

TARGETING WEAPONS
MISUSE OF FIREARMS IN SERBIA

ORUŽJE NA METI



“TARGETING WEAPONS”

MISUSE OF FIREARMS IN SERBIA

The South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) has a mandate from the United Nations Development Programme and the Regional Cooperation Council to support all international and national stakeholders by strengthening national and regional capacity to control and reduce the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and thus contribute to enhanced stability, security and development in South Eastern and Eastern Europe.

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'TARGETING WEAPONS'; MISUSE OF FIREARMS IN SERBIA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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Realization of this analysis was generously supported by the European Union, through the *Support of SEESAC Disarmament and Arms Control Activities in South East Europe* – EUSAC project.

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SUMMARY

Contrary to the general impression generated by media reports, firearm-related incidents taking place in the context of family violence are more deadly than those taking place within the context of criminal activities. Most incidents occur between friends and relatives. Young people make up one half of victims, but in most cases these incidents result in non-fatal injuries. Death is more frequently the result of firearm-related incidents when older citizens are victims. Perpetrators are predominantly men, while among women, there are more victims. In most cases of firearm-related incidents, illegal weapons are used – among them pistols and hunting rifles that can, by law, be legalized. Most citizens think that it is important to possess firearms for personal protection, but they are against the concealed carry of weapons.

These are some of the findings of the Public Policy Research Centre, that analyzed 470 different entries collected through the platform *Oružje na meti/Targeting Weapons* (www.oruzjenameti.org), established by the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of the Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC). The entries included comments made by Serbian citizens expressing their attitudes on the possession and carry of weapons as well as their testimonies of weapon sightings, as well as reports found in daily media on firearm-related incidents collected in the period from August 2012, when the platform was established, until the end of February 2015. The reports come from all parts of Serbia, from Veliki Trnovac to Zrenjanin.

The Public Policy Research Centre analyzed all entries available on the platform. The quantitative data presented was drawn from 400 media reports and analyzed according to the following criteria: the type of weapon used in the incident, and whether it was in (il)legal possession; gender and age of the victim(s) and perpetrator(s); their relationship; the outcome and context of the incident; the type of environment (urban or rural) where the incident took place; and its location/setting, time of day, and season.

According to the media reports analyzed, the largest proportion of incidents (almost 39% of all cases) involved the use of pistols and revolvers, followed by various combinations of small arms and light weapons (SALW) (9%). In 31% of reports, the type of weapon used was not indicated. The reports which contain information on the legal status of the weapon used show that the use of illegally possessed weapons was almost six times more prevalent than that of legal weapons. 32% of illegal weapons cases involved 'several types of weapons and ammunition', followed by 'pistols' in 28% of cases, and with 'grenades' figuring in 20% of cases.

The data also suggests that weapons that by law can be legalized (pistols, revolvers, hunting rifles) were five times more common than weapons that cannot be legalized (automatic weapons and grenades).

Young people aged 18-35 are most likely to be targeted in armed incidents, making up one half of the victims. Sustaining non-fatal injuries is the most common result of such incidents for this age group, while death was predominant among victims aged 36 to 65.

Men were perpetrators almost 32 times more often than women. Women were also five times more likely to be victims than perpetrators.

Firearm-related incidents had a fatal outcome in almost one fourth of the cases, and non-fatal injury was the result in one third of the cases. Men were almost five times more likely to be the victims of incidents than women, including those without physical consequences. However, death was more prevalent among female victims – 44% as opposed to 34% for male victims. A majority of the cases involving men resulted in injury (54%).

Among cases where the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim was known, over 40% involved friends/acquaintances, and 30% involved blood relatives or spouses.

Most cases involving the misuse of firearms were crime-related incidents (38%), followed by conflicts caused by property/money-related disputes or jealousy (9.75%), and family violence – (6.25%).

Although the misuse of weapons in a criminal context was most commonly reported by the media, in two thirds of such cases, no injuries were reported. A fatal outcome is relatively rare in crime-related incidents. In family-related violence, however, one half of the reported cases are fatal. Although there are almost six times more incidents involving firearms in a criminal context than that of family violence, the absolute number of deaths in the context of family violence (12 cases) is actually higher than the absolute number of deaths in the criminal context (11 cases). According to the available data, most deaths resulted from conflicts around money, property, or jealousy (15 cases), as well as suicide (13 cases).

According to the data, incidents occurring in urban areas were much more frequent (78%) than those happening in rural areas. Regarding the former, the location of incidents was most often a public space such as street or road (25%), and much less frequently a private space (15%). In rural areas on the other hand, one half of incidents happened inside a house or in a yard. Almost one fifth of cases involving the misuse of firearms took place in public or on business premises – including offices, shops, and border crossings, and almost 10% took place inside bars, restaurants, and similar facilities.

The number of incidents in the summer was almost two-fold the number of incidents in the winter. Moreover, incidents occurring in the evening hours and at night were clearly more prevalent than those happening in the morning and during daytime.

With regards to the attitudes expressed by citizens that posted on the platform (59 entries, 2012-2013), most (46%) were positive towards weapons in general. The put forth reasoning included: the necessity of owning weapons for the purpose of self-defence or the protection of home and property; security officials or persons with high risk jobs needing to possess firearms; and the importance of the defence industry's contribution to overall technological development. A negative attitude towards weapons (35%) was most often justified by the risk arms cause in public spaces, especially in relation to children; in some cases, negative attitudes were also linked to a perceived lack of professionalism of the police. An absolute majority is against carrying weapons, except under very limited circumstances, such as weapons carried by members of the military and special police forces, or when lives are clearly at risk.

Positive attitudes regarding the carrying of weapons were expressed mostly by persons with complaints about the weapon legislation, requesting that the laws and regulations be amended in specific areas, with citizens often offering specific solutions to these problems. This contributes to the assumption that these particular entries were provided primarily by citizens who use weapons professionally or as a hobby. Negative comments on general safety were more often put forward by citizens who think that the carrying of weapons is unnecessary than by those who find it necessary.

There were a few reports about seeing a weapon or witnessing gunfire (15 entries). Sightings of weapons on the street were most often reported (67%), followed by those seen in an apartment, house, or a yard (20%), and in facilities such as restaurants and bars (7%). Along with the often criticized celebratory gunfire, there were also complaints about traffic-related situations.

INTRODUCTION

Citizens choose to own weapons in order to perform professional activities, to practise their hobbies, and to feel more secure. However, the widespread presence of weapons increases the probability of incidents occurring, with a range of consequences – from intimidation and extortion to wounding and homicide, both intentional and unintentional, in public or in private.¹ Such misuse is possible both with weapons owned legally (including service weapons), and with those held illegally.

Possession of firearms in Serbia is legal, for certain types of weapons that are allowed according to Serbian law (such as handguns and hunting rifles) and with the provision that the owner of the weapon has the necessary license. Illegal weapons include weapons which may not be owned according to the law (automatic weapons, mines and explosives, and silencers) and/or weapons that may be legally owned but for which the citizen in question does not have a valid license. Furthermore, the license to own a weapon does not ensure the right to carry it in public. For this, a special license must be obtained, which is issued only to very few people in special circumstances.

Illegal weapons are often perceived to be owned by criminal groups, but in reality they are commonly owned by regular citizens – there are no precise statistics, but estimates indicate that in Serbia there are between 200,000 and 900,000 weapons in illegal possession.²

The widespread possession of weapons in Serbia and the Balkans is influenced by a number of historical, political, economic, and geographical circumstances.³ These range from the military conscription system in former Yugoslavia, the wars in the 1990s, "leakage" from unsecured military storage facilities and numerous military industrial factories, trans-border trafficking for profit or ideological reasons, and the use of weapons in criminal activities, to the lack of trust among segments of society in the security system institutions as well as an unwillingness to pay the required tax for the possession of a weapon. There is also a tradition of having a weapon at home, which is rooted in the patriarchal culture, as well as in the custom of passing weapons down through generations, dating back to Serbia's past wars. Also, there is a tradition of using weapons during family celebrations, festivities, and sporting events.⁴

1 *Firearms Possession and Domestic Violence in the Western Balkans: A Comparative Study of Legislation and Implementation Mechanisms*, Belgrade, 2007, SEESAC, 2007 <http://www.seesac.org/res/files/publication/513.pdf>

2 Living with the legacy: SALW Survey - Republic of Serbia, UNDP Serbia & Saferworld, 2005 <http://www.seesac.org/res/files/publication/445.pdf> and SEESAC; Public Perception of Small Arms in South Serbia, 2004, <http://www.seesac.org/res/files/publication/739.pdf>

3 For more details see: Svetlana Djurdjevic-Lukic, Small Arms and Human Security in the Western Balkans: Beyond conflict and fatal victims, Proceedings from the Second International Conference on Human Security (Y20HS), Belgrade 7-8. 11. 2014, Faculty for Security Studies, 2015, pp.395-412, available at http://www.publi-policy.rs/projekti/16_Oru%C5%BEje-na-meti---zloupotrebe-oru%C5%BEja-u-Srbiji?lang=en#.VtahdiGeDGc.

4 See: Republic of Montenegro "A house isn't a home without a gun" - SALW Survey, SEESAC, 2004, <http://www.seesac.org/res/files/publication/437.pdf>, "The rifle has a devil inside" Gun Culture in South East Europe, SEESAC, May 2006, <http://www.seesac.org/res/files/publication/386.pdf>

In the context of the demobilization of paramilitary groups after the most recent conflicts in the region, and the subsequent post-conflict reconstruction measures aimed at the general population, collection campaigns targeting illegal weapons were organized in Western Balkan countries on several occasions.⁵ Such actions included amnesty and occasionally additional incentives, such as direct money remuneration or buy-back, lottery tickets for individuals who surrender their weapons (with prizes such as household appliances or cars), or development incentives for communities who surrender a considerable number of illegal weapons ("weapons for development").⁶ The results of these actions differed considerably, and the sheer quantities of illegal weapons in the region required that collection campaigns be repeated periodically. Thus, such activities were conducted in Serbia in 1992, 1997, 1999, 2003, and 2007.

On 20 February 2015, the Serbian Parliament adopted the new Law on Weapons and Ammunition, which regulates the acquisition, possession, carrying, collection, repair, modification, brokering, and transport of weapons and ammunition.⁷ The Law improves licensing procedures and stipulates a three-month amnesty (4 March – 4 June 2015) – an opportunity for citizens to hand in illegally held weapons and ammunition without needing to provide information on their origin and without being subjected to legal sanctions.

However, the adoption of the Law on Weapons and Ammunition and the declaration of amnesty were not accompanied by analytical data from the relevant authorities containing the estimated numbers of weapons in illegal possession by Serbian citizens, the number and consequences of firearm-related incidents, the gender and age of victims and perpetrators, most common micro and macro locations, and other information that could shed some light on this issue. The analysis of entries from the platform *Oružje na meti/Targeting Weapons* thus provides a timely contribution towards a more comprehensive understanding of the possession and misuse of firearms, and especially the consequences of firearm-related incidents in Serbia.

The first section offers a detailed overview of data obtained by the analysis of newspaper articles available on the platform *Oružje na meti*; and the second section contains comments from citizens expressing their attitudes towards arms possession and carry, as well as reports on weapon sightings that were entered on the platform.

5 These campaigns, as many other arms control activities in the region were supported by European Union funds, and technical expertise has been provided since 2002 by the South East and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, SEESAC, seated in Belgrade, with the UNDP country office. See www.seesac.org

6 One failure of „weapons for development“ initiative in Kosovo in 2003, is described in detail in: Svetlana Đurđević-Lukić, Problem ilegalnog oružja, in: I.Lađević, S.Đurđević-Lukić, A.Jović-Lazić, Međunarodno prisustvo na Kosovu i Metohiji 1999-2009, Belgrade, 2010, p. 114-139.

7 Law on Weapons and Ammunition, 20th February 2015, <http://www.parlament.gov.rs/upload/archive/files/cir/pdf/zakoni/2015/4826-14.pdf>

1 ANALYSIS OF MEDIA REPORTS

From February 2013 to February 2015, four hundred (400) media reports on firearm-related incidents were entered on the platform, mostly from the daily newspaper *Blic*. Such a high number of articles allowed for substantial information to be derived on key aspects of the recorded incidents. It should be noted, however, that media reports are short, written immediately after the incidents (when

a lot of information is not yet known), and that journalists are not necessarily knowledgeable about the various types of weapons (including which of them can be registered and legally owned), nor are they informed about legislation distinguishing between the possession and carry of weapons.

1.1.

TYPE OF WEAPONS AND LEGAL STATUS OF POSSESSION

In 400 incidents reported on by the media and entered on the platform, **pistols and revolvers were most often used** (in 154, or 39% of cases). In less than 10% of the cases (37), other various types of weapons were used, followed by cases involving hunting weapons (29), grenades (23), and automatic weapons (10). In almost one third of the cases (31%, or 122 of cases) the news reports did not contain information about the type of weapon used.

Figure 1:
Type of weapon (SALW) used
in all reported incidents

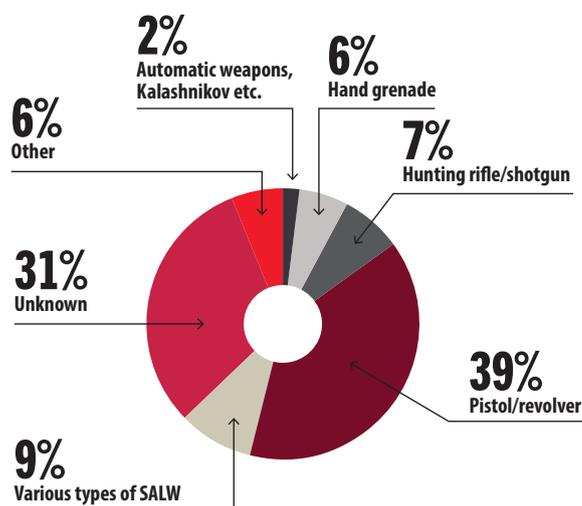


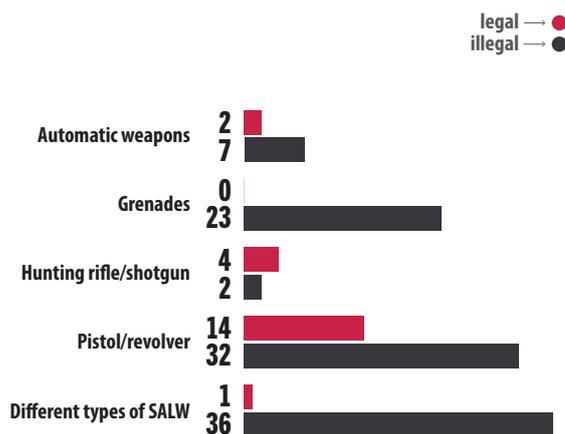
Figure 1

The legal possession of a weapon does not imply a concealed carry permit, but there hasn't been such distinction in media reports. In almost two thirds of the reported incidents, the legal status of the weapon owned or carried was unknown.

TYPE OF SALW	LEGAL	ILLEGAL	UNKNOWN	TOTAL
Automatic weapons	2	7	1	10
Hand grenade	0	23	0	23
Hunting rifle/shotgun	4	2	23	29
Pistol/revolver	14	32	108	154
Different types of SALW	1	36	0	37
Unknown	1	7	114	122
Other	0	13	12	25
Total	22	120	258	400

Table 1:
Type of weapons and the basis of possession
according to media reports

In cases where information on whether the weapons used were legally (22) or illegally (120) owned is available, **illegal weapons are almost six times more prevalent than legal ones.**



Graph 1:
Types of weapons used in incidents,
broken down by the legality of their possession

Although there were not many reported cases, the accumulation of various types of illegal weapons was noted in 36 cases, also, grenades were used to a considerable degree – in 23 cases.

Figure 2:
Types of illegal weapons used in incidents

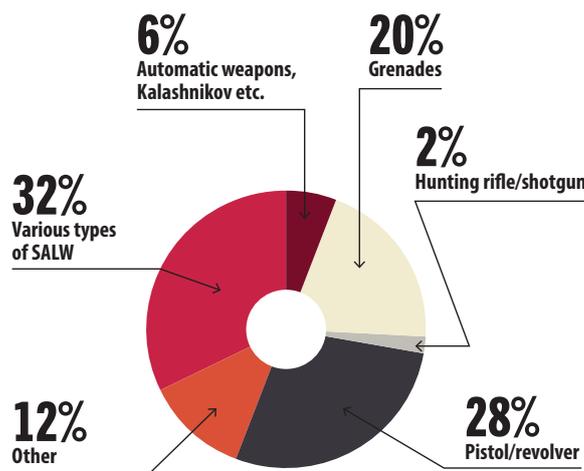


Figure 2

Regarding the incidents where weapons were held illegally, different types of weapons and ammunition were possessed in most situations, followed by pistols/revolvers and grenades. Together they make up 80% of the illegal weapons discovered in incidents.

If we disregard situations where: the type of weapon used was unknown, where different types of weapons were used, and which lists the category of weapons used as "other", then **weapons that may be legalized (e.g. pistols, revolvers, hunting rifles) make up 84% of the cases**, while weapons that may not be legalized (e.g. automatic weapons, grenades) make up 16% of the cases reported.

Figure 3:
Types of weapons used in incidents (where the type is known)
according to the possibility for legalization

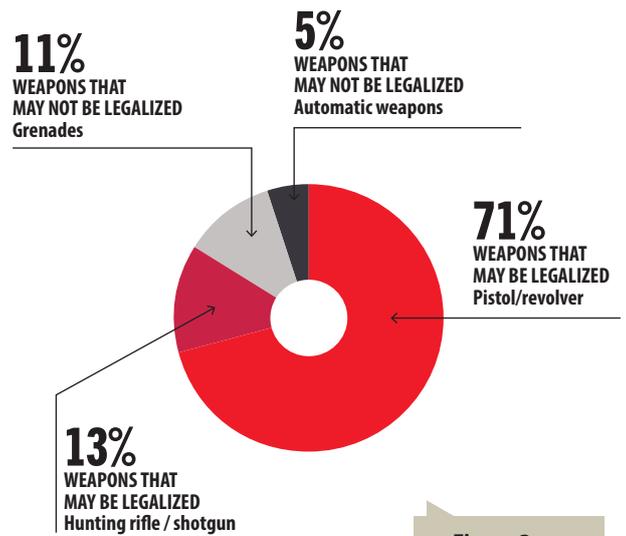


Figure 3

1.2.

OUTCOME OF INCIDENTS, GENDER, AND AGE OF THE VICTIMS

Firearm-related incidents **had a fatal outcome in almost one fourth of the cases, while wounding was reported in more than one third of the incidents.** In about 40% of the cases, there were no injuries, or the consequences were unclear at the time the media report was submitted.

Figure 4:
Outcome of incidents according to media reports

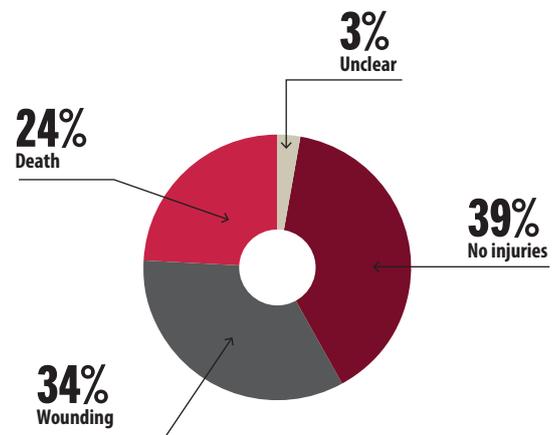


Figure 4

When this information is broken down by the gender of victims, **among the victims of threats or armed assaults, there are almost five times more male (218) than female victims (45).**

Figure 5:
Victims broken down by gender

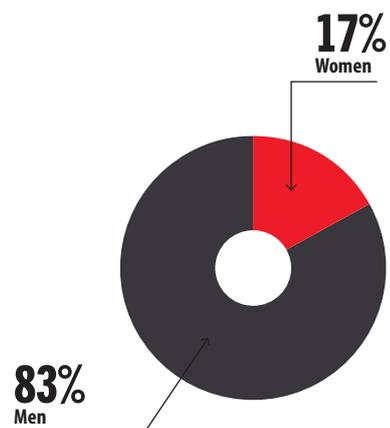


Figure 5

However, **death was the most prevalent outcome in cases involving women** – in 20 out of 45 cases (44%). Men, on the other hand, suffered injuries in more than one half of the cases in which they were the victim - 117 of 218 (54%).

OUTCOME	MEN	WOMEN	UNKNOWN	TOTAL
No injuries	25	7	123	155
Injury	117	17	4	138
Death	73	20	1	94
Unclear	3	1	9	13
Total	218	45	137	400

Table 2:
Outcome of firearm-related incidents broken down
by the gender of the victim

This difference is clearly shown in the following figures.

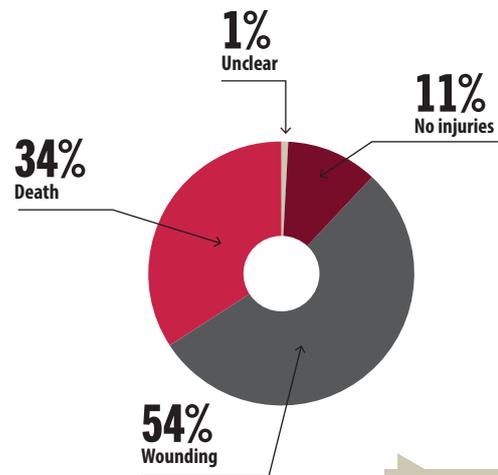


Figure 6:
Outcome of incidents with male victims

Figure 6

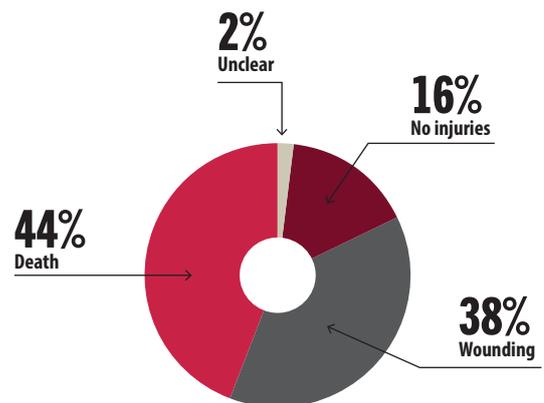


Figure 7:
Outcome of incidents with female victims

Figure 7

GENDER OF THE VICTIM	< 18	18 - 35	36-65	65+	UNKNOWN	TOTAL
Men	7	87	67	2	55	218
Women	2	11	13	2	17	45
Unknown	1	1	1		134	137
Total	10	99	81	4	206	400

Table 3:
Media reports on the gender and age of victims

The factor of age in the context of misuse of weapons was also considered. The reports in which the age of the victims was known (194) showed that more than one half of the cases included young people, aged 18-35 (99, or 51%), followed by mature adults, aged 36 to 65 (81, or 42%). A total of 10 minors were victims of attack or threats with a firearm (5%), and 4 victims were older than 65 (2%).

Figure 8:
All victims broken down by age

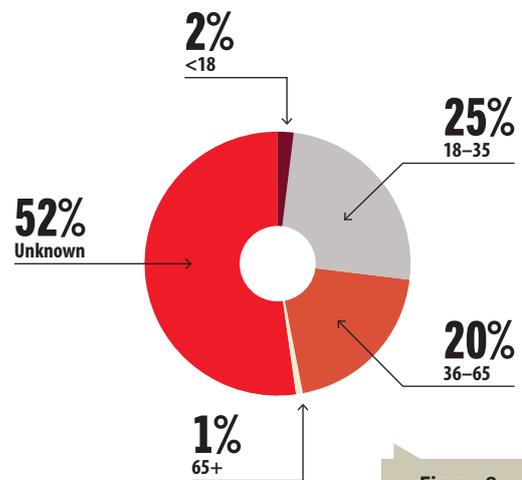


Figure 8

If we exclude the reports not containing data about the age of the victims, persons aged 18-35 are most likely to become victims, as they make up one half of the victims in the cases scrutinized.

Figure 9:
Known victims broken down by age

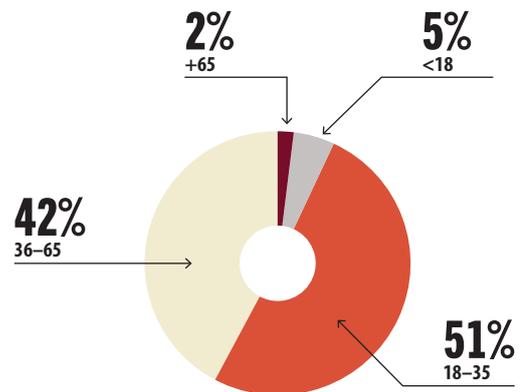


Figure 9

In terms of the consequences of incidents in which the age of victims was known, ***fatal outcome was prevalent among victims aged 36 to 65***, while cases involving younger persons aged 18 to 35 most often resulted in injuries.

AGE	NO INJURIES	INJURY	DEATH	UNCLEAR	TOTAL
< 18	3	4	3	0	10
18–35	9	61	29	0	99
36–65	6	24	51	0	81
65+	0	0	4	0	4
Unknown	137	49	7	13	206
Total	155	138	94	13	400

Table 4:
Outcome of incidents broken down by the age of victims

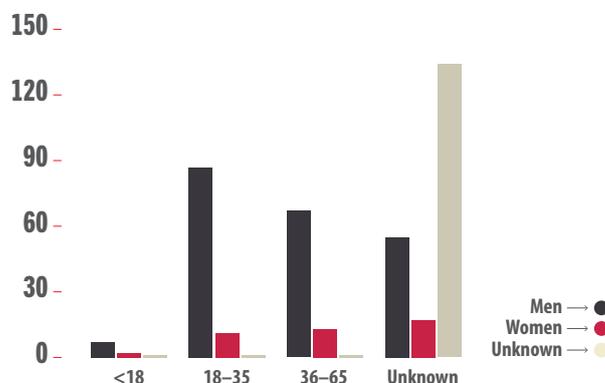
When data about age are crosschecked with the gender of victims, it appears that the highest proportion of victims were men, aged 18 to 35 (40%). Among women, there were more victims aged 36 to 65 – 13 (29%), followed by those aged 18 to 35 – 11 victims (24%) in the observed two-year

period. **There were 10 underage victims (2.5% of the total number of victims), of which 7 were boys (1.75% of the total number of victims, or 3% of the total number of male victims).** Underage boys were over three times more frequent victims than underage girls.

AGE OF VICTIM	GENDER OF VICTIM			
	M	F	Unknown	Total
Age				
<18	7	2	1	10
18–35	87	11	1	99
36–65	67	13	1	81
65+	2	2		4
Unknown	55	17	134	206
Total	218	45	137	400

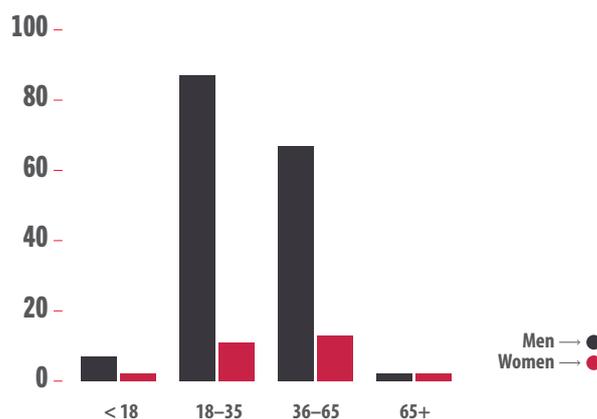
Table 5:
Victims according to gender and age

Graph 2:
Victims according to age and gender



Graph 2

Graph 3:
Known victims according to gender and age



Graph 3

When we exclude the cases with no data on the age of the victims, it is even clearer that there is little difference between the two most significant age categories of women, while among men, the number of younger male victims (87) compared to that of older men (67) is larger by one third.

When data on the age and gender of victims is cross-referenced with the consequences, we get an even clearer picture, shown in the following table:

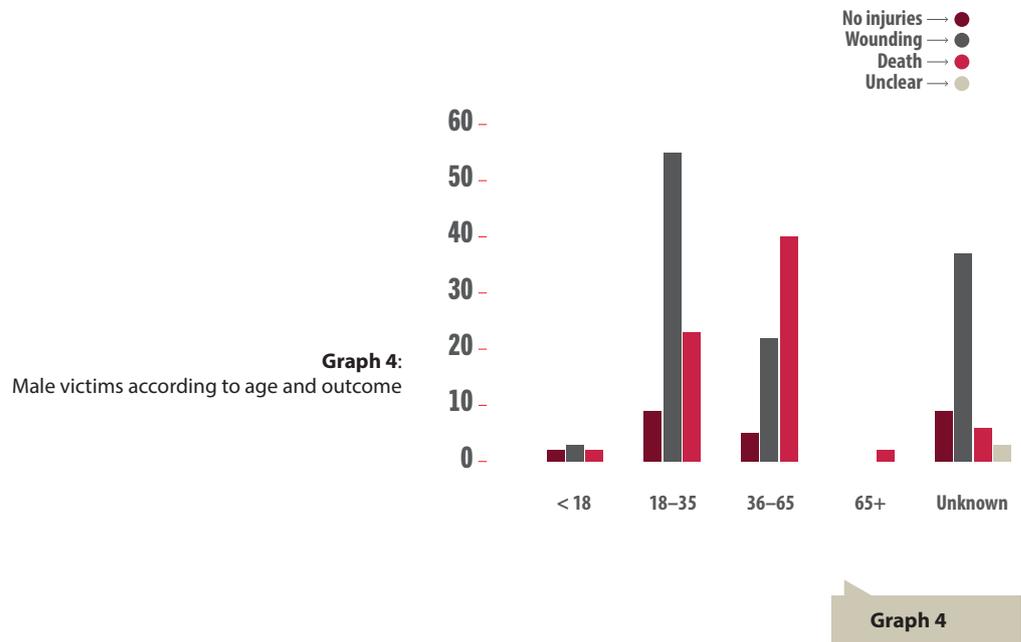
AGE	M	F	UNKNOWN	TOTAL %
< 18	1,75	0,5	0,25	2,5
No injuries	66,67	0	33,33	30
Injuries	75	25	0	40
Death	66,67	33,33	0	30
18 – 35	21,75	2,75	0,25	24,75
No injuries	100	0	0	9,09
Injuries	90,16	9,83	0	61,61
Death	79,31	17,24	3,44	29,29
36-65	82,71	16,04	1,23	20,25
No injuries	83,33	16,66	0	7,4
Injuries	91,66	4,16	4,16	29,63
Death	78,43	21,56	0	62,96
65+	0,50	0,50	0	1
Death	50	50	0	100
Unknown	26,69	8,25	65,04	51,5
No injuries	6,59	4,37	89,05	66,5
Unclear	23,07	7,69	69,23	6,31
Injuries	75,51	18,36	6,12	23,78
Death	85,71	14,28	0	3,39
Total				100

Table 6:
Victims according to the type of injury, gender, and age in percentages

GENDER OF VICTIM	NO INJURIES	INJURIES	DEATH	UNCLEAR	TOTAL
Men	25	117	73	3	218
<18	2	3	2		7
18–35	9	55	23		87
36–65	5	22	40		67
65+			2		2
Unknown	9	37	6	3	55
Women	7	17	20	1	45
< 18		1	1		2
18–35		6	5		11
36–65	1	1	11		13
65+			2		2
Unknown	6	9	1	1	17

Table 7:
Gender of victims, age of victims, and incident outcomes

Men aged 18-35 have a greater propensity for injuries than men of other age groups, as shown in the following graph.



1.3.

GENDER, AGE, AND ADDITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERPETRATORS

Based on the data available, men were predominantly the perpetrators of firearm-related incidents (287), whereas women were reported as perpetrators in only 9 cases. This means that in reported cases where the gender was known, **men were perpetrators almost 32 times more than women.**

If this data is compared to the previously shown findings about the victims, it is evident that **women were five times more frequently the victims (45) than perpetrators (9 cases).**

AGE	M	F	UNKNOWN	TOTAL
<18	10	0	0	10
18–35	61	2	2	65
36–65	99	3	0	102
65+	4	2	1	7
Unknown	113	2	101	216
Total	287	9	104	400

Table 8:

Perpetrators according to gender and age

Perpetrators were predominantly persons aged 36-65

– mature adults were perpetrators in more than one half of the incidents (102 of 184), in which gender was known. This age category was reported 25% more often as perpetrators than as victims. The number of underage perpetrators was the same as the number of underage victims, while persons aged 18-35 were 50% more often reported as victims (99) than as perpetrators (65).

Figure 10:
Age of perpetrators

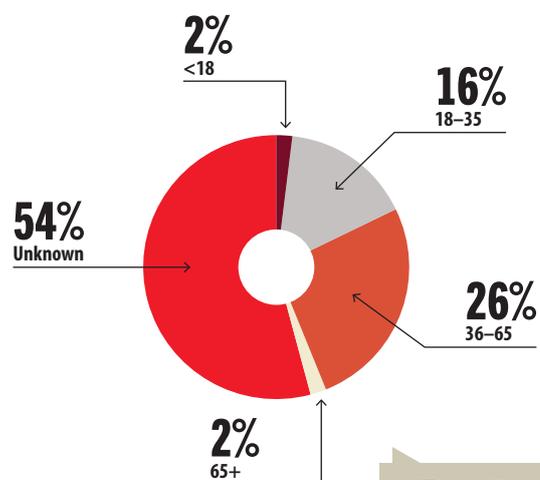


Figure 10

In the key age groups: 18-35, and 36-65, the ratio of male and female perpetrators is the same: men were perpetrators in 97% of the cases, and women in 3% of the cases.

Figure 11:
Perpetrators according to gender (aged 18-35)

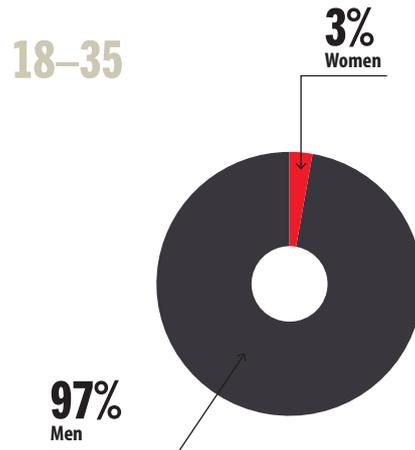


Figure 11

Figure 12:
Perpetrators according to gender (aged 36-65)

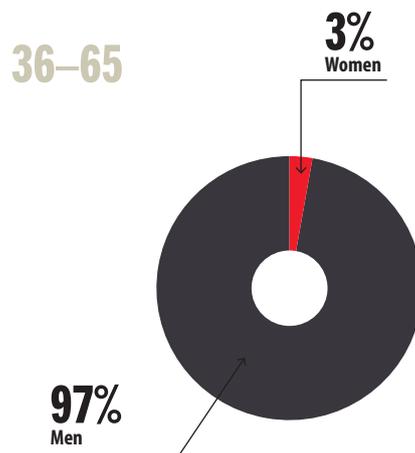


Figure 12

When both the gender and the age of the perpetrator were known (184 incidents), more than one half of male perpetrators were between 36 and 65 years old (99 cases), and over one third were younger men between 18 and 35 years old (61 cases). 6% of perpetrators were underage, while only 2% were older than 65.

Figure 13:
Male perpetrators according to age

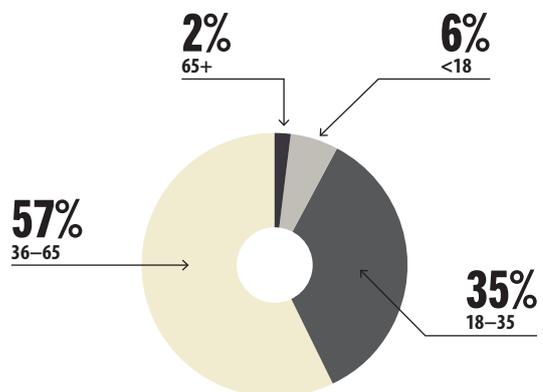


Figure 13

Figure 14:
Female perpetrators according to age
(there were no perpetrators under 18)

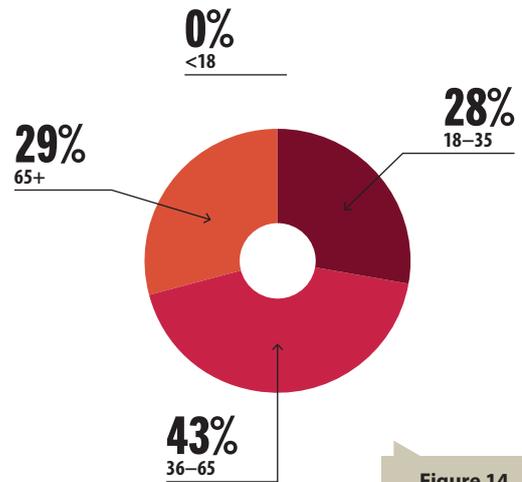


Figure 14

Less than 15% of the reports included additional information about the perpetrators, such as their occupation and affiliation with various social groups. The most common description was “previously known to the police” (19 cases). However, perpetrators also belonged to **professionals associated with arms possession**, such as members of state security institutions (16), hunters (9) and private security companies (1). The illegal possession and carry of weapons were reported in cases security officials (3), including officers performing off duty tasks.⁸ One case of a person previously known to the police, who legally possessed weapons, was also reported.

⁸ <http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/hronika/aktuelno.291.html:524038-Uhapsena-tri-policijaca-zbog-razbojnistva-i-teske-kradje> ; <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Hronika/410732/Policijac-interventne-jedinice-ubio-kolegu-u-centru-Novog-Sada>

POSSESSION				
Additional information about the perpetrator	Legal	Illegal	Unknown	Total
Refugee/IDP	1	0	0	1
Hunter	1	0	8	9
Football fan	0	0	4	4
Previously known to the police/police record	1	4	14	19
Armed/extremist groups	0	2	1	3
Member of the police/military/gendarme	6	3	7	16
Private security	0	0	1	1
Veteran	0	0	2	2
Other/no information	13	111	221	345
Total	22	120	258	400

Table 9:
Additional data about the perpetrators and the legal basis for arms possession

Out of nine women perpetrators, one was a member of a security agency, while information regarding the others was not available. .

When the data on the gender of victims was cross-referenced with the age of the perpetrators, it became apparent

that perpetrators over 65 years old attacked women and men to the same extent. Also, the data indicated that men were victims six times more often than women when the perpetrators were underage, although it should be noted that there were very few cases of this.

1.4.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VICTIM AND THE PERPETRATOR, INCIDENT OUTCOME

Short newspaper articles seldom contain details about the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. Also, the nature of incidents is sometimes such that there are no easily identifiable victims and perpetrators. However, when there was an obvious and well-defined relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (116), the total

number of incidents involving family members (father, mother, husband, wife, children); friends, acquaintances and neighbours; as well as relatives, was considerably larger (82) than the number of cases involving individuals unknown to each other (i.e. strangers) (32).

GENDER OF THE VICTIM				
Relationship between the victim and the perpetrator	M	F	Unknown	Total
Family	28	3	0	31
Friends/acquaintances/neighbours	46	0	2	48
Relatives	3	0	0	3
Don't know each other	27	0	5	32
Unknown	183	6	97	286
Total	287	9	104	400

Table 10:
Relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, and gender of the victim

Figure 15:
Relationship between the victim and
the perpetrator (known and unknown)

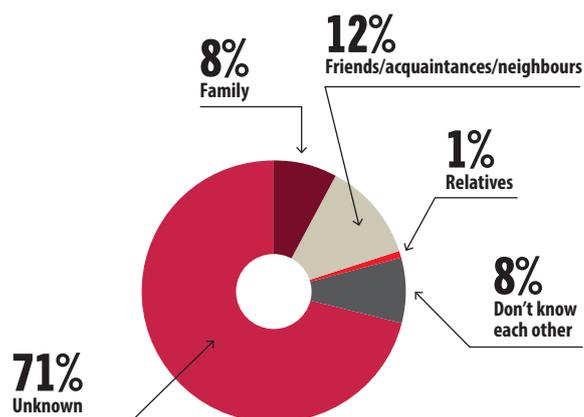


Figure 15

Among the reported cases where the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim was known, friends and acquaintances made up over 40%, while blood relations or spouses comprised 30% of those involved in the incidents.

Figure 16:
Known relationship between the victim and the perpetrator

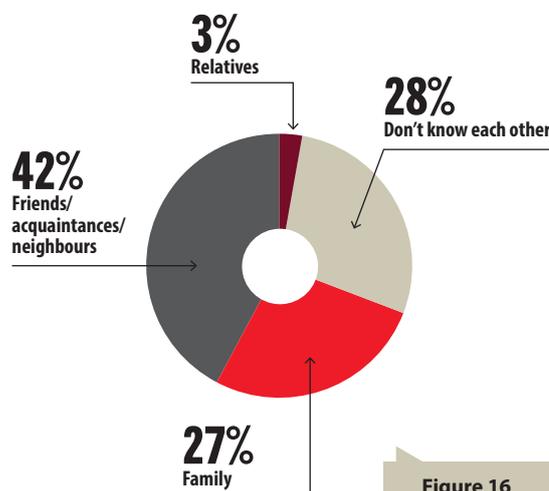


Figure 16

In terms of the outcomes of the incidents, the intensity of a relationship appeared to be directly correlated to the outcomes. **The most tragic outcome was most prevalent in the family**, where the misuse of weapons resulted in death in one half of the cases (16 out of 31, or 51.61%). This percentage was even higher among relatives (66.66%), but given that the number of these cases is very small (2 cases out of 3), a conclusion could not be drawn. The misuse of weapons resulted in death in just below one half of firearm-related incidents that occurred among friends and acquaintances (22 out of 48, or 45.83%).

OUTCOME OF INCIDENTS					
Relationship between the victim and the perpetrator	No injuries	Unclear	Injuries	Death	Total
Family	4	1	10	16	31
Don't know each other	11	1	19	1	32
Unknown	134	11	88	53	286
Friends/ acquaintances	5		21	22	48
Relatives	1			2	3
Total	155	13	138	94	400

Table 11:
Outcome of incidents and relationship of
the victim and the perpetrator

1.5.

CONTEXT OF MISUSE OF FIREARMS

The relationship between the victim and the perpetrator is closely related to the context of incidents. Among the incidents where the context was known, crime-related incidents were the most numerous (152 or 38%), followed by those caused by money problems, property

rows or jealousy (39 or 9.75%), and family violence (25 or 6.25% incidents). Accidents (13 or 3.25%) occurred in the context of different personal relationships, while hunting and sport-related incidents were the least frequent (5 or 1.25%).

CONTEXT OF INCIDENTS	FAMILY	RELATIVES	FRIENDS/ACQUAINTANCES	DON'T KNOW EACH OTHER	UNKNOWN	TOTAL
Criminal context	0	0	2	22	128	152
Hunting/sports	0	0	3	0	2	5
Money/property/jealousy	3	1	24	0	11	39
Accident	3	0	1	2	7	13
Family violence	24	1	0	0	0	25
Other	0	0	6	6	46	58
Unknown	1	1	12	2	92	108
Total	31	3	48	32	286	400

Table 12:
Context of incidents and relationship between the perpetrator and the victim

In a considerable number of incidents (108, or 27%) the context was either unknown or it was unique and was thus reported in the table under "other situations" (58, or 14.5% of cases). The most frequent incidents under this category were cases which involved the **use of firearms in suicides** (13, including 1 attempted suicide), followed by **random shooting** under various circumstances (6), as well as gun threats under various circumstances (5). Also, the newspaper articles reported the use of weapons in conflicts **between rival football fans** (3), **celebratory gunfire** (3), and gun threats in **claiming certain rights** (3). In four cases, weapon caches were **recovered**, in two cases underage persons **brought weapons to school**, two other cases were related to **self-defence**, and two more were associated with **revenge** (blood feud and a patient taking revenge on a doctor). Other cases under this category involved situations with only a vague outline of a context.

When data on the context of incidents is cross-referenced with their outcomes in terms of physical consequences, important trends become apparent, as per the table below.

CONTEXT OF INCIDENTS	NO INJURIES	UNCLEAR	INJURIES	DEATH	TOTAL
Criminal context	100	9	32	11	152
Family violence	4	1	8	12	25
Money/property/jealousy	4	1	19	15	39
Accident	0	0	8	5	13
Hunting/sports	0	0	2	3	5
Unknown	22	1	55	30	108
Other	25	1	14	18	58
Total	155	13	138	94	400

Table 13:
Context and outcome of incidents

Although firearm-related incidents in a criminal context were the ones most often reported in newspapers (152 of 400 cases, or 38%), in two thirds of these cases there were in fact no injuries.

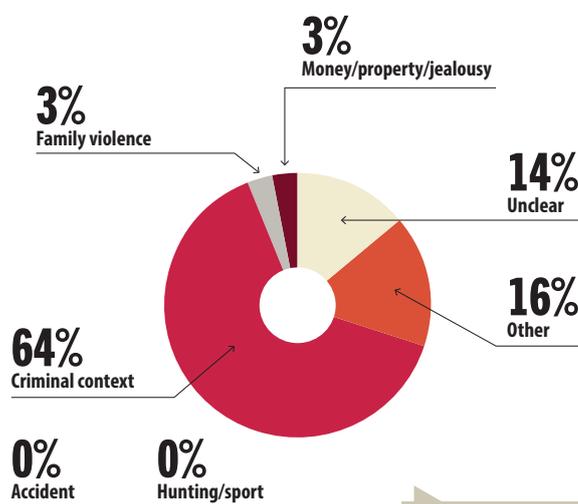


Figure 17:

Context of incidents in which there were no body injuries (Note: for accidents, hunting and sport-related incidents, the value is zero)

Death was relatively rare in crime-related incidents: occurring in 11 out of 152 cases (7%), while in family violence cases, it occurred in one half of the reported incidents of weapon misuse. To put it another way, **the absolute number of deaths in the context of family violence (12) was higher than the absolute number of deaths in a criminal context (11).**

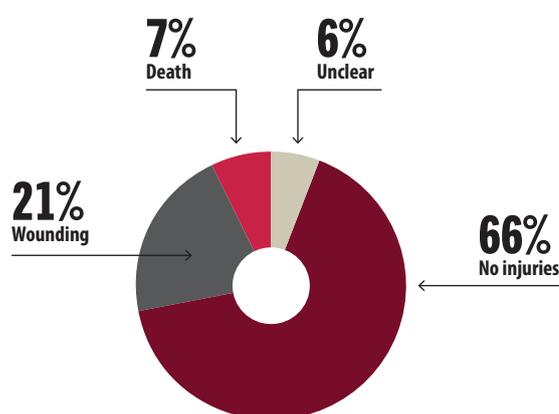
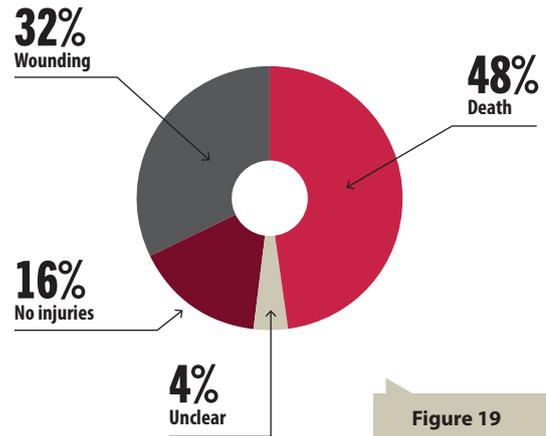


Figure 18:

Type of injury in crime related incidents

Figure 18

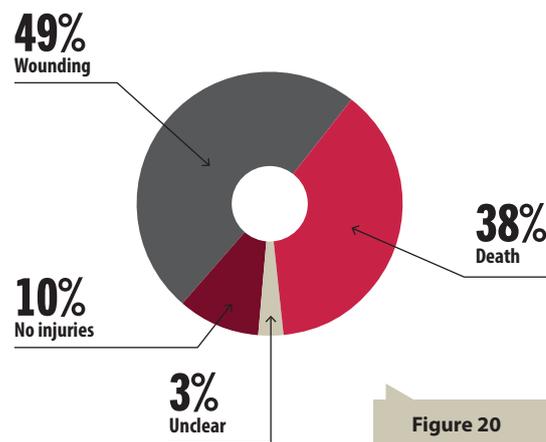
Figure 19:
Type of injury in the context of family violence



In almost one half of the cases when weapons were used in the context of family violence, the outcome was death.

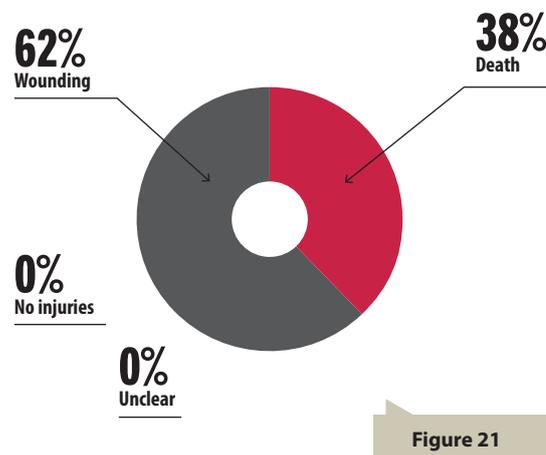
When it comes to conflicts caused by disputes regarding property, money, or jealousy where firearm was used, loss of life occurred in more than two fifths of the cases (15 fatal outcomes out of 39, or 38%).

Figure 20:
Type of injury in the context of incidents related to money, property, and jealousy



Accidents did not typically attract media attention if there were no resulting injuries and if there was not enough available information about an incident. As a result, data shows a high death rate in this context as well, (38%).

Figure 21:
The type of injury in the context of accidents



The highest percentage of deaths occurred as a result of hunting or sports shooting (60%). However, it should be noted that there were only five reported cases, which makes any inference limited.

Figure 22:
Hunting and sports shooting incidents and type of injury

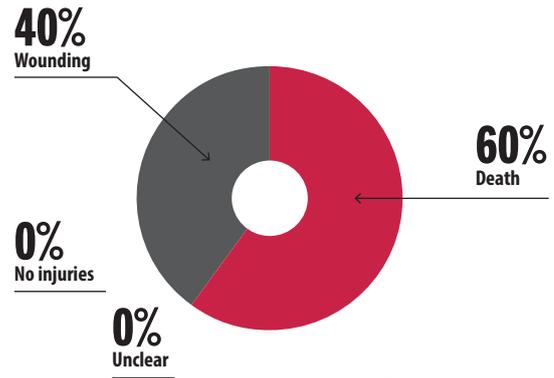


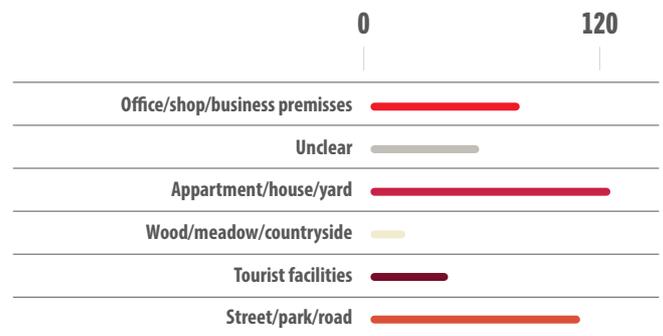
Figure 22

1.6

LOCATION OF INCIDENTS

With regards to the micro-locations of firearm-related incidents, **almost 30% of all reported incidents occurred in a private space – apartment, house or yard (119), and one fourth of the incidents (102) occurred in the street** or on a road. In about 20% of the cases, the misuse of weapons occurred in a public space or business premises, including in offices, at border crossings and in shops (75 cases), and almost 10% occurred inside bars, restaurants, and similar service-oriented facilities (37 cases).

Graph 5:
Micro-locations of weapon misuse



Graph 5

In terms of the type of settlements where the misuse of weapons occurs, data showed that **more than ¾ incidents (311) took place in urban areas**. In rural areas, one half of incidents take place inside a house or in a yard (42 out of 85), while in urban zones only one fourth of the cases took place in private setting (77 of 311).

Figure 23:
Micro-locations of incidents in rural areas

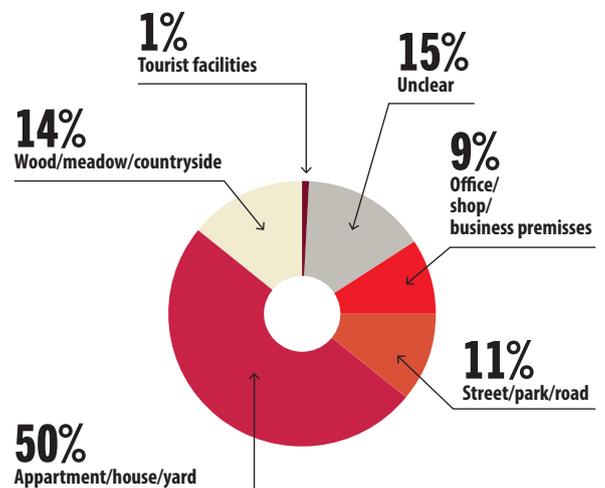


Figure 23

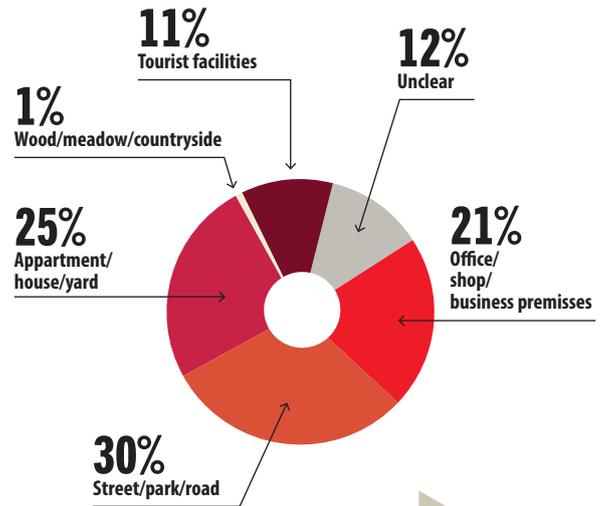


Figure 24:
Micro-locations of incidents in urban areas

Figure 24

When this data is cross-referenced with the data on the gender of victims, it is clear that **women were more often victims of firearm-related violence in private settings, than in public** (e.g. street, park, road, forest, field, out-of-town), or in bars and restaurants, where men were considerably more likely to be victims.

Graph 6:
Micro-location and gender of victims



Graph 6

In terms of geographical distribution, 114 incidents were reported in the Belgrade area, 29 in Novi Sad, 19 in Novi Pazar, 16 in Niš, 15 in Kragujevac, 9 in Kraljevo, 7 in Leskovac, 6 in Čačak, and 5 in Subotica. In other places, the number of reported incidents was below five.

1.7.

TIME OF THE DAY AND SEASON

Given that most cases of weapon misuse occurred in the open air, it is not surprising that the **number of incidents in the summer season was almost twice as high (137) as that in the winter (70)**, and that it makes up over two thirds of the entire number of reported incidents.

Incidents occurring in the evening hours and at night were clearly more prevalent (156) than those happening in the morning (66) and during daytime (48) – when such data is available in the media reports.

Hour of the day	SEASON				Total
	Autumn	Summer	Spring	Winter	
Morning	16	17	21	12	66
Day	12	17	17	2	48
Evening	6	10	6	9	31
Night	33	47	22	23	125
Unknown	31	46	29	24	130
Total	98	137	95	70	400

Table 14:
Incidents of weapon misuse broken down by season and time of the day

Figure 25:
Incidents of weapon misuse broken down by the time of the day

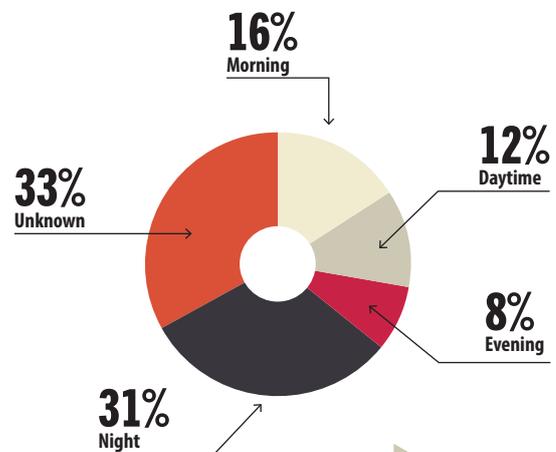


Figure 25

When data about the time of the day is cross-referenced with the age of the perpetrators (which, albeit, is unknown in more than one half of the cases), it becomes clear that **details about the age of perpetrators in firearm-related incidents happening at night are often missing.**

Also, out of ten reported cases where perpetrators were minors, only one occurred at night.

AGE OF PERPETRATORS						
Hour of the day	<18	18 - 35	36-65	65+	Unknown	Total
Morning	0	3	22	0	41	66
Day	6	3	16	1	22	48
Evening	0	6	6	1	18	31
Night	1	17	21	2	84	125
Unknown	3	36	37	3	51	130
Total	10	65	102	7	216	400

Table 15:
Time of the day and age of perpetrators
in firearm-related incidents

2 CITIZEN ATTITUDES TOWARDS FIREARMS AND REPORTS OF FIREARM SIGHTINGS

Attitudes towards firearms may be indirectly inferred from media reports. However, the platform *Oružje na meti/Targeting Weapons*, in its pilot phase, was established in 2012 in order to obtain an overview of citizen perceptions about this issue and to try and map out situations in which citizens actually saw weapons. Thus, this section of the report analy-

zes 59 entries made by individuals who offered their opinions on weapons in general, the possession and/or carry of weapons in particular, and laws governing this subject matter as well as the safety of these citizens' respective local environments. The section also considers citizen entries about witnessing gunfire, or weapon sightings (15 entries).

2.1.

CITIZEN ATTITUDES TOWARDS FIREARMS

The general sentiment towards weapons was relatively positive – with 27 citizens expressing a positive attitude to weapons, while 21 expressed a negative one.

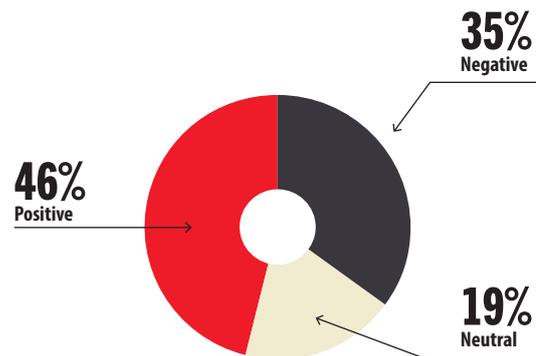


Figure 26:
Attitude of viewers of the platform towards weapons

Figure 26

Even though citizens who shared their attitudes did generally not reveal any personal information, with the exception of two cases, it appears that the platform has attracted a considerable number of people who were already interested in weapons, which in turn was reflected in the positive inclination of almost one half of the respondents. Furthermore, despite the fact that in many cases it was impossible to identify the gender of the person expressing his/her opinion, the general impression was that men prevailed among the respondents – as only two persons identified themselves as women.

In the instances where a positive attitude towards weapons in general was expressed, it included the following arguments: the necessity of **owning weapons** for the purpose of self-defence or the protection of home and property, as well as for the use by security officials or persons with high-risk jobs. Also highlighted was the importance of arms development for the overall technological development of society.

A negative attitude towards weapons was most often associated with the threat to safety they cause in public and the risk they pose to children; but it was also linked to a lack of professionalism of the police. With this in mind, appeals were made for better work by the police, including improved training for them, while criticisms were made about police at times acting discriminatory, and not applying laws equally to all.

Attitudes regarding the right to **carry** a weapon differed however: a majority of respondents were against it (31), except under very special circumstances, such as for the use by military and special police forces, or when lives are clearly at risk. An example was given of a police officer who showed off his weapon while inebriated, and of private security officers who visibly display the firearms they carry. Police officers were called on to be more discreet; suggestions were made that traffic police should not be armed; and that through these measures, new values would be promoted.

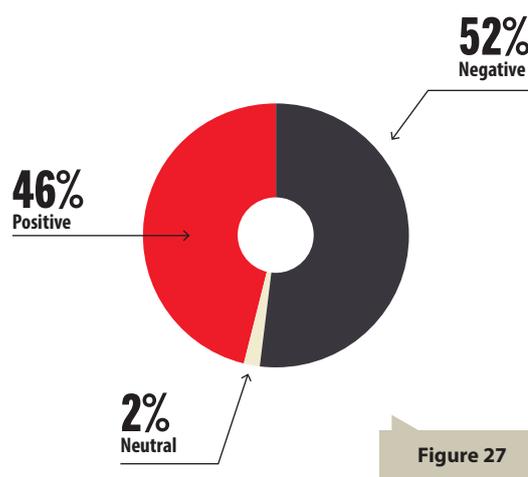


Figure 27:
Relationship of viewers of the platform towards the concealed carry of firearms

Citizens with a positive attitude towards the carrying of weapons, who were not significantly less numerous (27) than the citizens who were against it (31), highlighted the importance of advancing the culture of safety, particularly when it comes to advocating for responsible behaviour concerning the possession and carry of weapons. In their comments, citizens associated this behaviour with the need for amending legislation, so as to introduce medical check-ups and more serious training in weapon handling. They also suggested abandoning limited acquisition of ammunition, and advocated for less restrictive sales of weapons.

COMMENTS ON THE LAW					
Attitude towards concealed carry of weapons	Good legislation	Bad/outdated laws	Not applied	Other	Total
Negative	2	3	3	23	31
Unclear	0	0	0	1	1
Positive	0	11	2	14	27
Total	2	14	5	38	59

Table 16:
Comments on the law and the attitude towards the carry of weapons ('Other' includes absence of comment)

Positive attitudes towards the carry of weapons were expressed mostly by persons with specific complaints about laws regulating weapons, and with requests that these laws be amended in specific areas and in specific ways.

This contributes to the assumption that these respondents are people who professionally use weapons or are tied to weapons through a hobby.

COMMENTS ON GENERAL SAFETY				
Attitude towards carry of weapons	No comment	Negative	Positive	Total
Negative	8	22	1	31
Unclear	1	0	0	1
Positive	12	14	1	27
Total	21	36	2	59

Table 17:
Comments on the safety and the attitude towards the carry of weapons

What is interesting is that negative comments on the general state of safety and security in society were put forward more often by citizens who think that carrying of weapons is unnecessary, rather than by those who find it necessary. This implies that weapons are more often consi-

dered a source of *insecurity* rather than a source of *security*. Nevertheless, considering the limited sample and often very short comments, it is not possible to draw significant conclusions.

2.2.

CITIZEN REPORTS ABOUT FIREARM SIGHTINGS

A separate section on "Weapons sightings" was actively promoted in the pilot stage of the platform, so reports on *weapons seen* date mostly from 2012. There were only a few such reports about seeing a weapon, witnessing gunfire, and other incidents (15 entries), which is not surprising, considering the delicate nature of the issue.

Although there was an attempt to analyze these reports according to gender, age, interpersonal relationship, and other characteristics of the involved parties, such data was mostly lacking. In several cases the context showed that the actors were young people or members of the security sector, but there were no other elements for further analysis.

"Around 3 in the morning a man was passing by the car in which I was sitting with a colleague, carrying a gun. I was on duty in a civilian car, and naturally we detained him :) he found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time, and it goes without saying, he did not have a license for the gun."

"I saw a pistol in the park – a friend of mine was carrying it, what an amazing thing"

The geographical distribution of sites where weapons were seen could potentially be relevant.

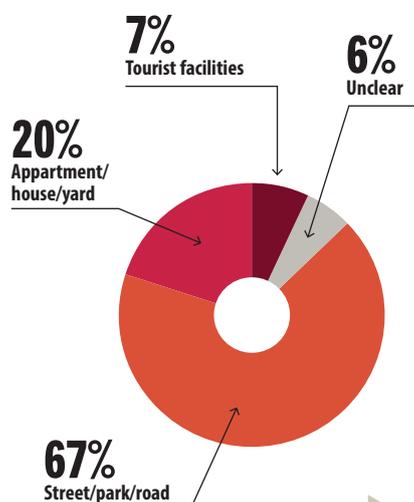


Figure 28:
Micro-locations in which weapons were seen

Figure 28

In the above entries, as well as in the media reports, the street was predominantly the venue of firearm-related incidents. The issues of family violence (*"My nephew thrust a gun in my mouth"*) and instances of harassment of women were also reported.

"A couple of years ago, on the train line Priboj – Belgrade, a man who was sitting with us in the compartment started talking to me, my friend, and my grandma. We were answering his questions in a polite manner, but at one moment he hugged my friend. Naturally, she told him off. Then he started yelling at us and telling us that we were crazy. Finally we stood up with the intention of changing carriages, but the man took out his gun and told us to sit down. We went out screaming for help. I think he was yelling back at us that he was from state security (DB) (?!). Anyway, eventually the conductor transferred us to another carriage and as we were near Belgrade, things ended well. I don't think he would have fired at us, he was just waving his gun, but still..."

Along with the often criticized celebratory shootings, traffic-related situations were also mentioned. In addition to the incident on the train, a particular danger presented involved aggravated drivers who were aggressive towards other people in traffic, and either showed their guns (a driver who pushed a cyclist off the road), or threatened to bring weapons to the scene (to deal with kids who were using steep streets for sledding).

It is worth mentioning that the reports were from various parts of Serbia. This confirms the capacity of the platform – with a larger investment in its promotion, it can offer even more data about weapon issues, especially during the campaign to turn in illegal weapons.

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Figure 26: Attitude of viewers of the platform towards weapons

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Graph 3: Known victims according to gender and age

Graph 4: Male victims according to age and outcome

Graph 5: Micro-locations of weapon misuse

Graph 6: Micro-location and gender of victims

