

AR/063

08 February 2006

SEESAC ACTIVITY REPORT – AR/063

CAMPAIGN AGAINST CELEBRATORY GUNFIRE 2005/2006

SEESAC FUNCTIONAL AREA	FA 5 - SALW Awareness and Communication Strategy
SEESAC OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY	OA 1 - Capacity Building OA 3 - Information Management and Exchange Activities



As part of a continuing effort to raise community awareness on the dangers of the illegal possession and misuse of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), SEESAC supported several campaigns over the Christmas and New Year period which sought to address the risks involved in celebratory gunfire. Throughout the region of South Eastern Europe (SEE) celebratory gunfire is a phenomenon that continues to pose a measurable hazard to the general public, with stray bullets having killed and injured numerous innocents in recent years. During the holiday season celebratory gunfire is

particularly widespread and many people in the region seem not to be aware of the dangers that are caused by this practice. The campaign took place in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Serbia and Montenegro. The aim of the campaign was to educate the public on the illegality and dangers of this behaviour so as to contribute to the reduction of fatal incidents and injuries. Currently, civilian weapons possession in the above-mentioned countries is estimated to be between 3.1 million and 3.9 million weapons in total out of which only approximately 1.7 million weapons are registered.

In **Albania** a radio spot was transmitted throughout the country from 15 December 2005 until 15 January 2006, and local TV stations highlighted the danger of using weapons during celebrations. In addition 2,500 posters were given to the Albanian State Police authorities in the regional directorates and police commissariats for distribution.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina** the campaign took place on the same dates as Albania and used television, radio and the print media to address the public. A video clip was broadcasted nationwide and advertisements appeared in the local newspapers. All public holidays were considered; namely the Catholic and Orthodox Christmas' and New Year's and Eid.

In **FYR Macedonia** the campaign was run from 08 December 2005 and 15 January 2006. This achieved high visibility on all the national television and radio channels, as well as many newspapers. Posters and flyers were distributed to schools, police stations and medical centres, as well as via billboards. Local mayors and police chiefs supported the campaign and shooting and hunting associations as well as private security companies were brought on board. The campaign also included promotion of 'A Lethal Legacy', a 25-minute documentary



produced by South East Europe TV in cooperation with SEESAC, which aims at informing the general public not only about the specific dangers of SALW, but also on the impact of SALW on human security. Figures from the Ministry of Interior indicate that material damage caused by celebratory fire was down from 15 cases in 2004 to 5 cases in 2005.



In **Serbia and Montenegro** the campaign ran between 25 December 2005 and 15 January 2006 . In the **Republic of Serbia** public announcements were made in three national newspapers and a radio spot was broadcasted for the duration of the campaign. A press conference was also held at the Red Star Shooting Club in Belgrade, which Olympic Gold Medal winner Jasna Sekric attended. The campaign received broad coverage by local newspapers and television stations and the Ministry of Interior reported a decline in the number of injuries and property damage resulting from celebratory gunfire. In the **Republic of Montenegro** public announcements appeared in two national newspapers and the Montenegrin Ministry of Interior and police held awareness raising events in local schools with students and their parents.

The campaign also reached international attention and was reported on by Southeast European Times, Radio Free Europe, Voice of America and The Guardian (UK).

The impact of the campaign is still being fully evaluated, but initial indications are that it was partially successful as the following matrix illustrates:

COUNTRY	NY 2004/2005			NY 2005/2006			% CHANGE	REMARKS
	FATAL	INJURED	TOTAL	FATAL	INJURED	TOTAL		
Albania			0			0	0	No recorded incidents by Police or Media.
Bosnia and Herzegovina	14			2			- 700%	
FYR Macedonia	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	
Serbia and Montenegro	NK	NK	NK	0	3	3	NK	No data available for NY 2004/2005.

For more information about this campaign and other SALW Awareness activities, please contact Anya Hart Dyke, SEESAC SALW Awareness Officer (anya.hartdyke@undp.org).



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