

Reduce Risk Increase Safety

Towards ending SALW misuse
in domestic violence context



Serbia is among top-ranked countries according to the estimated rate of civilian firearms holdings.

- 95% of firearm owners are men.
- 60% of women and 45% of men feel that a gun at home makes them less safe.
- 31% of people who were killed by a family member were killed with a firearm, while women account for 64% of victims of such homicides.
- 39% of all female homicides were committed with firearms, while 88% of the female homicide victims were killed by their husband or intimate partner.
- The misuse of firearms is far more fatal in the context of domestic violence than in the criminal context.
- 5 of 6 mass shootings that have occurred in Serbia are a direct consequence of the misuse of firearms in the context of domestic violence or involved the killing of a family member/ former/current partner or wife.

Lethal outcome of firearm misuse by type of incident *

51.9
%

Domestic violence

26
%

Accident, hunting, celebratory / misfire

22.3
%

Public dispute or argument

16.7
%

Dispute with police, army, security

15.2
%

Criminal (gang, theft, money, drugs)

9.1
%

Weapon use for defense

Firearms and domestic violence are inextricably linked.

Women are far more often victims of firearm misuse in the context of domestic violence and intimate partner violence. The misuse of firearms is not restricted to homicides only. Firearms are often used as a means to intimidate, threaten, commit psychological violence, rape and sexual abuse, exert control over the victim, as well as for other forms of violence. These forms of violence mainly occur in the private sphere, within the household and at home, and due to a high level of social tolerance of firearm possession on the one hand and domestic violence on the other, these cases are rarely reported to competent institutions. Therefore, in families and intimate partner relationships where abusers have access to a firearm, there is a high risk that the firearm will be misused and result in extremely severe consequences.

The aim of the "Reduce risk, increase safety" project is to reduce the risk of firearm misuse and ensure safety of victims of domestic violence and intimate partner violence by:

1. Restricting domestic violence offenders' access to firearms through improved licensing procedures for obtaining, holding and carrying firearms, removal and retrieval of firearms.
2. Establishing continuous monitoring of institutional practices in reducing the misuse of firearms in cases of domestic violence and intimate partner violence.
3. Working with professionals handling domestic violence incidents, in particular to detect illegal firearms and reduce the risk of their misuse in the context of domestic violence, and to ensure long-term safety of victims of violence.
4. Working with the judiciary to develop a more effective response to the misuse of firearms in the context of domestic violence.
5. Working with the media in raising public awareness in a society that is very tolerant of firearm possession but lacks the understanding of the consequences of their misuse.

The project is being implemented in cooperation with police officers, the judiciary, multisectoral groups for coordination and cooperation that process reported cases of domestic violence and intimate partner violence, women's NGOs providing support to victims of violence and the "Journalists Against Violence" group.

The "Reduce risk, increase safety" project contributes to the achievement of Goal 4 of the [Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap](#): by 2024, significantly reduce the supply, demand and misuse of firearms through increased awareness, education, outreach and advocacy.

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* Frequency of fatal outcome according to type of incident 2014-2018 (Source: www.seesac.org/AVMP)

Source: Gender and SALW in Serbia: Fast Facts, SEESAC, 2019.