



PARLIAMENTARY FORUM
ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS



THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE HASHEMITE
KINGDOM OF JORDAN

General Assembly of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons

**Event organized at the House of Representatives of the Hashemite
Kingdom of Jordan, 13th and 14th November 2014, Amman**

Final Report





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Participation

A total of 44 people participated in the General Assembly including; 30 members of parliament from the countries of Albania, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Nicaragua, Oman, Palestine, Peru, Puntland State of Somalia, the Republic of Somaliland, Serbia, Seychelles, Togo, Uganda, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zimbabwe as well as representatives of international organisations including Conflict Armament Research, PAX / International Network on Explosive Weapons (INEW), Permanent Peace Movement Lebanon, Saferworld, Sisterhood is Global Institute, the Parliamentary Forum on SALW and parliamentary staff members (list of participants attached).

Introduction – MP Ala Talabani from Iraq, President of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW

MP Ala Talabani welcomed the participants and explained that the Forum was founded 12 years ago with the aim of limiting and preventing the proliferation of SALW, as well as establishing a mechanism to inform parliamentarians of issues surrounding SALW. During these 12 years the Forum has organised various activities, exchanges and information events at parliaments around the world. It has succeeded in highlighting the negative effects of SALW and working for peace and disarmament. She emphasized that working to prevent proliferation of SALW means working to prevent armed violence and conflict.

Ms Talabani mentioned that the availability of weapons has a negative impact on human and economic development. She emphasized the role of the Forum as a platform where parliamentarians can learn, share ideas and experiences related to the realities of their own regions. She linked this with the problem of SALW in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA), where supply, demand and use in conflict are changing the life of millions for the worse. Mrs Talabani also mentioned the importance of building capacity and increasing the knowledge of the parliamentarians so they can take better decisions regarding SALW. She finished her intervention by mentioning the current situation in the region, the effect that ISIS has had and the importance of signing and ratifying international instruments such as the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

Welcoming Words – Dr. Ibrahim Al Shdifat, former parliamentarian and member of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW

Dr. Ibrahim Al Shdifat welcomed the participants from Africa, Europe and Latin America to the MENA region and the General Assembly of the Parliamentary Forum. He highlighted Jordan's desire to play the role as a country that seeks to achieve peace in the region. He mentioned the role of Jordan in peacekeeping missions, as well as the fact that it is one of the major contributors of forces for humanitarian missions across the world. Dr. Al Shdifat also highlighted the efforts made by the Jordanian Government to effectively work for the limitation and reduction of SALW.



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He expressed his gratitude to the Secretary General, the President, the members of the Forum and the Jordanian Parliament. He concluded his message with the hope of achieving recommendations that will help parliamentarians in their work against SALW proliferation.

Secretary General Peter Weiderud proceeded to explaining the format of the sessions and opened the floor for discussion on concerns and expectations from the members.

Secretary General Peter Weiderud closed the session and called for a break.

Joint session – MENA conference and General Assembly

President of the Forum, MP Ala Talabani, Iraq, elaborated on the format of the sessions and explained that the work of the Forum is centred on networking and international gatherings in order to work for security and peace. She highlighted that there are 500 million SALW in the world and the fact that the majority of these are found in the MENA region. She continued by asking the audience what the role of parliamentarians in tackling SALW should be. She explained the importance of legislation that regulates and controls SALW and the promotion of the signing



and ratification of international conventions and treaties on weapons control. President Talabani also mentioned the task of oversight of government actions regarding these issues, together with the mission and obligation to inform other countries about the importance of such actions. She also expressed the importance of applying a reasonable share of the budget for arms related issues, making the task of oversight one of the most fundamental for parliamentarians. MP Talabani recognised that the lack of information is an issue. She recalled

that before joining the Forum, she herself was not well informed, which highlights the importance of the Forum.

MP Dr. Sahar Qawasmi from Palestine said that during the MENA meeting held the day before the Assembly, it was made clear that the number of victims in the MENA region is staggering, highlighting the role of groups such as ISIS. She further commented on the work done on the Amman Declaration which had not encompassed sufficiently the issue of Israel's occupation of Gaza and the consequences it has for the Palestinian population. Dr. Qawasmi insisted on the



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importance of including Palestine in the declaration, noting that other crisis created by ISIS and Boko Haram were also mentioned in the document.

MP Diallo Touré from Mali explained the problem of SALW proliferation after the fall of Qaddafi which had catalysed the spread of armed groups, gangsters, small guerrillas and other organisations that take advantage of the high availability of SALW. She mentioned cases of forced marriages, where young girls become the wife of a warlord instead of going to school. She agreed that it is fundamental to increase technical services that can help reduce the proliferation of SALW in the region.

MP Bouamor Taghouan from Morocco expressed his view on the problem, where he considered pertinent to introduce reforms to tackle religious and ethnic issues. He explained that the problem with ISIS, SALW and groups alike will not find a solution in the parliament as it is more complicated than that. SALW problems are also increased by other crises, such as the outbreak of Ebola. He finally called for a better assessment of legislation and actions to cope with SALW proliferation.

Senator Ernest Hamuli Kitsa from the Democratic Republic of Congo thanked the Kingdom of Jordan for hosting the event. He mentioned how the existence of armed groups, killings, sexual violence and terrorism is deeply interlinked with SALW proliferation, hence the importance of drawing attention to the issue of SALW proliferation at the national level. In the DRC, the main problem is the large border which facilitates the movement of weapons and armed groups from all corners of the country. He underlined the importance of awareness campaigns and lobbying with the weapons producers as he believed that not enough efforts are directed towards them. The Senator expressed his wish to include the producers in the declaration, since international companies pump weapons into the DRC and other countries, harming the population and seizing land for natural resource exploitation.

MP Chief Paul Nji Tumasang MP from Cameroon commented on the problem of armed groups entering his country, mostly armed with SALW. Nowadays, Boko Haram represents the main problem for Cameroon, given the long border with Nigeria. He called into question the precedence and intermediary of the weapons that Boko Haram is using, underlining the mistakes made when the Libyan leader was toppled and plans were not made how to deal with the vast arsenals of that country. Chief Paul Nji Tumasang further elaborated on the issues confronted by Cameroon, explaining the relationship between youth unemployment, SALW proliferation and the spread of armed groups, highlighting the need to provide employment and a strategy to deal with misplaced religious conviction.

A member of the Ghanaian Delegation mentioned that Ghana has not experienced the problem at the same scale as its neighbours. The issue in Ghana is more related to local manufacturers. However, the lack of security in Nigeria is destabilizing the region. He called on the Forum to look at the issue of Boko Haram in the region. He also talked about the importance that political stability, economic opportunities have in ensuring public trust in the state. He mentioned that



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parliamentarians are exposed to danger and that the Forum should debate this issue, as well as exploring the culture of violence prevalent in many countries.

MP Saleh Mohammed Al Shashei from Oman reminded the audience that the main exporter of weapons is the West, whereas the main importers are found in the MENA region. He asked for greater responsibility to be taken by Western parliamentarians. He cordially invited the Forum to add the problem of the Gaza occupation, the use of explosives and the casualties that are a result of such occupation to the Amman Declaration

MP Emmanuel Kodjo Kossigan from Togo invited to a discussion about West African countries and the problems faced after Libya and Boko Haram. He explained Togo does not have the same levels of SALW proliferation as its neighbours. However, he acknowledged that ratification of the ATT needs to happen soon. MP Kossigan posed a question related to stopping Boko Haram and the source of the weapons they are using.

MP Drissa Sanogo from Burkina Faso also expressed his interest to include West African countries in the Amman Declaration. He explained how the proliferation of SALW after the fall of the Libyan regime turned peaceful demonstrators into groups of armed civilians, with segments of the population cooperating with groups like Boko Haram. He asked how people can be stopped from endorsing terrorism and terrorist groups. MP Sanogo related this to violent incidents, where unarmed people, while stealing food, became victims of excessive violence and use of lethal force by the security forces, catalysing the support of the population for armed groups. He highlighted the shortage of information available this respect, insisting on support efforts to improve the work of parliamentarians and push the government to implement better weapons control. He concluded that thanks to the ATT, Burkina Faso will be able to track the source of armament and the producers.

MP Marko Djurisc from Serbia expressed his gratitude to organisers and explained the steps Serbia has taken regarding SALW. Serbia, as a producer of ammunition, has signed the ATT and the Defence and Internal Affairs Committee ratified the bill on the confirmation of the ATT unanimously. The Serbian parliament also passed a law of weapons trade, limiting ammunition exports. Exporters now need a government license in order to be able to export weaponry and ammunition. Before that date, only 25% of the weapon makers had a license and 70% of them were trading without a proper government permit. However, MP Djurisc considered that there is more space for transparency in arms deals, and expressed his wishes to avoid ammunition ending in the wrong hands.

MP Armando Prenga from Albania explained the situation of proliferation of SALW in his country, where the parliament passed a law that prohibits the production of arms in Albania. He detailed the efforts to destroy ammunition and weaponry in the country, as well as expressing his concern on how to control the spread of arms in the region. Finally, he believed producer states should also have been present at the meeting.



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MP Joseph Nkaisery from Kenya, talked about the issue of armed groups in the region and how there are no good explanations why these groups exist. He underlined the need to increase capacity building for the government. He proposed sending a strong proposal to the UN together with a tighter cooperation between parliamentarians for holding government responsible.

Secretary General, Peter Weiderud, made comments on the issues mentioned above. He considered that the secrecy of security matters because of reason of national security continues to be an issue, although this can be seriously contested today. Other reasons could be that the government does as it pleases, without interference from parliamentary structures. Mr. Weiderud insisted on the need for transparency while at the same time underlining that a certain level of secrecy is legitimate in matters related to security. This goes together with accountability, record keeping and awareness rising. The Secretary General expressed the need to interact with religious leaders to avoid any misrepresentation of religious views. He welcomed the declaration made on the 24 of September by a group of Muslim leaders and Scholars against ISIS, clearly stating that their deeds were not related to Islam. In relation to this, Mr. Weiderud mentioned the need for linking up with religious leaders since they can make use of a different language in dealing with issues of terrorist-religious driven groups such as ISIS, a religious language instead of a more political one.

MP Ala Talabani, Iraq continued by underlining the importance of women's participation in the debates on SALW proliferation related issues. She mentioned the cases of Yazidi and Kurdish women being sold to ISIS leaders. She recalled the information provided by parliamentarians at the MENA meeting, and mentioned that there is still more work to be done regarding transparency. Ala Talabani further elaborated on the fact that ISIS is composed by a number of different nationalities. 1500 are from North Africa, 1200 from Turkey, 1000 from France, 500 from the UK and 500 from China. She highlighted the need for international legislation that can help cut the supply of weapons across borders.

The parliamentarians proceeded to amend and finalise the drafting of the Amman Declaration.

General Secretary Peter Weiderud closed the session and opened the lunch break.

Report from the President and the Secretary General – Ala Talabani, President of the Parliamentary Forum; Peter Weiderud, Secretary General.

The President of the Parliamentary Forum, Ala Talabani, gave her report of activities since her election 2012. She expressed her commitment on the work of SALW, as well as the importance of the work of the Forum, which provides a platform for information and coordination of parliamentarians that are committed to work for a world free of armed violence. President Ala Talabani briefly reported the changes and challenges that the Forum has faced during these two years, making a positive balance of the two years of her presidency. The work of the Forum has been successfully presented at different fora, developing cooperation and expanding the reach and



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impact of the Forum worldwide. She recalled the different activities of the Forum in New York, Berlin, Belgrade, Geneva, and highlighted the work and efforts of the Forum to further expand its activities in the Middle East.

The Secretary General of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons provided a report of the most important issues related to the Forum 2012-2104. Extracts of the key messages are listed below. For the full report see appendix 1.

- The Forum is in a better financial position compared to two years ago. In 2014 we were moved back to **Sida** giving us the stability of two year contracts again. I should add that both Sida and the Swedish MFA have always provided the amounts we have asked for, at present around USD 300.000. The problem we faced was more related to shifting policies within the donor communities.
- The Forum has secured two important grants for 2014-2015; one from the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation (**UNSCAR**), which is the UN multi-donor funding mechanism created to support the preparation for ratification and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty. This grant is of \$US 182,150 for a project of 18 months titled: “*Enhance ATT and UNPoA Implementation by South-South Parliamentary Exchange and Cooperation*”. The UN regional centres for disarmament for Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean – (UNREC and UNLIREC) are our main partners.
- We also received a grant of 50’000 USD from the **Folke Bernadotte Academy**, for work in the MENA region, which has financed the regional part of this gathering. In addition to this, we have received numerous **in-kind contributions from various parliaments**, including Burkina Faso, Germany, Greece, Jordan, Lithuania, Liberia, Serbia, Togo, United Kingdom, USA as well as the Latin American Parliament and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.
- We also have a number of project proposals currently being reviewed by the British Government (DfID), the German Government, the Norwegian Government as well as UNDP and the Folke Bernadotte Academy.
- Following your wisdom as expressed in Stockholm that it is important that Spain, one of our main donors, forms part for the Board, I visited Madrid in for a very fruitful meeting with **Hon. Augustin Conde, President of the Defence Committee**. He was most willing to accept your request to be on the Board of the Forum.
- We were also very pleased to identify and invite our civil society representative for the Board. Mr **Roy Isbister is Saferworld's** team leader on arms transfers. He has worked in this area for nearly ten years, and has considerable experience in developing and implementing strategies to promote the adoption of responsible arms transfer control strategies at national, regional and international levels. He has been an invaluable resource to our work on the Arms Trade Treaty on numerous.
- Since we met in Stockholm, a major achievement in the area of disarmament has happened – the adoption of the **Arms Trade Treaty**. 50 countries have now ratified the ATT which means that entry-into-force will happen 90 days later i.e. Christmas Eve this year.



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- The 2001 **United Nations a Programme of Action** to Combat, Prevent and Eradicate the Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA) was established to tackle the issue of the illicit trade. The ATT and the UNPoA are hence complimentary and mutually reinforcing. Thanks to the UNSCAR grant the Forum has strong resources to work with its members on this issue. We held a large inter-regional conference on at the **National Assembly of Togo** and in cooperation with UNREC in May this year and we will follow up with a similar activity in April next year, this time in **Lima, Peru**.
- In February, together with the **Parliament of Jamaica** we are holding a regional conference for **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)** which has been identified as a priority as these nations will face different challenges. Their territorial waters can easily be used for illicit shipments and they thus become violators of the treaty unwillingly. Activities will assist them in developing proper legislation and developing partnerships with more equipped countries.
- Our dialogue with the **US Congress** is growing stronger. The long-term objective of this dialogue is the reaching of an agreement on, and introduction of, legal measures to eliminate these illicit transfers. In spring 2013 we held a seminar with more than 30 participants, including 2 Members of Congress and 15 members of Congress staff as well as other actors. Meetings have been held with the Foreign Affairs committee looking at a seminar after the 2014 Congressional Elections.
- Other important activities were held in Germany, the UK, Geneva, Latin America and New York. Our different partners at the German Bundestag, SIPRI, the European External Action Service, SEESAC, the UK Parliament, Parliamentarians for Global Action, British Group of the IPU and the Cluster Munition Coalition, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) , International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and Peace Research Institute Oslo have greatly facilitated the work for the Forum.



Secretary General Peter Weiderud, President Ala Talabani, Dr. Ibrahim Al Shdifat



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Secretary General concluded his report by expressing his gratitude to all the members for their hard work as well as partners from civil society, research and academics. Weiderud said the Forum has grown and matured since the last meeting and it will continue to grow and mature. It has a responsibility to show that politics and political processes can make a change for the reality of people.

He opened for a break.

Session I: Explosive weapons in populated areas – Alexandra Hiniker, PAX

Alexandra Hiniker presented the history of PAX and the International Network on Explosive Weapons. She then proceeded to describing the characteristics of explosive weapons with wide area effect and provided examples of where they had been used in populated areas. She explained that heavy indirect-fire weapon systems such as high-explosive artillery and multiple launch rockets, or unguided aircraft bombs, can create effects that are more difficult to control – either because they are inaccurate or because the zones of blast and fragmentation extend across a wide area or because multiple weapons are used to saturate an area with explosive force. In 2014, such weapons were used in populated areas in Syria, Gaza, Ukraine, South Sudan and Iraq. The same pattern of harm was seen in past conflicts in Lebanon, Somalia, Sri Lanka and many others.

She pointed out that civilians were disproportionately killed and injured when explosive weapons with wide area effects were used in populated areas, citing Action Armed Violence statistics that in 2013, 82% of deaths and injuries caused by explosive weapons were civilians. When explosive weapons were used in populated areas, she reported that civilians made up 93% of casualties. She noted that these weapons also destroy infrastructure, housing, schools and hospitals. She added that the use of such weapons causes displacement, psychological trauma and long-term health problems for those who survive the use of such weapons.

Alexandra Hiniker outlined what international actors had done to address the issue, including the United Nations Secretary-General, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and more than 40 United Nations member states. She provided parliamentarians with a set of recommendations in order to address the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

- Encourage your government to endorse the UN Secretary-General's recommendation that the use in densely populated areas of explosive weapons with wide area effects should be avoided.
- Urge your government to set out their national policies and practices related to the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, including through their representatives to the United Nations.
- Encourage your government to indicate support for the development of an international commitment to prevent the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide area effects.



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- Beyond these public actions, parliamentarians could:
- Encourage your government to contribute to the compilation of good practices for preventing harm from explosive weapons that UN OCHA is undertaking.
- Hold hearings on how to strengthen documentation of the humanitarian impact of explosive weapons, and provide a basis for assistance to victims.
- Encourage your government to participate constructively in the development of an international commitment to prevent the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with wide area effects.

Parliamentary interventions:



Vice President Christer Winbäck, MP Marvin Atencio, Alexandra Hiniker, MP Dr. Sahar Qawasmi, MP Mohamoud Obsiye

MP Marvin Atencio Delgado from Costa Rica explained the history of peace that the country has enjoyed since 1946, when the army was abolished and a civilian police established to deal with the security of the country. Since then, Costa Rica has spearheaded efforts to promote peace and reduce armed violence. The Program for Controlling Arms and Ammunition in Central America, Esquipulas Peace Agreement, the Tlatelolco Treaty as well as the demining efforts promoted by the Central American countries are good examples of Costa Rica's work for human rights and world peace. MP Marvin Atencio called for more ratifications of the ATT and for parliamentarians



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to push for the banning of cluster munitions and depleted uranium, developing an international commitment to curb the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas and develop strict standards regarding unmanned combat aerial vehicles. He quoted the intervention of the President of Costa Rica, Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera, at the General Assembly of the UN on September 25, 2014 “repudiating the transfer of conventional weapons into existing conflict zones, also deploring the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas of Syria, Gaza and east Ukraine. He called on States to urgently develop stricter rules and commitments to prohibit and restrict those weapons’ use”.¹ He finished his intervention by underlining the fact that laws are not a panacea but a reflection of the will of the people to solve these issues through dialogue, peaceful and democratic means.

MP Mohamoud Obsiye from the Republic of Somaliland explained the experience of his country with regards to explosive weapons. He commented that after years of war and conflict, a large number of mines and explosive remnants were left and are still a source of danger for the population. He commented on the ongoing process of removal and destruction of explosive remnants and SALW, with the help of different international NGOs and organisations, mentioning very promising developments in his region. He also talked about the new legislation being approved in his country to reduce small arms, namely the Control Act of Small Arms.

MP Dr. Sahar Qawasmi from Palestine elaborated on the issues faced by the population in Palestine i.e. the suffering and destruction as a result of the widespread use of explosive weapons by Israeli forces. She reported the high number of people killed and how the most affected were civilians, among them children and women. MP Qawasmi explained the widespread targeting of civilian basic infrastructure, such as houses, hospitals, sanitation and other hubs for public services. Not only did the conflict destroy infrastructure, but it also caused displacement, increasing the number of people in need of psychological treatment, as well as rehabilitation due to injuries. Gaza City lost 25% of its houses and other cities suffered a 70% damage of its housing stock. MP Qawasmi called for efforts to prohibit the use of explosive weapons due to their inaccuracy and wide area effect which have staggering effects not only on the Palestinian population, but in those regions of the world where they are being used.

MP Christer Winbäck, Sweden, commented on explosive weapons and how they are a constant cause of suffering for civilians worldwide. He mentioned the problem of landmines, which continue to cause death and injuries many years after a conflict is over. Preventing the use of such weapons must be a high priority for parliamentarians. He expressed that part of the solution to this problem may be available in a near future by the use of “smart weapons” that can be disarmed when not needed anymore. The army can remotely deactivate explosives that remain on the ground so they can no longer cause harm for those who use the area. But the will of implementing these kinds of mechanisms, is again, a big responsibility for parliamentarians in the future.

General Secretary Peter Weiderud closed the session and ended the day.

¹ <http://www.un.org/en/ga/69/meetings/gadebate/24sep/costarica.shtml>



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Friday 14 November

Session II: Discussion on Parliamentary Forum Statement on Armed Violence and Health

Secretary General Peter Weiderud, briefly explained to the new members the important role of the policy statement has for the work of the Forum. The statement on Armed Violence and Health was presented and discussed. The statement highlights and analyses the importance of using a healthcare perspective in dealing with armed violence and pointed out a missing link that has to be build through convergent policies. Except for a few small corrections, the Policy Statement on Armed Violence and Health was unanimously approved.

Session III: The Arms Trade Treaty and other Instruments – Roy Isbister, Saferworld

Roy Isbister from the NGO Saferworld and Board Member of the Forum explained the significance and characteristics of the ATT, as well as the effect it has and will have in the efforts to better control conventional arms transfers. He started by highlighting the fact that the ATT has been signed by over 100 states and will entry into force the 24th of December of 2014. Roy Isbister proceeded to explain how the ATT has become a source of hope, since it has shown the capacity of the international community to act in security concerns compared to other disarmament system. It is a new model that represents a tremendous achievement, since it constitutes a new global norm against conventional arms and weapons, something that would have been impossible at the same level 10 years ago. It also acknowledges national sovereignty and decision making on transfers, since the states are free to apply the articles of the ATT according to their own procedures and there is no supranational organization that enforces or punishes party members. Roy Isbister also highlighted the fact that the ATT establishes conditions according to which states are obliged to refuse transfer, namely: where there is a UN embargo; if in breach of another international agreements to which a party; legal knowledge that the arms would be used to perpetrate war crimes, genocide, attacks against civilians, and other grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions.

He further explained the details related to procedures and meetings aimed to decide the functions, obligations and rights of state parties, and he also detailed the process of these steps. Finally, he clarified the limits of the ATT. As with many laws, treaties and regulations the ATT is not a panacea, but a piece of paper that will not necessarily transform national, regional and international security environments overnight. It will not solve the problem of groups like ISIS, Boko Haram and will certainly not bring peace in the Middle East. The ATT is not a rapid solution for the proliferation of conventional weapons. It regulates, but does not prohibit weapons transfer. However, Roy Isbister underlined, the ATT will provide a set of rules, a framework, within which states agree to exercise their sovereignty and take responsibility for their decisions.



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Fadi Abi Allam, President of the NGO Permanent Peace Movement, from Lebanon, presented the NGO perspective linked to Roy Isbister presentation. Allam explained the focus of the organisation, in issues of peace, prevention of armed conflict and changing the culture of violence in Lebanon. He explained that armed conflict is linked to three main issues; conflict within groups, availability of weapons and a mentality that lead people to consider violence as an option to deal with conflict. He expressed that a change of values have to take place, where the law is recognised. Laws are not only a piece of paper, but represent a level of civilization, as well as willingness and authority of the people. However, he agreed that the ATT will not be a solution for problems like ISIS, and the implementation of such laws, regulations and treaties form the core of the work that has to be done in order to achieve change.

Fadi Abi Allam further elaborated on the responsibility and work that can be done from the parliament, since parliamentarians represent the will of the people and they are well equipped to convey the issues that affect their communities. According to him, the capacity to lobby, raise awareness, pass laws and keep the issue alive for discussion through campaigns and advocacy. This work is fundamental to achieve full compliance of international obligations for better weapons control. Fadi Abi Allam finalised his message by highlighting the problems that still existing around armed violence and the proliferation of SALW, these being the attitudes of certain states towards weapons proliferation, where political decisions have priority over humanitarian issues.

Roy Isbister complemented Fadi Abi Allam's participation, by explaining the traditional secretive view of the government regarding the acquisition and trade of military equipment - a view that has been shifting during the last 20 years, where governments are more willing to report and provide information. He mentioned the roles parliamentarians can play in promoting, implementing and approving international instruments to control weapons proliferation. He emphasized the importance of parliamentary action for a more transparent, open and responsible government position.

MP Alba Palacios from Nicaragua shared the experience of Nicaragua as a conflict affected country and the process of disarmament carried on in the last years. She specifically highlighted the disarmament program in her country, where three hundred thousand fire weapons of diverse calibre have been destroyed. She insisted that NGOs, government and institutions have to cooperate to implement issues related to the ATT.

MP Delsa Solórzano from Venezuela shared her experiences and analysis of the Latin American region. Even though peace processes were successfully implemented, the region still has very high levels of violence. According to MP Solórzano, Venezuela has a homicide rate of 74 for every 100 thousand inhabitants and 80% of all homicides are committed with fire arms. The country has a population of 30 million and with an estimate of 7 million illegal weapons. 25% of the state's budget goes for weapons purchase.



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MP Chief Paul Tumasang from Cameroon, raised the issue of the absence of China, Russia and the United States in the ATT process, and if without their presence will the ATT be meaningful.

MP Diallo Touré from Mali, expressed her concern on explosives and the source of weapons being used in the region, as well as calling for a better identification of the resources that are arming groups in the region.

MP Yonhy Lescano from Peru gave a brief report on the status of the ATT ratification process in his country.

General Secretary Peter Weiderud closed the session and opened for a break.

Session IV: Discussion and election of new Board

MP Joseph Nkaisery from Kenya moderated the discussion and election of the new Board. He explained the functions and purpose of the Board of the Forum and proceeded to the election. A search Committee provided a list of candidates for board, whose nomination was based on the criteria of preserving a gender, regional and political spectrum balance.

Senator Ernest Kitsa from DRC expressed his concern regarding the election as he had no previous knowledge of some of the candidates and highlighted that some of the candidates were absent from the meeting.

Secretary General Peter Weiderud explained the process and the tasks of the search committee, as well for the need of a balanced representation in the Board. He also highlighted the fact that some of the candidates had important legislative issues to solve at their home countries, but they are intensively participating and supporting the work of the Forum. He cordially invited other members of the Forum to further participate in the activities organized by the Forum.

The General Assembly accepted the proposal and voted as follows:

MP Ala Talabani, Iraq: President – 03.05.1966
MP Agustin Conde, Spain: Vice-president – 06.06.1965
Christer Winbäck, Sweden- 07.12.1953
MP Betty Amongi, Uganda – 15.11.1975
MP Drissa Sanogo, Burkina Faso – 30.04.1976
Senator Maria Higonet, Argentina – 22.12.1962
MP José Figueroa, Nicaragua – 05.08.1955
MP Sahar Qawasmi, Palestine – 21.06.1963
Roy Isbister, Saferworld – 25.04.1963

The new Board was elected.



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MP Ala Talabani gave final words of gratitude for her re-election as a president. She expressed her beliefs in a world free of armed violence and underlined her awareness of the role and responsibility she has as a parliamentarian in these matters. She also reinstated her commitment as a parliamentarian and human being with the same focus as the Forum, as well as the advancement of the SALW control agenda.

Secretary General Peter Weiderud explained his particular understanding of politics as an art, which is based upon three main pillars; first, a vision, a desire, an idea of where to go; second, an interest representing the roots and defined interests in society; and third, the mature moment, the ability to see the ripe moment when change is possible. He argued that politics could only be if all three of them were combined. A mere focus on desire without taking interest or the mature moment into account will turn politics into moralism. If the focus lies only on interest then politics will be limited to tribalism. And merely taking the mature moment into account without knowing where to go will turn politics into populism. Weiderud closed the last session, expressing his gratitude and sharing with the attendees the importance of commitment, sense of responsibility and conviction in politics, linking the ideas with the tasks and the impact of the Forum and parliamentary work.

General Secretary Peter Weiderud closed the General Assembly 2014 and ended the day.

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Appendices:

- a. Appendix 1: [Secretary General's report](#)
- b. Appendix 2: [Policy Statement on Armed Violence and Health](#)
- c. Appendix 3: [The Amman Declaration](#)
- d. Appendix 4: [List of participants](#)