South East Europe Armed Violence Monitor

Quarterly Regional Report

July - September 2020
Background

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 SEE and established a Regional Armed Violence Monitoring Platform (AVMP).

The AVMP covers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. The data is collected daily using local media clippings, online search engines, and relevant firearm-related reports of public institutions, where available.

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 South East Europe from July to September 2020.

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.

*References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).
60% increase in the number of recorded firearm incidents has been noticed in the period July-September 2020 compared to the same period last year.

37% of misused weapons were handguns*, accounting for the majority of all misused firearms. In 63 reported incidents, handguns were used in the criminal context, and most frequently in robberies (52).

30% decrease in the number of recorded firearm incidents in the context of domestic violence has been observed compared to April-June 2020.

70% of all reported incidents fall under the categories of weapon seizures (319), criminal context (139), and public dispute (98).

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*The percentage excludes weapon seizures.
The use of firearms resulted in an accidental shooting in 17 cases.

A total of 116 incidents of shooting under undetermined circumstances were reported.

64.7% of incidents in the criminal context were robberies.

32 incidents of celebratory shooting were reported, out of which 15 were recorded in August.

A 58% increase in the misuse of firearms in public disputes in contrast to the same period last year.

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A 24.4% increase of firearm-related incidents was noted in SEE in comparison to the previous quarter (April-June 2020)*. This increase was particularly high in Montenegro (46%), Kosovo (45%), and Serbia (43%).

August 2020 marked the month with the highest number of incidents ever recorded in the AVMP. An increase of 25.6% of incidents related to undetermined shooting was noted in August compared to July 2020.

*Please note it may also indicate improved coverage of firearm incidents by the media and competent authorities, as well as a more rigorous quality assurance conducted by SEESAC.
- Firearm incidents related to the **criminal context** increased by 41.8% compared to the April-June period or from 98 to 139 incidents.

- BiH recorded an increase of 58.8% of such incidents, followed by Kosovo with an increase of 34.7%. Additionally, these two jurisdictions accounted for 61% of all reported incidents in this category.

- **Undetermined shooting** accounted for 69% of reported incidents under the category Other/unknown*. Compared to the April-June period, an increase of 37.3% was noted.

- The highest number was recorded in Kosovo (50), followed by North Macedonia (19) and BiH (16).

- An increase of 28.6% (or from 248 to 319) in **weapon seizures** was recorded during this quarter, in comparison to the previous one. Kosovo recorded the highest number of weapon seizures during the July-September period, accounting for 49.8% of all incidents under this category.

- Serbia recorded the highest increase of such incidents (an increase of 133.3%), followed by BiH (an increase of 95.4%) and Kosovo (an increase of 55%) compared to the previous quarter.

- Despite the overall positive trend of an increased number of weapon seizures in the region, North Macedonia recorded a 32.5% decrease in such incidents during the reporting period, followed by Albania (a decrease of 26%) and Montenegro (a decrease of 10.5%) compared to the previous quarter. Moldova recorded the same number of weapon seizures related incidents, namely 21.

*Other/Unknown refers to all incidents that cannot be classified under any of the categories. Undetermined shooting falls under this category.*
The total number of perpetrators in the reporting period was 937. The sex was reported for 76.5% of perpetrators.

In incidents for which the number and sex of perpetrators were reported, 703 were men and 14 were women. This also indicates that men accounted for 89.2% of all reported perpetrators.

Women accounted for the minority of perpetrators (2.8) and were mostly involved in incidents related to weapon seizures (71.4%).

In 217 reported incidents (out of 788 incidents) perpetrators remained unknown.

The total number of victims in the reporting period was 326. Out of this number, sex was reported for 308 (94.4%) victims.

Women were mostly identified as victims of incidents related to criminal context (57%) and domestic violence (19%).

Men were mostly reported as victims of incidents related to public disputes (37%) and criminal context (17.8%).

For the incidents in which the perpetrators and victims' age was reported, most perpetrators fall in the age group 19-35, and victims in the 36-60 age group.

* Refers only to incidents for which the number and sex of the perpetrators and victims were reported.

*Other/Unknown refers to all incidents that cannot be classified under any of the categories. Undetermined shooting falls under this category.
**Outcome for victims**

**Threat** was an outcome for most incidents in the criminal context, accounting for **43%** of all outcomes.

**Death** was recorded as an outcome for **38 victims**, mostly related to undetermined shooting (36.8%).

**Explosive devices** were a weapon of choice in **50%** of reported suicides.

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### September

- Death: 13
- Suicide: 4
- Threatened: 35
- Injury*: 34
- No injury**: 23
- Not applicable**: 2

### August

- Death: 12
- Suicide: 7
- Threatened: 35
- Injury*: 31
- No injury**: 13
- Not applicable**: 2

### July

- Death: 13
- Suicide: 4
- Threatened: 32
- Injury*: 41
- No injury**: 25
- Not applicable**:

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**Intimate partners** were reported as perpetrators in six (6), while members of the **nuclear/extended family** in **11 incidents**.

**Friends/acquaintances and neighbors** committed **22 incidents**, most frequently in public disputes (59%).

**Strangers** committed **53 incidents**, mostly in the criminal context (59%).

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* 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 328 (41.6%) firearm incidents, the weapons used were in **illegal possession**, while in 429 (54.4%) of them, the type of possession was **not reported**. In 31 (3.9%) cases, the weapons were in **legal possession**.

In 63 cases, handguns were used in the criminal context, while in 54 cases during public disputes.

Rifles were the second most seized type of weapon in the region in the July-September period.

The use of automatic/military-grade weapons rose by 18% compared to the same period last year. This type of weapon was seized in 21 instances.

During this quarter, citizens reported finding an explosive device in 60 instances.

*Please note that the graphs represent the number of incidents in which these types of weapons were used. In 25% of reported cases, the type of firearm was either unknown or not reported.*
A decrease of 44.4% was noted in firearm-related domestic violence cases in urban areas compared to the same period last year.

On the other hand, there was an increase of 54.7% of firearm incidents in the criminal context in urban areas.

The majority of firearm incidents took place at home (199), followed by street (136) and public buildings such as shops (29), gas stations (16), and office premises (14).