



**In Focus Armed Violence Monitor**

**Firearm incidents in the context of**

# **Domestic violence**

**In South East Europe in 2022**

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# About the Armed Violence Monitor

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*In Focus* – *Armed Violence Monitors* provide information on the specific types of firearm incidents and the related topics to illustrate the magnitude of firearms' adverse impact on civilians.

This issue addresses **firearm incidents in the context of domestic violence** in South East Europe (SEE) from **2022, also offering a comparative overview of 2021**. The Monitor provides an overview of firearm-related incidents committed by intimate partners and other close family members. The Monitor aims to shed light on firearm misuse in the domestic context and underscores its disproportionate effects on women, especially in the context of intimate partner violence.

## Methodology

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The information provided in this report is gathered from the Armed Violence Monitoring Platform (AVMP), which captures data on firearm-related incidents happening in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia, Kosovo\* and the Republic of Moldova.

The data is gathered daily from the relevant authorities' official websites, as well as print and online media. Data for Kosovo is also gathered from the police daily incident reports. Quality assurance is conducted rigorously by SEESAC. The platform has seen significant improvements in recent years in terms of data collection and categorization.

The AVMP has been established by SEESAC and funded by the European Union within the framework of EU Council Decision (CFSP) 2016/2356 and EU Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/2111.

*\*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.*

## HIGHLIGHTS

107

firearm incidents in the **context of domestic violence** were reported in 2022, an **18% increase** from 2021

62

incidents were committed by **intimate partners**

45

incidents were **committed** by other **family members**

18

**women were killed** in a domestic setting

10

**murder suicides**, all committed by men following domestic violence

46

incidents involved the use of **handguns**

# 1. Key definitions

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Domestic violence<sup>1</sup> means all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim.

Violence against women<sup>2</sup> is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Gender-based violence against women<sup>3</sup> shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately.

In its broader sense, domestic violence relates to violence against intimate partners, children, parents, and family members.<sup>4</sup>

Intimate partner violence refers to physical, sexual, or psychological abuse by a current or former partner or spouse that can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and may not imply sexual intimacy.

While domestic violence can affect everyone, regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, social status or educational level, it disproportionately affects women and girls who account for the majority of victims.

Domestic violence manifests itself as a pattern of behaviour through which the abuser intends to obtain or retain power and control over a partner or other family member.

<sup>1</sup> Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, Article 3. p.3.  
*Ibid*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

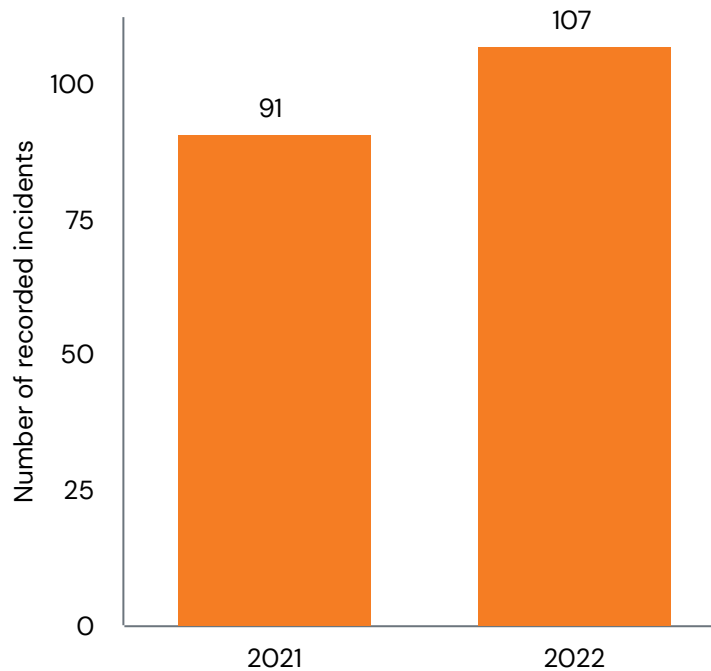
<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Family members, in the context of this report, refer to: 1. spouses or former spouses; 2. children, parents and other blood relatives, in-laws or adoptive relatives, and persons related by foster care; 3. persons who live or have lived in the same family household; 4. cohabitantes or former cohabitantes; 5. persons who have been or still are in a mutual emotional or sexual relation, or have a common child, or the child is to be born, although they have never lived in the same family household. An intimate partner can refer to: husband/wife, former husband/former wife, partner/former partner, boyfriend/girlfriend, former boyfriend/ former girlfriend.

## 2. Firearm incidents in the context of domestic violence

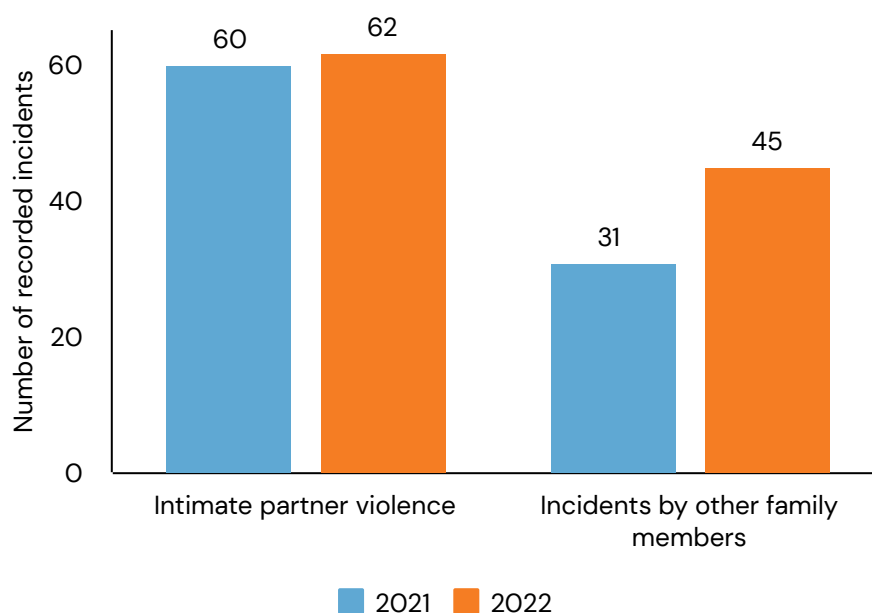
From 2021 to 2022, there was an 18% increase in the reported number of firearm incidents in the context of domestic violence, with the numbers rising from 91 to 107.

Firearm incidents in the context of domestic violence, by year



In 2022, out of 107 firearm incidents in the domestic setting, 58% were committed by intimate partners, while incidents involving other family members accounted for 48%. Compared to the data from 2021, incidents committed by intimate partners levelled off in 2022, showing a slight increase from 60 to 62 incidents. In contrast, incidents involving other family members saw a more substantial change, rising from 31 in 2021 to 45 in 2022.

Firearm incidents in domestic setting by context and year

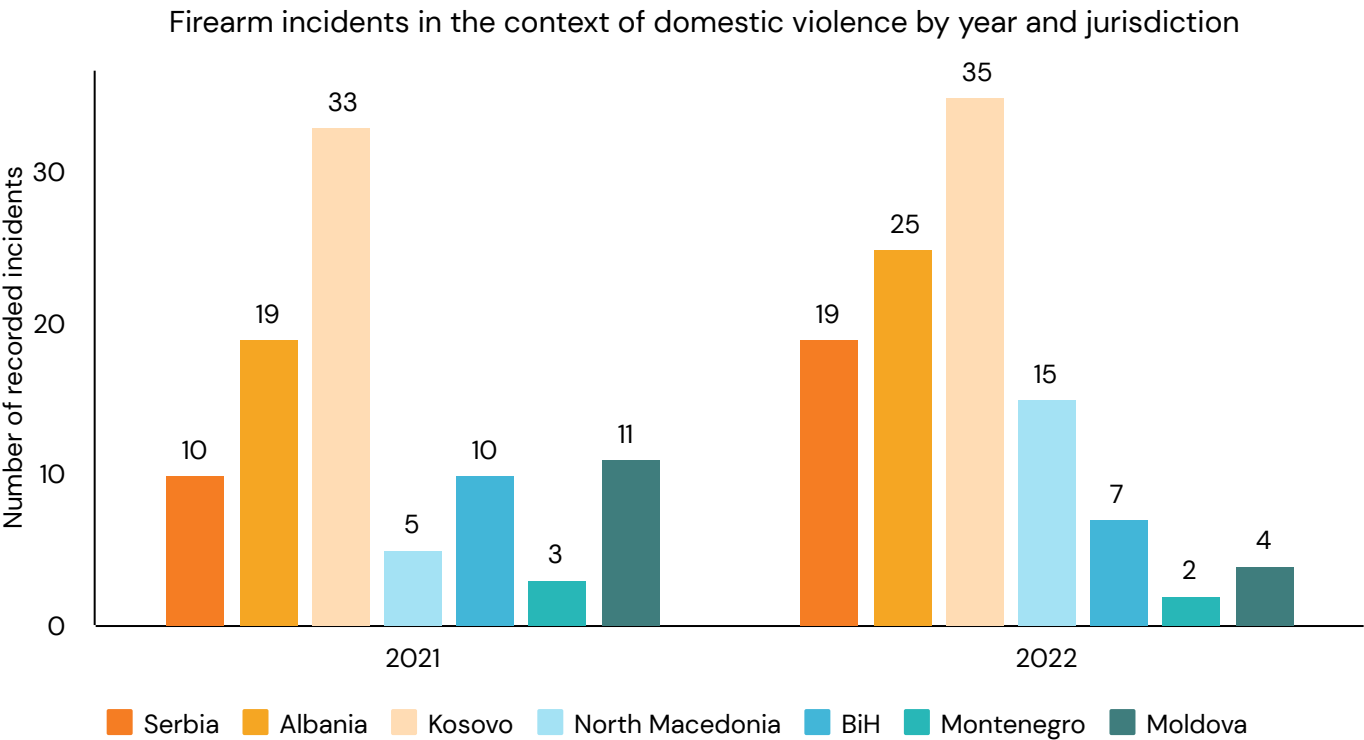


2.1 Firearm incidents in the context of domestic violence by jurisdictions

Notable trends were observed when analyzing the data on reported firearm incidents in the domestic context across jurisdictions in 2021 and 2022.

Specifically, incidents almost tripled in North Macedonia, rising from 5 to 15. Serbia documented a considerable increase, with incidents nearly doubling from 10 to 19. In Albania, incidents increased by approximately a third, from 19 to 25, while Kosovo demonstrated a slight rise.

Conversely, Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced a drop in incidents, from 10 to 7. Moldova saw a substantial decrease, with incidents dropping from 11 to 4. A slight decline was observed in Montenegro.



### 3. Victims

As a result of the overall rise in firearm incidents in the context of domestic violence, the number of victims increased from 115 in 2021 to 125 in 2022, marking a 9% rise. Out of 125 victims of firearm misuse in the context of domestic violence, 82 (66%) were women and 43 (34%) were men. The number of women victims represents an 11% increase compared to the previous year. In contrast to earlier trends of relatively constant numbers, the year 2022 witnessed a rise in men victims, marking a 26% increase from 34 to 43.



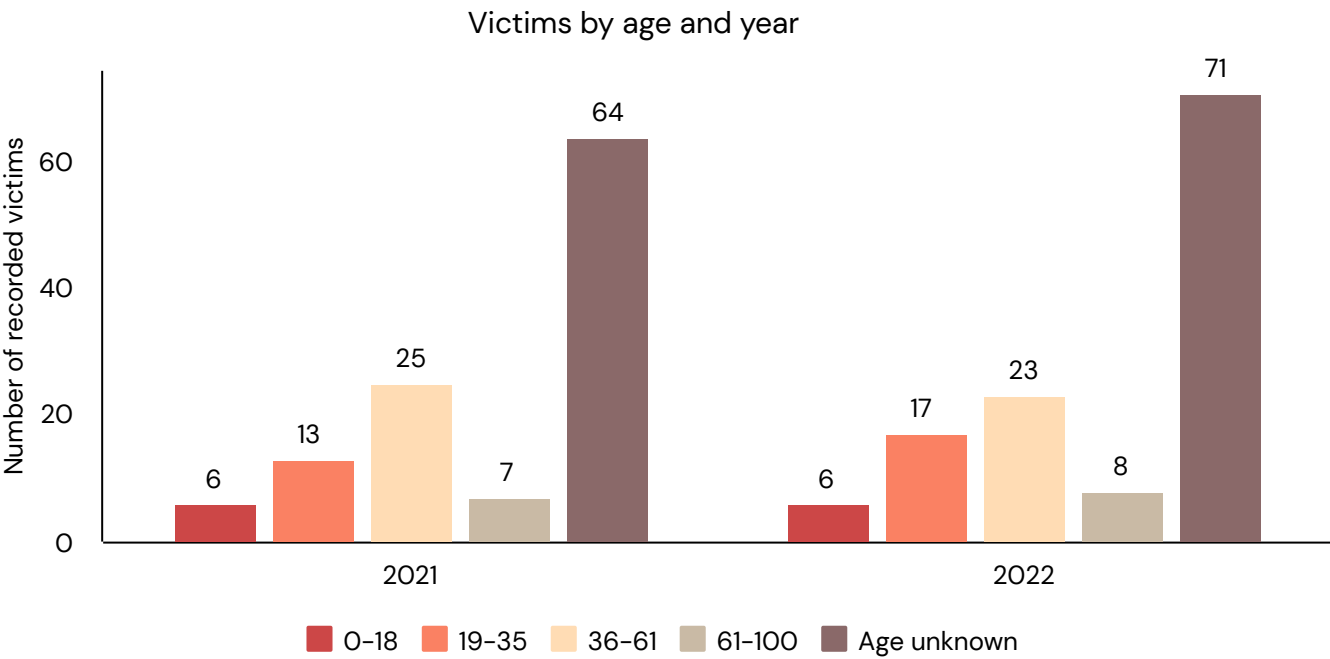
In most jurisdictions, women were the predominant victims, with the exception of Montenegro and North Macedonia, where more men than women were reported as victims.

Victims by sex, jurisdiction and year						
Location	2021			2022		
	M	W	N/A	M	W	N/A
Albania	9	13	2	11	20	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2	9		2	5	
Kosovo	9	25		10	28	
Moldova	3	14	3	1	4	
Montenegro	3	2		2	1	
North Macedonia	4	2		10	9	
Serbia	4	9	2	7	15	
	34	74	7	43	82	



3.1 Age of victims

In 2022, the age was specified for 54 (43%) victims, while the age was not indicated for 71 (57%) victims. The main age trend seen in 2021 remained consistent in 2022. Thus, the majority of victims (23 or 43%) were aged 36–60. A total of 17 (31%) victims were in the 19–35 age range, while those aged 61 and older (8 or 15%) were close behind. Six (11%) victims were 18 and younger.



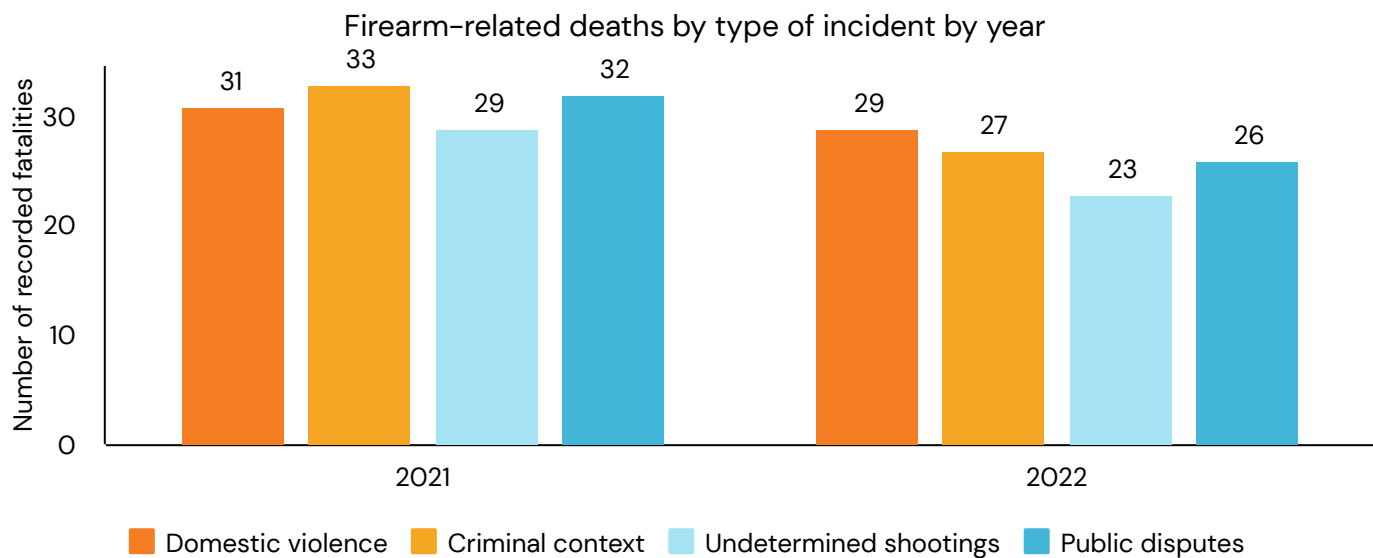
The data on both age and sex was provided for 54 victims, i.e. 33 women and 21 men. The age distribution among men and women victims showed that in 2021, the highest proportion of men and women victims fell within the 36–60 age group. However, in 2022, a reversal of this trend was noted, with a slightly greater number of women victims aged 19–35 compared to the 36–60 category.

Victims by age and sex in 2022

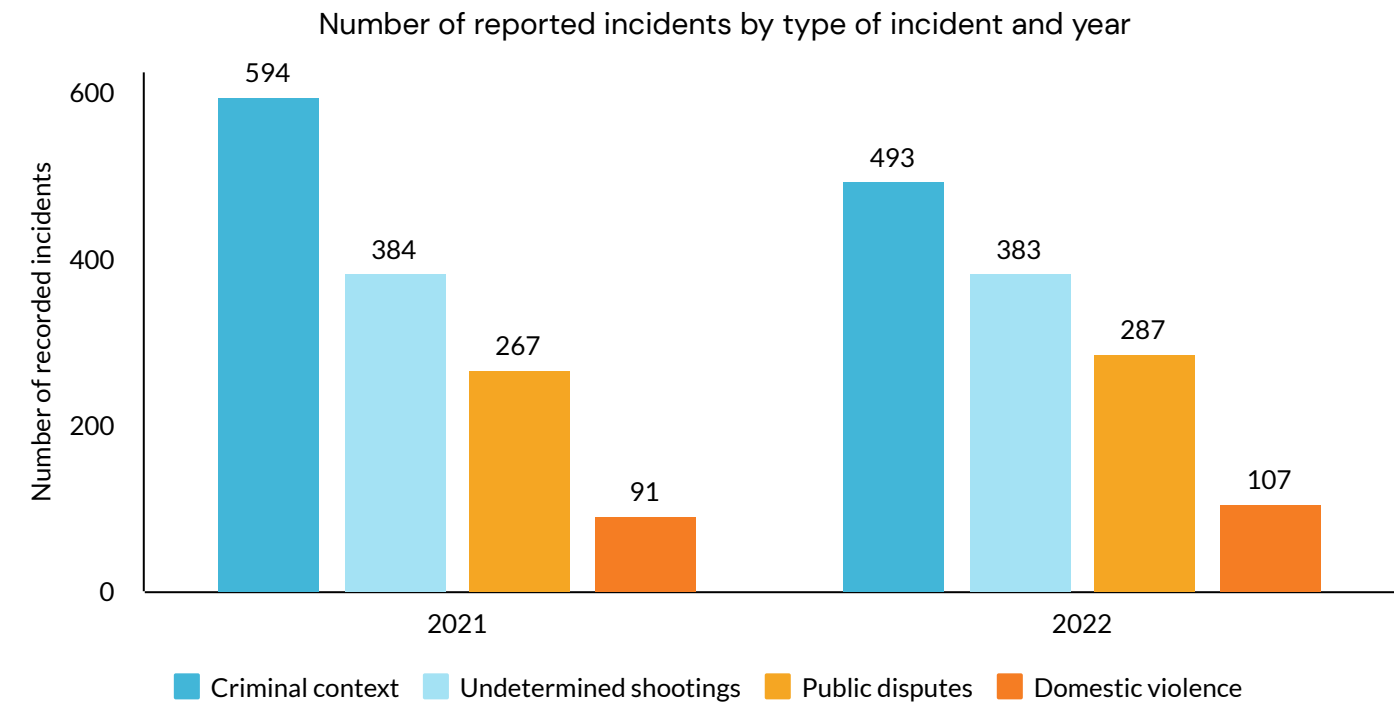
Age	Sex		Total
	Men	Women	
0-18	2	4	6
19-35	4	13	17
36-60	11	12	23
61+	4	4	8
Unknown	22	49	71
Total	43	82	125

## 4. Fatality of firearm incidents in the domestic context

The severity of the use of firearms in domestic violence in both 2021 and 2022 is reflected in the number of fatalities documented by the AVMP. In 2022, the number of deaths resulting from firearm incidents in domestic settings was higher than that reported in any other type of incident covered by the AVMP, including those in the criminal context, public disputes, and undetermined shootings.



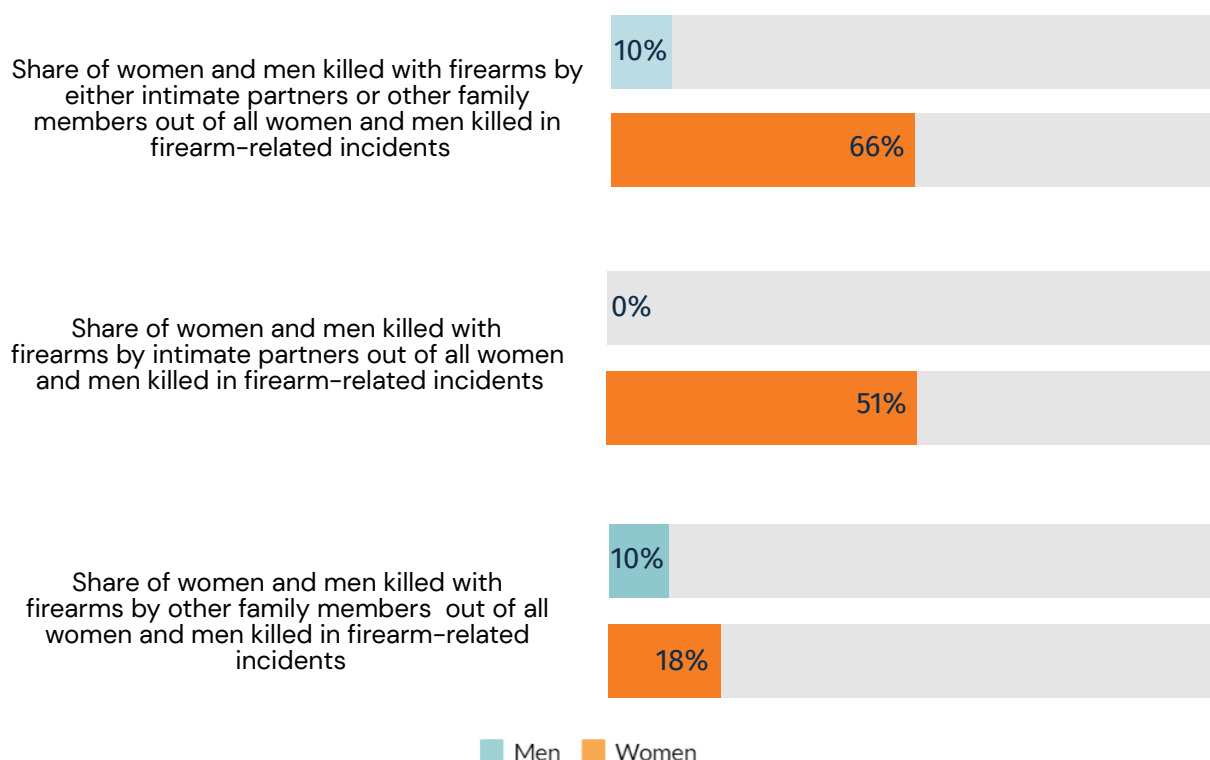
The stark contrast between the number of recorded incidents and the resulting firearm-related fatalities in the context of domestic violence is a noteworthy finding. Despite the domestic setting having a significantly lower number of reported incidents compared to other contexts, the fatalities associated with firearm use were either higher or equal. This discrepancy underscores the heightened lethality and danger present in domestic violence incidents involving firearms. This is even more striking when we take into account that cases of firearms being used for psychological violence, including threatening and intimidation, often go unreported.



Women are disproportionately affected by domestic violence, with a higher likelihood of being killed in such incidents compared to other types. Conversely, men face a greater risk of being killed in incidents such as undetermined shootings, criminal contexts, and public disputes.

Fatalities by type of incident, sex and year

Type of incident	2021		2022	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>Domestic violence</b>	9	22	11	18
<b>Criminal context</b>	30	3	27	0
<b>Public disputes</b>	33	0	25	1
<b>Undetermined shootings</b>	24	2	21	1

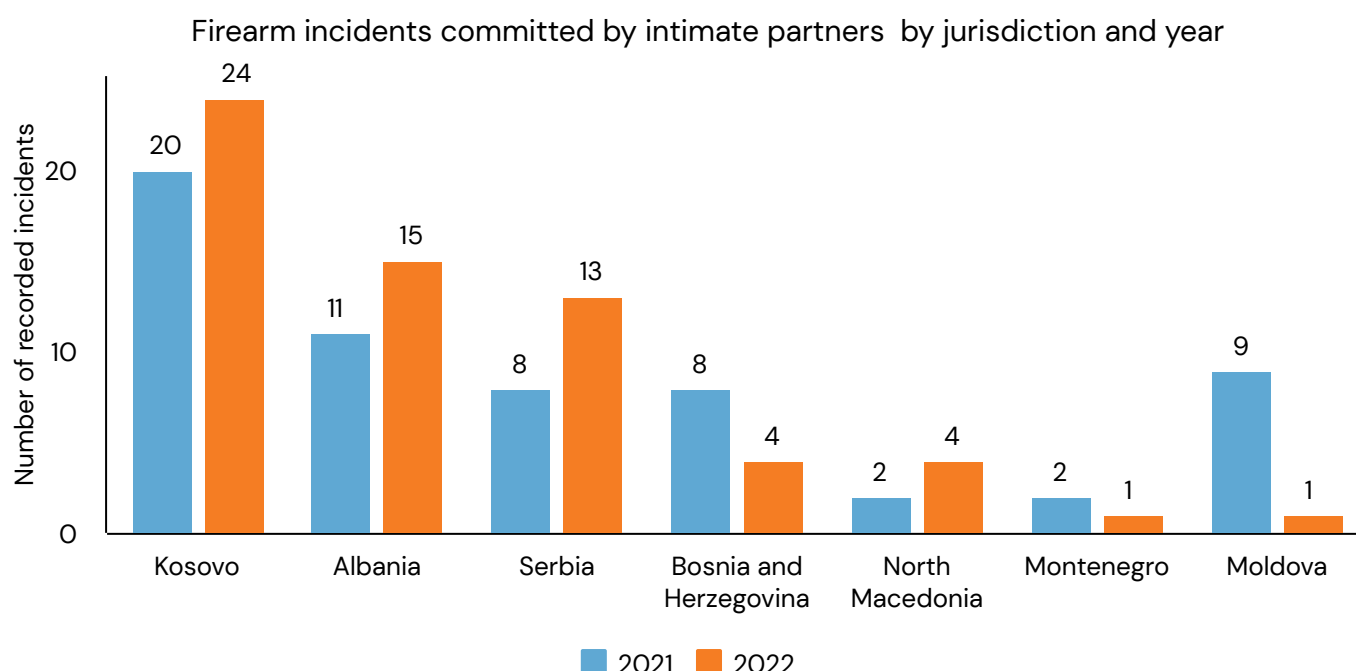


*The graph shows the fatal outcomes resulting from all types of incidents covered by the AVMP in 2022*

## 5. Firearm incidents in the context of intimate partner violence

The AVMP data for 2022 indicates that intimate partners committed a total of 62 firearm incidents in SEE, reflecting an overall increase of 3%. Consistent with 2021, Kosovo reported the highest number of incidents (24), followed by Albania (15) and Serbia (13). Montenegro and Moldova had the lowest number of these incidents, with each documenting one case.

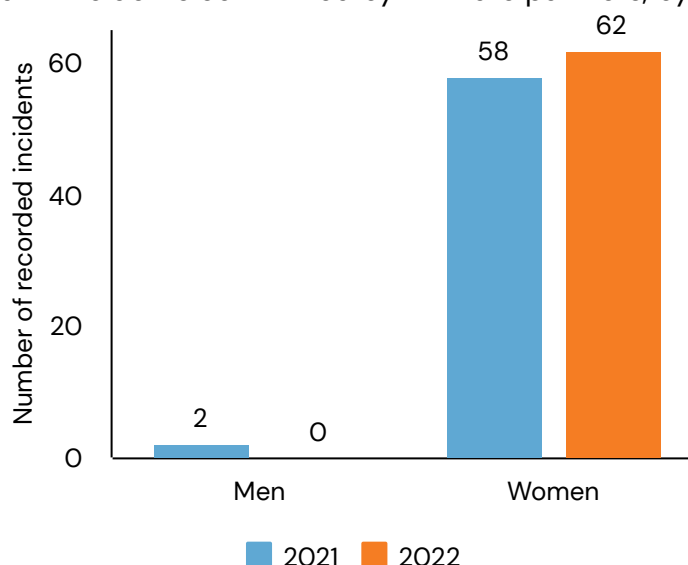
From 2021 to 2022, an upward trend was seen in Serbia (63%), Albania (36%), and Kosovo (20%). North Macedonia reported a doubling of incidents. In contrast, the most significant decline was reported in Moldova, where incidents dropped from 9 to 1. The number of reported firearm incidents perpetrated by intimate partners halved in Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina.



### 5.1 Victims of intimate partner violence

In 2022, incidents of intimate partner violence involving firearms resulted in 62 reported victims, all of whom were women. This mirrors a comparable trend observed in 2021, when women constituted 97% of the victims in such incidents, while men represented 3%. From 2021, the number of women victims increased by 7%, while no men victims of intimate partner violence with firearms were reported in 2022.

Victims of firearm incidents committed by intimate partners, by sex and year



In 2022, a decrease in fatalities among women due to intimate partner violence involving firearms was observed, with 14 women killed, indicating an 18% drop compared to 2021, when 17 women lost their lives. The jurisdictions reporting the highest number of fatalities in 2022 were Serbia (6) and Kosovo (3). While the number of fatalities increased in Serbia, Kosovo, and North Macedonia, other jurisdictions experienced a decline.

In terms of injuries, three women were shot and injured by their intimate partners, marking a 63% drop from 2021. These outcomes were reported in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, and North Macedonia.

However, a concerning rise of 53% was noticed in the number of women reported as threatened with firearms by their partners in 2022 compared to 2021, totalling 26 victims. The majority of threatened women were reported in Albania (8), Kosovo (8), and Serbia (6), aligning with the pattern observed in 2021.

In an incident reported in Moldova, one woman did not sustain a gunshot injury when her intimate partner discharged a firearm in her presence.

Additionally, the AVMP records incidents where a weapon was present during intimate partner violence but not used. Fifteen such cases were reported in 2021 and 18 in 2022.

#### Outcome for women victims of intimate partner violence by jurisdiction and year

	Death		Injury <sup>5</sup>		No injury <sup>6</sup>		Threatened	
Location	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
<b>Albania</b>	4	1				1	5	8
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	4	2	3	1				1
<b>Kosovo</b>	1	3	1				5	8
<b>Moldova</b>	3		3	1	1		2	
<b>Montenegro</b>	1	1					1	
<b>North Macedonia</b>		1		1			2	2
<b>Serbia</b>	4	6	1				2	6
	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>

In 2022, no men victims of intimate partner violence involving firearms were reported, while in 2021, one man was killed, and one was threatened in Kosovo by their female intimate partners.

<sup>5</sup> Injury refers to all incidents in which an individual sustained an injury due to the use of a weapon.

<sup>6</sup> No injury refers to all incidents in which a weapon was discharged, but the victim did not sustain a gunshot injury.

The use of firearms in intimate partner violence has a multifaceted impact. Namely, firearms pose a risk to other family members or persons present during the incident as well, often leading to lethal consequences. According to AVMP data for 2022, apart from 62 women victims of intimate partner violence, there were an additional 16 victims (10 men and 6 women) who were present during these incidents.

The number of these victims dropped by 27% in 2022. Among the 16 victims reported in 2022, six were documented in Albania, while other jurisdictions reported fewer than five. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Moldova did not report such victims. Unlike 2021, where intimate partner violence involving firearms led to five fatalities and seven injuries among individuals present during the incidents, there were no fatalities or injuries reported in 2022.

However, there was an increase in threats, totaling 12 victims, with four reported in Albania, three in Kosovo and North Macedonia, and two in Serbia. In two incidents, the weapon was present but not used.

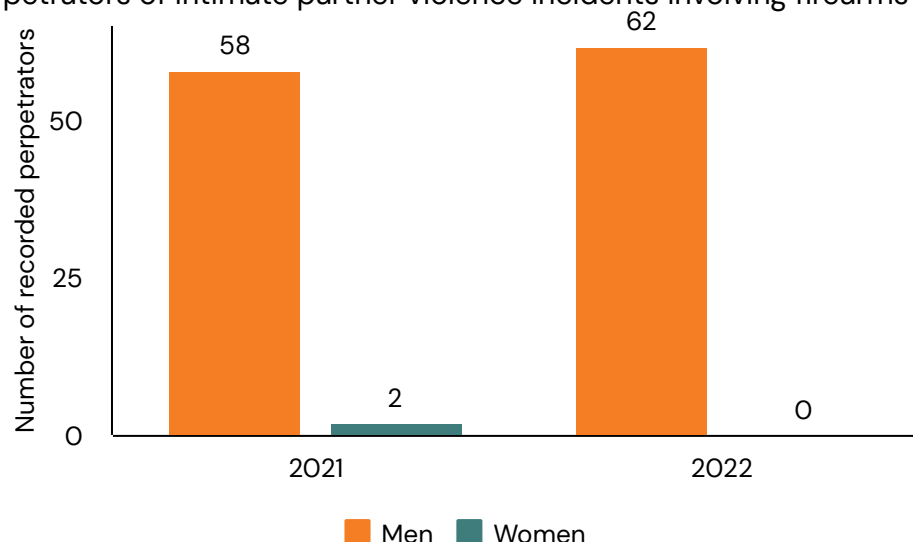
Outcome for other family members and persons  
involved in firearm incidents committed by intimate partners by year

	Death		Injury		No injury		Threatened	
Location	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
<b>Albania</b>			2				2	4
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	1							3
<b>Kosovo</b>								
<b>Moldova</b>	2		1		4	1	1	
<b>Montenegro</b>			1				1	
<b>North Macedonia</b>							1	3
<b>Serbia</b>	2		3			1		2
	5		7	2	4	2	5	12

## 5.2 Perpetrators of intimate partner violence involving firearms

In 2022, 62 men committed intimate partner incidents involving firearms. When the age was known, 73% of perpetrators were aged 36–60, 19% were 19–35 years old, and 11% were 61 or older. Similar age patterns were seen in 2021. No women committed intimate partner violence with firearms in 2022, while two women were reported as perpetrators of such incidents in 2021.

Perpetrators of intimate partner violence incidents involving firearms by year



- According to the available data, intimate partner violence against women was committed by 46 current and 13 former partners in 2022.
- The history of domestic violence is rarely reported. Consequently, only one case involving a man with a history of domestic violence was reported in 2022, whereas four such incidents were recorded in 2021.
- In 2022, no perpetrators were law enforcement officers, contrasting with three reported cases in 2021.

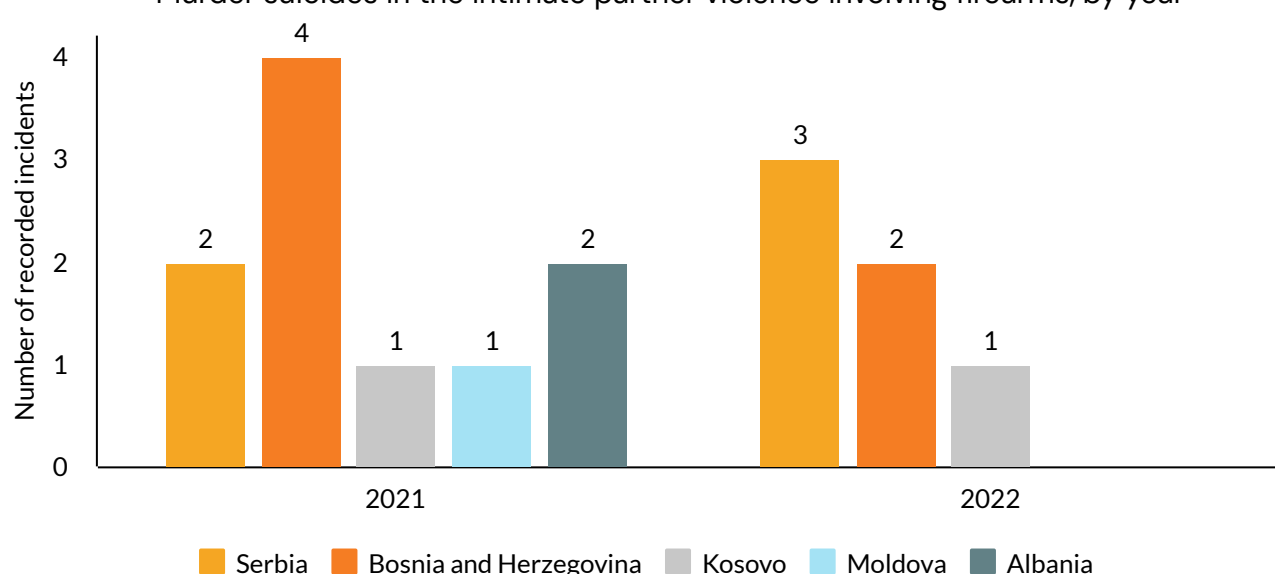
## 5.3 Murder suicide in intimate partner violence

Intimate partner homicides are often followed by the suicides of perpetrators. The number of these incidents dropped from 10 in 2021 to six in 2022.

Over the reporting period, Serbia (3), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2), and Kosovo reported these incidents.

In addition, two suicide attempts by men following the murder of a female intimate partner were reported in 2022 (one in Albania and one in Serbia).

Murder suicides in the intimate partner violence involving firearms, by year

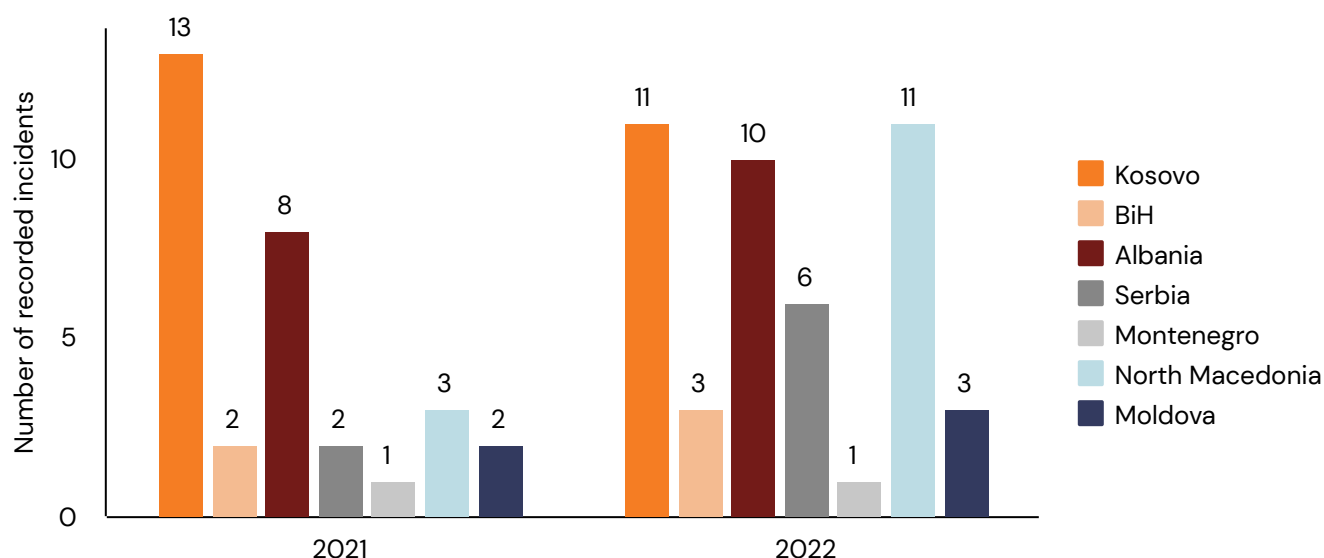


## 6. Firearm incidents committed by other family members

Domestic violence also includes incidents committed by other family members in addition to intimate partner violence. These cases involve instances where individuals perpetrated violence against members of their nuclear or extended family, including with the use of firearms.

The data reveal an overall 45% increase in reported incidents in the context of domestic violence committed by other family members, rising from 31 in 2021 to 45 in 2022. Kosovo and North Macedonia, with 11 reported incidents each, recorded the highest number. Albania, with 10 reported cases, followed closely. Serbia reported six such cases, while other jurisdictions reported three or fewer. With the exception of Kosovo, where a decline was seen, and Montenegro, where the same number of incidents was observed in both years, all jurisdictions experienced an increase. North Macedonia exhibited a substantial rise in these incidents, with reported incidents surging from 3 to 11. In Serbia, the incidents increased three times, from 2 to 6.

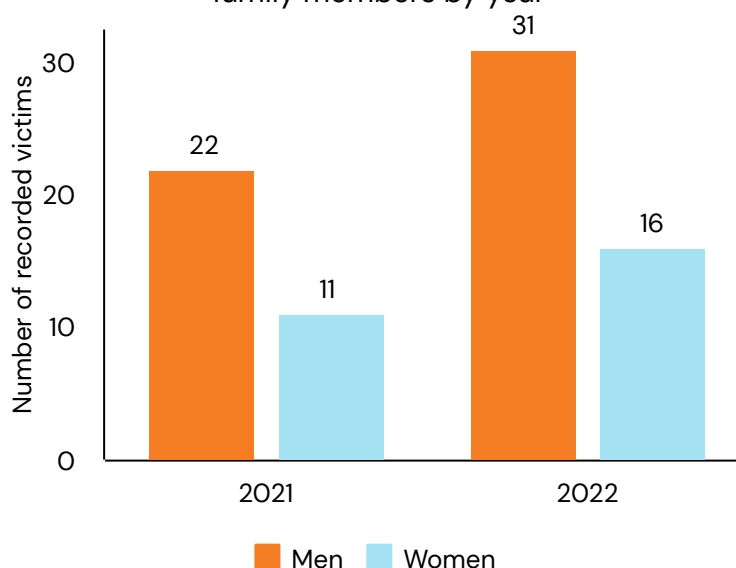
Firearm incidents committed by other family members by jurisdiction and year



### 6.1 Victims of firearm incidents by other family members

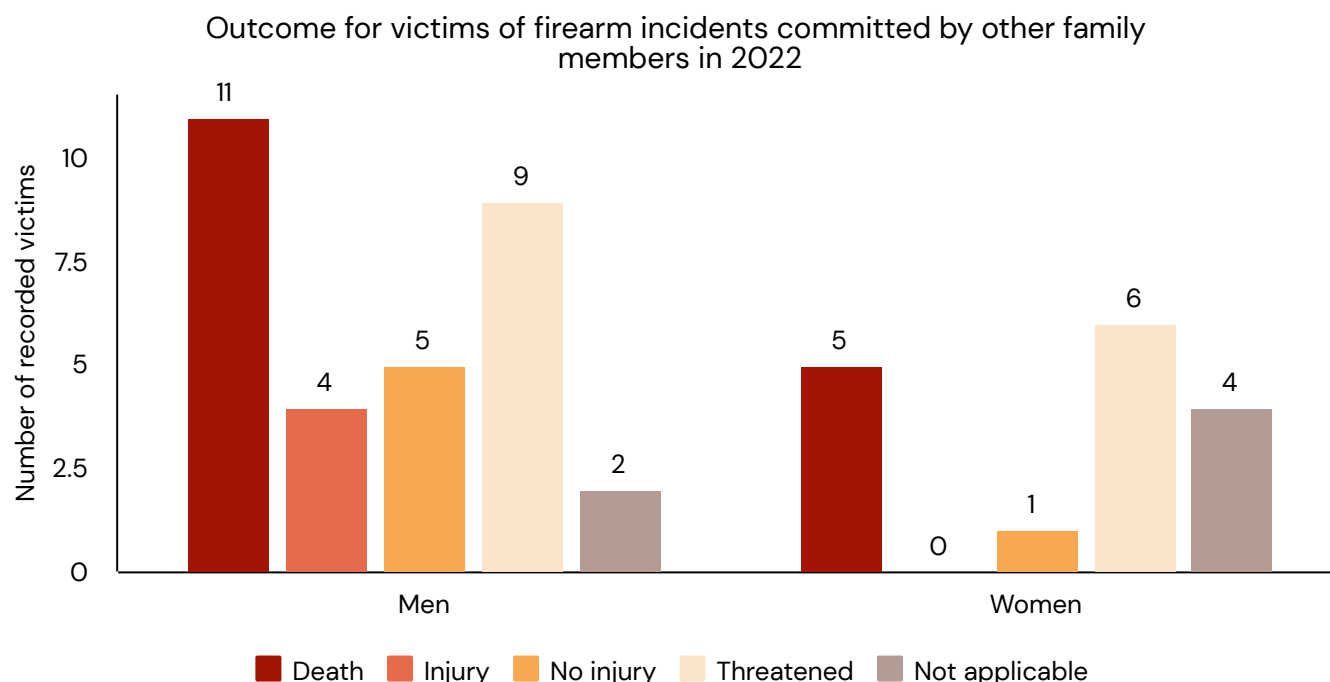
When it comes to domestic violence committed by other family members, the overall number of victims increased by 42%, i.e. from 33 in 2021 to 47 in 2022. In both years, men victims clearly outnumbered women victims. In 2022, the number of men victims (31) was nearly twice higher than the number of women victims (16), continuing the trend from 2021.

Victims of firearm incidents committed by other family members by year





In 2022, in SEE, 11 men and five women were killed by their family members. Four men were injured. Fifteen people, of whom nine men and six women were threatened. In cases where the perpetrators discharged a firearm in the presence of their family members, four men and one woman were not injured. The above data suggests that men are more affected by violence by other family members, whereas women are more impacted by intimate partner violence.



There was a doubling of firearm-related fatalities caused by other family members, rising from eight victims reported in 2021 to 16 in 2022. The most notable increase was documented in Serbia, with six killed victims. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo also experienced a rise in fatal outcomes.

The number of injured victims remained consistent, with four victims in both years. Three of the four injured victims in 2022 were reported in North Macedonia. The number of threatened victims increased by 25%, from 12 in 2021 to 15 in 2022. Serbia accounted for nearly half of the threatened victims (7), followed by Kosovo (4).

An increase was also observed among victims who did not sustain an injury when a family member discharged a firearm in their presence. In six cases, the weapon was present during the incident but was not used or discharged.

Outcome for victims of firearm incidents committed by other family members by jurisdiction and year

	Death		Injury		No injury		Threatened	
Location	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
<b>Albania</b>	3	4	4		1	2	1	1
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	1	2				1	1	
<b>Kosovo</b>		2			1	2	7	4
<b>Moldova</b>	1	1			2			3
<b>Montenegro</b>	1	0		1				
<b>North Macedonia</b>	1	1		3			2	
<b>Serbia</b>	1	6				1	1	7
	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>

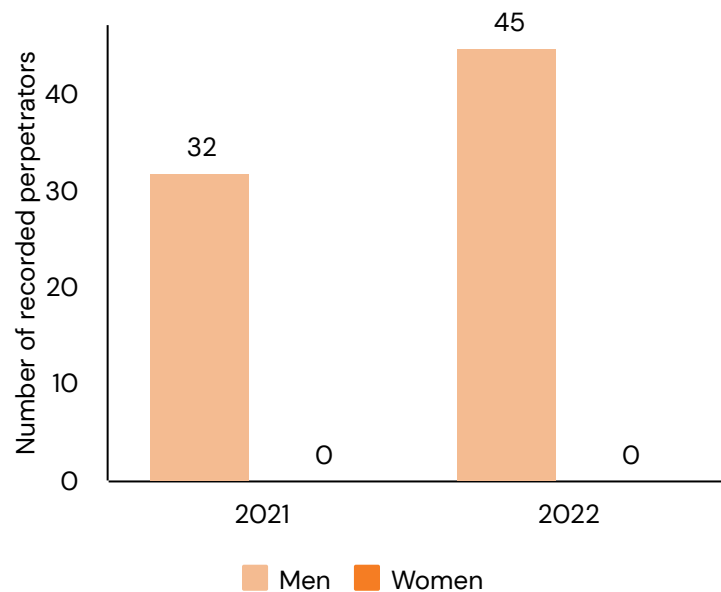
6.2 Perpetrators of firearm incidents against other family members

In 2022, all perpetrators of firearm incidents against their family members were men, mirroring the same pattern observed in 2021. Among the 32 perpetrators whose age information was specified, nearly two-thirds (66%) fell within the age range of 36–60, while approximately 19% were aged 61 or older, and 16% were between 19 and 35 years old.

The available data reveals that out of the 45 reported cases of domestic violence by other family members in 2022, 69% were committed by individuals within the nuclear family. In contrast, 27% of cases involved members of the extended family. Specific information about the relationship between the victim and the perpetrators remained unknown in 4% of cases.

In one case, reported in Kosovo, the perpetrator was a law enforcement officer who used his service weapon.

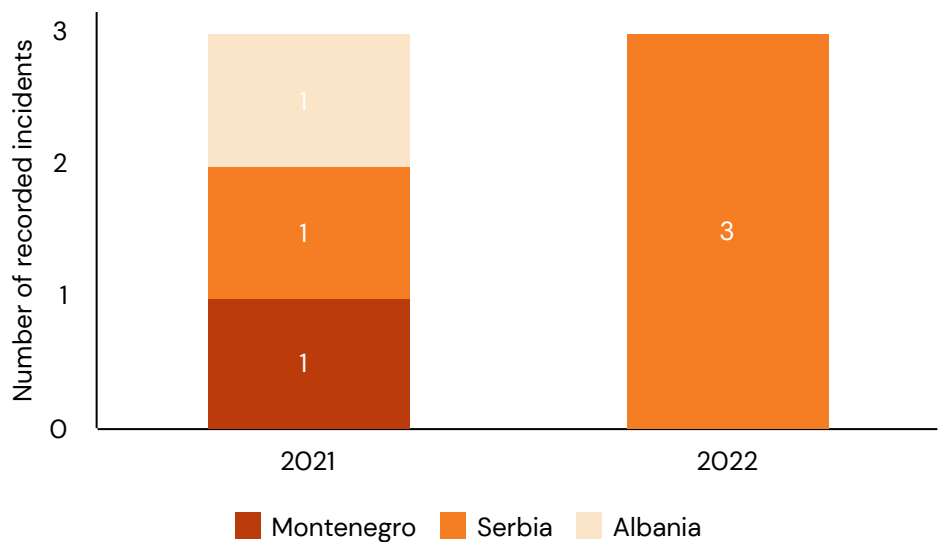
Perpetrators of firearm incidents against family members, by year



6.3 Murder suicides in firearm incidents against other family members

In 2022, there were three cases of murder suicide committed by people who had previously killed one or more members of their families, consistent with the reported number in 2021. All such cases in 2022, were reported in Serbia.

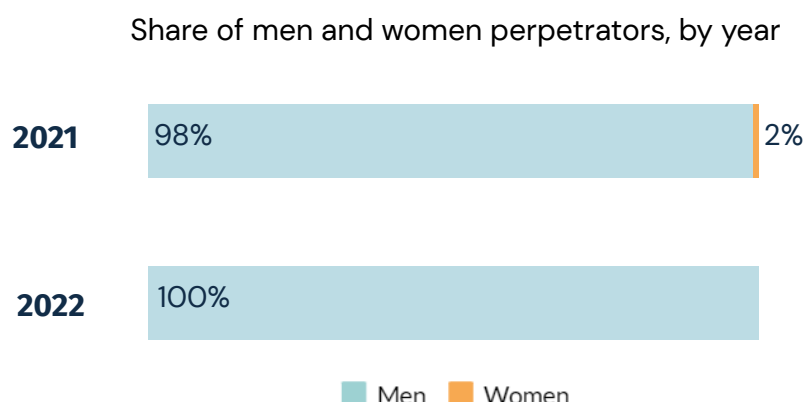
Murder suicides in firearm incidents committed against family members, by year



## 7. Perpetrators in the domestic context

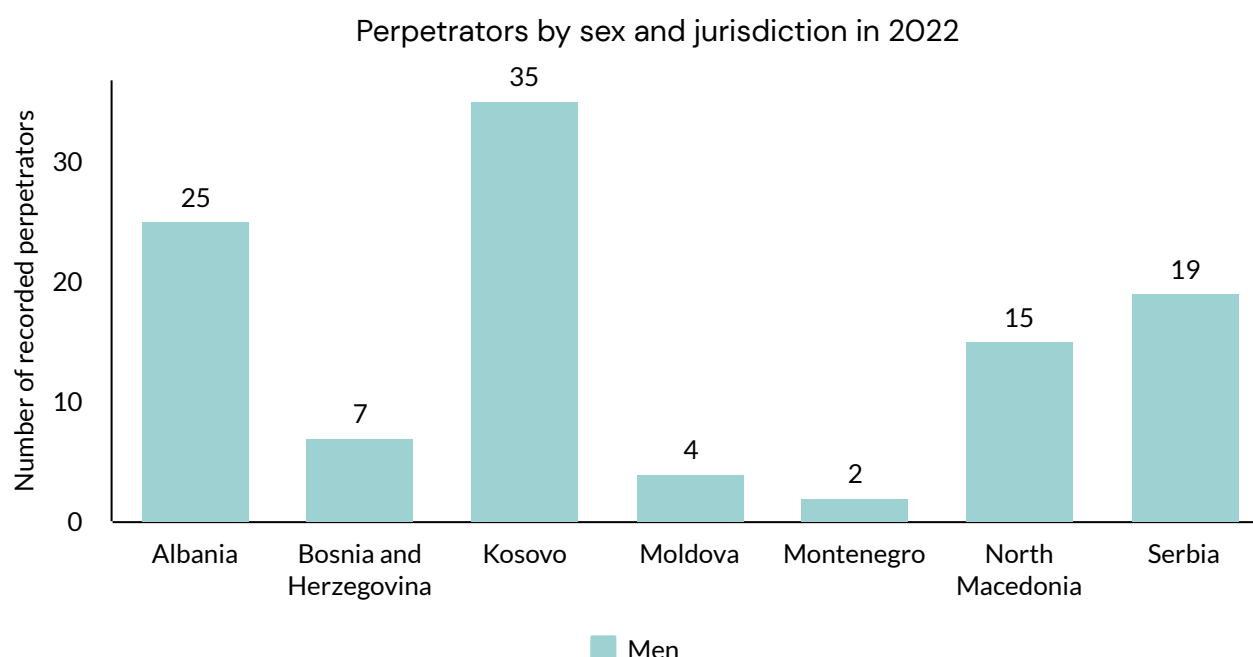
### 7.1 Sex of perpetrators

In 2022, men were the only perpetrators of domestic violence involving firearms, clearly indicating highly gendered patterns of firearm misuse in the domestic violence setting. Thus, a total of 108 men were reported as perpetrators in 2022. In 2021, men accounted for 98% of perpetrators compared to 2% of women.



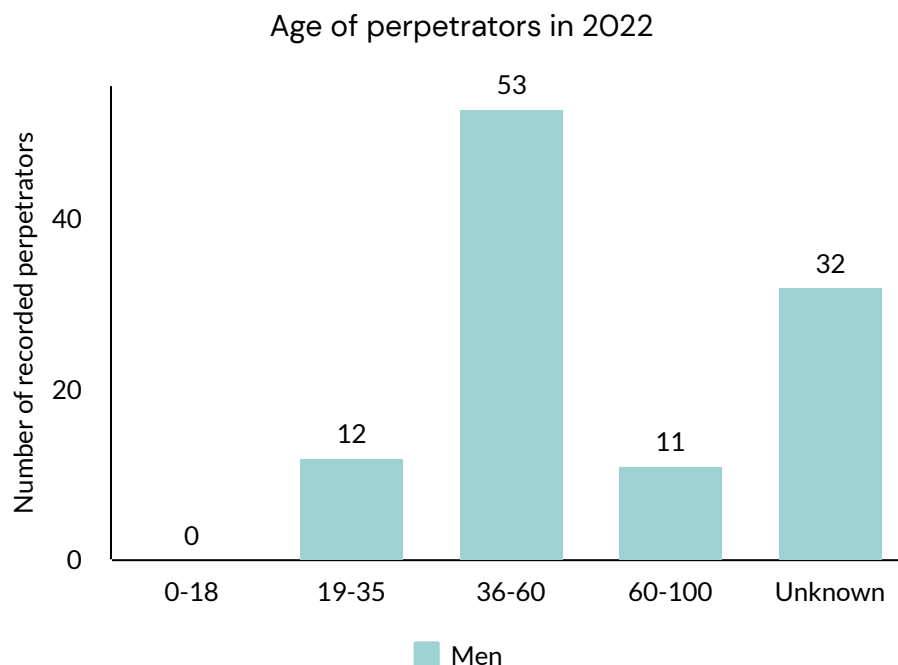
### 7.2 Perpetrators in jurisdictions

The gendered pattern of the misuse of firearms in domestic violence incidents remained consistent across all jurisdictions in 2022, with men being the sole perpetrators. In contrast, in 2021, the data showed a different pattern, with two women reported as perpetrators, one in Kosovo and one in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



### 7.3 Age of perpetrators

Out of 108 perpetrators of domestic violence involving firearms reported in 2022, the age was specified for 76 (70%) perpetrators, indicating that men aged 36–60 (53) most frequently committed domestic violence with firearms. Twelve perpetrators were reported among those aged 19 to 35, while 11 perpetrators were 61 and older. The data shows that a tendency towards misuse of firearms in domestic settings peaks in mature age, especially among men. The same pattern was documented in 2021.



## 8. Types of weapons

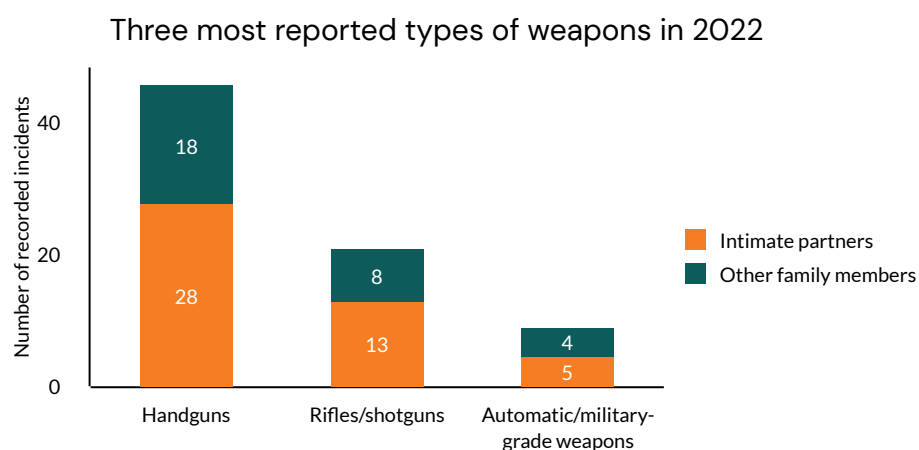
Based on the data for 2022, handguns were the most reported type of weapon, being used in 46 (49%) cases of domestic violence in SEE. Specifically, handguns were used in 28 incidents committed by intimate partners and in 18 incidents committed by other family members.

Rifles and shotguns ranked second, being used in 21 (25%) cases. Automatic/military-grade weapons were documented in nine (10%) incidents in domestic settings. All three types of weapons were more frequently used by intimate partners than by other family members.

Explosives were reported in three incidents, while air guns were reported in two cases. Multiple types of SALW were used in 21 incidents.

In 68 (63%) incidents, law enforcement officers seized the weapon from the perpetrators following the incident.

The above trends were consistent with those observed in 2021.



Kosovo and Serbia reported the most cases involving handguns in 2022, with 14 and 11 such cases, respectively. North Macedonia and Serbia saw notable increases in incidents with handguns.

Albania reported one-third of cases involving rifles/shotguns, followed by Kosovo (5 cases) and Serbia (4 cases). Compared to 2021, incidents with rifles/shotguns increased in nearly all jurisdictions except Moldova, where a downward trend was seen, while North Macedonia reported the same number of cases in both years.

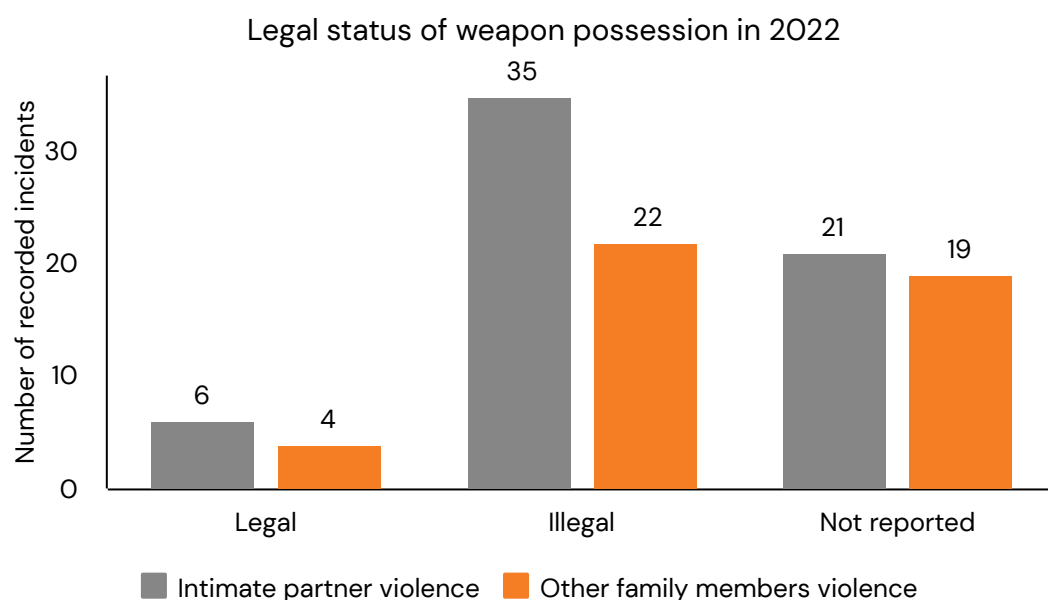
Cases involving automatic/military-grade weapons were reported in Albania (6 cases) and Kosovo (3 cases).

Three most reported types of weapons by jurisdiction and year

Location	Handguns		Rifles / shotguns		Automatic / Military-grade weapons	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
<b>Albania</b>	4	6	4	7	3	6
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	4	2	2	2	2	
<b>Kosovo</b>	14	14	2	5	2	3
<b>Moldova</b>	2	2	6	1		
<b>Montenegro</b>		1		1		
<b>North Macedonia</b>	3	10	1	1		
<b>Serbia</b>	4	11	3	4	1	
	<b>31</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>

### 8.1 Legal status of weapon possession

In 2022, the legal status of weapon possession was indicated for 67 (63%) cases. Ten cases (15%) involved weapons in legal possession, the majority of which were used in incidents committed by intimate partners. A total of 57 (85%) cases were committed with weapons in illegal possession. The same pattern was seen in 2021.



An upward trend was seen regarding weapons in legal possession from 2021 to 2022. In 2022, handguns (4 cases) and rifles/shotguns (3 cases) accounted for the majority of weapons in legal possession. The cases involving weapons in legal possession were primarily reported in Kosovo (5 cases). In one case, the perpetrator, a law enforcement officer, used his service weapon.

From 2021 to 2022, the number of cases with illegal weapons rose by 27%. The most reported weapons in illegal possession were handguns (23 cases), rifles/shotguns (10 cases) and automatic/military-grade weapons (9 cases).

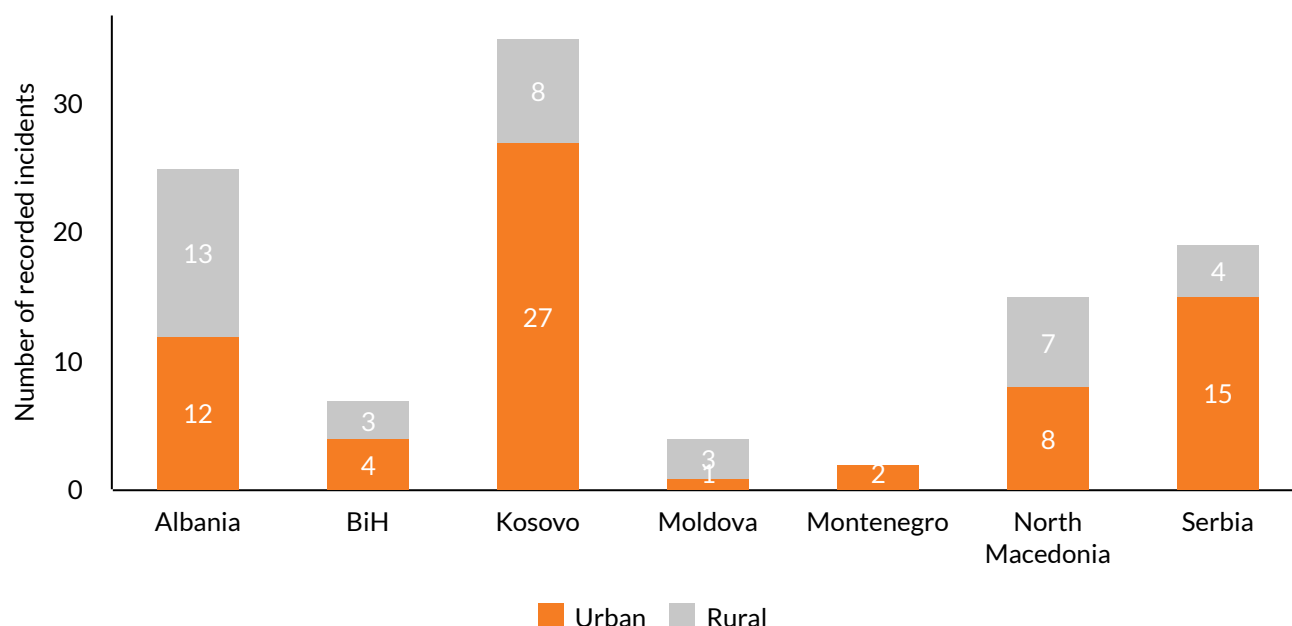
Legal status of weapon possession by jurisdictions and year

Location	Legal		Illegal		Not reported	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
<b>Albania</b>	1	1	9	19	9	7
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>			3	1	3	10
<b>Kosovo</b>	1	5	20	20	12	11
<b>Moldova</b>	4	1	7	2		
<b>Montenegro</b>	1			1	2	5
<b>North Macedonia</b>		1	1	5	4	6
<b>Serbia</b>		2	5	9	5	10
	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>49</b>

## 9. Macrolocation and microlocation

### 9.1 Macrolocation

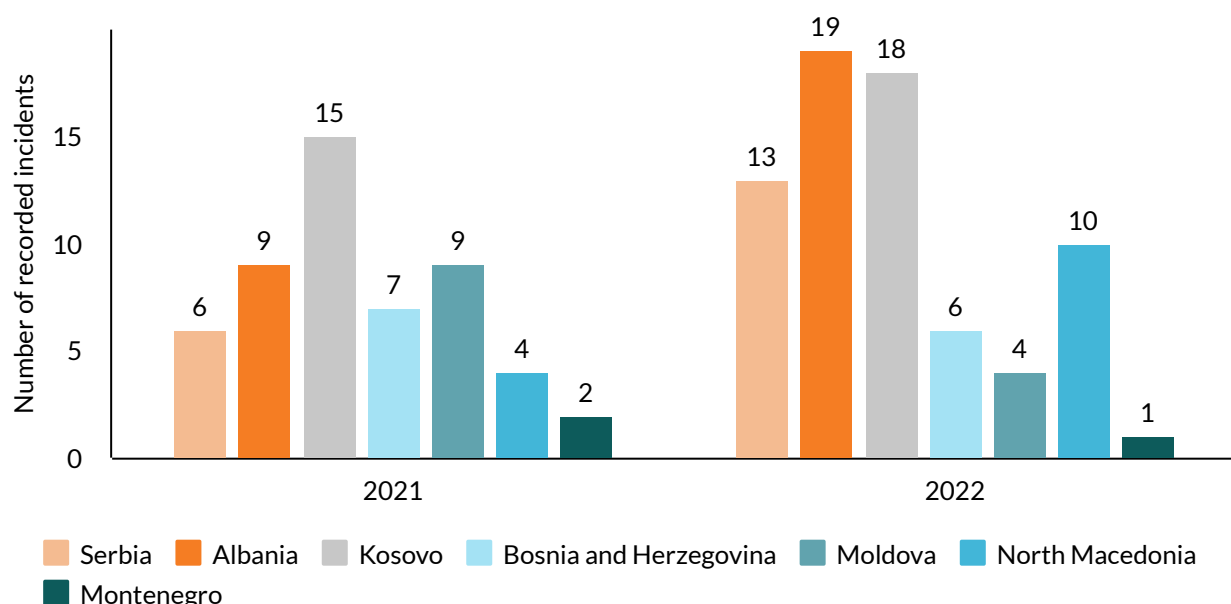
In 2022, the prevalence of firearm incidents in the domestic context was higher in urban areas, accounting for 74% of all incidents, while rural areas comprised 26%. This observation may suggest that such incidents are underreported in rural regions. This pattern was seen throughout the region, with the exception of Albania and Moldova, where the share of incidents in rural areas somewhat prevailed. The same trend was noticed in 2021. No incidents in rural areas were reported in Montenegro. The disparity between rural and urban areas was most pronounced in Serbia and Kosovo, where the majority of incidents took place in urban areas.



### 9.2 Microlocation

In 2022, the data on microlocation was known for 81 (77%) incidents, of which 71 incidents (88%) occurred at homes. This pattern persisted in all jurisdictions in both years. Six (6%) incidents took place on the streets, and four (4%) in public buildings.

Home as the most reported microlocation by jurisdiction and year





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