seminar, **Mr Martin Nihlgård, Secretary-General of IM Swedish Development Partner** underlined the importance of working together in the spirit of SDG 17 on Partnerships and the important role parliamentarians have when it comes to pushing for adoption, ratification and implementation of international legislation.

**Ms Karin Olofsson, Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW** expressed her sincere gratitude for the dedication of all panellists and participants attending the seminar. She underlined the importance of continued joint commitment and action for more peaceful and sustainable societies in a time when democracy is under pressure globally.