

# REDUCE RISK – INCREASE SAFETY III

Photo: Ana Batricevic/Journalists against violence



## PROFILE

**Donor:** Western Balkans SALW Control Roadmap Multi Partner Trust Fund

**Budget:** 776,135 US\$

**Implementing partners:** Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia, National Institute for Public Health – Dr. Milan Jovanovic Batut

**Duration:** October 2023 - October 2025

## PROJECT GOAL

Reduce the risk of firearms misuse for domestic violence and suicide and enhance community response to firearms - related crises and trauma.

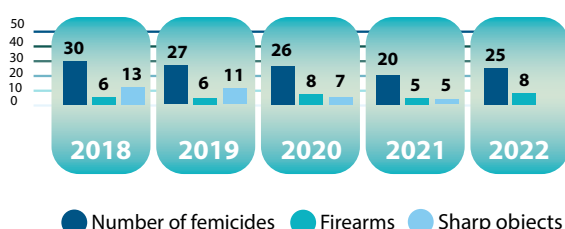
The project contributes to the implementation of the **Roadmap** for a sustainable solution to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024.

## CONTEXT

Firearms misuse affects the safety and wellbeing of citizens of Serbia, as it can have fatal consequences, including mass murders, and leave life - changing injuries and deep psychological trauma. Women and girls are more commonly victims of violence involving firearms that occurs in a domestic or partner - relationship context. While men represent the majority of those who commit such violence, they are also a majority among people who commit suicide with firearms. Notions of masculinity and firearms undoubtedly result in harm to both men and women.

About 30 women are killed each year in a domestic or intimate – partner violence context, and the share of misuse of firearms for these femicides ranges from 20% to 45%<sup>1</sup>.

**Total number of femicides in Serbia, cases committed with firearms and cases committed with sharp objects, including knives (2018 – 2022)**



Men represent over 70% of persons who commit suicide. In 2020, Serbia was the highest – ranking country in South East Europe with regards to firearm – related suicide<sup>2</sup>.

**Number of recorded suicides with firearms**



To reduce the risk of firearms misuse, the “Reduce Risk – Increase Safety III” project builds on the results from the previous phases of the project’s implementation and works to increase the participation of women and women’s organizations in SALW control, to ensure that policies in this field prevent the suffering of, above all, women and girls. In addition to this, the project supports institutions to improve processes for detection of firearms misuse risks, including healthcare workers, who survivors of violence turn to for help, and who, along with the police, assess a person’s fitness to possess and carry firearms. Moreover, overcoming prejudice related to mental health and strengthening the health care system’s support to persons at risk of committing suicide, is one of our goals in encouraging citizens, especially men, to seek help. Finally, a separate task of the project is to improve response to crisis situations, as well as contribute to overcoming trauma and reintegration of the community after mass murders, with a view of preventing such events in the future.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Characteristics and prevention of intimate partner femicide – suicide cases committed with a firearm, UNDP, 2023, <https://www.undp.org/serbia/publications/characteristics-and-prevention-intimate-partner-femicide-suicide-cases-committed-firearm>

<sup>2</sup> Source: Firearm misuse for domestic violence and suicide – a brief overview, UNDP, 2023, available at: <https://www.undp.org/serbia/publications/firearms-misuse-domestic-violence-and-suicide-brief-overview>

## FOCUS

- ▶ Improving institutional data collection and monitoring practices necessary for the planning and development of SALW control policies, especially in the context of firearms misuse for domestic violence.
- ▶ Improving regulations and procedures to reduce risk of firearms misuse in the context of domestic violence.
- ▶ Networking and empowerment of women to actively participate in the development and implementation of SALW control policies.
- ▶ Supporting the health care system to effectively identify potential firearms misuse for domestic violence and suicide, prevent risks and provide comprehensive support to persons at risk of firearms misuse.
- ▶ Informing the wider public about the negative effects of practices and attitudes leading to firearms misuse, and about existing sources of support.
- ▶ Supporting representatives of institutions, media, civil society and the academic community regarding efficient prevention of firearms - related incidents, including mass murders.

CONTRIBUTING TO SDGs:



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