



South East Europe

ARMED VIOLENCE MONITOR

January - March 2026

Background

The spread and misuse of firearms remain a persistent threat to public safety, human rights, and sustainable development worldwide. Recognizing this challenge, UNDP SEESAC established the Armed Violence Monitoring Platform (AVMP) to systematically collect and analyse data on firearm-related incidents across South East Europe (SEE).

Monitoring and analysing firearm-related incidents are therefore essential to understanding the scale, scope, and dynamics of armed violence. Comprehensive and timely data is crucial to inform evidence-based policymaking, strengthen prevention and response strategies, and support efforts to reduce the illicit possession and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW).

To support these goals, this **Quarterly Regional Report** presents key trends, incident patterns, and emerging threats observed between **January** and **March 2026**. Building on monthly reports, it aims to enhance understanding of firearm-related violence in SEE.

Methodology

The AVMP provides real-time insight into the scope and impact of firearm incidents, covering **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Kosovo**.¹

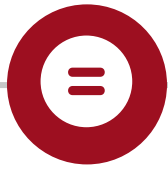
The AVMP data is collected **daily**² from a combination of **official sources**, including websites of law enforcement institutions and ministries of interior, **online and print media**, with Kosovo's data primarily sourced from daily police reports³.

Data on firearm incidents is categorised according to standardised definitions to ensure consistency and comparability across jurisdictions and reporting periods. Each incident is reviewed and analysed using a methodology developed by SEESAC.

¹ 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.

² Data was retrieved on 19 April 2026. 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



945

firearm incidents were reported, nearly identical to the previous quarter.



526

cases of weapon seizures were reported, representing **56% of all firearm incidents**.



151

incidents in the **criminal context** were documented, **40%** of which were cases linked to **organized crime**.



20

people were **killed** in firearm incidents, a **23% decline** from the previous quarter.



129

people were **threatened**, a **41% rise** from the previous quarter.

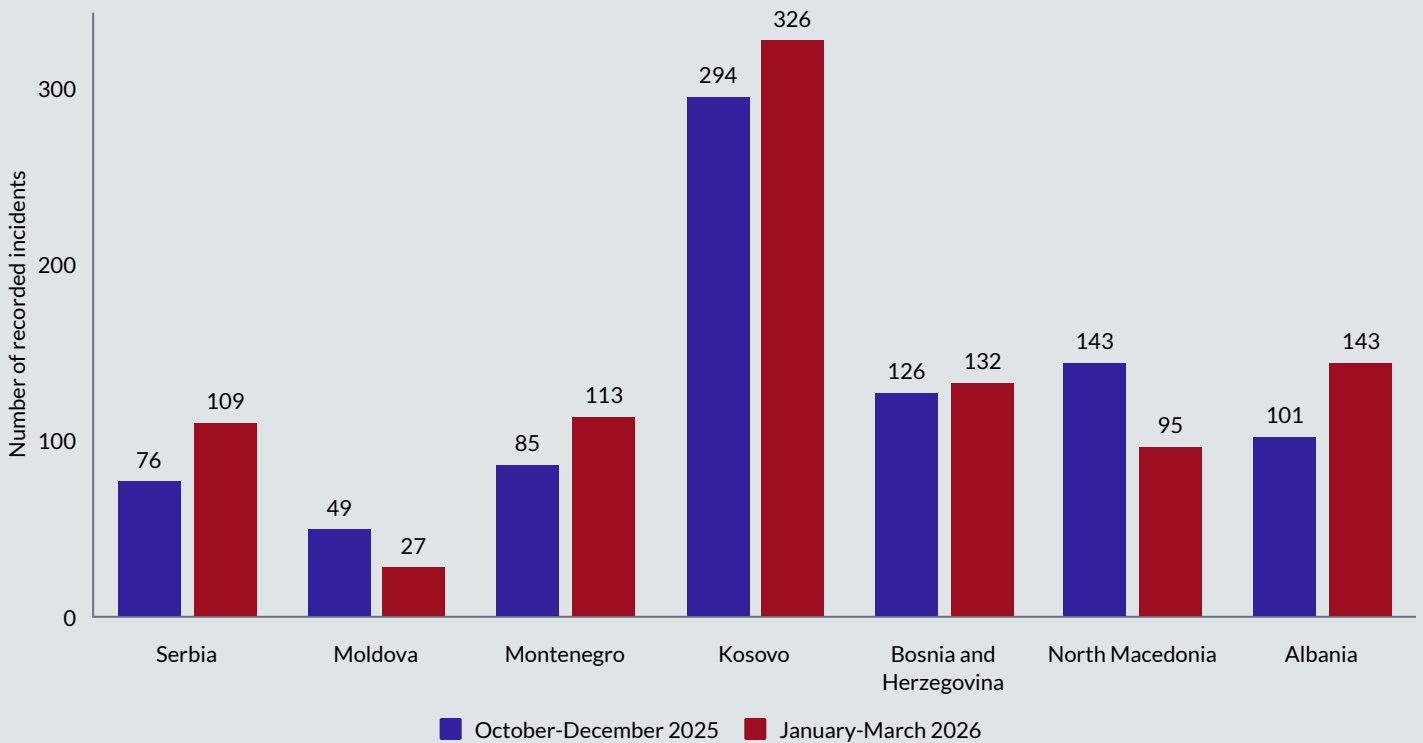


293

cases involved the use of **handguns**, of which **63%** of the cases involved handguns in **illegal possession**.

NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

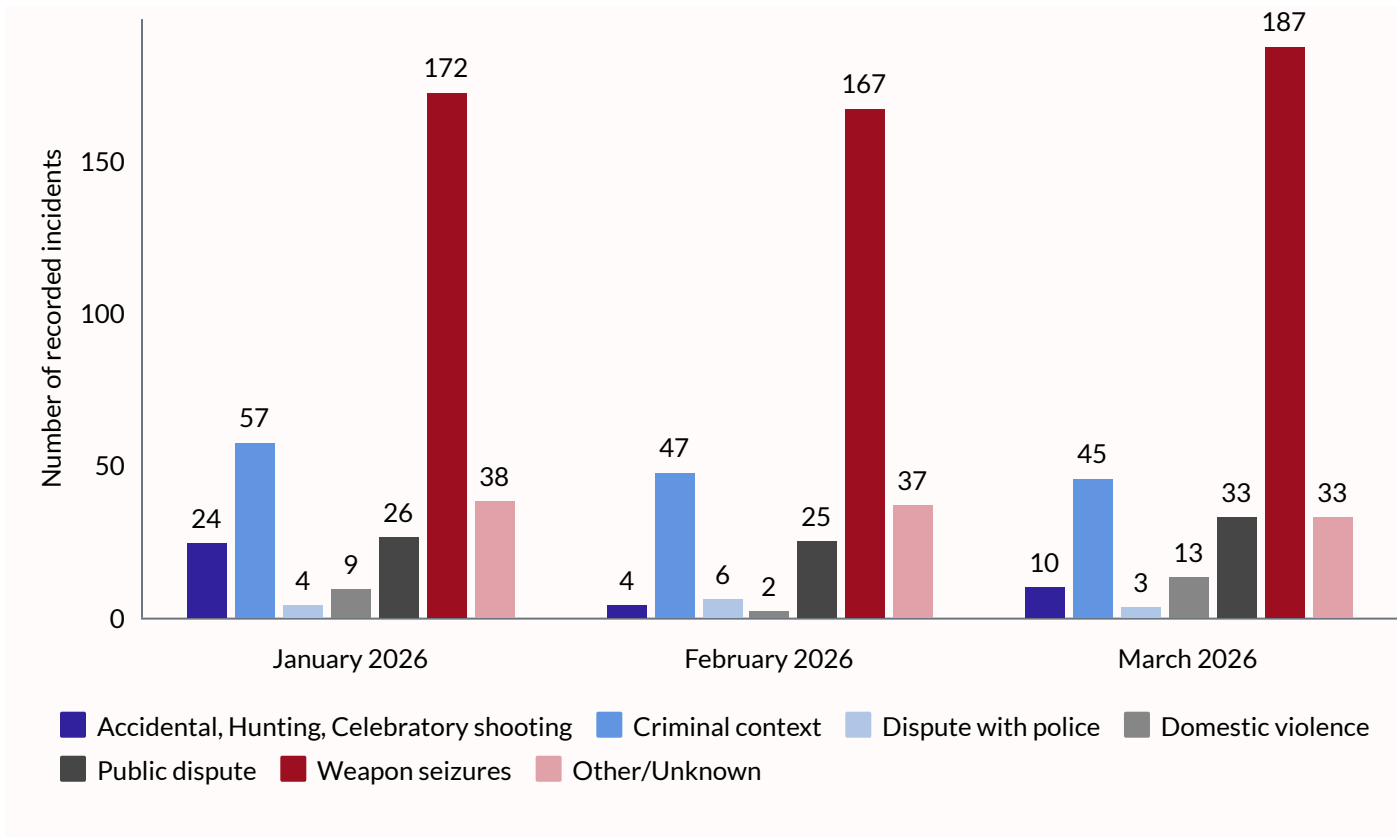
- In the first quarter of 2026, a total of **945 firearm incidents** were reported, representing an **8% increase** compared to the previous quarter, while the number of incidents remained almost unchanged compared to the same period in 2025.
- The **highest monthly figure** was recorded in **January 2026**, with **333 incidents**, marking a **6% rise** compared to January 2025 (353 cases).



- The **highest number of firearm incidents** continues to be recorded in **Kosovo (326)**, an **11% rise** from the previous quarter.
- **Albania (143)** and **Serbia (109)** both saw **considerable rises, increasing by 42% and 43% respectively**. **Montenegro (113)** also recorded a **significant increase (33%)**, while **Bosnia and Herzegovina (132)** experienced a **moderate rise of 5%**.
- In contrast, **North Macedonia (95)** registered a **sharp decrease of 34%**, marking the most pronounced decline among all jurisdictions.
- **Moldova (27)** continued to record the **lowest number of incidents** and saw a **45% decrease**.

TYPES OF INCIDENTS

The monthly distribution of firearm incidents in the first quarter of 2026 reveals fluctuations across different types of incidents:

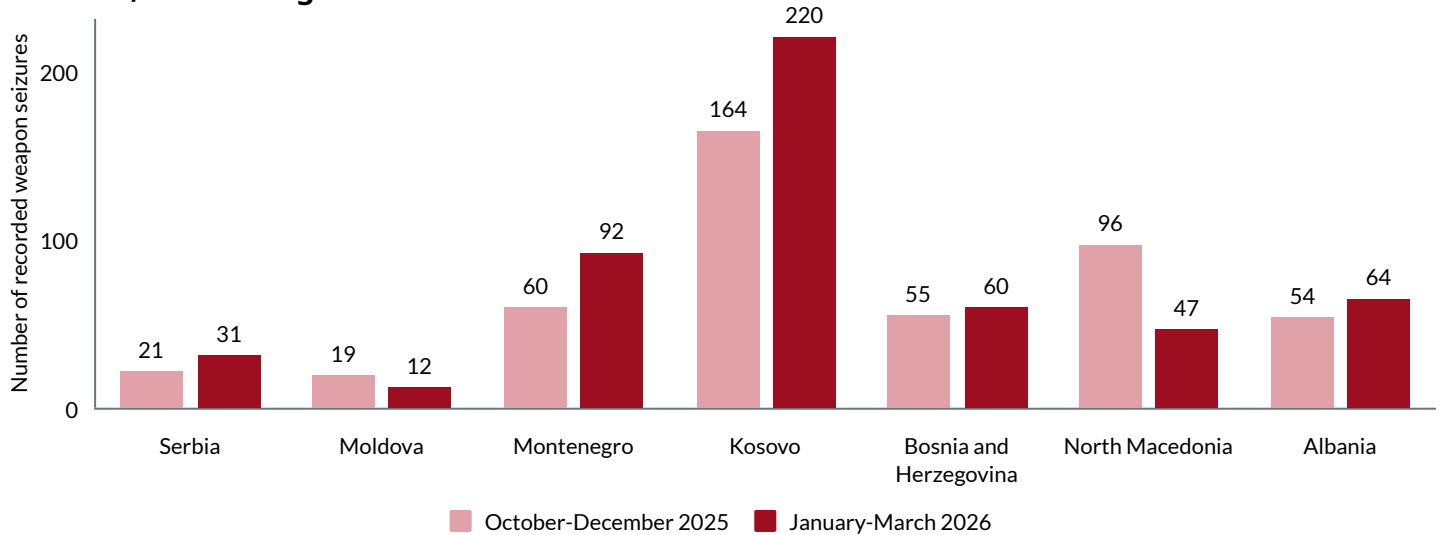


- **Weapon seizures** remained the **most frequently recorded category**, with **526 cases** documented in the first quarter of 2026. February saw the lowest number of cases (167).
- Incidents in a **criminal context** totalled **149 cases**. A **gradual decrease** in incidents from February (47) to March (45) suggested a **downward trend** across the quarter.
- **Public disputes involving firearms** amounted to **85 incidents**. Numbers were **relatively consistent** across the three months.
- **Accidental, celebratory shootings/hunting** totalled **38 cases**. The **highest number** of incidents was reported in **January (24)**.
- **Domestic violence** incidents reached **24 cases** over the quarter. March recorded the highest number of incidents in this quarter (**13**).
- **Disputes with police** were the **least frequently recorded** category, with **13 cases in total**. Incidents were spread across all three months, peaking in **February (6)**, with the fewer number of incidents in **March (3)** and **January (4)**.
- The **Other/Unknown** category accounted for **108 incidents**, with most cases being **undetermined shootings**. Figures remained relatively stable across the quarter.

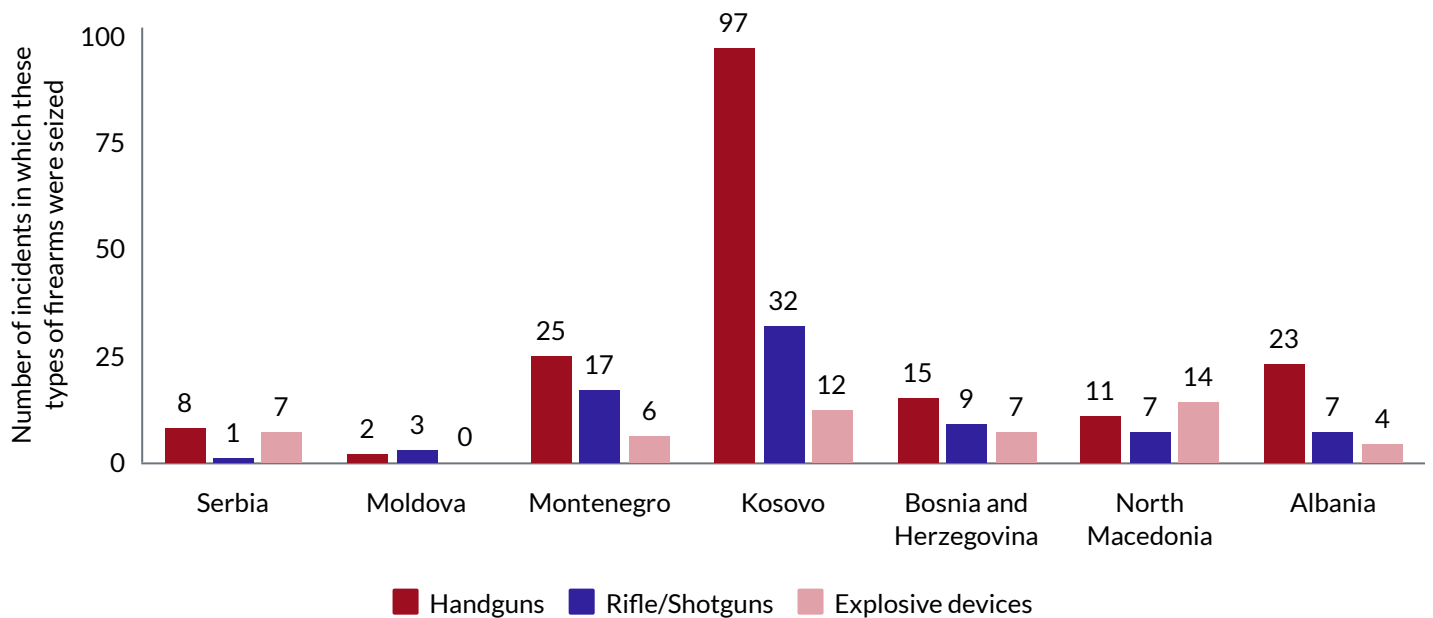
MOST REPORTED INCIDENTS

Weapon seizures

A total of **526 weapon seizure cases** were recorded in the reporting period, representing a **12% increase** compared to the **fourth quarter of 2025 (469 cases)**, and a **marginal decrease** compared to the **same period in 2025 (531 cases)**. Weapon seizures remained the **most prevalent type of incident, accounting for 56% of all firearm incidents**.



The **highest number of weapons seizures** this quarter was recorded in **Kosovo (220)**, representing a **34% increase** from the previous quarter and the highest number of cases recorded in the region. Montenegro (92), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania (64), and Serbia (31) also marked increases compared to the previous quarter.



Three most seized types of weapons in January-March 2026

Handguns continued to be the **most seized type of weapon** in the first quarter, with **181 cases** reported. This represented a **47% rise** from the previous quarter (123 cases), mainly due to **increases in Kosovo, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina**.

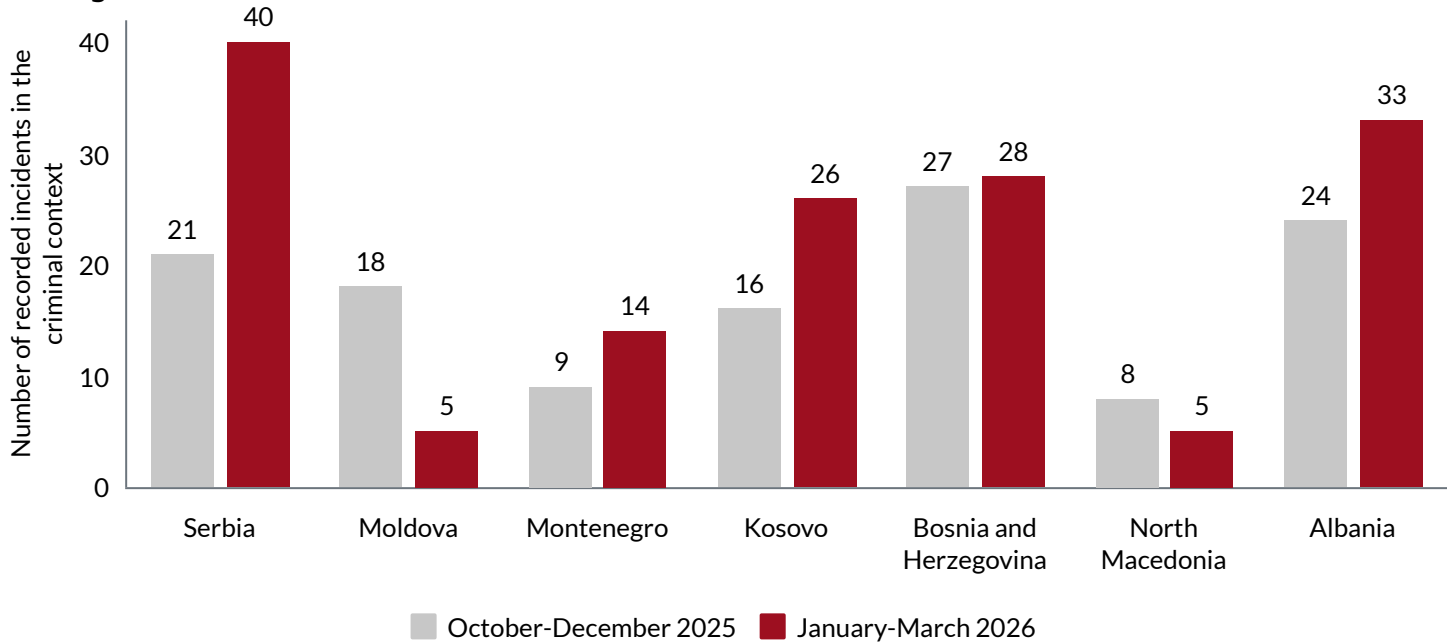
Seizures of **rifles/shotguns** saw a **modest increase** from 71 to **76 cases**. Similar to the previous quarter, the **highest number of rifle/shotgun** seizures was reported in **Kosovo and Montenegro**.

Seizures of **explosive devices decreased by half** compared to the fourth quarter of 2025, dropping from 100 to **50 cases**. This decline was largely driven by a **significant reduction in North Macedonia**, where cases fell from 53 to **14**, primarily due to a **decrease in the seizure of pyrotechnic devices**, which is a reoccurring seasonal trend.

Criminal context

In the first quarter of 2026, **151 firearm incidents** were recorded in the criminal context, marking a **23% increase** compared to the fourth quarter of 2025 (123 cases).

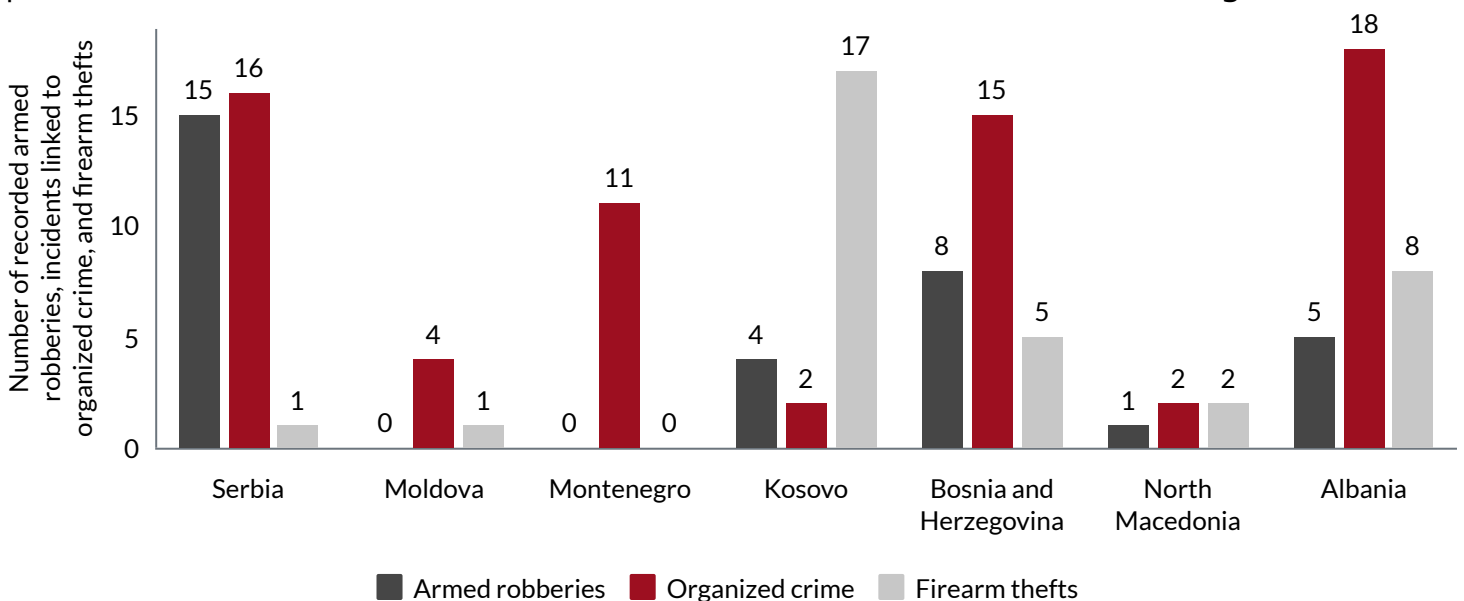
Serbia (40) recorded the **highest number of incidents, doubling** the previous quarter's total. **Albania (33)** and **Bosnia and Herzegovina (28)** followed, both reporting higher figures, with Bosnia and Herzegovina remaining relatively stable compared to the previous quarter. **Kosovo (26)** and **Montenegro (14)** also reported **increases**, reflecting a broader upward trend across several jurisdictions. In contrast, **Moldova (5)** and **North Macedonia (5)** both recorded **declines**, remaining among those with the lowest totals.



Armed robberies increased in the first quarter of 2026, rising from 28 cases in the fourth quarter of 2025 to **33 cases**. The **highest number** was recorded in **Serbia (15)**, followed by **Bosnia and Herzegovina (8)**, while **Albania (5)** and **Kosovo (4)** reported **modest increases**. In contrast, **Montenegro** and **Moldova** recorded **no such cases**.

Incidents linked to **organized crime increased** from 60 cases in the previous quarter to **68 cases** in the reporting period. **Albania (18)** continued to record the **highest number**, although slightly lower than in the previous quarter. **Serbia (16)**, **Bosnia and Herzegovina (15)**, and **Montenegro (11)** followed, with **Montenegro** and **Serbia** recording **increases**. In contrast, **Moldova (4)**, **Kosovo (2)**, and **North Macedonia (2)** reported **decreases**.

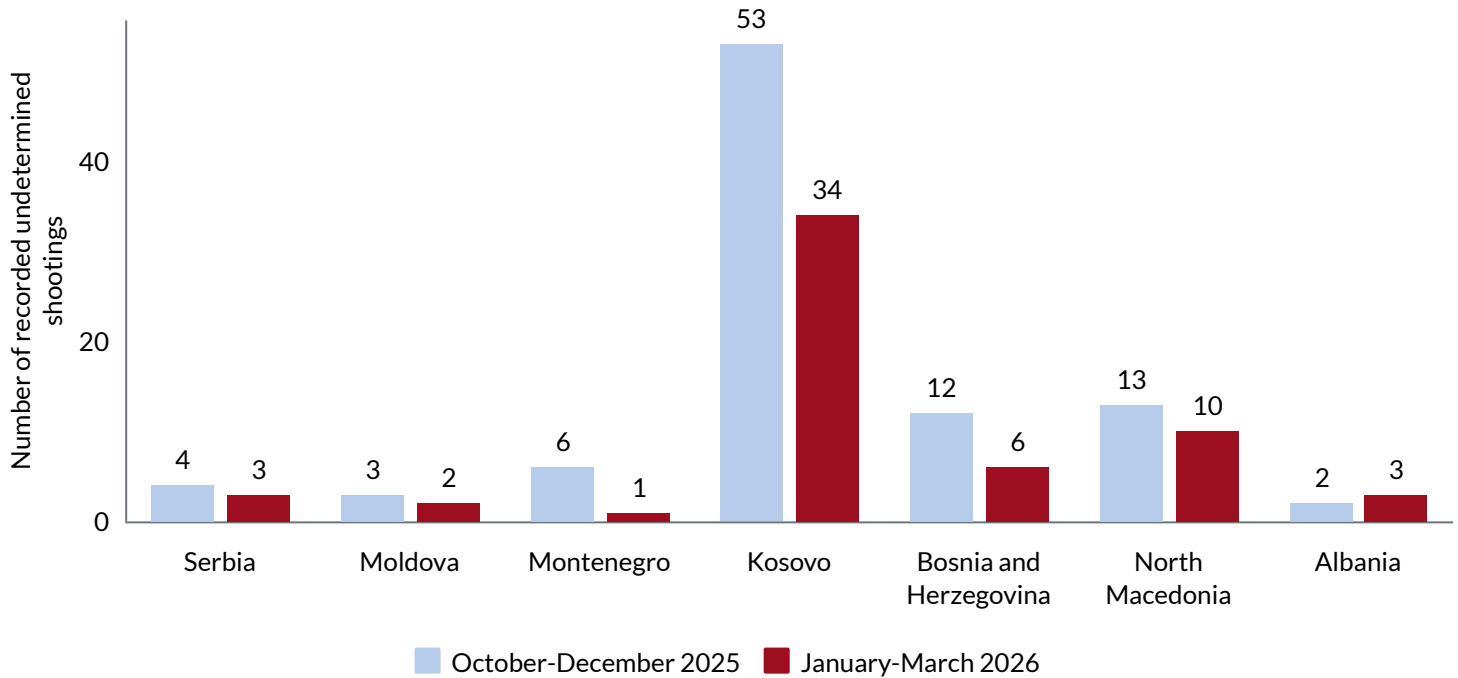
Firearm thefts increased from 12 cases in the previous quarter to **34 cases** in the first quarter of 2026. The **highest number** was recorded in **Kosovo (17)**, showing **an increase** compared to the previous quarter. An **increased number** was also recorded in **Albania (8)** and **Bosnia and Herzegovina (5)**.



Undetermined shootings

In the first quarter of 2026, a total of **59 undetermined shootings**³ were recorded, marking a **37% decrease** compared to the previous quarter (93 cases).

The **highest number** was documented in **Kosovo (34)**, despite a **decline**. **Bosnia and Herzegovina (6)** and **North Macedonia (10)** also recorded **lower figures** compared to the previous quarter.

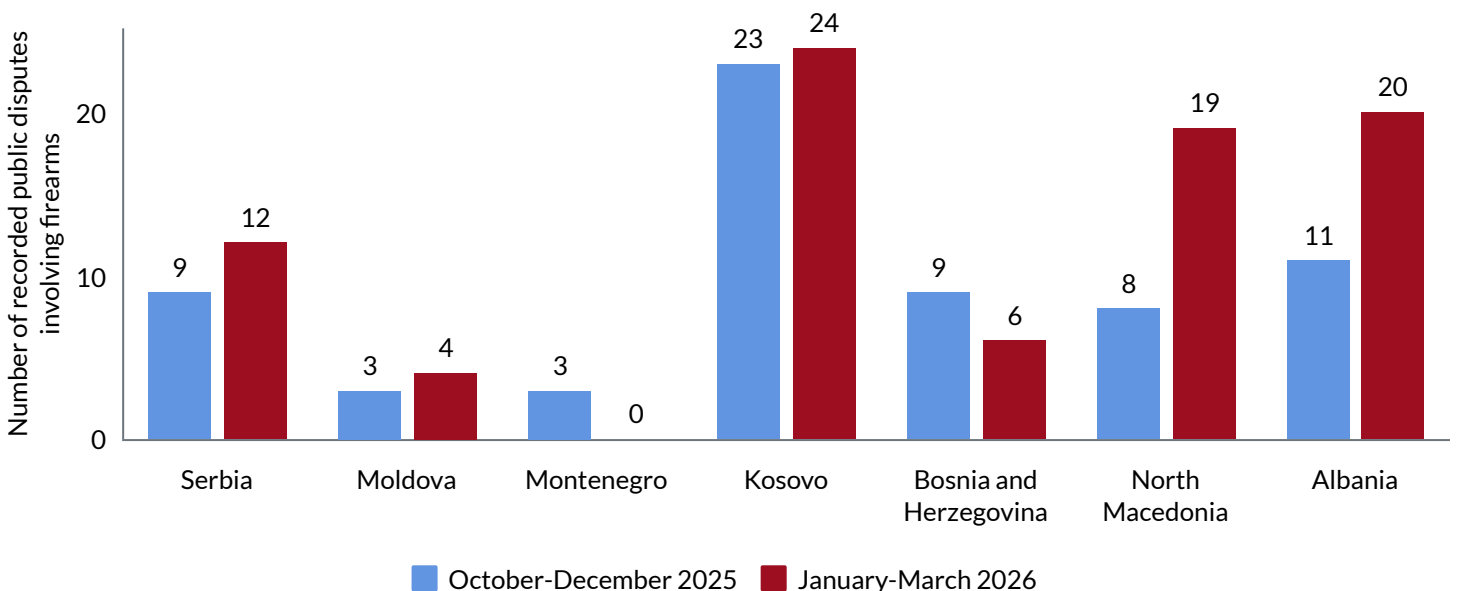


Public disputes

Firearm incidents stemming from **public disputes increased to 85 cases** in the first quarter of 2026, representing a **29% rise** compared to the previous quarter (66 cases), indicating a **reversal of the earlier downward trend**.

Kosovo (24) recorded the **highest number** of such incidents, with figures remaining relatively **stable** compared to the previous quarter. **Albania (20)** and **North Macedonia (19)** both reported **increases**, with North Macedonia more than doubling its figures.

Serbia (12) and **Moldova (4)** also recorded **slight increases**, while **Bosnia and Herzegovina (6)** registered a **decrease** compared to the previous quarter. **Montenegro reported no such incidents**.



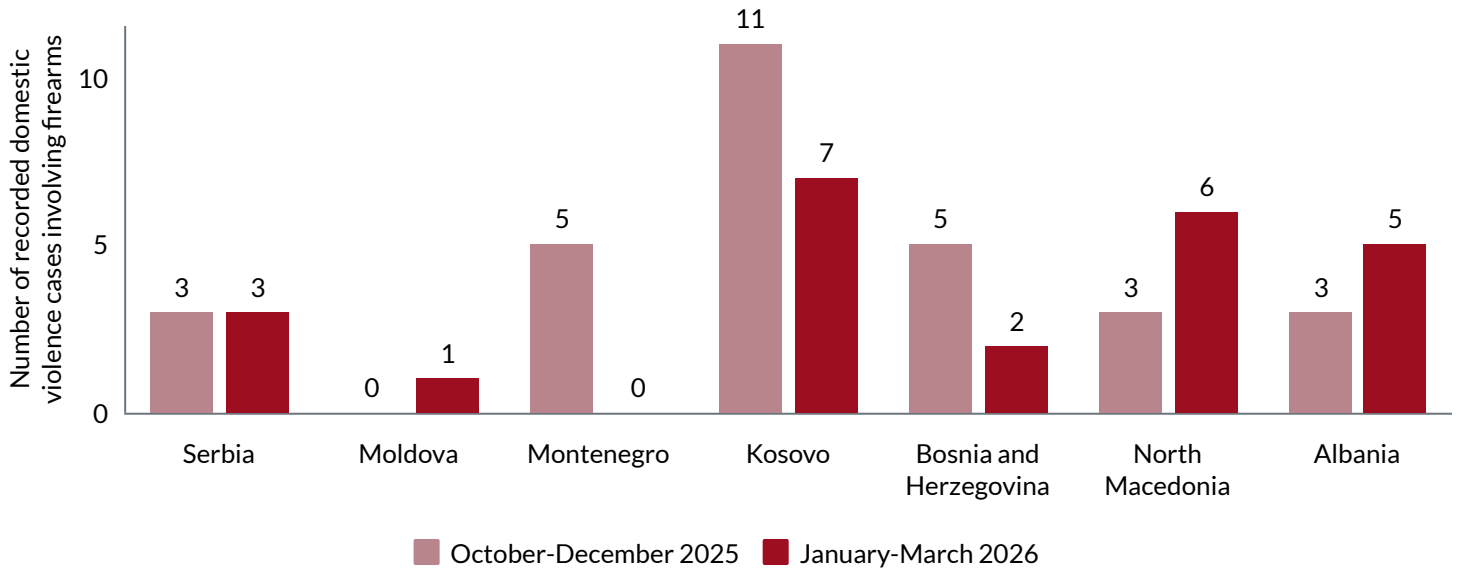
³ Undetermined shooting refers to any firearm discharge under unknown circumstances and motives, regardless of whether or not such an incident caused a fatality, injury, or damage.

Domestic violence

A total of **24 firearm incidents** in the context of **domestic violence** were reported across the region in the first quarter of 2026, a **20% decrease** compared to the previous quarter (30 cases).

An **increase** in the number of incidents was recorded in **North Macedonia (6)** and **Albania (5)**. Although the **highest number of incidents** was reported in **Kosovo (7)**, this represented a **decrease** compared to the previous quarter, **similar to the trend** observed in **Bosnia and Herzegovina (2)**.

Of the 24 incidents, 13 were committed by intimate partners, a **decrease** compared to the previous quarter (20 cases). In contrast, firearm-related violence **by other family members increased** slightly, from 10 to **11 cases**.

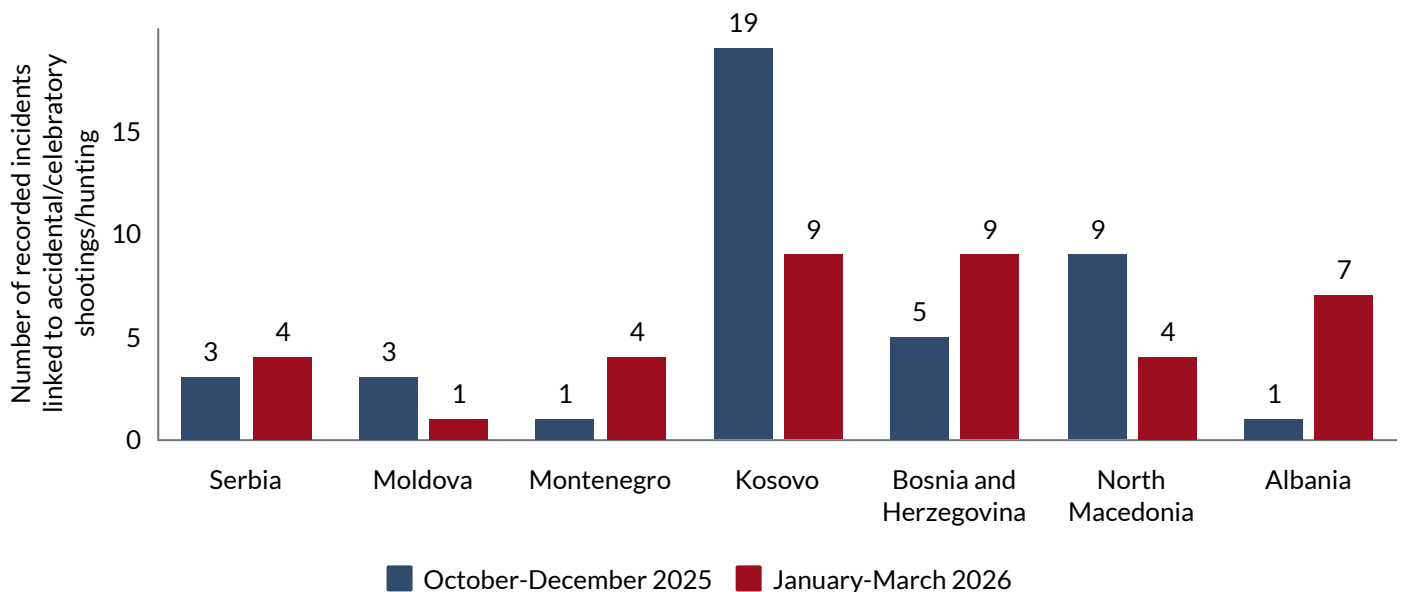


Accidental/Celebratory shootings/ Hunting

A total of **38 incidents** were recorded under the category **Accidental, Celebratory shootings, Hunting** during the reporting period, representing a slight decrease compared to the previous quarter (41 cases).

Celebratory shootings (22) continued to account for the **largest share of incidents**, although showing a **slight decline** compared to the previous quarter. **Accidental shootings (16)** remained broadly stable, with a **marginal increase**, while **hunting-related incidents (5)** also recorded a **slight rise**.

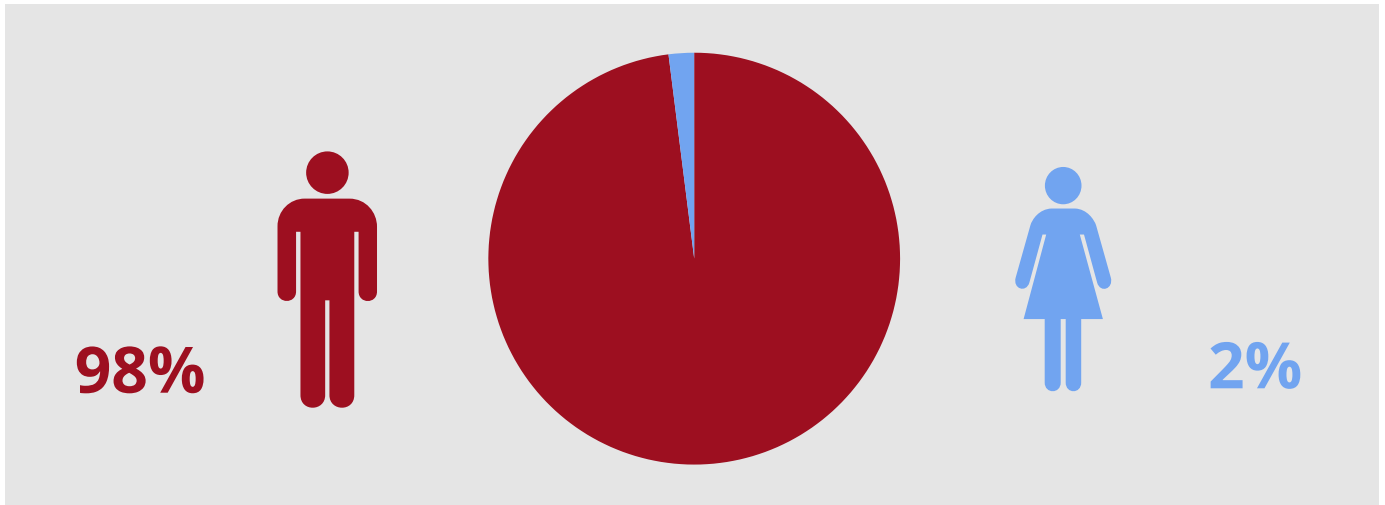
Bosnia and Herzegovina (9), Albania (7), Montenegro (4) and **Serbia (4)** marked increases compared to the previous quarter, while **Kosovo (9), North Macedonia, and Moldova** saw **declines** in the number of these incidents.



PERPETRATORS

A total of **1,192 perpetrators⁴** were recorded in firearm incidents during the reporting period. The majority were **men (1,010)**, while **21 were women**, and sex was not indicated for 161 individuals.

In cases when the sex was known, men accounted for 98% and women for 2% of perpetrators.

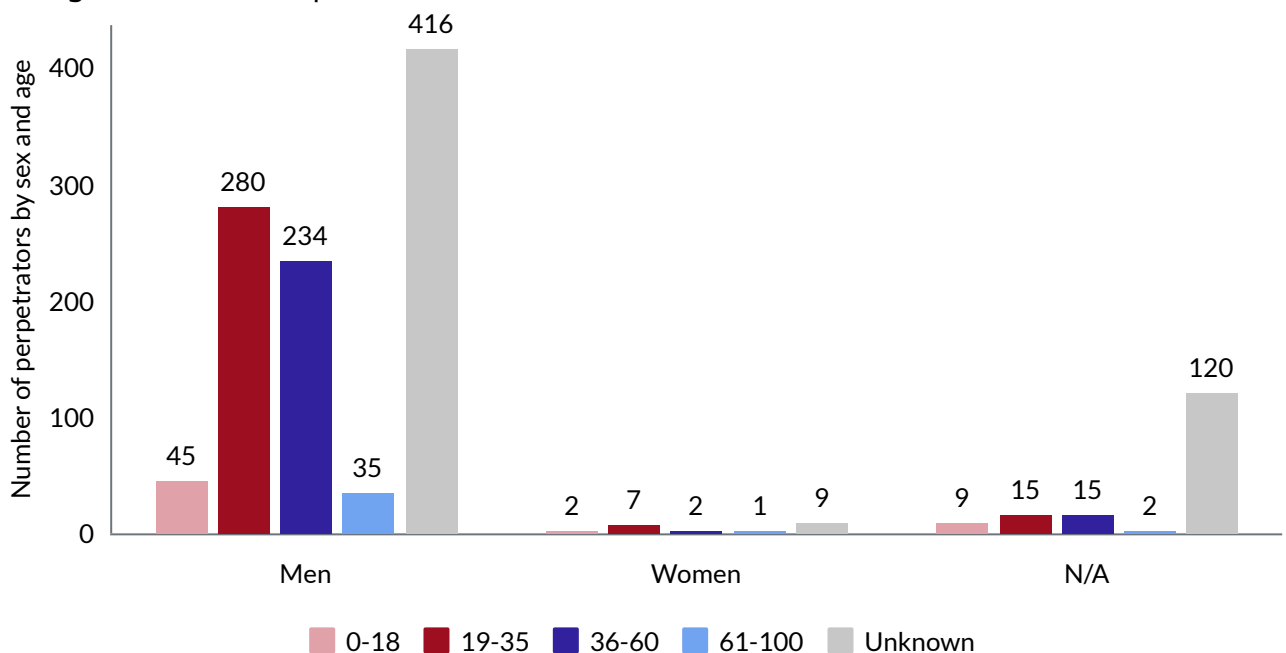


Men were identified as perpetrators, mostly in incidents related to **weapon seizures (52%)**, **criminal context (20%)**, **public disputes (11%)**, and **undetermined shootings (4%)**.



Women were identified as perpetrators, mainly in incidents related to **weapon seizures (38%)** and **criminal context (24%)**.

The **most common age group** among perpetrators was **19-35 (280)**, followed by **36-60 years (234)**. A total of **56** perpetrators were 18 or younger, which is a **considerable increase from the 29 reported** in the previous quarter. Most perpetrators in this age group were recorded in connection to weapon seizures (22) and public disputes (13). There were also **35 perpetrators aged 61 and older**. However, for **545 perpetrators**, the age remained unknown, while for 161, neither age nor sex was reported.

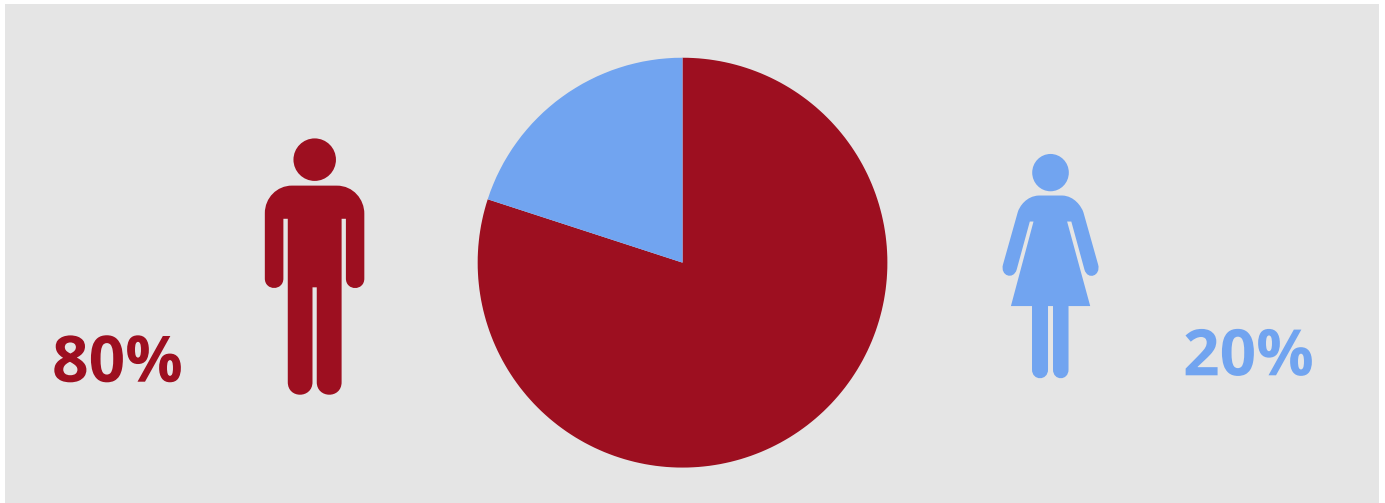


⁴ Perpetrator refers to any individual who has used a firearm/ammunition/explosive to commit any of the types of incidents covered by the AVMP.

VICTIMS

A total of **352 victims**⁵ were recorded in firearm incidents. This marks a **35% increase** compared to 260 in the previous quarter. **Men accounted for the majority of victims (225 men)**, while **55 were women**, and for **71 individuals**, the information on sex was not reported.

In cases when the sex was known, **men accounted for 80%** and women for **20% of victims**.

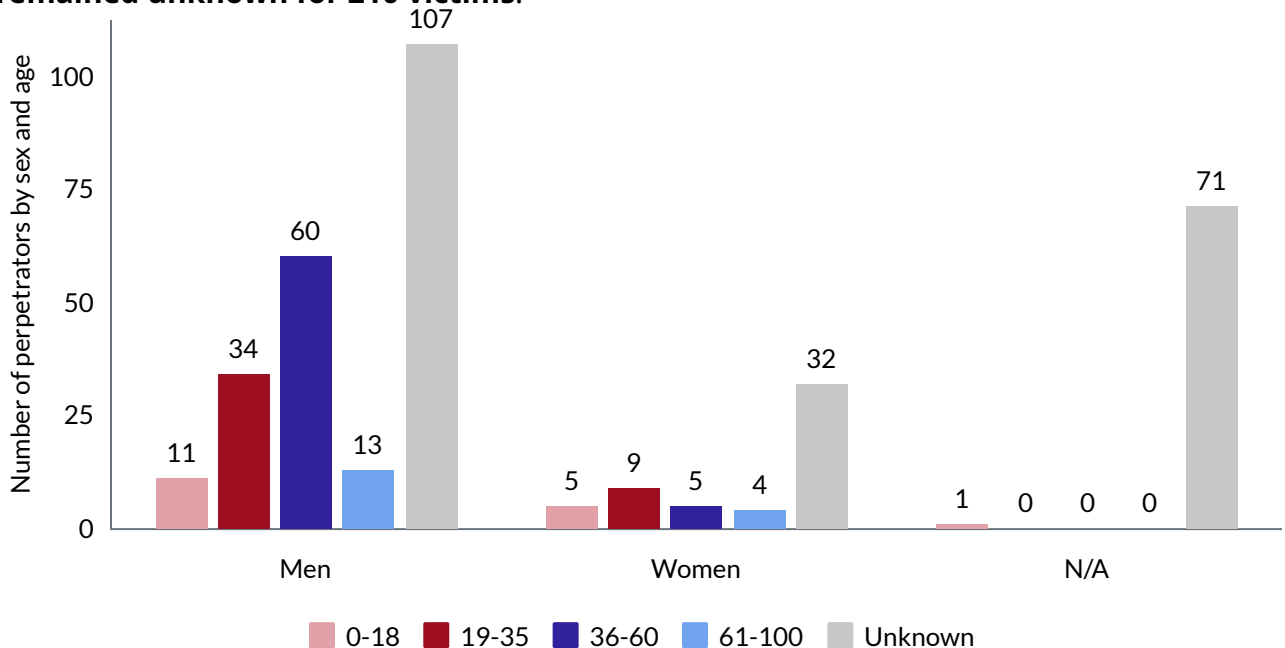


Men were identified as victims mostly in incidents related to **public disputes (37%)**, **criminal context (26%)**, and **undetermined shootings (12%)**.



Women were identified as victims mainly in incidents related to **domestic violence (42%)**, and **the criminal context (29%)**, specifically in **armed robberies**, and **public disputes (13%)**.

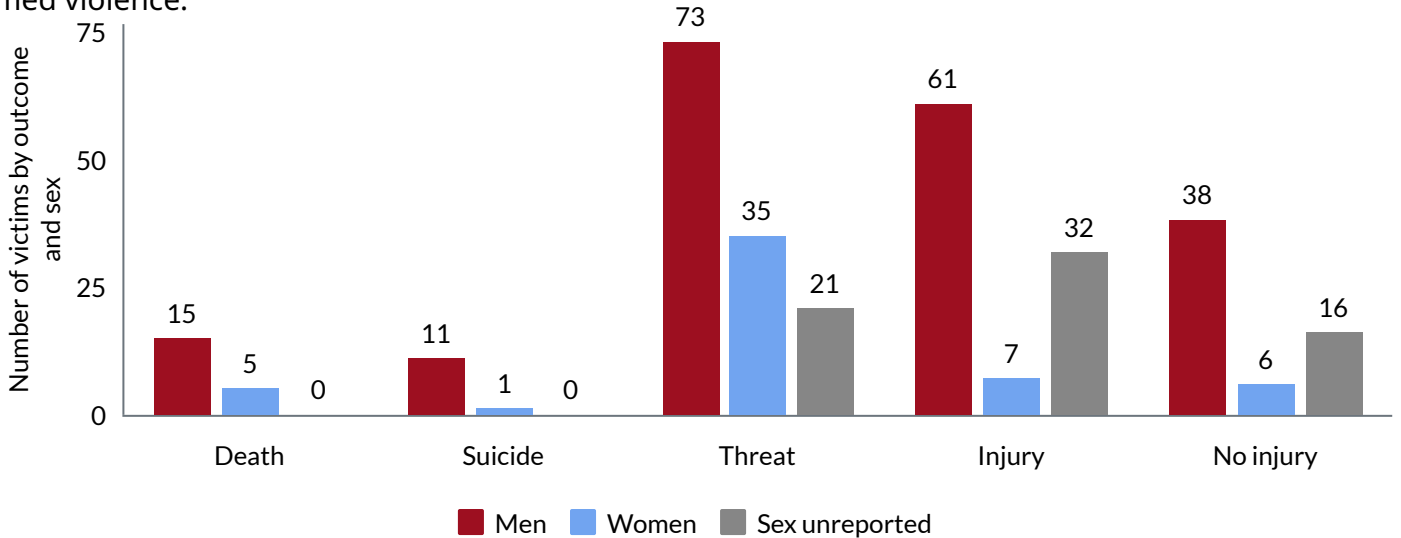
When the age was known, the **36-60 age group** was the **most affected** among victims, with **65 victims**. This was also the age group with the highest number of men victims. Those aged **19-35** followed (**43 victims**). This was also the group with the highest number of women victims. A total of **17 victims** were **aged 18 and younger**. There were **17 victims aged 61 and older**, while the **age remained unknown for 210 victims**.



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.

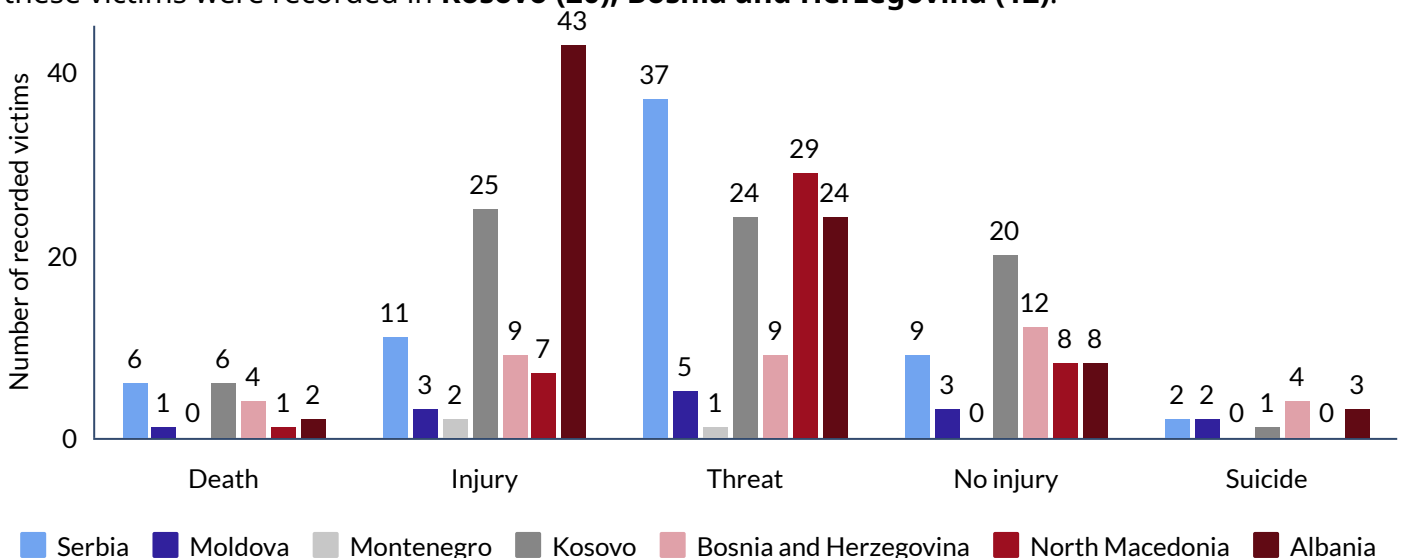
Outcomes for victims

The outcomes of firearm incidents in the first quarter of 2026 reflect different levels of impact of armed violence.



Most reported outcomes of firearm incidents by type from January to March 2026

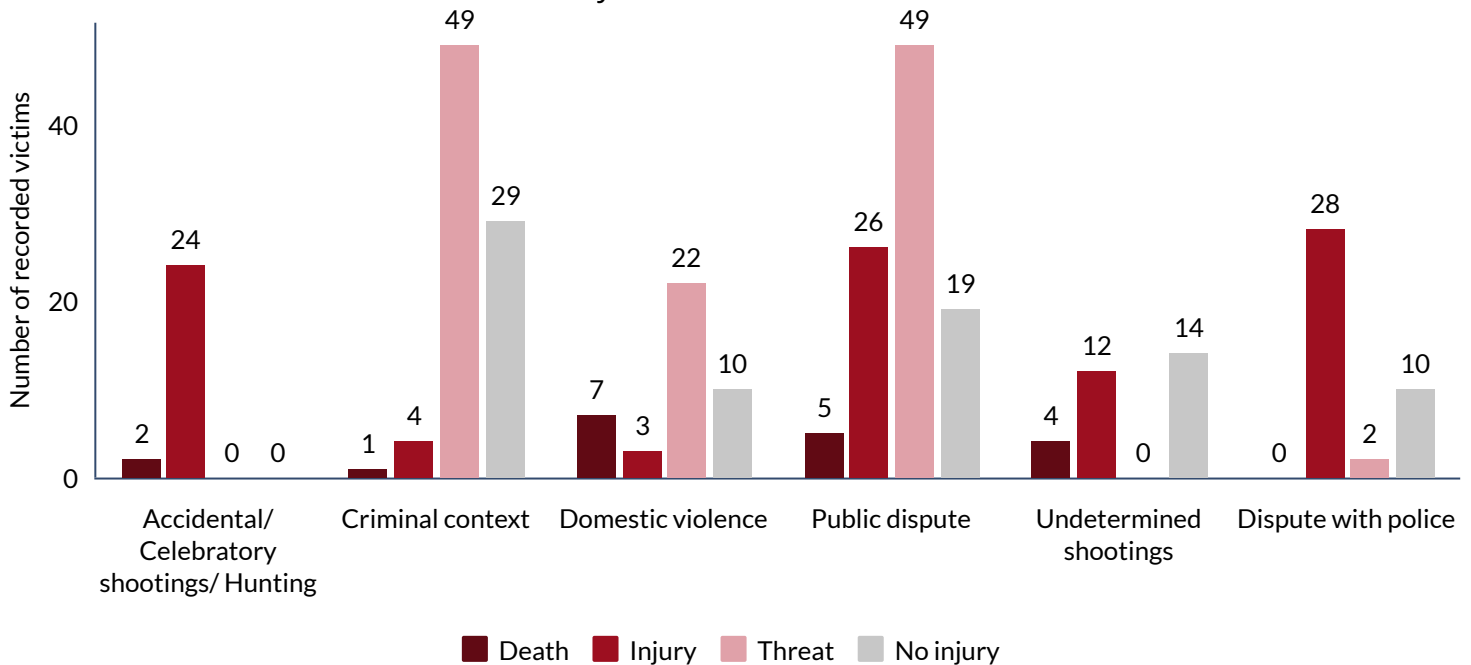
- **Firearm-related fatalities declined** in the first quarter of 2026, falling from 26 to **20 victims**. The **decrease was driven** by a **drop in men victims**, from 23 to **15**, while the number of women victims increased from 2 to **5**. The **highest number of fatalities** was recorded in **Serbia and Kosovo, with 6 victims each**, followed by **Bosnia and Herzegovina with 4**. The most notable decreases were observed in Albania, where fatalities fell from 6 to 2, and in North Macedonia, from 5 to 1. No fatalities were reported in Montenegro.
- **Firearm-related suicides dropped 13 to 12 cases**, primarily **affecting men (11)**. **Bosnia and Herzegovina (4)** reported the **highest number of cases**, followed by Albania (3), Moldova (2), Serbia (2), Kosovo (1), while no such cases were recorded in the remaining jurisdictions.
- The number of **injured victims increased** from 79 to **100** compared to the previous quarter. While injuries **among men decreased** from 68 to **61**, the **number of injured women rose** slightly from 6 to **7**. A notable **increase was observed among victims whose sex was not reported**, from **5 to 32**. The **highest number of injuries** was recorded in **Albania (43)**, followed by **Kosovo (25)** and **Serbia (11)**.
- **Threats with firearms increased** from 90 to **129 victims**. The increase was mainly driven by a **rise among both women victims**, from 25 to **35**, and **men victims**, from 68 to **73**. The **majority of victims** were documented in **Serbia (37)**, **North Macedonia (29)**, Kosovo (24) and Albania (24).
- A total of **60 victims** were reported in incidents involving **firearm discharge without injury**, an **increase** from 41 in the previous period. **Most victims were men (38)**. The **highest numbers** of these victims were recorded in **Kosovo (20)**, **Bosnia and Herzegovina (12)**.



Most reported outcomes of firearm incidents by jurisdiction from January to March 2026

Outcomes for victims and context

The below overview offers an insight into the outcomes for victims resulting from the use of firearms in different contexts covered by the AVMP.



Most reported outcomes of firearm incidents by type from January to March 2026

Firearm-related deaths

- **Firearm-related fatalities** in the **domestic setting** accounted for the **largest share**, with **7 deaths**, affecting **5 men** and **2 women**, representing an increase compared to the previous period (3 fatalities).
- **Public disputes** involving firearms **resulted in 5 fatalities**, all **men**. **Undetermined shootings** also accounted for **5 deaths**, including **3 men** and **1 woman**, where sex was specified.
- **Accidental shootings** led to **3 fatalities (2 men and 1 woman)**, marking a slight decline compared to the previous period, when 3 deaths were recorded.
- Incidents in the **criminal context** resulted in **1 fatality** of a man.

Firearm-related injuries

- **Cases related to disputes** with police resulted in the **highest number of firearm-related injuries**, with **28 victims**, including 1 man and 27 persons of unknown sex, marking a significant increase from 3 injured victims recorded in the prior quarter.
- **Public disputes** involving firearms accounted for **26 injured victims**, all men.
- **Accidental/Celebratory shootings/Hunting** led to **24 injuries (16 men and 3 women)**, while **undetermined shootings** caused **12 injuries, 10 men and 2 women**.
- Incidents in the **criminal context** resulted in **4 injured victims, all men**. In addition, **domestic violence incidents** resulted in **3 injured victims (2 men and 1 woman)**.

Firearm-related threats

- **Threats** involving firearms were most commonly reported in the context of **public disputes**, with **50 victims**, including **40 men and 5 women**, when the sex was known. The same number of threatened victims was also reported in cases linked to the **criminal context**, affecting **26 men and 14 women**.
- **Domestic violence incidents** led to **22 threatened victims**, i.e. **16 women and 2 men**.

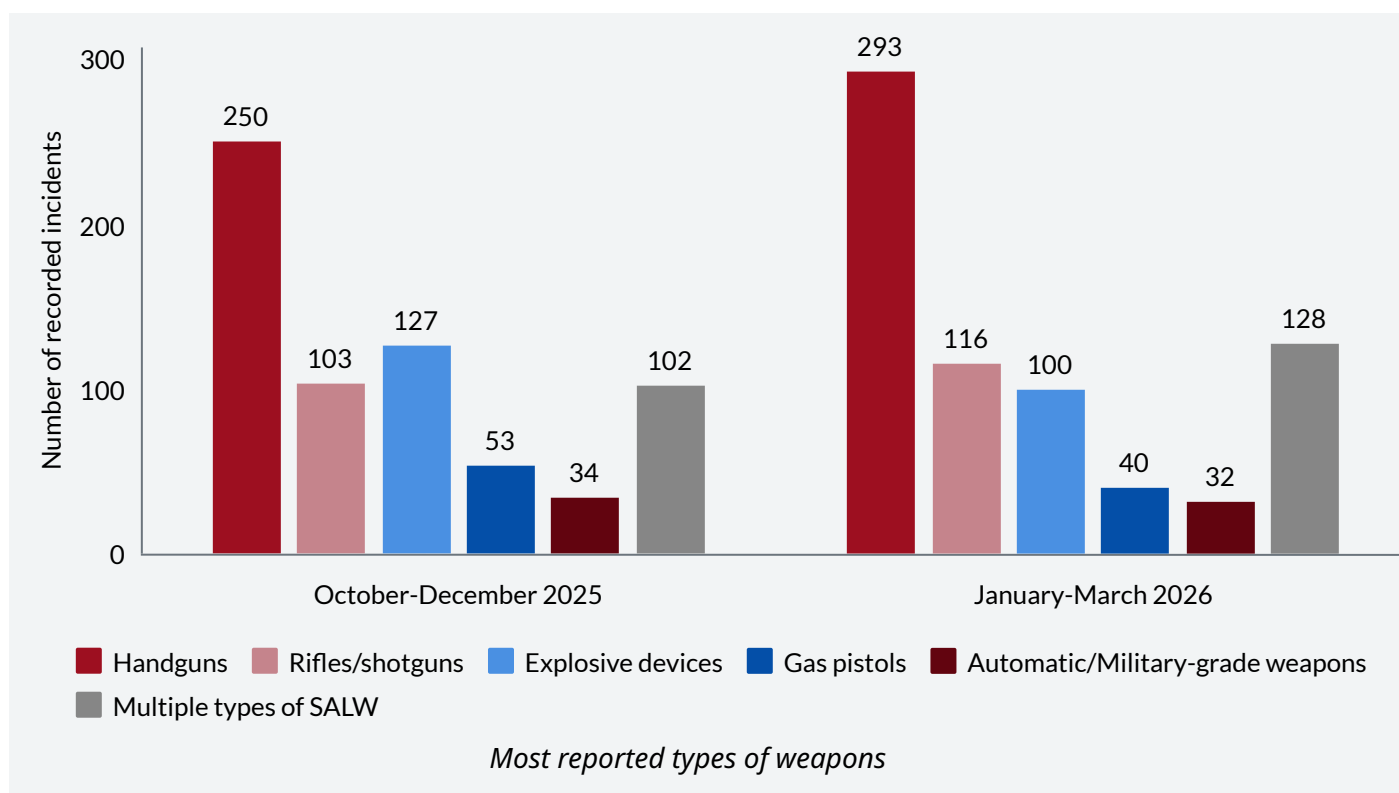
TYPES OF WEAPONS



- In **611 (65%) incidents**, the firearms used were in **illegal possession**, while in **76 (8%) cases**, they were in **legal possession**. In 258 (27%) incidents, the status of possession was not reported.

Handguns remained the **most frequently reported type of weapon**, documented in **293 cases** between January and March 2026, an **increase of 17%** compared to the previous quarter. They were reported in **62% of all recorded weapon seizures (181 cases)** and were also linked to incidents in the **criminal context (45 cases)** and **public disputes (31 cases)**, among others.

The use of **rifles/shotguns declined by 13%** compared to the previous quarter, with **116 cases** recorded in the first quarter of 2026. In **66% of these incidents**, the weapons were **seized**, while in **10% they were reported as stolen**.



Explosive devices ranked as the **third most frequently reported type of weapon**, with **100 cases**, representing a **12% decrease** from the prior quarter. **Half of these cases** were linked to **seizures**, including **25 incidents** involving the **accidental discovery of explosive devices** by civilians. Additionally, **22 cases** involved **undetermined explosions**, marking an increase compared to the previous period.

Gas pistols continued their **downward trend**, with **40 reported cases**, a **25% decrease** from the previous quarter. In **70% of these incidents (28 cases)**, the gas pistols were **seized**.

Incidents involving **automatic /military-grade weapons** also **declined slightly**, from 34 to **32 cases**. **Half of these** were linked to **weapon seizures (16 cases)**, while **6 occurred** in the **criminal context**.

In contrast, incidents involving **multiple types of SALW increased by 24%**, reaching a total of **128 cases**. **Most of these incidents** were linked to **weapon seizures (67%)**, while **25%** occurred in a **criminal context**.

MACRO AND MICROLOCATION

From January to March 2026

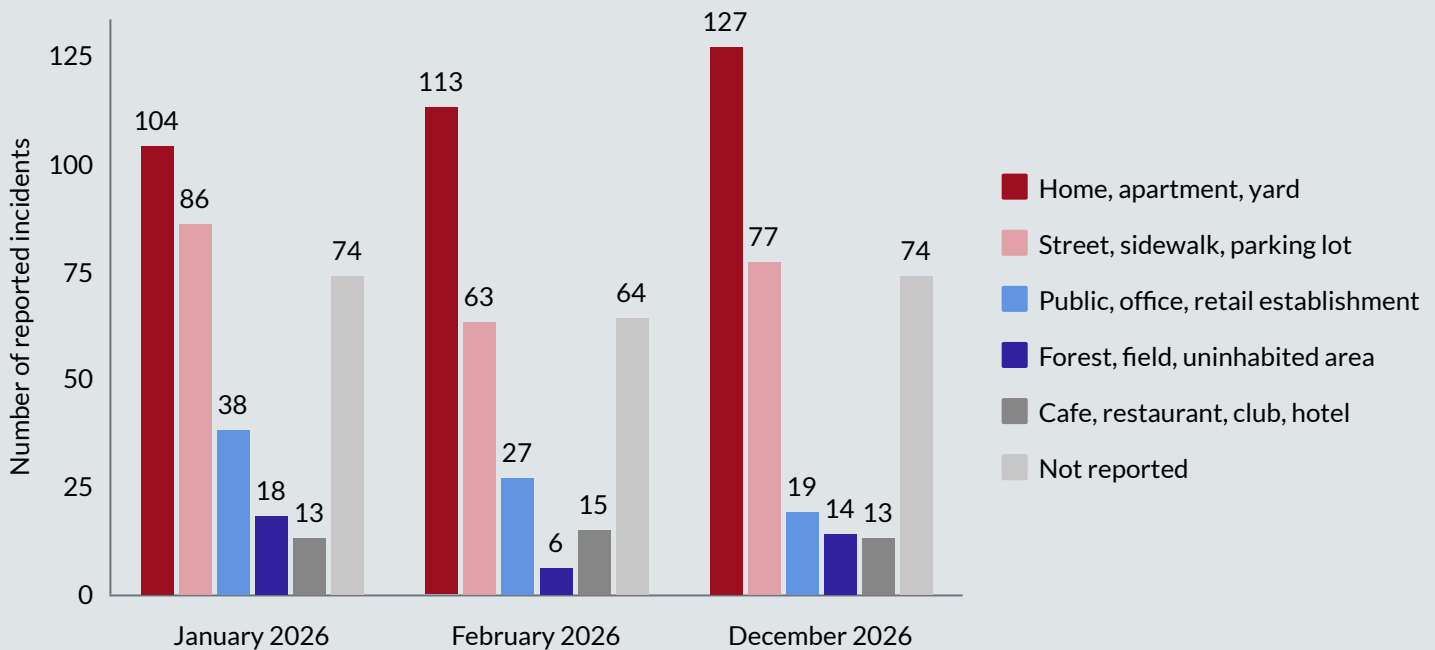


626 (66%) incidents
occurred in urban areas.



319 (34%) incidents
occurred in rural areas.

Microlocation



When reported, the majority of incidents occurred



at homes / yards

344 incidents

- Weapon seizures (217 cases)
- Criminal context (67 cases)
- Domestic violence (17 cases)
- Public disputes (12 cases)
- Undetermined shootings (12 cases)



in streets

226 incidents

- Weapon seizures (126 cases)
- Public disputes (31 cases)
- Criminal context (23 cases)
- Undetermined shootings (20 cases)



public buildings

84 incidents

- Criminal context (37 cases)
- Weapon seizures (28 cases)



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