

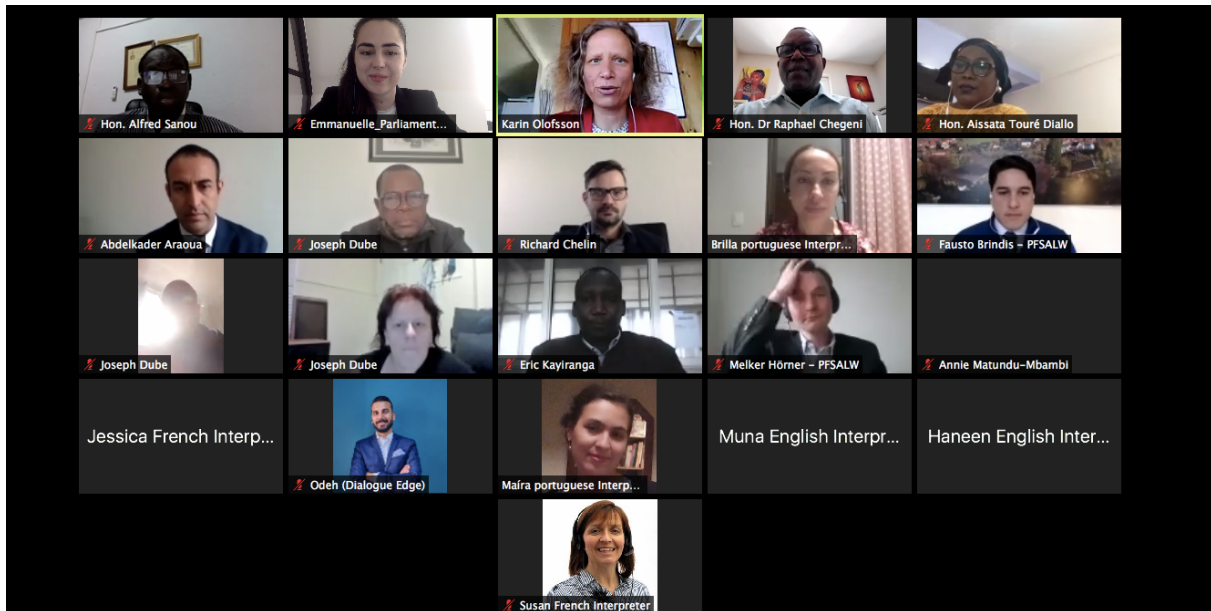


PARLIAMENTARY FORUM  
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Webinar Report

*“Connecting the Dots: Enhancing implementation of the UN PoA and the Women, Peace & Security and 2030 Agendas – through increased parliamentary engagement and action in international processes”*

Thursday, June 24, 2021  
11:00-14:00 Central African Time  
11:00-14:00 Central European Summer Time





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## Executive Summary

On the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021, the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PFSALW) organised the online webinar “*Connecting the Dots: Enhancing implementation of the UN PoA and the Women, Peace & Security and 2030 Agendas – through increased parliamentary engagement and action in international processes*”. Parliamentarians from Africa as well as other regions participated, along with representatives from international organisations, civil society and the diplomatic community.

The objective was to enhance implementation of 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) in relation to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda and the 2030 Agenda by parliamentary action through capacity building, policy shaping and awareness raising. Furthermore, the webinar was part of a project funded by the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR)<sup>1</sup>. The project set out to engage parliamentarians in the run up to the Seventh Biennial Meeting of States (BMS7) on the UN PoA that took place from the 26<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2021, by presenting recommendations on parliamentary actions based on the regional Parliamentary Action Plan (PAP) for Africa approved in 2019, complemented by parliamentary recommendations proposed during this webinar. The webinar was also held to prepare for a latter physical regional seminar that is tentatively planned to be held once the COVID-19 situation so permits.

Nearly 60 persons registered for the webinar<sup>2</sup> including parliamentarians from Africa and other regions, representatives from international organisations, civil society and the diplomatic community. Of the nearly 60 participants, 18 were parliamentarians or former parliamentarians representing 17 countries. Panellist interventions were delivered by parliamentarians and former parliamentarians from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Tanzania and Uganda, as well as experts from different international organisations and civil society organisations (CSO’s), including the African Union (AU) Commission, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in this report are those of the Implementing Partner, i.e. PFSALW, and participants, and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations (UN).

<sup>2</sup> A drop-out rate of 10-20% was estimated in accordance with average attendance rates for webinars.



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(WILPF) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA).

The uncontrolled proliferation and use of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) constitute an obstacle for sustainable development and human security in Africa and at the global level. Armed violence caused by the proliferation of SALW has widespread human, economic and social costs. Taking into consideration the consequences of armed violence, organised crime and terrorism, parliamentarians and other relevant stakeholders need to act decisively to achieve more peaceful and sustainably developed societies through the implementation and universalisation of international frameworks relevant to the prevention and reduction of SALW-related violence.

In the context of global democratic regress and following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become especially relevant for parliamentarians to exercise their legislative, oversight and awareness raising functions to safeguard peaceful societies, considering the obstacles these challenges pose not only to human lives and well-being, but also to continuous sustainable development.

The webinar was realised with the financial support from UNSCAR and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

### **Introduction**

The webinar was opened by **Mr Abdelkader Araoua, coordinator for the Silencing the Guns Unit at the AU Commission**, who commenced by providing an overview of the issue on persisting influx of illicit SALW in Africa, caused by porous borders, illegal trafficking, corruption and criminal and terrorist activity. The majority of SALW has entered from outside the region, underscoring the collective responsibility of African states and international producing and exporting stakeholders in preventing the uncontrolled flow of SALW. As highlighted in a study from the AU Commission in 2018, only 15% of the estimated 40 million SALW in Africa are legally owned. Mr Araoua concluded by stating that an integrated approach is needed towards building sustaining peace, including addressing the root causes of armed violence. The implementation of the AU Master Roadmap on Silencing the Guns in Africa, adopted in 2013, must be prioritised by all actors in society as to achieve a conflict free continent, including parliamentarians who can ensure that the Roadmap is being incorporated into national policies.

**Hon. Raphael Chegeni, Member of Parliament in Tanzania and Vice-President of PFSALW**, continued the introduction by highlighting the challenges that COVID-19 presents to international and regional cooperation and the importance of coming together to support efforts to promote more peaceful and sustainably developed societies despite the current pandemic. He drew attention to the devastating effects of SALW-related violence, causing the death of 223 300 people worldwide every year according to the Small Arms Survey, and the widespread human, economic and social costs. He emphasised the vital role of parliamentarians through their legislative, oversight and awareness raising functions in bridging the gap between international arms control instruments and the national and regional implementation level, and called for all parliamentarians to cooperate across borders to strengthen efforts towards sustainable peace, development and human security.



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**Session I: Prevention and reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)-related violence in Africa**

The aim of the first session was to analyse the status of SALW-related violence in Africa and to identify the main challenges and opportunities for parliamentary work in relation to the prevention and reduction of SALW-related violence.

**Mr Richard Chelin, senior researcher at ISS** identified the common denominator for several challenges in the region, such as terrorism, organised crime and armed conflict, to be the uncontrolled availability of SALW. These weapons are violence multipliers and are predominantly secured by armed actors through arms trafficking via international criminal networks. Key factors preventing the effective implementation of international instruments, policy frameworks and programmes on tackling uncontrolled SALW at the national and regional level in Africa, are lacking capacity and resources. Moreover, international instruments such as the UN PoA set ambitious goals, but, as pointed out by Mr Chelin, there is not one size that fits all. Hence, parliamentarians should make it their priority to translate international policies to respective national context with specific attention to local circumstances, and ensure adequate resources are allocated to implementation.

In her intervention, **Ms Annie Matundu Mbambi, President of WILPF in DRC** accounted for the gendered impacts of armed violence, and underlined that gender considerations must be included in all measures to prevent and reduce uncontrolled proliferation of SALW, as to ensure that women and youth are active participants in peace and security processes. Parliamentarians are vital actors in promoting peaceful societies, including raising awareness among the population on the dangers of uncontrolled SALW and adopting adequate legislation. However, in DRC and other countries in the region, parliamentarians often lack sufficient knowledge and capacity on SALW and the gender perspective. An opportunity looking forward is to enhance the collaboration between civil society who have the expertise, and parliamentarians who have the influence, in order to strengthen actions to prevent uncontrolled flows of SALW and reduce armed violence.

**Hon. Vincent de Paul Emah Etoundi, Member of Parliament in Cameroon and Board member of PFSALW** gave an overview of the serious situation in Cameroon in relation to the internal conflict between the English speaking and French speaking regions. He noted that a key area where intensified efforts from parliamentarians in Cameroon are needed, is to support the increased involvement of the population in the work to prevent and reduce armed violence through awareness raising. This would ensure that not only the government and parliament are the drivers for peace in the country, as broad support among the population would be secured. **Hon. Gerard Ndombang Ngala and Hon. Ebangha Agborntui Johanna, Members of Parliament in Cameroon and members of PFSALW** continued by highlighting some of the initiatives taken by parliamentarians in relation to strengthening arms control in the country, including the passing of laws to prevent illicit diversion of SALW and their ammunition, an accord signed with Nigeria to prevent uncontrolled SALW proliferation across borders as well as the implementation of the regional amnesty month as part of the Silencing the Guns initiative.

**Hon. Aïssata Diallo Touré, former Member of Parliament in Mali and member of PFSALW, current Head of the Communication-Lobbying Service at the National Institute of Public Health under the Ministry for Health in Mali**, presented key challenges faced by parliamentarians in the



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region with regards to promoting peace and security. These include institutional instability in fragile states, dependency on the government calling into question the objectivity of parliaments and decreasing the influence of opposition parties, and lack of financial, material and human resources. With regards to the specific task of preventing and reducing armed violence, the complexity of the work has increased during the pandemic following restrictions on social and physical mobility. Media outlets such as TV and radio are in some countries restricted to the control of executive, and hence not accessible to parliamentarians. This has substantially decreased the opportunities for parliamentarians to raise awareness among the population, in particular among those who are illiterate. In sum, the pandemic has slowed down efforts to prevent and reduce armed violence. As an opportunity looking forward, she identified the fact that more and more women are taking place in decision making processes and in civil society, a positive development that must be supported continuously by parliamentarians.

In the **open floor discussion** following the first session, the need for increased collaboration between civil society actors and parliamentarians was acknowledged. The participating civil society representatives specifically pointed out monitoring of SALW acquisition as one area where collaboration could be increased, as well as joint evaluation of how gender considerations are included in SALW policies. A positive example of this was shared from DRC, where dinner workshops for parliamentarians and women's rights organisations has presented an opportunity to exchange perspectives and where civil society has been able to provide specific recommendations to parliamentarians in terms of steps to take for more gender equal implementation of SALW frameworks. Another key topic in the open floor discussion was the effect of the pandemic on initiatives for peace and security. Several participants reported that the pandemic has had no deterring effect on armed conflict and violence, and that the socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic and lack of social mobility until date has significantly complicated peace and security work.

**Session II: Parliamentary action and engagement in the implementation of the UN PoA in Africa and other international instruments/frameworks on SALW-control, linked to the Women, Peace & Security (WPS) Agenda and the 2030 Agenda**

The aim of the second session was to identify recommendations on parliamentary actions to be presented at BMS7 of the UN PoA, based on the existing PAPs for Africa adopted in 2019 and 2018. Parliamentary contributions to the implementation of international SALW-control frameworks, the challenges and opportunities of working with said frameworks and the process of implementing recommendations from the 2019 regional PAP were themes that laid the foundation for this session.

**Mr Joseph Dube, representative of IANSA**, noted a fatigue among states in relation to the UN PoA, an instrument that has existed for a relatively long time but that has taken a back seat. Given its key role, and as the only instrument on SALW control encompassing all United Nations' (UN) member states, Mr Dube underlined the importance of parliamentarians taking the lead in revitalising efforts to implement the instrument, including ensuring that governments regularly submit UN PoA reports. Parliamentarians should also ensure that there is harmonisation of national laws in line with the articles in the UN PoA, such as on gender, transfer of weapons, ammunition and related equipment. He concluded his intervention by highlighting the uncontrolled circulation of SALW in the region as a key issue, and that additional steps are necessary on behalf of parliamentarians to ensure that adequate



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regulations in relation to stockpile management are being implemented, in particular in crisis zones as to prevent illicit diversion.

**Mr. Eric Kayiranga, coordinator of the Joint AU- United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) Amnesty Month Project and Weapons and Ammunition Expert, representative of RECSA** observed that there are several existing relevant frameworks on increasing SALW-control, such as the UN PoA, Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the Nairobi Protocol, the Kinshasa Convention and the Silencing the Guns Master Roadmap, and that these present an important opportunity in terms of preventing uncontrolled SALW at the regional and national level. However, irregular funding is a major obstacle preventing the effective realisation of SALW programmes across Africa. Parliamentarians have a vital responsibility to ensure adequate allocation of resources in budgets to implementation of SALW programmes, which would also decrease dependency on international aid and increase regional ownership. He further observed that the issue of uncontrolled SALW is generally not viewed as a development issue and rather as a security issue. Here parliamentarians can play a role through their awareness raising function to clarify the serious effects of armed violence on social and economic development, and advocate for SALW prevention being integrated in COVID-19 recovery measures.

**Hon. Biyika Lawrence Songa, Member of Parliament in Uganda and member of PFSALW**, emphasised the importance of acknowledging the interconnections between uncontrolled proliferation of SALW and other issues, including organised crime, illicit financial flows, wildlife trafficking and climate change. Understanding the full panorama of the problem linked to uncontrolled SALW is key to address its root causes. He further remarked that Uganda to a large extent is affected by insecurity and conflicts in neighbouring states, including DRC, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Chad. This calls for concerted efforts on behalf of stakeholders in all these countries to work together to find solutions, both in terms of solving internal crises as well as measures to prevent SALW from crossing porous borders. In Uganda and the Great Lakes region, SALW is to a large extent linked to conflicts over natural resources. It is key to ensure that peace and security actions are linked to pandemic mitigation strategies as to not lose momentum, despite the pandemic having overshadowed most other societal issues.

In his intervention, **Hon. Alfred Sanou, former Member of Parliament in Burkina Faso and member of PFSALW** commented on the recent developments in Burkina Faso where frequent terrorist attacks are facilitated by the uncontrolled availability of SALW. Following these attacks, more than one million persons have now become internally displaced refugees. As part of addressing this challenge, he highlighted his previous work as member of the national network of parliamentarians focusing specifically on SALW-issues. The forming and existence of this network is significantly increasing the leverage of parliamentarians dedicated to the prevention of armed violence, and several laws have been put forward and adopted as a result of the network's efforts, including on implementation of the ATT and UN PoA. He encouraged parliamentarians across the region to consider forming parliamentary groups specifically dedicated to SALW, as this would allow experienced parliamentarians to pass on their knowledge to new parliamentarians, in turn increasing the impact of parliamentary action.

In **the open floor discussion**, the trend of increasing legal manufacturing of SALW at the national level across Africa was highlighted, and the need for parliamentarians to be vigilant in this regard



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through their oversight role to prevent illicit diversion. The ongoing conflict in Cameroon between the French and English speaking regions was also brought up, and it was underlined that solving the root causes of the conflict is key to prevent the uncontrolled flow of SALW in the country. Finally, discussions emphasised the need for improved transition mechanisms when a new government enters into power or when a new parliament is elected. Ensuring that information is available regarding the status of international frameworks and their implementation, as well as plans for future actions to take, will ensure that new policy makers can assume responsibility for the results achieved so far and continue the efforts.

### Concluding remarks:

**Ms Karin Olofsson** concluded the webinar by expressing sincere gratitude to all panellists and participants. She highlighted the importance of strengthening common efforts and parliamentary action to contribute to more peaceful and sustainably developed societies. In light of the pandemic context, the need to silence the guns is more palpable than ever, underscoring the need for decisive actions on behalf of all relevant stakeholders.

### List of participants<sup>3</sup>

#### Members of Parliament

Country	Name	Position
Cameroon	Hon. Vincent de Paul Emah Etoundi	Member of Parliament in Cameroon
Cameroon	Hon. Gerard Ndombang Ngala	Member of Parliament in Cameroon
Cameroon	Hon. Ebangha Agborntui Johanna	Member of Parliament in Cameroon
Cape Verde	Hon. Lúcia Dos Passos	Member of Parliament in Cape Verde
Chad	Hon. Ahamat tahir Ahamat	Member of Parliament in Chad
Côte D'Ivoire	Hon. Soro Fobeh	Member of Parliament in Côte D'Ivoire
Japan	Hon. Kuniko Inoguchi	Member of Parliament in Japan
Morocco	Hon. Bouamor Taghouan	Member of Parliament in Morocco
Pakistan	Hon. Naz Naz Baloch	Member of Parliament in Pakistan
Somalia	Hon. Lutfi Sheriff Mohamed	Member of Parliament in Somalia
Tanzania	Hon. Raphael Chegeni	Member of Parliament in Tanzania

<sup>3</sup> This list is based on confirmed registered participants.



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Trinidad and Tobago	Hon. Wade Mark	Member of Parliament in Trinidad and Tobago
Uganda	Hon. Biyika Lawrence Songa	Member of Parliament in Uganda

**Former Members of Parliament**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Albania	Hon. Artur Hasanbelliu	Former Member of Parliament in Albania
Burkina Faso	Hon. Alfred Sanou	Former Member of Parliament in Burkina Faso
Burkina Faso	Hon. Drissa SANOGO	Former Member of Parliament in Burkina Faso
Mali	Hon. Aïssata Touré Diallo	Former Member of Parliament in Mali
Uruguay	Hon. Daisy Tourné	Former Member of Parliament in Uruguay
Niger	Hon. Ibrahim Assane	Former Member of Parliament in Niger

**Experts**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/organisation</b>
South Africa	Mr Joseph Dube	Representative of IANSA
Kenya	Mr Eric Kayiranga,	Coordinator of the Joint AU-UNODA Amnesty Month Project and Weapons and Ammunition Expert, representative of RECSA
Democratic Republic of Congo	Mrs Annie Matundu-Mbambi	President of WILPF in DRC
Ethiopia	Mr Abdelakder Araoua	Coordinator for the Silencing the Guns Unit at the AU Commission
South Africa	Mr Richard Chelin	Senior researcher, ISS

**Diplomatic Community**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/institution</b>
Angola	H.E Ms Ewa Polano	Ambassador, Swedish Embassy to Angola





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Cameroon	H.E Anu'a-Gheyle Solomon Azoh-Mbi	High Commissioner, Embassy of Cameroon to South Africa
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**Civil Society Organisations/Research/Other**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/organisation</b>
Belgium	Mr Kurt Horrix	CEO, Aspis Systems
Burkina Faso	Representative	Embassy of Burkina Faso in South Africa
Cameroon	Ms Nicoline Nwenushi Tumasang Wazeh	CEO, Pathways for Women's Empowerment and Development
Côte d'Ivoire	Ms Soumaïla Coulibaly	
Cyprus	Mrs Sophie Tsouris	Parliamentary staff, Senior International Relations Officer, the Cyprus House of Representatives
Democratic Republic of Congo	Ms Marie Ocktavia Kumisa Lluete	
Ethiopia	Mr Peter Omurangi Otim	Expert, Common African Defence and Security Policy, African Union
Ethiopia	Mr Christopher Suna Kayoshe	Acting Head, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, and Security Sector Reform (DDR/SSR) Division, African Union
Jordan	Mr Mahmoud Odeh	Managing Director, Dialogue Edge
Kenya	Ms Patricia Nangami	RECSA
Lebanon	Ms Shirine Jurdi	MENA regional liaison officer, GPPAC/ MENAPPAC
Mexico	Ms Montserrat Martinez	Researcher on Conventional Arms, Global Thought MX
Sweden	Ms Giovanna Maletta	Researcher, SIPRI
Sweden	Ms Jacqueline Duerre	Programs and Advocacy, Humanium Metal, IM Swedish Development Partner
Sweden	Ms Linda Skogsby	Market and development, Global, Fryshuset
Sweden	Mr Paul Hansen	Journalist, Dagens Nyheter
Sweden	Mr José Alvarado	Researcher, SIPRI



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Sweden	Ms Sophia Dyvk	
Sweden	Ms Melinda Nilsson	
The Netherlands	Ms Marion Verweij	Country Chair Defence & Security Wing, G100
Uganda	Mr Prof Robinah K. Nanyunja	President & Chair of Pilot International
United Kingdom	Mr Roy Isbister	Head of Arms Unit, Saferworld
United States	Ms Paula Soumaya Domit	Campaign Associate, Control Arms
United States	Ms Raluca Muresan	Acting Co-Director, Control Arms

**Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PFSALW) – Secretariat**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
PFSALW	Ms Karin Olofsson	Secretary General
PFSALW	Mr Fausto Octavio Brindis Abraham	Programme Officer
PFSALW	Ms Emmanuelle Texier	Programme Officer
PFSALW	Mr Melker Hörner	Intern