



British Group Inter-Parliamentary Union Newsletter November 2014

Since the end of the summer recess, BGIPU has undertaken a number of bilateral outward delegations, participated in high-level IPU meetings and hosted events here at the UK Parliament, most recently our very successful International Parliamentary Seminar on the Arms Trade Treaty. It has been a very active period in which we have had regular and substantive opportunities to engage with counterparts from overseas in addressing some of the most pressing international issues including arms control matters, the future security of Europe, the rise of extremist ideology in the world and the urgency of addressing the current global health challenges.

Such a wide-ranging and timely agenda for our work also underscores the continuing relevance of us building contacts and understanding with parliamentary colleagues abroad, making our regular bilateral exchanges pivotal to our broader inter-parliamentary engagement. At the 131st Assembly, the IPU elected a new President, Mr Saber Hossain Chowdhury MP, and we look forward to working closely with him and other IPU members in the period ahead in advance of the IPU's 132nd Assembly in Hanoi in March 2015. Closer to home, BGIPU will convene its Annual General Meeting on 3 December and we encourage all members to participate in elections for our 2015/16 Executive Committee and adoption of the 2014 Annual Report which is now available.

Rick Nimmo, Director

BGIPU Annual Report 2014 released in advance of Annual General Meeting

6 November 2014 - by *BGIPU*



The Annual General Meeting of the British Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, presided over by the Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt Hon John Bercow MP, Honorary President of the Group, will be held in the Attlee Suite, Portcullis House at 4.00pm on Wednesday 3 December 2014 to adopt the 2014 Annual Report and to elect the Executive Committee for 2014/15.

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BGIPU Parliamentary Seminar on the Arms Trade Treaty

3 November 2014 - by *BGIPU*

BGIPU welcomed more than 60 MPs and arms control experts from across the globe to London from 3-5 November for an International Parliamentary Seminar on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Through this meeting, BGIPU was successful in creating increased parliamentary awareness of the ATT. Key outcomes included greater awareness of



best practise models and processes in different legislatures and greater understanding of how parliamentarians can work to strengthen oversight, enforcement and accountability of the ATT to save lives and reduce the impacts of violent conflict.

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131st IPU Assembly highlights gender equality & global threats

12 October 2014 - by [BGIPU](#)



The 131st IPU Assembly met in Geneva from 12 to 16 October 2014 with over 1,500 participants including 725 parliamentarians from 144 parliaments, with 113 Speakers or Deputy Speakers and 234 women MPs, and welcomed back Madagascar and Guinea bringing total IPU membership to 166 of the world's parliaments. In an Assembly which saw S H Chowdhury elected as the new IPU President, key issues addressed including gender equity and violence against women, the current Ebola crisis and the threat of terrorism and extremism.

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Panel on UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace & Security

15 October 2014 - by [BGIPU](#)



On 15 October, BGIPU co-hosted with civil society organizations Womankind and Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS UK), a lunchtime panel discussion on "Implementing the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace & Security: How parliamentarians can engage." Drawing on the recently launched UK National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security, participants highlighted the importance of recognising the role women can play in addressing conflict and the differing impacts of violent conflict on women and girls, including the need to address sexual violence in conflict.

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UK's close friendship with Norway remains strong

28 September 2014 - by [BGIPU](#)



The United Kingdom's close friendship with Norway, forged in the dark days of Norway's WWII occupation, remains strong despite the passage of time since 1945 and the dramatic change in Norway's situation now that oil and gas have made it one of the richest countries in the world. Indeed, our recent delegation visit to Norway found that the wartime experience was still a strong factor in Norwegian perceptions of the UK, and that Norway was happy to be investing parts of its wealth in the UK.

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UK's deep relations and history in the Gulf reflected in visit to UAE

22 September 2014 - by *BGIPU*



Firm political ties were in evidence throughout our visit to the UAE hosted by HE Mohammed Ahmed Al-Murr, Speaker of the Federal National Council. In roundtable discussions, there was a strong emphasis on the collective nature of their work, with members represented the UAE in their deliberations, not their individual emirates. The UAE is a developing democracy and the FNC demonstrated greater involvement for younger people than in the past by expanding the electorate from 7,000 hand-picked electors to over 100,000 in the near future.

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UK delegation to Nepal highlights 200 years of relations

14 September 2014 - by *BGIPU*



The visit of a UK delegation to Nepal from 14-19 September provided an important opportunity to resume inter-parliamentary visits between Britain and Nepal with the establishment of its Constituent Assembly after successful democratic elections in November 2013. It was also timely as the 200th anniversary of bilateral relations approaches in 2016 and provided insights into the main constitutional issues facing the country. The UK delegation also saw the major contributions to Nepal's development being made by DFID and the Gurkha Welfare Scheme.

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Women Speakers call for urgent action on gender violence

3 September 2014 - by *BGIPU*



Women Speakers of Parliament from 16 countries, including the UK's Lord Speaker, Baroness D'Souza, have called for urgent action and commitment to ending violence against women and girls in conflict situations as they ended a two-day meeting in Geneva. Highlighting deep concern over recent developments, Women Speakers said they were appalled by the "vicious crimes being perpetrated against women and girls" in a Declaration issued at the 9th Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament organized by IPU.

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Georgia – part of the wider European family?

20 July 2014 - by *BGIPU*



While Ukraine's troubles have captured world attention, another of Russia's neighbours which suffered two annexations only six years ago – Georgia – has almost escaped notice. Every UK visitor to Georgia, however, is reminded of that country's long-standing application to join not only the EU but NATO. Georgia has lost 29 soldiers in Afghanistan where it has made the largest human contribution to ISAF of any non-NATO country.

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UK Parliamentarians attend XX International AIDS Conference

20 July 2014 - by *BGIPU*



Pamela Nash MP and Lord Fowler, in their capacities as Chair and Vice Chair of the APPG on HIV and AIDS, attended the XX International AIDS Conference in Melbourne, Australia with support from BGIPU. The 2014 Conference provided an excellent opportunity to meet with activists and HIV/AIDS specialists active throughout the world, in addition to meeting with other parliamentarians from across the globe to share their experiences of tackling HIV/AIDS, including discussing the political barriers faced in many countries.

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FORTHCOMING BGIPU ACTIVITIES

- BGIPU Inward Delegation | Inward Visit of Parliamentarians from Romania | 24 – 28 November
- BGIPU Annual General Meeting | Attlee Suite, Palace of Westminster | 3 December | 1600 – 1700
- Annual 2015 session of the Parliamentary Conference on WTO | 16-17 February
- 132nd IPU Assembly | Hanoi, Vietnam | 28 March – 1 April