South East Europe Armed Violence Monitor

Quarterly Regional Report

January-March 2021
The widespread proliferation and misuse of firearms continue to pose a grave threat around the globe. To echo the concern about the negative impact of firearms on security, human rights, as well as social and economic development, UNDP SEESAC initiated data collection in 2014 to track the firearm-related incidents in South East Europe (SEE) and established a Regional Armed Violence Monitoring Platform (AVMP).

The AVMP covers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The data is gathered daily from the relevant authorities’ official websites, as well as print and online media. Data for Kosovo is also gathered from daily police reports.

The present regional report builds on monthly Armed Violence Monitor Reports, and it has been prepared to provide a collection of data, show the trends, highlights, as well as threats regarding firearm incidents in SEE from January-March 2021.¹

Quarterly AVMP regional reports aim to serve as an information tool to research organizations and all interested parties engaged in the area of small arms and light weapons with the primary goal of providing a better understanding of the firearms’ negative impact on civilians.

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¹References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

¹ Data retrieved on 18.05.2021. Given that news articles may be published after the incidents occurred or that recorded incidents can be updated with new pieces of information, the given statistics may slightly differ in the future.
SNAPSHOTS

- 816 firearm incidents were observed in SEE.
- 378 cases of weapon seizures were recorded.
- 126 armed robberies were reported.
- 16 people committed suicide with firearms.
- 5 women were killed in domestic violence context.
- 29 underage perpetrators were reported.
In 169 incidents, weapons were seized in private spaces. Intimate partner violence was recorded in 7 cases. Weapon seizures accounted for 46.3% (or 378) of all reported incidents.

There were 12 celebratory shooting incidents. 100 incidents of shooting of unknown context were reported. 14 victims were injured in accidental shootings.

Other/Unknown refer to suicides, shootings under undetermined circumstances, non-hunting related shooting of animals, explosions, weapons used for defence, and all other incidents that cannot be classified under any of the categories above.
January recorded the highest number of firearm incidents in Q1 2021, while a decrease was observed from January to March (275 vs 262).

Kosovo (303), BiH (154) and Serbia (135) reported the highest number of firearm incidents in this quarter.

Weapon seizures were the most observed type of incident, with 126 seizures recorded each month.

The number of reported incidents remained stable in most jurisdictions during this quarter.
**MAIN TRENDS - Weapon seizures**

- **With 378 cases recorded**, weapon seizures continue to be the most reported type of firearm incident in the region.

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova and Serbia** recorded an increased number of weapon seizures during the reporting period, compared to the previous one.

- **Handguns** were the **most seized type of weapon** in this quarter, being seized in 124 incidents (out of 378). **Kosovo** recorded the **highest number of handgun seizures** (59.6%).

- **Explosive devices** came second most seized, in **60 incidents**. **Kosovo (29), North Macedonia (11)** and **Serbia (10)** reported the highest number of incidents in which explosives were seized.
With **167 cases** recorded, **incidents in criminal context** were the second most frequent type of incident in SEE.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (65 incidents) and Kosovo (41 incidents) continue to record the highest number of incidents in the criminal context.

Out of 167 incidents in criminal context, **126 were related to armed robberies**. With the exception of Kosovo and Serbia, which experienced a decrease, all other jurisdictions observed an increase in armed robberies since the previous quarter.

The highest number of armed robberies was recorded in Bosnia and Herzegovina (57), Kosovo (39) and Serbia (15).
- **60 incidents of public disputes** were reported. A **decrease of 34.7%** (92 v 60) was observed in comparison to the previous quarter.

- **Two jurisdictions**, namely Kosovo and Albania, recorded the highest number of incidents in this category, accounting for **56.6%** of all reported public disputes in this quarter.

- **An increase of 80%** of incidents involving the use of firearms in public disputes was observed from January to March 2021.
Out of 993 reported perpetrators, 694 were men and 10 were women. For 289 perpetrators sex was not reported. Men accounted for 98.5% of all perpetrators, whose sex was reported. Women accounted for the minority of perpetrators and were mostly involved in incidents related to weapon seizures (in 9 incidents) and celebratory shooting (in 1 incident).

Out of 388 reported victims, 260 were men and 74 were women. Sex was not reported for 54 victims. Women were mostly victims of incidents in the criminal context (67.1%) and domestic violence (15%), out of all incidents in which women were identified as victims. Men were mostly reported as victims of incidents related to criminal context (27.3%) and public disputes (22.3%), out of all incidents in which men were identified as victims.

In incidents where age of perpetrators and victims was reported, the majority fell under the age group of 19-35, followed by the 36-60 age group.

3 Perpetrator refers to any individual who has used a firearm/ammunition/explosive to commit any of the types of incidents covered by the AVMP.

4 Victim refers to any individual who has been threatened, injured or died as a result of the use of a firearm/ammunition/explosives.
153 reported victims were threatened with firearms, with 113 of them during armed robberies.

109 victims were injured. Most of them were injured in public disputes (36) and undetermined shootings (32).

33 people were killed with firearms. 5 women were killed in domestic violence context.

16 suicides with firearms were reported in this quarter, with all victims being men.

Suicide refers to all incidents in which the victim killed him/herself with a firearm.

Injury refers to all incidents in which an individual sustained an injury due to weapon use.

No injury refers to all incidents in which a weapon was discharged, but the victim did not sustain a gunshot injury.

Not applicable refers to all incidents in which a weapon is present but not used or discharged (for example, theft of a weapon).
In **382** (46.8%) incidents, the firearms used were in **illegal possession**, while in **38** (4.7%) cases they were in **legal possession**. In **396** (48.5%) incidents the type of possession was not reported.

- **Handguns** were reported in **282 incidents**. In 124 cases, this type of firearm was seized, while in 70 cases it was used in robberies.

- **Rifles/shotguns** were recorded in **94 incidents**, mostly related to seizures (44 cases) and in incidents in criminal context (16 cases).

- With **91 incidents**, **explosive devices** were the third most reported. In **20 incidents explosive devices** were activated under undetermined circumstances.

- **Automatic/military grade weapons** were reported in **45 incidents**. In 24 cases, this type of firearm was seized, while in 8 cases it was used by criminal groups.
In total there were 597 firearm incidents recorded in urban areas, accounting for 73.1% of all reported incidents, while 219 incidents were reported in rural areas.

The exact microlocation was identified in 600 firearm incidents (or in 73.5%), while it was not reported in 216 such cases (or 26.5%).

More precisely, majority of firearm incidents took place at home (243), followed by street (125) and public buildings such as shops (49) and gas stations (24).