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ANALYSIS OF

# MEDIA REPORTING ON FIREARM MISUSE

IN MALE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST  
WOMEN IN THE WESTERN BALKANS



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\* For the United Nations Development Programme, references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). For the European Union, this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence..



The South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) is a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) aimed at strengthening national and regional capacities to control and reduce the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, thus contributing to enhanced stability, security, and development in South Eastern and Eastern Europe.

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**For further information contact:**

Head of SEESAC  
Bulevar Zorana Đinđića 64,  
11000 Belgrade Serbia  
Tel: +381 11 415 5300  
[www.seesac.org](http://www.seesac.org)

Design and layout: Ivan Čulafić

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The Analysis builds directly on the years-long work undertaken by UNDP Serbia which in 2017, together with the B92 Fund, created the group *Journalists against Violence against Women*. As part of its work, and with UNDP's continued support, the group monitors the quality of media coverage of violence against women based on established, reputable indicators, has developed Guidelines for Media Reporting on Violence against Women<sup>1</sup>, and provides trainings for representatives of the media to help improve their reporting practices. Their media monitoring also pays attention to the role firearms have in the context of violence against women.

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1 More information available on the link: [novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Smer-nice\\_WEB-VERSION-final.pdf](https://novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Smer-nice_WEB-VERSION-final.pdf)



# Acronyms

**AVMP** – Armed Violence Monitoring Platform

**BIH** – Bosnia and Herzegovina

**GBV** – Gender-based violence

**IO** – International Organization

**IPA** – Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance

**MOI** – Ministry of Interior

**NGO** – Non-governmental Organization

**OSCE** – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**RCC** – Regional Cooperation Council

**SALW** – Small arms and light weapons

**SEE** – South Easter Europe

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

**UNDP** – United Nations Development Programme





# KEY FINDINGS OF THE REGIONAL ANALYSIS

01

Having reviewed 1,484 media reports pertaining to male gender-based violence against women with firearms in five jurisdictions in the Western Balkans,<sup>2</sup> researchers extrapolated key trends that mark this type of reporting. Both good and bad, these general trends can help us identify ways to communicate about this phenomenon more effectively in order to deepen public understanding of it.

- ▶ Media reporting on firearm misuse in male gender-based violence against women in the Western Balkans is generally limited in scope as it is primarily motivated by and focused on specific incidents. In 90% of the articles surveyed, the media reported only on the details of a specific incident, failing to provide a wider context, such as highlighting the frequency of such incidents, indicating their common characteristics, etc.;
- ▶ Furthermore, only 10% of the media articles reporting on firearm misuse in male gender-based violence against women were found to provide any educational content to the readers. Such information could include shedding light on the cycle of violence, outlining links between the presence of firearms and the rate of fatalities, discussing the problem as a social one stemming from unequal power relations between women and men, or providing information on how survivors could find support;
- ▶ Institutional responses to firearm misuse (arrests, indictments, convictions) were mentioned in more than 80% of relevant media reports across the region in the observed period. However, this does not mean that the media “followed the case from beginning to end,” as most of the sanctions mentioned in reports were related to arrests or indictments that typically took place immediately following the incident. A significantly smaller number of reports mentioned final court rulings. As court processes generally take time, the media tend to lose interest in them over the course of these proceedings;

2 The regional analysis reviews media reports from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo. Albania was not included because the OSCE Presence in Albania was planning to conduct a national analysis of media reporting on gender-based violence and firearms at a similar time. Therefore, it was deemed that the duplication of activities was unnecessary.

- ▶ The representatives of the Ministries of Interior and police are usually the main interlocutors for this issue. This is reflected in the fact that their statements were present in a little under 1/4 of analysed media reports, although the situation was found to differ depending on the jurisdiction in question. These institutions were followed by the Prosecutors' Offices (11% of media reports) and the courts (cited in 4% of media reports). The very low presence of statements from non-governmental organizations (NGO) (5%) and international organizations (1%) indicates that their knowledge and expertise are currently extremely underutilized by the media;
- ▶ The most visible type of firearm misuse covered by the media was murder (a little under 2/3 of media reports in the region). Other forms of firearm misuse such as threats with a firearm, striking with a firearm (without firing a shot), shot related injuries, and their combinations garnered much less media attention than murders alone. While this might seem logical, as the gravity of murder cannot be compared to other outcomes, it also demonstrates the media's limited understanding of the fact that such incidents are generally more common than murders and often precede them. The presence of firearms as a means of intimidation, control, and isolation was mentioned in less than 10% of the reports.
- ▶ When reporting on concrete incidents involving firearms, media reports tend to provide information on the type of firearm(s) misused (such as rifles, handguns, automatic weapons, etc.) in every second report. However, they generally do not inform on the number of firearms used/possessed by the perpetrator, nor on their legal status, with 71% of surveyed media reports lacking the information on whether the relevant firearm(s) was in legal or illegal possession;
- ▶ During the observed period, more than 2/3 of media reports in the region did not present information regarding whether the perpetrator had a prior history of violent behaviour and/or firearm misuse. This information is of great importance, and the media have the right, and one could argue an obligation, to ask responsible authorities whether the perpetrator had a history of violent behaviour and/or firearm misuse and, if so, to inquire about the follow-up response by the institutions. By doing so, the media could bring to the attention

of the public any possible weaknesses in the work of responsible institutions, thus influencing change. Information regarding the prior history of violence or firearm misuse by the perpetrator can also help prevent future incidents, as it is important for women who are experiencing violence to know that this kind of behaviour can be an indication of a high risk for further and more extreme violence, which could culminate in the misuse of firearms and/or death;

- ▶ The vast majority of the analysed media reports in the region (93%) do not consider a possible connection between a specific male gender-based violence incident and recent and/or ongoing armed conflicts. This connection could, for instance, be reflected in the easier access to firearms or the possible post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by former combatants.<sup>3</sup> This means that, regionally, media reporting could be improved by further exploring possible linkages between male gender-based violence against women and perpetrators' participation in armed conflicts;
- ▶ In most jurisdictions, a serious problem in the media's representation of survivors/victims and violence itself is the disclosure of the victims' identity or the identities of their family members, including children. This was found to be the case in close to 2/3 of media reports surveyed across the region, with the highest rate in Montenegro (86% of media reports);
- ▶ In direct connection with the high level of privacy exposure is the frequent publishing of details of violent acts that are not relevant to the public or statements by irrelevant interlocutors, which were found to be included in every other analysed media report. Furthermore, every other media report was seen to employ sensationalist or stereotypical language when referring to violence, the survivor/victim, and/or the perpetrator. These observations point to the violation and the lack of protection of the survivors/victims' dignity, which is a fundamental human right;

3 For connections between gender-based violence against women and armed conflict please see the below listed documents:

OSCE-Led Survey on Violence Against Women: [Well-Being and Safety of Women](#), OSCE, 2019 (p.82-83).  
[Prevention and response to gender-based violence during war and in post-conflict environment: Experiences and recommendations of women's non-governmental organization – Handbook](#), Women against violence in Europe (WAVE), 2022 (p. 19).

[Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict](#), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2018, (p.30-31).

- ▶ Diminishment or mocking of violence and/or demonstration of distrust towards the survivor/victim of firearm misuse was found to be present in 1/5 of media reports, which could potentially affect the public's perception of the crime and contribute to its normalization and/or minimization;
- ▶ Shifting the responsibility for the committed violence from the perpetrator to the survivor/victim was identified in approximately 1/5 of media reports across the region, with the highest percentage found in Serbia (27% of all media coverage in Serbia), followed by Montenegro (16% of articles published in Montenegro). Also discouraging was the presence and frequency of the media justifying cases of violence due to external circumstances or the perpetrator's personality traits (perpetrator's poor financial situation, alcoholism, etc.), with 1/3 of media reports across the region having included such elements. Again, the highest rate of such statements was found in media reports from Serbia (41% of media coverage in Serbia), followed by Montenegro (24% of articles published in Montenegro);
- ▶ Concerning the visualization of firearm misuse in male gender-based violence against women, the data indicates that approximately 1/2 of media reports in the region displayed firearms in an inadequate manner. In other words, they were presented as symbols of power, which could reinforce uncritical views of firearms and contribute to their normalization and glorification within society. On the other hand, some of the surveyed reports did indeed reflect a critical perspective of firearm misuse. Examples of such coverage include photographs and visuals of firearms in which they are being handled by forensics experts (e.g., in a forensic bag), during a confiscation, in the custody of relevant authorities, or crossed out with a red line and marked with "STOP GUNS," among other representations.
- ▶ Although slightly less troubling, the frequency of inappropriate visual coverage of violence, survivors/victims, and perpetrators in photographs and visual representations was still unacceptably high. Thirty-nine percent (39%) of reports across the region contained inadequate visuals, including particularly unethical ones featuring explicit details such as victims' dead bodies, their injuries, details

from the crime scenes, etc. Just as diminishment or mocking of gender-based violence could contribute to its normalization, so can explicit visual depiction of physical violence. Furthermore, it might take away from the gravity of its less physical forms, such as psychological, economic, and sexual violence.

# INTRODUCTION

02



Violence against women is a global phenomenon present in all societies. It is a gross violation of women's human rights, "which (has) led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women."<sup>4</sup>

Although all jurisdictions covered by this analysis have ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention<sup>5</sup>), violence against women persists as a widespread social and political problem. In surveys conducted in 2018, in each of the jurisdictions separately, more than 3.2 million women from across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo indicated experiencing some form of sexual harassment, stalking, intimate partner violence, or non-partner violence (including psychological, physical, or sexual violence) after the age of 15.<sup>6</sup> More than 730,000 reported being exposed to intimate partner physical or sexual violence.<sup>7</sup>

When it comes to *experiences of assaults and threats with a firearm* among the women who have indicated experiencing violence at the hands of a partner or non-partner, the percentages slightly differ across the region: 6% in Bosnia and Herzegovina,<sup>8</sup> 15,5% in Montenegro,<sup>9</sup> 3% in North Macedonia,<sup>10</sup> 5% in Serbia,<sup>11</sup> and 15,4% in Kosovo.<sup>12</sup> The same research highlights particularly alarming data in some of the jurisdictions. For instance, "when discussing the factors that might have contributed to an increase in cases of violence against women in Serbia, women in the qualitative research mentioned the extensive availability of firearms during and after the armed conflicts as a key factor. They said a considerable portion of army-issued firearms were retained by soldiers after they returned, which they either kept at home or passed on to others, and that these firearms have been used against women ever since."<sup>13</sup> In Montenegro, "in the qualitative research,

4 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993.

5 More information available on the link: [rm.coe.int/168008482e](https://rm.coe.int/168008482e)

6 OSCE-led Survey on the Well-being and Safety of Women (2019) including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo combined. More information available in footnotes 7-13.

7 Ibid.

8 More information available on the link: [osce.org/files/f/documents/3/5/423470\\_1.pdf](https://osce.org/files/f/documents/3/5/423470_1.pdf)

9 More information available on the link: [osce.org/files/f/documents/8/7/424985\\_1.pdf](https://osce.org/files/f/documents/8/7/424985_1.pdf)

10 More information available on the link: [osce.org/files/f/documents/3/5/419264\\_1.pdf](https://osce.org/files/f/documents/3/5/419264_1.pdf)

11 More information available on the link: [osce.org/files/f/documents/e/4/419750\\_1.pdf](https://osce.org/files/f/documents/e/4/419750_1.pdf)

12 More information available on the link: [osce.org/files/f/documents/d/c/439781.pdf](https://osce.org/files/f/documents/d/c/439781.pdf)

13 More information available on the link: [osce.org/files/f/documents/e/4/419750\\_1.pdf](https://osce.org/files/f/documents/e/4/419750_1.pdf)

women said that many people still had access to firearms following the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, and they expressed the belief that the prevalence of firearms had increased the number of violent acts.”<sup>14</sup>

The prominent role firearms play in gender-based violence and their disproportionate impact on women is also extensively documented in the data SEESAC collects through its Armed Violence Monitoring Platform (AVMP).<sup>15</sup> Recent analysis of this data shows the scale and persistence of firearm-related domestic violence. From 2019 to 2021 in South East Europe, more people were killed with firearms in the context of domestic violence (101) than in any other type of incident, including those in the criminal context (93), public disputes (93), and undetermined shootings (87). The misuse of firearms in domestic violence disproportionately affects women. Seventy-seven percent (64 out of 83) of all women killed with firearms in South East Europe in this period were killed in the domestic violence context, while the same holds true for 10% of men killed with firearms (37 out of 361). Within the domestic violence context, women were most at risk of firearm use by their current or former intimate partners. Specifically, 57% of all women killed with firearms were murdered by their intimate partners. On the other hand, men were most frequently killed with firearms by other male family members.

The gender aspects of firearms possession, their misuse, as well as attitudes towards firearms are also comprehensively detailed in SEESAC’s research showing that:

- ▶ Men make up more than 97% of firearm owners in SEE;<sup>16</sup>
- ▶ Women, more often than men, see firearms as a risk or a threat rather than a means to protect themselves and their family;<sup>17</sup>
- ▶ Men are proportionately more often perpetrators than victims of firearm-related incidents. Women are victims several times more frequently than they are perpetrators of firearm-related incidents, and patterns of their

14 More information available on the link: [osce.org/files/f/documents/8/7/424985\\_1.pdf](https://osce.org/files/f/documents/8/7/424985_1.pdf)

15 Armed Violence Monitoring Platform (AVMP) is a SEESAC-run database that collects data primarily from media reports covering firearms-related incidents that have taken place in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo since 2014. More information on the link: [seesac.org/AVMP](https://seesac.org/AVMP)

16 See SEESAC’s publication on Men and Firearms in South East Europe: Fast Facts at link: [seesac.org/f/docs/Gender-and-SALW/Men-and-Firearms-in-SEE\\_ENG\\_WEB.pdf](https://seesac.org/f/docs/Gender-and-SALW/Men-and-Firearms-in-SEE_ENG_WEB.pdf)

17 Ibid

disproportionate representation among victims are associated with the misuse of firearms in domestic violence;<sup>18</sup>

- ▶ Murder by an intimate partner is the most common form of female homicide;<sup>19</sup>
- ▶ The high share of women murdered with firearms reflects the high lethality of firearms in the domestic violence context;<sup>20</sup>
- ▶ The misuse of firearms in the context of domestic violence is four times more fatal than in the general criminal context.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to necessitating an institutional response, the data provided above also demands wide social attention and appropriate action. In this context, the media could play an important role in illuminating this phenomenon to the public and thus contribute to its prevention.

In 2018, Western Balkan authorities jointly developed and adopted the *Roadmap for a Sustainable Solution to the Illegal Possession, Misuse and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and their Ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024*<sup>22</sup>, a strategic document representing the region's firm commitment to addressing a variety of problems linked to firearms. Reduction of the supply, demand, and misuse of firearms through increased awareness and education of the public about the associated risks is one of the seven stated goals of the document.

By delving deeper into the state of media reporting on the phenomenon of firearm misuse in a gender-based violence context, identifying areas where improvement is needed, as well as providing concrete recommendations, this analysis aims to contribute to the accomplishment of the Roadmap.

18 More information available on the link: [seesac.org/f/docs/Gender-and-SALW/Policy-brief-Small-Arms-Control---The-Case-for-Gender-Mainstreaming.pdf](https://seesac.org/f/docs/Gender-and-SALW/Policy-brief-Small-Arms-Control---The-Case-for-Gender-Mainstreaming.pdf)

19 See SEESAC's publication on the Misuse of Firearms in Domestic Violence in South East Europe: Fast Facts at link: [seesac.org/f/docs/Gender-and-SALW/Misuse-of-firearms-in-SEE\\_ENG\\_WEB\\_FINAL\\_1.pdf](https://seesac.org/f/docs/Gender-and-SALW/Misuse-of-firearms-in-SEE_ENG_WEB_FINAL_1.pdf)

20 Ibid

21 Ibid

22 More information available on the link: [seesac.org/f/docs/publications-salw-control-roadmap/Regional-Roadmap-for-a-sustainable-solution-to-the.pdf](https://seesac.org/f/docs/publications-salw-control-roadmap/Regional-Roadmap-for-a-sustainable-solution-to-the.pdf)

# Up-to-date analysis of media reporting on male gender-based violence against women in the region

The analysis before you is the first that explores media reporting on male gender-based violence against women at a regional level. Except for Serbia,<sup>23</sup> it is also the first analysis that examines the coverage of firearms in this context. Although male gender-based violence has been a topic of several studies in the region, it has not been researched equally across all jurisdictions. The methodologies employed by previous studies vary, making a complete and direct comparison of the research unfeasible. However, the studies each identify some of the same trends highlighted by this analysis and all of them point to the media's limited understanding of gender-based violence as a social problem. Below, we outline some of the main conclusions drawn by previous studies in each of the jurisdictions.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, three studies were conducted (in 2016,<sup>24</sup> 2018, and 2020<sup>25</sup>) investigating media reports in this context and how they evolved over the observed years. The latest report stated that while “slow progress in this area is noticeable... the analysis of media coverage shows that the unprofessional approach and negative practices are still present in reporting on this topic.” The 2020 report specifically notes that media almost always fail to recognize male gender-based violence against women as a social problem relevant to society as a whole and not only to those directly affected by it.

One study from North Macedonia on media coverage of femicide<sup>26</sup> indicated that: “the media have a relatively low capacity to recognize femicide;” there is “a significant lack of analysis of socio-political context;” the media “do not take into account the role of institutions in preventing and protecting against gender-based

23 See analysis by Novinarke Protiv Nasilja Prema Ženama titled Analiza medijskog izveštavanja o problemu nasilja prema ženama za period 2019-2021. godine at link: [novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Analiza-2019-2021.pdf](https://novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Analiza-2019-2021.pdf)

24 More information available on the link: [bit.ly/4acYKk0](https://bit.ly/4acYKk0)

25 More information available on the link: [bit.ly/4dragLL](https://bit.ly/4dragLL)

26 More information available on the link: [iks.edu.mk/en/research-analysis/femicide-in-macedonian-media](https://iks.edu.mk/en/research-analysis/femicide-in-macedonian-media)

violence, especially femicide;” and that most of the media use sensationalist language, while the use of visual materials in news reports is inappropriate; several principles from the Code of Journalists of Macedonia have been violated in the news reports.

“In protecting the right to privacy, one of the most important ethical problems is that, as a rule, the names and surnames of the victim and the suspect are published,”<sup>27</sup> stated one of the reports on this issue from Montenegro. Another relevant report observed that “there is a small number of analytical stories about gender-based violence, sexual violence against women, and femicide, which are most often put in the context of an individual, not a social problem.”<sup>28</sup>

In Serbia, the informal group, *Journalists against Violence against Women*<sup>29</sup> conducted annual research of media reporting on violence against women from 2019 to 2021. In their analysis,<sup>30</sup> they noted that media primarily report on individual cases of this type of violence. Media rarely write about male gender-based violence against women more holistically, as a social phenomenon with the aim of educating the public about it. Instead, they typically cover the subject in conjunction with the coverage of a particular incident.<sup>31</sup> The group identified other trends as well. “During all three years, the most frequently violated indicator refers to the disclosure of the identity of the survivor/victim and her family members. While in 2019, every other report violated this indicator, in 2021, that number was reduced to 40%.”<sup>32</sup> Their research also showed that in every third media report, the details of the act of violence/murder or statements made by the interlocutors that are irrelevant from the point of view of the public interest are published.<sup>33</sup>

27 More information available on the link: [mminstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ETICKI-HZA-ZOVI-U-ZASTITI-PRAVA-NA-PRIVATNOST-Finalno-za-stampu.pdf](https://mminstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/ETICKI-HZA-ZOVI-U-ZASTITI-PRAVA-NA-PRIVATNOST-Finalno-za-stampu.pdf)

28 More information available on the link: [undp.org/cnr/montenegro/publications/rodno-ogledalo-medija-u-crnoj-gori](https://undp.org/cnr/montenegro/publications/rodno-ogledalo-medija-u-crnoj-gori)

29 More information available on the link: [novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/en/](https://novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/en/)

30 More information available on the link: [novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Analiza-2019-2021.pdf](https://novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Analiza-2019-2021.pdf)

31 Ibid

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

As a result of the work of the *Journalists against Violence against Women* group and the support given to them by UNDP, Serbia is the only jurisdiction in the region that also has data on media reporting on firearm misuse in incidents of violence against women. The relevant analysis was carried out on a sample of media reports from the second half of 2019, covering print and electronic media, as well as media internet portals. The analysis finds that in less than 2% of media reports, misuse of firearms is treated as a social phenomenon. Instead, regardless of their frequency, they are treated as isolated incidents. Media generally cover these incidents simply as events of the day and are rarely motivated to investigate or elaborate on the phenomenon in more depth.<sup>34</sup>

Although no in-depth analysis of media reporting on violence against women in Kosovo could be found, one article grounded in media monitoring notes that incidents of gender-based violence are most often published under the crime news section, which might speak to a lack of gender perspective in editorial policies.<sup>35</sup>

34 More information available on the link: [novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/A-por-trait-against-a-landscape-5.pdf](https://novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/A-por-trait-against-a-landscape-5.pdf)

35 More information available on the link: [kosovotwopointzero.com/en/the-darkness-of-the-black-chronicles/](https://kosovotwopointzero.com/en/the-darkness-of-the-black-chronicles/)

## The goal of the analysis

**The aim of this analysis is to explore how the media in the region<sup>36</sup> report on the phenomenon of firearm misuse in incidents of male gender-based violence (GBV) against women.** Specifically, this analysis aims to answer key questions regarding: the media's presentation of incidents, perpetrators, and firearms; the media's depiction of survivors/victims and the violence itself; the utilization of photographs and visuals in reports on this subject; and the extent to which the media fulfil their educational role with regards to the issue of gender-based violence and firearm misuse.

In shaping and developing the goal, methodology, and conclusions of this regional analysis, the guiding principle has been the public's right to know. "The public interest is about what matters to everyone in society. It is about the common good, the general welfare, and the security and well-being of everyone in the community we serve."<sup>37</sup> "The public interest is not just what the readers, listeners or viewers want either as consumers or people who want to be entertained. It is about issues that affect everyone, even if many of them are not aware of it or even if they don't appear to care."<sup>38</sup>

In conducting this analysis, the objective was to research not only if the media pay attention to the issue of male gender-based violence against women with misuse of firearms, but also to explore the nature of this attention, what kind of data and photographs are used in media reports, how the media treat survivors and victims of gender-based violence, and how they treat the perpetrators.

Finally, the authors of this analysis sought to determine if the media fulfil their role to inform, educate, and be the watchdog, i.e., "to seek to increase transparency and accountability of (...) public figures and institutions (...) to bring greater transparency to issues or events."<sup>39</sup>

36 Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo

37 More information available on the link: [ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/the-public-interest](https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/the-public-interest)

38 Ibid.

39 More information available on the link: [liberties.eu/en/stories/watchdog-journalism/43959](https://liberties.eu/en/stories/watchdog-journalism/43959)

# METHODOLOGY

03



# Sample

This regional media analysis included content from print media and web portals published from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022 from the following five<sup>40</sup> Western Balkan jurisdictions: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo.<sup>41</sup>

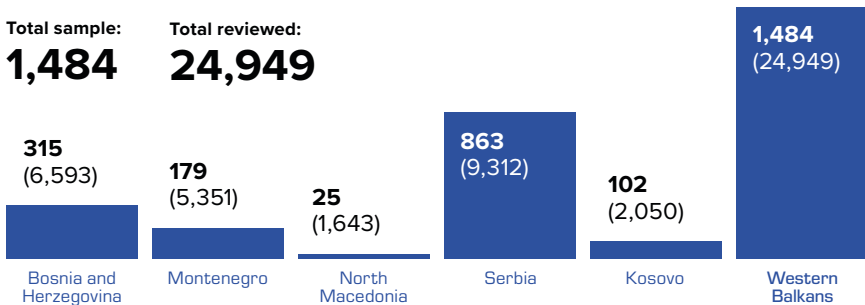
Media content for all jurisdictions was made available by SEESAC in a form of press clippings in the respective local languages. All provided press clippings contained one or more of the following keywords: gun, murder, violence, firearm, injury, crime, bullet, explosive, armed robbery, and ammunition. In total, 24,949 media reports were provided for review (Graph 1).

Teams of journalists/researchers went through all the gathered press clippings and selected those that were related to cases of male gender-based violence against women with the misuse of firearms from their respective jurisdictions for deeper analysis.

**As a result, a total of 1,484 media reports were selected for deeper analysis.**<sup>42</sup>

## NUMBER OF MEDIA REPORTS ON THE INCIDENTS AND PHENOMENON OF FIREARM MISUSE IN CASES OF MALE GBV AGAINST WOMEN

GRAPH 1



40 Albania was not included in the regional analysis because the OSCE Presence in Albania was planning to conduct a national analysis of media reporting on gender-based violence and firearms at a similar time, thus it was deemed that there was no need for duplication.

41 The sources analysed in Kosovo included online media only, because in 2022, the year this analysis covers, there were no print media being published in Kosovo. The “Koha Ditore” newspaper was the last print media source in Kosovo, which stopped being printed when the COVID pandemic began when it transitioned to an online version.

42 The analysed sample did not include media reports on concrete cases of violence and firearm misuse from other jurisdictions and regions, as the aim of this research was to analyse how media from the region treat these issues at the local level.

## Limitations of the analysis

The sample for this analysis is representative, encompassing all media reports published during 2022 in the five relevant jurisdictions covering the selected issues. Some jurisdictions, such as North Macedonia, had a relatively limited number of media reports on the male gender-based violence against women and the misuse of firearms during the reviewed period. Of the 1,642 reports collected, 25 dealt with this particular issue. Despite these limitations, the sample remains representative, as it includes all media reports on the phenomenon examined.

It should be noted that although the sample included only media reports published in 2022, some of these reports covered incidents that took place prior to 2022, regardless of whether they had been solved.

It is important to highlight that the results presented below should not be interpreted as the number of specific cases that occurred. These values (figures) reflect the frequency of media reports covering those cases, which is generally higher than the actual number of incidents that took place.

# Research terminology

This media analysis deals with the phenomenon of male gender-based violence against women involving firearm misuse.

**The phenomenon of male gender-based violence against women** encompasses all forms of violence against women by men, committed owing to the victims' sex, i.e. because they are women.

**The relationship between the perpetrator and the survivor/victim** may vary and involve relationships such as: intimate partner relationship (including married and unmarried (current or former) partners, living in the same or separate households), family relationships (e.g., father-daughter, son-mother, son-in-law, mother-in-law, etc.). The nature of the relationship can also be relatively superficial (at the level of an acquaintance) or even non-existent (e.g., in situations of stalking by a male stranger).

For the purposes of this analysis, the misuse of **firearms** also included the misuse of explosives.

The phenomenon of **male gender-based violence against women involving firearm misuse** excludes situations where a woman is an accidental victim of firearm discharge (e.g., celebratory shooting or clashes between criminal groups resulting in women being threatened/injured/killed). These situations are not gender-based, i.e., women are not targeted to be threatened/injured/killed solely because they are women. However, if the primary victim is a woman and was targeted because of her sex/gender, and other individuals are injured in the assault as well, this is considered gender-based violence.

The analysis considered various **types of violence** when a firearm was involved, some of which overlap. They included murder (death by firearm), physical violence (e.g. hitting or wounding with a firearm), sexual violence (e.g. forcing into unwanted sexual activity by threatening with a firearm), psychological violence (e.g. threats and intimidation with firearm), and economic violence (e.g. controlling access to money by threatening with a firearm).

**Firearm misuse** for male gender-based violence against women encompasses several situations: threatening to use a firearm, striking with a firearm, firing and wounding or killing with a firearm. In addition, the mere presence of a firearm also falls under firearm misuse, since its presence alone instils fear in survivors/victims and allows the perpetrators to establish control over them, even if the weapon has never been used.

One additional note must be emphasized regarding the terminology employed in the analysis: the term “**survivor**” refers to women who have been exposed to firearm-enabled violence as defined above, while the term “**victim**” refers to women who have been killed.

A few more concepts should be clarified to ensure correct understanding of the analysis’ recommendations. **Irrelevant interlocutors** are persons whose statements do not have informative, preventative, nor educational contribution to media’s reporting and whose sole purpose is to add to the sensational character of the story, which violates the privacy of survivor/victim and/or their families, and which is explicitly prohibited by the journalist code of ethics throughout the region.

Similarly, **irrelevant details** are those that, while potentially interesting to segments of the public, are not of public interest. Their effects are negative and can include: adding to the sensationalism of the media report, potentially endangering the investigation of the case and the prosecution of the perpetrator, violating the privacy of the victim/survivor and/or their families, drawing the public’s focus away from this deeply problematic societal phenomenon and instead desensitizing the readers to violence, placing them in the role of a voyeur and the judge, etc.

**Inadequate/inappropriate visualization of firearms** covers all cases where firearms are presented as powerful and dominating, where they are glorified and promoted, and where critical reflection on the effects of their misuse is lacking.

On the other hand, **inadequate/inappropriate visualization of violence** is one where identity of the victims is revealed, irrelevant details of violence are shown such as dead bodies, blood, bodily injuries, any visuals that portray victim in a powerless and perpetrator in a dominant position or where simulations of violence are shown. Under this category also fall visuals of survivor/victim and perpetrator placed together using photo editing. Such visualizations desensitize the public to violence, can contribute to its promotion and are traumatizing to survivors of violence.

# Research methodology and indicators

The following table displays the indicators/questions used for the content analysis of media reports. More detailed explanations of each indicator can be found in Annex 1.

Design of the methodology, was led by the most important principle of media work – to provide information that is of public interest, especially regarding the phenomenon of firearm misuse for male gender-based violence against women, which is a very specific context and one that, in the eyes of the authors of this analysis, is underrepresented in most areas of public policies, education, and prevention. To develop proper methodology, existing good practice of monitoring media's reporting of gender-based violence was harnessed. Namely, indicators developed by the group Journalists against Violence against Women for their respective media analyses<sup>43</sup> conducted in Serbia, defined in line with journalist code of ethics, were used as the basis for the methodology of the Analysis at hand. They were further expanded primarily to include additional data points pertaining to reporting on firearms and firearms-related violence.

## Set of general indicators

---

Name of media outlet

---

Date of media report

---

Type of media

---

Name of journalist

---

Media report title

---

## Set of indicators about concrete incidents, perpetrators, and firearms

---

Is the subject of the media report a specific event, the phenomenon of violence/firearms misuse, or does it cover both sets of information?

---

Is the media report an original piece by a journalist, or is it a news report/statement issued by the Ministry of the Interior and/or the Prosecutor's Office, or both?

---

Event microlocation

---

43 More information available on the link: [novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/publikacije/](http://novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/publikacije/)

---

Event macrolocation

---

Relationship between the survivor/victim and the perpetrator

---

Manner of firearm misuse

---

---

### **Set of indicators regarding firearm and perpetrator-related information published by the media**

---

Availability of information on the type and number of firearms

---

Availability of information on the legal status of possessed firearms

---

Availability of information on the perpetrator's prior history of violent behaviour

---

Availability of information on the perpetrator's history of firearm misuse

---

Availability of information regarding any links to wars/ armed conflicts

---

Availability of information on the institutional consequences of firearm misuse

---

The media report contains a statement by relevant institutions/experts?

---

Whose statement is it?

---

Does the media report include photographs/video footage that portray firearms in an inadequate manner, by glorifying them or depicting the power of firearms, without any critical reflection in the visuals?

---

Does the media report fulfil its educational role with regard to the phenomenon of firearms misuse?

---

### **Set of indicators about reporting on violence against women and firearms misuse**

---

Does the media report reveal the identity of the survivor/victim and/or family members?

---

Does the media report shift responsibility for the violence from the perpetrator to the victim/survivor?

---

Does the media report contain information that could justify an act of violence by external circumstances or the perpetrator's personal characteristics?

---

Does the media report disclose details of the act of violence/murder or interlocutors' statements that are not relevant to the act?

---

Does the media report use sensationalist or stereotypical expressions referring to violence, the survivor/victim and/or the perpetrator?

---

Does the media report diminish or ridicule violence or indicate distrust of the victim/survivor?

---

---

Does the media report headline/announcement violate any of the indicators above?

Does the media report include photographs/video footage that depict violence, victims, and/or perpetrators in an inadequate and stereotypical manner?

Does the media report clearly indicate that male gender-based violence against women is a social problem stemming from unequal power relations between men and women?

Does the media report fulfil its educational role with regard to the phenomenon of male gender-based violence against women?

---

# **RESULTS OF THE REGIONAL ANALYSIS**

**04**



## General information

The total number of media reports on firearm misuse across the region provided by the SEESAC was 24,949. Among these, 1,484 (6%) were on male gender-based violence against women with the use of firearms.

From the data provided, it is clear that online media dominate the coverage of this topic. Ranging from 82% in Montenegro and Serbia, to 96% in North Macedonia, media reports of male gender-based violence against women with firearm misuse were mostly published by online media (85% on average for the whole region; Graph 2).<sup>44</sup>

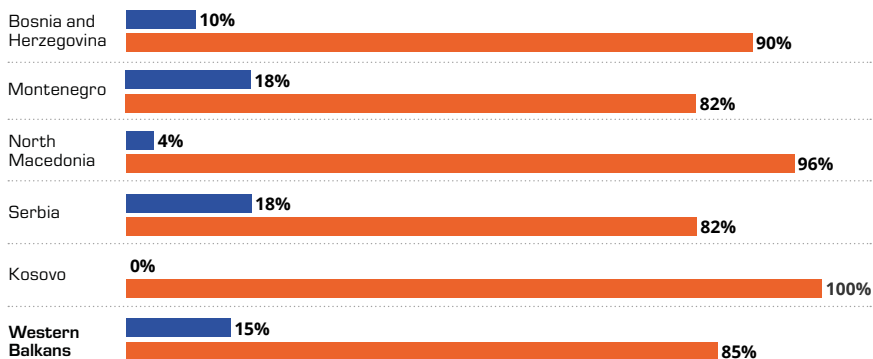
This can partly be explained by the tendency of the online media in the region to produce more content than the print media. In addition, the information on certain incidents in the sample was published in a series of online articles, often all released within a single day and frequently differing only in the headline and one (newly obtained) piece of information. Furthermore, many print media also have their own online portals, resulting in even more content from online portals in the analysis.

It is worth mentioning that the only significant difference in the nature of reporting between the online and print media is in the use of sensationalism and irrelevant details, which were more prominent in online media.

### MEDIA REPORTS ON GBV WITH THE USE OF FIREARMS PUBLISHED BY WEB AND PRINT MEDIA

■ print ■ web

GRAPH 2



44 During the time period covered by in this Analysis, there was no print media present in Kosovo. For this reason, in Kosovo, 100% of reviewed articles were found online.

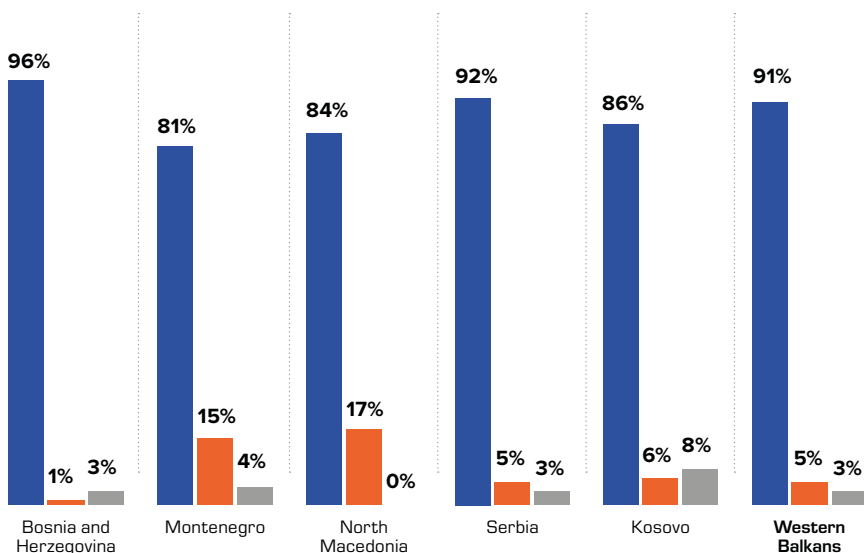
Regarding the subject featured in individual media reports (Graph 3), it is evident that the media mostly cover these topics when concrete incidents occur and that on average only 5% of the surveyed media reports addressed the phenomenon of male gender-based violence against women by firearm misuse without being prompted by a concrete incident. At the same time, even when a concrete incident served as a reason for writing on the subject, on average 3% of media reports used this as an opportunity to provide a more in-depth picture of the phenomenon.

This could be explained by the lack of time/interest of the journalists themselves or by the media outlets' editorial policies on the type of content that should be published. However, this situation also raises questions regarding the media's awareness of the problem, the industry's potential lack of knowledge of these issues, and its readiness and resources to persevere in investigative stories that would shed light on the phenomena of gender-based violence as such.

**SUBJECT OF MEDIA REPORT**

GRAPH 3

■ specific incident ■ phenomenon ■ both



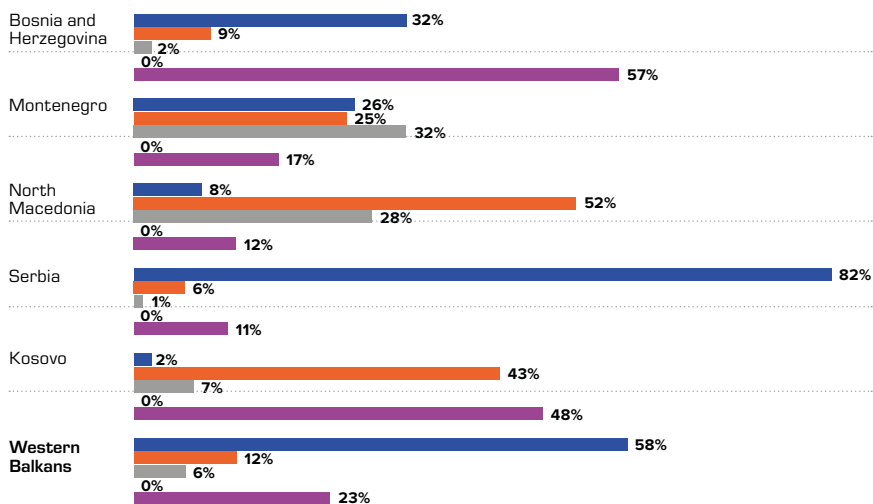
Sources of information typically used in media reports (Graph 4) varied considerably among jurisdictions. On the one hand, researchers noted articles that were primarily based on official press releases and/or statements issued by

the MOI/justice departments/NGOs/IOs. On the other hand, they noted articles grounded in the investigative work done by the journalist – the original pieces. The remaining articles were those for which journalists used a mix of these two types of sources. According to journalist-researchers, the prevalence of original pieces in Serbia (82%) was a consequence of many media reports featuring statements from anonymous sources that appear to be coming from relevant institutions, but where a definite link cannot be established. Other jurisdictions recorded around half of media reports consisting of press releases/information from the MOI (North Macedonia, 52%) or reports combining official statements and original journalist work (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 57%; Kosovo, 48%).

A critical finding relevant to all jurisdictions was the complete absence of NGOs and international organizations’ official press releases (not to be confused with individual statements of NGO representatives, shown in Graph 15). This means that these organizations either did not publish any statements related to male gender-based violence against women involving firearms during 2022, or that the media did not cite them. In either case, the quality of media reporting would benefit from including the expertise of relevant NGO and IO actors, and the results of the analysis clearly indicate that this is an area that requires improvement.

**TYPE OF MEDIA REPORT** ■ original piece ■ MOI press releases ■ justice press releases ■ NGO's/IO's press releases ■ combined

GRAPH 4



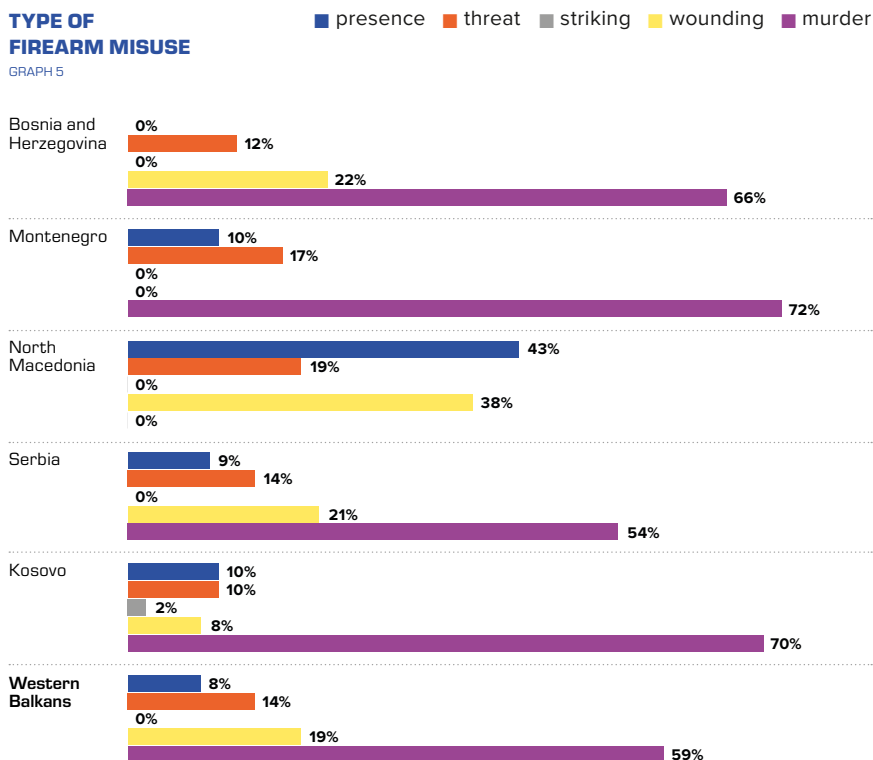
## Media's representation of concrete incidents, perpetrators, and firearms

The following data relates solely to media reports covering specific incidents and not those few that discuss the phenomenon of male gender-based violence with the misuse of firearms.

Most media reports regarding male gender-based violence against women with the misuse of firearms are focused on murder cases. An average of 59% of all media reports in the region during the observed period covered this specific manner of firearm misuse (Graph 5), except for North Macedonia, where no such incidents were reported. The use of firearms for physically striking a victim was not reported in any of the jurisdictions except in Kosovo (in 2% of articles). The presence of firearms as tools for threats, intimidation, control, and/or isolation of victims/survivors was largely unaddressed, except in North Macedonia, where it was mentioned in almost half of the analysed media reports. This aspect only appeared in 10% of media reports in Montenegro and Kosovo and just 9% of reports in Serbia. Bearing in mind statistics demonstrating a relatively high instance of firearm misuse in gender-based violence in the region, as discussed in the Introduction, it can be concluded that this phenomenon is underreported. Although lethal outcomes of firearm misuse undoubtedly deserve special attention, there is ample space for the media to cover other manners of firearm misuse and to document and stress the tendency of violence to increase over time and frequently culminate in death. By taking a more in-depth approach to covering these incidents, the media would better fulfil their task of informing and educating the public about various ways in which firearms are misused. Additionally, this desired coverage should make a difference by respecting established norms for ethical reporting.

## TYPE OF FIREARM MISUSE

GRAPH 5



### Excerpts from the media reports/headlines showing positive examples of media covering different types of firearms misuse, other than murder.

He pointed a rifle at a woman with a baby and threatened to kill her and himself.

27.9.2022, print media from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

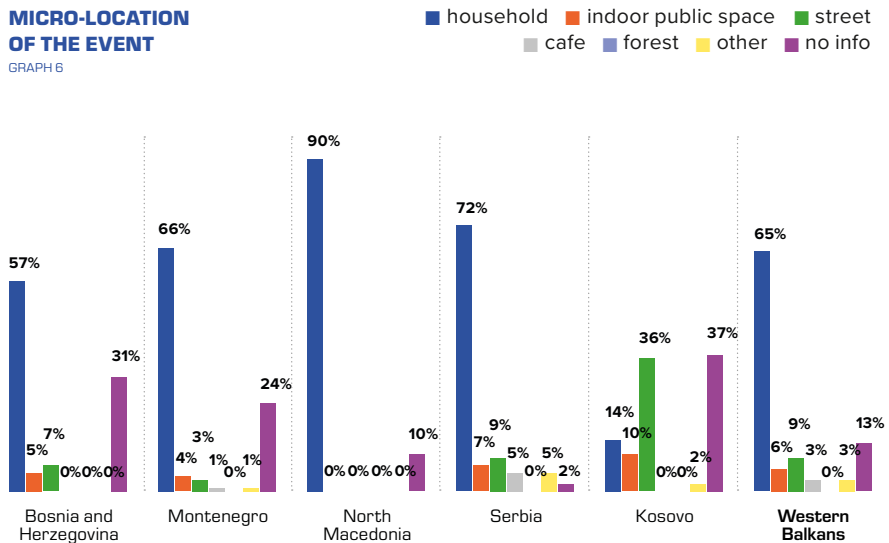
On 22.8.2022 at 18.00h at the Kisela Voda Police Station, E.A. from the village of Ljuboten, Skopje, reported that around 13:30h E.R. from the village of Ljuboten discharged a firearm at her house, damaging the house. The case is being investigated.

24.8.2022, web portal from North Macedonia.

Most cases of male gender-based violence against women with the misuse of firearms that were reported by the media in the observed period took place within private spaces – households, flats, houses, and household yards – ranging from 90% of media reports in North Macedonia to 57% in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Graph 6). The only exception was Kosovo, where approximately 1/3 of media reports covered incidents that played out on the street (including on the sidewalk and at parking lots), while approximately another 1/3 lacked information on the micro-location of the incident. In all other jurisdictions, none of the other offered micro locations (indoor public space, street, café, forest, etc.) were listed in more than 10% of the reports. This further solidifies the private sphere or the household as the place with the highest risk of escalation of violence against women.

### MICRO-LOCATION OF THE EVENT

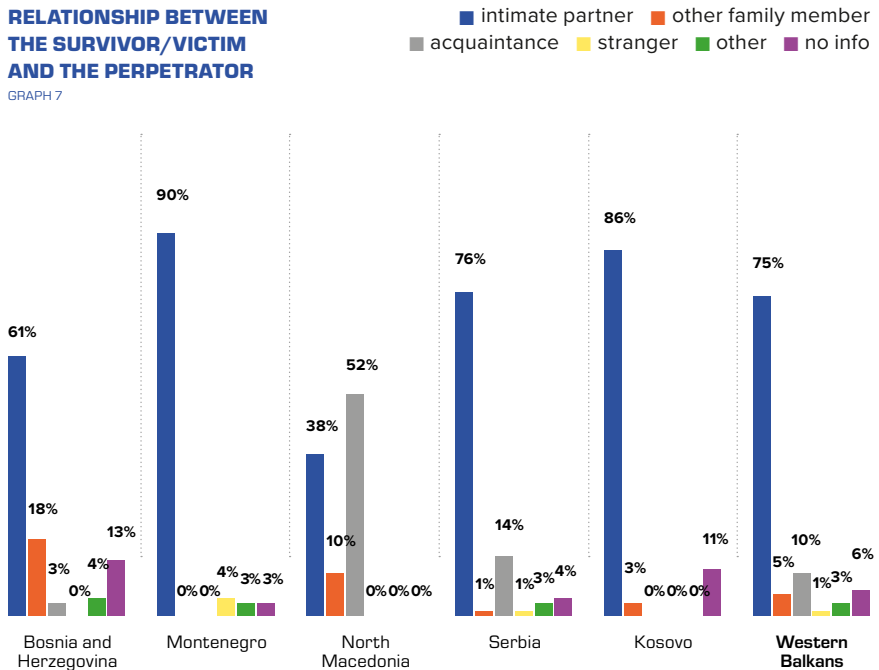
GRAPH 6



The relationship between the victim(s)/survivor(s) and the perpetrator(s) (Graph 7) was usually revealed in the media reports, ranging from 90% of articles in Montenegro to 61% in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Most articles reported that the involved parties were intimate partners (married or unmarried; former or current). The only exception is North Macedonia, where approximately half of media reports indicated that they were acquaintances (52%).

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SURVIVOR/VICTIM AND THE PERPETRATOR

GRAPH 7



This analysis was guided by the aim of serving the public interest to know the relevant details of incidents of firearm misuse in the context of male gender-based violence against women. However, it is important to note that these relevant details do not include details of, e.g., victims' clothing, their private photographs, etc. (see the section – Media's representations of survivors/victims and the violence itself). Details that the public has the right to know and that are of public interest refer to the type and number of firearms used, the legal status of firearm possession, information about whether the perpetrator has a history of violent behaviour and/or misuse of firearms, his/their connection with current and past armed conflicts, as well as the institutional response to his/their crimes. By providing these specific details, the media have an important role to play in shedding light on the phenomenon overall. It also plays a constructive role in increasing the public's understanding of the problem, shaping its perceptions, and consequently influencing the actions of survivors, relevant institutions, and the wider public. This approach enables the media to bolster everyone's ability and inclination to

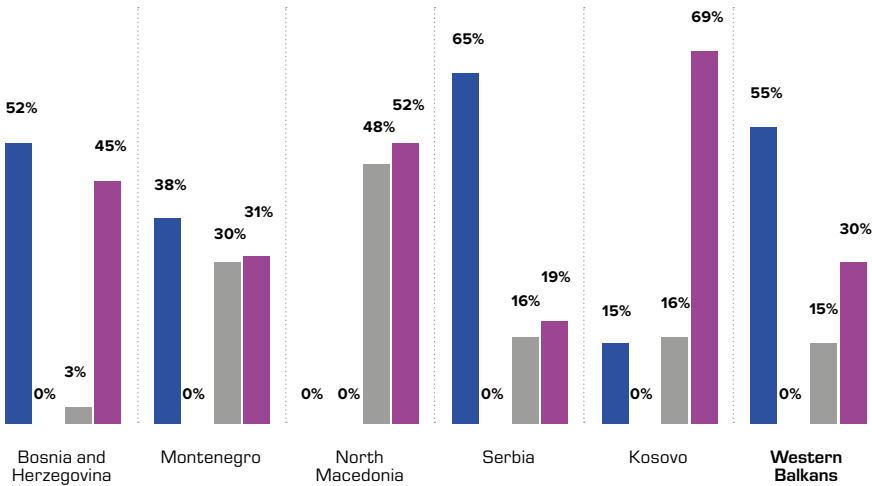
look for warning signs and patterns of violence, including potential risks of its escalation, thus contributing to the prevention of such violence. However, findings of this analysis show that this information was commonly underrepresented in media reports.

In most jurisdictions covered by this analysis, media reports provided information on the type of firearm misused in a little over half of the published stories (Graph 8) - 55% on average. One-third of media reports mentioned both the type and the number of firearms misused. However, the legal status of the firearm(s) used was mostly invisible in the news regionally (Graph 9). A little over 1/4 of media reports provided this information (ranging from 6% in Bosnia and Herzegovina to 38% in North Macedonia).

**INFORMATION ON THE TYPE AND NUMBER OF FIREARMS**

GRAPH 8

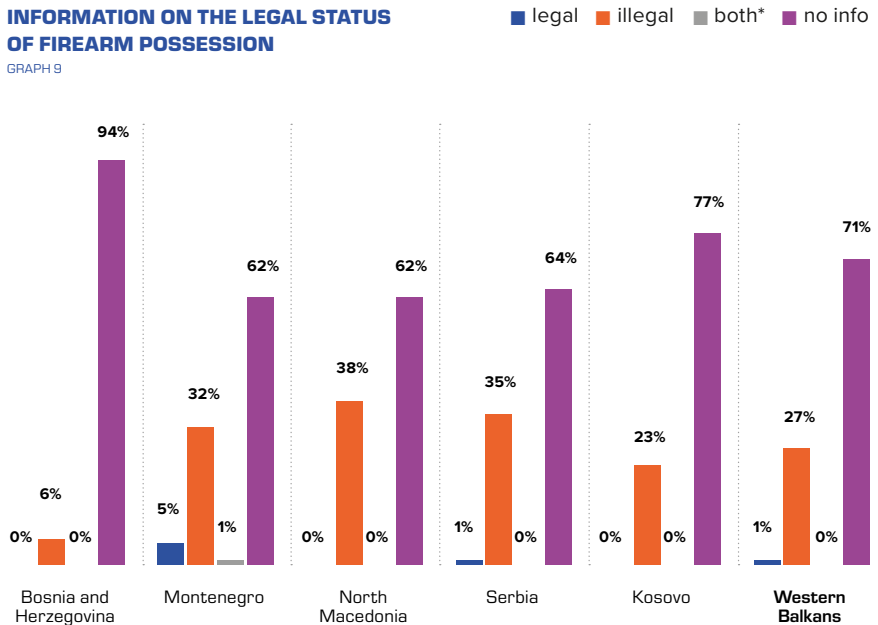
■ type ■ number ■ both ■ no info





## INFORMATION ON THE LEGAL STATUS OF FIREARM POSSESSION

GRAPH 9



\* Category "Both" refers to those cases when multiple pieces of firearms are used or found, and they have different legal status.

### Excerpts from the media reports illustrating positive examples of media including information on the type and the number of pieces of firearms misused in an incident, or their legal status:

Last night, the investigators of the Podujeva police station arrested a person for domestic violence, and found and seized an AK47 automatic rifle and a pistol, three magazines, 35 cartridges, a metal rod, etc.

As the Police have announced, the suspect N.S, male, 37 years old, was escorted to the police station and, in consultation with the state prosecutor, he was detained for 48 hours while a case was initiated for the criminal offence of domestic violence and unauthorized ownership, control, or possession of weapons.

3.12.2022, web portal from Kosovo.

According to the verdict, it was proven during the trial that on 19 May 2020, in Podgorica, with the threat of a gun, J.\* forced his then ex-girlfriend to have sexual intercourse.

As stated in one of the decisions on the extension of the detention of J., the girl said that the accused came to her house with a weapon and forced her into a sexual act with threats.

The girl's testimony before the court was confirmed by her mother, who said that her daughter informed her by text message that an ex-boyfriend had come to her house and that he had a gun with him.

Fearing for her daughter's life, the mother immediately informed the police about everything.

On the same day, a police patrol stopped J. around 15:00h searched the car and found a "CZ" pistol with four bullets in the magazine.

\*Personal data was revealed in the article, but for ethical reasons, was not disclosed in this text.

9.7.2022, web portal from Montenegro.

The Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade filed an indictment against V.M.\* (42) on the suspicion that on 25 June this year in Grocka, in an intoxicated state, he threatened his ex-common-law wife N.K. with a pistol in the presence of her father and brother, insulted her, made threats of suicide and that he fired one bullet from a pistol, for which he does not have a license to hold and carry.

\*Personal data was revealed in the article, but for ethical reasons, was not disclosed in this text.

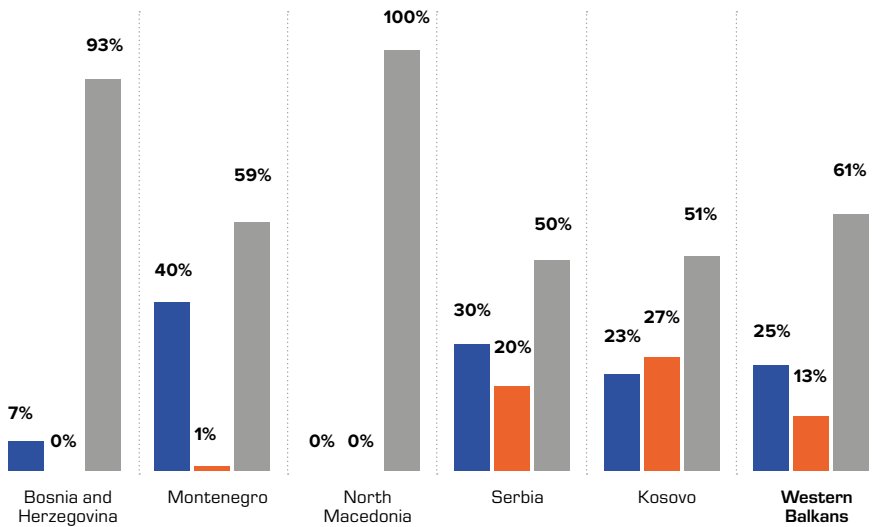
4.8.2022, web portal from Serbia.

More than 2/3 of analysed media reports in the region, published during the observed period, did not include information on whether the perpetrator had a prior history of violent behaviour and/or firearm misuse (Graphs 10 and 11). This information is critical, and the media have the right to request it from relevant institutions, as well as clarifications on their actions in response to such behaviours. Consequently, media outlets could shed light on possible shortcomings in the protection of citizens and influence change.

### IS THERE A HISTORY OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR BY THE PERPETRATOR?

■ yes ■ no ■ no info

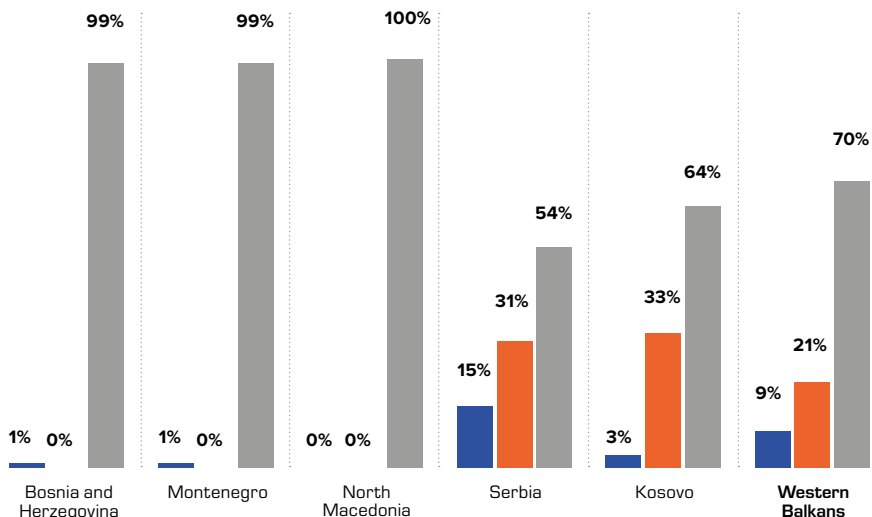
GRAPH 10



## IS THERE A HISTORY OF FIREARMS MISUSE BY THE PERPETRATOR?

■ yes ■ no ■ no info

GRAPH 11



**Excerpt from a media report, showing a positive example of media revealing the previous violent behaviour of the perpetrator, thus adding to the educational aspect of reporting:**

As per the prosecution's assessment, Š.\* was targeted by the accused Đ.\* because she refused to renew the extramarital relationship that had ended a few months earlier, according to Pobjeda. During that time, the accused Đ. stalked Š., sent messages through fake profiles, threatened, and said that it was not over between them and that her life was in his hands. The threats directed at Š. came true on the last day of September last year when Đ. came in front of her family house and shot the 19-year-old girl with a pistol of an unknown brand after she repeatedly told him that she did not want to live with him and that she did not love him.

\*Personal data was revealed in the article, but for ethical reasons, was not disclosed in this text.

2.3.2022, web portal from Montenegro.

Although the region has a recent history of armed conflicts and it is assumed that as a result of such conflicts civilians had easier access to firearms, media outlets have shown minimal interest in exploring possible linkages between these remnants of armed conflicts and gender-based violence with the use of firearms (Graph 12). With the exception of Kosovo, where 35% of the surveyed articles explicitly noted that the concrete incidents were unrelated to conflicts in any way, most of the media reports in the region failed to take this aspect into consideration. This means that the media reporting could be enhanced in terms of providing information relevant in post-conflict societies on potential links between the region's recent history and the presence of male gender-based violence against women. As indicated in the Introduction, studies on violence against women from the Western Balkans<sup>45</sup> have underscored the specifics of post-conflict contexts – the most crucial one being the “extensive availability of firearms during and after the armed conflicts.”<sup>46</sup> The studies indicate that firearms have been retained by former soldiers and are used against women in the conflicts' aftermath. “Ignoring post-conflict violence during the reconstruction phase can hamper the social healing, resiliency, and economic recovery of a nation,”<sup>47</sup> states the author of a research studying three conflict-affected countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, and Liberia.

45 Please see footnotes 3-14.

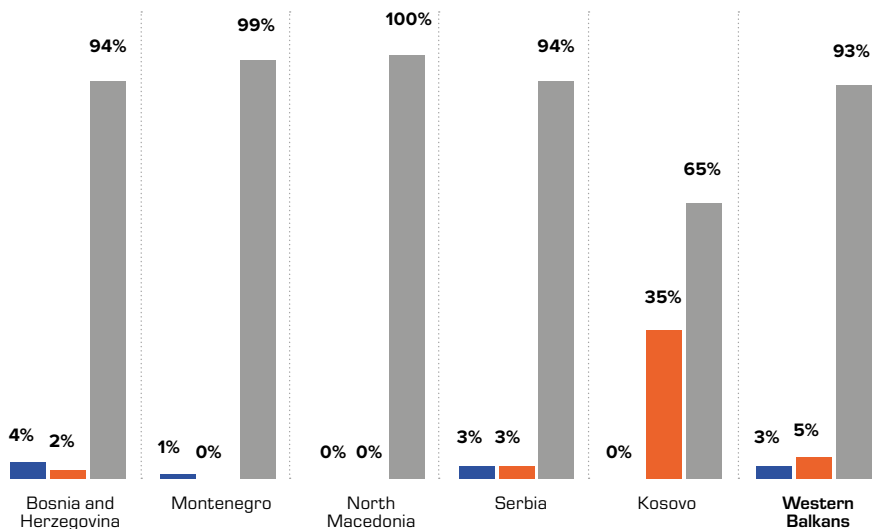
46 Please see [osce.org/files/f/documents/e/4/419750\\_1.pdf](https://osce.org/files/f/documents/e/4/419750_1.pdf)

47 Please see [blogs.worldbank.org/dev4peace/ripple-effects-war-how-violence-can-persist-after-formal-peace-declared](https://blogs.worldbank.org/dev4peace/ripple-effects-war-how-violence-can-persist-after-formal-peace-declared)

## IS THERE A LINK BETWEEN THE INCIDENT AND PRIOR OR CURRENT ARMED CONFLICTS/WARS?

■ yes ■ no ■ no info

GRAPH 12



### Excerpt from the media report linking the current problem of male gender-based violence against women with the use of firearms and the recent history of conflict:

The fact that women are more prone to experience post-war domestic and intimate partner violence with firearms perpetrated by men who spent time on the battlefields of the former Yugoslavia makes the problem even more pronounced and more profound, especially since the holders of power are precisely those who played a significant role and participated in war politics during the nineties.

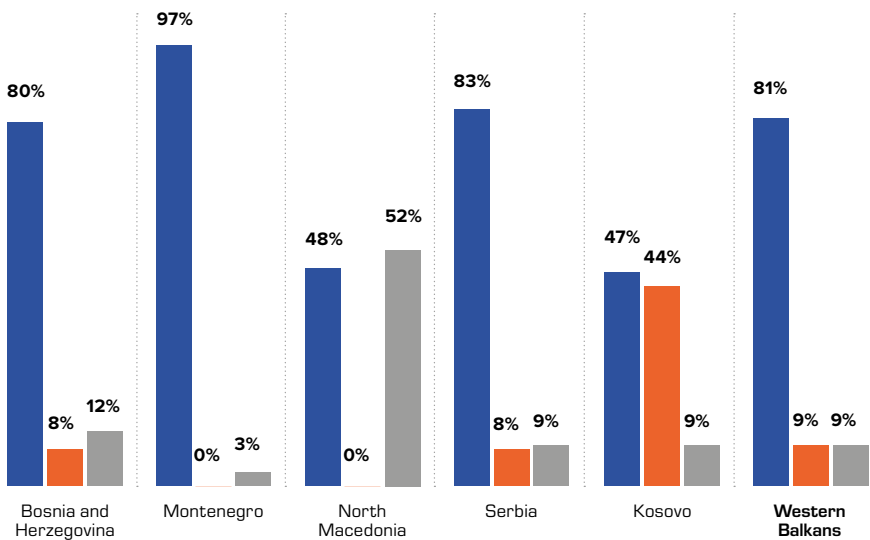
7.10.2022, print media from Serbia.

An important issue that this analysis sought to examine, is media coverage of the institutional responses to firearm misuse in cases of male gender-based violence against women (Graph 13). While more than 80% of the surveyed media reports across the region did write about the responses made by the relevant institutions against perpetrators following an incident, researchers also noted that in most cases media reports covered only the initial measures taken and did not follow cases to their legal conclusions. Thus, most of the sanctions mentioned in reports speak of the arrests or indictments that took place in the days immediately following the incident. Since court processes take time, the media tend to lose interest. As a result, only a small number of reports cited final court rulings.

### DID RELEVANT AUTHORITIES RESPOND TO FIREARM MISUSE?

■ yes ■ no ■ no info

GRAPH 13



**Examples of the media headlines illustrating how they report on institutional reactions to violence, however primarily at their initial stages and not at the time of their conclusions:**

**Details of the incident in Kotor Varošu:**

**The suspect was arrested for the murder of his sister.**

4.6.2022, web portal from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**He hurt his wife while cleaning his pistols**

**– the prosecution began the investigation of Arachinovec.**

28.8.2022, web portal from North Macedonia.

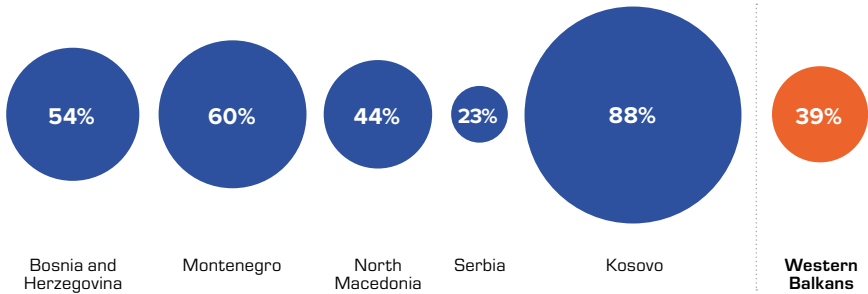
When it comes to including statements made by relevant experts from various public institutions, NGOs, IOs, etc. in the media reports (Graph 14), the situation was found to vary throughout the region. The notes of the relevant researchers from all jurisdictions, especially Serbia, highlight the frequent use of unknown sources, such as “sources close to the investigations,” which cannot be fully trusted, particularly when disclosing “shocking details.” While the identity of these sources is unknown, an assumption is made that they are most likely acquaintances of survivors and/or perpetrators, or that they are even representatives of institutions working on the case.

The majority of relevant statements in the region originated from the Ministries of Interior, followed by the Prosecutors’ Offices (Graph 15). However, considering the relatively low percentage of such statements as indicated in the Graph 14, especially in some of the jurisdictions, there certainly is room for improving cooperation between the media and these institutions. Enhancement is also clearly necessary in the cooperation between the media and NGOs and international organizations working in the field of preventing male gender-based violence against women and/or firearm misuse. Despite being potential sources of pertinent data, explanations, and expert opinions, their views were rarely seen in relevant media reports which might indicate the lack of initiative by journalists to seek out these experts, or experts’ unwillingness to provide information.



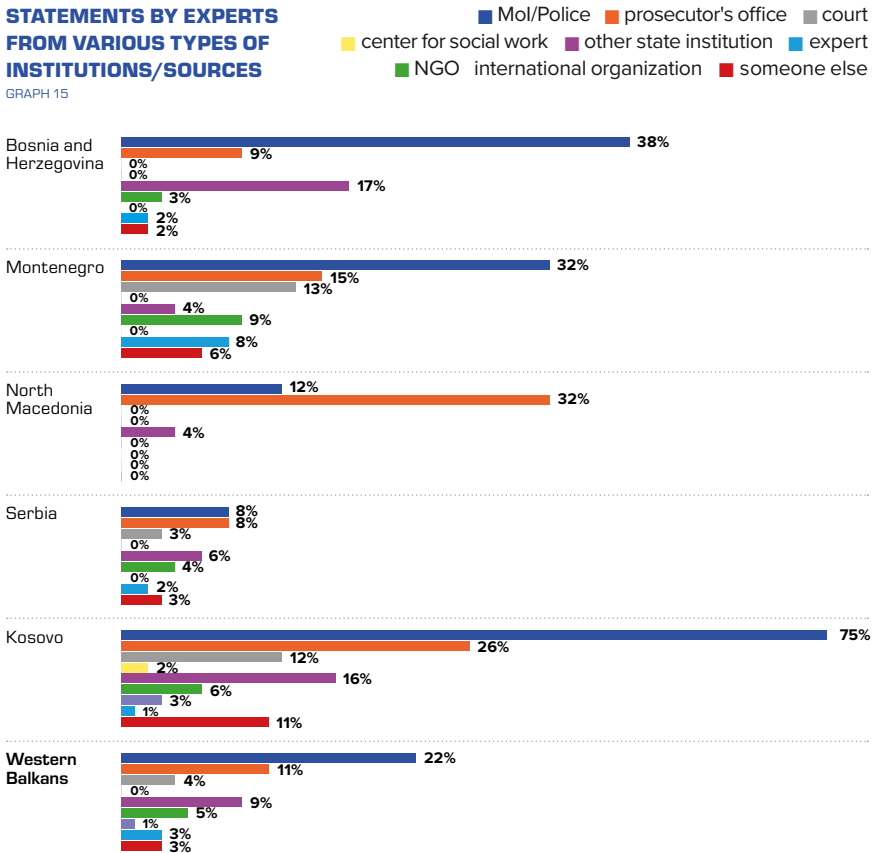
## MEDIA REPORTS CONTAINING STATEMENT OF RELEVANT EXPERTS

GRAPH 14



## STATEMENTS BY EXPERTS FROM VARIOUS TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS/SOURCES

GRAPH 15

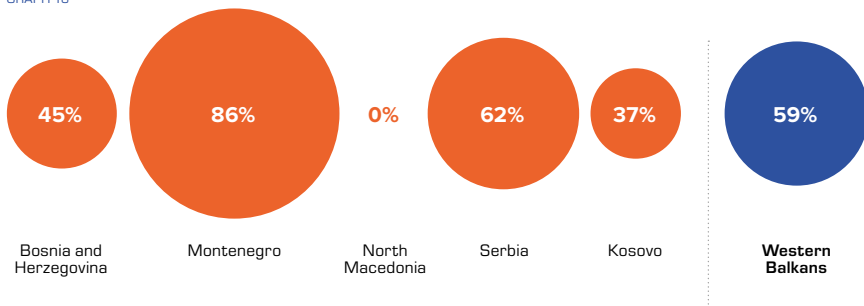


# Media's representation of survivors/victims and violence

Data suggests that the frequent disclosure of the identity of survivors/victims, their children, and their family members poses a significant problem (Graph 16). This issue is particularly prominent in the media of Montenegro and Serbia, where identity was revealed in most of the analysed reports (86% and 62%, respectively). In more than half of the media reports from Bosnia and Herzegovina (55%) and Kosovo (63%), the identity of survivors/victims and their families was protected, yet this still leaves great room for progress. North Macedonia stood out as an exception in this regard, with no media reports found that disclosed the identities of victims/survivors. Still, as the involved researchers from North Macedonia warned, this finding should be taken with some reservation, as the sample of media reports was relatively small and could provide an overly positive and distorted image of the treatment survivors of gender-based violence involving a firearm have in this jurisdiction.

## DISCLOSURE OF THE IDENTITY OF SURVIVOR/VICTIM AND/OR FAMILY MEMBERS

GRAPH 16

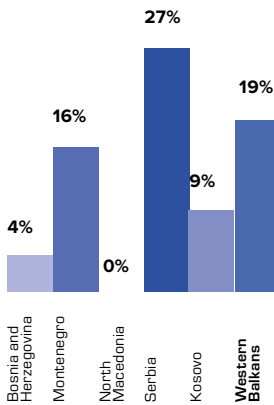


Responsibility was shifted from the perpetrator to the survivor/victim (Graph 17) in approximately 1/5 of media reports across the jurisdictions, with the highest percentage seen in Serbia (27%), followed by Montenegro (16%). A remarkably similar pattern can be seen concerning the media's tendency to diminish/ridicule violence and show scepticism towards the survivor/victim, with 1/5 of all media articles in the region featuring this type of language (Graph 18). Equally discouraging is the data regarding the justification of violence based on external circumstances or the

perpetrators' personality traits (Graph 19), which was present in approximately 1/3 of analysed media reports from across the region. Again, this practice prevailed in articles published in Serbia (41%), followed by those from Montenegro (24%). Regarding both issues of shifting responsibility and justification of violence, there were no such cases found in the media reports from North Macedonia.

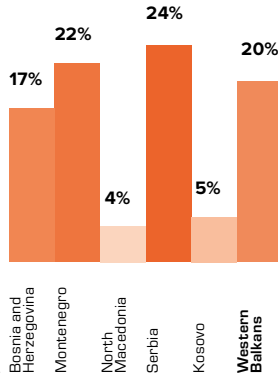
### SHIFTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR VIOLENCE FROM THE PERPETRATOR TO THE SURVIVOR/VICTIM

GRAPH 17



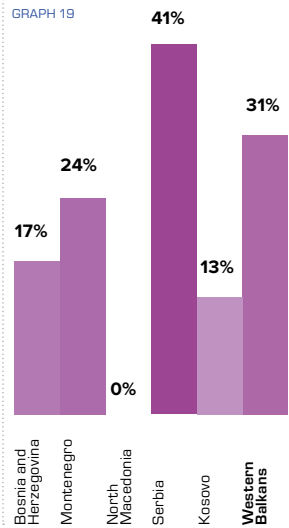
### DIMINISHMENT OR MOCKING OF VIOLENCE AND/OR SHOWING DISTRUST TOWARDS THE SURVIVOR/VICTIM

GRAPH 18



### JUSTIFICATION OF VIOLENCE BASED ON EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES OR THE PERPETRATOR'S PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

GRAPH 19



Excerpts from the media headlines and reports illustrating how media reports mocked violence and/or shifted the responsibility for violence from the perpetrator to external circumstances or the perpetrators' personal characteristics:

**GRIM TOLL: Killed because of quarrels and love, clans did nothing.**

2.1.2022, web portal from Montenegro.

**What is known about the crime in University Clinical Center: The murder of the woman who did not manage to become a mother, the man who took her life, is still at large.**

30.11.2022, web portal from Kosovo.

**JULY IS THE BLOODIEST MONTH OF THE YEAR: These crimes HORRIFIED all of Serbia, monsters are ACTIVATED IN THE SUMMER?!**

6.7.2022, web portal from Serbia.

**He kissed her, then killed her**

9.1.2022, print media from Serbia.

**IS BRANDY THE MAIN CULPRIT?! Crime on CHRISTMAS EVE near Svilajnac, has a sinister background – D\* hasn't had a drink in 20 years!**

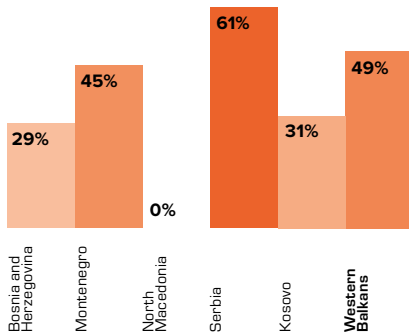
\*Personal data was revealed in the article, but for ethical reasons, was not disclosed in this text.

9.1.2022, web portal from Serbia.

Especially alarming is data related to the disclosure of irrelevant details regarding the specific acts of violence or the statements of irrelevant interlocutors (Graph 20), as well as the use of sensationalist and/or stereotypical language when referring to violence, survivors/victims and/or perpetrators (Graph 21). Each of these elements was present in approximately half of the media reports in the region. The highest rate of these malpractices was found in media reports published in Serbia, where more than half of the analysed media reports used sensationalist expressions and almost 2/3 disclosed irrelevant information. Although the media reports from North Macedonia did not register any unethical reporting based on any previous indicators, 4% were found to feature sensational elements. The notes of the involved researchers from all jurisdictions suggest that this type of unethical reporting is mostly prevalent in articles that are the original work of journalists, as opposed to those in which journalists primarily relied upon official statements and press releases from responsible authorities, NGOs or IOs. In these articles, journalists seek to include as many (irrelevant) details as possible (usually provided by neighbours or family members rather than officials) and use sensational phrases to captivate readers with “disturbing details,” “shocking statements,” and “scandalous news” not found in other media.

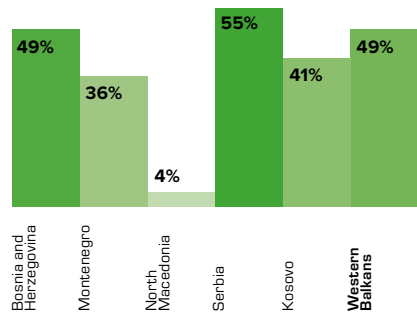
## DISCLOSURE OF IRRELEVANT DETAILS OF THE ACT OF VIOLENCE OR IRRELEVANT INTERLOCUTORS' STATEMENTS

GRAPH 20



## USE OF SENSATIONALIST OR STEREOTYPICAL LANGUAGE WHEN REFERRING TO VIOLENCE, THE SURVIVOR/VICTIM, THE PERPETRATOR

GRAPH 21



Excerpts from media reports illustrating how the media use irrelevant details and sensationalist and/or stereotypical expressions:

A 51-year-old man beat up his girlfriend from Romania (22), then pointed a gun; here are the details of the drama in Kichevo.

30.11.2022, web portal from North Macedonia.

Maniac! He came drunk to the house of his common-law wife and pointed a gun at her and the baby: "If you don't go with me, I'll kill you and myself."

26.9.2022, web portal from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

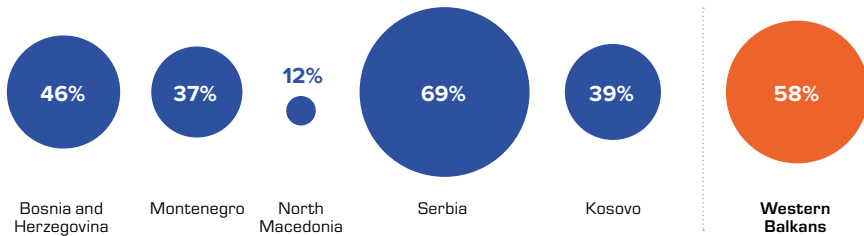
The moment when the dead body of the pregnant woman was removed from the yard of the University Clinical Center.

30.11.2022, web portal from Kosovo.

Headlines of media reports were also analysed, because they are often the only thing that the public reads – whether they are encountered on the front pages of print media displayed in stores or by readers scrolling through social media in search of web portals. The aim of this aspect of the analysis was to establish whether, and to what extent, the headlines themselves featured the elements of aforementioned unethical reporting, such as identity disclosure, irrelevant details, diminishment of violence, justification of perpetrators’ acts, shifting of responsibility, sensational wording, etc. The relevant data shows (Graph 22) that more than half (58%) of media headlines in the region employed the above-indicated elements of unethical reporting. These include more than 2/3 of reports in Serbia, almost half of the reports in Bosnia and Herzegovina, more than 1/3 in Kosovo and Montenegro, and around 1/10 of the reports in North Macedonia. Bearing in mind the particular power of headlines, it could be assumed that their usage by the media in the region could negatively affect the public perception of firearm misuse in male gender-based violence against women.

### HEADLINE WITH UNETHICAL ELEMENTS

GRAPH 22

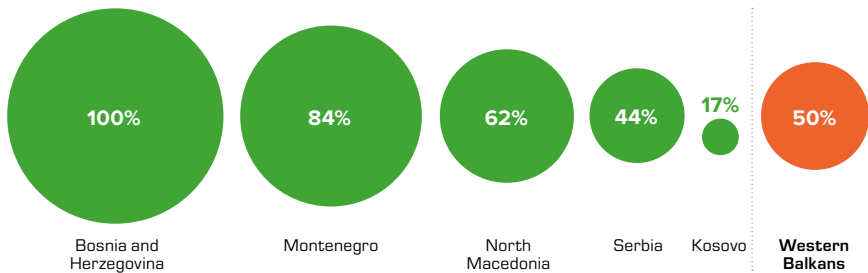


# Visualizing violence and firearms

The analysis reveals that, on average, half of the media reports examined during the observed period in the region displayed firearms in an inadequate manner (Graph 23) – ranging from 100% of media reports in Bosnia and Herzegovina to 17% in Kosovo. Depicting firearms in an inadequate manner implies that when firearms are displayed, they are usually presented as a symbol of power, which could reinforce uncritical views regarding firearms and contribute to their glorification in society. Some reports however adopted a more critical and adequate approach, such as depicting firearms in the hands of forensic experts (e.g., in a forensic bag), during confiscation, in the custody of relevant authorities, or crossed out with a red line and marked with “STOP GUNS,” etc.

## PRESENCE OF INADEQUATE PHOTOGRAPHS/VISUALS OF FIREARMS

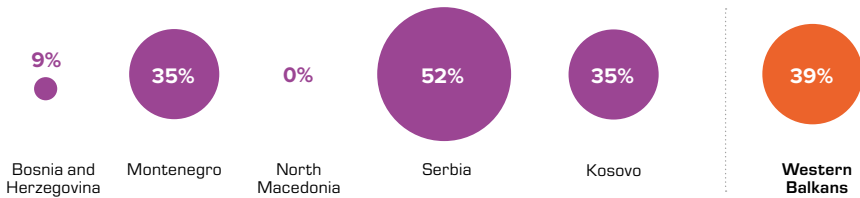
GRAPH 23



When it comes to photographs/visuals depicting violence, survivors/victims, and/or perpetrators in an inadequate manner (showing details of the violence committed, revealing the identity of survivor, showing survivors/victim in a subdued position and/or perpetrator in a dominant one, or showing the two of them together using photo editing), the data is less distressing, with such images present in 39% of the analysed media reports in the region (Graph 24). However, the sample did demonstrate that the media reports from all but one jurisdiction contained photographs of victims' dead bodies, injuries, crime scenes details, etc.

### PRESENCE OF PHOTOGRAPHS/VISUALS THAT DEPICT VIOLENCE, SURVIVORS, PERPETRATORS IN AN INADEQUATE AND STEREOTYPICAL MANNER

GRAPH 24





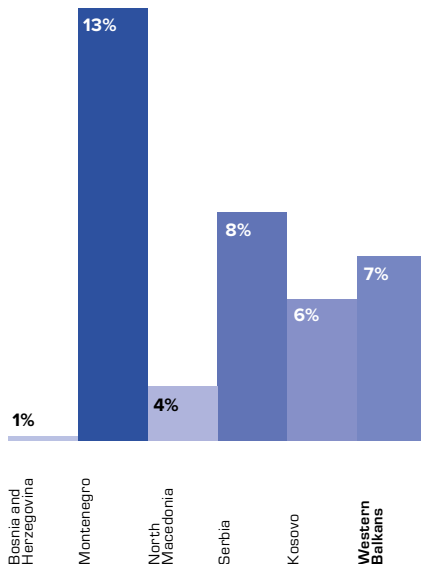
# Media's educational role

Finally, the most unfavourable results of this analysis refer to the media's role and responsibility to inform and educate the public on firearm misuse in male gender-based violence against women as a social problem. Educational content includes relevant statistical information, the description of the phenomenon and its prevention, and information on protection and support for survivors. As the graphs show, educational content on both firearm misuse (Graph 25) and gender-based male violence against women (Graph 26) appeared on average in less than 10% of media reports in the region. In certain jurisdictions, such content was featured in only 1% of reports. In most cases where educational content was provided, it was through the statements of NGO experts dealing with the problem of male gender-based violence against women.

A similar situation was documented with content that explicitly states that violence against women is a social problem stemming from unequal power relations between women and men. On average, this type of information was present in only 3% of media reports in the region and did not exceed 10% in any jurisdiction. (Graph 27).

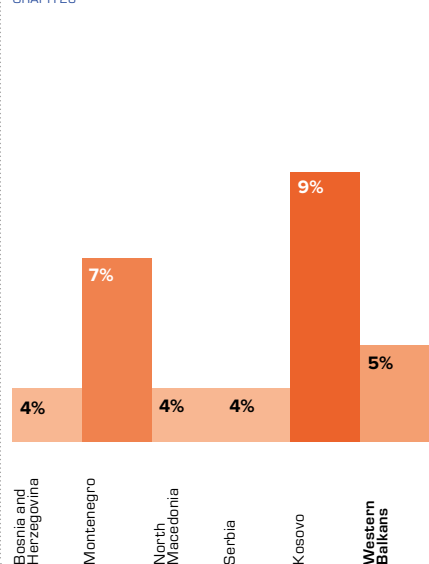
## PRESENCE OF EDUCATIONAL CONTENT ON THE PHENOMENON OF FIREARM MISUSE

GRAPH 25



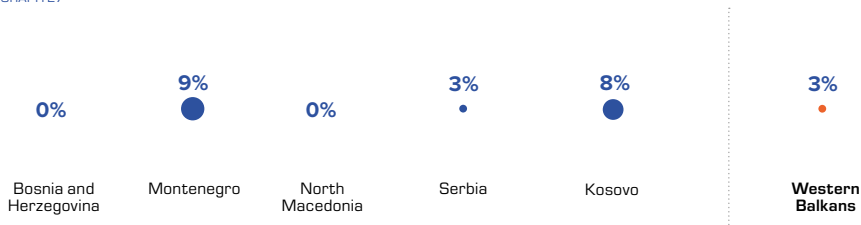
## PRESENCE OF EDUCATIONAL CONTENT ON THE PHENOMENON OF MALE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

GRAPH 26



## PRESENCE OF THE INDICATION THAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS A SOCIAL PROBLEM STEMMING FROM UNEQUAL POWER RELATIONS BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

GRAPH 27



### Excerpts from the media reports illustrating educational content:

The only proper way to overcome this state of structural discrimination against women and children who are victims of domestic violence and violence against women is for the authorities in Montenegro to, instead of superficially proposing new legal solutions, establish the responsibility of those who do not adhere to the law and to conduct a detailed analysis of the institutional failures in cases of femicide and to create new effective policies, based on its results.

Maja Raičević, Executive Director of the NGO Center for Women's Rights, in a statement for Pobjeda.

5.7.2022, web portal from Montenegro.

Some of the indicators that can signal a high degree of risk, that is, indicate that serious injury or murder will occur, include: the abuser's history of violent behaviour (against the same or previous partners); possession of firearms; mental illness, abuse of alcohol or psychoactive substances; abandonment (divorce/breakup) of the abuser by the victim; murder threats; suicide threats; victim's fear that the abuser will kill her. These are just some of the risks that need to be considered in each individual case taking into account the entire context. Professionals dealing with such cases should be familiar with this procedure - indicates Vedrana Lacmanović from AWC.

31.7.2022, web portal from Serbia.

According to the Ministry of Interior statistics, in the first half of 2020, 435 criminal offences were committed, involving 450 perpetrators. A high percentage of perpetrators, 91.3%, were men who have committed violence against their wives and parents. In terms of the manner in which these crimes were committed, in 341 cases, the perpetrators used physical force against the victims, inflicting bodily injuries; 32 cases were committed with cold weapons, and three with firearms. "Therefore, the use of gender-based violence as an aspect is important because it emphasizes that many forms of violence against women are rooted in the power imbalance between women and men" concluded Vice President Spasovski.

14.8.2022, web portal from North Macedonia.

# **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**05**

Media reporting on male gender-based violence against women involving firearm misuse in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo exhibits many similarities. In all jurisdictions, coverage of this topic is dominated by online media outlets, as they tend to produce more content than print media, primarily when a specific incident occurs. These incidents typically prompt a series of articles generated and published in a short time span, sometimes differing only in their headlines and one (newly obtained) piece of information. The media usually do not devote sufficient attention to incidents of male gender-based violence to help their audience understand why these incidents are, in fact, parts of a larger social problem. Cases of such violence are generally portrayed as isolated incidents (regardless of how often they happen) without being placed in any social or political context. A discouraging finding is that the media overwhelmingly fail to use coverage of these individual incidents as an opportunity to educate the public, explain the phenomenon, provide relevant statistics, and/or feature information about associated risks, available protection, and support for survivors. Disturbingly, only 3% of analysed media reports contained information on both specific cases and the broader context. This, to some degree, can be explained by the journalists' assumed lack of time and/or interest or by specific editorial policies dictating the type of content that should be published. However, it also raises questions regarding the media's awareness of the problem, its potential gaps in understanding and/or lack of sensitivity, and points to the need to work to increase their awareness and fill existing gaps. It might also point to the lack of readiness and resources of relevant media outlets to persevere in investigative stories that would shed light on the phenomenon of gender-based violence as such.

 **RECOMMENDATION:**

**EDUCATE JOURNALISTS AND EDITORIAL STAFF**

- ▶ Journalists and editors should be educated on the phenomenon of male gender-based violence against women involving firearm misuse, and they should actively seek out the relevant interlocutors on the topic from responsible authorities as well as from NGOs and IO community.
- ▶ This knowledge, alongside accessible statistics and resources, should inform and be an integral part of media reporting, both in articles depicting the phenomenon itself as well as those dealing with concrete incidents.

The analysis clearly shows the excess of information irrelevant to the public and a lack of educational content in the media's reporting on incidents involving male gender-based violence against women committed with the use of firearms in the region. Every other media report (49%) was found to contain irrelevant and sensationalist information (such as immaterial details of the incidents, statements of unofficial interlocutors such as neighbours, etc.). However, educational content on the social problem of firearm misuse and gender-based violence against women was grossly lacking. It was found in less than 10% of media reports surveyed in the region.

This implies that while the media usually do "dig" to get information, their focus is primarily on obtaining "captivating" details that might generate more clicks/attention from potential readers and not on obtaining relevant information, such as experts' opinions, information on the type and number of firearms misused, their legal status, whether the perpetrator has a history of violent behaviour and/or of firearm misuse, statistical data pertaining to the phenomenon or gender-based violence, information shedding light on the impact of firearms in domestic violence, information on the relevant legal frameworks, etc.



#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

### **SHIFT FROM SENSATIONAL TO EDUCATIONAL CONTENT**

- ▶ The focus of the media's attention should shift from unnecessary to relevant details. Instead of seeking details such as victims' previous behaviour and neighbours' personal perceptions of the perpetrator as a "quiet and good man," efforts should be invested in searching for details of public interest. This could include educational content on the issue, such as information on the lethality of firearms in domestic violence context compared to other types of incidents, the legal status of the firearms used, a history of violent behaviour or misuse of firearms by the perpetrator, institutional responses to any prior violence, the microlocation of the incident, etc.

Most of the relevant statements in the region appear to be derived from the Ministries of Interior and police representatives, followed by the Prosecutors' Offices. However, data from some jurisdictions shows a high percentage of

anonymous sources from institutions and “persons close to the investigation.” This often correlates with providing case-specific details that are vital for the processing of the case but irrelevant to the public and unsuitable for media reports, primarily because they can endanger the course of investigation and undermine the ability of the prosecution to bring the perpetrator to justice. The data shows that experts’ statements coming from NGOs and international organizations familiar with this social problem are rarely seen in media reports. Still, when they do appear, these statements usually alleviate the problematic gap in educational content.



#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

### **EXPAND SOURCES AND TYPES OF INFORMATION GATHERED**

#### **INSTITUTIONS:**

Cooperation between the media and relevant institutions, such as the Ministries of the Interior and the Prosecutors’ Offices, could be improved, especially in terms of the type of content these institutions provide to the media. For instance:

- ▶ Instead of focusing on details such as the amount of blood on the victim, the public’s right to know should be met by providing information on whether the perpetrator has a history of violence and/or firearm misuse, how he obtained the firearm, etc.
- ▶ The Ministries of the Interior and Prosecutor’s Offices can use their role as “information providers” to also share more overarching educational content in communication with the media, going beyond the details of individual cases and offering information on relevant statistics, legislation, phenomenon, support services available, the importance of bystander’s role in preventing violence by reporting, etc. By offering relevant statistical information and educational content, institutions, together with the media, can act as a united front in shedding light on this harmful phenomenon, influencing society, survivors, and institutions to look for the warning signs, patterns of violence, and potential risks of its escalation, while contributing to the prevention of such violence.

## **MEDIA:**

- ▶ Journalists should make full use of any statistical and educational data provided to them by the relevant institutions and thus contribute to raising awareness among the public about the phenomenon overall.
- ▶ Cooperation between the media and NGOs and international organizations working in the field of preventing violence against women and/or firearm misuse should be improved. The media should actively seek information from these organizations, as they could likely serve as sources of relevant data, explanations, and experts' opinions.

The analysis shows that while the media in the region frequently report on institutional responses to violence, they primarily focus on arrests and indictments. The lack of investigative journalism on possible institutional shortcomings in terms of the prevention of incidents and the protection of victims is deeply concerning.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

### **TELL THE WHOLE STORY**

- ▶ Due to a gap in the investigative coverage of this phenomenon, there is huge potential for improvement in this area. Media outlets should explore institutional responses throughout the life of a case. They should follow concrete incidents "from beginning to end" and report not only on arrests and indictments but on the entire institutional procedure, including final sentencing. This approach could serve as a prevention method, as it could deter perpetrators from violence, as well as build survivors' trust in institutions. In so doing, the media would also positively affect the healing process of survivors of gender-based violence and firearms-related trauma. It would also help shine a light on the possible lack of protection for survivors and victims, thus instigating change.
- ▶ The media could also delve into topics such as public perception of firearms, firearm ownership, intended usage, gender implications, the community's role in supporting survivors, etc., in order to help the public better understand the environment in which male gender-based violence takes place and to reassess presumed truths about firearms.



It can be reasonably concluded that, while the issue of male gender-based violence against women involving firearm misuse is covered through daily news to some degree, the political, institutional, and social aspects of the phenomenon remain largely invisible, as do its causes and consequences. This also relates to the type of violence that is visible in the media, where reports covering murders accounted for 2/3 of all media reports, while other, less overt types of firearm misuse, such as threatening to use firearms and the presence of firearms as a factor leading to control and intimidation of victims, were widely neglected.



**RECOMMENDATION:**

**FOCUS ON VIOLENCE  
IN ALL ITS OUTCOMES – NOT ONLY FEMICIDE**

- ▶ Although lethal outcomes of firearm misuse undoubtedly deserve special attention, there is ample space for the media to cover all other manners of firearm misuse. These include threats, striking, wounding with a firearm, as well as the mere presence of a firearm (since its presence alone can instil fear in survivors/victims and allow the perpetrators to establish control over them, even if the weapon has not been used). The media should actively work on documenting the linkages between different forms of firearm misuse in violence against women and stress the tendency for violence to escalate over time and often culminate in death. In doing so, they would fulfil their task of providing relevant information and educating the public.

The media reporting on this issue can have a significant impact on survivors, their families, and society, both positive and negative.

When media attention, and therefore public attention, is focused solely on specific incidents, commonly highlighting the gravest outcomes, this sends a message to all other survivors that there is no link between what they see in the media and their own experiences. As a result, these individuals are more likely to feel lonely and isolated, remaining vulnerable and unable to seek support in their closest circles, as others are also

exposed to the same media messages that fail to provide a wider context and information on how to support survivors. By following such an approach, the media not only fail to fulfil their educational role, but they also educate the public that violence against women, including violence committed with firearms, is not a political and social issue.

By diverting public attention to irrelevant and sensational details of the incident, the media is also sending a message to survivors that their experiences can serve as fodder for the public, allowing the audience to take on the role of voyeur and/or judge. The public gets all the gory details, giving them a sense of having witnessed the crime scene. The public is privy to victims' previous behaviour, potentially allowing them to pass judgment on crimes and, in some cases, attribute blame to the victims themselves. This affects not only the women who are the subject of media reports but also other survivors. It exacerbates their feelings of loneliness and isolation, as well as their lack of self-esteem and dignity while detracting from their readiness to report the violence they endure. A woman survivor, who participated in a study on how women, survivors of violence, perceive media reports on this issue, stated- having read an article about a specific incident: "How can I seek help if she (the victim) has already been condemned by the journalists and anyone who reads this?"<sup>48</sup> The study found that this type of media reporting demotivates women from reporting violence, whether to institutions or someone close to them.

"The way media reports on violence generally evokes fear as the dominant emotion among women who have survived violence. Other emotions are less intense than fear, are generally mixed, and can be divided into two groups. The first group includes negative emotions triggered by sensationalist reporting, such as anger, anxiety, sadness, and identification with the women the text is about... Positive feelings fall under the second group and are prompted by media content that offers women support and information on how to get out of violence. Feelings of satisfaction, encouragement, safety, hope, and justice are associated with reporting that helps women understand the relationship they are in, how to get out of it and which institutions they can turn to for help."<sup>49</sup>

48 More information available on the link: [zeneprotivnasilja.net/images/pdf/literatura/Kako\\_vas\\_zene\\_citaju.pdf](https://zeneprotivnasilja.net/images/pdf/literatura/Kako_vas_zene_citaju.pdf)

49 Ibid

Although the study quoted above did not include media reports on firearm misuse, its insights can still hold relevance for this analysis. If media outlets tend to focus only on murders of women committed with firearms, other types of violence, such as threatening or striking with a firearm, as well as the presence of firearms as a means of intimidation, remain unseen, not only in society as a whole but also by the survivors themselves and the relevant authorities. This can lead to a lack of the essential understanding that firearm misuse is a broader phenomenon that goes beyond murder and also includes violent behaviours such as control, isolation, threats, and intimidation. When this misrepresentation is perpetuated, the fact that the presence of firearms or perpetrators' ability to obtain them significantly increases the risk of murder<sup>50</sup> can fall under the radar.

In addition, the glorification and inadequate representation of firearms, which were found among half of the photographs and visuals featured in the analysed media reports, are also likely to have a detrimental influence on survivors. They tend to normalize the presence of weapons in the households while further intensifying fear and anxiety in their presence, as they are portrayed as symbols of power.

 **RECOMMENDATION:**

**KEEP IN MIND THE EFFECTS REPORTING MIGHT HAVE ON SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE**

- ▶ When information is provided to the media, as well as when media prepares information for the public, special care should be paid to how this information may affect women who are currently experiencing violence. The media should remember that survivors are part of the public and that their interest is an integral part of the public interest. Reporting should strive to offer survivors as much helpful and encouraging information as possible. This can be accomplished by stating that assistance is available and providing information on where to find it, showing respect for the privacy and dignity of victims and survivors, and showcasing examples of women who successfully extricated themselves from violent relationships, among others.

50 More information available on the link: [undp.org/sr/serbia/publications/karakteristike-i-prevencija-slucajeva-femicida-suicida-pocinjenih-vatrenim-oruzjem-u-intimnom-partnerskom-odnosu](https://undp.org/sr/serbia/publications/karakteristike-i-prevencija-slucajeva-femicida-suicida-pocinjenih-vatrenim-oruzjem-u-intimnom-partnerskom-odnosu)

# **KEY FINDINGS PER JURISDICTION**

**06**

# Bosnia and Herzegovina

The total number of media reports on firearm misuse in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH) during 2022 was 6,593, of which 315 (5%) covered male gender-based violence against women. As in other jurisdictions, this topic was much more visible in media online portals than in print media, with **90% of the reports published online**.

**BIH media had the highest rate of media reports relating to specific cases** (96%), which implies that the media usually do not report on male gender-based violence against women with firearms as a social issue. Instead, they generally concentrate on covering isolated incidents.

Most of the media's attention in BIH was directed at cases of femicide, with 66% of analysed reports covering this manner of firearm misuse, while no media reports were found addressing the presence of firearms as a form of violence, intimidation, and control. Incidents covered by media reports in BIH usually happened in households (57%), while 1/3 of the reports did not provide information on the micro location of the events being covered. Most perpetrators of violence against women with the misuse of firearm presented in articles published by media in BIH were intimate partners of victims/survivors (61%), followed by other family members (18%). Like jurisdictions across the region, the media in BIH reported on the type of firearm misused more often than not (in 52% of cases). Yet, this leaves almost half (45%) of media reports with no mention of either the type or the number of firearms involved. At the same time, the media in BIH, more than in other jurisdictions, failed to report on the legality of firearms (94% of reports provided no information on whether the firearm was in legal possession). Whether the perpetrators had a history of violence and/or firearm misuse was left almost entirely unmentioned in the BIH media, as was the information regarding possible connection of the incident to armed conflicts (e.g., the perpetrator is a war veteran, firearm can be traced back to a conflict, etc.).

The identity of survivor/victim and/or their family members was disclosed in 45% of the analysed media reports from BIH, which is below the documented region-wide average of 59%. Shifting of responsibility for the violence from the perpetrator to

the victim was present in only 4% of media reports in BiH compared to the regional average of 19%. Violence was justified based on external circumstances or the perpetrator's personal characteristics in 17% of media reports in BiH and in 31% regionally. Irrelevant details were published in 29% of reports in BiH and in 49% regionally. However, as is the case in the region as a whole, **every other media report in BiH included sensationalist or stereotypical expressions** referring to violence, the survivor/victim, and/or the perpetrator.

Photographs/visuals depicting violence, survivors, and/or perpetrators in an inadequate and stereotypical manner were less frequent in BiH (only 9%) than in the region (39%). However, the reverse trend was seen in using inadequate photographs/visuals of firearms, whereby **all visuals displaying firearms present in BiH media were inadequate**.

A worrying issue was the lack of educational content in media reporting. Namely, **none of the analysed media reports in BiH presented violence against women as a social problem stemming from unequal power relations between women and men**, while only 1% and 4% of the media reports contained educational content related to the phenomenon of firearm misuse and male gender-based violence against women, respectively.

**Overall, media reports in BiH were consistent with those in the region, with small deviations noted for specific indicators, as detailed above.** Certain particularities were identified in the media reporting in BiH. For instance, reports about cases of sexual violence during the war (ongoing investigations, new indictments, etc.) were documented. While such cases were not numerous, they exceeded the presence of such cases in other jurisdictions. The researchers from BiH also highlighted the media's tendency to emphasize drunkenness as an explanation and, at times, even as an excuse for the perpetrators' violent behaviour. They also observed that the media, in cases of femicide, usually focused on the perpetrator and his life, with no adequate memorialization of victims - who they were, their lives and accomplishments, and what will happen with their children, among other things. While writing about the victim might risk jeopardizing their privacy and, as such, should be done with extreme care, the media could undoubtedly avoid undue publicity for perpetrators.

# Montenegro

In 2022, print and online media outlets in Montenegro were found to have published 5,351 reports on firearm misuse, with 179 (3%) of these reports related to male gender-based violence against women. In line with other jurisdictions, most media reports on this topic were published by online media (82%) and focused on specific incidents (81%). More than half of the reports (57%) were copy-pasted press releases of the Ministry of Interior and the justice sector.

As in other jurisdictions, the majority of covered incidents occurred in households (66%), with 90% of all incidents involving violence committed by an intimate partner. In most cases (72%), the reported incidents were murders, while 17% of surveyed articles mentioned threats with firearms, and 10% noted the presence of a firearm as a form of violence. Similar to their colleagues in the region, the media houses in Montenegro usually did not report on the legal status of firearms (62% of reports failed to provide this information). When they did, the firearms were often identified as illegal (32% of media reports). **In contrast to other jurisdictions, the media in Montenegro showed a higher tendency to publish information on perpetrators' prior violent history, if any. This element was present in 41% of media reports**, of which 40% explicitly stated that this type of behaviour had already been exhibited. **However, prior firearm misuse and possible connections to wars/conflicts both went virtually unmentioned (in 99% of reports). Institutional consequences for firearm misuse were documented in the surveyed media reports in Montenegro more frequently than in other jurisdictions (97%).**

**Worryingly, the media in Montenegro had the highest percentage of reports disclosing the identity of survivors/victims and their families, with this element appearing in as many as 86% of reports.** Furthermore, when it came to indicators such as publishing irrelevant details, justifying violence, shifting responsibility for violence from the perpetrator to the survivor/victim, and diminishing violence, the media in Montenegro ranked second highest among the five jurisdictions analysed, with approximately 1/3 of media reports involved in at least one of the above unethical reporting practices. On the other hand, the **media in Montenegro**

**displayed the highest percentage (13%) of reports containing educational content on firearm misuse compared to other jurisdictions in the region, although this percentage is still disappointingly low.**

More than 1/3 (35%) of media reports in Montenegro were found to depict violence and survivors/victims in an inappropriate manner, and 84% of them failed to provide adequate visualization of firearms.

The engaged researchers from Montenegro specifically highlighted examples of photographs of victims and perpetrators that were edited to create a single image with both of them. This not only disclosed their identities but also ran the risk of romanticizing the act of violence. In such images, the perpetrator and the victim were typically placed next to each other, visually implying their equality, while it has been clearly established that violence against women is a problem of the unequal power distribution between women and men.

The researchers also emphasized that the media tend to publish details only available to the court and the prosecution, which points to a problem of data leaking from official state bodies. It should be noted that details obtained during institutional proceedings are not always in the interest of the public, especially when they can compromise the dignity of survivors, which goes even further against ethical and professional journalistic standards.



# North Macedonia

In 2022, the media in North Macedonia published the smallest number of reports on firearm misuse in the region, totalling 1,643, with only 25 (2%) covering the topic of violence against women. The limited coverage is attributed to the small number of incidents that took place in North Macedonia during the period covered. Although this could be seen as constraining the scope of conclusions, the analysed reports remain representative in terms of the media's treatment of these incidents.

Most reports (18) were published in August 2022, when two different incidents occurred. In one case, a woman's house was shot at by a neighbour, while in the other, a husband shot and injured his wife. In total, four (4) distinct cases were covered during 2022 and were the main focus of 84% of the surveyed media reports. **Seventeen percent of reports dealt with the phenomenon of firearm misuse and violence against women, which represented the highest percentage among all jurisdictions in the region.**

In total, 90% of media reports mentioned incidents that took place within the household, with the majority (52%) indicating an acquaintance as the perpetrator, followed by an intimate partner (38%). Half of the media reports mentioned both the type and the number of firearms misused (48%), while half did not provide this information. Not one media report noted if the perpetrators had a history of violent behaviour, firearm misuse or any links to any wars/conflicts. This should be seen in connection with the fact that 80% of media reports primarily consisted of official press releases issued by the Ministry of Interior and the justice sector, which implies that these institutions generally do not provide this information to the public in their statements.

Overall, the results of this analysis show that the media reporting on firearm misuse in male gender-based violence against women in North Macedonia is the most adequate when compared to the region. There were no media reports where the identity of survivors/victims was disclosed, and no reports contained

irrelevant details or justified violence. Only 4% of reports were identified as using sensationalism when reporting on this issue. Although no inadequate photographs of violence and survivors were documented, 62% of the photographs of firearms in the surveyed reports presented them in an inappropriate manner.

As in other jurisdictions, a very small number of reports (only 4%) provided educational content on violence against women or firearm misuse.

In conclusion, it should be noted once again that the analysis in North Macedonia is based on a limited number of reports. With this in mind, the engaged researchers from North Macedonia stated that the results regarding the overall media reporting on violence against women in this jurisdiction should be taken with some reservation.

# Serbia

Online and print media outlets in Serbia were documented as publishing the greatest number of reports on violence against women with the use of firearms in the region. A total of 9,312 reports on firearm misuse were published in Serbia during 2022, with 863 of these (9%) related to violence against women. Four-fifths of such reports were published by the online media. Similar to other jurisdictions, most reports (92%) concentrated on specific incidents. Furthermore, media reports in Serbia exhibited the highest percentage of original pieces written on these issues (82%) compared to other jurisdictions in the region, where articles commonly consisted of press releases of relevant institutions.

More than half of the surveyed media reports were related to murders. Yet, this percentage was lower than that documented in other jurisdictions (only 54%), leaving space for other types of firearm misuse to be more visible. As a result, wounding with a firearm was the focus of 21% of media reports, threats were the centre of attention of 14%, and the presence of firearms was addressed in 9% of media reports.

The majority of media articles dealt with incidents that occurred in households (72%) and were committed by an intimate partner (76%). Compared to the region, **the media in Serbia had the highest number of reports that provided information on the type of firearm misused (65%)**. The same was true for reports offering information on whether the perpetrators had a prior history of violent behaviour (featured in half of the analysed media reports) and firearm misuse (evident in 46% of the media reports). However, the legal status of firearms was not mentioned in 64% of reports.

When it comes to reporting on violence and victims/survivors, two-thirds of the surveyed media reports disclosed the identities of these individuals, which is close to the established regional average. However, media reports in Serbia were found to be most likely to shift responsibility for violence from the perpetrator to the survivor/victim (27%), justify violence due to external circumstances or

the perpetrators' personality traits (41%), disclose irrelevant details of the act of violence or irrelevant interlocutors' statements (61%), use sensationalist or stereotypical language when referring to violence (55%), and diminish or mock violence and/or show scepticism towards the survivor/victim (24%). All the mentioned percentages exceeded the established regional average.

A similar situation was documented with the visualization of the reports, where half of the reports featured photographs that presented the survivors in an inappropriate way. Relatedly, however, less than half of the photographs used in reports depicted firearms inadequately (44%), which is below the established regional average of 50%.

As in other jurisdictions, very few media reports provided educational content on violence against women (only 4%) and firearm misuse (only 8%).

The insights provided by the engaged researchers highlighted a frequent use of anonymous sources supposedly from state institutions (e.g., from the MoI, or the judicial system), whose imprecise nature raises concerns about their credibility. In addition, there was occasional citing of interlocutors irrelevant to the topic, including astrologers and numerologists. At times, these sources were found to blame the victims and pin “the expansion of violence” to factors such as high temperatures and atmospheric pressure. Sensationalism was also observed as widely present in texts, headlines, and photos. In some cases, murders were described as an “unfortunate murder” (implying there could be a “fortunate murder”), a “tragic romance,” a “passionate relationship,” or an “accident,” while perpetrators were described as “maddened.” Furthermore, some photographs used in reporting on concrete incidents were taken from the private social media accounts of the victims, e.g. depicting them and the perpetrators together while jointly holding a gun.

# Kosovo

All the media reports published in Kosovo in 2022 and analysed were published in online media<sup>51</sup> – in total 2,050 reports concerning firearm misuse, with 102 (5%) related to violence against women.

More than three-fourths (86%) of analysed reports pertained to specific incidents only, as opposed to 6% that solely discussed the phenomenon of gender-based violence. **Almost half of the reports (43%) were based entirely on press releases issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs**, a significantly higher percentage than the regional average of 12%.

Kosovo was the only jurisdiction that did not have a high portion of reports covering incidents that occurred in households – only 14% compared to the 65% regional average. Specifically, in 37% of reports, the location of the incident was not mentioned, while 36% of media reports specified the street as the micro location of the incidents covered. As in other jurisdictions, the predominant manner of firearm misuse mentioned in reports was murder (present in 70% of media reports), with intimate partners being the most frequent perpetrators (86%). The media in Kosovo featured the highest percentage of reports where the type and number of firearms misused were not disclosed (69%). Similarly, no information about the legal status of firearms was indicated in 77% of cases. Half of the reports did not provide any information on whether the perpetrator had a prior history of violent behaviour, while 64% failed to specify if the perpetrator had a previous history of firearm misuse. Compared to other jurisdictions in the region, information regarding perpetrators' link to prior or current wars/conflicts was most prevalent in Kosovo media reports, appearing in 35% of articles. **Also, media reports in Kosovo had the highest proportion of statements by the MoI officials, visible in 75% of articles.**

51 Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been no print media in Kosovo. The “Koha Ditore” newspaper was the last print media source in Kosovo, which stopped being printed when the COVID pandemic began when it transitioned to an online version.

**The disclosure of survivors/victims' identities was present in approximately 1/3 of media reports in Kosovo, which was below the regional average.** The same was found to be true for shifting responsibility for violence from the perpetrator to the survivor/victim (present in 9% of reports), the justification of violence based on external circumstances or the perpetrator's personal characteristics (13%), diminishment of or ridiculing violence and/or showing scepticism towards the survivor(s)/victim(s) (5%). Although publishing irrelevant details and using sensationalistic language was documented as below the regional average, certain concerns remain. Irrelevant data was published in 1/3 of the reports, while sensationalism was present in 41%.

Photographs/visuals depicting violence, survivors, and/or perpetrators in an inadequate and stereotypical manner were seen in 35% of reports, and inadequate photographs/visuals of firearms in 17%.

Similar to the remainder of the region, educational content was published in less than 10% of all analysed media reports.

The researchers conducting the analysis in Kosovo drew attention to some problematic headlines and texts about the murder of a woman in the courtyard of Pristina's Gynaecology Clinic while waiting to give birth the next day. This case attracted considerable public interest, with some of the media outlets resorting to publishing irrelevant and stereotypical details, such as "A woman's murder, crushing her dream to become a mother" or "The moment when the woman's dead body was removed from the yard." These reports were accompanied by visuals featuring photographs of the body in the yard.



# **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND INDICATORS - IN DEPTH**

**ANNEX  
1**



**I - SET OF GENERAL QUESTIONS**

More detailed guidelines are available in the publication  
 “Guidelines on Media Reporting on Violence against Women”<sup>52</sup>

1.1. Name of media outlet		Enter the name of the media outlet in the original form
1.2. Date of media report		Enter dates in the following format only:  Day/Month/Year  02/12/2022
1.3. Type of media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print</li> <li>• Web</li> </ul>	Select one of the offered responses, depending on the type of media
1.4. Name of journalist		<p>- If the media report’s byline only refers to the editorial staff, enter the words “Editorial staff” only (without quotation marks), i.e. do not enter the name of the media outlet together with the words “Editorial Staff”.</p> <p>- If the media report is not bylined at all, enter “N.N.” (without quotation marks).</p> <p>- If the media report is copied from another media source, list the name of the original media source.</p> <p>- If the media report is signed with initials, enter the initials.</p>
1.5. Media report title		Enter the original title, as stated in the header of the PDF document

52 For more information see links: [novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Smernice\\_WEB-VERSION-final.pdf](https://novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Smernice_WEB-VERSION-final.pdf) and [novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Guidelines\\_WEB-VERSION-ENG.pdf](https://novinarkeprotivnasilja.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Guidelines_WEB-VERSION-ENG.pdf)

## II - SET OF QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EVENT BEING ANALYSED

<p><b>2.1 Is the subject of the media report a specific event, the phenomenon of violence/firearms misuse, or does it cover both sets of information?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific event</li> <li>• Phenomenon</li> <li>• Both</li> </ul>	<p>If the media report only covers a specific incident, check “Specific event”.</p> <p>If the media report discusses the phenomenon of violence and/or firearms misuse, without referring to a specific case, check “Phenomenon”.</p> <p>If the media report covers both aspects (e.g. it was prompted by a specific incident, but it provides a broader picture of the phenomenon, presents statistics, refers to statements by professionals etc.), check “Both”.</p>
<p><b>2.2 Is the media report an original piece by a journalist, or is it a news report/ statement issued by the Ministry of the Interior and/or the Prosecutor’s Office, or both?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original piece</li> <li>• News report of a statement by the Mol</li> <li>• News report of a statement by the Prosecutor’s Office or the Court</li> <li>• News report of a statement by an NGO or international organization</li> <li>• A combination of an original piece and a statement</li> </ul>	<p>If the media report does not specify that the information was obtained from an official statement/press release, check “Original piece”.</p> <p>If the media report clearly specifies that it reports information from a statement issued by the Mol, check “News report of a statement by the Mol”. The same goes for Prosecutor’s Office and NOGs/IOs.</p> <p>This does not refer to situations when media publish a statement made</p>

		<p>by an interlocutor from these institutions but is limited only to publication of official statements/press releases.</p> <p>If the media report contains both sets of information, check “Combination”.</p>
<p><b>2.3 Event microlocation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Household (private sphere – flat, house etc.), household yard</li> <li>• Closed-type public space (e.g. an institution), business premises, retail stores</li> <li>• Street, sidewalk, parking lot</li> <li>• Café, restaurant, club, hotel</li> <li>• Forest, field, uninhabited area</li> <li>• Other</li> <li>• No information</li> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>	<p>If the response is “Something else”, you can enter the details in the field “Note”.</p> <p>“Not applicable” refers to situations when the media report is not covering a specific event, but the phenomenon more generally, making it impossible to write about the specifics of the event.</p>

<p><b>2.4 Event macrolocation</b></p>		<p>Enter the name of the place where the event occurred (town, village, etc.).</p> <p>If the media report does not cover a specific event, but the phenomenon more generally, making it impossible to answer this question, this field should be left blank.</p>
<p><b>2.5 Relationship between the survivor/victim and the perpetrator</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intimate partner (married or unmarried; former or current)</li> <li>• Other family member</li> <li>• Acquaintance</li> <li>• Stranger</li> <li>• Other</li> <li>• No information</li> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>	<p>If the response is “Something else”, you can enter the details in the field “Note”.</p> <p>“Not applicable” refers to situations when the media report is not covering a specific event, but the phenomenon more generally, making it impossible to write about the specifics of the event.</p>
<p><b>2.6 Manner of firearms misuse</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of a firearm</li> <li>• Threat with a firearm</li> <li>• Striking with a firearm</li> <li>• Wounding with a firearm</li> <li>• Murder</li> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>	<p>“Striking with a firearm” means physical violence, without discharging the firearm.</p> <p>“Wounding with a firearm” means physical violence by discharging a firearm.</p> <p>“Not applicable” refers to situations when the media report is not covering a specific event, but the phenomenon more generally, making it impossible to write about the specifics of the event.</p>

### III - SET OF QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FIREARM- AND PERPETRATOR-RELATED INFORMATION PUBLISHED BY THE MEDIA

#### 3.1 Availability of information on the type and number of firearms

- Type of firearms
- Number of firearms
- Both
- No information
- Not applicable

“Type of firearms” means that the media report refers to a specific firearm (e.g. pistol, rifle etc.).

“Number of firearms” means that the media report specifies how many firearms the perpetrator used or possessed (whether legally or not).

If both sets of information are provided, check “Both”.

If none of this information is provided (e.g. it only says “firearm”), check “No information”.

“Not applicable” refers to situations when the media report is not covering a specific event, but the phenomenon more generally, making it impossible to write about the specifics of the event.

<p><b>3.2 Availability of information on the legal status of possessed firearms</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal</li> <li>• Illegal</li> <li>• Both</li> <li>• No information</li> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>	<p>Check “Both” if the media report indicates the presence/use of multiple firearms, and clearly states that some of those are legal, and some illegal.</p> <p>“Not applicable” refers to situations when the media report is not covering a specific event, but the phenomenon more generally, making it impossible to write about the specifics of the event.</p>
<p><b>3.3 Availability of information on the perpetrator’s prior history of violent behaviour</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• No information</li> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>	<p>This refers to any information that the perpetrator was previously charged/convicted, or to accounts of neighbours/relatives that were not recorded by state institutions.</p> <p>It includes any history of violence against women, as well as other forms of violent behaviour.</p> <p>It may or may not refer to violent behaviour by firearms misuse.</p> <p>“Not applicable” refers to situations when the media report is not covering a specific event, but the phenomenon more generally, making it impossible to write about the specifics of the event.</p>

<p><b>3.4 Availability of information on the perpetrator's history of firearms misuse</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• No information</li> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>	<p>Examples of situations to which this refers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• illegal possession and/or use of firearms,</li> <li>• misuse of legal firearms (celebratory shooting, disturbing the peace, keeping firearms contrary to regulations, threats, domestic violence etc.)</li> </ul> <p>“Not applicable” refers to situations when the media report is not covering a specific event, but the phenomenon more generally, making it impossible to write about the specifics of the event.</p>
<p><b>3.5 Availability of information regarding any links to armed conflicts/wars</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• No information</li> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>	<p>This refers to whether information is provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the perpetrator is a war veteran, or otherwise traumatised by armed conflict/war (e.g. his father was in the armed conflict/warzone and was violent),</li> <li>• or that the firearm was left over from an armed conflict/war.</li> </ul> <p>This includes links to any wars/armed conflicts (not only those that took place during the 1990s, but also war in Ukraine, participation with ISIS and similar).</p>

		<p>“Not applicable” refers to situations when the media report is not covering a specific event, but the phenomenon more generally, making it impossible to write about the specifics of the event.</p>
<p><b>3.6 Availability of information on the institutional consequences of firearms misuse</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• No information</li> </ul>	<p>This refers to any quotations from or references to laws, (possible) penalties, indictments, court rulings etc.</p> <p>This refers to media reports covering specific events, as well as those writing about the phenomenon more generally.</p>
<p><b>3.7 The media report contains a statement by relevant institutions/experts</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes (continue to question 3.7.1.)</li> <li>• No (continue to question 3.8.)</li> </ul>	<p>This refers to media reports covering specific events as well as those writing about the phenomenon more generally.</p>
<p><b>3.7.1. Whose statement is it?</b>  (Only answer this question if the response to the preceding question is affirmative)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mol</li> <li>• Prosecutor's Office</li> <li>• Court</li> <li>• Centre for Social Work</li> <li>• Other state institution</li> <li>• NGO</li> <li>• International organisation</li> <li>• Expert on the subject of violence and/or firearms</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	<p>If the media report contains multiple statements, check all relevant items.</p>



<p><b>3.8 Does the media report include photographs/video footage that portray firearms in an inadequate manner, by glorifying them, depicting the power of firearms, without any critical reflection in the visuals?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>	<p>“Not applicable” refers to the situation where the media report is not accompanied by any photograph/visual, or the photograph/visual does not show firearms.</p> <p>***Note the difference between this and Indicator 4.8, which does not refer to firearms.</p>
<p><b>3.9 Does the media report fulfil its educational role with regard to the phenomenon of firearms misuse?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	<p>Here the educational role concerns the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whether the media report mentions the problem of firearms misuse and/or illegal firearms possession,</li> <li>• whether the media report mentions the issue of risk factors associated with gender-based violence and firearms misuse,</li> <li>• whether the media report mentions the risk factor associated with suicide (murder/suicide)</li> <li>• whether statistical data on firearms misuse are presented,</li> <li>• etc.</li> </ul> <p>This refers to media reports covering specific events as well as those writing about the phenomenon more generally.</p> <p>***Note the difference between this and Indicator 4.10, which does not refer to firearms misuse.</p>

#### IV - SET OF QUESTIONS ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND FIREARMS MISUSE

<p><b>4.1. Does the media report reveal the identity of the survivor/victim and family members?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>	<p>Revealing the identity of the survivor/victim refers not only to publishing her name and surname, but also to other possible ways of revealing her identity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• publishing the perpetrator's identity and relationship to the victim,</li> <li>• publishing a photograph of the victim's home,</li> <li>• etc.</li> </ul> <p>"Not applicable" refers to media reports which do not cover a specific case and, hence, cannot reveal any identity.</p>
<p><b>4.2. Does the media report shift responsibility for the violence from the perpetrator to the victim/survivor?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	<p>This refers to situations where the media report attributes reasons for violent behaviour to the survivor/victim ("she left him", "she cheated on him", "she was dressed provocatively", "she got into his car", "she provoked him" etc.).</p> <p>It also includes all other situations where a reference to violent behaviour is followed by wording such as "because", "due to" etc., accompanied by a reference to the survivor/victim's personal characteristic.</p>

		<p>to the survivor/victim's personal characteristic.</p> <p>This refers to media reports covering specific events as well as those writing about the phenomenon more generally.</p>
<p><b>4.3. Does the media report contain information that could justify an act of violence by external circumstances or the perpetrator's personal characteristics?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	<p>This refers to situations where the media report attributes reasons for violent behaviour to external factors or the perpetrator's personal characteristics (poverty, cultural customs, alcoholism, mental illness, stress at work, public pressure in case of public personalities, etc.).</p> <p>This refers to media reports covering specific events as well as those writing about the phenomenon more generally.</p>
<p><b>4.4. Does the media report disclose details of the act of violence/ murder or interlocutors' statements that are not relevant to the act?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	<p>This refers to all information in the media report which is not relevant from the aspect of public interest – e.g. detailed graphic descriptions of the violence and injuries, statements from persons close to the perpetrator, private information from social networks, astrological and numerological interpretations of the violence etc.</p> <p>This refers to media reports covering specific events as well as those writing about the phenomenon more generally.</p>

<p><b>4.5. Does the media report use sensationalist or stereotypical expressions referring to violence, the survivor/victim, the perpetrator?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	<p>This refers to all situations where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• survivors are depicted as “poor”, “unfortunate”, crying, with visible consequences of physical violence,</li> <li>• the ethnic, religious or other background of the perpetrator/victim is emphasised,</li> <li>• the media report uses wording such as “shock”, “disbelief”, “brutal”, “horrid” and other sensationalist expressions,</li> <li>• etc.</li> </ul> <p>This refers to media reports covering specific events as well as those writing about the phenomenon more generally.</p>
<p><b>4.6. Does the media report diminish or ridicule violence or distrust the victim/survivor?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	<p>This refers to situations where the media report romanticises violence (“great love”, “tragic ending to a love story” etc.), where it diminishes violence (“marital argument”, “family problems”) or ridicules it by giving nicknames to the perpetrator and/or the survivor/victim, and the like.</p> <p>This refers to media reports covering specific events as well as those writing about the phenomenon more generally.</p>

<p><b>4.7. Does the media report headline/ announcement violate any of the indicators above?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	<p>Under this indicator, we analyse only the wording of the header elements (kicker, headline, deck), irrespective of the text of the media report.</p> <p>This refers to media reports covering specific events as well as those writing about the phenomenon more generally.</p>
<p><b>4.8. Does the media report include photographs/video footage that depict violence, victims and perpetrators in an inadequate and stereotypical manner?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> <li>• Not applicable</li> </ul>	<p>This refers to situations where the victim/survivor's identity is revealed, where they are portrayed in a stereotypical manner, where illustrations showing simulations of violence are used, where the perpetrator and the victim are shown next to each other using photo editing.</p> <p>“Not applicable” refers to a situation where the media report is not accompanied by any photograph/visual.</p>
<p><b>4.9. Does the media report clearly indicate that violence against women is a social problem stemming from unequal power relations between men and women?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	<p>This refers to media reports indicating that violence against women is always a consequence of unequal power relations between women and men.</p> <p>This refers to media reports covering specific events as well as those writing about the phenomenon more generally.</p>

<p>4.10. Does the media report fulfil its educational role with regards to the phenomenon of gender-based male violence against women?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	<p>The educational role primarily refers to whether information on victim protection/support is provided (police telephone number, helpline number, information on free legal aid etc.).</p> <p>The educational role also includes providing information about how violence works, what are the risk factors of escalating violence, what are the statistics in our jurisdiction and/or other jurisdictions etc.</p> <p>This refers to media reports covering specific events as well as those writing about the phenomenon more generally.</p>
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**NOTES**

		<p>Enter the following information in this field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if the analysed media report is of high quality and can be considered a good practice (this is important in order to identify good examples!),</li> <li>• if the analysed media report is of extremely poor quality according to multiple criteria,</li> <li>• if there is something specifically good or specifically bad for this individual media report,</li> <li>• if you have any particular thoughts or you wish to draw our attention to a particular media report for whatever reason.</li> </ul>
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