

## International Day of Rural Women - a day to recognize the rural women's contribution but also their challenges posed by armed violence

Today is **International Day of Rural Women**, a day to celebrate the vital role played by rural women in developing their communities, rural areas and economy across the world.

While we honour the contribution of rural women and girls, we feel it is essential to draw attention to the challenges they face. Armed violence being one of them.



On the surface, it may appear that armed violence is more prevalent in urban areas. However, considering the urban-rural population ratio, it is evident that the problem is just as pervasive in rural areas.

According to the SEESAC's Armed Violence Monitoring Platform (AVMP) data, 5,513 firearm incidents took place in South East Europe from 2020 to date, with nearly one-third occurring in rural areas (1,503).

In the said period, **63** women in rural areas were reported as victims in **55** firearm incidents.

As a result of armed violence, **13** women were **killed**, **15** were **injured**, **22** were **threatened** with firearms.

Almost **51%** of all **women victims** of firearm incidents in rural areas were reported in the context of **domestic violence**, **nine** of whom were **killed** by their **intimate partner** and **one** by **other family members**. In nearly **70%** of **domestic violence incidents** involving firearms in rural areas, **homes** were the **most dangerous settings**.

Women in rural areas were also reported as victims in **criminal context incidents**, mainly in **armed robberies** when **eight** of them were **threatened**. **Two** women were **shot** and **killed**, and **two** were **injured** in the criminal context.

In **public disputes** in rural areas, **three** women were **injured**, and **two** were **threatened** with firearms.

**One** woman **died**, and **two** were **injured** in **accidental shootings**.

The above grave statistics show that armed violence seriously undermines rural women's safety. It also warns us that small arms control measures must take into account specific realities of rural women and the challenges they experience.

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