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ANNIVERSARY

PARLIAMENTARY FORUM  
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

Twentieth Anniversary Publication  
(2002-2022)





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

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The Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (the Forum) is the only international organisation for parliamentarians across party-political lines specifically focusing on the reduction and prevention of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)- related violence.

The overall vision is to contribute to the achievement of more peaceful and sustainably developed societies by enhancing parliamentary action against armed violence through the implementation and universalisation of relevant international frameworks to safeguard human security for the benefit of the right-holders, the entire population.

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***Twentieth Anniversary Publication, 2022***

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**ISBN: 978-91-87409-07-3**

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## IN MEMORIAM



### Daisy Tourné

17/3/1951 – 19/11/2022

With deep sadness the passing of the President of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (the Forum), Hon. Daisy Tourné, is noted. After a period of illness, she passed away aged 71 on November 19, 2022.

Hon. Tourné was born on March 17, 1951 in Montevideo, Uruguay, and had a renowned career as Member of Parliament (MP); as a deputy during 1995 – 2007, and as a senator during 2015 – 2020. Between 2007 and 2009 she served as Minister of Interior, the first woman to have been appointed to that post in Uruguay. During the years, Hon. Tourné also held various assignments at the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO). Furthermore, she was an elementary school teacher and a social psychologist.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the vast efforts and solid commitment on behalf of Hon. Tourné. She first became a member of the Forum in 2006. In 2018, she was elected President of the Forum, for the third time. Hon. Tourné was a highly competent politician, and her contributions to the endeavours of the Forum have been instrumental and are vastly esteemed. Her areas of specific interest and expertise were sustainable development, peace and security, including the prevention of uncontrolled proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), and gender equality.

Our condolences to family members, friends, and to all persons that knew her.

Hon. Daisy Tourné will remain forever in our hearts.

Sincerely,

The Board and Secretariat of the Forum

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# Acronyms

<b>ATT</b>	Arms Trade Treaty
<b>IPU</b>	Inter-Parliamentary Union
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>PAP</b>	Parliamentary Action Plan
<b>PARLATINO</b>	Latin American and Caribbean Parliament
<b>RCC</b>	Regional Cooperation Council
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SALW</b>	Small Arms and Light Weapons
<b>SEESAC</b>	South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons
<b>SweFOR</b>	Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation
<b>The Forum</b>	Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNODA</b>	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
<b>UN PoA</b>	United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
<b>UNSCR</b>	United Nations Security Council Resolution
<b>WPS</b>	Women, Peace and Security
<b>YPS</b>	Youth, Peace and Security

## Contributing Authors

**Mrs. Bojana Balon** is the Head of the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC). SEESAC functions as a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). Previously, Mrs. Balon coordinated and developed SEESAC's activities related to gender mainstreaming in the security sector, including both the Women Police Officers Network in South Eastern and Eastern Europe and the Gender Equality in the Military project.

**Hon. Dr. Raphael Chegeni** is an MP in the National Assembly of Tanzania. Among other assignments, he has served as Secretary General and later chairperson of the Great Lakes Parliamentary Forum on Peace (AMANI Forum), Co-President on the Council of Parliamentary Network for Nuclear Disarmament as part of the Middle Power Initiative, member of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and Security and a member of Parliamentarians for Global Action. He has been a Board member of the Forum since 2016 and was elected as Vice-President of the Board in 2018. Since November 2022, he is serving as President of the Forum.

**Mrs. María Pía Devoto** is the Director of the Asociación Para Políticas Públicas and an expert in international security issues and non-proliferation, disarmament, arms control and gender. She is a founding member of the Argentine Network for Disarmament and of the Human Security Network of Latin America and the Caribbean, of whom she is the coordinator, and member of multiple disarmament governing bodies, including Stop Killer Robots and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. Mrs. Devoto is also a focal point for the Gender Equality Network on Small Arms. She has been a Board member of the Forum as civil society representative since 2016.

**Hon. Vincent de Paul Emah Etoundi** is an MP in Cameroon. He is the Secretary of the Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement Parliamentary Group at the National Assembly, member of the Committee of Constitutional Law, Human Rights and Freedoms; Justice, Legislation and Standing Orders, Administration; Secretary General of the Cameroon Parliamentary Alliance for Food and Nutritional Security, and former member of the National Commission of Human Rights. He is a current Board member of the Forum since 2016.

**Hon. Elias Hankach** is an MP for the Maronite-Metn District in the National Assembly of Lebanon as representative of the Kataeb Party of which he has been a member since 2015. Currently, Hon. Hankach is a member of the Information Technology Committee, and the Youth and Sports Parliamentary Commission. Since 2019, he is a member of the Forum.

**Hon. Elibariki Emmanuel Kingu** is an MP in the National Assembly of Tanzania since 2015 as representative of the Singida West constituency. He is a member of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee and is appointed ambassador in the National Assembly for promoting gender equality. He is also a member of the Forum since 2021.

**Hon. Wade Mark** is an MP in the Senate of Trinidad and Tobago. He is one of the longest serving senators in the history of Trinidad and Tobago. Currently, Hon. Mark is, among others, Member of the Business Committee, Standing Orders Committee and the Committee on Public Administration and Appropriations. From 2010 to 2015, he served as Speaker of the House in the House of Representatives. Hon. Mark is also a member of the Forum.

**Hon. Esther Matiko** is an MP in the National Assembly of Tanzania as member of the CHADEMA political party. In the National Assembly, she represents the Tarime Urban region as a member of the Budget Committee. Moreover, Hon. Matiko is actively involved in the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and she is member of the Forum since 2021.

**H.E. Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu** is the current Under-Secretary and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs at the United Nations (UN). Prior to taking on this post, Ms. Nakamitsu served as Assistant Administrator of the Crisis Response Unit at the UNDP. She has many years of experience within and outside the UN system, most recently as Special Adviser Ad Interim on Follow-up to the Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants. She was previously Director of the Asia and the Middle East Division of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Director of the Department's Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training.

**Ms. Karin Olofsson** is holding the position as the Secretary General of the Forum since 2015. Prior to joining the Forum, she held several positions within the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), for 10 years, including as Policy Advisor on peace and security, and at the Swedish Embassy in Colombia, as First Secretary, and the Embassy in Guatemala, as Second Secretary, with focus on sustainable development, peace and security. Among other assignments, she has also served at the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (SweFOR) in different capacities, the organisation that played an instrumental role in the foundation of the Forum.

**Hon. Dr. Sahar Qawsmi** is an MP and current member of Central Council of Palestinian National Council; former member of the Palestinian Legislative Council as member of the Fateh Parliamentary Block between 2006 and 2019. Currently, she serves as Vice-President of Arab Parliament Forum of Population and Development, Member of the Board of Coalition of Women MPs from Arab Countries to Combat Violence Against Women and member of Parliamentarians Network for Conflict Prevention and Human Security. She was elected as a Board member of the Forum for the third time in 2018.

**Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua** is an MP in Fiji since 2018. She is serving as a member and current President of the National Federation Party. During the 2018 elections, Hon. Qereqeretabua campaigned largely on environmental issues and was a strong advocate for increasing women's representation in Parliament. In the current parliamentary term, she is one of ten women parliamentarians, which is the largest women representation in Fijian Parliament history. She is also member of the Forum since 2019.

**Hon. Delsa Solórzano** is a lawyer and MP in the National Assembly of Venezuela. Hon. Solórzano is President of the Special Committee on Justice and Peace and the founder and President of the political party "Encuentro Ciudadano". Since 2014 she is also a member of the Forum.

**Hon. Biyika Lawrence Songa** is an MP of the Parliament of Uganda, representing Ora County as a member of the National Resistance Movement Political ruling party. Hon. Songa is the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Climate Change and is a member of the Committee of Environment and Natural Resources. Among others, he is part of the Global Renewable Congress, Climate Parliament as well as a founder and Chair of the Songa community foundation. Hon. Songa is member of the Forum since 2017.

**Mrs. Bodil Valero** is a former MP in the Swedish Parliament, representing the Green Party between 2006 and 2014. She is also a former Member of the European Parliament where she served as coordinator in the Security and Defence Committee. Additionally, she was a member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and the Delegation to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. She is a former member of the Forum and one of the co-founders of the organisation.

**Mr. Christer Winbäck** is a former MP from Sweden and the current group leader for the Liberal Party at municipal level. He has actively worked to reduce and prevent armed violence throughout his career. In his role as an MP, he served as member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and was engaged in issues concerning Latin America. He was the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Associations for Latin America as well as one related to Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). Mr Winbäck is one of the co-founders of the Forum and was elected as Board member in 2007 and adjunct Board member in 2018. Currently, he is also coordinating member of the Election Committee of the Forum.

**Mrs. Eva Zetterberg** is a former MP in the Swedish Parliament for the Left Party between 1991 and 2002. She was Deputy Speaker of the Parliament and member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs as well as member of the Swedish Parliamentary Delegation to the IPU. In 2003, she served as Ambassador of Sweden to Nicaragua and later as Sweden's Ambassador to Chile and Peru. She is a former member of the Forum and one of the co-founders of the organisation.



## Foreword

**Hon. Dr. Raphael Chegeni, Member of Parliament in Tanzania, and President of the Forum**

Every year, 211 000 people lose their lives in SALW-related violence worldwide according to the Small Arms Survey. The illicit proliferation and misuse of SALW has widespread human, economic and social costs, and constitutes an obstacle to peace and sustainable development. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic and its continued effects on socioeconomic development, exacerbate an already difficult situation worldwide in terms of SALW-related violence. The reduction of armed violence requires a complex set of interventions where we as parliamentarians have a central role at each level through our legislative, oversight and awareness raising functions.



Over the course of the last 20 years, since its foundation in the Spanish Congress in 2002, the Forum has provided parliamentarians with the opportunity to share experiences and join forces for armed violence prevention and reduction. Today, the Forum gathers over 300 members in more than 100 countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific. The Theory of Change of the Forum is to contribute to the achievement of more peaceful and sustainably developed societies by enhancing parliamentary action in the implementation and universalisation of international frameworks relevant to the prevention of SALW-related violence, including the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UN PoA), the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the 2030 Agenda.

Since its inception, the Forum has supported parliamentarians from various political backgrounds and challenging contexts, based on the threefold mutually reinforcing methodology of policy shaping, capacity building and awareness raising and by providing the political relevance of a network that underpins efforts to tackle the illicit proliferation of SALW. In line with its Strategic Plan, the Forum applies coherently a gender equality perspective in its work, which is mainstreamed both organisationally and thematically.

The Forum's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Publication highlights the vital efforts of parliamentarians across the world in preventing SALW-related violence and looks back at the main lessons learned from 20 years of contributing to peace and sustainable development. The publication also sets out to explore the key current challenges and opportunities, as to encourage us as parliamentarians to continue our vital work for the rights and safety of every person around the globe.

# International Frameworks

Three international frameworks constitute the points of departure in the work of the Forum; the politically binding 2030 Agenda with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.4; the legally binding ATT; and the politically binding UN PoA. Moreover, further strengthening the gender equality perspective as well as increased involvement of women and youth in peace and security efforts are key elements.

## **The 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 16**

In 2015, the 2030 Agenda was unanimously adopted by all UN Member States. The 2030 Agenda has 17 SDGs that shape the direction of global and national development policies and offers opportunities for bridging the divide between human rights and sustainable development. The Agenda is politically binding, and Member States have the responsibility for follow-up and review with regards to the progress made in implementing the Goals and targets by year 2030. The Agenda includes, among others, SDG 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions with target 16.4 “By 2030, significantly reduce illicit arms flows (...)”, SDG 5 on Gender Equality and SDG 17 on Strengthening Global Partnerships for Sustainable Development.



## **Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)**

The ATT was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2013 and has been in force since December 2014. The ATT represents the first global and legally binding agreement to regulate international trade in conventional weapons, including SALW, by establishing international standards governing arms transfers. The Treaty aims to contribute to international and regional peace, security, and stability, reducing human suffering, and promoting cooperation, transparency, and responsible action among the international community. The Treaty restricts the production and trade of certain weapons and aims to regulate international arms trade by increasing transparency in accordance with international law, preventing the export of arms to conflict zones and harmonising national and regional regulations. To date, 112 states have become State Parties to the Treaty.

## **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)**

Based on the UN PoA, UN Member States agree to improve national import/export controls, SALW legislation, and stockpile management. The framework covers aspects of processes, regulations and assessment of measures to address illicit trade of SALW. The UN PoA is a politically binding instrument, meaning that Members States are implementing the UN PoA on voluntary basis. Since its

adoption in 2001, the UN and other relevant stakeholders have worked to support the implementation of the UN PoA at national, regional, and international levels.

### **Women, Peace and Security (WPS) – Resolution 1325**

The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), adopted in 2000, reaffirms the important role of women as active agents in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, peace negotiations, humanitarian responses and in post-conflict reconstruction. Additionally, the politically binding resolution calls on all parties to take measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, such as sexual abuse, in armed conflict.

### **Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) – Resolution 2250**

The UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS), adopted in 2015, expresses the need to safeguard the meaningful and active participation of youth in peacebuilding. The resolution provides guidelines on implementing the YPS Agenda in policies and programs to be developed by Member States, the UN and civil society. Furthermore, the politically binding resolution recognises the important contributions from young people and urges stakeholders globally to create space for youth so that they can be part in shaping peaceful and sustainably developed societies.

### **The Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition (Firearms Protocol)**

The Firearms Protocol is a Treaty adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2001 and entered into force in 2005. The Protocol is the only legally binding instrument to counter the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms, including SALW, at the global level. The Protocol provides a framework for States to control and regulate licit arms and arms flows, prevent their diversion into the illegal circuit, facilitate the investigation and prosecutions of similar offences without hampering legitimate transfers.

# The Forum's Key Achievements Between 2002-2022<sup>1</sup>



The Forum and its members have been **featured in over 200 media appearances**, spreading awareness about the Forum and SALW-related violence.



The Forum has **promoted the vital participation of women**. Women currently constitute **30% of the membership base** and on average, nearly **40% of participants** in key activities.



**Over 390 parliamentary actions** for the reduction and prevention of SALW-related violence have been **based on support from the Forum**



The Forum has supported parliamentary actions promoting the **signing, ratification and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty** in at least **22 countries**.



The Forum has released nearly **70 Policy Statements, Declarations & Publications**, including **11 Parliamentary Action Plans** with key parliamentary recommendations.



The Forum has participated as **panellist or moderator** in approximately **80 policy relevant external events**, sharing the Forum's expertise.



Through its activities, the Forum has reached nearly **1400 parliamentarians** and **over 2200 other relevant stakeholders**.



The Forum has developed a **Model Law** used in legislative reforms in **8 countries**.



The Forum has hosted approximately **130 key activities**, including **40 regional seminars**, **34 national seminars**, **29 international seminars and side events**, and **others**.



The Forum currently gathers **over 300 Members** from approximately **100 countries**.

<sup>1</sup> Based on the Forum's annual reports and internal documentation available between 2002 – November 2022. The figures regarding the number of women participants in the Forum's activities and the number of media appearances concern the period 2016-2021. The figure regarding parliamentary actions is based on existing documentation between 2007- June 2022.

# Parliamentary Action Plans (PAPs) Elaborated and Adopted by the Members of the Forum

The Parliamentary Action Plan (PAP) is an innovative tool introduced by the Forum in 2017. The PAPs are elaborated through a participatory approach with the parliamentarians attending the Forum's activities who are invited to propose recommendations for further parliamentary action to be taken following the activity, short- and long-term, as to prevent SALW-related violence. The PAPs support the goal to strengthen the capacity of the members by offering tangible and relevant recommendations for action as to increase impact, and is a tool assessed favourably by an external evaluation.

Until date, 11 PAPs have been elaborated and approved by parliamentarians, including 1 global PAP and 10 regional PAPs from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa. The regional PAPs have been subjected to regular review and approved in revised versions to ensure their relevance to the parliamentarians. The PAPs are expected to serve as a guiding roadmap for long-term, sustained parliamentary action after the end of specific activities.

The recommendations in the PAPs relate to the three key roles of a parliamentarian, the legislative, oversight and awareness raising functions. Below follow brief extracts of recommendations from respective region<sup>2</sup>:

## Africa

- Ensure signature, ratification, domestication of relevant international and regional treaties and instruments related to the topic, such as the ATT.
- Ensure the establishment of commissions on SALW and ensure adequate operation and function of the SALW commissions, including access to relevant capacity building efforts.
- Pursue sensitisation on SDG 16, SDG 5, UN PoA, ATT and other instruments relevant to SALW control among fellow parliamentarians to increase political will, by submitting a report on the topic to respective parliamentary committees and ensuring access to the instruments.

## Asia

- Prioritise the signature and ratification of the ATT, as well as the Firearms Protocol.

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<sup>2</sup> Please note the recommendations in the majority of cases are extracted from the most recent PAPs from respective region during the period 2017 - 2022.

- Follow up with Government representatives to ensure that the country is complying with international reporting commitments, including reporting on the UN PoA.
- Promote peace education efforts and awareness raising among the population and in remote areas related to identification of SALW, as well as improving understanding of provisions related to national firearms control laws.

### **Middle East and North Africa**

- Include the gender equality and youth perspective when working with legislation regarding SALW control, both in terms of content in the legislation and promoting women's and youth's participation and leadership roles in the legislative process.
- Stay informed by seeking advice from civil society organisations and research institutes in the oversight tasks, as these can provide expertise, experiences and voice issues, as well as encourage the active participation of parliamentarians in processes.
- Promote the development of formal or informal cross-party groups/networks in order to raise awareness on SALW-related violence and champion relevant instruments to curb the uncontrolled flow and misuse of SALW.

### **Latin America and the Caribbean**

- Use available tools such as model legislations, e.g. the PARLATINO<sup>3</sup> or United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) model laws on Firearms, to identify areas of improvement as well as to aid the regional harmonisation or laws and common standards.
- Promote and implement systematised national data collection on firearm-related deaths and injuries to help inform armed violence prevention policies.
- Link with civil society organisations, Government agencies and constituencies for awareness raising initiatives aimed at sensitising the population on the consequences and costs of armed violence, in order to look for necessary solutions.

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<sup>3</sup> The Model Law was commissioned by PARLATINO and developed by the Forum in cooperation with SweFOR and the Latin American organisations; Latin American Coalition for the Prevention of Armed Violence, and Viva Rio. It was formally adopted by PARLATINO in December 2008: [http://parlatino.org/pdf/leyes\\_marcos/leyes/ley-armas-municion-ingles-pma-5-dic-2008.pdf](http://parlatino.org/pdf/leyes_marcos/leyes/ley-armas-municion-ingles-pma-5-dic-2008.pdf)

# Chapter 1 – Preventing Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)- related Violence in the Current State of the World

## 1.1 – 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Forum: Looking Back on Achievements and Challenges

### H.E. Izumi Nakamitsu – the United Nations High Representative of Disarmament Affairs

The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (the Forum) comes at a time of serious challenges to our collective efforts to fight the scourge of the proliferation and misuse of SALW. Illicit flows of SALW have consistently threatened peace and security in modern times across the globe. Today, they are major instruments for initiating, exacerbating and sustaining armed conflict and violence. As such, the urgent need for effective and forward-looking control measures remains as potent as ever.



Since the 2001 adoption of the UN PoA and the Firearms Protocol, a great deal of work has been undertaken to address this persistent and resilient challenge.

At the national and regional levels, States have adopted measures to address the threat posed by the proliferation and misuse of SALW, including efforts to fully mainstream a gender perspective in small arms control efforts at all levels. More broadly, the international community has come to the realisation that the control of SALW contributes to the achievement of the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda– which ultimately benefits us all.

Despite these achievements, challenges persist, including capacity issues, limited resources, and the lack of adequate institutional frameworks. These have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing conflicts globally, including in Ukraine, and the increased likelihood of illicit trafficking of SALW as a result.

Action, therefore, continues to be needed. To succeed, the responsibility cannot just fall upon States. Civil society actors also have an integral role to play. It is these actors, after all, who represent the crucial bridge between state and society, and have contributed to the adoption of critical normative and practical infrastructure, such as the UN PoA and the ATT.

The Forum is a vital component of the engine that drives the dialogue forward. Parliaments play an important role in promoting action at all levels for the fight against illicit SALW and armed violence.

*“During the past 20 years, the work of the Forum with parliamentarians across the world has been crucial.”*

The cooperation between my Office, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), and the Forum has been exemplary on these matters. In partnership with the UNODA-administered UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (UNSCAR), the Forum has achieved significant outcomes, including the improvement of relevant national legislative frameworks; the adoption of several subregional PAPs; the mainstreaming of UN Security Councils’ Agenda on WPS; and the empowerment of female parliamentarians to participate in national planning and decision-making processes related to disarmament.

I commend the strong resolve demonstrated by the Forum over the past 20 years in ensuring that parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, play a befitting role in preventing the flows of SALW into their communities and countries.



## **1.2 – The Foundation of the Forum: 20 Years of Preventing Armed Violence and the Illicit Flows of SALW**

**Mr. Christer Winbäck – Former Member of Parliament of Sweden, former Vice-President, and co-founder of the Forum**

**Mrs. Bodil Valero – Former Member of Parliament of Sweden, Former Member of European Parliament, and co-founder of the Forum.**

**Mrs. Eva Zetterberg – Former Member of Parliament of Sweden and co-founder of the Forum.**



Armed conflicts and violence, independent of scale, are perpetuated by the uncontrolled availability of SALW, causing deaths and injuries, as well as severe impact on the everyday lives of humans. As noted by Global Peace Index 2022, global peacefulness has deteriorated in eleven of the past 14 years, and the number of conflicts climbed to record high in the last decade. Moreover, policymakers and scholars have stated a decline in democracy worldwide.

Concise and effective steps to tackle illicit SALW proliferation are therefore crucial to contribute to more peaceful and sustainably developed societies. In an initiative to support national legislative efforts on armed violence prevention and to strengthen parliamentary action for the implementation of international instruments relevant to SALW-control, the Forum was founded 20 years ago in the Spanish Congress by a group of parliamentarians across party-political lines from Sweden, Spain and countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, with the support from SweFOR.

While the situation linked to armed violence remains severe globally, underlining the need for continued efforts, the last 20 years have also brought important progress in terms of international consensus and joint commitments on arms control and peacebuilding. Today, several important international frameworks are in place for the prevention and reduction of armed violence, including the politically binding UN PoA adopted in 2001, the legally binding ATT that entered into force 2014 and regulates arms transfers, and the politically binding 2030 Agenda from 2015 with its SDG 16.4 on reducing illicit arms flows. With the 2030 Agenda, the importance of

reducing illicit flows of arms for the achievement of sustainable peace and development has been recognised for the first time in a universal framework, adopted by UN Member States committing to the fulfilment of the SDGs.

Moreover, with the UNSCR 1325 on the WPS Agenda adopted in 2001, and UNSCR 2250 on the YPS Agenda adopted in 2015, important frameworks are now in place to further enhance the active involvement of women as well as of youth in peace and security processes.

The role of parliamentarians is central to ensure that the potential of instruments such as the UN PoA, the ATT, 2030 Agenda, WPS Agenda and YPS Agenda is realised. Given parliamentarians' three key functions related to legislation, oversight and awareness raising, the parliamentary responsibility concerns translating international ambitions, policies, and agreements to the regional and national implementation levels for the benefit of the citizens. Furthermore, while respecting the different mandates, it is vital that civil society actors are included in relevant parliamentary initiatives in the fields of peace and sustainable development, as civil society can provide an independent analysis of issues related to arms control, mobilise the population, advocate and provide access to knowledge that parliamentarians may lack.

Parliamentarians in different countries have played a key role in the increased universalisation and implementation of the aforementioned instruments since their adoption at the national, regional, and international levels, including Forum members based on capacity building, policy shaping and awareness raising support from the Forum. Therefore, it is crucial that organisations like the Forum continue to support parliamentarians in their important work to promote peace and sustainable development.

### 1.3 – Preventing Illicit SALW Flows in a Post-Conflict Context

#### **Mrs. Bojana Balon – Director of South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC)**

The widespread availability of illicit SALW and their ammunition is a key enabler of conflict and endemic crime worldwide. SEESAC works to strengthen the capacities of national and regional stakeholders to control and reduce the proliferation and misuse of SALW, advance gender equality, facilitate regional cooperation and thus contribute to enhanced stability, security and development in South Eastern and Eastern Europe. SEESAC functions as a joint initiative of the UNDP and the RCC.



Data from SEESAC's Armed Violence Monitoring Platform shows that there have been more than 3,000 firearm-related incidents in South East Europe in 2021. While, positively, the majority of the incidents recorded were about seizure of firearms, at least 564 occurred in the criminal context, which is an increase of 13% compared to 2020. It is also important to stress that a strong gender dimension is evident in these firearm incidents, as only 2% of perpetrators in 2021 were women, while comprising 22% of the victims. As the consequence of the firearm-related incidents, at least 23 women and 115 men died only in the past year in South East Europe.

In a post-conflict region, for the last 20 years, SEESAC has been providing a comprehensive support to the Governments in all the different aspects of SALW control – from supporting the development of strong institutional capacities and legal and policy frameworks, to collection of data on different aspects of SALW control that shape policy implementation, efforts to secure the stockpiles and destroy excess weapons and ammunition, strengthening the detection and investigation capacities and combatting illicit arms trafficking, raising the awareness of the citizens on the dangers of misuse of firearms and supporting collection campaigns, to addressing gender aspects of SALW control. The backbone of SEESAC's approach is the facilitation of regional cooperation through several specialised regional platforms. The key regional platform of SALW commissions developed the Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap, in close cooperation with Germany, France, European Union and SEESAC.

The Roadmap provides a comprehensive platform not only for joint regional commitments undertaken at the strategic, policy, and operational level, but also for commonly agreed levels of performance, rigorous monitoring and for a coordinated approach to SALW control efforts and resources. The implementation of the Roadmap has been recognised as an example of good practice and is being replicated across the globe. Our hope is that it can serve as a source of inspiration for stakeholders globally, including parliamentarians, to combat the illicit proliferation of SALW and their ammunition.

## 1.4 – The Importance of Preventing SALW- related Violence, Insights from a Civil Society Perspective

### **Mrs. María Pía Devoto – Director of Asociación Para Políticas Públicas**

The world is currently experiencing a profound sense of uncertainty as a result of prolonged conflicts in many parts of the world, such as the ongoing war in Ukraine, in combination with the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and astronomical military expenditure. These challenges do not help us to feel safe and protected. Furthermore, despite all the efforts realised to reduce armed violence, uncontrolled SALW continues to have a major impact on societies worldwide.



In the mid-1990s, SALW was identified by the international community as the main tool of violence in conflicts, responsible for significant human losses as well as negative socio-economic effects. As a result, the UN PoA was adopted in 2001 by UN Member States. However, some elements were missing from the UN PoA, such as civilian possession, ammunition regulation and the gender equality perspective.

During the early years of implementing the UN PoA, Latin American countries provided regular updates on the regulation of civilian possession, despite the fact that the item was not included as an element in the instrument. The “Disarmament Statute” approved in Brazil in 2003 was the result of popular pressure and mobilisation and served as a regional reference on established serious arms control and ammunition measures, in particular regarding the implementation of the Gun Buy Back program.

Since 2001, the discussions have evolved and in the recent Eighth Biennial Meeting of States on the UN PoA in June 2022, as well as the Review Conferences (in 2006, 2012 and 2018), more concrete aspects have been explored in relation to the UN PoA. As a result, the International Tracing Instrument (2005) has been adopted; recommendations from the Group of Governmental Experts on brokering have been presented and the need to discuss conventional ammunition has been emphasised by several stakeholders, including by civil society.

The gender perspective has been gaining ground in country reports and at the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States in 2016, as States now recognise the importance of gender mainstreaming in arms control. In addition, the gender perspective is increasingly being incorporated into national arms control policies, complementing the massive feminist movement in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

The progress achieved was possible thanks to civil society pressure, both locally and globally, for example through the efforts of the International Action Network on

Small Arms (IANSA) and networks such as the Forum which has been contributing to the reduction and prevention of SALW-related violence by strengthening parliamentary commitment and action. One such effort are the regional meetings on “Arms & Gender: towards a regional parliamentary arms control agenda”, organised by the Forum, Asociación para Políticas Publicas, Red de Seguridad Humana en América Latina y el Caribe, Control Arms and the Gender Equality Network for Small Arms Control in Argentina in December 2021, followed by a second regional meeting held in November 2022 in Uruguay.

However, political leadership and champions are needed in all regions of the world. In particular, in the more vulnerable regions in the global south, where the need to reduce and prevent armed violence is palpable. In this regard, the joining of forces of parliamentarians, civil society and other relevant stakeholders is vital as to contribute to human security, peace, and sustainable development.



*Image 1: General Assembly of the Forum in Brussels (2018)*

## 1.5 – Challenges in the Current State of the World

**Hon. Lawrence Biyika Songa – Member of Parliament of Uganda and Member of the Forum**

**Hon. Delsa Solórzano – Member of Parliament of Venezuela and Member of the Forum**



According to the UN Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022, the world is currently experiencing the largest number of conflicts since 1946 with record numbers of forcibly displaced people as a consequence. Furthermore, the same UN report states that one quarter of the global population is living in conflict-affected countries. Violent conflict and the effects of war are further exacerbated by global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and have a detrimental effect on human security and sustainable development. The serious circumstances underline the importance of advancing towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda as well as the implementation of other relevant international frameworks for enhanced SALW control, such as the ATT and the UN PoA. The Forum enhances parliamentary action to prevent and reduce the illicit proliferation and SALW- related violence as to contribute to peaceful and sustainably developed societies.

Illicit SALW flows pose a challenge in countries across the globe. For example, in Uganda, armed conflict and insecurity in neighbouring countries are contributing to increased uncontrolled proliferation of SALW and other issues such as organised crime, illicit financial flows, wildlife trafficking and climate change. The porous nature of Uganda's borders, the increased global interest in the natural resources of the Great Lakes region of Africa, the increased poverty, limited infrastructure and limited access to energy, are all factors aggravating the problem of the proliferation of SALW in Africa.

As parliamentarians, through our legislative, oversight and awareness raising functions, we have an important role to play in relation to preventing armed violence and building back better after the pandemic as to contribute to peace and sustainable development, including by working towards the implementation of relevant international instruments, such as the 2030 Agenda and specifically SDG

## 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.

Democracy is an important precondition for economic and social development. Thus, democracy is vital for achieving the SDG 16. The need to strengthen democratic institutions and restore trust is critical in light of current global democratic backsliding. In times when democracy is under pressure, it is important to note that investments in parliamentary action and institutions are essential as resilient democratic institutions are necessary to prevent and reduce SALW- related violence and achieve the SDG 16.

From the perspective of an opposition parliamentarian in Venezuela, it can be observed that the executive power has control over the rest of the State powers. As a consequence, human rights are violated, particularly in relation to political persecution. Additionally, the State is not addressing sufficiently the violations committed by armed paramilitary groups through their attacks on the population. Based on the context, Venezuela is one of the countries with the highest rate of homicides caused by SALW, mostly derived from smuggling.

*“The situation in Venezuela underlines the importance of the continued work of the Forum, at national, regional and global levels.”*

In addition to democratic backsliding, according to the IPU a recent upward trend of violations against parliamentarians undermines the execution of the key functions of parliamentarians. It is essential for parliamentarians to be able to speak on behalf of constituents and express themselves freely. Freedom of speech and a safe workplace is vital for parliamentarians to seek, receive and impart relevant information as to contribute to more peaceful and sustainably developed societies.

In conclusion, the current state of the world is characterised by interlinked crises that can jeopardise parliamentary action to reduce SALW-related violence. The aim of the current publication is to explore forward-oriented ways of navigating in the global context and to highlight vital achievements, as to contribute to a more peaceful and sustainably developed world through continued determined parliamentary efforts for the prevention of SALW- related violence.

# Chapter 2 – The Importance of Parliamentary Action

## 2.1 – Parliamentarians as Vital Actors in the Prevention of SALW-related Violence

**Hon. Vincent de Paul Emah Etoundi – Member of Parliament of Cameroon and Board Member of the Forum**

**Hon. Wade Mark – Member of Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago and Member of the Forum**



In a democratic system, we as parliamentarians are the elected representatives of the people and represent broad segments of the society. Apart from the representative function, parliamentarians have three key functions in the prevention and reduction of SALW-related violence through our legislative, oversight and awareness raising roles.

As legislators, parliamentarians have the mandate to introduce new legislation and review existing laws, giving the ability to translate current issues into policies. Reformation, adoption and harmonisation of legislation relevant to successfully tackling SALW-related violence include the regulation of civilian acquisition and possession of SALW, regulation of manufacture and selling, as well as addressing the demand for SALW at national, regional and international levels. Parliamentarians also have an important role to contribute to harmonisation of the national legislative framework with relevant regional and international instruments such as the UN PoA, the ATT and 2030 Agenda, SDG 16.4: “By 2030, significantly reduce illicit arms flows (...)”. The complex nature of legislative processes underlines the importance of parliamentary exchanges on experiences, lessons learned and good practices.

Regarding the oversight function, parliamentary action is vital as to enhance the implementation of relevant policies and oversee the Government, for example by asking questions in committee hearings or in debates, or by promoting such a hearing with high-ranking functions within the executive. Moreover, parliamentarians



can significantly affect the degree of implementation of laws through their legislative right to interpellation by requesting and reviewing reports on Government activities and budgets.

Through awareness raising actions at the national, regional, and international levels, parliamentarians can contribute to enhancing the understanding of the Government, the public, fellow parliamentarians and other relevant stakeholders on the importance of preventing SALW-related violence. For example, by spreading and promoting opinion pieces, delivering interventions in parliamentary debates, through media outlets or at conferences. Parliamentarians promote public discourse and contribute to cultural and behavioural changes by interacting with the public, fellow colleagues, and other relevant actors. Moreover, parliamentarians can contribute to responsible arms transfers, either in cases where countries have legislative councils advising on arms transfers, or by public awareness raising and by requiring accountability on behalf of Governments to adhere to and comply with international instruments.

In Trinidad and Tobago, parliamentarians have highlighted and advocated for undertaking necessary actions as to curb armed violence and heinous crimes, and to control the use of SALW, in benefit for the citizens who are the main victims of indiscriminate SALW-violence. As a signatory to the ATT, parliamentarians in Trinidad and Tobago are committed to taking action to control the proliferation of SALW in the nation.

Parliamentarians in Cameroon have contributed to the inclusivity of women in peacebuilding by raising awareness among parliamentarians and civil society organisations through workshops on the necessity to include women and their perspectives in peace and security endeavours in accordance with the UNSCR 1325.

The inclusion of parliamentarians across party political lines from all over the world is part of the unique character of the Forum. The broad scope enables a wide understanding that the prevention of illicit SALW is fundamental, ultimately paving the way for parliamentary action to prevent SALW- related violence for more peaceful and sustainably developed societies.

## **2.2 – Preventing Illicit SALW Flows in the International Context: The Role of Parliamentarians**

**Hon. Elibariki Emmanuel Kingu – Member of Parliament of Tanzania and  
Member of the Forum**

**Hon. Dr. Sahar Qawasmi – Member of Parliament of Palestine and Board  
Member of the Forum**



As parliamentarians, we play a central role in preventing SALW-related violence in view of our legislative, oversight and awareness-raising functions, by bridging the gap between international arms control instruments and the regional and national implementation levels. Relevant international instruments for the reduction of illicit SALW proliferation include the UN PoA, the ATT and the 2030 Agenda with its SDG 16.4 on reducing illicit arms flows.

Generally, parliamentary involvement in international processes related to the aforementioned instruments is neglected, which means the potential of parliamentary action in contributing to more peaceful and sustainably developed societies is lost. Moreover, parliamentarians may lack sufficient knowledge about relevant international instruments, underlining the need to ensure the instruments are made more accessible, including by translation to local languages, as to further underpin political will.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, more than 140 000 Palestinians have suffered fatalities and injuries since 2008 in the occupied Palestinian territory, including violence committed by SALW. However, Palestinians still believe in peace and the vital role of the international community and relevant frameworks for achieving peace, such as the ATT to which Palestine is a State Party.

Persistent insecurities, armed conflicts and slow socio-economic development across Africa is affecting peace and security in Tanzania. The majority of uncontrolled SALW in the region are originally imported from producing countries outside of the region, which underlines the need for co-responsibility on behalf of

manufacturing countries and companies in the search for solutions, as well as further collaboration between countries.

In light of the context in Palestine, Tanzania and other counties globally, it is essential that we as parliamentarians, the representatives of the people, promote the inclusion of women and young parliamentarians in international policy processes in order for policies to adequately reflect the realities of those affected by armed violence. Additionally, parliamentary involvement enables more democratic policy discussion and inclusive decision-making processes.

For the security, rights and wellbeing of all humans, it is crucial that all relevant stakeholders, including parliamentarians, join forces to prevent the uncontrolled availability of SALW through the effective implementation of relevant international instruments at the national, regional and international levels.



*Image 2: General Assembly of the Forum in Brussels (2018)*

# Chapter 3 – Opportunities and Challenges

## Looking Forward

### 3.1 – Looking Ahead: Key Challenges and Opportunities for Parliamentary Action

**Hon. Elias Hankach – Member of Parliament of Lebanon and Member of the Forum**

**Hon. Esther Matiko – Member of Parliament of Tanzania and Member of the Forum**

**Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua – Member of Parliament of Fiji and Member of the Forum**



In light of the current challenges faced worldwide, including armed violence and conflict, the importance of conflict prevention is palpable. The usage of illicit SALW, arms that are easily accessible and concealable, negatively impacts human security and sustainable development contributing to prolonged armed conflicts. Hence, it is vital to reduce the illicit flows of SALW as to contribute to more peaceful and sustainably developed societies.

Insecurity and armed conflict in the Middle East region, in particular the Syrian war, has resulted in an increase of illicit arms trafficking between Lebanon and Syria in both directions, which has severely affected social and economic development in Lebanon. In order to regulate arms, parliamentarians in Lebanon have voted in favour of the ATT, and the Treaty was ratified in 2019. Additionally, a group of Lebanese youth in the association “Make Your Mark”, has worked on a draft law that prohibits the use of SALW in residential areas. The draft law is planned to be tabled in the Parliament as soon as the current presidential elections deadlock in the country is resolved.

Despite its maritime borders, the Pacific region, including Fiji, suffers from large-scale arms trafficking. Moreover, after the coup d’état in Fiji in 2000, the proliferation

of SALW has increased, including raids on armouries. The specific contexts of Lebanon and Fiji demonstrate the universal importance of preventing armed violence, where we as parliamentarians play a vital role, including by ensuring that international frameworks and resolutions are being implemented in practice, in benefit for the people.

It is crucial to draw on lessons learned as well as to look ahead. While the situation linked to SALW-related violence is serious globally, it is important to maintain a constructive view for improvement in the future and focus on the opportunities. Concise and effective steps at the national, regional and international levels on behalf of parliamentarians are instrumental, through the legislative, oversight and awareness raising functions. In the current state of the world, parliamentarians shall ensure that peacebuilding, and the prevention of SALW-related violence as an integrated part, is placed at the centre of strategies for societal recovery. As emphasised in the UN Resolution on the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, “Sustainable development cannot be realised without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development”.

Furthermore, parliamentarians have an important role in relation to building back better after the COVID-19 pandemic as well as working towards the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda and specifically SDG 16.4 and its links to SDG 5 on Gender Equality. However, it has become clear that further action is needed to achieve the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda. With less than 10 years left to realise the SDGs, the Decade of Action calls for accelerating efforts for sustainable peace and development. Parliamentarians have the ability to safeguard the progress already made and take appropriate steps onwards for the achievement of the SDGs. Hence, parliamentarians are vital to translate international policies to the national level, ensuring national ownership and promoting more efficient implementation.

Tanzania has made vital progress with regards to the achievement of SDG 5 and the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on supporting women’s participation in peace and security processes. For example, Tanzania’s first woman President, serving since 2021, is highly active in peace and security processes in the country and region and has appointed a woman as Minister of Defence. Moreover, in the Parliament, nearly 37% of the parliamentarians are women which is considerably above the world average of 26% women in parliament according to IPU.

In order to reduce the illicit flows of SALW, it is essential to draw on lessons learned with a forward-oriented perspective. Parliamentary action is fundamental onwards as to further reduce SALW- related violence, with the ultimate goal to achieve the 2030 Agenda and more peaceful and sustainably developed societies.

## 3.2 – Looking Ahead on a Global Level

### Karin Olofsson – Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons

Given the current global context, regrettably, the need to prioritise the prevention and reduction of armed violence remains highly relevant. Moreover, democratic backsliding and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, pose major challenges for the prevention of SALW-related violence.

Despite palpable challenges, looking back on 20 productive years of the Forum in supporting parliamentary action on preventing and reducing SALW-related violence, the progress made is noteworthy and inspires hope for the future.



*“Looking forward to the coming 20 years, many challenges are perceivable in the endeavour to reduce the illicit flow of SALW, but the Forum has shown its ability to adapt to the global context based on substantial results achievement on parliamentary action.”*

Even though the pandemic made it impossible to meet in person the recent years, over the last 20 years, over 390 parliamentary actions have been taken based on the support from the Forum for the reduction and prevention of armed violence.

The UN Global Study on implementation of UNSCR 1325 concludes that women’s participation is key to sustainable peace. Women are not only victims of armed violence but are actors to be involved in peace- and security processes at all levels. When women contribute as active agents in decision-making in these processes, valuable contributions to achieving sustainable peace are made. Hence, the Forum applies consistently a gender equality perspective, both organisationally by targeting more women parliamentarians as well as in the thematic work related to relevant international instruments. Women make up 30% of the membership base, and on average in key activities organised by the Forum, nearly 40% of participants are women. In 2021, the global proportion of women parliamentarians has increased marginally to 26%, according to the IPU. Even though the increase is promising, involving more women in relevant political processes is a priority.

Another opportunity for the prevention and reduction of SALW-related violence lies in including young people in peacebuilding efforts. UNSCR 2250 recognises and supports the efforts of young people in such processes. According to the IPU, young people constitute almost half of the world’s population, yet less than 3% of all parliamentarians are under the age of 30, whereof only 1% are women.

Democracies are stronger when a variety of groups and voices in societies are represented. Hence, it is vital for stakeholders such as the Forum to facilitate an enabling environment for the inclusion of young people in parliamentary efforts on the topic.

The pillars in the Theory of Change of the Forum; capacity building, policy shaping and awareness raising, will continue to be used in the work of the Forum to support parliamentarians in their national, regional and international efforts by: 1) Providing and elaborating policy tools and PAPs to contribute to the individual capacity as well as the capacity of parliaments to attend to issues of uncontrolled SALW, based on a participatory approach where parliamentarians are engaged actively in the process; 2) Identifying policy options and recommendations for SALW control by drawing on knowledge and expertise both internally and through the Forum's network of partner organisations and research institutes; 3) Providing a space for parliamentarians to meet and cooperate with other stakeholders and actors from civil society, as well as to distribute and share policy content to raise awareness on SALW at a societal level.

Given the current situation in the world, the Forum has a responsibility to continue the work to contribute to more peaceful and sustainably developed societies by preventing SALW-related violence through the enhancement of parliamentary action. Based on the solid engagement of the Forum's members and the productive collaboration with other stakeholders, the Forum is determined to pursue continued efforts for a more peaceful world.

# Acknowledgements

The Forum wishes to express its gratitude to all its members worldwide during the period for the vital work realised to prevent SALW-related violence as to contribute to more peaceful and sustainably developed societies. Furthermore, the Forum would like to express its gratitude to its current and past donors for trusting and supporting the Forum's work on armed violence prevention and reduction during the period of 20 years.

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Finally, the Forum would like to express its appreciation to the numerous national, regional and international parliaments and assemblies, national authorities, international organisations and research institutions which have supported the Forum, co-hosted its activities and provided in-kind contributions to the realisation of its work. The Forum is also thankful for the collaboration with, and invaluable knowledge provided by, experts and civil society organisations worldwide. The Forum also wishes to express its gratitude for donations received from individual persons.



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