

IANSA MEMBER ACTION:

Engaging Parliamentarians on the Control of Small Arms and Reduction of Gun Violence

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INTRODUCTION

Governments have established important frameworks through the United Nations that attempt to curb the flow of illicit arms in order to reduce the tremendous impact that armed violence has on communities—whether in the form of conflict or crime. One of these vital frameworks is the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (PoA), which was adopted by the General Assembly in 2001. IANSA and its member organizations work to strengthen the PoA and ensure its full and effective implementation. To do so, it is necessary for civil society to constructively engage, and maintain principled partnerships with elected officials such as parliamentarians and officials in relevant government ministries like foreign affairs, defense, trade, justice, internal affairs, women and children. IANSA aims to increase its engagement with these officials and your participation in this effort is vital.

This member action paper aims to provide guidance in how IANSA's member organizations can engage with parliamentarians in order to accelerate the implementation of the PoA. The purpose is to build upon the momentum achieved at RevCon3 by helping to ensure that parliamentarians in particular, but also relevant government officials in your country, are aware of the official outcomes of RevCon3 as well as aware of IANSA's recommended next steps for the PoA process.

For this initiative IANSA is partnering with the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PFSALW). PFSALW gathers more than 230 members across party-political lines from parliaments in over 80 countries globally. It is the only membership based organisation gathering parliamentarians globally across party-political lines, specifically related to the reduction and prevention of small arms related violence. They enhance parliamentary action in the implementation and universalisation of international frameworks relevant to the prevention and reduction of SALW related violence through capacity-building, policy-shaping and awareness-raising.



WHY YOUR ROLE IS CRUCIAL

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For more information about the PoA, RevCon3 and BMS7 please see following publications from IANSA:



Background Information for IANSA Member Action: Engaging Parliamentarians on the Control of Small Arms and Reduction of Gun Violence



IANSA Quick Guide: Results of the Third Review Conference on the Programme of Action

ENGAGE YOUR PARLAMENTARIANS ON SMALL ARMS CONTROL- HERE'S HOW

IANSA is urging member organizations and advocates to meet with their parliamentarians about measures that can be taken to control the misuse and illicit trade of small arms. Here are some suggestions on how you can prepare, carry out and follow up on a meeting with your parliamentarians.

PREPARE THE MEETING

- Contact your parliamentarian to set up a meeting. The Parliamentary Forum on SALW can assist IANSA members in identifying and contacting parliamentarians in its network. For assistance in identifying your parliamentarian, please contact secretariat@parlforum.org or Tel: +46 8 653 25 43. You can refer to the RevCon3 outcome document (page 10), which encourages “strong cooperation with civil society and parliamentarians...” when asking for a meeting with your parliamentarians.
- Reporting is often used as a mechanism to ensure accountability and foster transparency. While reporting is mandatory for states parties to arms control processes like the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI), it is voluntary under the PoA. In 2018 120 states submitted their reports for RevCom3. Go to the website of United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) to see if your country has submitted its report. If it is submitted you can read the report. What do you think is good and what could they improve?
- Go to the website of IANSA to see if there are any upcoming campaigns that you could inform the parliamentarians about.



A face-to-face meeting, while more effective, may not be possible for logistical reasons. If so, please ask your elected official or officials if they are available to speak with you via Skype or telephone.

TALKING POINTS FOR THE MEETING

- State your name, organization, and your organization's membership in IANSA.
- Express your concern about gun violence worldwide. Below are some useful concerns to cite:



- In 2017 more than 1 billion small arms and light weapons (SALW) were circulating worldwide, and about 85% of these were in the hands of civilians. (Small Arms Survey, 2018)



- Globally, firearms were used in an estimated 46 per cent of all violent deaths in 2010–15, resulting in an average of 214,000 deaths per year. Specifically, they were used in 50 per cent of homicides and 32 per cent of conflict deaths (Small Arms Survey, 2016).



- Most gunshot victims survive the shooting, but for many survivors the health consequences are extremely serious, and sometimes fatal. Sometimes gunshot victims die years later from infections that often are a secondary effect of being shot (Peters, 2018).



- A study of 24 countries showed that firearms were used in one-third of all femicides, killing of women and girls (Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, 2011).



- According to WHO, key protective factor in lessening the perpetration of and victimization related to femicide is legislation restricting access to firearms for perpetrators of intimate partner violence (WHO, 2012).

- Highlight the vital role of parliamentarians in preventing and reducing gun violence through these three key roles: the legislative, oversight[EB1] and awareness-raising functions. • In relation to the PoA, emphasize their role and ability to bridge the gap between international arms control instruments and the implementation of these instruments at the regional, national and local levels. [EB1]What do we mean by this?
- Express your concern about how the proliferation and misuse of guns affect your country and/or your community.
- Ask if they are aware of the UN Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons (PoA). If they are not familiar with it, use the Background Information document to brief them.
- Ask if they are familiar with the Review Conference on the PoA (RevCon3), which was held in June 2018; the agreements that governments made there to tackle problem related to small arms, and the Rev Con outcome documents' reference to the role of civil society and parliamentarians. Provide the parliamentarians with an online or hard copy of **IANSA's Quick Guide to the Results of RevCon3**, which includes our recommendations for next steps. Ask them to read the Guide carefully and to consider what the parliament and government can do to address these important concerns.

- Ask if they are familiar with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular with SDG 5.2 (end all violence against all women and girls by 2030) and SDG 16.4 (significantly reduce illicit arms flows in order to reduce all forms of violence and contribute to peace and justice). Information about these SDGs are available in our background information sheet.
- Ask if they are committed to passing legislation or taking other action to help strengthen gun laws and reduce gun violence.
- Ask if your parliament has recently passed or is working to pass legislation to regulate the trade, possession and use of small arms and light weapons.
- Ask if your parliamentarian has been active in overseeing implementation of existing laws, such as through interpellations.
- Ask if your parliamentarian has been involved in any national awareness raising on the negative impact of gun violence. Would they be interested in participating in campaigns, such as the Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence, or the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence? These are perfect occasions for parliamentarians to make announcements about gun violence and the need for gun control. Are they interested in writing opinion pieces on the topic of small arms control? They can find more information about these campaigns at www.iansa.org
- If your parliamentarian is not already a member, suggest membership in the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, where they can receive further policy support in their parliamentary tasks – legislative, oversight and awareness-raising – and take part in capacity building and policy shaping activities.
- Thank your parliamentarian for meeting with you, and reiterate the importance of civil society and government working together on the basis of the commitments made in the UN PoA to prevent the proliferation and misuse of small arms.
- Mention that they can obtain more information from you, or directly from IANSA's UN Liaison Officer, Emma Bjertén at emma.bjerten@iansa.org if they have any additional questions.

AFTER THE MEETING-FOLLOW UP WITH AN EMAIL!



- Thank the parliamentarians for taking their time to meet with you.
- Share online versions of publications and material that you mentioned or shared at the meeting. It is always good to share online versions of any distributed material in case they want to share it with their colleagues.
- Remind the parliamentarians of any commitments they made during the meeting.

SUPPORT FROM IANSA

Before you begin contacting elected officials about the above concerns, you can contact Emma Bjertén, the IANSA UN Liaison Officer, at emma.bjerten@iansa.org to arrange a call, discuss the IANSA priorities and seek answers to any queries you have about the action. Our team at the IANSA office in New York can walk you through the process of meeting with parliamentarians and offer talking points and strategies.

HOW TO REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF YOUR MEETING

After your meeting with a parliamentarian, please use **this form** to report back on the results.

Thank you for being an essential part of the global movement against gun violence!



REFERENCES

Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, (2011), Global Burden of Armed Violence 2011, "When the Victim Is a Woman", pp. 113–144. http://www.genevadeclaration.org/fileadmin/docs/GBAV2/GBAV2011_CH4_rev.pdf

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World Health Organisation (WHO), (2012), Understanding and Addressing Violence against Women, https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77421/WHO_RHR_12.38_eng.pdf;jsessionid=844CFCCD09E4B3240AFB98100B89308C?sequence=1

www.iansa.org

<http://parliamentaryforum.org>