



United Nations
Development Programme



SEESAC

South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons

SEESAC APD 25

1st Edition
2004-19-01

Public Perceptions of Small Arms and Security in South Serbia

The **South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons** (SEESAC) has a mandate from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Stability Pact for South East Europe (SPSEE) to provide operational assistance, technical assistance and management information in support of the formulation and implementation of SALW co-ordination, control and reduction measures, projects and activities in order to support the Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan, thereby contributing to enhanced regional stability and further long-term development in South Eastern Europe.

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Public Perceptions of Small Arms and Security in South Serbia, SEESAC, Belgrade 2003

ISBN:

Acknowledgements

This report summarises the key findings of a survey commissioned by SEESAC on behalf of UNDP Serbia and Montenegro. While the conceptual design and overall guidance for the survey was provided by Simon Rynn (SEESAC), the research itself was implemented by the Belgrade-based company SMMRI, with project direction by Srdjan Bogosavljević, qualitative research by Svetlana Logar, data processing by Jovanka Vukmirović and sample design by Dragiša Bjeloglav. Field-work was co-ordinated by Marko Uljarević. SEESAC would like to acknowledge the help was obtained from Dritan Krifca of UNDP Macedonia and from the OSCE field mission team in North Macedonia with regard to sample design in that area. Although the report was written by Simon Rynn, SEESAC would like to thank SMMRI for their project report, on which this document is based.

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Executive Summary

This report summarises the main findings of a research study implemented by Strategic Marketing and Media Research Institute (SMMRI) on behalf of SEEASAC / UNDP Serbia and Montenegro from 27 July to 06 August 2003 in the South Serbian municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja. The purpose of the research was to clarify the attitudes and perceptions of ordinary citizens regarding small arms, in order to better judge whether a SALW collection project would prove successful. In addition to providing valuable information about perceptions of SALW, the survey results also shed light on related matters, including the state of inter-ethnic relations, public perceptions of international agencies working in the area, the developmental needs of communities, and levels of trust in security providers. The main research findings are as follows:

Security and SALW:

- ❑ Physical security was highlighted as a concern by respondents, but was not identified as a high priority compared to other, mainly economic worries such as employment, low pay, poor infrastructure, or inadequate access to education.
- ❑ Security was seen to have improved compared to previous years. The introduction of the Multi-Ethnic Police (MEP) was cited by many respondents as a major contribution in this area. Among those surveyed, Ethnic Albanians tended to trust the MEP as a protection for their community. Although ethnic Serbs also welcomed the MEP presence they had lower faith in its capacity as a police service, and see its contribution more in calming ethnic Albanian fears.
- ❑ Both communities tended to identify the prospect of a future inter-ethnic conflict, the political situation and poverty as common threats. The threat from armed crime was commonly rated as very low.
- ❑ Different sources of insecurity were identified by the two main ethnic groups. Ethnic Albanians primarily felt threatened by the state security forces – particularly the Gendarmerie – and also by the prospect of unemployment and to some degree by ethnic Serbs. Among ethnic Serb respondents the threats most commonly identified were regional instability, crime, corruption and ethnic Albanians. Yet there was no expectation that local Albanians would join any armed conflict – fears were focussed on ethnic Albanians from surrounding regions (Kosovo, Macedonia, Albania).
- ❑ Neither ethnic Albanians or ethnic Serbs perceived collective or personal security to be jeopardised by firearms *per se*. Further, until prompted, respondents did not immediately make a link between SALW proliferation in the area, and their poor quality of life.

SALW availability and distribution

- ❑ Respondents commonly asserted that firearms are present throughout South Serbia; but it is typically said to be criminals or ‘the other’ ethnic group that possess them.
- ❑ Ethnic Albanians typically claimed not to know where to find firearms. They stated that weapons are possessed by the police, army, criminal groups and those who participated in the recent conflict, but are no longer kept by ordinary people because security has improved.
- ❑ In contrast ethnic Serbs tended to say that firearms are available even in flea markets and that ethnic Albanians keeping high numbers of them in caches. Ethnic Serbs tended to deny that families in their own community kept illegal firearms.

- ❑ Self-protection was overwhelmingly cited as the main reason for weapons possession.
- ❑ The visibility of weapons appears to be very low; any SALW in the area held by civilians are well concealed, whether in homes or caches due to fears both of the security forces and the possibility of inter-ethnic conflict.
- ❑ Participants were not willing to make any assessment of either the number or the type of illegal weapons that might be present in their region. No reliable assessment could therefore be made.

Policy options for UNDP

- ❑ A majority of respondents felt that there were low prospects for any form of weapons collection to be successful, regardless of the exact type of intervention. There was general agreement that a permanent improvement to the level of security in the region was a prerequisite for reduced levels of SALW possession. 'Re-deployment of security forces' was the most common choice when respondents were asked to identify specific measures that would make a SALW collection successful.
- ❑ Serbs were generally more negative about the chances for successful SALW collection than their ethnic Albanian counterparts. They tended to insist that ethnic Serb households do not have illegal firearms to hand-in, and that ethnic Albanians are so wedded to their SALW caches that they would return just a negligible portion of their arsenal during any collection. Ethnic Albanians, especially females, were more optimistic about the prospects for a SALW collection. Among those who believed it could succeed, employment schemes were identified as the most appropriate incentive.
- ❑ If any collection were to take place ethnic Albanians would trust international organisations most to run it, while ethnic Serbs would have low confidence in any institution. Ethnic Serb respondents often expressed negative views of the international agencies working in the area, alleging favouritism towards ethnic Albanians. Among this group, SALW collections that offer incentives (e.g. WED) were seen as yet another way to reward ethnic Albanians disproportionately.

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Public perceptions of small arms and security in South Serbia

1 Introduction

In recent years the municipalities of Medvedja, Bujanovac and Presevo, which form the southernmost part of the Republic of Serbia along the border with FYROM and the entity of Kosovo have been plagued by high levels of tension. In 2001 in a low-intensity conflict occurred between government security forces and the insurgent group known as the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB)¹ in and around the demilitarised zone established at the close of NATO's military action against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Of the three municipalities mentioned above, Bujanovac and Presevo (predominantly ethnic Albanian) experienced the most armed violence. Medvedja, where ethnic Albanians are a minority, was spared large-scale violence, but widespread displacement of people occurred there.

In the wake of the 2001 crisis, the 'Covic Plan' of February 2001 provided a framework for central and local government to introduce confidence-building, developmental and peace-building measures with the agreement of UCPMB commanders in an attempt to defuse the crisis. A concerted effort by international actors (including a number of UN agencies, the US Government, NATO and the OSCE) and NGOs also took place. These coordinated efforts met with notable success, and the Plan's provisions were by and large implemented. De-militarisation occurred on both sides. Regular security forces were reintroduced (though special police units and the army remained), and UCPMB members were partly disarmed. The progressive reintegration of ethnic Albanians into municipal administrative and economic structures began and considerable economic and social development assistance has since been provided in the crisis-affected areas.

Nevertheless, peace and stability in this part of Southern Serbia remains extremely fragile. Recurrent acts of armed violence still occur, particularly in the Presevo valley and Northern Macedonia. The level of tension between local communities and security forces has therefore remained high. The apparent formation of an armed faction calling itself the Albanian National Army (AKSH) is one symptom of this fragile peace. For every conflict resolution success scored in the area so far (including e.g. greater inclusion of ethnic Albanians in local government and joint Albanian-Serb police patrols), there is a general sense among ethnic Albanians that the peace agreement of 2001 has not delivered all it promised. In particular high levels of unemployment have dampened expectations for the future. Meanwhile the nebulous status of Kosovo, instability in Macedonia and the uncertain political direction of Serbia have added nothing positive to this mix.

The ongoing availability of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the area, some of military origin, is one notable symptom of ongoing tensions. The continued presence of such weapons poses a threat to the stability of the immediate area and the wider region, perpetuates perceptions of insecurity within local communities, while also providing opportunities for violent conflict resolution. Where weapons continue to be held by ex-combatants, the long-term commitment of these groups to the Covic peace process is also called into question.

Given this situation, between 08 October and 06 November 2002, SEESAC, together with UNDP BCPR Geneva, fielded an assessment mission to the municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja to determine the feasibility of a project that would allow for the voluntary surrender of illegal SALW by citizens in return for development-style incentives (i.e. 'Weapons in Exchange for Development' (WED)).

¹ Albanian: Ushtria Clirimtare Presheve, Medveja e Bujanovec.

Four conditions must be satisfied for weapon collection programmes of any kind to succeed. They are:

- a) a relatively stable security environment;
- b) a low level of active demand for weapons and their possession by ordinary civilians and demobilised ex-combatants;
- c) sufficient support of key stakeholders for the type of intervention planned; and
- d) sufficient trust among communities and individual weapon holders for the institutions charged with implementing the collection scheme and/or delivering incentives.

The 2002 field mission undertook a series of consultations with key stakeholders (FRY Government, municipal authorities, local political parties, village representatives, local NGOs, international organisations, and ex-combatants), and also a review of secondary sources. On the basis of this it concluded that a proportion of the significant quantities of SALW in circulation in the South of Serbia would be handed over in return for development-style incentives and recommended that a pilot WED intervention be attempted.

However, in the four months that followed the field mission's recommendations, a number of separate events demonstrated the need for supplementary research. The most significant of these events was the March 2003 assassination of Serbian Prime Minister Djindjic. The immediate effect of this was to worsen public perceptions of security throughout the country. In the April - May 2003 weapons amnesty introduced by the Government of the Republic of Serbia a total of 47,852 weapons and explosives were surrendered by Serbian citizens (Ministry of Interior statistics). However, the high surrender rate was induced mainly by fear, as much of the harsh penalties for illegal possession that obtained under the period of Martial Law as of the weapons themselves. Perhaps more accustomed to feelings of insecurity, and to exceptional policing methods, the municipalities of southern Serbia were notable for their lack of participation in this amnesty, surrendering less than twenty weapons. If these two events called into question the readiness of the South Serbian population to hand in weapons under threat of punishment, the continued massive and unconditional inflow of development assistance – both bilateral and multi-lateral – into South Serbia also raised the question of whether a WED-style offer of purely *conditional* development assistance would prove attractive enough to reduce public scepticism.²

By late spring 2003 it had become clear to SEESAC and UNDP Serbia and Montenegro that information was needed about the perceptions of Southern Serbia's ordinary citizens towards the idea of SALW collection. UNDP / SEESAC therefore commissioned a SALW Perception Survey, the findings of which are the basis for this report. The survey was implemented for UNDP / SEESAC by the Belgrade-based company Strategic Marketing and Media Research Institute (SMMRI) from 27 July to 06 August 2003. The information gathered during the research is not limited to the SALW questions emphasised in this report. It also covers matters such as inter-ethnic relations, economic development needs and trust in institutions that receive less emphasis here. Those requiring further data can obtain an annex of tabulated data (Annex C) from the SEESAC website.³

² UNDP Serbia and Montenegro's Rapid Employment Programme, and USAID spending are the most significant and visible aid flows likely to impact on a future WfD. Summaries of spending and sub-projects are available.

³ <http://www.seesac.org/reports/surveys.htm>.

2 Methodology

This research study was conducted using three research tools; 1) household surveys; 2) focus groups; and 3) in-depth interviews. Household surveys were carried out using a questionnaire with an average duration of 60 minutes (see Annex A), the sample frame being adult citizens in households from urban, suburban and rural settlements. Respondents were drawn from 118 pooling places in the South Serbian municipalities of

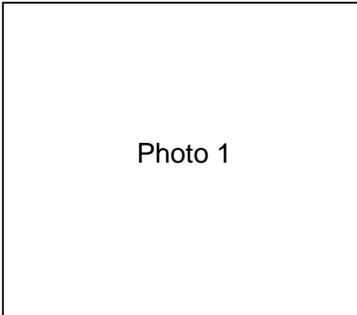


Photo 1

Bujanovac, Presevo and Medvedja, while two quota control groups were examined. Firstly, ethnic Albanian women from the South of Serbia (135 women), and secondly, heads of household in 120 ethnic Albanian households from the North Macedonian municipality of Lipkovo (5 pooling places).⁴ In order to reduce time in the field and produce speedy results, a decision was made not to include quota samples from specific ethnic minorities resident in the area (e.g. Roma), or to include IDPs currently living in South Serbia. Anecdotal evidence and a number of unrelated research studies suggest that neither

of these groups is armed to any significant degree.

Two-stage, random, stratified sampling was used, first, polling station territories (PPS sampling scheme), and second, households (SRSWoR – random walk). Respondents were heads of household (690 ethnic Albanians and 321 ethnic Serbs in the South Serbia group). Post-stratification was of three kinds; 1) by municipalities (number of inhabitants); 2) by type of settlement (urban, rural); and 3) by national structure (Serbs, Albanians). The household survey error margin was $\pm 1.25\%$ with respect to incidences of 5%.

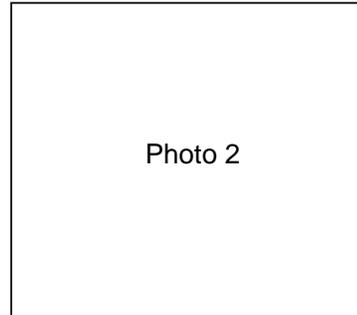


Photo 2

Table 1: Household survey sample

ROW %	COUNT	SAMPLE	
100.0	1011	Total	
68.3	690	Albanians	Ethnicity - HH
31.7	321	Serbs	
13.2	133	18-35 (A)	Age - HH
3.5	36	18-35 (S)	
36.8	372	36-55 (A)	
13.7	138	36-55 (S)	
18.3	185	56+ (A)	
14.5	147	56+ (S)	

⁴ Based on advice from UNDP Serbia and Montenegro's Youth Employment Support Project, UNDP Macedonia and the OSCE Monitoring Mission office in Kumanovo, the following Macedonian villages were surveyed because of their close links with South Serbia: Belanovce, Lojane, Gornji Sopot, Susevo, Mulalovo, Petroc, Jablanic and Maglince.

ROW %	COUNT	SAMPLE	
29.6	299	Elementary (A)	Education - HH
13.9	141	Elementary (S)	
26.5	268	Secondary (A)	
14.5	146	Secondary (S)	
12.2	123	University (A)	
3.3	34	University (S)	
9.0	91	-100 EU (A)	Household monthly expenditure - HH
13.5	137	-100 EU (S)	
29.2	295	101-250 EU (A)	
13.3	134	101-250 EU (A)	
26.4	267	251+ EU (A)	
4.7	47	251+ EU (S)	
4.0	40	Refusal	
13.4	135	1-4 (A)	Number of household members - HH
18.5	187	1-4 (S)	
26.3	266	5-6 (A)	
10.5	107	5-6 (S)	
28.5	288	7+ (A)	
2.7	27	7+ (S)	
21.2	214	Urban (A)	Type of settlements - HH
11.7	119	Urban (S)	
47.1	476	Rural (A)	
20.0	202	Rural (S)	
100.0	135	Albanian women	
100.0	120	Macedonian Albanians	

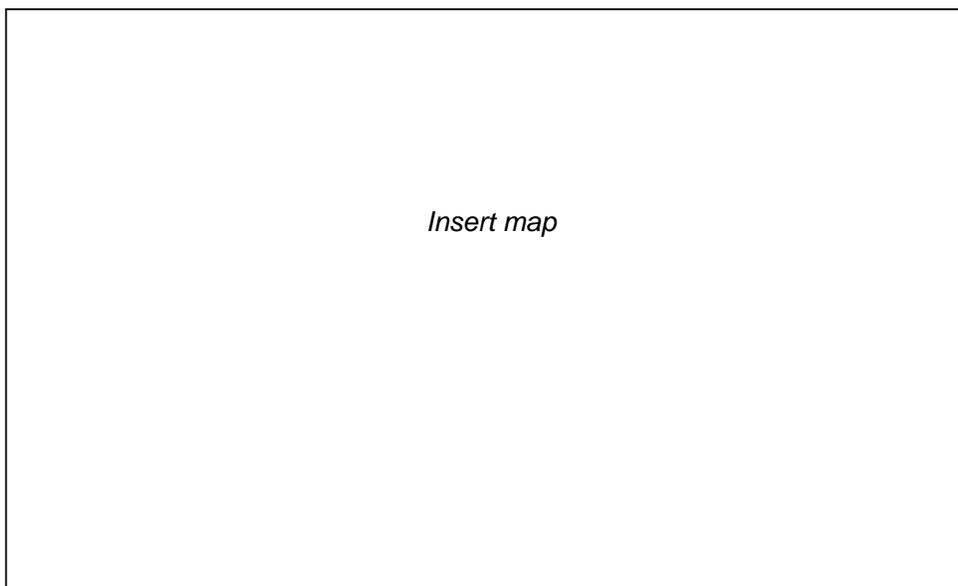
In order to obtain a deeper understanding of target communities' behaviour, attitudes, motives and beliefs, a number of focus groups and in-depth interviews were organised. These methods also gave access to respondents whose views were difficult to obtain during household surveys whether for practical or cultural reasons. Two focus groups took place on 19 July 2003 in Bujanovac with a total of 16 ethnic Serb participants participating, half from Bujanovac and half from Presevo. Participants were divided into two groups by gender, one male and one female group, aged 30 to 50. In-depth interviews were used in South Serbia (Bujanovac and Presevo), and in North Macedonia (Likovo and, Matec) with ethnic Albanian participants during the second half of July 2003. Interviewers were of the same ethnicity and sex as participants. A total of six males and four females were interviewed in the South Serbian municipalities of Bujanovac and Presevo, while two males and three females were interviewed in Macedonia.

Table 2: Population statistics

	MUNICIPALITY			
	Presevo	Bujanovac	Medvedja	Total
AREA (Sq Km)	264	461	524	1,249

		MUNICIPALITY			
		Presevo	Bujanovac	Medvedja	Total
Settlements		59	35	44	138
Resident population⁵		34,904	43,302	10,760	88,966
IDP²		34	4848	735	5617
Refugees		19	115	73	207
TOTAL		34,957	48,265	11,568	94,790
Serbs³	No.	2,984	14,782	7,163	24,929
	%	8.5	34.1	66.6	28.0
Albanians	No.	31,098	2,816	23,681	57,595
	%	89.1	26.2	54.7	64.7
Others	No.	822	4,839	781	6,442
	%	2.4	11.2	7.3	7.3

Figure 1: South Serbian municipalities of Bujanovac, Medvedja and Presevo.



⁵ Reference: Republic Statistical Office of Serbia, Results from Population Census 2002.

² Reference: Estimation UNHCR March 2003.

³ Ibid. 1.

3 SALW Perception Survey – main findings

3.1 Perceptions of Human Security

Investigating public perceptions of security in general serves both to introduce the topic of SALW to survey respondents, and to give additional information regarding the backdrop against which SALW proliferation is occurring. As anticipated, respondents perceived the security situation to have improved in the past couple of years, but surprisingly, although physical security was flagged as a concern by some respondents, it was never cited as the paramount concern. Many points of agreement were found between ethnic Albanian and ethnic Serb respondents in this part of the survey. The everyday problems that

“Firearms are not the problem here. Our bigger problems are reckless driving, drugs, and so on.”

“During the past 3-4 years, there was no shooting here. Maybe on Christmas Eve, three or four shots, that’s all.”

Focus group respondents, Presevo and Bujanovac.

“Our municipality is undeveloped, so it is normal that we have various problems arising from that, the biggest one being unemployment.”

– Female respondent, Bujanovac.

“Everyday problems that I can see are unemployment, the young are wondering in the streets, they can’t fit in the local milieu, and that’s what I feel as problem.”

– Male respondent, Orahovac.

respondents deemed to be their highest priorities were not related to physical security, but to poverty and low living standards (e.g. especially unemployment, low pay, unreliable water and electricity supply, lack of access to education). More surprising still in an area known to suffer from continued armed violence and weapons proliferation, a majority of all respondents did not perceive collective or personal security to be jeopardised by firearms *per se*. For example the perceived threat from armed crime was very low. The most commonly expressed fears about physical security related to the prospect of future inter-ethnic conflict.

It is apparent that perceptions of security vary according to ethnicity, with ethnic Albanians tending to feel threatened by the state security forces – particularly the gendarmerie – while ethnic Serbs were more likely to express fears about regional instability, crime and corruption. Yet ethnic Serbs do not expect local Albanians to start or join in any armed conflict – their fears seem to focus more on ‘trouble-makers’ from Kosovo, northern Macedonia and Albania. Among both ethnic groups a significant number of respondents would cite the other group as a threat to them.

The overall picture is that psychological pressures, limited life chances and everyday living conditions are people’s main concerns. Unemployment, low salaries, a lack of basic facilities and poor infrastructure were continually mentioned. Most participants did not feel their physical security to be a problem. Female participants were especially sensitive to low quality of life.

“People don’t feel secure in a psychological sense. There are no direct pressures, but indirect ones, for example the Serbian population depart, and they sell their property to Albanians.”

- Male focus group participant, Bujanovac.

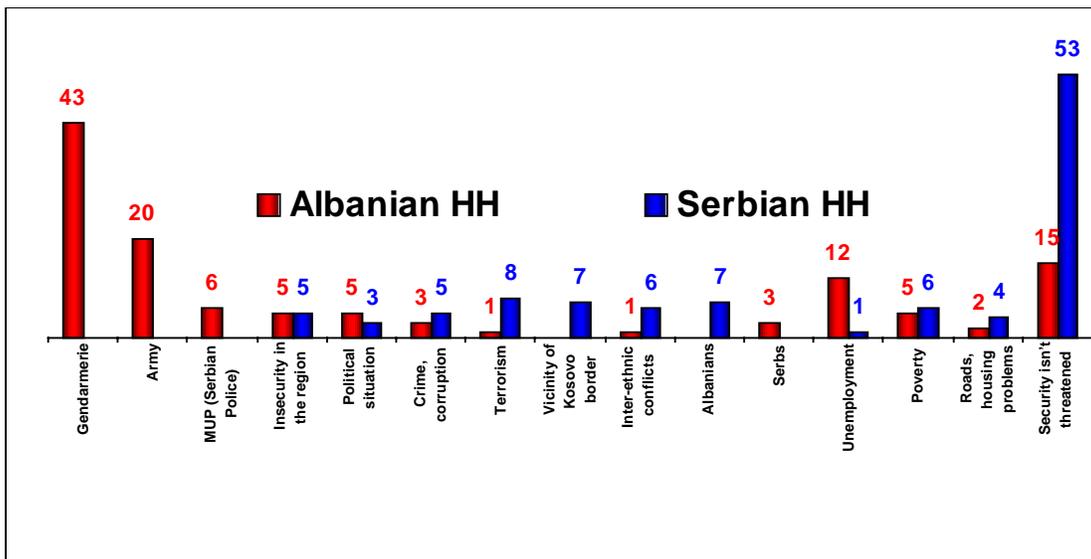
“In the part of settlement where I live, the electricity is so poor that I cannot cook, do the ironing, turn on a vacuum cleaner or washing machine in the afternoon... we don’t have a cafe, a pastry shop, our children don’t have a park. There is nowhere to go out... When you come to our railway station you feel as if you were in a desert.”

– Female focus group participant, Bujanovac.

3.1.1 Community security

When asked “What threatens collective security the most in your local neighbourhood?”, 27% of household heads (HH)⁶ said that security is not threatened at all, or that they cannot specify the factors which threaten general security. Attitudes towards general security differ considerably depending on ethnicity. 53% of Serbian HH and only 15% of Albanian HH think that general security is not threatened at all, or they cannot specify the factors that threaten security.

Figure 2: What threatens collective security the most in your neighbourhood? (multiple response).

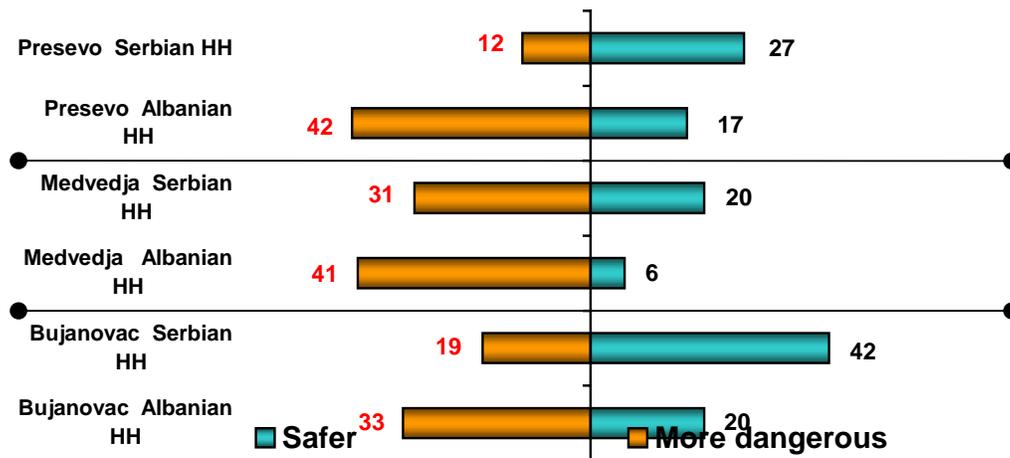


The attitude of ethnic Albanian women differs considerably from that of ethnic Albanian HH, with 61% of Albanian women asserting that general security is not threatened, and they don't mention any threatening factor, in contrast to just 15% of Albanian HH who share the same attitude. Ethnic differences are apparent here also. A majority of ethnic Albanian HH assert that general security is threatened by the Gendarmerie (43%), army (14%), and Serbian Police (Ministry of Interior, 'MUP') (4%), present in the region. Considerably fewer ethnic Albanian HH identified problems such as unemployment (12%), poverty (5%), the political situation (5%), or crime /corruption (3%) as the main threats to their collective security.

In contrast to a considerable number of Albanian HH, not a single (0.0%) Serbian HH stated that their security was threatened by the Gendarmerie, army or MUP. Threatening factors identified by Serbian HH included terrorism (8%), proximity to the Kosovo border (7%), ethnic Albanians (7%), inter-ethnic conflicts (7%), poverty (6%), and crime and corruption (5%). Among Macedonian Albanians the main sources of insecurity were identified as: unemployment (61%), crime and corruption (8%) and poverty (4%).

⁶ Hereafter the abbreviations 'Serbian HH' and 'Albanian HH' are used in place of 'ethnic Serb household heads' and 'ethnic Albanian household heads'.

Figure 3: Do you think your neighbourhood is safer, the same or more dangerous than other areas in South Serbia?



More Serbian HH (35%) than Albanian HH (18%) thought that their local area safer in comparison to other parts of South Serbia. The municipal breakdown among this group shows that residents of Bujanovac feel the safest by far:

- Bujanovac - 42% of Serbian HH and 20% of Albanian HH.
- Presevo - 27% of Serbian HH and 17% of Albanian HH.
- Medvedja - 20% of Serbian HH and 6% of Albanian HH.

Perceptions varied according to demographic factors like age, sex, income and education (See Table 5, Annex C). While Albanians from Northern Macedonia cited low living standards as their biggest problem, their security situation was a much greater concern than for respondents over the Serbian border. The situation was seen as having deteriorated over the past two years, as indicated by persistent gunfire.

“To tell the truth, there is shooting, I don’t know how much, but I hear shooting every night.”
 – Male respondent, Likovo, Macedonia.

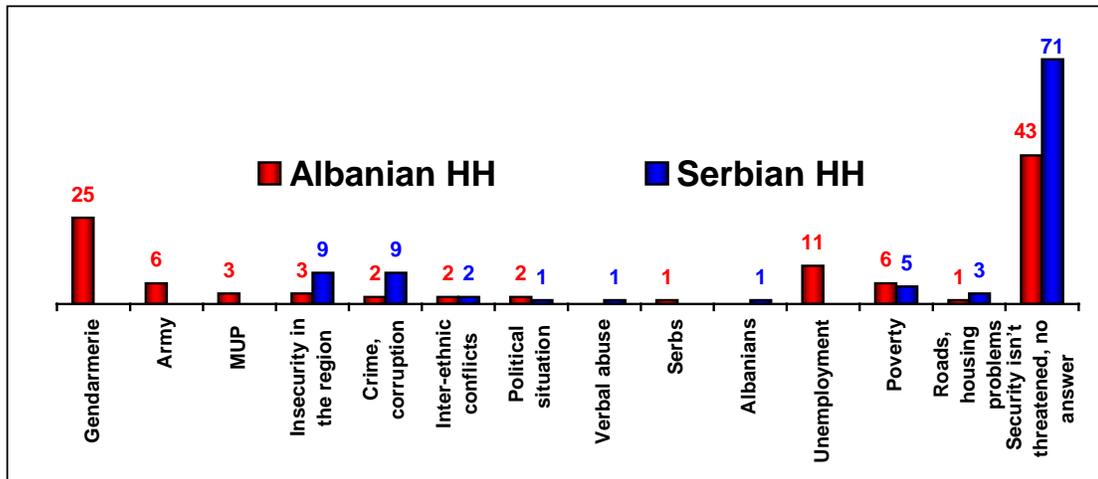
“There is a lot of shooting, a lot of thefts, we have all become traumatised, every shooting frightens us.”
 – Female respondent, Likovo, Macedonia.

3.1.2 Personal security

Overall respondents feel their personal security to be less threatened than their collective security. The number of South Serbian HH who felt their personal security to be unthreatened (including those who could not specify a threat) was nearly double (52%) the number who responded in the same way to questions concerning collective security (27%). Considerable ethnic variations were apparent among respondents. In general, ethnic Serbs feel safer than ethnic Albanians with considerably more Serbian HH (71%) than Albanian HH (43%) stating that their personal security is not threatened, or mentioning no threats. The same attitude is shared by three out of four (76%) Albanian women and one half of (50%) Macedonian Albanians. But the factors identified as threatening remain the same as with collective security. The main personal security threat identified by ethnic Albanian HH was seen to be the Gendarmerie (25%), followed by the army (6%) and MUP (3%). In contrast Serbian HH opted for crime and corruption (9%),

and general insecurity in the region (9%). Economic problems, such as unemployment (11% Albanian HH, 0% Serbian HH) and poverty (6% Albanian HH, 5% Serbian HH), were to a much lesser extent perceived as factors threatening personal security.

Figure 4: What threatens your personal security the most (multiple response).



3.1.3 Perceptions regarding armed crime.

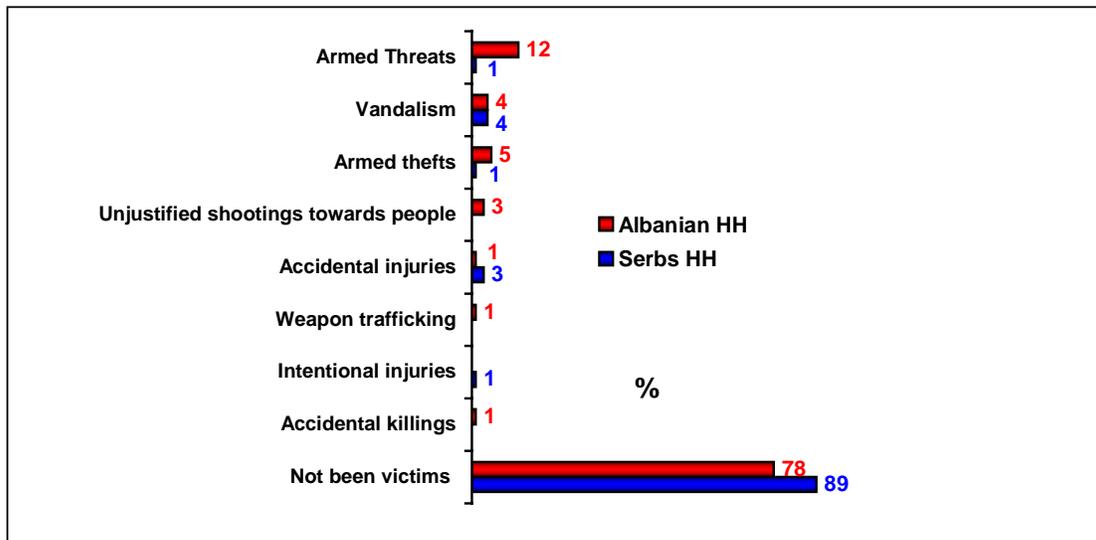
When asked whether they themselves or any other member of their families had been victims of some form of armed crime, the overwhelming majority of respondents (82% of SSHH) answered negatively.

More Serbian HH (89%) than Albanian HH (78%) state that neither themselves nor members of their families were victims of some form of armed crime. The vast majority (92%) of Albanian women also fall into this group, and more than two thirds of Macedonian Albanians (68%) gave the same answer. Out of a total of 12% of Albanian HH who claimed to have been victims of armed crime, all of them said it had taken the form of 'armed threats'. Other statements (multiple response) related to armed thefts (5%), vandalism (4%), unjustified shooting towards people (4%), accidental injuries (3%), accidental killings (1%), and arms trafficking (1%).

Of the 11% of Serbian HH who claimed that either they or members of their households had been victims of armed violence, 4% cited, 3% accidental or intentional injuries, 1%, armed threats, and 1% armed thefts. Neither the respondents nor members of their family were under arms threat, nor can they name the concrete cases of such threats.

"There were cases of armed threats, so one didn't feel safe."
 – Female respondent, Bujanovac.
"We have shooting, but there are no casualties."
 – Female respondent, Likovo, Macedonia.

Figure 5: Have you or a member of your household been the victim of any of the following types of armed crime? (multiple response).



Though the figures point to a low level of weapon-related crime (with the possible exception of armed threats towards, or among, the ethnic Albanian community), female participants were still worried for the security of the children. In focus groups and interviews however it became apparent that these fears were not directly related to SALW but to issues like, drugs, assaults and brawling.

“You cannot send your child to Bujanovac, since the bus goes through Vujaci, a village with 70-80% of Albanians. And then, incidents happen. It does not matter whether you have a male or a female child, when you send him/her, you worry the whole day how he/she will get back.”

- Female Focus Group participant, Bujanovac.

3.1.4 Security now compared to one year ago

Perceptions of how the security situation has varied in recent years shows notable geographic and ethnic differences. Albanians from the South of Serbia think that security in their local area is satisfactory, and has improved over the last two years. No differences are evident in security ratings between the three municipalities (Medvedja, Bujanovac and Presevo). Focus group discussions point to the introduction of MEP units as a major contributing factor.

“I go out to street with my children, I feel safe, we walk around freely. In other words, if we compare the security situation before two years with situation today, we breathe much easier today.”

- Female respondent, Bujanovac.

50% of Albanian HH versus 25% of Serbian HH stated that security had improved over the last year. Most Serbs (60%) said it had remained the same, while only 27% of Albanian HH opted for this response. Very few think security has worsened (7% of Serbian HH, 9% of Albanian). 40% of Albanian women assert that security has improved, 36% that it has remained the same, while 22% consider it to have been volatile over the previous year. Only 2% of Albanian women consider the security situation worse than one year ago.

“There are unknown criminal groups, and a lot of shooting overnight; we are more threatened now than we were before.”

- Female respondent, Likovo, Macedonia.

“This situation is more dangerous in comparison to previous years, we didn’t hear so much shooting before, these groups did not exist.”

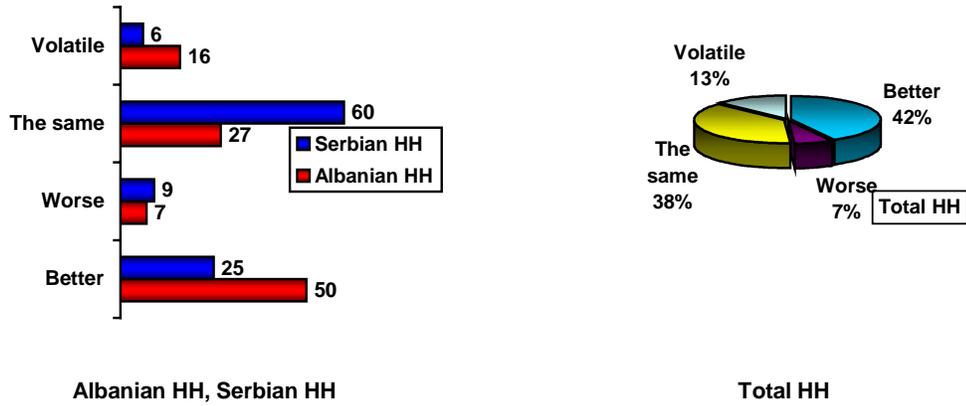
- Female respondent, Likovo, Macedonia.

“Shooting from firearms is constant, we all think that this should come to an end.”

When surveyed using questionnaires, 51% of Macedonian Albanian respondents

stated that the security situation in their region was better compared to one year ago, 41% thought that it had remained the same. Only 2% thought it had gotten worse. Concerns were more evident from Macedonian Albanians in the Likovo area however, as a number of quotes indicate.

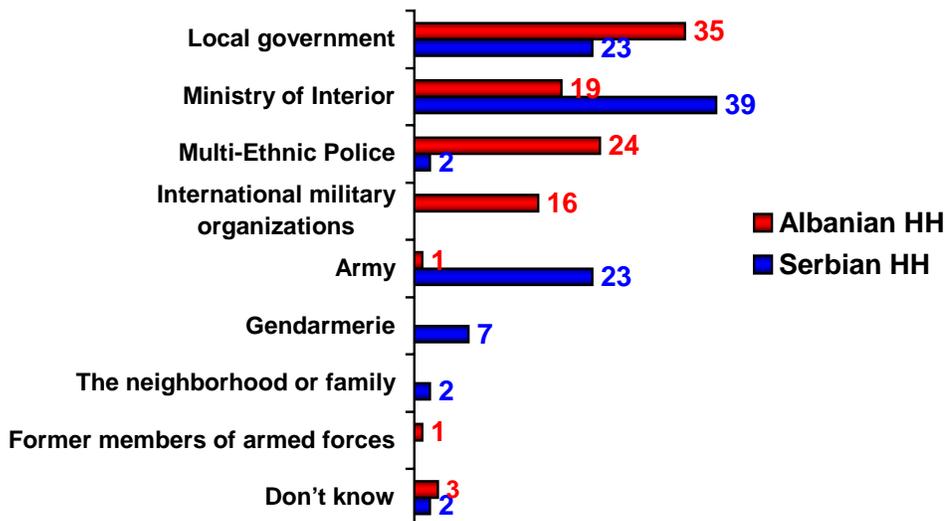
Figure 6: Compared to one year ago, is the security in this area better or worse?



3.1.5 Perceptions towards security providers

Although physical security was felt to have improved as a result of the MEP presence and to now be quite stable, attitudes on who should be responsible for security in the region differ significantly according to ethnicity. Ethnic Albanians put much more trust in the MEP and see them as a guarantor of security, while ethnic Serbs see the benefit of the MEP as calming Albanian fears.

Figure 7: Ideally, who do you think should be responsible for security? (single response)



The highest percentage of Serbian HH think that security forces under the control of the Republic of Serbia should be responsible for security in the region, (MUP police, 39%) army (23%), and Gendarmerie (7%). More surprisingly almost one quarter (23%) of Serbian HH think that local government should be responsible for security in the region. Not a single Serbian HH stated that international military organisations should be responsible for security in the region. In contrast Albanian HHs think that local government (35%), MEP, MUP (19%) and international military organisations (16%) should be responsible for security in the region. The highest percentage of Macedonian Albanians think that MEP (44%) should be responsible for security in the region, followed by international military organisations (17%), ministry of interior (17%), local government (8%), former members of armed forces (6%), and the army (4%).

“Security is complete because we have Multi-Ethnic Police. They watch over us all the time, night and day, patrols are moving around, and it is difficult for the criminal groups to undertake some actions as they did before, control is everywhere.”

– Female respondent, Bujanovac.

“Since the arrival of Multi-Ethnic Police the people can move more freely, the incidents that used to make the situation in the region so difficult are less common.”

– Male respondent, Presevo.

3.2 Perceived availability, distribution and possession of SALW

While discussions concerning human security proved relatively easy to conduct, questions relating directly to SALW posed greater problems for researchers. The topic was clearly felt to be a sensitive and contentious one, causing a higher rate of non-response, hesitancy and evasion overall. Particularly with questions relating to weapons possession, a trend emerges where respondents admit that firearms are present throughout South Serbia, but insist that it is always the ‘other’ ethnic group that possesses and hides them. For example, in focus groups Serb participants would often say that firearms are available even in flea markets and accuse Albanians of possessing high numbers of them. They tended to deny very strongly that Serbian families keep illegal firearms whether in a cache or at home, but were equally convinced that Albanians do, albeit hidden. Ethnic Albanian respondents were most likely to say that weapons were possessed only by the police, army, criminal groups and ex-combatants, but not by ordinary people any more, because security has improved. They generally said they would not know where to find a weapon.

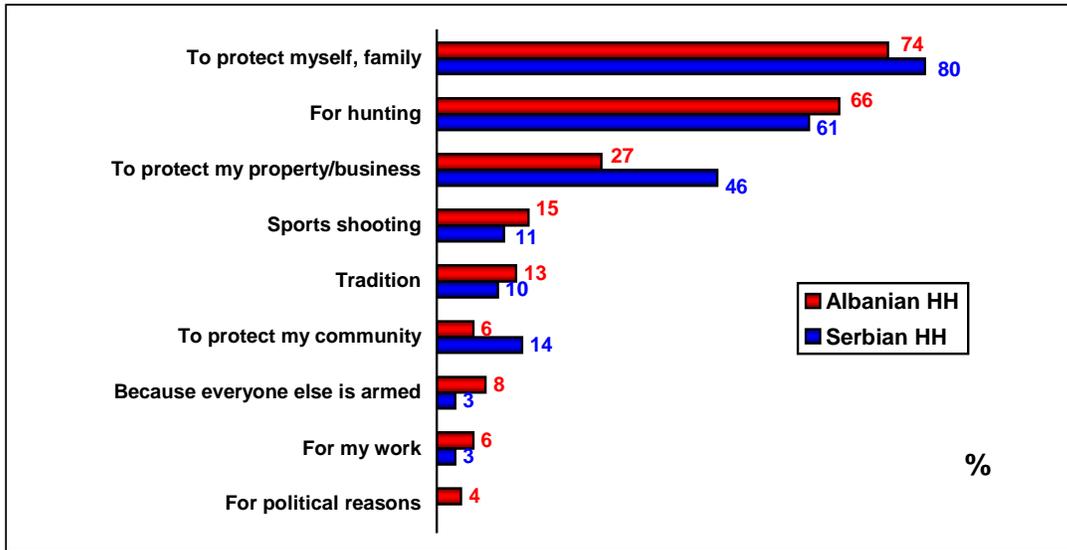
Photo 3

Contradictory responses such as these, point either to very skewed perceptions, or evasion. Nevertheless, the responses illustrate the controversy surrounding weapons possession in the area surveyed, and give important evidence of prevailing attitudes and perceptions. Despite sensitivities it is also clear from this section of the survey that weapons proliferation is not perceived as an imminent security threat. Overall the visibility of weapons is apparently reduced. SALW seem to be well concealed and not in evidence since their owners are afraid either of the security forces or of triggering inter-ethnic conflict.

3.2.1 Perceived levels of SALW possession

High levels of non-response were the norm when researchers enquired about both the average number of weapons possessed by households or the number of households that possess weapons, as figure 8 illustrates.

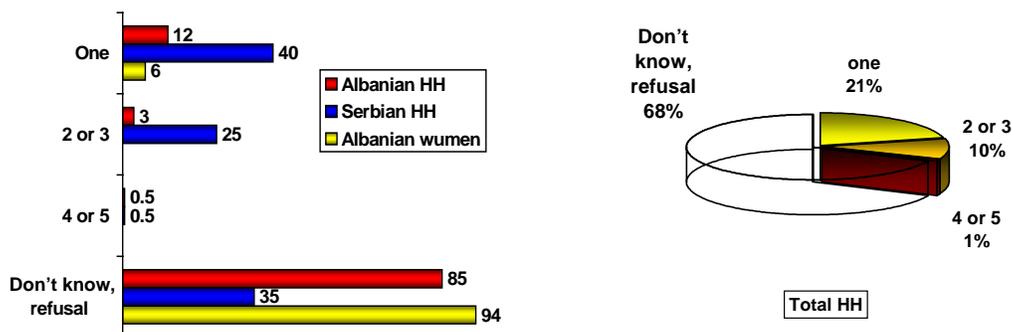
Figure 8: Why would your household choose to possess weapons, if they were legal?



“In my opinion people here, particularly the Albanians, have always lived in fear of weapons, and they would never agree to talk about that openly.”
– Female respondent, Bujanovac.

Respondents typically refused to make even rough estimates of the number of households that possess weapons. The reason usually cited in discussions was that since people don't openly discuss these matters, they are not well informed on the topic.

Figure 9: What is your personal assessment of the average number of weapons that people have in their households?



Albanian HH, Serbian HH

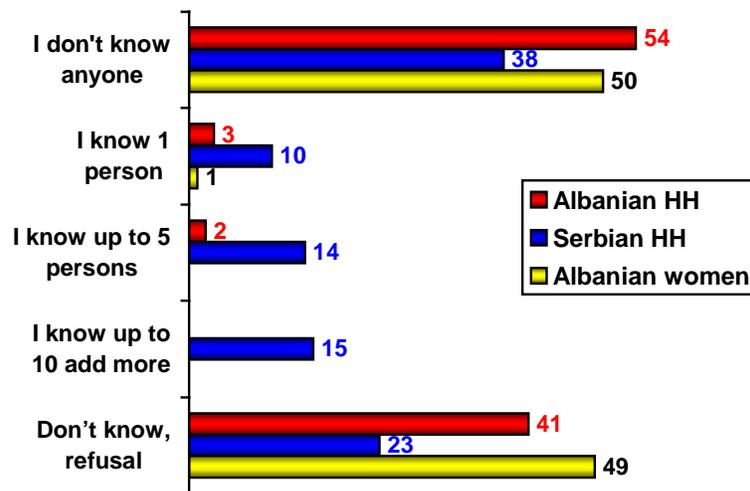
Total HH

Willingness to respond did however vary according to sex and ethnicity:

- ❑ 85% of Albanian HH versus 35% Serbian HH claimed not to be able to make an assessment.
- ❑ 40% of Serbian HH and 12% of Albanian HH asserted that the average number of weapons possessed in the households is one.
- ❑ 25% of Serbian HH and 3% of Albanian HH maintain that the average number of weapons in the households is two to three.
- ❑ Almost all (94%) Albanian women would not give an answer to this question, while just 6% asserted that an average of one weapon is kept by households. A majority of Macedonian Albanians (72%) did not answer this question. Of those who did, 20% thought that one weapon is possessed by households, and 9% that two to four weapons are the average.

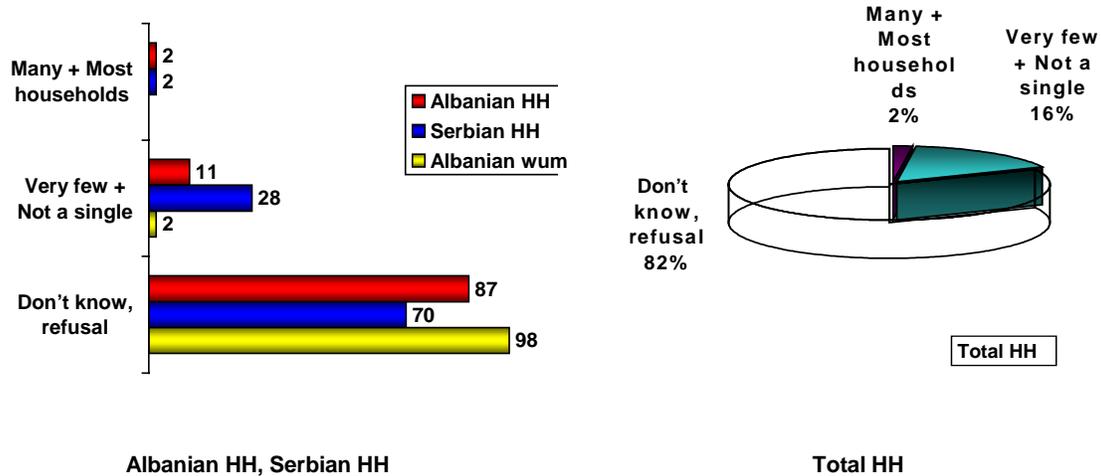
Participants in North Macedonia were more open than in South Serbia in stating their belief that households in Northern Macedonia do keep firearms for self protection. However, like other groups they tended to deny that they themselves possessed weapons. Participants were not willing to make any assessment of either the number or the type of illegal weapons that might be present in their region.

Figure 10: If it not a secret, if you know someone from you local area who has a gun? (single response).



The fact that very few respondents admitted to knowing someone who possessed a weapon is another measure of the sensitivities involved, with 'don't knows' and refusals being by far the norm.

Figure 11: Do you know how many households in your local area have unregistered firearms?

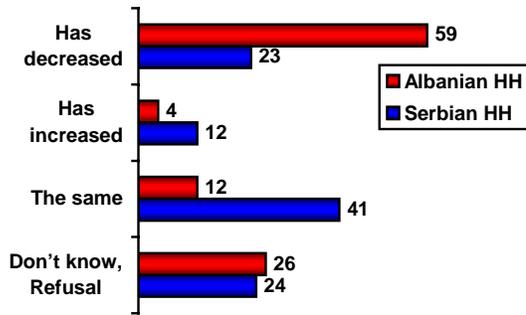


Extreme reluctance was also apparent when it came to estimating the number of households in the area with unregistered firearms.

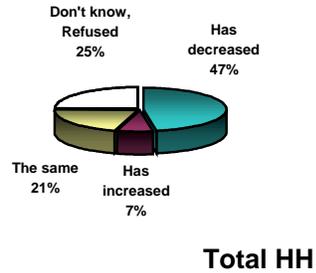
- 82% of SSHH (87% Albanian HH, 70% Serbian), and 98% of Albanian women did not offer an assessment.
- 11% of Albanian HH and 28% of Serbian HH maintained that unregistered firearms are possessed by very few households.
- Just 2% of Albanian HH and 2% of Serbian HH assert that unregistered firearms are held by most households.
- A majority of Macedonian Albanians (64%) did not answer this question, the other respondents claimed that unregistered firearms are present in most households (14%) or in very few households (23%).

When asked how the number of firearms in their neighbourhood has changed in the last three years, almost one half (48%) of South Serbian HH stated that the number had decreased. Considerably more Albanian HHs (59%) than Serbian HHs (23%) supported this view. Only 7% of all HH thought the numbers had increased, while 21% saw the numbers as constant. Almost one quarter (23% of Albanian HH and 23% of Serbian HH) of respondents could not, or would not answer this question. More than one half (54%) of Albanian women did not answer the question. Attitudes of Macedonian Albanians were split on this question: 24% thought that the number had decreased, 23% that it had remained unchanged, 23% that it had increased, with 29% not responding.

Figure 12: How do you think that the number of firearms in your neighbourhood has changed in the last three years? Has it decreased, increased or remained the same?



Albanian HH, Serbian HH



Total HH

Total HH

3.2.2 Attitudes towards possession

Respondents believe that people in the region do possess weapons, since shootings can be heard and weapons observed at least from time to time. Albanians from the South of Serbia assert that there is less shooting than before, in contrast to Albanians from Northern Macedonia who claim that shooting is persistent.

Whether in focus groups or in responding to questionnaires, ethnic Serbs were extremely reluctant to support the idea that any Serbian family keeps illegal weapons. At the start of focus group discussions most ethnic Serb respondents were loath to admit that even legal firearms were held by Serb households, but by the end of some groups a few would admit to having a gun at home. In discussions the three main reasons for Serbian households *not* to possess any illegal firearms were said to be:

“Why would Serbian keep firearms for self-defense? Self-defense from whom? There were a few raids by the Gendarmerie or Multi-Ethnic Police in Kosovska street and they found nothing in Serbian houses. Serbs keep only what is allowed. But almost every Albanian house has a member who is working abroad and who sends them money. That’s why I believe that each [Albanian] house has arms.”

– Female Serb focus group participant, Bujanovac.

- ❑ They don’t expect that it will help them on any occasion.
- ❑ They don’t have the money to buy guns.
- ❑ If some Serb families did have some, they returned them during the April-May 2003 weapons amnesty.

On the contrary, according to ethnic Serbs, ethnic Albanians do possess firearms, because:

- ❑ They have enough money to buy them.
- ❑ Albanian paramilitary organisations supply them.
- ❑ They did not return the firearms during spring 2003 weapons amnesty.

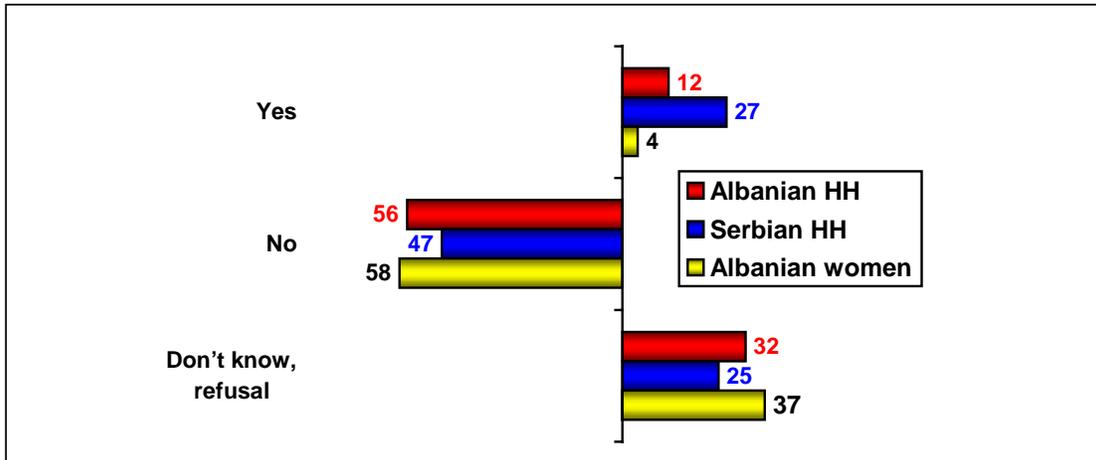
Ironically, a number of ethnic Serb males independently remarked during discussions that ethnic Albanians had been in attendance, they too would have denied possessing weapons and would instead have accused the Serb community of hoarding them.

“If you had such a discussion with the Albanians they would say that they don’t have weapons, and that the Serbs do. But, the truth is on our side. If Serbs have weapons they are small calibre pistols, for which they have a permit. Anyway, Albanians don’t keep weapons at home, their weapons are well hidden.”

- Male Serb Focus Group participant, Bujanovac.

Most of the respondents maintained that there are not too many firearms in society. 56% of Albanian HH, 47% of Serbian HH and 58% of Albanian women shared this attitude. 12% of Albanian HH, 27% of Serbian HH and just 4% of Albanian women thought that there are too many weapons. A majority of Macedonian Albanians think that there are not too many weapons in their neighbourhood (43%), in contrast to 23% who assert that there are.

Figure 13: Do you think there are too many guns in society?

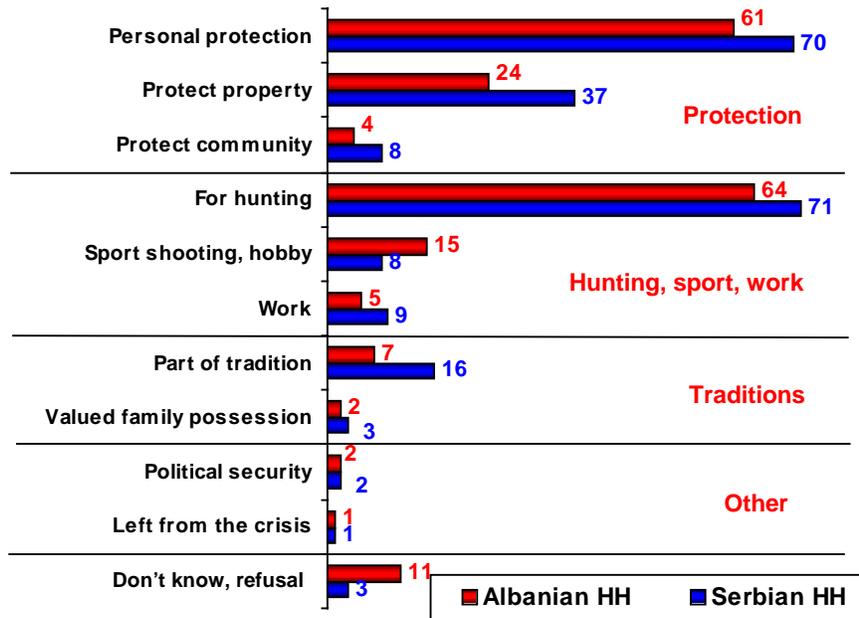


3.2.3 Reasons for possession

Assumed reasons for weapons possession did not vary significantly by ethnicity. The predominant attitude was that firearms are needed for security reasons (especially self-protection), hunting/sport and tradition:

- ❑ Self-protection: 61% of Serbian HH and 70% of Albanian HH.
- ❑ To protect property: 37% of Serbian HH and 24% of Albanian HH.
- ❑ To protect the community: 8% of Serbian HH and 4% of Albanian HH.
- ❑ For hunting: 71% of Serbian HH and 64% of Albanian HH.
- ❑ For sport, hobby: 8% of Serbian HH and 15% of Albanian HH.
- ❑ For work: 9% of Serbian HH and 5% of Albanian HH.
- ❑ Most female Albanian respondents would not, or could not answer the question (41%).
- ❑ Only 16% of Serbian and 7% of Albanian HH opted for the 'tradition' option.

Figure 14: Why do people keep firearms? (multiple response).

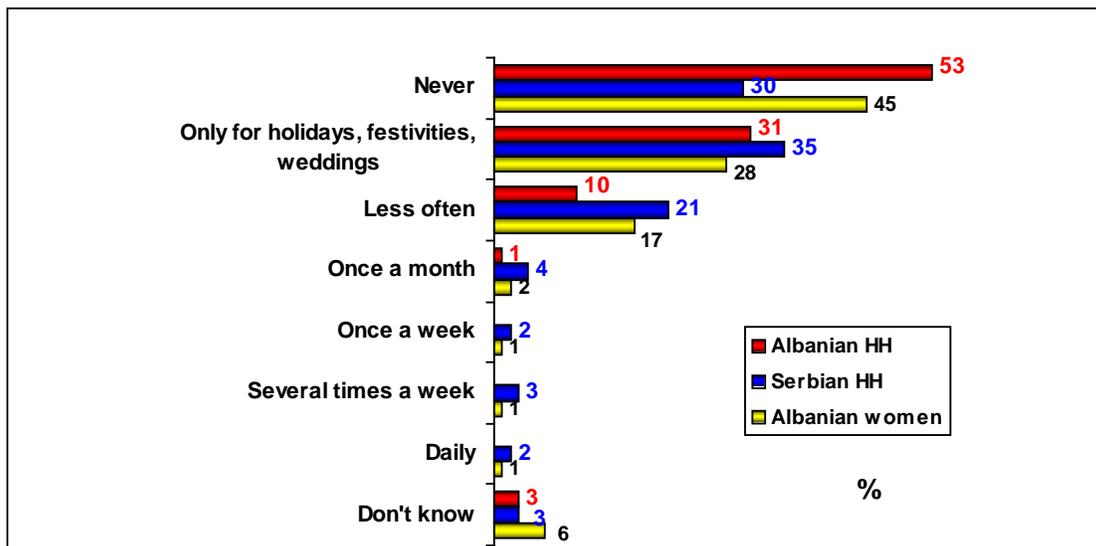


The majority of Macedonian Albanians maintain that firearms are needed for personal protection (62%), protection of property (39%) protection of community (9%), hunting (20%). 15% of Macedonian Albanians say that weapons are held because they are left over from the recent period of crisis – far higher than among respondents in South Serbia.

“Some people keep weapons because of the feeling of security. I also know people whose hobby is hunting, and that’s why they have weapons.”
 – Female respondent, Bujanovac.
“As long as there are rumours that there will be war, people will keep weapons.”

3.2.4 Perceptions regarding SALW visibility and use

Figure 15: Apart from security forces, how often do you hear firearms in your neighbourhood? (single response).



During the questionnaire, and in interviews and focus groups, respondents were asked how often they see and hear weapons (excluding security forces). The typical response in both cases points to a comparatively low level of visibility and of gunfire. The most commonly cited occasions for gunfire to be heard were holidays, festivities and weddings (Albanian HH 31%, Serbian HH 35%). At the same time however 11% of Serbian HH state that they hear shooting in the area (apart for security forces), either several times a month, several times a week, or daily. Only 1% of ethnic Albanian respondents chose these options. A majority of Macedonian Albanians hear shooting only at weddings and during festivities (64%), or they never hear it (12%) or they hear it very rarely (17%). It is worth noting that although in other parts of the survey the respondents were liable to say they did not perceive weapons as a threat, in discussions those who discussed hearing or seeing gunfire often expressed feelings of fear, or at least discomfort.

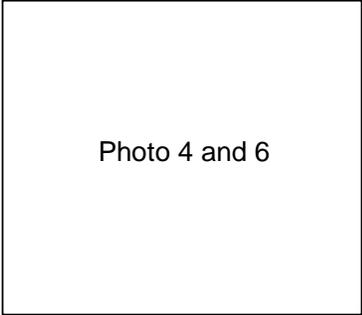
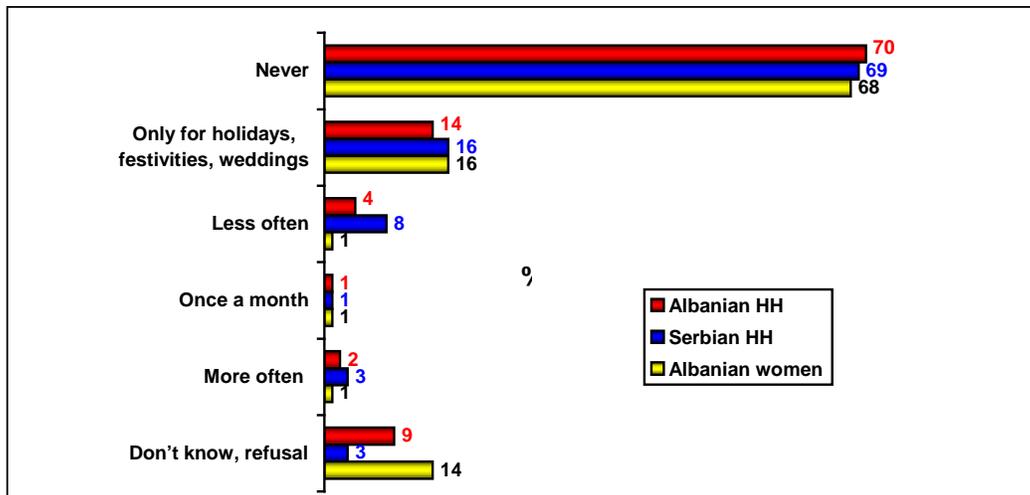


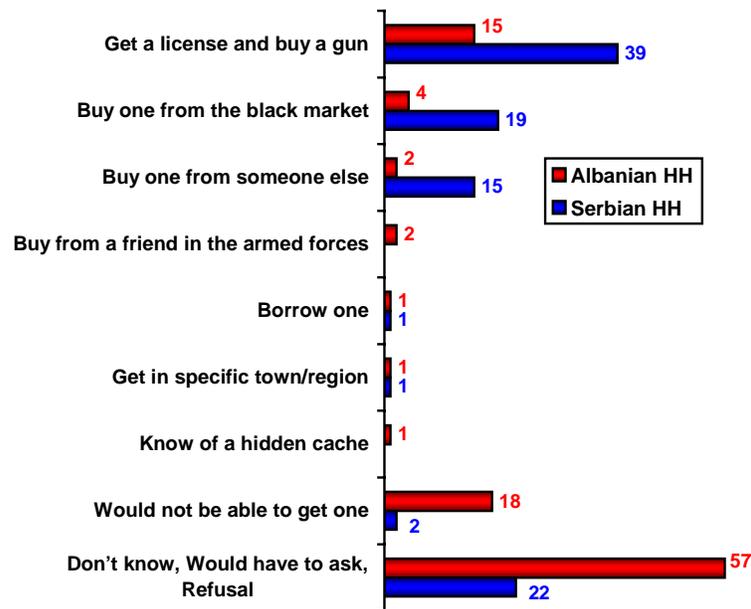
Figure 16: Apart from security forces, how often do you see firearms in your neighbourhood? (single response).



3.2.5 Perceived availability of SALW

To the question “If a person from your neighbourhood needed a weapon, where could he get one?”, 57% of Albanian HH answered that they do not know, would have to ask, or they refused to answer (57%). Together with the 18% stating that weapons cannot be found this demonstrates a high degree either of ignorance, or evasiveness about the subject. Since far fewer Serbs chose these options (22% of HH), the level of evasion can be assumed to be high.

Figure 17: If a person from your neighbourhood, for whatever reason, needed a weapon, where do you think he could get one? (single response).

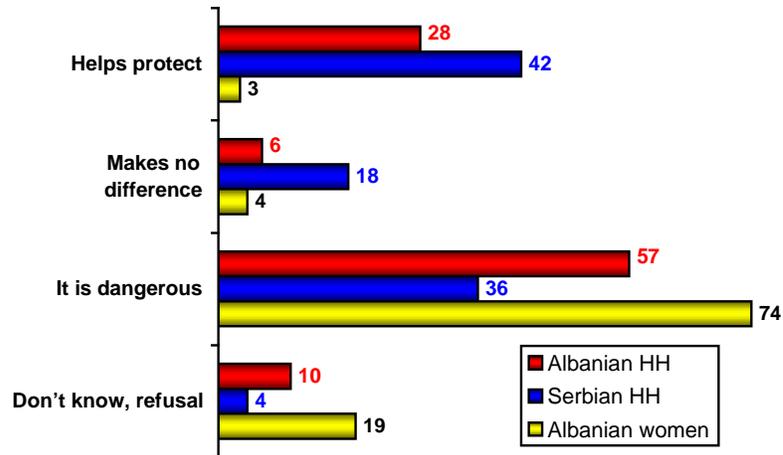


A significant minority of respondents of both ethnicity indicate that weapons are available from various sources, though they indicated different sources. Overall ethnic Serbs seem happier to provide information on this topic. 39% of them state that a weapon can be found if one gets a license, 19% that weapons can be bought on the black market, and 15% that you can buy from someone else (15%). Just 2% of Serbian HH assert that it is not possible to get a weapon. This pattern was repeated during focus groups and interviews, with the topic of hidden caches proving the most sensitive.

3.2.6 Perceived impact of SALW

Overall the perceived impact of SALW among respondents was negative. Responses were however very mixed as a question concerning weapons and household safety shows (see figure 18).

Figure 18: Many people feel that having a gun helps to protect their families, Other people believe that having guns is dangerous to their families. Which opinion do you agree with?

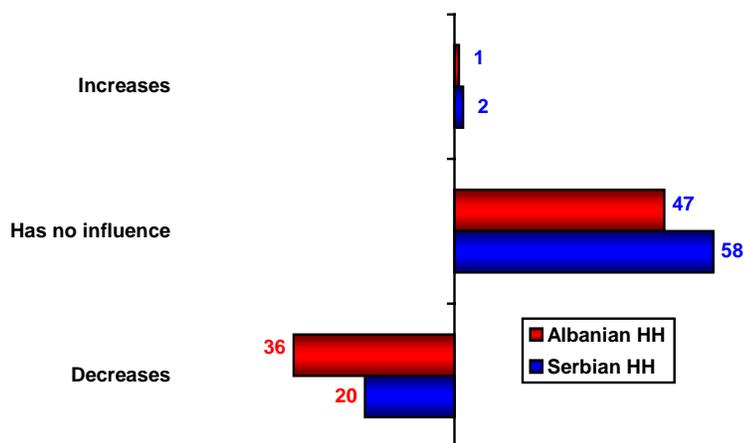


Some interesting differences can also be observed in the responses:

- Albanian HH were more likely assert that the possession of firearms is dangerous for the household (57%) than to assert that they contribute towards household security (28%).
- Attitudes of the Serbian HH differ significantly, with more Serbian HH believing that the possession of firearms contributes to household security (42%) than considering them a danger (36%).
- A large majority of Albanian women consider firearms in the household dangerous (74%), and just 3% think that weapons contribute to security.
- A majority of Macedonian Albanians questioned think that firearms in the household are dangerous (68%), against 25% who think that they contribute to safety.

Respondents do not immediately link weapons availability with poor quality of life and underdevelopment. In fact the widespread attitude is that possession of weapons does not have a significant impact on economic development and living standards in the region (47% Albanian HH, 58% Serbian HH, 54% Albanian women, 60% Macedonian Albanians).

Figure 19: The presence of guns has what overall impact on economic development?



When prompted to specify the impact that firearms possession has on different aspects of community life however, interviewees opt overwhelmingly for negative responses in each area. The linkage made by ethnic Serbs between with the state of local infrastructure and weapons possession probably reflects their general concern with this issue, something that emerged quite clearly in discussions about everyday living conditions and human security. Similarly, the linkage ethnic Albanians tended to make with education reflects long-run problems attaining full inclusion in the schooling system.

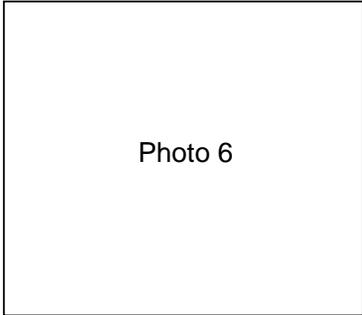
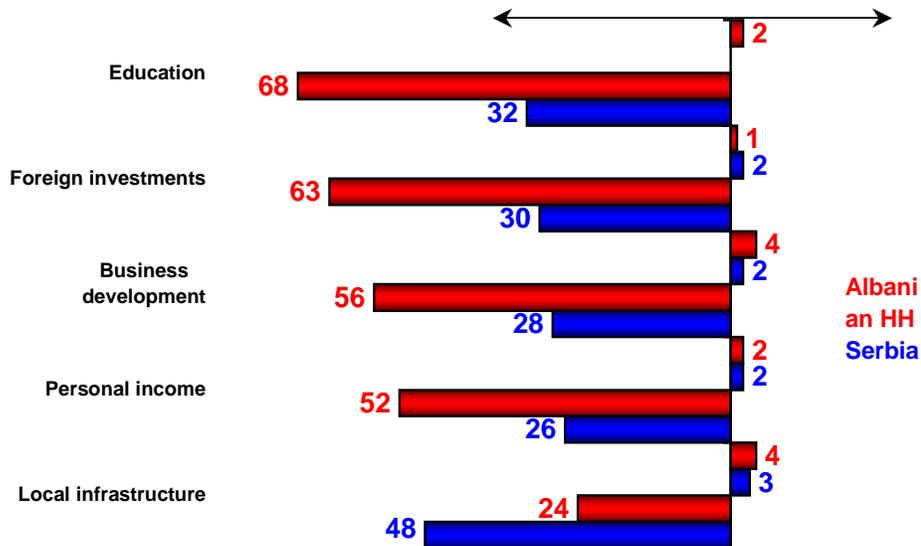


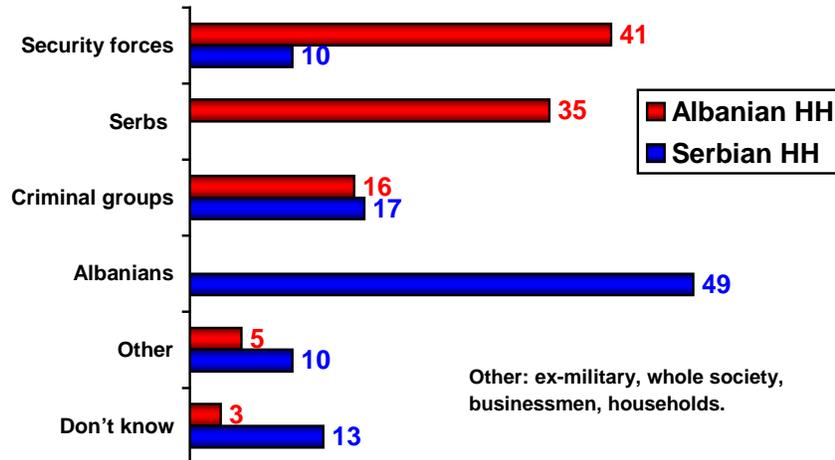
Figure 20: What is the impact of firearms possession on ...? (multiple response).



3.3 Perceptions regarding SALW distribution

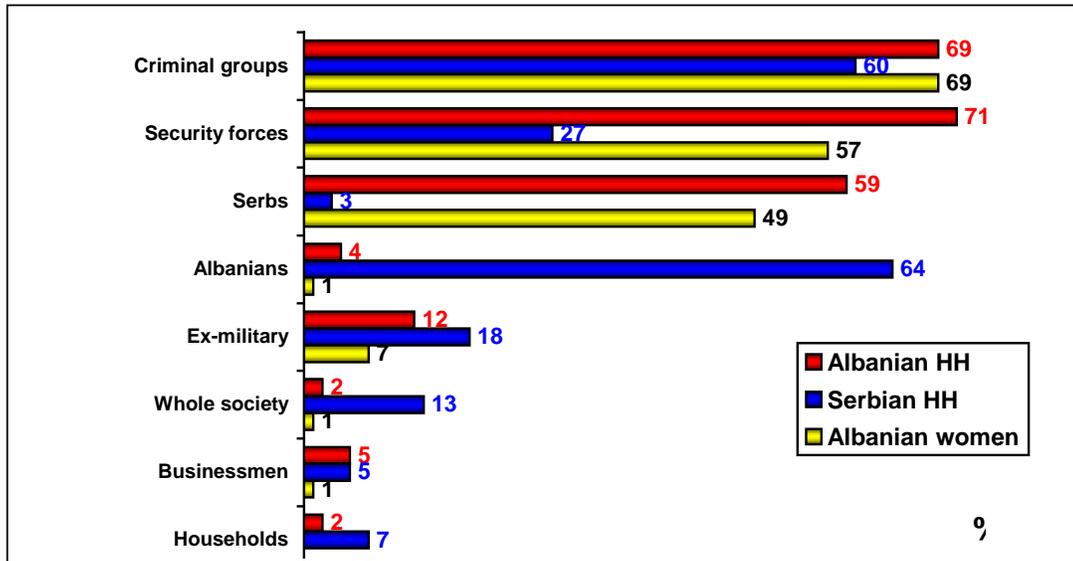
In some respects questions concerning the distribution of weapons in society clearly drew out inter-ethnic differences and tensions. In prompted and unprompted versions of this question, both major ethnic groups were quick to accuse the other (though for ethnic Albanian respondents unlike Serbs, the other ethnic group is not the favourite response). This reflects ethnic Albanian concerns about security forces (see also below). Some level of consensus does exist, though with a sizeable minority of both ethnicities agreeing that criminal groups (16%) have the most weapons.

Figure 21: Which segments of society possess the most firearms? (single response).



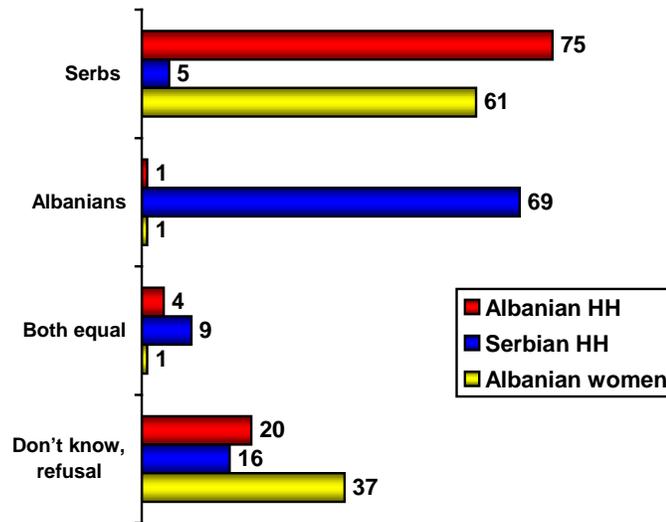
By reframing the question a slightly more nuanced set of responses were obtained (see figure 22).

Figure 22: In which parts of society do you think there are too many guns? (multiple response).



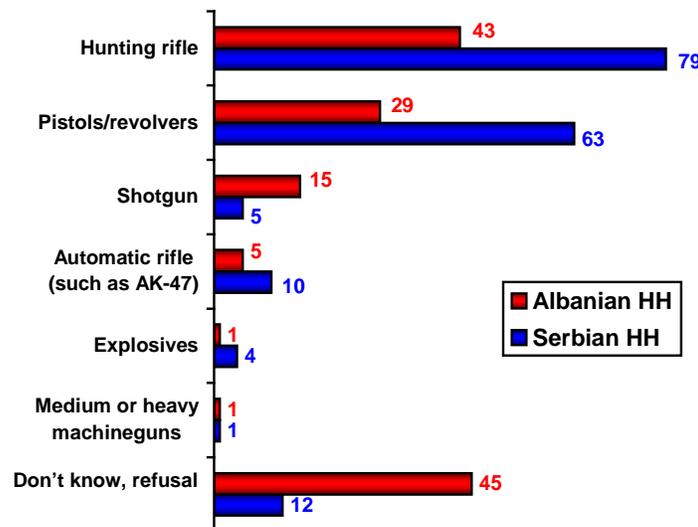
When given a two-way response option and asked to state whether ethnic Serbs or Albanians have the most weapons in the region, most responded in the predictable way. On this occasion even Albanian women (generally unwilling to answer questions directly related to weapons) were comfortable enough to provide an answer. Some 5% of Serbs named their own ethnic group as having more weapons.

Figure 23: Who, in your opinion, has more firearms in your region, Serbs or Albanians?



While it proved extremely difficult to obtain information about the perceived number of weapons circulating in South Serbia during this survey, information about the prevalent weapon types was easier to gather. By far the most commonly identified firearms in the area are hunting rifles (Albanian HH 43%, Serbian HH 79%), with pistols/revolvers coming a close second (Albanian HH 29%, Serbian HH 63%). Military-style weaponry is known from police seizures to be available in the area, and those respondents who identified these weapon types are confirming their availability.

Figure 24: On average, what types/makes do you think are the most common in your community? (multiple response).



3.4 Perceptions towards SALW control options

Questioning in this portion of the survey gave respondents the chance to assess the likely success of several different types of micro-disarmament programme. The options presented to them included 1) Weapons in Exchange for Development (WED) schemes; 2) Weapons in Exchange for Incentives schemes (WEI) – in which developmental incentives are delivered using a lottery mechanism; and 3) Weapons in Competition for Development (WCD) – in which communities compete to win development awards. Respondents were also asked to assess the overall likelihood of weapons collection schemes succeeding, regardless of their design, and to predict the effect of greater enforcement.

Once again, ethnic, gender and geographic differences were apparent among respondents, but there was general agreement that a long-run improvement to the security situation would be the single biggest factor in encouraging reduced levels of weapons possession. For ethnic Albanians this tended to mean ‘re-deployment of security forces’. Yet ethnic Albanians were moderately positive about the prospects for collection efforts and particularly interested in the idea that development projects might be used as incentives. They would place most trust in international organisations to implement any scheme.

In contrast ethnic Serbs were more pessimistic. They commonly believed that ethnic Albanians would surrender negligible numbers of weapons, and stuck to the idea that since Serbian HH do not have illegal firearms to hand-in, they would not be able to participate. The view that donors and international agencies tend to favour Albanians also re-emerges (i.e. any scheme that offers incentives for surrender will just be another way for Albanians to benefit disproportionately). Although the Ministry of Interior (MUP) was named as the favourite institution to run any such schemes by Serbs, levels of confidence in all institutions appear to be extremely low. Macedonian Albanians share the pessimism of ethnic Serbs in South Serbia, the majority position being that Macedonians should hand in their firearms first.

An ethnic split is also apparent when one turns to the question of tighter controls over SALW, with more than one half of Serbian HH (52%), in favour, and a majority of Albanian HH (62%) against. The association of ‘control’ with enforcement by security forces certainly means that answers to this question are closely related to views of security providers (see below).

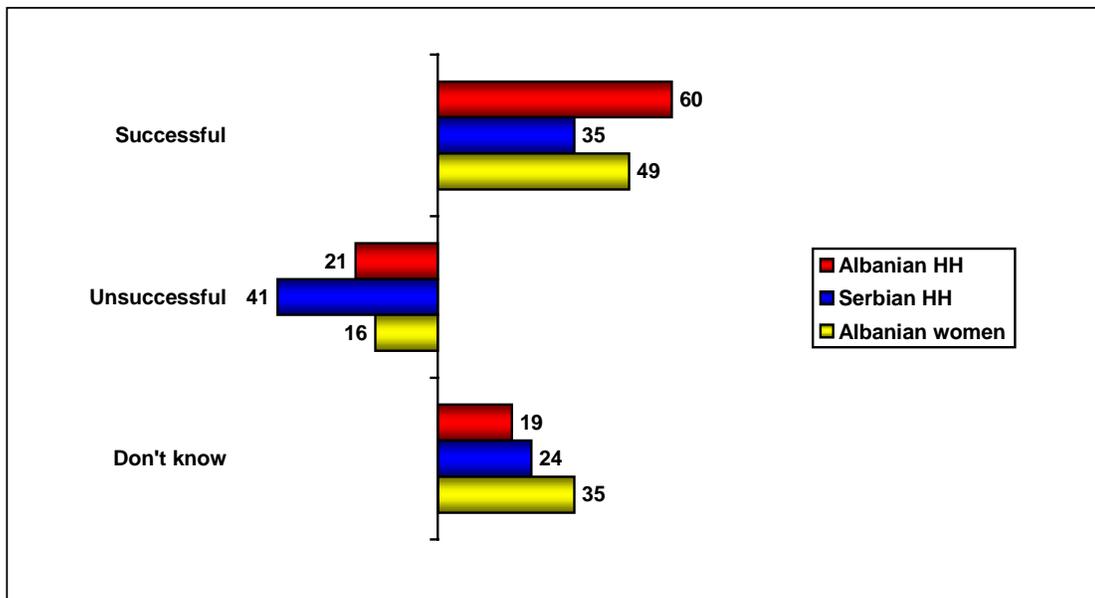
Figure 25: Do you think that improving the control of firearms in South Serbia would increase security?



Attitudes towards the desirability of licensing also vary. When asked how much they think licensing for legal firearms possession would increase security, 39% of Serbian HH say it would increase security, 38% that it would not change anything, and only 7% that it would make things worse. In contrast a lower number of Albanian HH are positive about such a measure, 29% say it would not change anything, and almost a third think it would make the situation worse (31%). Albanian women are the most concerned of all that licensing for legal firearms possession would make the security situation in the region worse (46%).

As noted above, Albanian HH (60%) are much more positive than Serbian HH (21%) about the overall prospects for a successful weapons collection effort. 41% of Serbian HH believe a collection effort would not succeed. Among this group, disbelief is more pronounced among younger (48%), more educated (57%), better off (55%) and urban respondents (53%). When asked what type of weapons would most likely be retained after a collection effort, most say hunting rifles (Albanian HH, 57%, Serbian HH, 56%), many say pistols/revolvers (Albanian HH, 32%, Serbian HH, 56%), and some say shotguns (Albanian HH, 23%, Serbian HH, 3%), and automatic rifles (Albanian HH, 4%, Serbian HH – 15%).

Figure 26: “There is announcement for collection of illegal weapons. In your personal opinion, overall that action will be..”



Taking all HH together, no clear picture emerges across the South Serbian sample area of the conditions which should be satisfied in order to motivate people to hand in their illegal weapons voluntarily. Vague responses were the most common, including ‘Don’t know’ (Albanian HH 17%, Serbian HH 34%), ‘There are no illegal weapons’ (Albanian HH 9%, Serbian HH 6%), ‘This would be difficult, not likely’ (Albanian HH 1%, Serbian HH 16%), and ‘with no conditions/only if asked to do so’ (Albanian HH 13%, Serbian HH 5%).

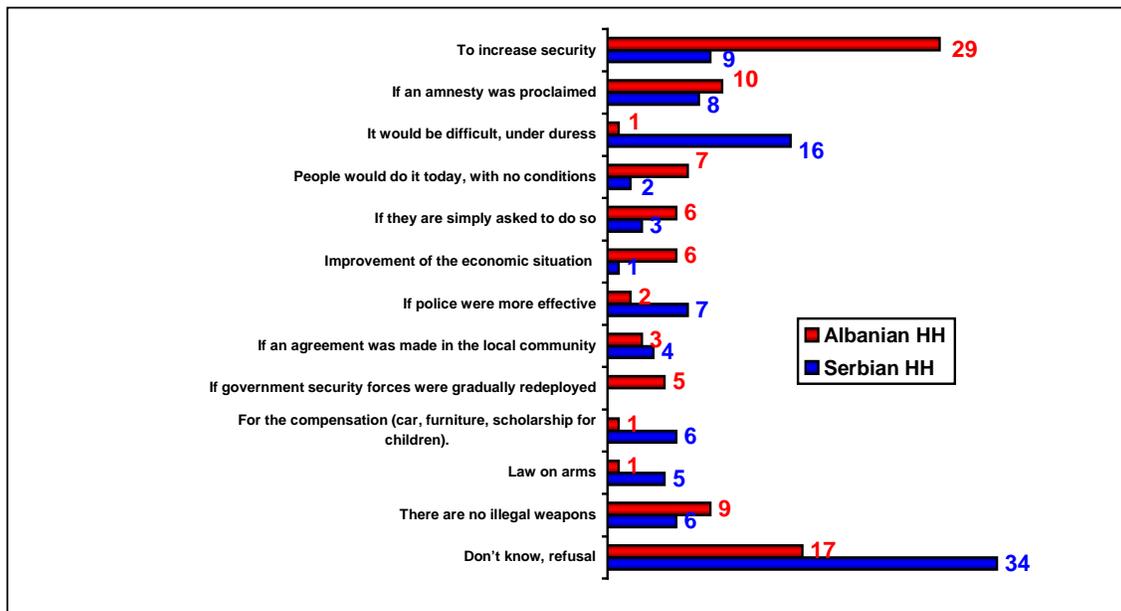
Concrete answers obtained from Albanian HH, commonly related to:

- Increased security in the area (29%), amnesty (10%), improved economic situation (6%), withdrawal of security forces (5%), participation of NATO/KFOR (4%), agreement within local community (3%).

Concrete answers obtained from Serbian HH, commonly refer to:

- Increased security in the region (9%), amnesty (8%), increased efficiency of police (7%), prizes/material rewards (6%), a law on surrendering arms (5%), an agreement within the local community (4%).

Figure 27: Under what conditions, if any do you think people in your community would be willing to hand in their illegal weapons and ammunition? (multiple response).



Respondents were then asked to assess the likelihood of several different modes of weapons collection (WED, WCD, WEI) succeeding. Some of these questions are difficult to pose in a questionnaire, and focus groups and interviews helped to clarify responses.

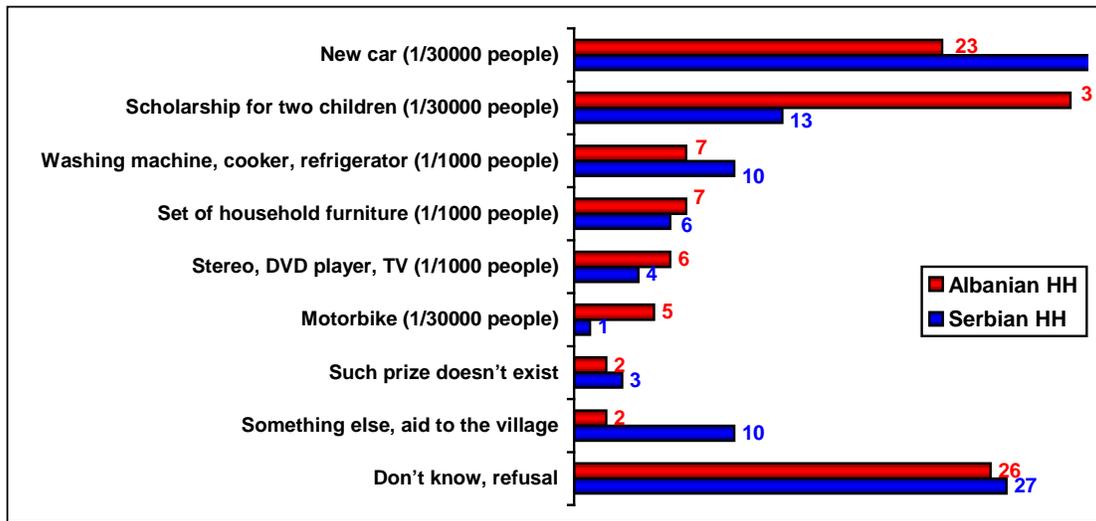
Initial reactions to the WEI concept were often astonishment or amusement.⁷ Nevertheless, an analysis of the answers obtained gives an impression that after the concept was fully explained, the population of South Serbia thought it moderately plausible. However, the proviso that better security would be required was often added in focus group discussions. Among ethnic Albanian respondents it was thought that scholarships would prove the most effective prize in any lottery, reflecting once again the concerns of Albanians with education. Most ethnic Serb respondents opted for a new car. Perhaps unsurprisingly the idea of monetary rewards was often brought up in discussions.

“I think that it would be better to give more prizes, because more people get a prize, if only one person can win, people think that they don't have a chance to be a winner.”
 – Female respondent, Bujanovac.

“Money would be the best, because I think that money solves all problems.”
 – Female respondent, Bujanovac.

⁷ The survey was conducted prior to the successful use of a WEI scheme in Macedonia from September to October 2003. The only previous case known to the author was in Brcko, Bosnia and Herzegovina in early 2003, and the scheme was not well publicised outside Bosnia.

Figure 28: If a lottery were to be held in your municipality in which only those surrendering illegal weapons were allowed to participate...?



When asked how likely it is that members of their own ethnic group will hand in weapons for developmental projects in the municipality, the pattern of low confidence in the other ethnic group's willingness to disarm continues. Only 21% of Serbian HH thought it 'very likely' that ethnic Serbs would disarm. 50% of Albanian HH thought that ethnic Albanians were very likely to do so.

Figure 29: How likely do you think it is that Serbs will hand in their weapons, if they have any, in exchange for community development projects in your municipality?

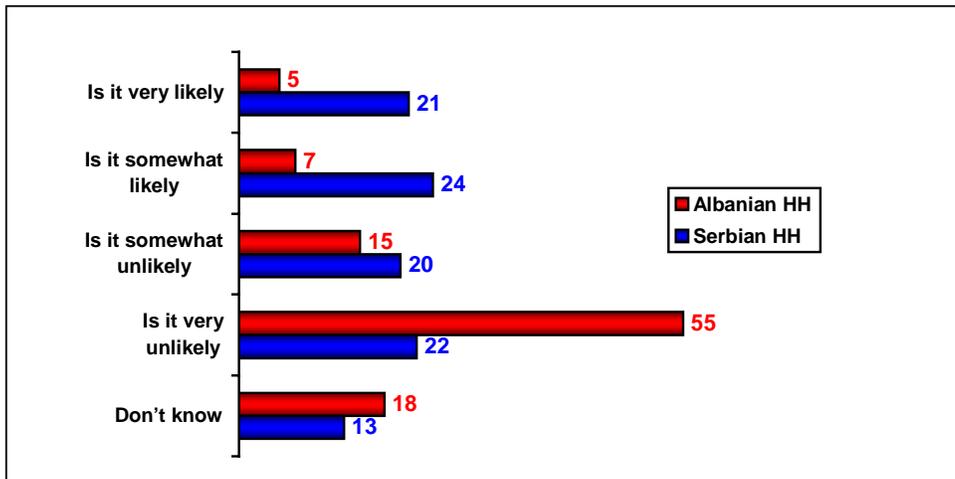
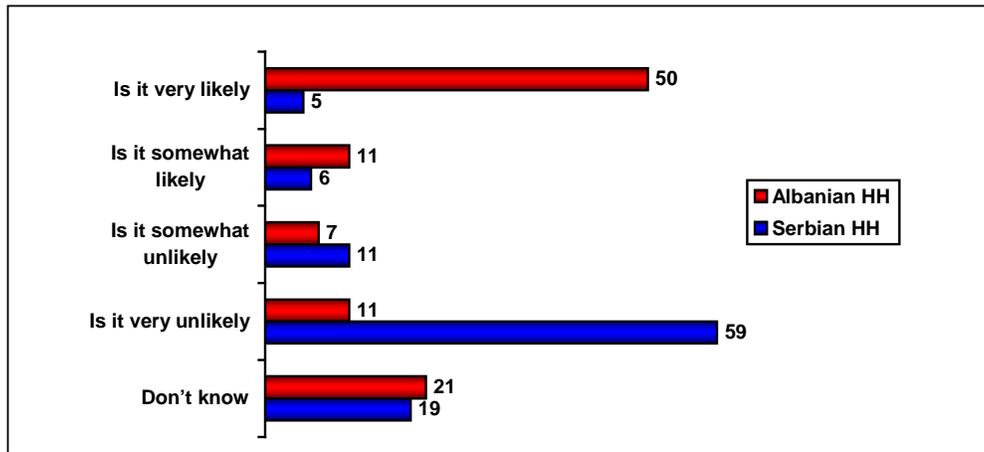


Figure 30: How likely do you think it is that Albanians will hand in their weapons, if they have any, in exchange for community development projects in your municipality?



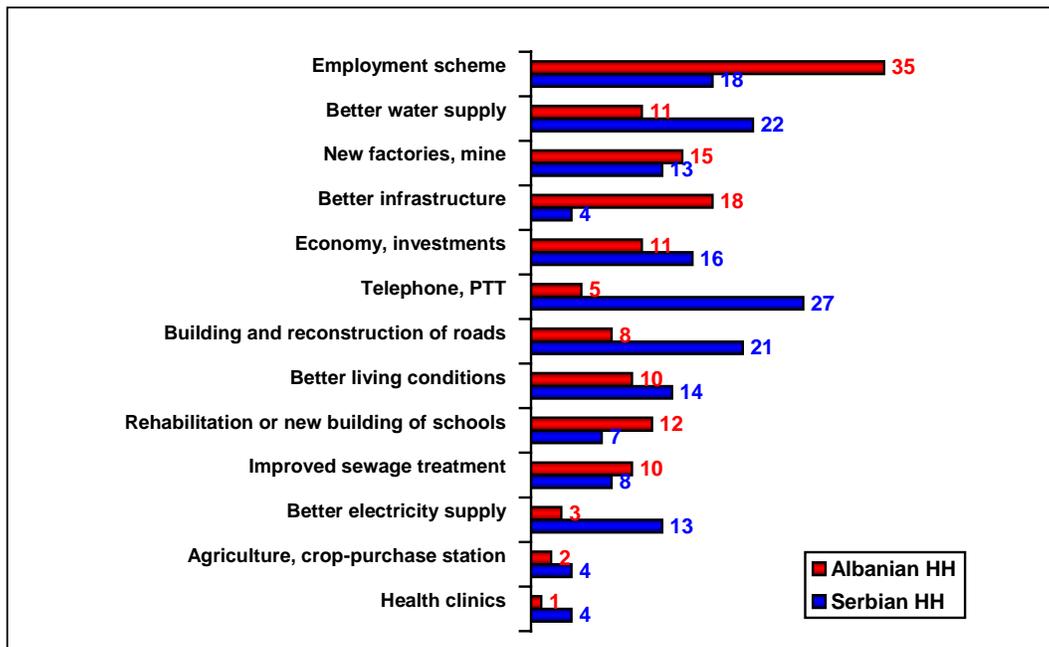
Developmental schemes (WED) did seem to be preferred to a lottery (WEI) by a majority of focus group respondents, (the assumption being that if such a scheme were implemented, their municipality would indeed receive a project award).

Infrastructure-related projects were rated as desirable by all respondents, with education as usual being identified as a priority by ethnic Albanians. During discussions there seemed to be some agreement that if any such projects were to be delivered, international organisations would be the most trusted to deliver them.

“A development project is a better stimulation. If a factory were opened, people would get jobs, everyone would care about a job and family, and no one would have time for firearms.”
Female respondent, Bujanovac.

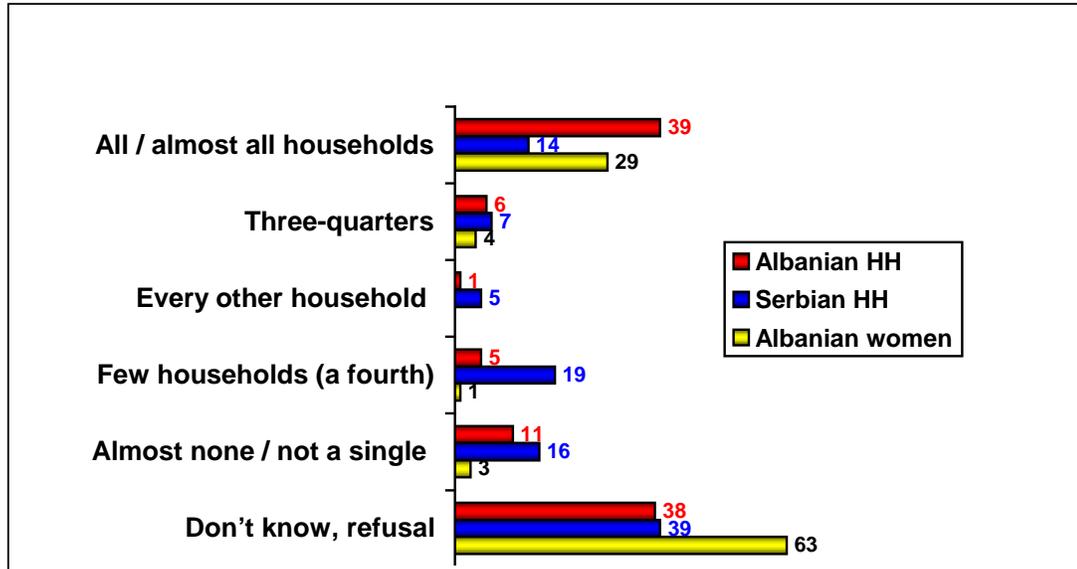
“These people need jobs, and solving this problem would solve everything else, people would be willing to participate in such a project.”
– Male respondent, Orahovica.

Figure 31: What type of municipal improvements are most needed by people in your neighbourhood? (multiple response).



When respondents were asked to assess the likelihood of households participating in a WCD-style project, the responses were as follows:

Figure 32: If your community was given the chance to compete with neighbouring communities to win funding for this projecthow many households holding weapons would surrender them?



“As far as the Serbs are concerned, even if they had such an opportunity they would have nothing to return. What can I return if I don't have weapons? As far as the Albanians are concerned, they have nothing to lose. Their streets, every peripheral little street, every corner is asphalted over and they have water supply, and sewerage systems.”

“If some action were taken here, even in form of a collection, they [Albanians] would transfer the weapons to Kosovo or Macedonia. Finally, even if someone confiscates their weapons this is no problem for them. You can buy weapons everywhere, even in the flea market.”

“The Albanians cannot live without weapons. They won't return their weapons for sure. And I can't return something which I don't have.”

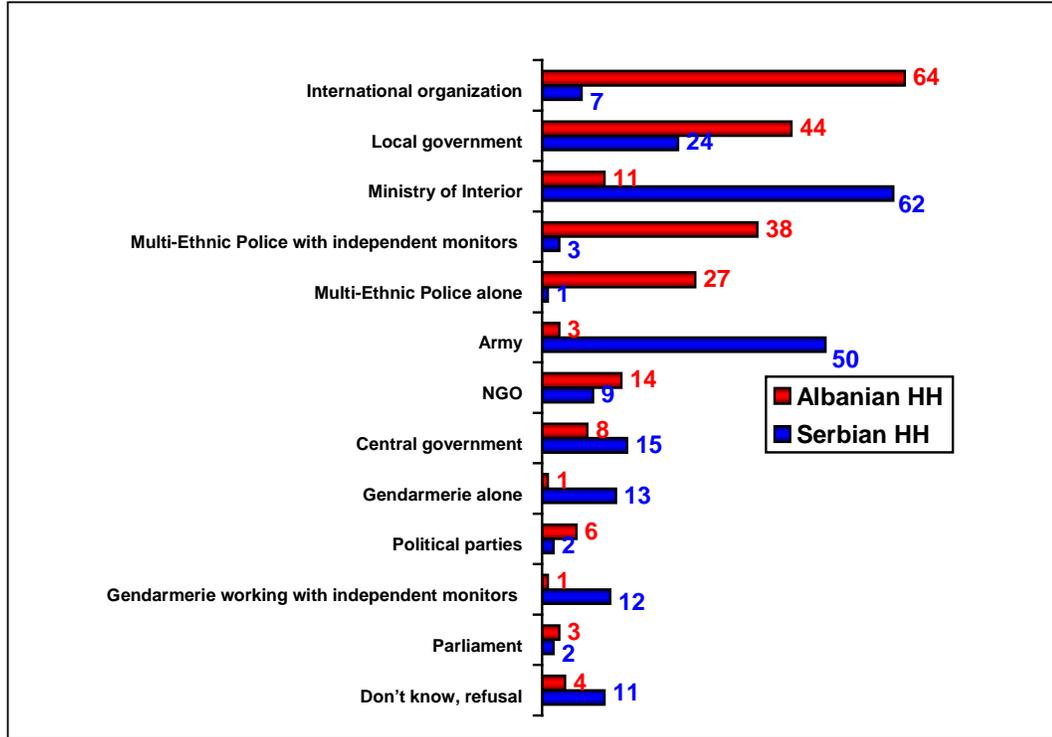
– Serb focus group participants, Bujanovac.

However, it proved impossible to identify implementing organisations that would have the support of both Serbs and ethnic Albanians. When given prompted answers ethnic Albanians overwhelmingly choose international organisations. But among ethnic Serbs there are hardly either individuals or organisations they have confidence in. The MEP option attracted no Serbian respondents. The trust in international organisations and NGOs is also remarkably low, Serbs feeling that they support ethnic Albanians.

“During the past three years since UN forces have been here, all NGOs, all programmes were implemented through local authorities, by their people. Everything was done to improve the conditions of Albanians, at the expense of the Serbian population. This proposal that you have just mentioned [weapons in exchange for development awards] would only mean more of the same for the Serbian population.” – Serb focus group participant.

Serbs see favouritism on the part of the 'international community' and think donors and international agencies invest more in ethnic Albanian areas. Therefore if an organised collection of firearms were to begin, the most acceptable organisations to carry out the action would be as follows:

Figure 33: Which organisations would people most trust to collect the weapons? (prompted, multiple response).



4 Conclusions

By providing programme planners with qualitative and quantitative data on community perceptions, SALW Perception Surveys maximise the chances of effective SALW control intervention planning. In this particular case, the survey results clearly demonstrated the difficulties of running SALW control intervention projects of whatever type in the municipalities in question. Though the pattern among respondents was by no means universal, with regard to SALW collection in particular, the level of support was too low to warrant the sizeable investment required. On the one hand respondents typically did not see SALW proliferation as an immediate threat to their security, and were more interested in programmes whose main outcome would be improved living standards or employment opportunities.

While SALW control intervention programmes can indeed be linked with incentive schemes that promise these types of improvement, a number of other conditions must exist for the linkage between development rewards and weapons collection to prove worthwhile. In this case two of the key conditions mentioned in the introduction to this report also appear not to have been met. Despite a widespread perception that levels of security have improved in the two years following the 2001 crisis, much clearly remains to be done. Levels of trust in the security forces remain low. The need for improved security (of various types) was a constant theme among survey respondents, but there was a wide divergence of views between ethnic Serbs and Albanians with regard to which agencies should provide that security. Trust in the other agencies that would be required to implement any weapons collection scheme was also lacking, leaving it unclear how best to physically collect weapons. Lastly, levels of inter-ethnic mistrust remain high, making SALW collection an issue as likely to divide the citizens of South Serbia as unite them in a single effort to surrender weapons. At least some shared ownership of the problem between the two major ethnic groups would need to exist, otherwise SALW collection may prove divisive. Comments from focus group participants and interviewees indicated that previous amnesties had indeed proved divisive.

While none of the above negative conditions are insurmountable, their combination poses real challenges for programme planners. Recent programmes in Kosovo and Macedonia have shown the risks and potential benefits of SALW control intervention programmes, and underlined the importance of SALW Surveys such as this one in designing programmes. SALW control remains a priority for Serbia, and UNDP Serbia and Montenegro and SEESAC continue to monitor the situation, and to consult with the main stakeholders within the Republic about possible courses of action.⁸ At the time of writing it is hoped that a fully-fledged national SALW Control programme will be possible in Serbia during 2004. At its heart would be a comprehensive national strategy on SALW, drafted on the basis of wide consultation and on the information gathered by a national SALW Survey.⁹ While any such strategy may allow the matter of weapons collection in South Serbia to be revisited, that intervention would be one part of an integrated national plan for SALW that attempted to forge appropriate links with Serbia and Montenegro's national framework for economic development, and its ongoing security sector reforms.

⁸ Consultations were held with all major governmental, international and civil society stakeholders in both Belgrade and Vranje (South Serbia) on 03 and 05 December 2003, during which UNDP, SEESAC and SMMRI presented their research findings.

⁹ In addition to studying nation-wide perceptions of SALW (SALW Perception Survey), a full survey would have three other components, viz. SALW Distribution, Impact and Capacity surveys as set out in RMDS 05.80, available from http://www.seesac.org/resources/current_eng.htm.

Annex A (Informative) Household questionnaire

SMMRI-UNDP

MUNICIPALITY _____
COMMUNITY _____
POLLING CENTRE _____
DATE OF SURVEY _____
NAME AND SURNAME OF INTERVIEWER _____

(Questions with 'A' sign to be filled in by the interviewer after the survey has been completed)

A1	Sex of respondent:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Male 2. Female
A2	Ethnicity of respondent:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Albanian 4. Serbian 5. Macedonian 6. Other (specify) _____
A3	Location:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Town 3. Village
A4	Number of people present at the interview including interviewer and respondent:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1-2 persons 2. 3 persons 3. 4 persons 4. 5 persons 5. 6 persons 6. 7 persons 7. 8-9 persons 8. 10+ persons
A5	Surroundings/people present in household: (Multiple response)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children 2. Other adult household members 3. Neighbours, onlookers 4. Local officials 5. Other 6. Nobody

Good afternoon!

My name is I work for SMMRI, an agency for market, media and public opinion research. We are conducting research for the United Nations to get a better understanding of the security situation in the region. Your answers will be strictly confidential – they will only be used in group analyses. We thank you for your help.

B. Personal data

B1	What is your age in years? (Single response)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 15-17 years 2. 18-25 years 3. 26-35 years 4. 36-45 years 5. 46-55 years 6. 56-65 years 7. 66+ years 		
B2	What is the last grade of formal education you have completed? (Single response)	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No formal education 2. Uncompleted primary 3. Completed primary 4. Uncompleted </td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Completed secondary 6. Uncompleted university </td> </tr> </table>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No formal education 2. Uncompleted primary 3. Completed primary 4. Uncompleted 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Completed secondary 6. Uncompleted university
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No formal education 2. Uncompleted primary 3. Completed primary 4. Uncompleted 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Completed secondary 6. Uncompleted university 			

		secondary, but have apprenticeship	7. Completed college or higher technical/vocational university 8. Completed university
B3	What is your occupational status? (Single response)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working 2. Housewife 3. Student or apprentice 4. Retired/ disabled 5. Unemployed 	
B4	What is your occupation?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Owner of own business 2. Manager of enterprise 3. Manager of division department 4. Professional, expert 5. White collar worker /office employee 6. Foreman, technician 7. Skilled worker 8. Semi-skilled worker 9. Civil servant (police, teachers, etc.) 10. Military person 11. Employed as part of a local development project 12. Farmer, fishermen 13. Farmer without own land 14. Other 15. Never employed 16. Changing jobs 17. Don't know/Refused 	
B5	Who is the head of this household? (Single response)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respondent → B10 2. Other person → B6 	
B6	Is the head of this household a man or a woman?	<input type="checkbox"/> Man <input type="checkbox"/> Woman	
B7	What is the relationship of the head of household to you?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spouse 2. Son/daughter of respondent 3. Parent/parent-in-law of the respondent 4. Sibling of the respondent 5. Other 	
B8	What is the last grade in school completed by the head of this household?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No formal 2. Completed primary 3. Uncompleted secondary 4. Uncompleted secondary, but have apprenticeship 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Completed secondary 6. Uncompleted university 7. Completed college or higher technical/vocational university 8. Completed university
B9	What is the occupation of the head of the household?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Owner of own business 2. Manager of enterprise 3. Manager of division department 4. Professional 5. White collar worker/office employee 6. Foreman, technician 7. Skilled worker 8. Semi-skilled worker 9. Civil servants (police, teachers, etc.) 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Military person 11. Employed as part of a local development project 12. Farmer, fishermen 13. Farmer without own land 14. Other 15. Never employed 16. Changing jobs 17. Don't know/Refused
B10	<p>How many people live here in this household now, including children? (Single response)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1-2 persons 2. 3 persons 3. 4 persons 4. 5 persons 5. 6 persons 6. 7 persons 7. 8-9 persons 8. 10+ persons
B11	<p>Tell me, on average, how much does your household spend every month? (Single answer)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1-100 EUR 2. 101-250 EUR 3. 251-400 EUR 4. 401-600 EUR 5. More than 600 EUR

C. Security

C0a	<p>What are the greatest threats to <u>collective security in your community?</u></p>	
C0b	<p>What are the greatest threats to <u>your personal security and that of your family in your community?</u></p>	
C1	<p>Have you or a member of your household been the victim of any of the following types of armed crime? (Multiple response, show card C1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Armed threats 2. Accidental injuries 3. Intentional injuries 4. Accidental killings 5. Revenge killings 6. Armed thefts 7. Unjustified shootings towards people 8. Weapon trafficking 9. Vandalism 10. Other _____ 99. No/ they have not been victims
C2	<p>Do you think your town/neighbourhood is safer, the same, or more dangerous than other areas in South Serbia? (Single response)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safer 2. Same 3. More dangerous 4. Don't know
C3	<p>Compared to one year ago, is the security in this area better or worse? (Single response)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved 2. Gotten worse 3. Stayed the same 4. Volatile: goes up and down
C5	<p>Ideally, who do you think should be responsible for security? (Single response, show card C5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local government 2. Ministry of Interior 3. Army 4. Gendarmerie 5. Multiethnic Police 6. Former members of armed forces 7. International military organisations 8. Private security firms

		9. The community or family 10. Others (specify) _____ 11. Refused 12. Don't know
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D. Weapon availability and perceptions

D1	Do you think that improving the control of firearms in South Serbia would increase security? (Single response)	1. Yes 2. No 3. Refused 4. Don't know
D2	How much do you think licensing for legal firearms possession will increase security? (Single response)	1. A lot 2. Somewhat 3. It would not change anything 4. Worse 5. Refused 6. Don't know
D3	How do you think that the number of firearms in your community has changed in the last three years? Has it decreased, increased or remained the same? (Single response)	1. Has decreased 2. Has increased 3. The same 4. Refused 5. Don't know
D4	Do you know how many households in your local area HAVE (REGISTERED) firearms? (Single answer, show card D4-D5)	1. A lot 2. Most households 3. Very few have 4. Not a single household 5. Refused 6. Don't know
D5	Do you know how many households in your local area STILL HAVE UNREGISTERED firearms? (Single response, show card)	1. A lot 2. Most households 3. Very few have 4. Not a single household 5. Refused 6. Don't know
D6	What is your personal assessment, (on the average), of the number of weapons that people have in their household?	1. 1 2. 2 3. 3 4. From 3 to 5 5. More than 5 6. Refused 7. Don't know
D7	If a person from your community, for whatever reason, would need a weapon, where do you think he could get one? (Single response)	1. Would not be able to get one 2. Would have to ask 3. Buy one from the black market 4. Buy one from someone else 5. Know of a hidden cache 6. Buy from a friend in the armed forces 7. Borrow one 8. Get from family member 9. Get in specific town/region 10. Get a license and buy a gun 11. Refused 12. Don't know
D8	A. Apart from security forces how often do you <u>hear</u>	
	Never	a. Hear 1
		b. See 1

	firearms in your neighbourhood? (Single response)	Only for holidays, celebrations, weddings...	2	2					
		Less often	3	3					
		Once a month	4	4					
	B. Apart from security forces how often do you see firearms in your neighbourhood? (Single response, show card D8.)	Once a week	5	5					
		Several times a week	6	6					
		Daily	7	7					
		Refused	8	8					
		Don't know	9	9					
D9	Why do you think people keep firearms? (Multiple response, show card D10)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal protection 2. Protect property 3. Protect community 4. Political security 5. Work 6. Sport shooting 7. Left from the crisis 8. For hunting 9. Valued family possession 10. Part of the tradition 11. Other (specify) _____ 12. Refused 13. Don't know 							
D10	Many people feel that having a gun helps to protect their families. Other people believe that having guns is dangerous to their families. Which opinion do you agree with? (Single response; show card D11)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Helps protect 2. Makes no difference 3. Is dangerous 4. Refused 5. Don't know 							
D11	Do you think that the presence of guns in your community has an overall impact on the economic development and the standard of living? (Single response)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increases development and living standards, a lot 2. Increases development and living standards, somewhat 3. Has no influence 4. Decreases development and living standards, somewhat 5. Decreases development and living standards, a lot 6. Refused 7. Don't know 							
D12	On what of the following would you say that the guns possession has an impact in your local community: (Show card D13)		Positive influence	Some positive	Negative influence	Some negative	No influence	Don't know	Refused
		1. Education	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		2. Local infrastructure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		3. Foreign investments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		4. Business development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		5. Personal income	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D13	If it is not a secret, could you tell us do you know someone from your local area that has a gun? (Single response, show card	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I don't know any 2. I know 1 person 3. I know up to 5 persons 4. I know up to 10 persons 5. I know up to 15 persons 							

	D14)	6. I know up to 20 persons 7. More than 20 8. Refused 9. Don't know		
D14	Do you think there are too many guns in your area? (Single response)	1. Yes 2. No 3. Refused 4. Don't know		
D15	Who do you think possesses more firearms in your region, Serbs or Albanians?	1. Serbs 2. Albanians 3. Same 4. Don't know / refused		
D16	A. In which parts of society do you think there are more firearms than usual? (Multiple response) B. Which of these parts of society would you say possesses the most firearms? (Single response, show card D16)		A Multiple response	B Single response
		1. Criminal groups	1	1
		2. Businessmen	2	2
		3. In households	3	3
		4. Security forces	4	4
		5. Among ex-fighters/ex-military	5	5
		6. Whole society	6	6
		7. Albanians	7	7
		8. Serbs	8	8
9. Don't know	9	9		
D17	If your household could own a gun legally (registered) would you choose to do so? (Single response)	1. No → D18 2. Yes → D19 3. Refused → D20 4. Don't know → D20		
D18	A. Why would your household choose NOT TO OWN a weapon even if it was a legal one? (Multiple response) B. Which of the specified reasons is the most important? (Single response) (Circle all reasons in column A specified by the interviewee. Circle only ONE response in column B – the most important reason)		A	B
		Do not like guns	1	1
		Dangerous for family in the house (i.e. children)	2	2
		Don't need one	3	3
		Dangerous for community	4	4
		Don't know how to use one	5	5
		Afraid	6	6
		Only women in the house	7	7
		License too costly/difficult to obtain	8	8
Other _____	9	9		
Refused	10	10		
D19	A. Why would your household choose to OWN a firearm? (Multiple response) B. Which of the specified reasons is the most important? (Single response) (Circle all reasons in column A specified by the interviewee. Circle only ONE response in column B – the most important reason)		A	B
		To protect myself/my family	1	1
		To protect my property/business	2	2
		To protect my community	3	3
		For political reasons	4	4
		For my work	5	5
		Sport shooting	6	6
		Because all other people have guns	7	7
		For hunting	8	8
		Tradition	9	9
		Other _____	10	10
Don't know	11	11		
D20	On average, what types/makes do you think are the most common in your community? (Multiple response)	1. Pistols/revolvers 2. Automatic rifle (such as AK-47) 3. Hunting rifle 4. Shotgun		

	(Show card D20-E4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Medium or heavy machineguns 6. Explosives 7. Other _____ 8. Refused 9. Don't know
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E. Possible interventions

E1	Under what conditions if any do you think people in your community would be willing to hand in their illegal weapons and ammunition?	
E2	What would you say the best approach to the people would be for collecting the illegal guns in your local area? (Show card E2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People would do it today, with no conditions 2. If an amnesty was proclaimed 3. If they are simply asked to do so 4. If there would be less crime 5. If there would be severe penalty 6. If an agreement was made in the local community 7. Improvement of the economic situation of local area 8. In return for community development projects 9. In order that they as individuals may enter a competition for prizes (e.g. a car, furniture, scholarship for children) 10. If police were less aggressive 11. If police were more effective 12. If government security forces were gradually redeployed and withdrawn in return 13. None 14. Other _____ 15. Refused 16. Don't know
E3	There is announcement for collection of illegal weapons. In your personal opinion in overall that action will be: (Show card E3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Very successful 2. Successful 3. Unsuccessful 4. Very unsuccessful 5. Refused 6. Don't know
E4	If a collection were held and not all weapons handed in, what types of weapons do you think that is most likely for people to keep? (Multiple response, show card D20-E4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pistols/revolvers 2. Automatic rifle (such as AK-47) 3. Hunting rifle 4. Shotgun 5. Medium or heavy machineguns 6. Explosives 7. Other (specify) _____ 8. Refused 9. Don't know
E5	If a lottery were to be held in your municipality in which only those surrendering illegal weapons were allowed to participate, with winning individuals selected at random, which of these prizes in your opinion would ensure the highest number of participants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New set of household furniture (e.g. one prize per 1000 people). 2. New stereo, DVD player and TV (one prize per 1000 people). 3. Scholarship for two of winner's children (one prize per 30,000 people). 4. New washing machine, cooker and refrigerator (e.g. one prize per 1000 people). 5. New car (west-European model) (e.g. one prize per 30,000 people).

	(Show card E5)	6. New motorbike (e.g. one prize per 30,000 people). 7. Other (specify) _____ 8. Refused 9. Don't know	
E6	A. How likely do you think it is that <u>Serbs</u> will hand in their weapons, if they have any, in exchange for community development projects in your municipality? (Single response) B. How likely do you think it is that <u>Albanians</u> will hand in their weapons, if they have any, in exchange for community development projects in your municipality? (Single response)	A. Serbs	B. Albanians
		1. It is very likely 2. It is somewhat likely 3. It is somewhat unlikely 4. It is very unlikely 5. Don't know	1. It is very likely 2. It is somewhat likely 3. It is somewhat unlikely 4. It is very unlikely 5. Don't know
E7	In your opinion, what type of municipal developments/improvements are most needed by people in your community?		
E8	In your opinion, what type of municipal improvements are most needed by people in your community? (Multiple response, show card E8).	1. Better water supply 2. Better electricity supply 3. Improvements to waste management 4. Improved sewage treatment 5. Better sanitation 6. Street lighting 7. Improvements to local school 8. Health centre 9. Playgrounds or playing fields for children 10. Kindergarten	11. Employment scheme 12. Loans to start or develop a small business 13. Clean-up of rivers 14. Bus shelters 15. New or improved bus service 16. Road-building or rehabilitation 17. Rehabilitation or new building of schools 18. Health clinics 19. Community centres 20. Refused 21. Don't know
E9	If your community was given the chance to compete with neighbouring communities to win funding for this project on condition that an agreed number of weapons was surrendered, how many households holding weapons would surrender them? (Single response, show card E9)	1. All households 2. Almost all households 3. Most households (three-quarters) 4. Every other household (1 out of 2) 5. Few households (a fourth) 6. Almost no households 7. Not a single household 8. Refused 9. Don't know	
E10	In your opinion, if your community had agreed to hand in a certain number of weapons, how many households that own several illegal weapons would hand more than one in to increase the community's	1. All households 2. Almost all households 3. Most households (three-quarters) 4. Every other household (1 out of 2) 5. Few households (a fourth) 6. Almost no households 7. Not a single household	

	chances in the competition? (Single response, show card E10)	8. Refused 9. Don't know		
E11	If a voluntary weapons collection initiative were begun in your community, which organisation would people possessing weapons most prefer to surrender them to?			
E12	A. If a voluntary weapons collection initiative were begun in your community, which organisation would people possessing weapons most prefer to surrender them to? (Multiple response.) B. Which organisation is the most acceptable, which would you position highest? (Single response) (Circle all answers in column A specified by the interviewee. Circle only ONE response in column B – the most acceptable organisation) (Show card E12)		A	B
		Central government	1	1
		Local government	2	2
		Parliament	3	3
		Ministry of Interior	4	4
		Army	5	5
		Political parties	6	6
		NGO	7	7
		International organisation	8	8
		Multi-Ethnic Police alone	9	9
		Multi-Ethnic Police working with independent monitors from local community	10	10
		Gendarmerie working with independent monitors from local community	11	11
		Gendarmerie alone	12	12
		Other (specify) _____	13	13
		Refused	14	14
Don't know	15	15		
E13	Please name one person the people in your community trust the most? (Specify name and job title)	Name and surname _____ Job title _____		

Annex B

(Informative)

Terms and definitions

A.1.1

ammunition

See **munition**

A.1.2

explosives

a substance or mixture of substances, which, under external influences, is capable of rapidly releasing energy in the form of gases and heat. [AAP-6]

A.1.3

munition

a complete device charged with **explosives**, propellants, pyrotechnics, initiating composition, or nuclear, biological or chemical material for use in military operations, including **demolitions**. [AAP-6].

Note: In common usage, "munitions" (plural) can be military weapons, ammunition and equipment.

A.1.4

micro-disarmament

the collection, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives, light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. It includes the development of responsible arms management programmes.

A.1.5

national authority

the government department(s), organisation(s) or institution(s) in a country charged with the regulation, management and coordination of **SALW** activities.

A.1.6

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)

all lethal conventional munitions that can be carried by an individual combatant or a light vehicle, that also do not require a substantial logistic and maintenance capability.

Note: There are a variety of definitions for SALW circulating and international consensus on a "correct" definition has yet to be agreed. For the purposes of this report the above definition will be used.

A.1.7

Small Arms Capacity Survey (SACS)

the component of SALW survey that collects data on the indigenous resources available to respond to the SALW problem.

A.1.8

Small Arms Distribution Survey (SADS)

the component of SALW survey that collects data on the type, quantity, ownership, distribution and movement of SALW within the country or region.

A.1.9

Small Arms Impact Survey (SAIS)

the component of SALW survey that collects data on the impact of SALW on the community and social and economic development.

A.1.10

Small Arms Perception Survey (SAPS)

the component of SALW survey that collects qualitative and quantitative information, via focus groups, interviews, and household surveys, on the attitudes of the local community to SALW and possible interventions.

A.1.11

standard

a standard is a documented agreement containing technical specifications or other precise criteria to be used consistently as rules, guidelines, or definitions of characteristics to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose.

Note: RMDS aim to improve safety and efficiency in micro-disarmament by promoting the preferred procedures and practices at both headquarters and field level. To be effective, the standards should be definable, measurable, achievable and verifiable.

A.1.12

survey (SALW Survey)

a systematic and logical process to determine the nature and extent of SALW proliferation and impact within a region, nation or community in order to provide accurate data and information for a safe, effective and efficient intervention by an appropriate organisation.

A.1.13

Weapons in Competition for Development (WCD) concept

the direct linkage between the voluntary surrender of small arms and light weapons by competing communities in exchange for an agreed proportion of small-scale infrastructure development by the legal government, an international organisation or NGO.

A.1.14

Weapons in Exchange for Development (WED) (WFD) concept

the indirect linkage between the voluntary surrender of small arms and light weapons by the community as a whole in exchange for the provision of sustainable infrastructure development by the legal government, an international organisation or NGO.

A.1.15

Weapons in Exchange for Incentives (WEI) concept

the direct linkage between the voluntary surrender of small arms and light weapons by individuals in exchange for the provision of appropriate materials by the legal government, an international organisation or NGO.

A.1.16

Weapons Linked to Development (WLD) concept

the direct linkage between the voluntary surrender of small arms and light weapons by the community as a whole in return for an increase in ongoing development assistance by the legal government, an international organisation or NGO.