



South East Europe Armed Violence Monitor

Quarterly Regional Report

July-September 2023

Background

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

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

The present regional report builds on monthly Armed Violence Monitor Reports, and it has been prepared to provide a collection of data, show the trends, highlights, as well as threats regarding firearm incidents in SEE from **July-September¹ 2023**.

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

* 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.

¹ Data was retrieved on 10 October 2023. Given that news articles may be published after the incidents occurred or that recorded incidents can be updated with new pieces of information, the given statistics may slightly differ in the future.

QUARTERLY SNAPSHOTS

July - September 2023

953

firearm incidents were
reported in SEE

456

weapon
seizures

85

celebratory
shootings

45

people were
killed with
firearms

82

public
disputes
involving
firearms

134

incidents
involved
multiple types
of SALW

93

incidents with
weapons in
legal
possession

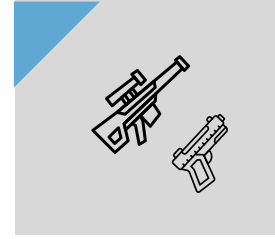
TYPE OF INCIDENTS



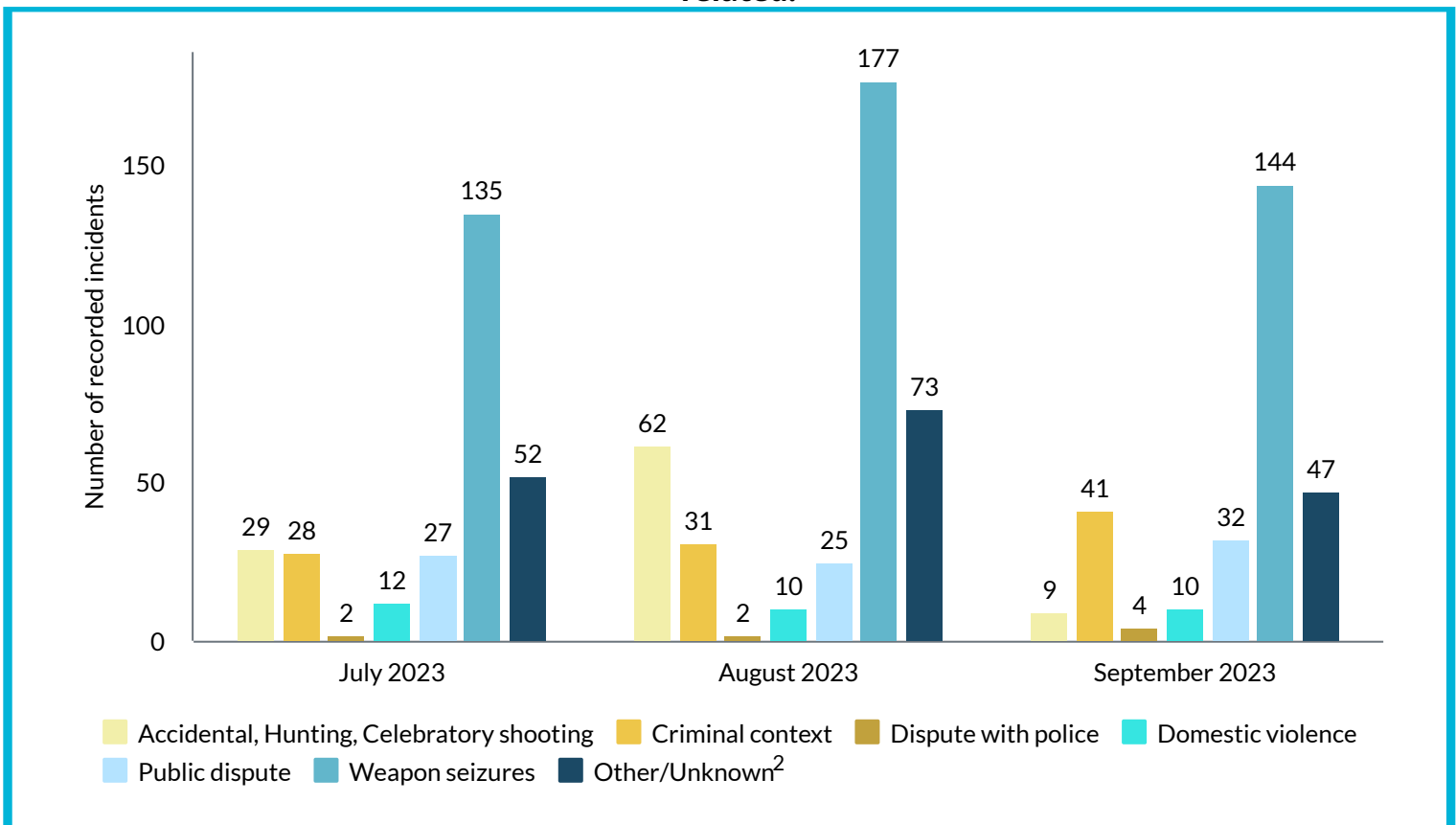
72 people did not sustain a gunshot injury when a firearm was discharged in their presence.



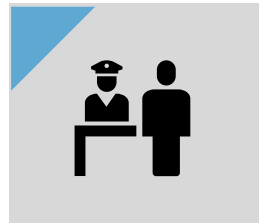
21 explosions were reported, **19** of which were **undetermined**, and **2** were **criminally related**.



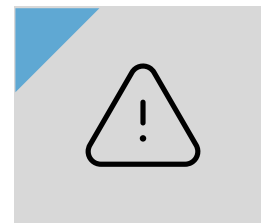
134 incidents involved **multiple types of SALW**, nearly **double the number** from the previous quarter.



32 domestic violence incidents, of which **19** were committed by **intimate partners**.



9 weapon seizures were reported **in the border areas/ border crossing points**.



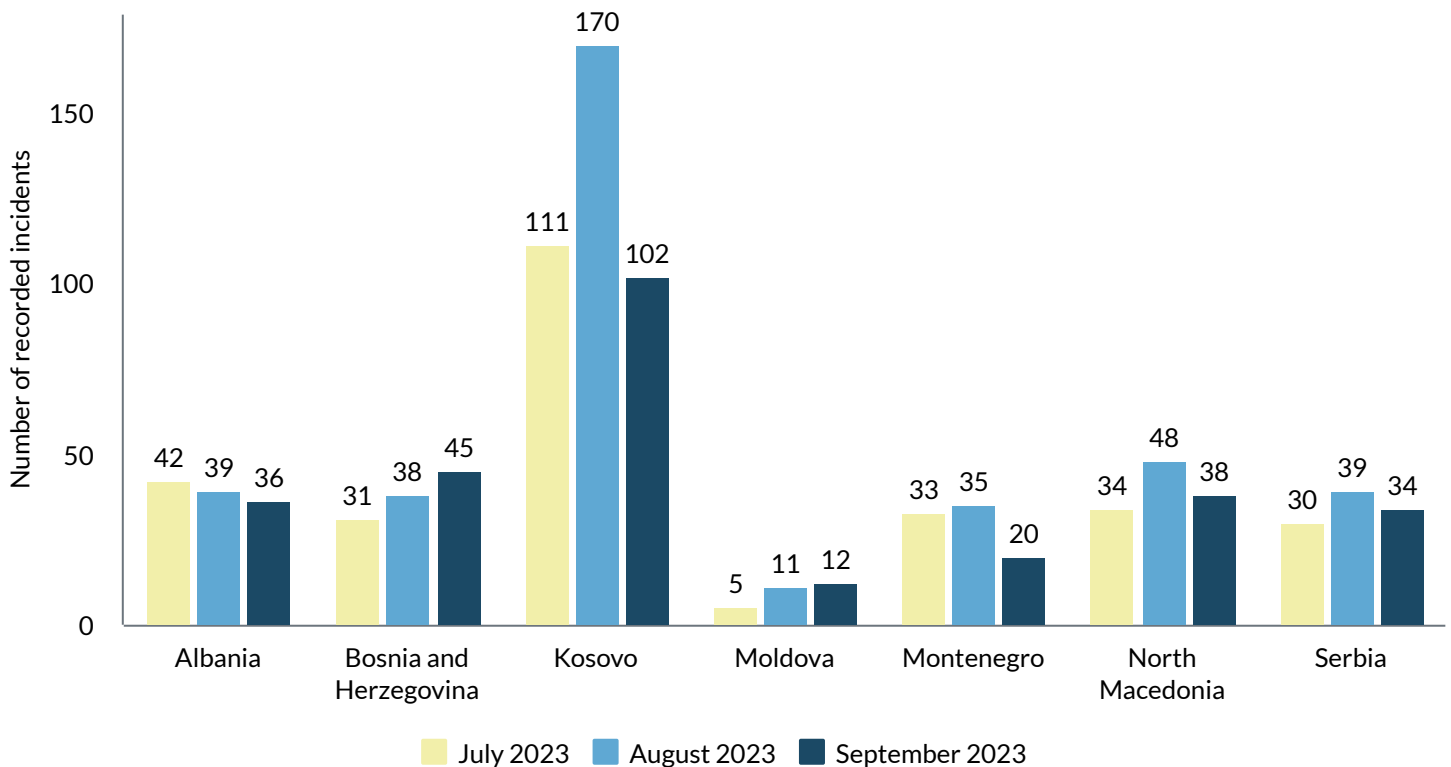
15 people were **injured in accidental shootings**.

² Other/ Unknown category refers to suicides, shootings under undetermined circumstances, non-hunting related shooting of animals, explosions, weapons used for defence, and all other incidents that cannot be classified under any of the categories above.

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

A total of **953** firearm incidents were recorded this quarter, a **14% increase** from the last quarter's 832 incidents.

In **August**, there were **380** firearm incidents, marking the highest number of incidents ever recorded by the AVMP in a single month.

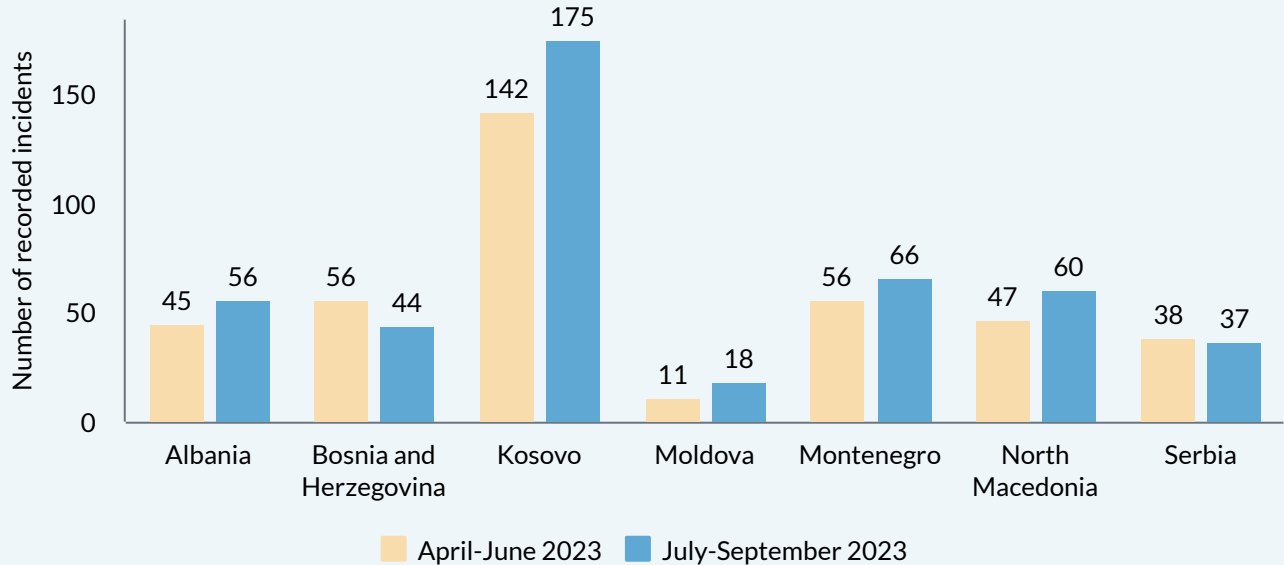


Kosovo (383), North Macedonia (120) and Albania (117) reported the highest number of firearm incidents.

Weapon seizures (456) and **undetermined shootings (124)** were the most reported types of incidents.

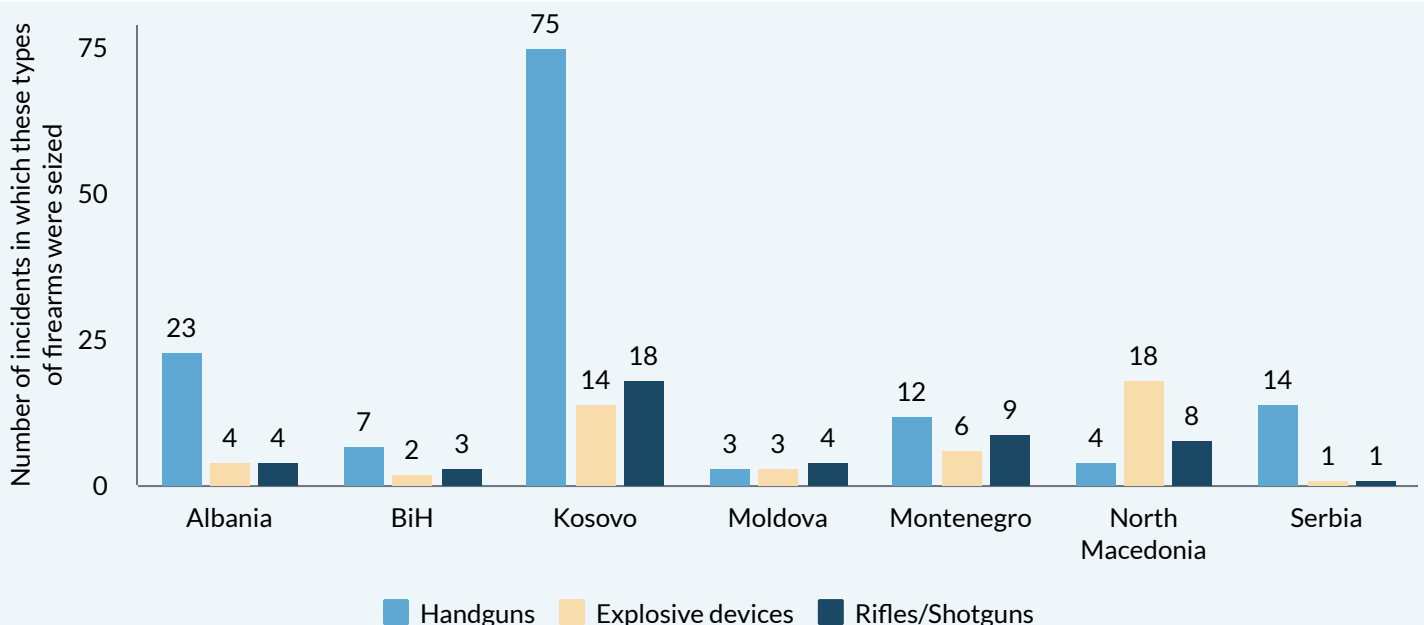
MAIN TRENDS - Weapon seizures

- During this quarter, there were **456 reported weapon seizures**, making them the most common type of firearm incident, **accounting for 48% of all incidents**.
- This represents a **15% increase** compared to the 395 cases in the previous quarter and a **20% rise from the same period last year** (380 cases).
- The increase was primarily attributed to a significant number of weapon seizures documented in August (177).



- The **highest number of seizures** was recorded in **Kosovo**, followed by **Montenegro** and **North Macedonia**. Kosovo and North Macedonia witnessed notable increases, with a rise of 23% and 28%, respectively.

- **Handguns** remained the **most seized** type of weapon, being reported in **138** cases. **Kosovo** had the highest number of handgun seizures, totalling **75** cases.
- Explosives were **the second most seized weapon**, with **North Macedonia (18)** and **Kosovo (14)** continuing to document the highest numbers.
- Seizures of **rifles/shotguns** increased by **24%** compared to the previous quarter, rising from 38 to **47 cases**. **Kosovo (13)** and **Montenegro (9)** reported most seizures of this type of weapon.

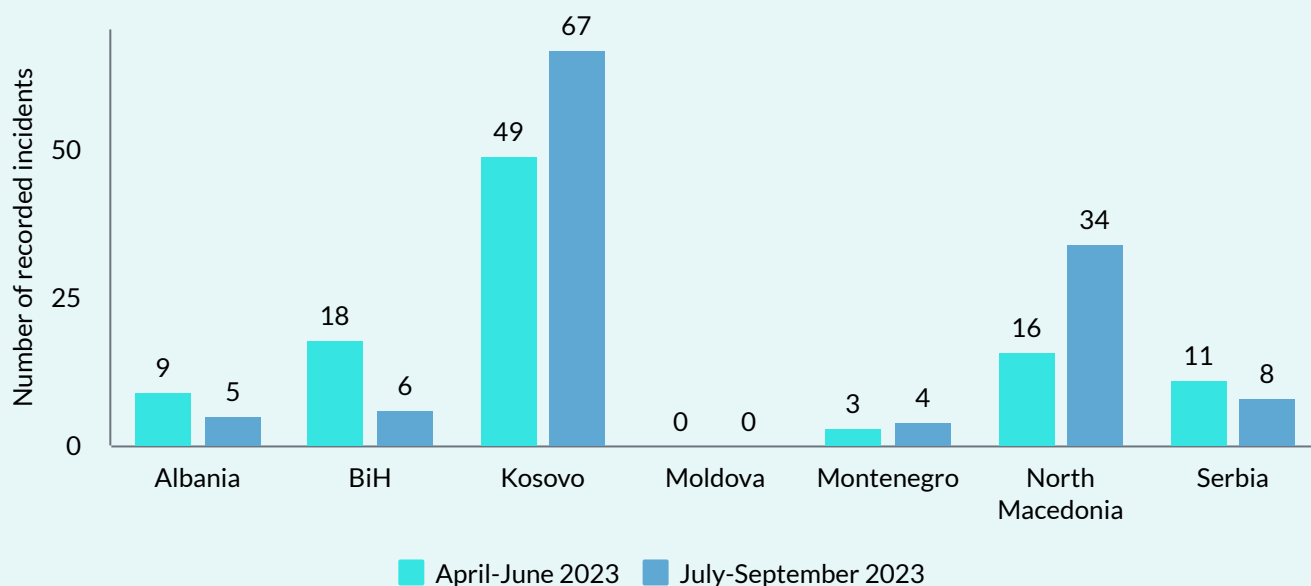


Three most seized types of weapons in the July-September 2023 period

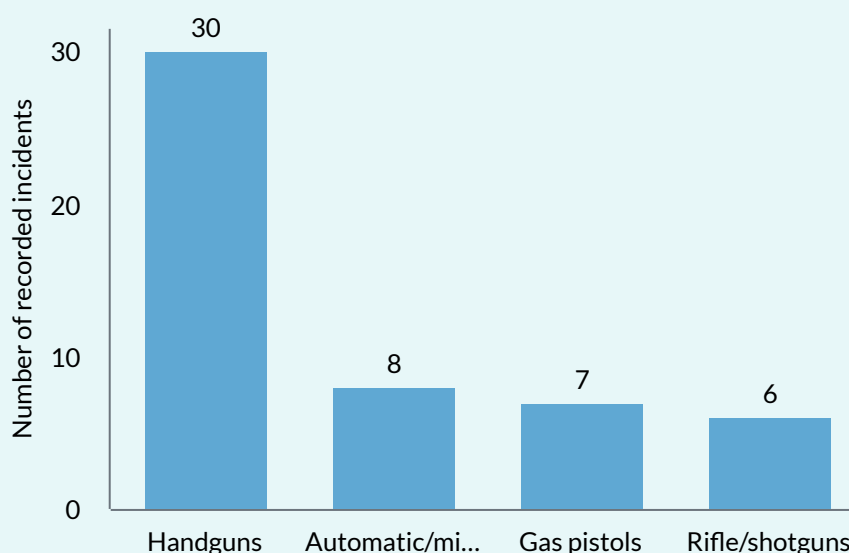
- Seizures of **multiple types of SALW** increased by **72%** from the previous quarter (from 54 to 93 cases). Most of these seizures were reported in **Montenegro (36)**.

MAIN TRENDS (CONT.) - Undetermined shootings³

- **Undetermined shootings**, as the **second most reported** type of incident, documented a total of **124 cases**, showing a **15% increase** compared to the previous quarter's 107 cases.
- **Kosovo** reported the **highest number**, making up **54%** of all **undetermined shootings** and demonstrating a **35% increase** from the previous quarter. North Macedonia experienced a considerable increase of 112%. On the other hand, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia observed declines of 44%, 72%, and 27%, respectively.



- Undetermined shootings resulted in **59 victims**, of whom **6 people** were reported as **killed** and **27** as **injured**.
- Out of the **95 perpetrators**, **92 were men**. The perpetrators were caught in 63 incidents, while they remained unknown in 58 cases.



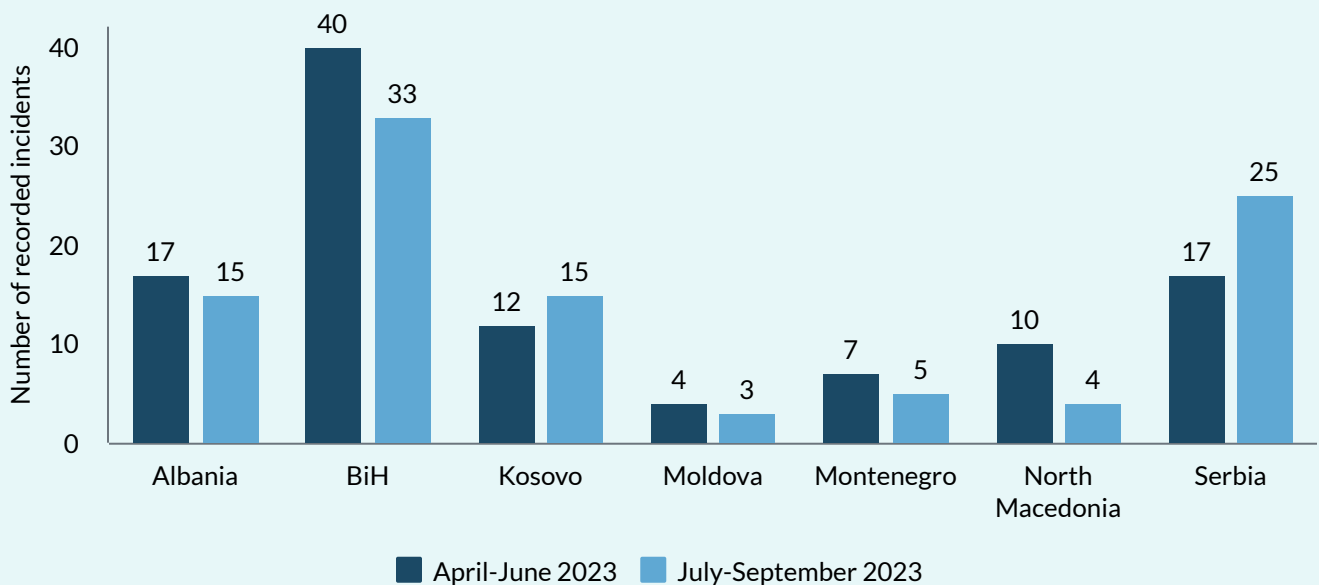
Four most reported types of weapons in undetermined shootings in July-September 2023 period

- In 57 cases where the type of firearm was indicated, **handguns** were the **primary weapon**, being used in 30 undetermined shootings, nearly identical to the previous quarter (29 cases). The use of **automatic/military-grade weapons** and **gas pistols** remained consistent with the previous quarter. However, the number of undetermined shootings involving **rifles/shotguns doubled** in number.

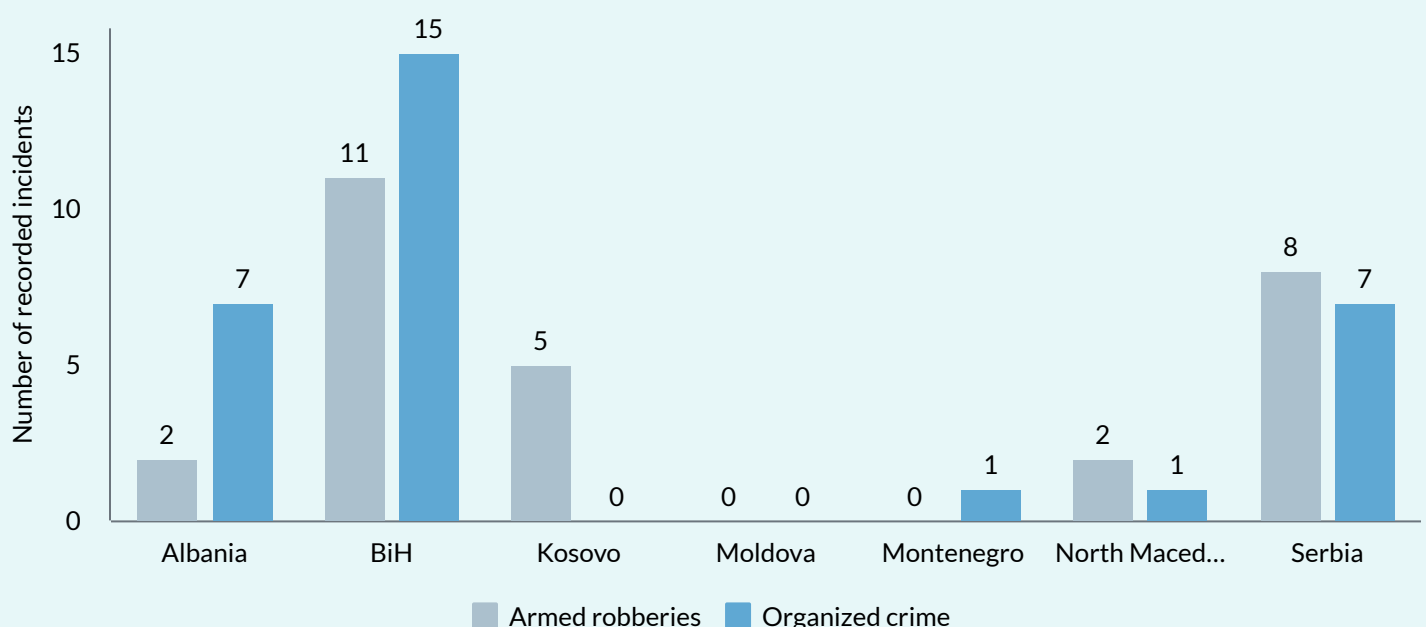
³ Undetermined shooting refers to any firearm discharge under unknown circumstances and motives, regardless of whether or not such incident caused a fatality, injury, or damage.

MAIN TRENDS (CONT.) - Criminal context

- Firearm incidents in the **criminal context decreased from 107 to 100 cases**, maintaining a **downward trend** with a **7% decline** since the previous quarter.
- Nearly all jurisdictions **reported a decrease**, except for Serbia and Kosovo, which recorded increases of 47% and 25%, respectively.



- The number of **armed robberies** continued to **decline**, dropping from 35 cases in the previous quarter to **28 this quarter**. No armed robberies were reported in Moldova and Montenegro this quarter.
- A total of **32** firearm incidents were associated with **organized crime**, indicating an **11% decline** from the previous quarter. **Bosnia and Herzegovina (14)**, with the same number of these incidents as in the previous quarter, **accounted for 44% of all these incidents**.



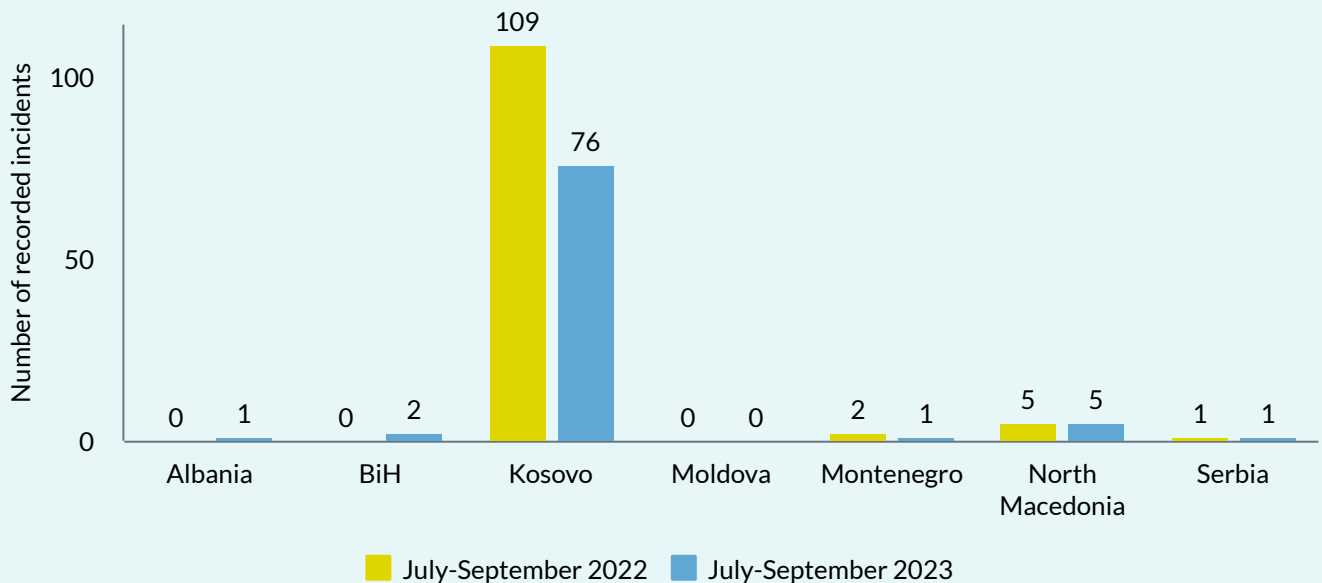
Two most reported types of incidents under the criminal context category in the July-September 2023 period

- **55 victims** of incidents in criminal context were reported, among whom **7 were killed, 10 injured and 25 threatened**.

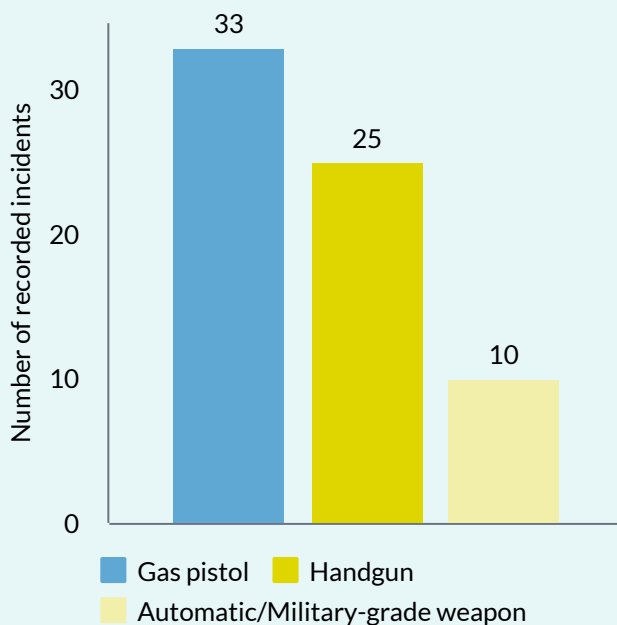
MAIN TRENDS (CONT.)

Celebratory shootings

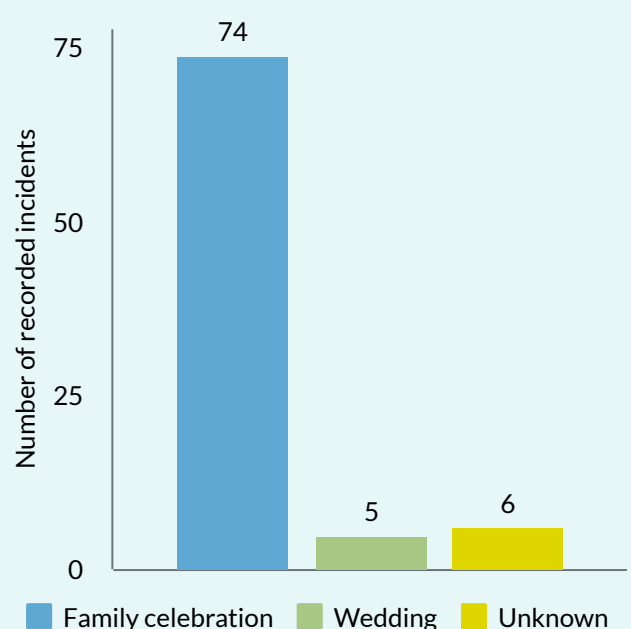
- A total of **85 celebratory shootings** were recorded, marking a significant increase since the previous quarter with 17 such cases and a **27% drop** from the same period last year when 117 incidents were reported.
- **Kosovo** accounted for **89% of all celebratory shootings** this quarter. Compared to the same period last year, Kosovo documented a 33% decline.



- **Gas pistols (33)** and **handguns (25)** were the most used types of weapons. In 58 incidents, firearms were in illegal possession.
- A total of **74 celebratory shootings** occurred during **family celebrations**.
- **Five men** were **injured** in celebratory shootings.
- A total of **94 perpetrators** were recorded, of whom **92 were men**, when the data on sex was available.



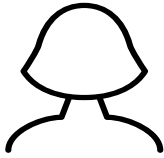
The most reported types of weapons in celebratory shootings



Celebratory shootings by type of event in which they occurred

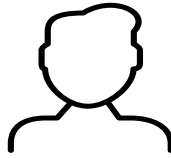
PERPETRATORS

From July to September 2023, there were **1,047 perpetrators⁴** of firearm incidents, of whom



12

were women



892

were men

N/A

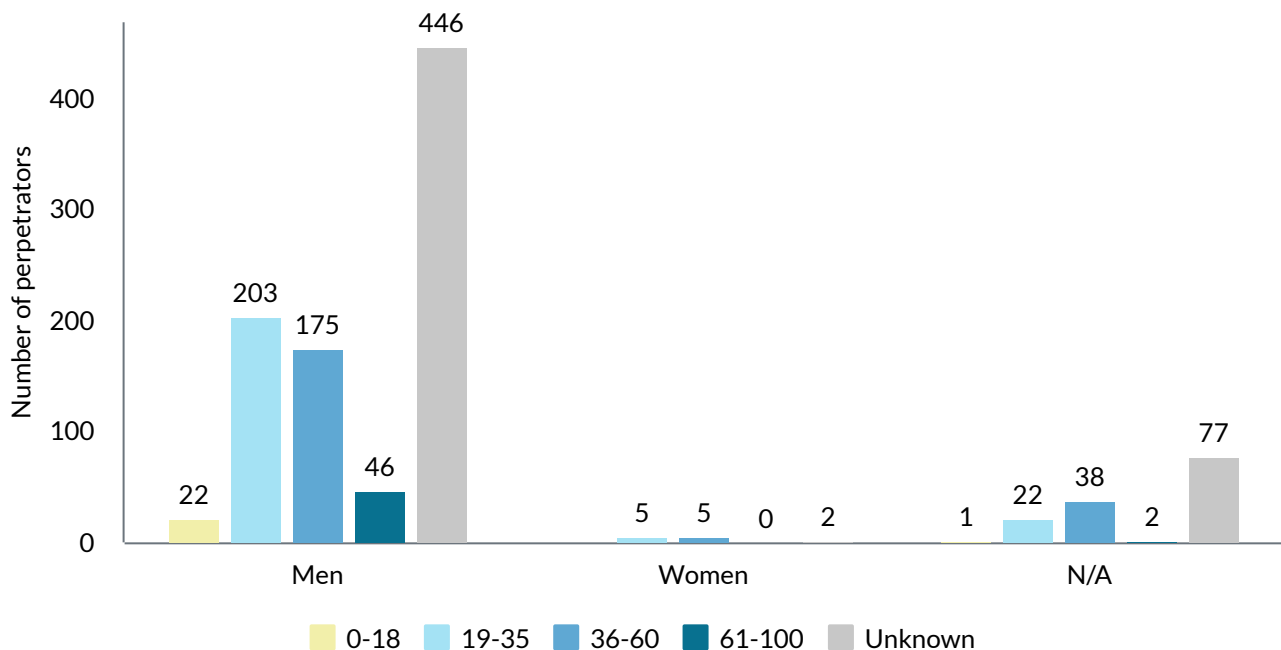
for **143**

sex was not reported

Men were identified as perpetrators mostly in incidents related to **weapon seizures (47%), criminal context (12%) and public disputes (11%).**

Women were identified as perpetrators mostly in incidents related to **weapon seizures (42%) and criminal context (17%).**

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

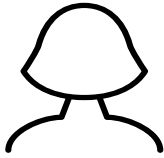


- For **524 (50%) perpetrators, age was not reported.** For 77 perpetrators, neither sex nor age was reported.

⁴ Perpetrator refers to any individual who has used a firearm/ammunition/explosive to commit any of the types of incidents covered by the AVMP.

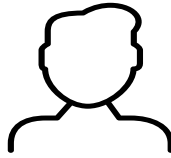
VICTIMS

From July to September 2023, there were **331 victims⁵** of firearm incidents, of whom



45

were women



244

were men

N/A

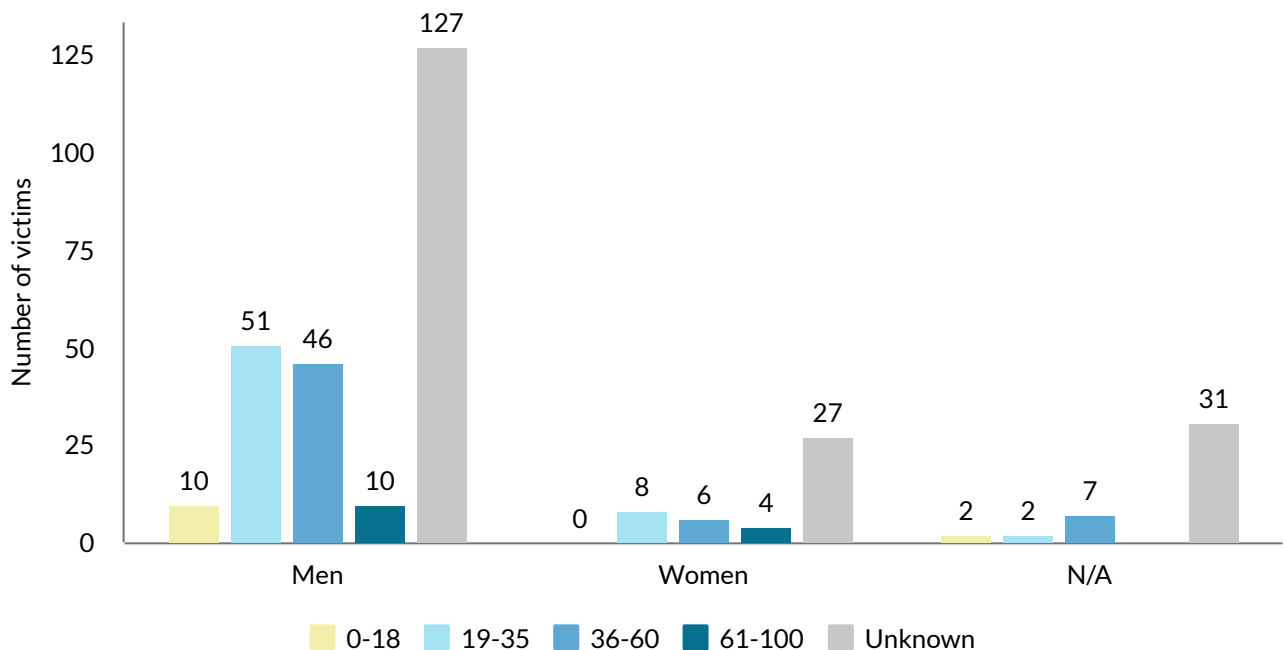
for **42**

sex was not reported

Women victims were mostly reported in incidents related to **domestic violence (51%)**, **criminal context (22%)** and **undetermined shootings (18%)**.

Men victims were mostly reported in incidents related to **public disputes (39%)**, **undetermined shootings (18%)** and **criminal context (14%)**.

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



- For **187 (56%) victims**, age was not reported. For 31 victims, neither sex nor age was reported.

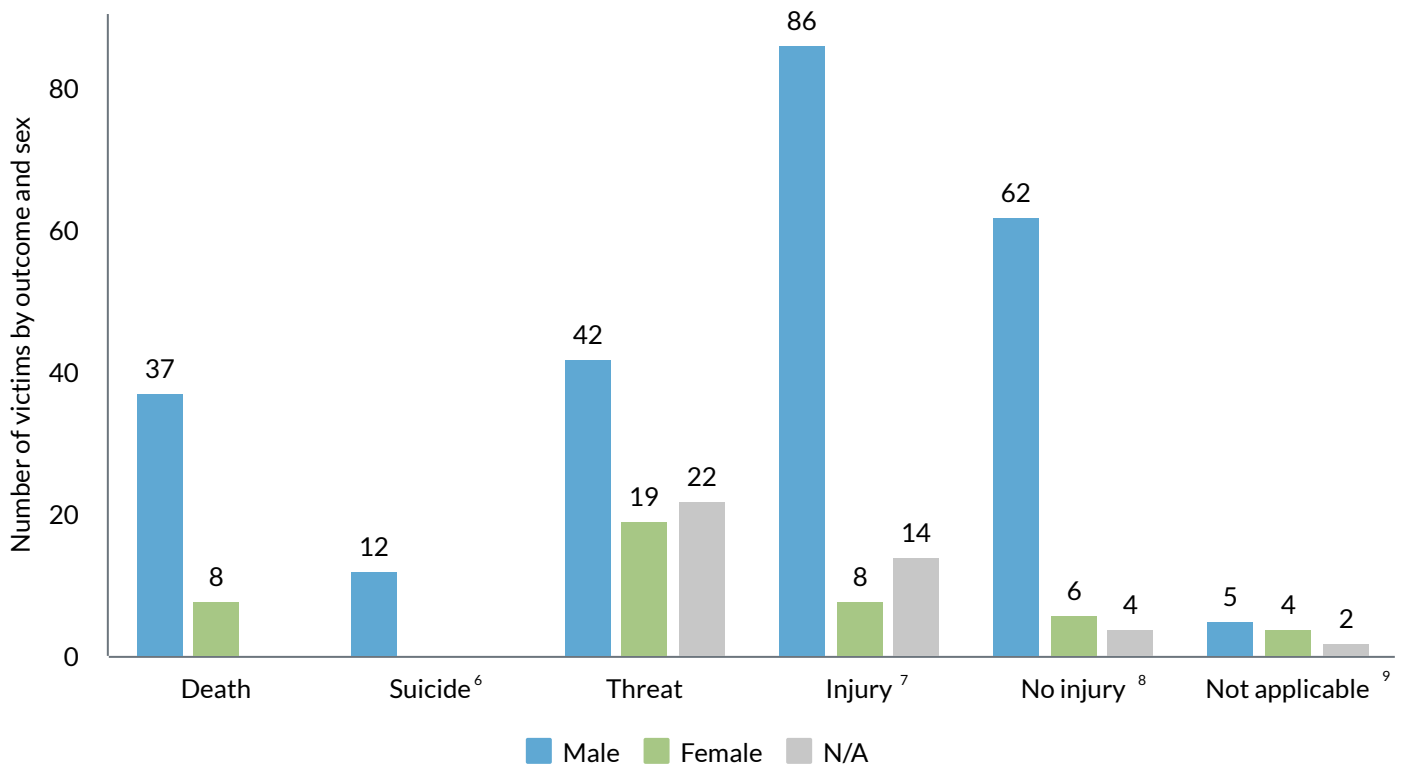
⁵ Victim refers to any individual who has been threatened, injured or died as a result of the use of a firearm/ammunition/explosives.

Victims also include those who were present when a firearm was discharged but did not sustain a gunshot injury and those who were present during an incident in which a firearm was present but was not used.

OUTCOME FOR VICTIMS

45 people were killed with firearms, a **10% less** since the previous quarter. Victims were mainly killed in **domestic violence (14)** and **public disputes (10)**.

12 firearm suicides were reported, a **29% decrease** from the previous quarter, and **five** of them in a **murder suicide** pattern.



108 victims were injured, a **11% drop** from the previous quarter. 37 victims were injured in public disputes, and 27 in undetermined shootings.

89 victims were threatened with firearms, **31% less** than in the previous quarter. 37 victims were threatened in public disputes, and 25 in criminal context.

⁶ Suicide refers to all incidents in which the victim killed him/herself with a firearm.

⁷ Injury refers to all incidents in which an individual sustained an injury due to weapon use.

⁸ No injury refers to all incidents in which a weapon was discharged, but the victim did not sustain a gunshot injury.

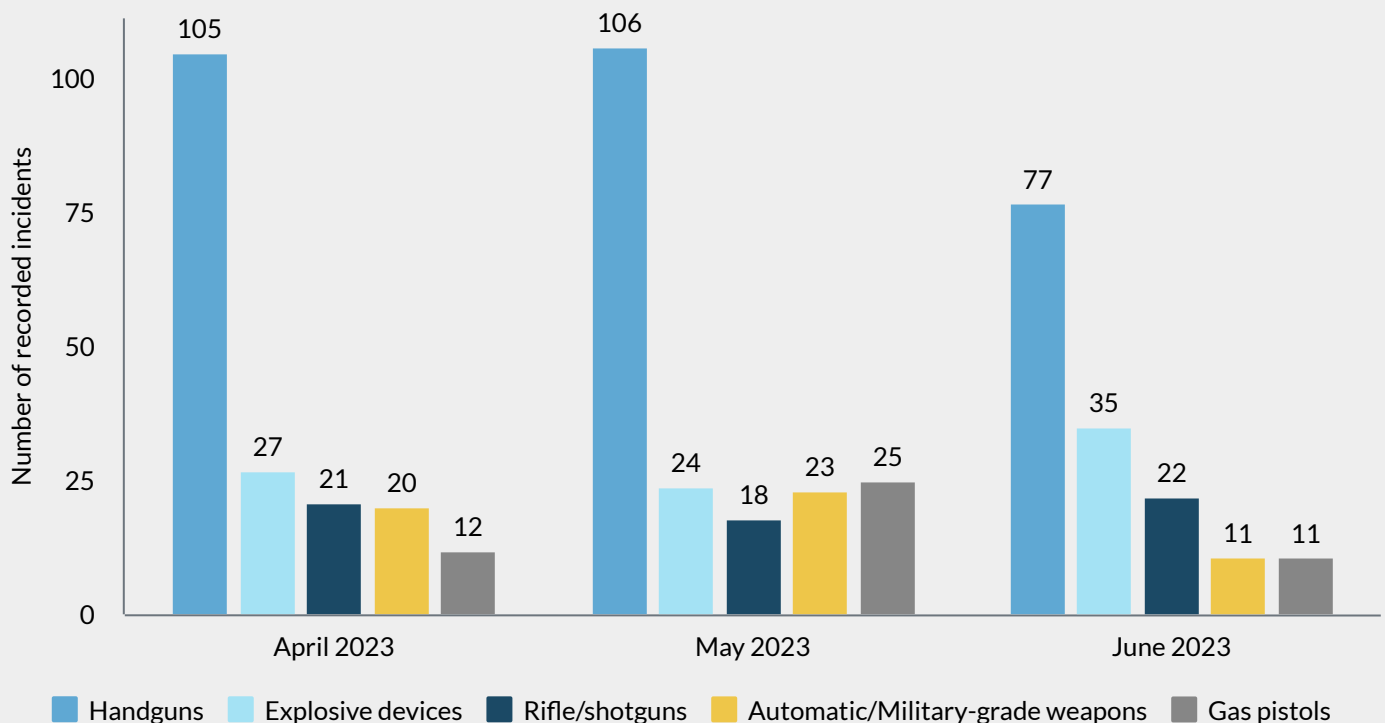
⁹ Not applicable refers to all incidents in which a weapon is present but not used or discharged (for example, theft of a weapon).

TYPE OF WEAPONS



In **566 (59%) incidents**, the firearms used were in **illegal possession**, while in **34 (4%) cases**, they were in **legal possession**. In 352 (37%) incidents, the status of possession was not reported.

- **Handguns** were reported in **298 incidents**, a 10% more than in the previous quarter. Apart from being seized in 138 cases, this type of firearm was used in the criminal context in **48 cases**, and in 33 **public disputes**.
- **Rifles/shotguns** were reported in **82 incidents**, showing a 34 % rise since the previous quarter. In **nearly 74% of the cases**, this type of weapon was **seized**.



The graph represents the number of incidents in which the five most reported types of weapons were used. During this quarter, in 17% of all reported cases, the type of firearm was either unknown or not reported.

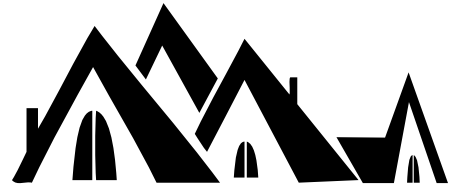
- **Gas pistols** were reported in **82 incidents**, showing a notable upward trend compared to the previous quarter (50 cases). This type of firearm was reported as **seized** in almost half of cases (35 cases), but it was also used in **celebratory shootings (33 cases)**.
- **Explosive devices**, as the **third most used** type of weapon, were reported in **76 incidents**, 11% less than in the previous quarter. In **36 cases**, explosives were reported as **found accidentally** by civilians, while in **19 cases** they were used in **undetermined explosions**.
- **Automatic/military-grade weapons** were reported in **63 incidents**, primarily in weapon seizures (37 cases). A 17% rise from the previous reporting period was observed in relation to this type of weapon.

MACRO AND MICROLOCATION

From July to September 2023

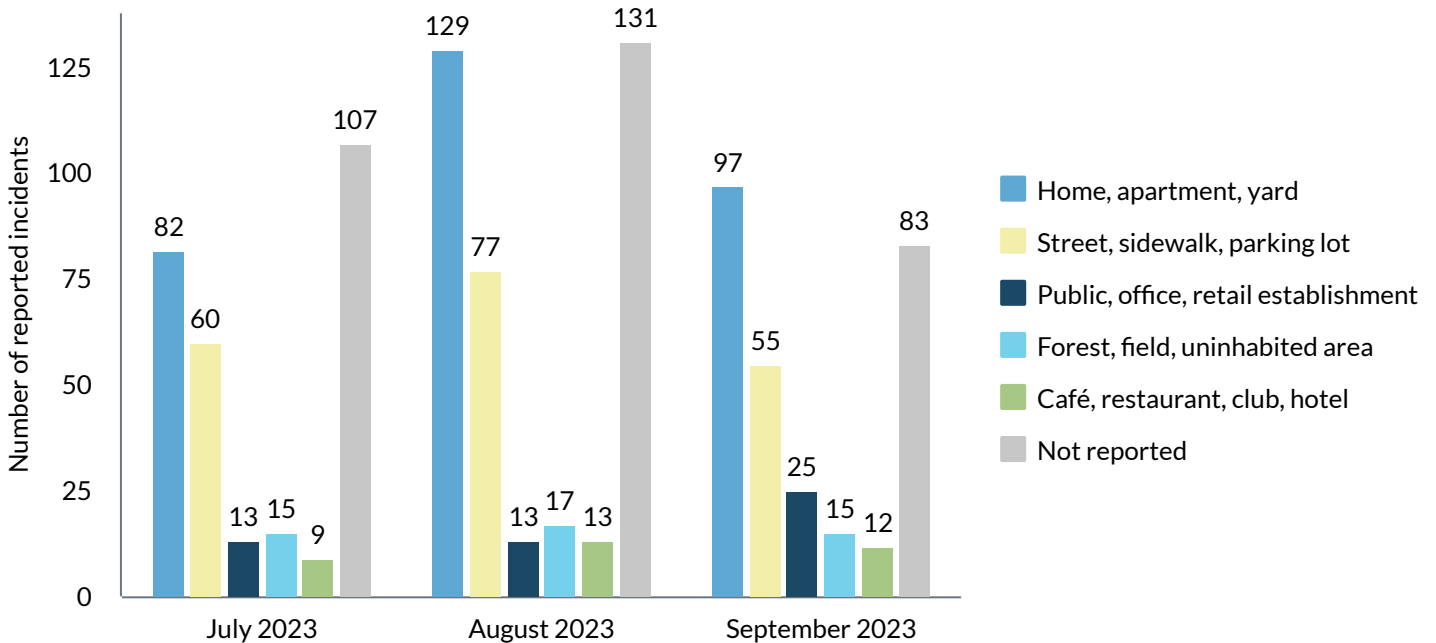


648 (68%) incidents
occurred in urban areas.



305 (32%) incidents
occurred in rural areas.

Microlocation



Majority of incidents were reported



at homes / yards
310 incidents



in streets
182 incidents



in forests
26 incidents



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