



Constructive Dialogue on Firearms
United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC)
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Vienna (hybrid)

Statement Ms. Karin Olofsson, Secretary General, Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons

Distinguished delegates, distinguished representatives from civil society, it is an honour to greet you on behalf of the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (the Forum). My name is Karin Olofsson, and I am the Secretary General of the Forum. A warm thank you to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for this vital dialogue opportunity.

According to the Small Arms Survey, over 211 000 people are killed every year in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)-related violence. The link between transnational organised crime and illicit trafficking in firearms is noted in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) and highlighted in the UNTOC's Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of, and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. As also highlighted, illicit trafficking in firearms endangers the wellbeing of peoples, their socio-economic development and right to live in peace.

The urgency of the situation calls for concise steps by all, including parliamentarians, to implement relevant international instruments, including the UNTOC, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (UN PoA) and the 2030 Agenda. Parliamentarians play a vital role through their legislative, oversight and awareness raising functions, by bridging the gap between international arms control instruments and national and regional levels.

However, parliamentary involvement in the aforementioned international processes is generally neglected, which means the potential of parliamentary action in contributing to more peaceful societies is lost. Therefore, the Forum emphasises, and works for, the active parliamentary involvement related to the universalisation and implementation of UNTOC and the Firearms Protocol and synergies with other relevant instruments, based on the Forum's Strategic Plan 2023-2026 where the Firearms Protocol is included for the first time as a prioritised framework. The Forum is also encouraging the UNODC to consider further inclusion of parliamentarians in apt way in the UNTOC Review process, at country level.

Illicit firearms trafficking cross borders, and is closely linked to criminal and terrorist activity, requiring collaboration between states. Hence, in light of the regional synergies in the implementation of international arms control instruments, it is important that parliamentarians collaborate. In its work, the Forum is actively working to support cooperation between parliamentarians as well as with other relevant stakeholders.

In sum, preventing illicit firearms trafficking is a precondition for the achievement of more peaceful and sustainably developed societies, and parliamentary action is vital in this endeavour.

Thank you!