
A Fragile Peace: Guns and Security in Post-conflict Macedonia

By Suzette R. Grillot, Wolf-Christian Paes,
Hans Risser, and Shelly O. Stoneman

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADI	Association for Democratic Initiatives
ANA	Albanian National Army (<i>Armata Kombëtare Shqiptare</i> —AKSh)
ANUF	Albanian National Union Front
APC	armoured personnel carrier
ARI	Army of the Republic of Illirida
ARM	Army of the Republic of Macedonia (<i>Armija na Republika Makedonija</i>)
ATGM	Anti-tank guided missiles
BICC	Bonn International Center for Conversion
DPA	Democratic Party of Albanians (<i>Partia Demokratike Shqiptare</i> —PDSH)
DUI	Democratic Union for Integration (<i>Bashkimi Demoktatik për Integrim</i> —BDI)
EAR	European Agency for Reconstruction
EU	European Union
EUFOR	European Union Forces (Operation Concordia)
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDSCS	Institute for Democracy, Solidarity, and Civil Society
KFOR	NATO's Kosovo Force
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army (<i>Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës</i> —UÇK)
MANPAD	Man-Portable Air Defence System
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<i>Ministerstvo za Nadvoreshni Raboti</i> —MNR)
MOD	Ministry of Defence (<i>Ministerstvo za Odbrana</i> —MO)
MOI	Ministry of Interior (<i>Ministerstvo za Vnatreshni Raboti</i> —MVR)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NLA	National Liberation Army (<i>Ushtria Çlirimtare Kombetare</i> —UÇK)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PDP	Party for Democratic Prosperity
PRSh	<i>Partia Revolucionare Shqiptare</i>
RPG	Rocket-propelled grenade
SACIM	Small Arms Control in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (a UNDP Programme)
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SDSM	Social Democratic Party of Macedonia (<i>Socijal Demokratski Sojuz na Makedonija</i>)
SEESAC	South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of SALW
UCPMB	Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja, and Bujanovac (<i>Ushtria Çlirimtare e Preshevës, Mevegjës dhe Bujanocit</i>)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNPREDEP	United Nations Preventive Deployment
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protective Force
VMRO-DPMNE	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Party—Democratic Party for National Unity
WED	Weapons in Exchange for Development (a UNDP weapons collection programme)

I. Introduction

It is an understatement to say that the presence of small arms and light weapons is a significant problem in the Balkans. Guns contributed significantly to the violence, death, and destruction that surrounded the inter-ethnic conflicts of the 1990s and early 21st century. Since the conclusion of hostilities, the effects of violent conflict persist in the area, as does the circulation of many small arms and light weapons. In fact, these weapons continue to cause civilian injuries and deaths, constrain social and economic development, enhance criminal capability, and contribute to ethnic and societal tensions that may incite future conflicts throughout the Balkans.

The weapons that circulate within and around The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are no exception to this trend.¹ In recent years, international attention has been drawn to Macedonia, in part because of the 2001 conflict that occurred between ethnic Albanian rebels and the Macedonian security forces, and also due to the country's publicly stated desire to join NATO and the European Union. In spite of Macedonia's interests in European integration, much remains to be done to control the quantities of weapons that exist in the country and circulate throughout the area.

This study provides an assessment of small arms availability, distribution, circulation, impact and control in the Republic of Macedonia. Since the close of the crisis in the fall of 2001, the country has continued to struggle with tensions between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians, a depressed economy, and increased levels of crime. It is also believed that large numbers of illegal weapons remain within its borders; many of these derived from the 2001 conflict as well as other regional wars, such as those in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. Precise numbers and types of weapons that exist and circulate in Macedonia are not known, however; neither are the specifics of their origin, dissemination, circulation, availability, or impact on society.

This report seeks to offer an analysis of these and related issues by providing a snapshot of the problem of small arms and light weapons in Macedonia. Officially termed a Small Arms Baseline Assessment, this report was originally undertaken by the Small Arms Survey (SAS) and the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC). Additional tasking and funding was later provided by the South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of small arms and light weapons (SEESAC). A preliminary version of this report was used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in order to determine the feasibility of conducting a weapons collection programme in Macedonia between 1 November and 15 December 2003. The study offers a survey of overall small arms availability, circulation, impact and control in the country and thus provides a clearer picture of ongoing efforts in Macedonia to address and manage the problem.

The research team faced numerous obstacles, not least of which was the difficulty accessing small arms data in Macedonia (as is the case in many other countries). Few officials in Macedonia were willing to discuss the weapons issue. Although the 2001 crisis is over, tensions remain and the willingness to address gun issues is relatively low. The lack of transparency regarding guns in the country obliged us to resort to a significant amount of conjecture in estimating stockpiles and numbers of weapons in circulation. Moreover, the numbers that do exist and circulate in Macedonia have often been highly politicized, resulting in widely divergent estimates. Despite these obstacles, however, it is important to study small arms issues where they present problems, and Macedonia is certainly one of those areas.

Map: Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia



Box 1.1 Generating new information: Data and sources for the study

This study is based on a range of data from sources that include:

- A 1,157-person face-to-face household survey designed by SAS and a local partner NGO, the Institute for Democracy, Solidarity, and Civil Society (IDSCS), and implemented throughout Macedonia (see questionnaire in Appendix 3).
- 12 focus groups conducted with eight to 11 participants each, undertaken in nine Macedonian cities (Bitola, Gostivar, Kocani, Kumanovo, Prilep, Skopje, Stip, Strumica, and Tetovo).
- Data were collected on gunshot injuries at five Macedonian hospitals (in Kumanovo, Prilep, Struga, Strumica, and Tetovo), which together are representative of the country geographically, ethnically, and based on whether the area experienced violence during the 2001 conflict.
- Interviews with 26 doctors at the same five hospitals mentioned above.
- Analysis of gunshot incidents in two national newspapers *Dnevnik* and *Ukrinski Vesnik*.
- Interviews with key officials at the Macedonian ministries of Defence, Economy, Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Customs Administration, and from UNDP, OSCE, NATO, and a number of Macedonian NGOs.
- Interviews with 10 ex-NLA fighters.

The report is comprised of several parts. The second section reviews the political, economic, and social context of the small arms situation in the Macedonia and discusses the security environment that has persisted since the 2001 conflict. The report then provides a picture of the guns that are present in Macedonia, including an estimate of the total number of guns in the country, who the various gun holders are, and how guns are distributed and circulated. This section also discusses weapons collections initiatives (both completed and planned). The fourth part of the report explores the issue of historical gun culture in Macedonia. Section five discusses the issue of illicit smuggling and trafficking of small arms across the Macedonian border and the official efforts made to control these porous areas, and part six examines the various direct and indirect impacts that small arms have had on the country. Next the report describes and evaluates various measures the Macedonian government has established to control small arms availability and circulation in the country. Finally, the report concludes with an overall assessment of the small arms situation in Macedonia.

The main findings of the report are:

- There are approximately between 380,000 and 750,000 small arms and light weapons in Macedonia today. Around 156,000 weapons are registered with the Ministry of Interior (MOI). Findings of this study suggest that Macedonian citizens possess an estimated 100,000 to 450,000 illegal weapons.
- Although no longer a coherent fighting force in Macedonia, the former NLA rebel group at its peak may have had between 8,000 and 20,000 weapons at its disposal, some of which could since have entered the black market.
- Even though traditional notions of ‘gun culture’ may have some relevance to weapons possession in Macedonia, the jury is still out on its significance in the country and how it affects patterns of gun ownership. It does seem plausible, however, given the success of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in Kosovo and the National Liberation Army (NLA) in Macedonia—both of which already

created new myths with the ‘martyrs’ being commemorated in song and poetry—that the attachment of rural people to firearms has been reinforced rather than weakened in recent years.

- A network of smuggling routes, especially through the mountainous and water-covered areas, continues to permit smugglers unauthorized entry to Macedonia. At the root of this problem is a disorganized system of border management, which is currently undergoing reform with the assistance of international organizations such as the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Although the scope of gun trafficking is limited, primarily due to fewer conflicts and subsequent lessened demand, networks nevertheless continue to move weapons back and forth across the borders of Macedonia and those of its immediate neighbours, primarily Albania and Kosovo.
- While a legal framework for the control of small arms exists, penalties for the violation of these laws are poorly enforced and verification of arms shipments is not consistently and routinely implemented. Overall, efforts to control small arms and light weapons exhibit significant variance between policy and practice.
- The picture we have of the impact of small arms in Macedonia varies depending on the source of data. Actual medical, crime, and economic figures, for example, do not necessarily paint a significantly negative portrait of the impact. Overall focus group and survey data, however, suggest that Macedonian citizens are concerned about their security and safety and perceive the general availability and distribution of small arms to be threatening.
- Moreover, even though the number of incidents has remained relatively stable throughout the country, the number of victims as well as the number of incidents involving automatic weapons is increasing. Overall statistics indicate that small arms are used significantly more against ethnic Albanians than ethnic Macedonians.
- Data indicates that both registered and illicit firearms are used in firearm-related incidents in Macedonia. A substantive amount of gunshot victims are armed.
- Security perceptions in Macedonia differ according to gender: while women report having seen fewer guns in the neighbourhood than men, they seem more concerned about the security situation and the impact of guns in the society. The data also suggests that almost 90 per cent of gunshot victims are men.

II. Macedonia: Past, present, and future

To understand Macedonia today and fully appreciate the environment in which the small arms issue should be addressed, one must turn to the country's past. Following the end of Axis occupation, the Macedonian state was constituted as the Sixth Republic of the Yugoslav Federation on 2 August 1944. As part of Yugoslavia's population, members of the Albanian minority of Macedonia were integrally linked with their ethnic kin in Kosovo. There were no travel restrictions for citizens within the republics and autonomous regions of the former Yugoslavia. Macedonia's ethnic Albanian minority was free to attend Pristina University, the majority of whose students were ethnically Albanian.² Kosovo also served as a 'safety valve' for the political ambitions of ethnic Albanians living in Macedonia. Until the late 1980s the Socialist League of Kosovo remained dominated by ethnic Albanians. It was, therefore, much more open to Albanians from Macedonia than its Macedonian counterpart, which was predominately ruled by ethnic Macedonians. Meanwhile, extremist groups, some advocating the secession of Kosovo and the unification with Albania, were active among students of Pristina University from the early 1980s onward. Many future leaders of both democratic Albanian parties and armed movements in Kosovo, Macedonia and southern Serbia were socialized politically during their student years in Pristina.³ Kosovo continued to fulfil this function for Macedonia's Albanian population until the then president Slobodan Milosevic began his crackdown on Albanian nationalism, a trend that was to continue after Macedonian independence.

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With the dramatic changes in the social, economic and political system of Yugoslavia in 1989–1990, Macedonia began to move quickly toward independence. The first multi-party elections in Macedonia were held on 11 November 1990. On 27 January 1991 Kiro Gligorov was elected the first president of the republic. On 20 March the same year, the first Macedonian government was formed following the multi-party elections. The majority of Macedonia's registered voters called for independence from Yugoslavia in a national referendum on 8 September 1991, but a large part of the country's ethnic Albanian and ethnic Serb communities boycotted the referendum.⁴ The constitution of Macedonia was ratified by Parliament on 17 November 1991. After the declaration of independence, Belgrade negotiated with Skopje and eventually withdrew the last units of the Yugoslav National Army from the sovereign territory of Macedonia in the spring of 1992. But, due to resistance from Greece over the name of the republic, it would not be until 8 April 1993 that the 'former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' would become a member of the United Nations.

Oasis of peace?

Since independence in 1991 until 2001, the international community had praised the democratically elected government of Macedonia for its attempts at creating a multiethnic society.⁵ Likewise, its constitution was often held up as a model to other states of the former Yugoslavia. During this period, Macedonia was often referred to as an 'oasis of peace' compared to the turbulent and violent conflicts raging outside its borders. But ethnic tensions still simmered within the borders. As early as 1991, the Albanian political parties in parliament called for changes to the Macedonian constitution to make it more inclusive towards minority groups. In reaction to these tensions, the international community supported efforts at violence-prevention and confidence building between the different communities.⁶ At the request of President Gligorov, the United Nations began the pioneering preventive mandate for a peacekeeping mission in Macedonia. From 1992 until February 1995, troops of UNPROFOR, and

after 1995 UNPREDEP, monitored the northern and western borders of Macedonia in order to prevent an outbreak of violence, while the rest of the former Yugoslavia continued to suffer from ethnic strife and civil war. Although the UN force was never truly tested with any real challenge, the United Nations declared the operation a success because of the absence of conflict. But while UNPREDEP attempted to prevent the importation of instability and violence from outside the republic, signs of internal turmoil were already appearing.⁷

In 1997 the ethnic Albanian mayors of Tetovo and Gostivar decided to fly the Albanian and Turkish flags along with the Macedonian flag in front of their communities' municipality buildings. Although the national government threatened to forcibly remove the flags, the local population supported the mayors' claims that the flags were ethnic symbols and did not represent allegiance to a foreign state. On 9 July 1997 special forces units of the MOI moved in to arrest the mayors and remove the flags. In response, the communities of Tetovo and Gostivar demonstrated against the police, blocking them from removing the flags. During the confrontation, three ethnic Albanians were killed and numerous civilians were seriously injured.⁸ Despite these troubles, many believed that Macedonia had escaped the fate of the rest of the former Yugoslavia.⁹

The Kosovo conflict in 1999 exacerbated an already tense situation in neighbouring ex-Yugoslavia. While maintaining its unitary structure, Macedonia remained rather weak and unable to enforce the rule of law throughout its sovereign territory.¹⁰ Furthermore, the political institutions of Macedonia had a poor record at democratization and privatization of the economy.¹¹ Corruption seemed endemic, resulting in voter backlash against the Social Democrat (SDSM) government and leading to the election of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Party – Democratic Party for National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE/DPA) coalition in 1998. The Kosovo conflict placed yet another burden on the fragile economy and drained the state's coffers with the arrival of 350,000 refugees from Kosovo, some of whom never returned home.¹² Likewise, logistics support for the KLA from Macedonian territory left many hidden arms caches along the mountainous northern border with Kosovo.¹³

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The 2001 crisis

The crisis in Macedonia began in earnest on 21 January 2001, when an NLA attack on a police station in Tearce left one police officer dead and three others wounded (see Appendix 1: Chronology of the 2001 Macedonian crisis). The NLA announced the campaign of liberation for ethnic Albanian territory in order to fight for equal rights for the Albanian minority of Macedonia.¹⁴ Initially the NLA did not seem to garner much support from the ethnic Albanian community, but as they began scoring military successes and seizing more territory, their ranks swelled to an estimated 5,000 soldiers and reservists.¹⁵

On 14 June 2001, Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski publicly appealed to NATO for assistance in ending the conflict. The North Atlantic Council agreed to provide a peacekeeping force once a ceasefire and political agreement between the main parliamentary leaders of Macedonia were established. With the aim of assisting in reforming the Macedonian constitution, special representatives of the United States and European Union moderated ensuing negotiations between the political parties of Macedonia. The signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement¹⁶ on 13 August 2001 and demobilization of the NLA following the completion of NATO's Operation Essential Harvest marked the end of the Macedonian crisis.¹⁷ And yet instability and violence persisted.

Various analyses seek to explain the roots of the crisis.¹⁸ The leading proposal, which coincides with the widespread view held by ethnic Albanians, submits that ethnic Albanian citizens of Macedonia

rose up against discrimination in an attempt to secure more rights.¹⁹ Indeed, this goal seems to have been the main motivation of the majority of NLA fighters and their supporters.

In contrast, a popular view among the ethnic Macedonian community and the one supported by the VMRO-DPMNE government, was that the conflict was imported to Macedonia by extremists from Kosovo struggling to achieve a 'Greater Albania'. For the most part this view is discredited by the fact that the vast majority of conflict-related violence ended with the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. While many NLA cadres had indeed seen service with the KLA until 1999 (and to some extent with the KLA-proxy UCPMB in southern Serbia in 2000–01), the rank-and-file was recruited locally and seemed motivated by genuine Macedonian concerns.²⁰ It can be argued, however, that the existence of the more radical elements among the former NLA and the elements of unrest that persisted following the signing of the Ohrid Framework lend some credibility to this view.

A third view holds that the disputed border between Macedonia and Kosovo played a central role in the conflict, and that it remains a point of contention between the local communities living along the border. It is no coincidence that one of the initial clashes of the crisis occurred when Macedonian security forces attempted to enter the village of Tanusevci along the disputed border.²¹ The area around Tanusevci was a staging area for the KLA during the Kosovo conflict and is renowned for smuggling. Control of lucrative smuggling routes in the area was put into doubt when Presidents Boris Trajkovski and Vojislav Kostunica of Yugoslavia signed the Border Agreement between Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 23 February 2001. This agreement, which redraws the border between Kosovo, Serbia, and Macedonia, did not involve any representatives of Kosovo in the negotiations. The United Nations recognizes this agreement, which gives Macedonia the high ground of Kodra Fura, a mountain peak on the border with excellent views of the surrounding valleys that are often used for smuggling.²² Some believe that the crisis was staged in order to maintain and fight over lucrative smuggling routes from which the political elite of Macedonia were hoping to profit. Many argue that when the two nationalistic parties—the VMRO-DPMNE and DPA—joined forces, there was an informal agreement to divide the country into spheres of influence. Thus each party would rule and profit from the illegal business and corruption of their respective ethnic communities. This helped to further divide a de facto segregated society and helped enable the outbreak of violence in 2001. Some even speculate that the parties went still further by staging a fake war.²³

Each of these views probably contains a grain of truth. It would be too simplistic to state that the Macedonian crisis was purely an ethnic crisis that could be solved with just one peace accord aimed at improving minority rights.

The current political context

Since the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the end of the conflict, tensions have remained high among the communities of the former crisis region. During the post-conflict period they seemed to peak with the September 2002 parliamentary elections. Many feared an attempt by the former coalition government to instigate a political crisis that would allow them to postpone elections and remain in power.²⁴

Since independence in 1991, the Macedonian political spectrum has been neatly divided along both ethnic (Macedonian vs. Albanian) and ideological (national-conservative vs. post-communist) lines. These ideological and ethnic divisions were represented by the ethnic Macedonian party conglomerates VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM, and their ethnic Albanian counterparts DPA and PDP, as well as by

a score of smaller parties that were usually tied to the major parties in a system of alliances favoured by the electoral system. This led to a situation where parties have had to compete for votes almost exclusively within their own ethnic block, and then after the polls they must have had to form an inter-ethnic government coalition with representatives of the other community. Furthermore, as political analyst Brenda Pearson explains, party loyalty is also maintained through personal economic interests:

Political party membership is the determining factor for employment in Macedonia. Thousands of people are purged from their jobs in the public sector and from state enterprises when political power changes hands. Governing parties rule absolutely and, in return, do not really expect much work from their employees. Thus, the country's workforce is by and large untrained and lives on patronage. The politicians in power are only too happy to comply with this Faustian bargain because it keeps them in office.²⁵

This system worked remarkably well for a decade, as the power-sharing agreement created numerous opportunities to serve the elaborate patronage networks created by the four dominant political groups.²⁶

Despite the nationalist rhetoric of both the VMRO-DPMNE and the DPA, there was fairly little cause for real concern about inter-ethnic violence as long as the fundamental parameters of Macedonian politics remained unchanged. Nevertheless, the 2001 crisis and the subsequent Ohrid agreement affected this situation. With the NLA representatives excluded from the negotiations, the agreement had been reached with the active participation of the DPA on the Albanian side. Nonetheless, it quickly became apparent to the DPA leadership that the party could not capitalize on this success, after senior NLA leader Ali Ahmeti refused the party's courtship and announced his intention to found his own party, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI).²⁷ Campaigning on a pro-Ohrid platform and making ample use of his newly acquired status as an Albanian folk hero, the rebel-turned-politician developed into a serious threat to the established Albanian parties. Defining himself as a social-democrat and publicly opposing schemes of 'Greater Albania' or a Bosnia-style cantonization of the county, Ahmeti distanced himself from the radical fringe of Albanian politics and embraced the post-communist SDSM as a potential coalition partner, embittering both the DPA and the VMRO-DPMNE.²⁸

As a direct result of these developments, tensions between DUI supporters and the DPA escalated in the run-up to the elections. Having themselves signed the Ohrid agreement on behalf of the NLA and the Albanian population, the DPA (as well as the PDP) now began to oppose the agreement as falling short of the real Albanian ambitions of autonomy, if not secession. By recruiting some disgruntled NLA commanders into their ranks, the DPA attempted to occupy the mantle of the 'liberation struggle' and to paint the DUI as a traitor to the Albanian cause by supporting the Ohrid principles. New acts of violence provided the background noise to the unfolding political drama: on 25 March 2002 three people were killed during a fierce attack on Ahmeti's headquarters, reportedly attributed to self-styled ANA (Albanian National Army, or AKSh) elements, while extensive material damage was caused during a retaliatory attack on 2 April 2002 against a DPA-linked restaurant in Tetovo.²⁹

Meanwhile, on the other end of the political spectrum, a similar conflict raged between the VMRO-DPMNE and the SDSM over the Macedonian vote. As the VMRO-DPMNE was quickly losing popularity amongst allegations of corruption and mismanagement during the 2001 crisis, the party began to distance itself from the agreement it had helped to broker just a few months before. Campaigning actively against the participation of former rebels in electoral politics, the VMRO-DPMNE attempted to style itself as the guardian of Macedonian sovereignty, accusing the SDSM of collaborating with 'the

enemy'. The strategic shift away from the principles of the Ohrid agreement and towards a position of restrained hostility towards both the ethnic Albanian population and the international community coincided with a marked increase in violence and insecurity. The Macedonian media began to report the presence of another Albanian terrorist group, the 'Army of the Republic of Ilirida', which supposedly operated out of Kosovo and threatened to further destabilize Macedonia.³⁰ While some observers have questioned its very existence, the circulating rumours certainly helped to perpetuate a climate of fear and ethnic hatred. Within the Macedonian community, the unresolved future of the paramilitary 'Lions' police reservist formations—created by the VMRO-DPMNE and numbering some 1,000–1,500 armed men—triggered fears of violent reprisals in case of an SDSM victory.

Remarkably the 2002 elections took place with little unrest, undoubtedly due to heavy pressure from the international community and the presence of the international observers.³¹ They resulted in an overwhelming victory for the current SDSM-DUI coalition government. The transfer of power was remarkably calm and was followed by a striking increase in peace and stability in the country.

The citizens of Macedonia had high expectations of the new government and hoped for a rapid series of reforms to improve the economic, security, and political situation. Among the ethnic Albanian community, DUI supporters expected the new party to achieve the full implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. While the security situation in Macedonia improved in late 2002 and early 2003, it remained tenuous due to the high expectations of the citizens for drastic improvements. The new coalition government worked fast to try to pass reform legislation but could not live up to the high expectations of the citizens. With frustration growing among the ethnic Albanian community regarding what they viewed as a stalled implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, tensions began to rise again during the late spring, stemming from a number of events in the Kumanovo and Tetovo areas. In February 2003, two Polish NATO soldiers and two civilians were killed when their car hit a landmine on a remote road near the village of Sopot. The MOI's investigation resulted in a highly controversial police raid into the village in May 2003.³² The heavy-handed tactics of the purely ethnic Macedonian police unit provoked a political crisis. The following month, two further police raids in the Tetovo Valley and Arachinovo, each of which resulted in the death of an ethnic Albanian, further escalated tensions. The actions provoked the response of a shadowy group of extremists known as the Albanian National Army (ANA), which threatened to start another war if the ethnic Albanians arrested in Sopot were not released within two weeks. In the same communiqué, published in the ethnic Albanian newspaper *Fakti*, the ANA called on all ethnic Albanians in Macedonia to ignore attempts at disarmament by the MOI and the international community.³³

Regardless of such efforts at destabilization, the government is attempting to implement numerous reform initiatives in the security sector, border management, and judiciary. Officials are also working on a series of reforms regarding the legal possession and carrying of firearms by civilians in the republic. The adoption of the new law on voluntary collection of weapons cleared the way for the implementation of an amnesty period and voluntary collection of weapons in November and December 2003. While the security situation has greatly improved over the last year, tensions between the ethnic communities remain delicate as evidenced by the events of May and June 2003. A successful voluntary weapons collection programme cannot happen in a vacuum, separate from real progress in other areas of reform. Great care must also be taken to ensure that the ethnic Albanian community does not see the voluntary collection effort as an attempt by the government to disarm the ethnic Albanians. Indeed, many members of the ethnic Albanian community remain sceptical of the MOI's intentions regarding the disarmament issue. The NLA is regarded as a major source of illegal weapons in Macedonia, and in interviews, nine out of 10 former NLA members said the collection effort would be unsuccessful and

claimed disarmament could only happen after full implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Meanwhile, expectations of success among government officials remains high; in the newspaper *Dnevnik*, as indicated the MOI announced that the new collection effort should collect more than 50,000 pieces of military weapons.³⁴ Finally, in addition to continued improvements in the security situation, more confidence building measures by the security forces, and further reforms, a massive public awareness campaign is also vitally important to raise citizens' awareness of the dangers of small arms proliferation in Macedonia.

III. Guns in Macedonia

The various gun holders in Macedonia, both legal and illegal, include a mix of state security forces, private citizens, criminals, and private security forces (see Box 3.1).

Box 3.1 Estimating weapons possession in Macedonia

To estimate the number of guns in Macedonia, various and multiple sources of data were consulted. The research team identified actual and potential gun holders in Macedonian society and collected data on the issue via interviews with government officials, non-governmental experts, ex-combatants, and ordinary Macedonian citizens. Documents from government and non-government sources were also used. The household survey and focus group research employed in this study also served as sources of information regarding gun ownership. Ultimately, estimates of weapons possession per potential gun holder were bolstered using typical and relevant multipliers, especially for guns held by the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence, rebel forces, and civilians. As with any other attempt to approximate the numbers of guns in society, the estimates presented here are based on the best efforts of the research team to collect data, interpret it, and provide reliable numbers.

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Ministry of Interior: Police, Tigers, and Lions

As the governmental authority responsible for policing and maintaining security within Macedonia, the Ministry of Interior presides over a police force of some 6,000 uniformed police officers and 1,500 detectives serving in various special police units.³⁵ Two special forces units, the Tigers and the Lions, have also been numbered among the ranks of the MOI's forces. The Tigers were first created under the previous SDSM government and serve as a special tactics police taskforce. They are specially outfitted for their role with combat weapons and armoured personal carriers. The unit consist of roughly 200 members.³⁶ During the 2001 conflict the Tigers were used as frontline combat troops in engagements with rebel forces and rebel-held villages. Today they are the special operations and counter-terrorism unit of the MOI.

A unit known as the Special Task Force is also among the ranks of the MOI's police force. Police officers selected for this unit are drawn from the best of the uniformed career police found in Macedonia's municipal police stations. The several hundred members of the Special Task Force are called upon for complex police actions such as riot and crowd control, rescue operations, and hostage or siege situations.³⁷ While the Special Task Force is typically comprised of outstanding career police officers, this was not the case during the 2001 crisis, when the unit also accepted reservists and regular police officers.

In order to complement the work of the Tigers during the crisis, the VMRO-DPMNE Interior Minister, Ljube Boskovski, created the Rapid Reaction Police Battalion, the Lions, as a quick reaction force of police reservists. The purpose of the Lions was to provide back-up and logistics support to the Tigers. In July and August of 2001 a list was compiled, consisting of volunteers from the government's police reservists and some military reservists. The roughly 7,000 names of police reservists on the list

were transferred to the Special Task Force unit of the Ministry of Interior. Then some of these new members of the Special Task Forces were organized into the Lions.³⁸ The Lions were often criticized for being primarily loyal to Boskovski and the VMRO-DPMNE party.³⁹ During interviews conducted in July 2002, representatives of NATO and the OSCE claimed that most of the initial recruits were criminals and thugs who were given arms with very little training.⁴⁰



© Reuters/Ognen Teofilovski

Members of the disbanded Macedonian special police unit Lions brandish their guns as they man a blockade on the road between Skopje and Kosovo in January 2003.

At the peak of their strength, the Lions reportedly numbered more than 2,000 members.⁴¹ Following the end of the conflict the ranks of the Lions were purged as the force sought a legitimate role within the Macedonian security forces.

In late 2001, the process of demobilizing all police reservists began: one-half of the 7,000 reservists originally recruited were released from service.⁴² As a result of the demobilization efforts, the Lions numbered about 1,800 official members one year after their creation.⁴³ Problems continued as some of the dismissed reservists kept their weapons and began to function as a group of armed 'unofficial' Lions. The MOI Lions sought to distance themselves from the criminal group and their bad reputation in order to survive the September 2002 elections and a possible regime change. In 2002, members of both the Lions and Tigers were involved in violent confrontations with civilians. These clashes bore no signs of ethnic strife, but some began to see the Macedonian special forces as out of control.⁴⁴ Many feared that the demobilized police reservists would cause trouble for rivals of the VMRO-DPMNE government during the upcoming elections,⁴⁵ but international pressure and observers may have played a role in preventing confrontations.

Following the election of the SDSM-DUI government in September 2002, the new Interior Minister, Hari Kostov, moved to dismiss the Lions in accordance with international advice. From January to April 2003, the Lions held sporadic demonstrations and a hunger strike to protest their demobilization. At one point, about 1,000 members of the Lions established a roadblock on the Skopje–Blace route to Kosovo, leading to an armed standoff between the former MOI employees and current members of the police and Tigers.⁴⁶ After a few days, the government made an agreement to integrate a small number of former Lions into the ranks of the police, provided they meet the education and service requirements established by the MOI, such as not having a prior criminal record. This satisfied some members of the former Lions, but demonstrations continued with ever smaller numbers.

MOI stockpiles

The Ministry of Interior has not been forthcoming about the size of its small arms and light weapons stockpile. Although information about official stockpiles held by the MOI and its various units is scarce, we believe a reasonable estimate can be made (see Table 3.1).

	Lower threshold	Upper threshold
Uniformed police and detectives (7,500)	9,000 ¹	15,000 ²
Police reservists and special forces (7,000)	14,000 ²	21,000 ³
Totals – Range	23,000	36,000

Notes:

1 Figure is based on a multiplier of 1.2–2.

2 Figure is based on a multiplier of 2.

3 Figure is based on a multiplier of 3.

Sources: Police figures: Ordanoski, 'Macedonian Police Caught in the Middle', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 November 2001; Ordanoski, 'Lions and Tigers: The Militarization of the Macedonian Right', in Ohrid and Beyond: A Cross-ethnic Investigation into the Macedonian Crisis, *IWPR*: London, 2002, p. 43. Stockpiles: Authors' estimates.

The estimates for regular police officers and detectives are based on a multiplier of 1.2–2 guns per person, assuming that most officers are issued at least one gun and most likely have access to another in storage.⁴⁷ Moreover, we assume that regular MOI police are not likely to have personal back-up weapons since guns that are licensed to police officers reportedly remain with them at all times.⁴⁸ Although reserve police and special forces are not currently in operation, at one time there were 7,000 reservists and special forces personnel in action in Macedonia. Consequently, the weapons at their disposal must remain in MOI stocks (unless they are kept at the reservist's home). These forces probably have access to larger numbers of weapons—perhaps 2–3 per person.⁴⁹

Ministry of Defence

The Ministry of Defence is the state authority responsible for the territorial defence of Macedonia. Following independence, it engaged in an uphill battle to reform. It remained heavily modelled on its predecessor, the Yugoslav National Army, relying primarily on tanks and other heavy weapons. As described below, the MOD's armaments and structure proved to be inadequate in the 2001 crisis. Currently the MOD is in the midst of reforming its military structure and armaments to face its new challenges.

Macedonia's independence from Yugoslavia in 1991 resulted in the creation of a new Macedonian Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Army of the Republic of Macedonia, or ARM (*Armija na Republika Makedonija*). Upon independence, the Yugoslav Army withdrew from the territory of Macedonia with all military assets Belgrade deemed necessary. Reportedly, the Yugoslav Army took everything of use including 55 combat aircraft, more than 450 armoured vehicles and tanks, ammunition stockpiles, and even light fixtures and door handles from the barracks.⁵⁰ The Yugoslav Army left the fledgling Macedonian Army with a bare minimum of arms: 40,000 obsolete repeating rifles and 5,000 Kalashnikovs that had officially belonged to the Territorial Defence Force. As for heavier equipment, the army possessed nothing larger than 120mm mortars and five T-34 tanks from the Second World War.⁵¹ The weak position of the ARM was illustrated by the fact that the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces left Macedonia with 50 pilots trained for fixed-wing aircraft but only three Zlin 242 trainers to fly.⁵²

The 1991 United Nations arms embargo on the former Yugoslavia hampered attempts by the Macedonian Army to rearm.⁵³ Macedonia's military and defence industry was far from self-sufficient in terms of facilitating rearmament. While textile companies provided uniforms and the two main state manufacturers—11 Oktomvri Eurokompozit and Suvenir Metal Products Equipment (see Box 3.2)—produced a limited number of ammunition for small arms, artillery, anti-tank weapons, grenades, and body armour, the ARM remained dependent on foreign grants and procurements for any real defence capabilities. The passage of UN Security Council resolution 1021 in November 1995 officially ended the arms embargo on the republics of the former Yugoslavia and allowed the ARM to import weapons from other countries. Arms were never acquired in significant numbers until the Kosovo crisis of 1999, however. *Jane's Intelligence Review* reported that in 1999 'Bulgaria provided almost 200 T-55 main battle tanks, BTR-70/80 armoured personnel carriers, BRDM scout cars, D-30 122mm and D-20 152mm artillery, as well as ammunition for all these weapons, while Germany donated M1122 and TM-170 armoured personnel carriers'.⁵⁴ Another source claims that '108 pieces of M1938 (D-30) 122mm howitzers' that were donated by Bulgaria in 1999 were 'obsolescent'.⁵⁵ In 2000, the Macedonian Ministry of Defence provided a budget of USD 77million for military procurement.⁵⁶ According to the Central Intelligence Agency's *World Factbook 2001*, Macedonian military expenditures equalled USD 76.3 million or 2.17 per cent of the GDP in the fiscal year 2000–01. Apart from four Mi-17 'Hip' assault/transport helicopters, 12 BTR-80 armoured personnel carriers, and a battery each of 105mm howitzers and 128mm multiple rocket launchers, much military equipment has been donated to Macedonia by 'several western countries'.⁵⁷

The spring and summer 2001 offensives against NLA rebels severely depleted the ARM's ammunition stockpiles and resulted in equipment losses. One Mi-17 helicopter crashed near Tetovo in March.⁵⁸ The Macedonian Ministry of Defence countered these losses by going on a buying spree. According to one estimate, in 2001 the Macedonian government spent an equivalent of 5.4 per cent of its GDP on weapons procurement, more than twice the amount spent during the previous year.⁵⁹ In March 2001, Ukraine delivered the first of a series of shipments that would add an additional six Mi-24 'Hind' attack helicopters and six Mi8/17 'Hip' assault/transport helicopters to the Macedonian Army Air Force. In June, the Ministry of Defence purchased four Sukhoi SU-25 'Frogfoot' aircraft, providing the first jet fighters to the Macedonian military forces since the withdrawal of the Yugoslav military.⁶⁰ Various shipments of small arms, artillery, armoured personnel carriers, tanks, and ammunition from Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia and Ukraine bolstered the offensive capability of the Macedonian Army.⁶¹ T-55 main battle tanks and BTR-series armoured personnel carriers were also shipped to Ukraine for upgrades, along with new diesel engines and vision systems.⁶² Ministry of Defence records show that the following small arms and light weapons were imported during 2001 (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Imports by MOI in 2001

Category and sub-category	Exporter state/state of origin	Number of items
<i>a. Small Arms</i>		
1. Revolvers/pistols	FRY	702
	Croatia	2,014
2. Rifles and carbines	FRY	50
3. Assault rifles	Bulgaria	14,200
4. Light machine guns	Bulgaria	130
<i>b. Light Weapons</i>		
1. Man-portable anti-tank missile and rockets	FRY	1,087
	Bulgaria	400
2. Man-portable anti-aircraft missile systems	FRY	20

Source: Ministry of Defence, Macedonia⁶³

Currently, the Macedonian Ministry of Defence is in the midst of reform efforts to reorganize its structures and the ARM. Indeed, MOD representatives claim that the army is no longer procuring new weapons in order to concentrate on reorganization. Only after such efforts will the MOD begin to modernize its weapon stockpiles.

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Today the total strength of the peacetime ARM is roughly 12,000 professional and conscript soldiers. In an August 2003 interview, the Ministry of Defence conceded that the experience of 2001 proved the army was ill-equipped and outdated: 'Our main battle tanks, heavy armour, and aircraft were inappropriate.'⁶⁴ According to the Minister of Defence, ARM forces restructuring will focus on developing the army's special forces capability and divesting of the T-55 main battle tanks and four Su-25 combat aircraft purchased during the 2001 crisis. The concept for the future is a light, mobile professional army centred around special forces units. Given this goal, the ARM will need light and fast vehicles and aircraft to support such troops. NATO advisors are encouraging and supporting Macedonia in this endeavour.⁶⁵ As of August 2003, the Army of the Republic of Macedonia possesses a total of 85,500 small arms and light weapons in its stockpiles (see Table 3.3).⁶⁶

All weapons in the ARM's stockpiles are held under strict stockpile management procedures while in storage or transport. Elements taken into consideration when choosing a stockpile location include distance from motorways, populated areas, industrial facilities, railways, artificial lakes, dams, and airports. Weapons and ammunition are kept in designated military facilities such as military barracks and warehouses. Armaments, their working parts, and ammunition are stored separately in storehouses. Various safety and security measures apply to stockpile storage: guards, duty officers, dogs, reporting services, access control measures, inventory management, accounting procedures, metal fences, reinforced doors, alarms systems, electronic devices, fire prevention services, medical security measures, and disaster protection. Legislation regulating the stockpile of armaments and ammunition include the Law for production and trade of armaments and military equipment, the *Army Rulebook* and its regulations for storage and handling of ammunition and explosive devices, as well as the *Guide for Protection Against Theft of Weapons and Ammunition*.⁶⁷

Table 3.3 Macedonian army stockpiles

Automatic rifles	<i>TOTAL</i>	1,774
	7.62 M49/57 and PPS	1,532
	Other	242
Rifles	<i>TOTAL</i>	59,876
	PAP 7.62 M59/66 A1	17,757
	AP 7.62—all models	38,644
	PAP 7.9mm sniper	1,165
	7.9mm M48	2,163
	Other	147
Machine guns	<i>TOTAL</i>	3,950
	7.62mm—all models	2,339
	7.9mm M53	1,581
	Other	30
Heavy guns	<i>TOTAL</i>	275
	7.62mm	132
	7.9mm	47
	Other	96
Hand-held rocket launchers	<i>TOTAL</i>	14,567
	90mm M57	1,135
	64mm Zolja M80	13,294
	90mm Osa M79	138
Recoilless rifle	<i>TOTAL</i>	183
	82mm	165
	Other	18
Mortar	<i>TOTAL</i>	742
	60mm	371
	82mm	371
Anti-aircraft gun	<i>TOTAL</i>	36
	12.7 DSK	18
	12.7 Broving	18
Shotguns	<i>TOTAL</i>	3,679
	7.65mm	214
	7.65mm auto – All Models	173
	7.62mm	1,963
	Other	1,329
Misc.	<i>TOTAL</i>	364
	Rifle with 40mm grenade launcher	131
	Grenade launcher 30mm auto.	36
	Rifle 5.56mm M95	113
	Sniper Rifle 7.62mm Dragunov	84
TOTAL		85,446

Source: Ministry of Defence, Macedonia

Civilians

Estimating the number of weapons among the civilian population has proven a difficult task. Civilian possession of firearms is controlled by the Ministry of Interior, which maintains records of legally owned firearms in Macedonia. Various organizations and groups have attempted to estimate the number of illegal weapons in Macedonian society. These estimates, whose validity is often questionable, vary from 50,000 to 700,000 (see below). This section of the report will attempt to address this issue by reviewing the requirements of the MOI for legal civilian possession, the numbers of registered weapons, and various estimates for illegal firearms in Macedonia. Finally, we will offer our own estimate of firearms possession among the Macedonian population.

The current law controlling the legal possession of a firearm requires that a citizen of Macedonia obtain a licence for possession from the Ministry of Interior. As required by law, a person must be older than 18 years, be mentally fit, and free from criminal investigation or a past criminal record. The Ministry of Interior, acting as the responsible state authority, makes the ultimate decision on whether a person is allowed to possess a weapon. The ministry is not required to provide any explanation in case an application is denied. A person applying for a licence must pass three checks conducted by the MOI:

- 1) The Ministry of Justice checks for a past criminal record.
- 2) The Ministry of Interior checks whether the applicant is under criminal investigation.
- 3) The police conduct a field check and interview neighbours and family members of the applicant.

The application process is required of all citizens requesting a licence to possess a firearm. If the licence is granted, the individual is required to register all firearms with the MOI. The process can be accelerated if the person has been a member of a hunting or sporting club for three or more years and is applying for a shotgun or hunting rifle. Possession of a fully automatic weapon is forbidden for all citizens except for employees of the MOD and MOI. A person found in possession of a weapon without a licence may be imprisoned for two months to three years or fined between USD 100 and USD 5,000. A person convicted of possession of a large amount of illegal weapons can be imprisoned for up to 10 years.⁶⁸ The MOI's licensing system is reportedly undermined by widespread nepotism and cronyism, a legacy of inherited from previous governments and Macedonian Ministry of Interior inherited and previous governments. Many journalists have claimed that during the 2001 crisis, the application process was shortened or bypassed altogether as firearms were distributed to civilians and given to party members without proper investigation. In August 2001, a *Jane's Defense Weekly* correspondent reported that 'the government is known to have distributed at least 600 assault rifles to civilians during the current crisis'.⁶⁹ The consequence was a call for the re-registration of legal weapons and an amnesty period for individuals who wished to register weapons they possessed illegally (see Weapons collection: Past and future, below).

Before the break-up of Yugoslavia, Yugoslav officials reported 99,324 small arms in the territory of Macedonia. This number included weapons owned by the state authorities and personal weapons legally owned by civilians.⁷⁰ According to MOI statistics, at the time of Macedonian independence in 1991, there were roughly 52,000 legally held firearms among the civilian population of Macedonia. It was assumed that there were an equal number of illegal weapons present at the time.⁷¹ The most recent statistics of the Ministry of Interior, as of 31 March 2003, indicate there are now close to 156,000 legally registered firearms in the Republic of Macedonia—140,000 are licensed to legal persons; 13,800 to legal entities such as private security firms and businesses; and 2,300 to shooting associations (see Table 3.4).⁷²

The civilian demand for legal firearms drastically increased during and following the 2001 crisis. In 2001 and 2002, the number of citizens who applied for a permit to possess a weapon was 10 times greater than that of 2000, the year before the crisis.⁷³ Likewise, according to an MOI official, 'the number of private security agencies that have regular licences for weapons has also multiplied so their employees are automatically getting licences for weapons, if the legal criteria for possession are met. But there are many more cases of individuals, partially due to the security situation and partially for 'playing cool', who possess weapons without permission or licence from the MOI and are a danger to every environment and community.'⁷⁴

Table 3.4 Registered weapons and issued licences by the MOI

Types of weapons	Natural persons	Legal entities	Shooting associations
Hunting rifles	70,574	439	0
Combined hunting rifles	391	0	0
Semiautomatic hunting rifles	148	0	0
Hunting carbines	10,982	1,885	19
Carbines	2,140	2,700	207
Small-calibre rifles	4508	664	607
Small-calibre pistols	475	145	52
Pistols and revolvers	48,128	5,890	14
Air arms	2,428	745	1,343
Air guns	69	6	94
Semi-automatic	0	1,323	0
Carbines	1	0	6
Flobers (revolvers)	9	0	0
TOTAL	139,857	13,797	2,342

Source: 'Report of the Republic of Macedonia on the implementation of the United Nations Action Programme to Combat Illicit Trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons', prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Skopje, May 2003.

In July 2002, the MOI claimed that the territories of Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, and southern Serbia were home to 300,000 to 350,000 illegal weapons that originated in military depots in Albania, and an additional 150,000 new weapons procured from Western European and Asian sources.⁷⁵ The greatest amount of these illegal weapons was believed to be in the former crisis region of western and northern Macedonia. This estimate conflicts with claims by the UNDP-Tirana office that, of the 550,000 weapons looted in 1997 from Albanian armouries, 200,000 weapons have already been collected, 200,000 remain among the citizens of Albania, and only 150,000 weapons were trafficked outside of Albania.⁷⁶ At the 2001 UN Small Arms Conference in New York, the Macedonian Minister of Foreign Affairs reported that there were about 700,000 illegal weapons in Macedonia and the region.⁷⁷ There is no information available regarding how this estimate was calculated or upon what information it is based.

A better estimate of overall civilian possession of firearms (both legal and illegal) may be based on the results of the 1,157-person household survey conducted throughout Macedonia in June 2003.⁷⁸ In that survey, 15.6 per cent of respondents admitted to personally owning a gun (a possible underestimate, given that 3.7 per cent answered 'don't know' or refused to answer). Assuming that the household

survey is representative and accurate, we can base an estimate of gun possession on the last official and uncontroversial Macedonian census of 1994, which lists a population of 1,945,932 residents. By subtracting the 0–14 year age group not included in the household survey (which comprises approximately 21% of the population), we get a total of 1,537,286 residents. Of that figure, 15.6 per cent represents an estimated 239,817 individuals who admit to owning a gun (plus 0 to 56,680 respondents who answered ‘don’t know’ or refused to answer). MOI statistics suggest that 139,857 firearms are legally registered in Macedonia (see above). Assuming, therefore, that the gun owners we identified via the household survey own only one gun, we can calculate a range of about 100,000 (239,817 minus 139,857) to 160,000 (296,497 minus 139,857) illegal weapons in the country.⁷⁹

As stated, the above estimate assumes that those who admit to gun ownership possess only one gun. It is quite possible that Macedonian citizens own more than one gun on average.⁸⁰ Additional estimates based on multiple gun ownership, therefore, could be much higher. Assuming that Macedonian gun owners possess 1.5 guns, for example, would yield a range of 220,000 to 300,000 illegal weapons. An assumption that Macedonian gun owners keep two weapons, on average, would yield a figure of 340,000 to 450,000 illegal guns. At a minimum then, we can be confident that our lower threshold of illegal weapons in Macedonia is 100,000. The upper, less convincing, threshold, would be 450,000 (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5 Illegal guns in Macedonia			
Levels of confidence	Guns per owner	Illegal guns in Macedonia	
		Lower threshold	Upper threshold
High confidence	1	100,000	160,000
Medium confidence	1.5	220,000	300,000
Low confidence	2	340,000	450,000

Source: Figures based on 1994 population data from the Macedonian census.

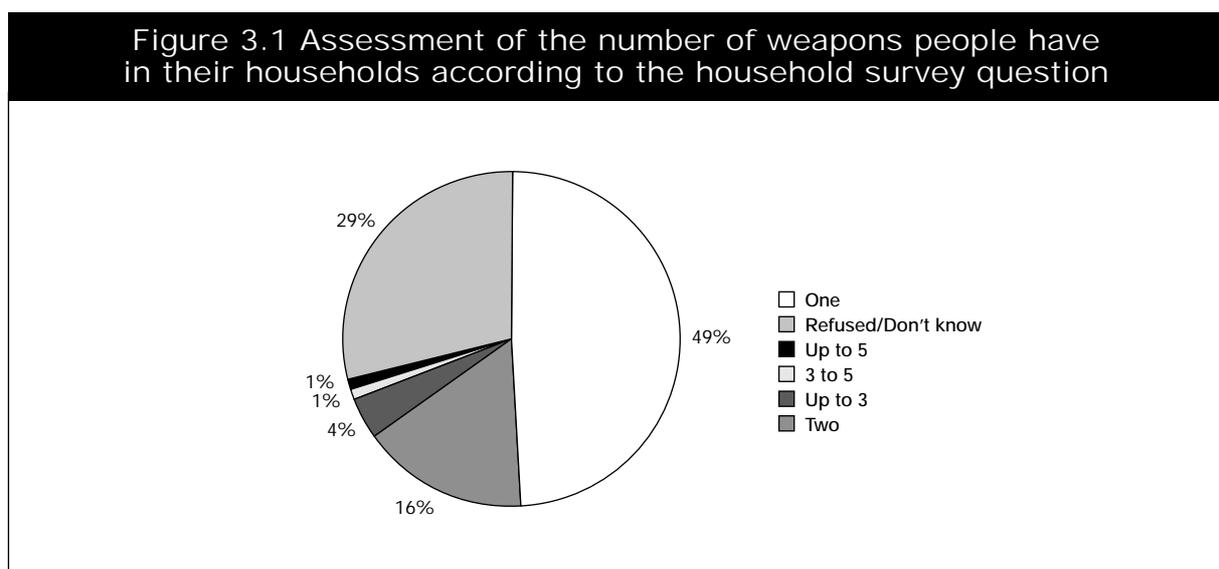
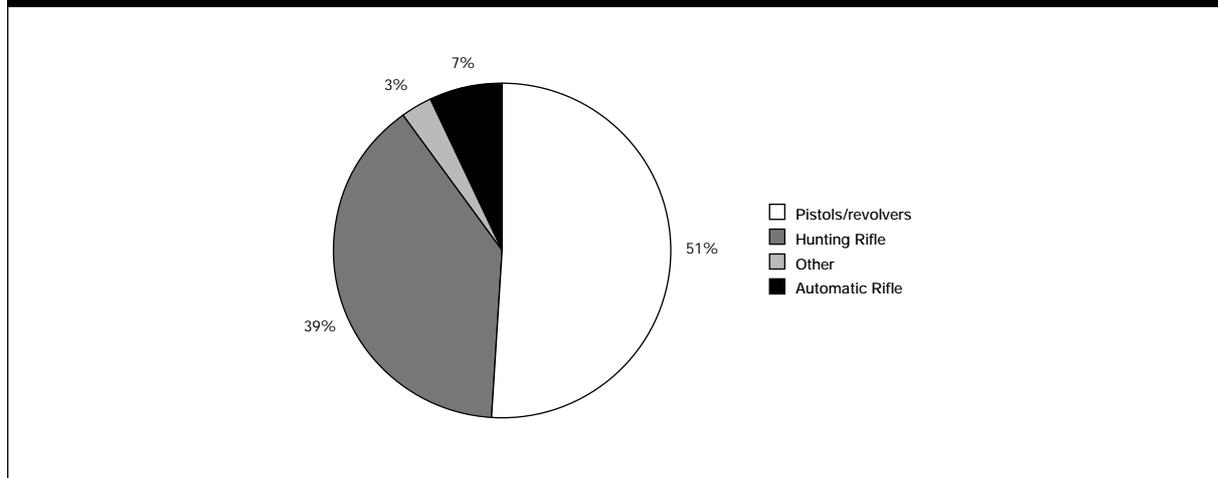


Figure 3.2 Ownership by weapon type



National Liberation Army

One of the largest suspected sources of illegal weapons in Macedonia is the arsenal of the former National Liberation Army (NLA). No assessment of the amount of illegal small arms and light weapons in Macedonia would be complete without an analysis of former NLA stockpiles. Although not a coherent fighting force since its dissolution after the 2001 conflict, the NLA's arsenals did not disappear and, therefore, must be considered within the context of potential and actual stockpiles available to former members. As a fledgling guerrilla movement, the NLA drew heavily on connections with the former KLA. Its main leaders, Ali Ahmeti, Gezim Ostremi, Fazli Veliu, and Xhezair Shaqiri, a.k.a. Commander Hoxha, all had fought with or worked in the fundraising network of the Kosovo Liberation Army (Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës—UÇK).⁸¹ The question of the size of NLA stockpiles has been sharply debated and became a political issue when NATO planned its voluntary weapons collection programme, Operation Essential Harvest (see 'Weapons collection: Past and future', below).

Estimating the size of the NLA's arms stockpile begins with an estimate of the size of the NLA. The NLA claimed to have six brigades operating inside Macedonia. The 111th, 113th, and 114th brigades operated in the Crna Gora region, while the 112th Brigade controlled a number of battalions in the Tetovo area. The 116th Brigade was responsible for the area around Gostivar, and the 115th Brigade was believed to be located in areas north of Skopje, including Radusa.⁸² The NLA claimed to have a potential strength of 16,000.⁸³ In contrast, an OSCE official claimed that the NLA had a total of 10 brigades but only fielded the six listed above, implying that the NLA had a rather large reserve potential.⁸⁴ The Macedonian government maintained that there were about 7,000 rebels.⁸⁵ Journalist and a Balkan affairs analyst Zoran Kusovac offers a more conservative estimate of between 2,000 and 2,500 'full-time' combatants.⁸⁶ The NLA, however, was also dependent on a larger 'second echelon' of supporters who carried out tasks such as reconnaissance, patrols, communications, and logistics. In interviews with former combatants conducted during the spring and summer of 2003, the interviewees confirmed that the total strength of the NLA at its height was between 5,000 and 5,500 troops. A distinction was made, however, between the fully armed front-line troops, which numbered 2,800–3,500, and the rest of the NLA, roughly 2,000 people who worked as rear-echelon support and logistics staff. Former combatants stressed that if the rear-echelon members were armed at all, they carried light weapons (i.e. a pistol). As an example of the rear echelon, the NLA claimed to have two field hospitals with a medical staff of 550 people, all of whom were unarmed.⁸⁷

Estimates of the number of weapons in the NLA's stockpiles have varied greatly and at times have been manipulated for political reasons (see Table 3.6). The Macedonian government maintained that the rebels held about 50,000 weapons.⁸⁸ NATO estimates were more conservative based on an estimate that the rebel force consisted of roughly 2,000 combatants.⁸⁹ *Jane's Defence Weekly* correspondent Zoran Kusovac made the following independent estimate of the NLA's arsenal:

Rifles	5,000–8,000
Heavy machine guns, (mostly .50-caliber)	150–250
Sniper rifles (including some .50-caliber anti-materiel rifles)	100–200
Shoulder-launched surface to air missiles	20–50
Shoulder-launched anti-tank launchers (reloads not included)	200–350
Mortars (60mm, 80mm and 120mm)	100–200
Anti-personnel and anti-tank landmines	5,000+

Source: Zoran Kusovac, 'How Many Weapons in Macedonia?', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 29 August 2001, at <www.iansa.org/oldsite/news/2001/aug_01/how_many.htm>.

The NLA was known to have quite sophisticated array of weaponry from various sources, including: 9M32 Strella-2M (SA-7B Grail Mod 1) man-portable surface-to-air missiles; 120mm and 82mm mortars; rocket-propelled grenades and light anti-tank rockets; 12.7mm heavy machine guns; as well as sorted light machine guns and Kalashnikov assault rifles.⁹⁰ During a July 2001 visit to a rebel-held village, a *Jane's Intelligence Review* correspondent found rebels with AK-47s, AKM and AK-74 assault rifles, M76/77 sniper rifles, M59/66 carbines, and M84 machine guns.⁹¹

However large the stockpiles of the NLA were, it is clear that connections to former KLA stockpiles and an extensive and active funding network provided them with many sources of weapons. Funding for the NLA came from the same war coffers that the KLA had used to finance its insurgency. The same 'Homeland Calling' fund that financed the KLA during the 1998–99 Kosovo conflict also provided funding to the NLA. Furthermore, the NLA had access to covert fund-controlled arms dumps in Kosovo and Albania. The National Freedom Fund (Liria Kombëtare) later replaced Homeland Calling as the main financial source of the NLA. The two funds, National Freedom Fund and Homeland Calling, collected money from the Albanian diaspora living in North America and Western Europe and funnelled it to the NLA. During the six months from May to October 2001, the NLA allegedly amassed a war chest of USD 60 million to fund the struggle in Macedonia.⁹²

There are many allegations of Albanian organized crime ties to the NLA funds. In an interview with MSNBC.com, Ali Ahmeti conceded that 'some of the rebels' funding might come from narcotics trafficking and a flourishing sex slave trade in the region'. Ahmeti defended the NLA by claiming that although the NLA attempts to vet all incoming money, 'the volume of donations to the rebel movement made it impossible to check their sources'.⁹³ In Spring 2002, a daily newspaper in Skopje claimed that money from the sale of heroin was used to buy USD 7 million worth of arms from dealers in Switzerland, Macedonia, Serbia, and Bulgaria. The amount of weapons was reportedly enough to equip a force of 2,000 men.⁹⁴ Robert Hislope, who has researched the role of organized crime in the

Macedonian crisis, claims that while ‘the NLA’s ties to the Mafia are not as obvious as those of the KLA, ... the Mafia was one among several sources of funding and weapons procurement’.⁹⁵

In the International Crisis Group’s report on corruption in Macedonia, Commander Hoxha of the NLA admitted that the group bought weapons from organized criminal gangs and various gun dealers, but explained that illicit arms traffickers are not from a single ethnic group or region. ‘It’s not true that all our weapons came from Kosovo; we found a great number in Macedonia and Serbia as well...The Mafia only cares about money. If you have the money, you get the weapon.’⁹⁶ In an attempt to halt funding to the NLA and other rebel groups threatening to destabilize Macedonia and the southern Balkans in general, United States President George W. Bush issued Executive Order 13219 on 27 June 2001. The order froze the financial assets of some 25 individuals, many of whom had close connections with the former KLA and five of whom were active members of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC).⁹⁷

Operations by NATO’s forces in Kosovo had proven a headache for the NLA by seizing weapons intended for frontline rebel troops. During NATO’s Operation Eagle, Kosovo Forces (KFOR) intercepted 2,000 weapons and 180,000 rounds of ammunition bound for Macedonia.⁹⁸ From June through September 2001 alone, Operation Eagle brought about the arrest of 797 individuals and seized 729 assault rifles, 63 support weapons (including mortars and machine guns), mines, more than 1,500 grenades, and more than 150,000 rounds of ammunition.⁹⁹ KFOR also seized 9M14 Malyutka (AT-3 ‘Sagger’) wire-guided anti-tank missiles, 9m32 Strella-2M (SA-7B ‘Grail’ Mod 1) shoulder-launched surface-to-air missiles and one 9M313 Igla-1 (SA-16 ‘Gimlet’) missile. KFOR troops arrested Bosnian, Croat, and Bulgarian nationals as well as ethnic Albanians attempting to smuggle weaponry into Macedonia from Kosovo, demonstrating how the illicit trade of weapons cut across ethnic lines in the Balkans.¹⁰⁰ One NLA commander even stated in August 2001 to an IWPR reporter that, ‘Serbs give us the best deals, while Albanians from Albania give us a hard time.’¹⁰¹

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Based on the general information above and more precise data gathered during 10 interviews with former combatants of the NLA,¹⁰² the research team has drawn the following conclusions regarding the NLA: based on interviews that revealed an NLA strength of about 5,000 to 5,500 members, the NLA would be expected to have a total of 8,000 to 8,800 small arms and light weapons using the common 1.6 weapons/combatant multiplier.¹⁰³ The accuracy of this ratio, however, is less reliable for the NLA than for other groups, given that the NLA membership is divided between heavily armed combatants and lightly armed support personnel. In addition, the NLA—which was not as active operationally as other insurgency groups—had reliable safe havens and a ready source of supply. Unlike other groups, the NLA thus seems to have been better configured to acquire and store equipment than to use it. With these distinctions in mind, it is possible to begin to assemble an overall picture and a sense of scale of NLA armaments.

Troops and individual weapons: From a total NLA strength of 3,000 to 5,500 armed personnel, the number of small arms and light weapons can be extrapolated. The approach is not necessarily an accurate portrait, but offers a suggestive impression of the scale and sophistication of the weapons the NLA quickly could put in the hands of its members.

Interviews with former combatants suggest that roughly two-thirds of NLA personnel were fully armed as combat troops (2,000–3,700). Given their access to reliable supply and safe havens, it is reasonable to believe that each had at his disposal two personal defence weapons, a sidearm, and rifle, typically a version of a Markov pistol and an AK-rifle. The firearms in their personal possession—whether technically owned individually or by the NLA—would amount to 4,000 to 7,400 weapons.

In addition, remaining troops at headquarters, logistic, medical, and other support personnel are armed, albeit at a lower standard. Normally these 1,000–1,800 people might be expected to have roughly 1,000–1,800 firearms, mostly pistols. In fact, such a calculation would conflict with ex-combatants' claims that support personnel were mostly unarmed. Since an unarmed, plainclothes individual is more likely to successfully transport or transfer food, intelligence, and other support items past roadblocks and throughout Macedonia, a gun estimate for the support echelon may be inappropriate.

NLA-controlled arsenals: The fact that the NLA routinely deployed larger weapons, too large and valuable to be entrusted to their operators for long-term storage, suggests that the organization also has independent arsenals of its own. The size of these arsenals is predictably difficult to assess. As stated before, an OSCE official has claimed that during the fighting in 2001 the NLA organized 10 brigades, but actually fielded only six,¹⁰⁴ which suggests major reserves. It is not inconceivable, therefore, that these official or semi-official arsenals could include an additional 4,000 to 10,000 pistols and automatic rifles, depending on the potential field size of the organization.

RPGs and medium-size machine guns: The scale of heavier NLA weapon stocks is also difficult to gauge. No concrete data exists regarding the number of such weapons available to the NLA. Based on normal infantry doctrine, it would be common to expect an NLA infantry squad of 10 fighters to carry one or two RPGs or medium-size machine guns. These individuals would not carry a rifle, although they probably have one issued and in storage. Depending on the scale of the organization, the NLA could be expected to control roughly 200 to 740 of these weapons, including those in storage.

Light mortar and heavy machine guns: More sophisticated weapons like 60mm or 82mm mortars and heavy machine guns (12.7mm) tend to be allocated to specially trained teams under battalion control. If we assume that three of each are deployed per battalion, the NLA would have a total of roughly 10 to 60 heavy machine guns. In addition, a small number could be in storage, although the associated expense militates against accumulating large additional quantities.

Heavy mortars and guided missiles: Regarding sophisticated equipment such as 120 mm mortars and SA-7s, we can conclude that the NLA is unlikely to have more than a handful of the former and probably none of the latter. Larger mortars are too bulky to be routinely used by guerrillas. They can be disassembled and moved short distances, but they weigh too much to move efficiently except by car or truck. In addition, their ammunition is cumbersome and rather delicate. The NLA might possess a few, at most.

MANPADs: To estimate the number of MANPAD surface-to-air missiles such as the SA-7 or SA-18, we must resort to conjecture.¹⁰⁵ There is no hard evidence the NLA possessed them in the summer of 2001. Recent reports from Skopje state that MANPADs have been acquired since then.¹⁰⁶ To be sure, the NLA has not tried to persuade outsiders that they have MANPADs at their disposal, nor are there reliable reports that the NLA ever used such weapons. The presence of anti-tank guided missiles, or ATGMs, such as the AT-4 is equally unlikely.

Taken together, the above estimates of the NLA's small arms and light weapons arsenal range from about 8,000 to 20,000 weapons (see Table 3.7).

**Table 3.7 Estimated NLA small arms and light weapons inventories
(includes individually owned and NLA-controlled equipment)**

Category	Low (high confidence)	High (low confidence)
combatants	3,000	5,500
Combatant small arms	4,000	7,400
Support personnel small arms	0	1,800
NLA arsenals of small arms	4,000	10,000
Private hoards	?	?
RPGs and medium machine guns	200	740
Light mortars and heavy machine guns	10	60
60mm and 82mm mortars	?	?
120mm mortars	?	?
ATGM launchers	?	?
MANPAD launchers	?	?
Total small arms (rounded)	8,000	19,200
Total light weapons (rounded)	210	800
Total small arms and light weapons	8,210	20,000

Note: All quantities are based on multipliers described in the text. Quantities have been rounded to reduce specificity. Totals give a sense of overall scale only. They should not be interpreted to mean that the items being added are of equal military importance.

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There are important unknowns in this analysis, both in terms of quantity and quality of equipment. Particularly obscure are the privately owned, individual hoards of NLA members and sympathizers. The other vitally important qualitative unknown relates to guided weapons, principally MANPADs and anti-tank missiles.

Finally, it is important to stress that the NLA does not currently exist as an organized, coherent fighting force in Macedonia, and that the weapon estimates presented here are just that—estimates. Based on information gathered for this study and on past research focusing on similar rebel groups, we can assume that the NLA does have access to some kind of firepower and that previous stockpiles did not simply vanish.¹⁰⁷ Most if not all the weapons may be held in caches outside the country and may not be at the group’s immediate disposal. Potential rebel fighters in Macedonia, however, undoubtedly have access to some kinds of weapons. These guns may be reflected in estimates presented for illegal ownership among the civilian population and may not require separate consideration. Nonetheless, our research suggests that former NLA fighters are likely to have at least limited access to small arms, as do many citizens of Macedonia, and that they may very well have access also to other arsenals stockpiled in various locations.

Albanian National Army

The origins of the ANA remain murky, but in one form or another, the group predates the emergence of the NLA and the 2001 crisis in Macedonia. Some claim the ANA emerged as early as 1999 in Kosovo from disgruntled former KLA fighters. The ANA first appeared officially in Macedonia in February 2000 with the release of a communiqué claiming responsibility for a 13 January 2000 attack in Arachinovo that resulted in the death of four Macedonian police officers.¹⁰⁸ There is no evidence,

however, that the ANA exists as a unified group, and unlike the KLA and NLA at their peaks, the ANA does not seem to attract much popular support. Some analysts claim that the ANA has origins in a radical Marxist group, the Albanian Revolutionary Party (Partia Revolucionare Shqiptare—PRSh), which has a small following in Kosovo and Macedonia. Others claim they are simply criminals and traffickers attempting to hide their activities behind a political agenda. A September 2003 article in *The Economist* argued that the core of the ANA consists of ‘some 50–70 cigarette smugglers drawn from both sides of the [Macedonian] border with Kosovo’ whose ‘latest violence has been largely prompted by their desire to stop Macedonia’s police from shutting down their smuggling routes’.¹⁰⁹ Some ANA members fought with or under the NLA in Macedonia, later claiming responsibility for the single deadliest attack on Macedonian security forces during the crisis. This ambush occurred on 8 August 2001 on the Skopje–Tetovo highway and resulted in the death of 10 Macedonian soldiers.¹¹⁰ Immediately following the end of the Macedonian crisis, the ANA did not recognize the Ohrid Framework Agreement and vowed to continue the fight. In 2002, the group threatened a spring offensive, which never materialized. The ANA reportedly took responsibility for a bomb blast on 31 October 2002 outside the Macedonian parliament building on the day of the parliamentary vote for the new SDSM-DUI government.

The following year, the ANA Web site featured communiqués threatening yet another ‘hot spring offensive’. Splinter groups of the ANA appear to have made an attempt to consolidate around this time. The Albanian National Union Front, ANUF, claims to be the political wing of the ANA. ANUF and the ANA say they are fighting for the liberation and unification of all Albanian lands; their goal is the creation of a ‘Greater Albania’ that encompasses parts of Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and areas of northern Greece that are home to communities of ethnic Albanians. The ANA allegedly joined forces with another shadowy group, the Army of the Republic of Illirida (ARI), a small group of armed individuals thought to be operating in the mountainous regions of Macedonia. Alternatively, ANUF may have subsumed ARI at some point during 2003.¹¹¹

The threat posed by the ANA was largely dismissed and the organization seemed to exist only on the Internet. But an attempt on 11 April 2003 to bomb the Polje–Lesak railway line in northern Kosovo, which resulted in the death of a KPC member whom the ANA has also claimed as an operative, forced the head of the UN Administration Mission in Kosovo, Michael Steiner, to declare the organization a ‘terrorist group’. His declaration was followed by a crackdown within the KPC on extremist elements and a call for better regional co-operation against ANA cells. Despite these efforts, the ANA has claimed responsibility for attacks on ethnic Serbs in Kosovo, Serbian police and army units in southern Serbia. The ANA’s ‘Skanderbeg Division’ has claimed responsibility for numerous bombings in Macedonia. After a police raid in the ethnic Albanian village of Sopot in June, the ANA announced a two-week ultimatum in the ethnic Albanian newspaper *Fakti*, threatening to start another war if ethnic Albanians arrested in Sopot were not released. In the same communiqué, the ANA suggested that all ethnic Albanians in Macedonia should ignore attempts at disarmament by the Ministry of Interior and the international community.¹¹²

Meanwhile, the international community has not been idle. On 1 July 2003, police officials in Albania arrested Gafurr Adili and Taip Mustafaj for encouraging ethnic, national and racial hatred. Both men are wanted in Macedonia for alleged links to the Albanian National Army.¹¹³ Following Adili’s arrest, Swiss authorities banned his return to Switzerland, where he previously had refugee status.¹¹⁴ In Kosovo, KFOR troops arrested Shefket Musliu on 22 April 2003. Musliu, a former commander of the Liberation Army of Presovo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB), is suspected of involvement in recent ANA activities in Kosovo and southern Serbia. The Serbian government has issued an arrest warrant for Musliu and intends to question him over the recent upsurge of violence near Presevo.¹¹⁵

In whatever form they operate, the members of the ANA appear to remain a small number of shadowy extremists with the potential to cause problems for the security forces of the southern Balkans. This small, but potentially well-armed group of extremists operates on the fringes of Albanian society and is not garnering much support for their cause. Some ethnic Albanian villagers of the Tetovo Valley and Lipkovo area have reported intimidation by uniformed individuals entering their villages and one Macedonian government representative claimed that some ethnic Albanian villagers have even scuffled with ANA members in attempts to prevent them from entering their villages. Recently the Macedonian security forces attempted to arrest and neutralize some of the armed groups operating in the Kumanovo region. The ensuing police blockade of the villages of Lojane and Vaksince resulted in the flight of up to 1,000 local residents who feared renewed conflict. The Macedonian police are concentrating their efforts on the arrest of Avdil Jakupi, alias Commander Chakala, who claims to represent a branch of the ANA. At least one faction of the ANA claims he has nothing to do with the ANA. The police crackdown has led to at least one engagement near the village of Brest on 5 September 2003.¹¹⁶

Table 3.8 Overall weapons holdings in Macedonia

Gun holders	Number of weapons	
	Lower threshold (high confidence)	Upper threshold (low confidence)
MOI	25,000	36,000
MOD	85,500	85,500
Civilians		
• Legal holdings	140,000	140,000
• Illegal holdings	100,000	450,000
Legal entities	14,000	14,000
Shooting association	2,500	2,500
NLA	8,000	20,000
TOTALS	375,000	748,000

Box 3.2 Supply of small arms in Macedonia: Production facilities and licensed dealers

In Macedonia, only two small factories possess a limited capacity for the legal production of small arms and light weapons, ammunition, and explosives. The first is the Suvenir Metal Products Equipment Company of Samakov, which produces mostly small-calibre ammunition and a limited number of sporting rifles. The primary customers of this facility are the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Interior, which buy much of the produced ammunition. The facility also repairs and maintains firearms and has small shops for the legal sale of ammunition and firearms to civilians for sporting and hunting purposes.

The second factory is the 11 Oktomvri / Eurokompozit firm of Prilep. This small factory specializes in the production of defence products such as body armour, police shields, and helmets. The factory also possesses the capacity to produce 64mm 'Zolja', 90mm 'Osa', and 120mm light-weight hand-held rocket launchers.¹¹⁷ The Ministry of Defence claims that the factory does not maintain large stockpiles of weapons and produces them only if ordered. At this writing, officials suggest no orders are pending.¹¹⁸

Both companies do, however, suffer from financial troubles and are in danger of closing. Officials from the ministries of Defence and Interior say they consequently remain dependent on foreign imports for their security needs. Further inquiry should be undertaken to examine the capacity of each facility for small arms and light weapons production, as well as the capacity for destruction of surplus weapons and ammunition in Macedonia.

Besides domestic producers, small arms and military products are available through various foreign suppliers. The country's first defence exhibition was held in May 2001 and included local suppliers as well as Bulgarian and ex-Yugoslavian state-owned arms producers. The exhibition was sponsored by *MICEI International*, a Skopje-based company that holds the licence in Macedonia for major manufactures such as Browning, Remington, Smith & Wesson, Beretta, Heckler & Koch, and Glock.¹¹⁹ The company also supplies ammunition, artillery shells, bullet-proof vests, as well as sports utility vehicles and various survival and security products.¹²⁰ Firms such as MICEI International, Suvenir OP of Skopje and Arsenal of Struga import small arms and ammunition to the Macedonian security forces and private citizens.

Weapons collection: Past and future

As part of the overall peace plan, NATO agreed to oversee a voluntary weapons collection from the NLA members, once a political agreement acceptable to all parties had been brokered. The Ohrid Framework Agreement paved the way for NATO to begin Operation Essential Harvest.

Just how many weapons and combatants the NLA had become a sensitive political question after NATO agreed to preside over a voluntary weapons collection in September 2001. Rather than aiming at full disarmament of the NLA, Operation Essential Harvest and later demobilization efforts were primarily designed to signal the group's good faith in the Ohrid Framework Agreement, thus building confidence in the larger peace process. The purpose of the month-long mission was to collect arms and ammunition voluntarily turned over by ethnic Albanian insurgents.

The Macedonian VMRO-DPMNE government insisted on a collection of at least 7,000 weapons based on an estimated NLA strength of 7,000 combatants.¹²¹ NATO officials maintained that the rebel force consisted of roughly 2,000 combatants and therefore set a goal of 3,000 weapons as a significant political gesture from the NLA.¹²² NATO officials claimed that with fewer weapons in rebel hands, Macedonia would be more stable and that the disarmament was a gesture to the Macedonian Parliament to begin reforms that would benefit the Albanian minority. As the Macedonian public became more interested in what quantity of NLA weapons NATO forces should be expected to collect, politicians began raising the number of weapons to be collected if the operation was to be deemed a success. On 26 August 2001 the VMRO-DPMNE prime minister insisted that NATO troops collect no less than 30,000 weapons. His spokesperson, Antonio Milososki, later declared that NATO needed to collect 60,000 weapons to be a success. At one point the VMRO-DPMNE interior minister called for NATO to collect 85,000 weapons and more than 5 million pieces of ammunition.¹²³ It is clear from these statements that the numbers to be collected took on an ever-increasing political meaning. The calls from members of the VMRO-DPMNE party can be seen as evidence of their increasingly radical stance and a clear attempt to cast doubt on the peace process in general.¹²⁴

On 26 August 2001, Operation Essential Harvest began with the arrival of 400 British, Czech, and French soldiers. These soldiers would prepare for the full activation of the larger Task Force Harvest. The mission of the task forces would be the collection and disposal of arms and ammunition turned in by the insurgents. From 26 August to 26 September, NATO troops collected and disposed of 3,875 weapons and 397,625 mines, explosives, and ammunition that were handed in by the NLA. Included in this total were four tanks and armoured personal carriers (APCs) that had been captured by the rebels from Macedonian security forces.¹²⁵ The fact that the rebels had tanks and APCs demonstrates that they were able to arm themselves with weapons captured from the Macedonian authorities.

Table 3.9 Operation Essential Harvest 26 August–26 September 2001: Collected weapons

Weapon type	1st period (27–30 August)	2nd period (7–13 August)	3rd period (20–26 September)	Total
Tanks/APCs	0	2	2	4
Air defence weapons systems	3	6	8	17
Support weapons systems (mortars, anti-tank weapons, etc.)	69	42	50	161
Machine guns	194	184	105	483
Assault rifles	944	1,037	1,229	3,210
Total	1,210	1,271	1,394	3,875

Source: NATO – Operation Essential Harvest. September 27, 2001: <www.afsouth.nato.int/operations/skopje/harvest.htm>.

On 26 September 2001, NATO announced the end of Operation Essential Harvest. Weapons and ammunition were transported to a disposal site at Krivolac, where they were later publicly destroyed. Ammunition and weapons deemed too unsafe to move were destroyed at the collection sites. NATO proclaimed the operation a success by collecting more than the agreed-upon 3,000 weapons. According to intelligence reports showing a stockpile of 5,000 weapons, the NLA had handed in more than half their weapons.¹²⁶ Yet NATO was heavily criticized by the ethnic Macedonian community for

not collecting enough weapons, and many claimed the operation had just allowed the NLA to clean their stockpiles of old, obsolete weapons to make way for newer ones. During the run-up to the September 2002 election in Macedonia, NATO sources reportedly claimed that the NLA surrendered only around 10 per cent of their weapons.¹²⁷

The discovery of a secret arms cache just one month after the end of Operation Harvest detracted from the success of the operation and fuelled unease in the ethnic Macedonian community. In the village of Tanuse, Macedonian police and army officials uncovered a buried cache of 'rocket launchers, more than a dozen anti-tank mines, several machine guns and Kalashnikov assault rifles, about 60 hand grenades, and a substantial quantity of explosives.'¹²⁸ The need for further disarmament initiatives was apparent.



© Reuters/Oleg Popov

AK-47 machine guns line the wall of a KLA bunker inside a mine about 30 km north of Skopje. Macedonian police discovered this cache in April 1999.

In March 2002, members of various political parties in Macedonia offered plans to Parliament for a weapons collection programme and amendments to the laws regarding the legal possession of firearms.

In April 2002, VMRO generated a draft law for a voluntary weapons collection programme submitted by the Ministry of Interior to the parliament. The draft law proposed that the Ministry of Interior would collect firearms, ammunition and explosive material voluntarily surrendered by individuals during a 45-day period. The Ministry would establish collection points around the country and invite the OSCE and International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) to provide observers. A mass public appeal published in the media was to notify citizens of the need to turn in weapons and the location of collection points. During that 45-day period, all individuals possessing weapons illegally who voluntarily surrendered the materials to the Ministry of Interior would be granted an amnesty exonerating them of any criminal prosecution. Furthermore, the Ministry of Interior would carry out the collection without any identification or registration of the individuals so as to maintain their anonymity. The Ministry would register the weapons, ammunition and explosive material according to type, model, caliber, production number, producer and condition of the weapon. Based on an assessment on the condition of the weapon, old or obsolete weapons would be destroyed, but usable weapons would be stored by the Ministry for possible future use.

The Ministry of Interior advocated a voluntary handover ruling out cash incentives for individuals, fearing that a buy-back would increase smuggling of weapons by those hoping to profit from the state budget. The Ministry intended to embark on a robust public awareness campaign of a kind that had proven effective in Croatia and Serbia.¹²⁹ Such experiences also suggest that Macedonia should rely heavily on internationals' participation in the initiative.

Representatives of SDSM, the main opposition party at the time, proposed a different law calling for local rather than national authorities to run the collection of voluntarily surrendered weapons. They also advocated a 're-registration' of all firearms including legally held arms. The aim of the re-registration would be to take stock of all citizens in possession of a firearm, including those who received weapons directly from the Macedonian government during the crisis. Such procedure would reveal a scale of distribution of firearms to civilians by political parties in the previous government that happened during and after the crisis.

Another party in parliament, the Democratic Alliance headed by Pavle Trajanov proposed disarmament in three phases. It envisaged consensus-building among all political parties on weapons collection, and provision of monetary compensation by the international community to motivate the citizens. It also proposed to amend the penal code to increase the punishment for the illegal possession of weapons and for the state to act forcefully in seizing weapons from those that did not voluntarily surrender them.¹³⁰

Ultimately all proposals for a weapons collection programme were postponed until after the September 2002 elections. In January of 2003, the new SDSM-DUI government began reviewing proposals for a voluntary weapons collection programme. Working closely with representatives of the international community a new series of laws for the voluntary surrender of firearms was passed by the parliament in June 2003. Included in the new series of laws were changes to the existing law regarding civilian possession of firearms. Under the new Law on supplying, possessing, and carrying firearms, civilian citizens are required to legally register their firearms. The law does not allow for civilian possession of assault rifles. Whereas citizens were formerly able to apply for a single weapons permit, the new law requires civilians to apply for either a licence to possess a firearm or a licence to possess and carry a firearm. Applications for firearm licences are submitted to the appropriate municipal body of the Ministry of Interior. Licences are not granted to applicants who are under age or mentally ill; nor are they granted to individuals who have been convicted or are under investigation for criminal activities. Furthermore, the detailed new law regulates what types of weapons may be legally owned and supplied and lays out the application procedures for individual citizens and legal entities (e.g. hunting clubs, private security firms).¹³¹

Also approved in June 2003, the Law on voluntary surrender and collection of firearms, ammunition, and explosive materials and for legalization of weapons,¹³² allowed for a 45-day voluntary weapons collection programme. During this period citizens were granted amnesty from prosecution to anonymously surrender illegal weapons. Citizens who did not have a licence to possess a firearm could legalize any weapons they illegally possessed without risking prosecution. The new law also provides for the creation of a Macedonian National Coordination Body, which will form and implement a national programme on general security enhancement through voluntarily surrender of firearms, ammunition, and explosive materials. The Coordination Body consists of the president of the Parliament Committee for Defence and Security, four members of Parliament, the ministers of Interior, Justice and Defence, representatives of the Association of Local Self-Government Units, and representatives of the civil society.¹³³ In a politically symbolic move, the Coordination Body elected Gezim Ostreni, a former officer of the KLA who later became the military chief of staff of the NLA, as the chairman of the Coordination Body.¹³⁴ The Coordination Body announced that the amnesty period for surrender or registration of weapons would last from 1 November until 15 December 2003. Through a small arms awareness campaign,

financially supported by the UNDP's Small Arms Control in Macedonia (SACIM) programme, the Coordination Body called for the surrender of both illegal and legal weapons in civilian possession. As part of the public awareness-raising activities, UNDP is also offering the incentive of special lottery tickets in exchange for illicit weapons. While some experts had advocated a Weapons in Exchange for Development (WED) programme similar to the one UNDP is conducting in Albania, it was never foreseen that the UNDP would have been able to include a WED incentive concept in the short time allotted by the Macedonian government's amnesty period.¹³⁵ Following the 45-day amnesty period penalties for possessing or carrying illegal weapons were increased. The Ministry of Interior stressed that this amnesty was to be a one-time period of leniency.

For the collection programme, the Macedonian government established 123 dedicated collection points in every Macedonian municipality. When the temporary amnesty expired on 15 December 2003, the initiative had succeeded in collecting 3,590 rifles and 2,749 hand guns, as well as more than 100,000 rounds of ammunition.¹³⁶ Not surprisingly, both the Macedonian government and representatives of the international community in Skopje have welcomed these results as an important success. UNDP's representative in Macedonia, Frode Muring, called the programme 'an important step towards a future of peaceful co-existence, rule of law, and international integration'.¹³⁷ Other international observers have been more critical, with *The New York Times*' Nicholas Wood claiming that many surrendered weapons were obsolete and that results were more promising in 'middle-class areas of the capital' than in the 2001 conflict area, with some weapons collection points receiving no weapons at all or only World War II rifles.¹³⁸ At this writing, no detailed statistics on the condition of weapons and the location of their surrender were available. The Macedonian government, however, claims that 'most of the surrendered mines and almost half of the hand grenades' were collected in the former crisis areas.¹³⁹

Table 3.10 Weapons, ammunition and explosives collected
1 November–15 December 2003

Barreled weapons	6,412
Rifles	3,589
Revolvers	458
Pistols	2,336
Machine guns	27
Mortars	2
Rocket launchers	55
Mines	247
Rockets/missiles	60
Hand grenades	797
Total amount of small arms and light weapons	7,571
Ammunition	100,219
Detonators	1,151
Explosives	165,40
Det. cable	497,65
Imitators	106
Others	1101

Source: Author's correspondence with UNDP Skopje, 17 December 2003.

These figures also include, however, weapons handed in during the collection period for which the owner requested 'legalization' rather than surrendering them to the authorities for destruction. From the data available to the authors it is not quite clear how many of these 'requests for legalization' were accompanied by the (temporary) surrender of the weapon, which would have resulted in their inclusion in the collection statistics. As of 15 December 2003, a total of 4,387 requests for legalization had been received by the authorities, out of which 73 had been refused and 796 granted, with the rest still being processed.¹⁴⁰

In the absence of more comprehensive data analysis on the condition and place of surrender, it is very difficult to measure the impact of the programme on the security situation in Macedonia. Judging from the experience with similar programmes elsewhere in the region, a large part of the weapons is likely to have come from civilians rather than from former combatants. Nevertheless, some 348 assault rifles, 55 rocket launchers, and about 800 hand grenades were included in the collection statistics,¹⁴¹ suggesting that at least some contemporary military weapons were removed from society during the operation. Further analysis of the results will show whether the programme has also helped to change public perceptions of guns in Macedonian society and thereby contributed to the peace process.



© Reuters/Peter Andrews

A Hungarian engineer destroys a weapon as a Greek NATO soldier stands guard over guns collected from ethnic Albanian fighters under Operation Essential Harvest at the Macedonian army base in Krivolak in September 2001.

The Law on voluntary surrender and collection of firearms, ammunition, and explosive materials requires that all weapons surrendered be safely stockpiled by the Ministry of Interior and destroyed no later than 90 days following the end of the amnesty period. Experts of the ministries of Interior and Defence were to oversee the destruction of the weapons at the Makstil steel factory. Under NATO's Operation Essential Harvest, NATO soldiers cut the surrendered weapons with industrial shears at the ARM's Krivolak training grounds. NATO then sent the remnants of the weapons to Greece to be melted down.

IV. Traditional patterns of gun ownership and 'gun cultures'

It is believed that weapons have traditionally played an important role in Macedonian society.¹⁴² In the past, personal weapons have served both practical and socio-cultural purposes across ethnic boundaries. The latter is in evidence by traditional practices such as celebratory firing in the air during festivities, as well as in the social status conveyed by gun ownership. While few people would dispute the past existence of these 'gun cultures', there is no agreement among local and international experts on whether this phenomenon continues to be relevant to today's disarmament discussion or should be relegated to the sphere of national folklore. Macedonia's recent history of ethnic conflict has made the discussion of this factor even more difficult, particularly as ethnic Macedonians often point the finger at their ethnic Albanian compatriots, arguing that the alleged Albanian love affair with firearms defies state authorities and contributed to the 2001 conflict. In contrast, Albanian scholars go to great lengths in their claims that 'gun cultures' are a thing of the past. This polarization along ethnic lines makes research on this issue very difficult. Furthermore, it distracts from the fact that traditional patterns of gun ownership crisscross ethnic lines in Macedonia, and, far from being universal, are more prominent in some parts of the population than others, with the discerning factors being the urban-rural divide, socio-economic status, and education level.

Traditional and contemporary reasons for gun ownership

While the current proliferation of weapons in Southeast Europe in general and in Macedonia in particular can be traced back to the violent conflicts of the past decade, as well as to the unprecedented looting of more than half a million firearms in Albania during the political turmoil of 1997, personal weapons were very much a part of daily life in this part of the world before these events. The individual possession of firearms is usually motivated either by fear (i.e. the perceived need to defend oneself, one's possession, and family against others) or by greed (i.e. the desire to take something from another person or group of people). Another important motivation in rural societies is hunting.

Respondents polled during recent surveys on attitudes towards firearms in Macedonia cited insecurity as the most important factor motivating people to own weapons, followed by criminal intent and inter-ethnic hatred.¹⁴³ These results are in line with the findings of surveys in Albania, Kosovo, and other post-conflict societies worldwide.¹⁴⁴ Clearly, people who have directly or indirectly experienced the trauma of politically or criminally motivated violence are most likely to arm themselves in anticipation of renewed trouble. Contributing factors in creating this feeling of insecurity are dramatic changes of a political or socio-economic nature, or the destruction of long-established value and belief systems. What matters most in this context is the subjective feeling of insecurity, rather than the objective situation. Even areas that have been spared from violence often witness a growing desire for guns when rumours about conflicts in other parts begin to circulate. Examples of this behaviour are plentiful, one of the most striking being the widespread arming of individual citizens during the 1997 crisis in Albania, which included even remote mountain villages far removed from the trouble zones in the southern coastal area.¹⁴⁵

Box 4.1 Gun ownership and the *Kanun* of Lekë Dukagjinit

When the role of guns in Albanian society is discussed among international experts, frequent reference is made to Albanian customary law, codified from an oral source by an Albanian cleric in the early 20th century as the *Kanun* (Law) of Lekë Dukagjinit (*Kanuni i Lekë Dukagjinit*). While this text—and other, lesser known, compilations¹⁴⁶—have been much studied as documents on Albania’s pre-modern society, the relevance of the *Kanun* for the understanding of present Albanian society in the Balkans is highly controversial. Many scholars claim that this complex set of customary laws is only of historic significance, whereas others see the continued existence of some elements of this ancient value system as a key to understanding some of the violent incidents that continue to plague the Albanian population in the triangle encompassing Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo and southern Serbia. There is, however, comprehensive empirical evidence that those responsible for the re-emergence of the ‘blood feud’ (*gjak*) in northern Albania and parts of Kosovo usually (and often incorrectly) justify their actions with the *Kanun*.¹⁴⁷

While the *Kanun* is often associated by Western observers with seemingly random acts of violence, this manifest of Albanian customary law presents a fascinating glimpse into the political and socio-economic structure of a pre-modern society. Appropriately called the ‘Law of the Mountains’ this traditional value system was most deeply rooted in remote and inaccessible elevated terrain of Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia. Presumably dating back to pre-Ottoman times, the *Kanun* has served as a parallel set of laws governing the interaction of villages beyond the sphere of the law set by the foreign masters claiming suzerainty over the territory.

The *Kanun* regulates all aspects of village life, covering topics ranging from the payment of the village blacksmith, the role of the church, and marriage customs, to what in modern terminology would be called criminal law. It is particularly this aspect of the *Kanun* that is frequently mentioned in the context of ‘honour killings’. Given the isolated lifestyle of most Albanian villagers, it comes as no surprise that weapons play an important role in traditional society. The author Neritan Alibali writes, “The weapon has been an organic part of the Albanian, a co-traveler in good and in bad times, a means to secure his life. When a boy was born into a family, people would say that the kin was increased by a rifle. And when a man died, woman cried loudly that a gun remained hanging lacking an owner.”¹⁴⁸

In their study entitled *Kosovo and the Gun*, Anna Khakee and Nicolas Florquin also highlight the numerous references to guns in the *Kanun* and argue that firearms are considered the primary means of committing (and avenging) crimes in traditional Albanian societies.¹⁴⁹ It is remarkable that the *Kanun* makes no reference to imprisonment as punishment; whereas compensation must be paid for minor crimes, severe crimes can only be avenged with blood.¹⁵⁰ According to customary law, punishment is to be meted out by the male adults of the village in the form of a ‘firing squad’ (paragraph 17), clearly hinting both at the self-regulatory function of the *Kanun* and the role of the individual armed citizen within the traditional society. Traditional Albanian society was organized in extended family units (clans) led by hereditary chiefs; however, decisions were taken by the assembly of the village elders, who based their decisions on the value system of the *Kanun*. In times of violent conflict, the banner (a micro-combat unit known as a *flamur*) was based on the extended family unit as well and consisted of able-bodied men carrying their personal weapons.

In traditional Albanian society, every man was supposed to hold his own firearm, representing both his status as an adult and as a participant in the Albanian polity. The gun therefore served as a symbol of masculinity, linking 'personal security, and the security of the family, clan, and tribe throughout centuries'.¹⁵¹ Significantly, women were considered non-combatants by definition, which awarded special privileges in terms of protection from 'blood feuds' but also signified their second-class status in terms of participation in decision-making. While every man was supposed to purchase and maintain his own rifle, the usage of the weapon was tightly regulated by the *Kanun* and controlled by his peers. Overstepping of these rules—whether intentionally or by accident—carried the risk of severe punishment. Albanian customary law had therefore established a set of norms for the self-regulation of a well-armed society existing without an effective external police force.

'Gun cultures' today

As discussed above, the isolated lifestyle and the lack of outside regulatory interference in large parts of the Albanian settlement area comprising present-day Albania, Macedonia, Kosovo, and southern Serbia facilitated the emergence of a society based on well-armed family units, the most visible expression of which is the fortified family tower (*kullë*) still in existence as the family home in remote parts of the area. Until the beginning of the 20th century it is safe to assume that most families owned sufficient guns to provide their adult male members with the means to defend the clan. Beginning with the administrative reforms of the Ottoman Empire in 1844, foreign occupation powers (Turks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Italians, Germans) attempted to strengthen control over the peripheral regions by disarming the population in military campaigns. This tradition was continued by the communist regimes in Albania and the Yugoslav republics after 1944–45. Repressive measures, however, forced families to hide their weapons outside of personal homes.

While communist Albania punished illegal gun ownership with up to 10 years in prison, Yugoslavia was more lenient in this regard and also issued more licences to citizens for individual gun possession. The rapid economic and social development (albeit from a very low level) in combination with better education opportunities in communist times certainly had an important impact on traditional gun ownership both in Albania and in the neighbouring Yugoslav republics. Whereas both countries based their strategic doctrine on the idea of peasant resistance and guerrilla warfare, perhaps a modern variation of the established village-level defence strategy, both regimes frowned upon 'backward' traditions and sought to establish the modern state as the ultimate arbiter of social conflicts. The increasing urbanization and industrialization fostered by the ruling parties in Yugoslavia and Albania meant that traditions that were not endorsed by the government became the domain of older generations and were driven back to the most remote areas. Some indications exist, however, that illegal gun ownership remained substantial in the mountain areas until the beginning of the secessionist wars that spelled the end of Yugoslavia. In 1989, the federal Yugoslav police reportedly estimated that the province of Kosovo alone contained up to 400,000 illegal firearms, including 150,000 long-barrelled ones.¹⁵² As most of these weapons were assumed to be in the hands of private Albanian citizens, and given the close family ties and the similar social structure among Albanians in Kosovo and in Macedonia, it seems safe to assume that the number of privately held arms in the mountainous areas of western and northern Macedonia was considerable before the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

It is important to emphasize that these weapons, with the exception of the small fraction used in crime, hunting, or farming, served no specific purpose and were mostly ornamental. Consisting of a motley collection of repeating rifles, hunting guns and World War II vintage military weapons, most of them posed little, if any, significant threat. Nevertheless, their existence—particularly in contrast to the

smaller number of weapons among urban dwellers—reflects that a traditional attachment to private weaponry was not eradicated by communist rule.

The collapse of socialist rule in the region and the difficult political and socio-economic transformation period has weakened the repressive power of the state. Organized and often violent crime has become a formidable challenge in all Balkan countries, with the police and the court system suffering from widespread corruption and a lack of public trust. Particularly in Albania, the victory of the communist regime was accompanied by a revival of what was perceived as traditional practices, including some elements of the *Kanun*. Since 1991, incidents of ‘honour killings’ have been reported from northern Albania (as well as more isolated incidents in Kosovo). While estimates of the number of victims during the last decade vary from several hundred to up to 6,000, the problem seems quite significant. According to local human rights groups, more than 2,500 families, including some 900 children, have fled the country or live in ‘self-confinement’ within their homes to avoid the wrath of ‘blood feuds’.¹⁵³

The distrust in state institutions, fuelled by Serb repression in Kosovo and under-representation within the Macedonian security apparatus, has led some ethnic Albanians in the former Yugoslav territories to resolve internal conflicts without the assistance of the state. During the Albanian insurgencies in Kosovo, southern Serbia, and Macedonia, family clans often formed the smallest combat unit, particularly among those troops serving as territorial militias defending their home areas. Combined with the arms procured with the assistance of the Albanian expatriate community, the sudden surge in supply in the regional arms market after the 1997 riots in Albania facilitated the arming of various guerrilla forces. Nevertheless, a substantial number of weapons are believed to have originated in private hoards dating back to pre-conflict times. In this context, it is difficult to make a distinction between privately owned weapons used by supporters of the insurgencies and weapons procured and directly controlled by the guerrilla group. The matter was not resolved during the demobilization and disarmament campaign in Kosovo and Macedonia, when only the second category of weapons was specifically targeted by NATO troops.

The jury is still out on whether the series of recent conflicts sparked a renewal of ‘gun cultures’. As indicated earlier, many people still feel insecure and the level of distrust in the police remains high. Unless their subjective perception of security dramatically improves, people are thus not likely to hand in their individual weapons. The matter is further complicated by the fact that many people have seized the opportunity since 1997 to upgrade their private arsenal from obsolete repeating rifles to comparatively modern assault rifles, a mini-revolution in family firepower. The political and military success of the KLA in Kosovo and the NLA in Macedonia have already created new myths, with the ‘martyrs’ being commemorated in song and poetry. Given these developments, it seems likely that the attachment of rural people to firearms is reinforced rather than weakened. ‘Gun cultures’ are not, however, an integral and unchangeable part of a people’s character, but they need to be reproduced and adapted to current conditions. Although the return of traditional ‘gun cultures’ seems unlikely in Macedonia, there is a chance that the prevailing climate of lawlessness on the periphery, the widespread hero worship for NLA combatants, and the continuing distrust of the police and the court system may spawn a new kind of ‘gun culture’, one that justifies mob rule in the name of poorly understood ‘ancient customs’.

V. Smuggling and trafficking in Macedonia

Following the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, the emergence of five new states created more than 4,800 km of new international borders in the western Balkans region. About 720 km of those borders delineate Macedonia's frontier with its five neighbours: Albania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Kosovo, and Greece.¹⁵⁴ Macedonia confronted many of the same challenges faced by other states with relatively new borders: inefficient border agencies, minimal cooperation between the different agencies, and insufficiently equipped border checkpoints.¹⁵⁵ In an effort to correct these weaknesses and prepare their country for European integration, Macedonian officials have since taken a number of actions, including adopting new legislation and implementing new technology at the borders to stem the flow of contraband goods into the country. Nonetheless, the borders remain porous. Nonetheless, the borders remain porous; indeed, the government's failure to create and maintain effective border controls has allowed illegal small arms and light weapons to remain in circulation in Macedonia and the greater Balkan region.

The state of the borders

In order to address border weaknesses and bolster both national and regional border security, the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) has been collaborating with the Macedonian government to reform the country's current border security practices. Following three years of planning, the agency developed an Integrated Border Management programme in late 2003.¹⁵⁶ This programme will assist Macedonian authorities in bringing border management in line with EU standards and will include directives for the creation of a national data network that will link border-crossing points with central data processing facilities. For the period of 2000–03, the EAR has set aside approximately EUR 21.5 million for equipment, training, and EU expertise to ensure that this programme can be effectively implemented.¹⁵⁷

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In the EAR's assessment of Macedonian border security, four weaknesses have been identified.

- 1) All attempts at reform within the government are generally directed from the top down, which results in new initiatives for border security that are not well understood or effectively implemented by the appropriate authorities on the ground.
- 2) Macedonian border security agencies do not properly analyse or apply gathered intelligence, which results in smuggling operations going undiscovered.
- 3) A lack of appropriate financial and technical resources—primarily a computerized system that would connect border authorities with the necessary documentation for goods in transit, as well as the authorities with each other—limits effective communication and enforcement at the border.
- 4) The government has thus far been incapable or unwilling to articulate a comprehensive management plan on national border security. Unfortunately, this incapacity has left the government dependent on the advice and donations of the international community.¹⁵⁸

EAR technical reform efforts have primarily focused on the official border points, as this is where the bulk of the trafficking occurs. However, this focus on reforming official checkpoints fails to address the numerous unofficial routes through both mountains and bodies of water that traverse Macedonia's borders and provide alternative paths for smugglers. EAR officials recognize that there is a 'tremendous need to deal with the rest of the border,' but they are committed to assisting Macedonia in creating the

necessary infrastructure at the primary channels of border traffic first.¹⁵⁹ Included in the country assessment is the EAR's evaluation of the security of both the airport and Lake Ohrid—two areas potentially vulnerable to smugglers. Both currently fall short in the infrastructure and personnel necessary to effectively deter or detect potential traffickers, but the government has taken few steps to shore up these weaknesses.¹⁶⁰

Organized crime affiliates are often behind various smuggling operations in Macedonia, as in many other countries in the Balkan region. The illicit operations run by these organizations can have far-reaching effects on the security of countries throughout the region as well as in other parts of Europe. At a recent border conference in May 2003, NATO Secretary Lord George Robertson pointed out the alarming fact that

[o]rganized crime is able to cross the Balkan borders so easily...[,which] creates the perfect conditions for drugs, arms and people trafficking, and terror and political violence. All this poses a real threat for the stability of the region, complicating the reform there and giving bad headaches to Europe.¹⁶¹

In Macedonia, it has been alleged that organized crime contributed both directly and indirectly to the funding of weapons procurement for insurgents during the 2001 conflict (see the section on the National Liberation Army in III. Guns in Macedonia, *above*).¹⁶² These criminal organizations continue to operate within the country, despite the end of the conflict. A 2001 Saferworld report suggests that this is common for organized crime operations:

There are very clear connections between organized crime and illicit arms trafficking... Criminal organizations established during periods of conflict often remain active after fighting has subsided and are the key catalysts in the transfer of SALW from post-conflict areas to new destinations.¹⁶³

It seems clear that until a stronger border management system is established, members of organized crime operations will continue to exploit the weakness of the Macedonian borders, as well as other borders in the region, for illegal weapons trafficking.

If small arms trafficking is to be effectively tackled in Macedonia, the border agencies need to improve practices of information sharing through the correct official channels. Both customs officials and members of the armed forces patrol the borders, but according to officials at the Customs Administration there is minimal inter-agency communication.¹⁶⁴ Providing an additional obstacle to inter-agency communication is the impending transfer of authority of border security from the armed forces to the police, which will help the Macedonian border agencies to better comply with European Union standards. Although the transition of authority to the police is expected to begin in autumn 2004 and be completed by the end of 2005, it will take time for a new system of communication and coordination to develop between customs and their counterparts in the police.¹⁶⁵

In addition, the current limits on technology and personnel available at the borders restrict the two organizations' abilities to share information about illicit trafficking and apprehend traffickers. Items such as transport vehicles, vision and telecommunications equipment, and computers are desperately needed by border officials to improve monitoring and inspection techniques. In order to address this issue, the EAR is working with the Macedonian government to provide some of the financial and technical means necessary to enhance efficiency and verification skills.¹⁶⁶ They are providing the border

authorities with some of the listed equipment as well as training on issues such as information handling, documentation controls, management skills, and the struggle against corruption.¹⁶⁷

Corruption within the border agencies is a considerable problem. According to international officials working in Macedonia, it exists at both the lowest and highest levels in the Customs Administration and in the armed forces.¹⁶⁸ One example are the rumoured kickbacks to officials who facilitate the passage of un-inspected shipments of weapons past the borders.¹⁶⁹ In fact, according to surveys, Macedonian citizens consider the Customs Administration to be the most corrupt of government agencies in the country.¹⁷⁰ In the hopes of ending such illegal practices, customs officials have taken steps to internally root out corruption in their ranks. In May 2003, the Customs Administration successfully conducted an internal sting operation intended to catch border agents suspected of participating in these payoff schemes. These efforts, along with a series of successful seizures of ammunition and weapons at the borders in April 2003, demonstrate that the Customs Administration has the potential to play a lead role in changing the status quo and ultimately strengthening Macedonia's borders.¹⁷¹

Smuggling routes

According to well-placed government officials at the Ministry of Interior, weapons that are smuggled into Macedonia largely originate in Kosovo and Albania. To bring these illegal weapons into Macedonia, smugglers take one of at least four known routes from these neighbouring states. There are three smuggling routes from Kosovo and one from Albania. From Kosovo, the trail of illicitly trafficked weapons begins in Presevo, Vitino, or Globcica, and ends in various small villages around Macedonia, including Lojane, Zlokucane, Tanusevci, Radusa, Brest, and Jazinec. Nearly all of these routes go through official border checkpoints or mountainous border passes, not unlike smuggling routes in Kosovo.¹⁷² The origins of most of the weapons circulating in and out of Kosovo are reportedly Chinese, Bulgarian, and Yugoslavian. Macedonian authorities do not routinely document the information on seizures of trafficked weaponry, but they believe Chinese weapons to be the most frequently seized.¹⁷³ In contrast to the findings of the Kosovo study, this information indicates that the weapons largely originate in Albania.

In Albania, the illicitly trafficked small arms and light weapons originate in a number of small villages, including but not limited to, Skenderbeg, Mt. Jablanica, or Lacavice, and are smuggled into a number of villages nearby the Macedonian city of Struga. Almost all of the weapons trafficked out of Albania are suspected of being Chinese in origin.¹⁷⁴ Many of these were looted from the Albanian national military stockpiles in 1997 by Albanian citizens. These weapons were never successfully re-collected or accounted for by the government and continue to circulate within the Balkan region.¹⁷⁵

Another area of border weakness is the green border with Kosovo. Since the 1999 conflict in Kosovo, border guards working under the auspices of the Ministry of Defence in Macedonia have detected a large number of illegal crossings and discovered contraband. Several incidents of illegal trade of narcotics and weapons have been registered. The EAR is also working with the border units to enhance their operating procedures and procure additional equipment to better secure this area.¹⁷⁶

There are several methods used for smuggling weapons into and out of Macedonia. Traffickers can either cross the Macedonian border on foot or load the camouflaged illicit cargo onto mules and attempt a crossing at either an official point of entry or at an unofficial—and usually mountainous—border crossing.¹⁷⁷ In 1999, a number of men were caught carrying weapons on horseback across the Albanian border towards Macedonia.¹⁷⁸ Reportedly, four-wheel-drive vehicles are also being used to cross at least two checkpoints, as are herds of cows laden with small amounts of weapons, which have

crossed the Kosovo border to Macedonia before being discovered.¹⁷⁹ Border guards have attempted to shore up these areas of weakness by posting border guard towers that control areas of up to 10 km on the border with Albania, 20 km on the Serbian and Kosovo borders, 37 km on the Greek border, and 45 km on the border with Bulgaria.¹⁸⁰ These towers do not cover all points along the border, however, especially in those areas obstructed by mountains or covered by Lake Ohrid.

Although the size of the arms shipments circulating is reportedly rather small, a limited market for illicit small arms remains, perhaps due to the inherent feelings of personal insecurity that have remained in Macedonia following the 2001 conflict.¹⁸¹ According to officials from both governmental and non-governmental organizations in Macedonia, the demand for weapons has diminished since the period prior to and during the conflict.¹⁸² Smuggled weapons do not even necessarily command a cash payment; presently, a certain barter system exists along the borders, where weapons are being exchanged for large quantities of other goods, including food, fuel, and cigarettes.¹⁸³

The regional dimensions

The insecure status of Macedonia's borders affects all of its immediate neighbours, as well as other states in the region, but Kosovo (and thereby Serbia) and Albania have been affected mostly due to the continued supply and demand for illegal weapons within their borders. Weapons have been repeatedly smuggled back and forth across these borders, and some made their way to all three conflicts in the region during the 1990s, 2000, and 2001. Recognizing that trans-border illicit trafficking has shown no signs of stopping, it is clear that any improvement in border management and security will require a multilateral effort between Macedonia and its neighbours, especially Albania and Kosovo.

During the 2001 conflict in Macedonia, many weapons were smuggled across the Kosovo border for use by the NLA in combat against Macedonian security forces despite the presence of KFOR troops at the border.¹⁸⁴ Similarly, in spite of a number of KFOR checkpoints and tax collection points established around Kosovo in February 2001, only some progress was made at slowing the flow of weapons to and from northern Macedonia.¹⁸⁵ As of November 2002, KFOR soldiers were still conducting routine raids against suspected smugglers along the Kosovo–Macedonian border to prevent further transfer of weapons to northern Macedonia.¹⁸⁶

The porous nature of the Macedonian border with Albania has also contributed to the circulation of arms in and out of the Republic of Albania. As mentioned above, of the approximately 550,000 small arms and light weapons that were looted from Albanian government stockpiles by the enraged citizenry in 1997, only 200,000 have been recovered. Government officials believe that 150,000 of the remaining 350,000 pieces have been trafficked out of the country into both Kosovo and Macedonia and the final 200,000 remain unaccounted for.¹⁸⁷ A number of seizures of arms and ammunition made throughout 2001 and 2002 by international forces suggest that Albania was the key source of weapons for Kosovar Albanian fighters, many of whom also crossed the southern border of Kosovo to participate in the conflict in Macedonia. Most, but not all, of the weapons seized were of Chinese origin, which indicates that they were most likely from Albania's stockpiles, given that Albania produced guns under Chinese licence. Since licensed production of Chinese weapons is widespread, however, it is possible that the weapons may have originated elsewhere.¹⁸⁸

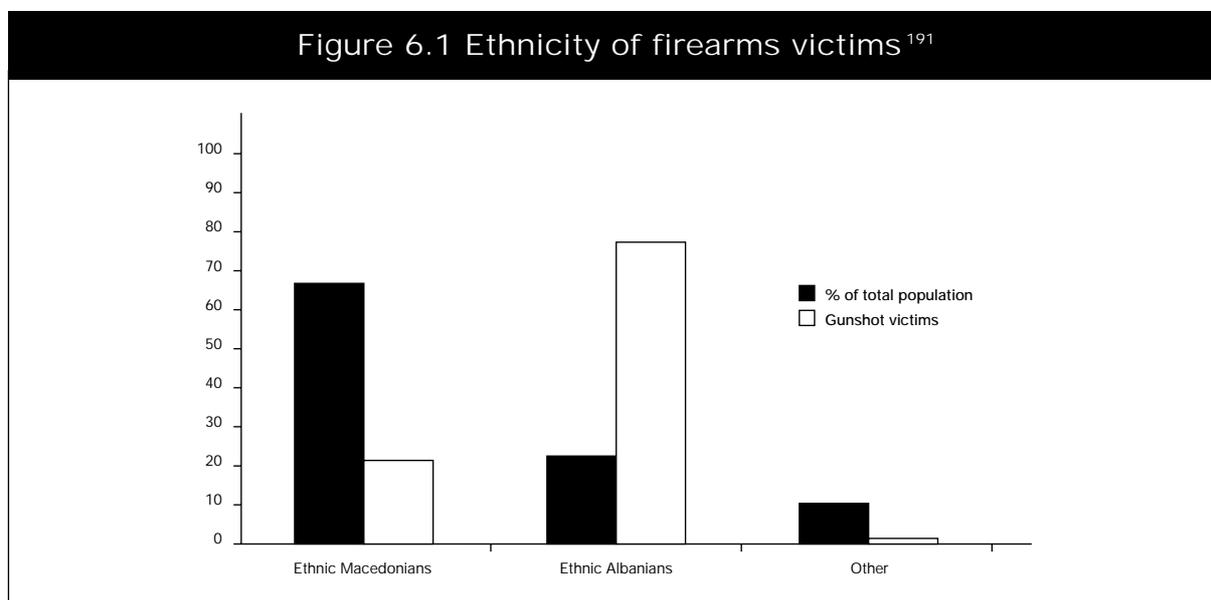
Regardless, the potential for many of these weapons to re-circulate throughout the region remains a threat to all countries and territories involved. Tougher inspections and verification of cargo passing Macedonia's borders would assist the Albanian government in reclaiming the elusive looted weapons and minimize trans-border trafficking in these neighbouring countries, as well as in Macedonia.

VI. The impact of small arms and light weapons

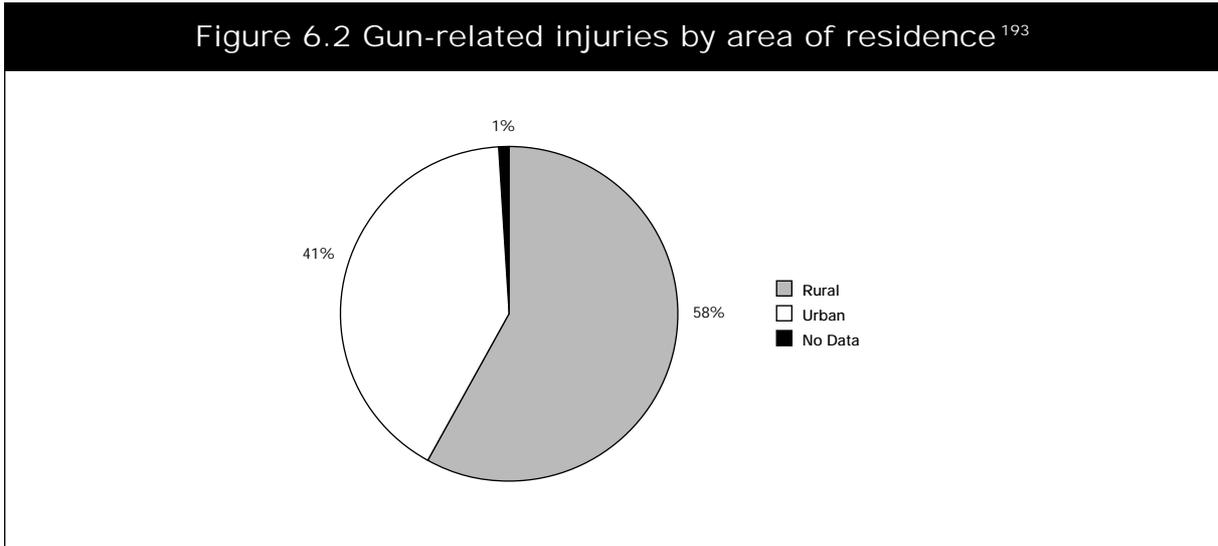
Public health

Hospital data show that there were a total of 81 reported gunshot injuries during the last six months of 2000 and the first six months of 2002, 35 per cent of them occurring in 2000 and 65 per cent in 2002 (see Figure 6.1).¹⁸⁹ A year of conflict, 2001 has not been included in this analysis. Overall, 89 per cent of gunshot victims were men and 11 per cent were women. Not surprisingly, most victims were treated in hospitals of Kumanovo and especially Tetovo (77 per cent), which are located in the former conflict zone. From 2000 to 2002, the percentage of gunshot wounds doubled there from 33 per cent to 66 per cent. Kumanovo registered the second largest number of victims (17 per cent), with the other three hospitals dividing up the remaining percentages of gunshot victims.¹⁹⁰

Although ethnic Albanians represent only about one quarter of the population, they account for the majority of gunshot victims in the periods under review. Overall, 22 per cent of victims were ethnic Macedonians, 77 per cent were ethnic Albanians, and 1 per cent were of other ethnicities (see Chart 1). These numbers can be misleading, however, in terms of assessing the harm done to each group: ethnic Macedonians sustained 50 per cent of all critical injuries, which require extensive treatment and recovery at the main hospital in Skopje. The remaining 50 per cent of critical injuries are unknown. Albanians, by comparison, suffer 90 per cent of light injuries, which require bandaging only and 73 per cent of heavy injuries, which require treatment but result in full recovery.

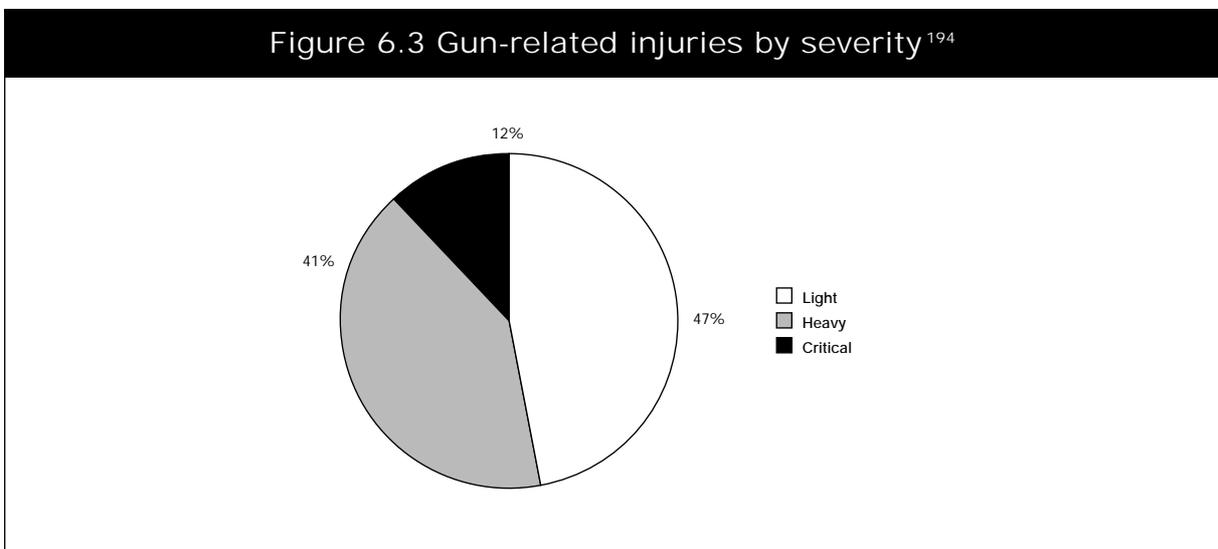


The data reveal similar statistics with respect to the impact of guns on urban and rural communities. According to UNDP *Human Development Report*, 59.5 per cent of the population in Macedonia lives in urban areas.¹⁹² Concerning victims of firearms, hospital records show that 41 per cent of victims lived in urban areas while 58 per cent lived in rural towns and villages, with 1 per cent providing no data. Sixty per cent of critical injuries, however, are suffered in urban areas while 55 per cent of light injuries and 70 per cent of heavy injuries are suffered in rural areas.



The overall trend regarding the types of injuries incurred is marked by a substantial increase in light injuries, a substantial decrease in heavy injuries, and a minimal decrease in critical injuries. Hospital records show that of all gunshot wounds, 47 per cent were considered light injuries, 41 per cent were heavy wounds, and 12 per cent were critical injuries. The amount of light injuries increased from 32 per cent in 2000 to 55 per cent in 2002. Heavy injuries, by contrast, decreased from 54 per cent in 2000 to 34 per cent in 2002. Considering the measure of 12 per cent given above, the proportion of critical injuries appears to have remained constant. The 2000/2002 comparison reveals a minimal decrease from 2000 to 2002.

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Methodology for assessing public health in Macedonia

To assess the public health impact of guns in Macedonia, the research team, with the help of the Institute for Democracies Solidarity and Civil Society (IDSCS), gathered data on gunshot injuries from five Macedonian hospitals that collectively reflect the geographic and ethnic diversity of the country.¹⁹⁵ The data comes from a review of medical cards in these state hospitals for the last six

months of 2000 and the first six months of 2002. The team also looked at media accounts of firearm incidents in 2000 and 2002 and interviewed several doctors to supplement this effort. Overall statistics show that though the number of gunshot incidents has decreased for most of the country, small arms are used to a significantly larger extent against ethnic Albanians than ethnic Macedonians.

Box 6.1 Limitations to research on impacts

Though the conclusions drawn from the hospital data are helpful in developing a picture of the medical impact of small arms in Macedonia, the research is limited by several factors that create the need for alternative data sources. Before analyzing research drawn from these alternative sources, it is important to point out some of these factors.

First, the above research may have missed an unknown number of gunshot incidents and injuries as some individuals may have been treated at private hospitals, to which the research team could not gain access. Reportedly, these hospitals, primarily located in Albanian communities (and allegedly employing Albanian doctors educated at Tetovo University), do not keep sufficient records and did not agree to provide information requested by the team. Moreover, these hospitals are not recognized by the Macedonian government, are not registered with the Ministry of Health, and are thus not required to keep adequate records on patients. Basically, these facilities operate outside the state health care system. Attempts to gain access to whatever records may exist (even via the OSCE) were denied. An MOI source, however, believes that in the Tetovo area, just as many victims of gunshot wounds are treated in these 'private' hospitals as in state hospitals.

Other factors contributing to the limitations of the above medical data include: 1) the various storage procedures of each hospital (some records, for example, were stored inappropriately and thus subject to damage); 2) the inability to decipher information on old medical cards because wear and tear and their being written in ink; 3) the fact that light gunshot injuries rarely resulted in the recording of the patients details on a medical card; 4) the absence of hospital records of death due to firearms injuries *before* reaching the hospital; and 5) the lack of in-depth personal information that would be useful for research purposes.

These factors highlighted the necessity of expanding research to alternative sources. The team thus incorporated analysis of gunshot incidents in two daily nationwide newspapers (*Dnevnik* and *Uktrinski Vesnik*) and insights from personal interviews with 26 doctors at the five hospitals.

Doctors also address one of the factors that serve as a limitation to this research—the lack of information. They believe that some, and perhaps a significant number of, gun injuries go unrecorded and untreated. Additionally, doctors point to fear as a cause of this lack of information. They note that they are often threatened or pressured to keep few records and otherwise not report gunshot incidents. Pressure comes primarily from wounded persons or their families and is believed to be the result of concerns about the criminal activity in which the persons are involved.

Media analysis

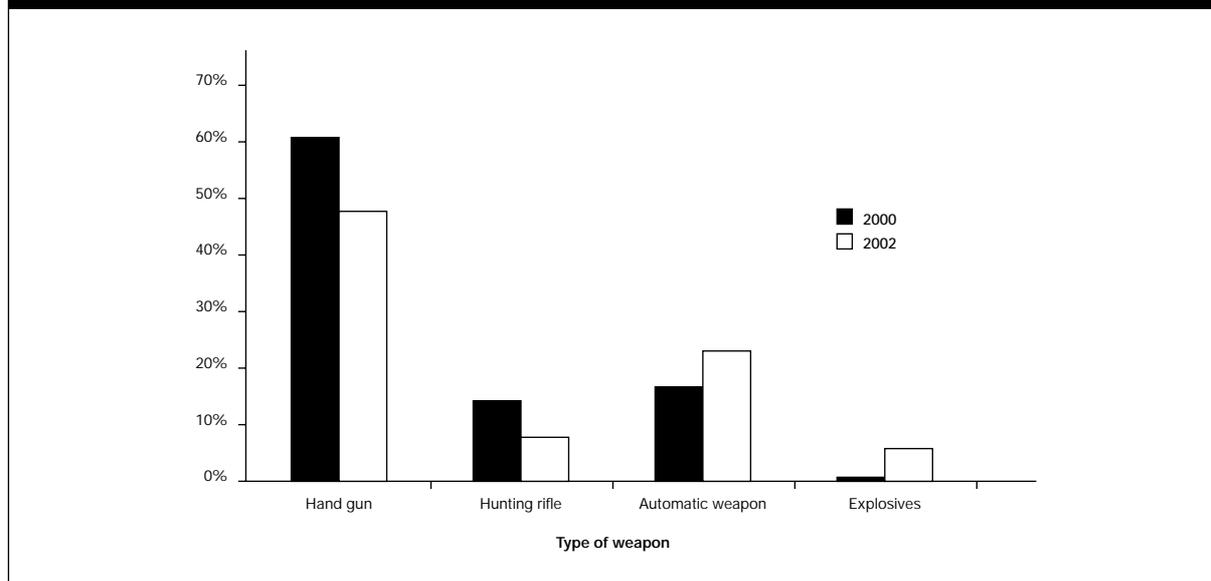
Additional insights for the impact of guns in Macedonian society can be drawn from analyzing references made to firearms incidents in newspapers. The two newspapers analysed for the entirety of 2000 and 2002 seem to indicate that Macedonia has achieved some progress in minimizing the amount of gunshot incidents following the 2001 conflict. The papers reflect a rather insignificant increase in gun-related incidents, up from 121 in 2000 to 127 in 2002.¹⁹⁶ As expected, they recorded an increase in gun activity in the second half of 2000, reflecting escalating tensions. Gunshot incidents decreased everywhere in the country except in western Macedonia, where incidents increased from 40 per cent of all shootings in 2000 to 52 per cent in 2002. The result is a slight increase in the total number of gunshot incidents for the whole of Macedonia. The total percentage of shootings for both years is a strong reflection that gun violence must particularly be countered in the west. Almost half of shootings in 2000/2002 occurred in western Macedonia, followed by 30 per cent in Skopje, 14 per cent in eastern Macedonia, and 10 per cent in southern Macedonia.

Macedonia's progress, however, is mitigated by the fact that though the number of incidents is relatively stable throughout the country, the number of victims is increasing. From 2000 to 2002, the number of gunshot victims increased across all age groups, except in the 46–60 age category. The total number of deaths resulting from firearm incidents also increased from 28 per cent in 2000 to 36 per cent in 2002. The newspapers show that for both years, 31 per cent of incidents resulted in deaths.

While the increase in the number of victims and deaths appears minimal, they may be significant reflections of another trend related to the types of weapons being used in gun-related incidents. Statistics show a decrease in incidents involving handguns and rifles, and an increase in incidents involving automatic weapons and explosives. From 2000 to 2002, handgun incidents declined from 61 per cent to 48 per cent and hunting rifle incidents declined from 14 per cent to 8 per cent. Automatic weapon incidents, however, increased from 13 per cent to 23 per cent, and incidents involving explosives increased substantially from 0.5 per cent to 6 per cent (see Figure 6.4).

The number of group-related incidents may also factor into the increased percentage of victims. From 2000 to 2002, the number of incidents inflicted by a group nearly doubled from 19 per cent in 2000 to 32 per cent in 2002, while the number of incidents intentionally caused by one assailant dropped from 51 per cent in 2000 to 32 per cent in 2002. As for other types of incidents, self-inflicted episodes remained about constant at 8 per cent in 2000 and 10 per cent in 2002, as did accidents (16 per cent in both years).¹⁹⁷

Figure 6.4 Percentage of gun-related incidents resulting in casualties (by type of weapon)



Thus, an increase in the number of gunshot victims and in the number of gun-related deaths, accompanying a decrease in the number of incidents in most regions of the country, may be due to both the changing nature of the weapons being used and the number of those perpetrating the incident.

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Newspaper coverage supports the hospital data suggesting that the impact of gun-related incidents on ethnic groups is substantially more harmful to ethnic Albanians than ethnic Macedonians. The distribution of reported gun-related incidents is fairly even involving Macedonian victims and injured Albanians. Ethnic Macedonians account for 69 per cent of injuries inflicted by hunting rifles and 56 per cent of those caused by explosives, while Albanians account for 44 per cent of handgun injuries and 47 per cent of automatic weapon incidents. Both groups also share a vulnerability to different types of incidents. Ethnic Macedonians account for 57 per cent of self-inflicted gunshot wounds and 55 per cent of the accidents inflicted by another person. Albanians account for 50 per cent of deliberate shootings by one assailant and 52 per cent of deliberate shootings by a group.

The appearance of a high percentage of accidents is indeed the reality. According to the newspapers under review, 40 per cent of shootings were accidents or self inflicted, while the remaining were reportedly intentional. Approximately 53 per cent of accidents involved handguns; in 19 per cent of the cases automatic weapons, 10 per cent hunting rifles, and 4 per cent explosives. There is no data recorded for the remaining 14 per cent.

Moreover, the data also indicates that:

- 17 per cent of the weapons involved in the total reported gunshot incidents were registered/licensed weapons, but 77 per cent of the reports did not indicate gun registration status.
- 18 per cent of gunshot victims were armed in 2000; 25 per cent of victims were armed in 2002.

- Minors account for 10 per cent of all gunshot victims and the 19–30 age group accounts for 30–35 per cent of incidents.
- Automatic rifles were used in 30 per cent of the injuries sustained by the 19–30 age group and 22 per cent of the 31–45 age group.
- 62 per cent of injuries caused by handguns occur in the cities and bigger towns; 94 per cent of hunting rifle incidents occur in the villages and rural communities; 73 per cent of incidents involving automatic rifles occur in the villages as do 67 per cent of incidents involving explosives.

As to the causes of gun injuries, personal interviews with doctors indicate that sources of Macedonian violence vary little from sources of violence in other countries. Doctors in Tetovo, Kumanovo, Prilep, and Struga believe that many gunshot incidents involve drugs, alcohol, and other criminal activity. Doctors in Struga suggest that most of their injuries are due to accidents/celebratory fire. Overall, doctors note the presence of guns in Macedonian society and even in their own hospitals. They say that the numbers and types of weapons vary, but they believe that both legal and illegal weapons are involved in the gunshot incidents that they see.

Crime impact

Measuring the Impact of guns on crime is difficult due to the fact that official crime statistics kept by the Ministry of Interior do not take into account whether firearms were involved. Moreover, these statistics have not yet been provided despite repeated requests. One may draw inferences, however, from general statistics provided by other sources. As 2001 was a year of major conflict, a look at crime rates before and after the hostilities may allow for some fitting comparisons both within Macedonia and between Balkan states.

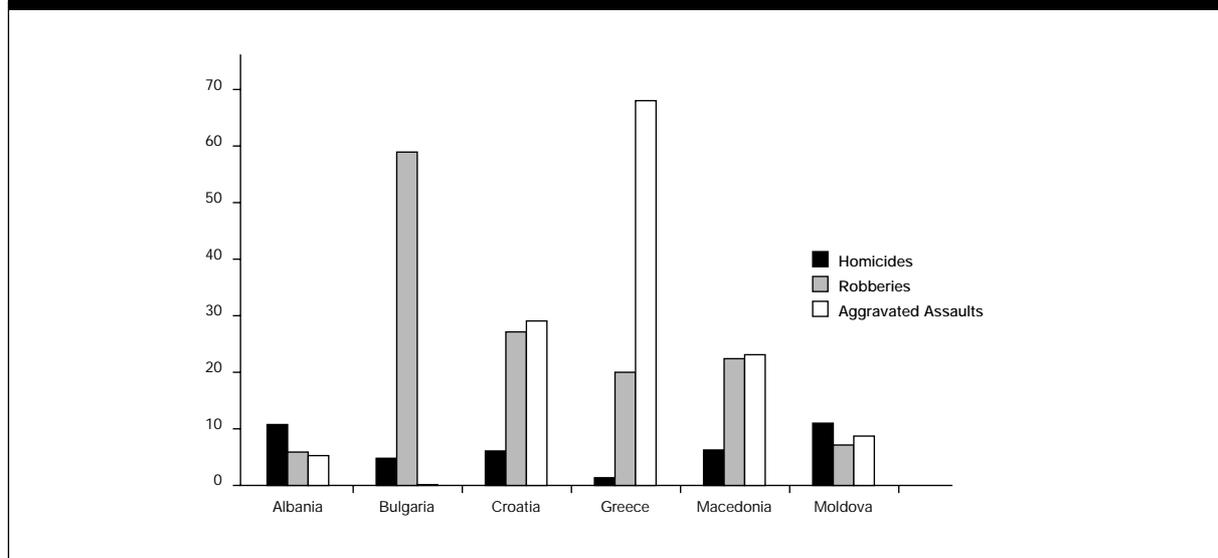
The general statistics available take on various forms and inconsistencies with one another. Interpol data are available for Macedonia only for the years of 1995–1998 and 2002 and are not categorized based on gun use. The Macedonian Bureau of Statistics offers data on criminal activity, but they are somewhat inconsistent with other figures. Working with available data and reports, however, the conclusions are as follows:

Interpol data not taking into account gun use show that crime rates for most offenses held constant or decreased. Looking at those offenses most likely to employ guns, serious assaults decreased by about 70, theft of all kinds decreased by more than 7,000, and aggravated theft decreased by more than 2,500 from 1998 to 2002. Moreover, homicides increased by only 25, and robbery and violent theft increased by more than 200 for this same time period.

Reports of homicide statistics taking into account firearms offer data that are inconsistent with Interpol, but consistent with the suggestion that gun availability after the conflict has not engendered extraordinary homicide rates. Based on figures available at the Macedonian Bureau of Statistics, the numbers of murders committed with firearms tripled from 2000 to 2001, but dropped by half in 2002. Twenty-eight reported murders were committed with guns in 2000, 95 in 2001, and 46 in 2002. Ministry of Interior reports state that between 1998 and 2002, 161 felony murders were committed with firearms. Though these figures were not available by year, spread over a time span of a few years they yield numbers that fall within the range of homicides reported by the Macedonian Bureau.

Compared to crime rates of selected Balkan states, Macedonia represents approximately the mean rate of both homicides and aggravated assaults in 2002.¹⁹⁸ Measuring homicides per 100,000, the mean for sample of countries was 7.8. Macedonia recorded 6.53 for that year. Likewise, measuring aggravated assaults per 100,000 in 2002, the mean of the sample was 23.69. Macedonia recorded 22.96 aggravated assaults. As for robberies per 100,000, Macedonia fell approximately 30 below the mean of 51.04. Moreover, Macedonia fell well below Greece in aggravated assaults and well below Bulgaria in robberies, indicating that Macedonia has made progress in holding down crime rates compared to its more stable counterparts (see Figure 6.5).¹⁹⁹

Figure 6.5 Comparative crime rates in 2002 for selected Balkan states (per 100,000)



Source: INTERPOL crime statistics, <www.interpol.int>, and International Crime Victimization Survey, <ruljjs.leidenuniv.nl/group/jfcr/222/icvs/data/CE_vic.htm>.

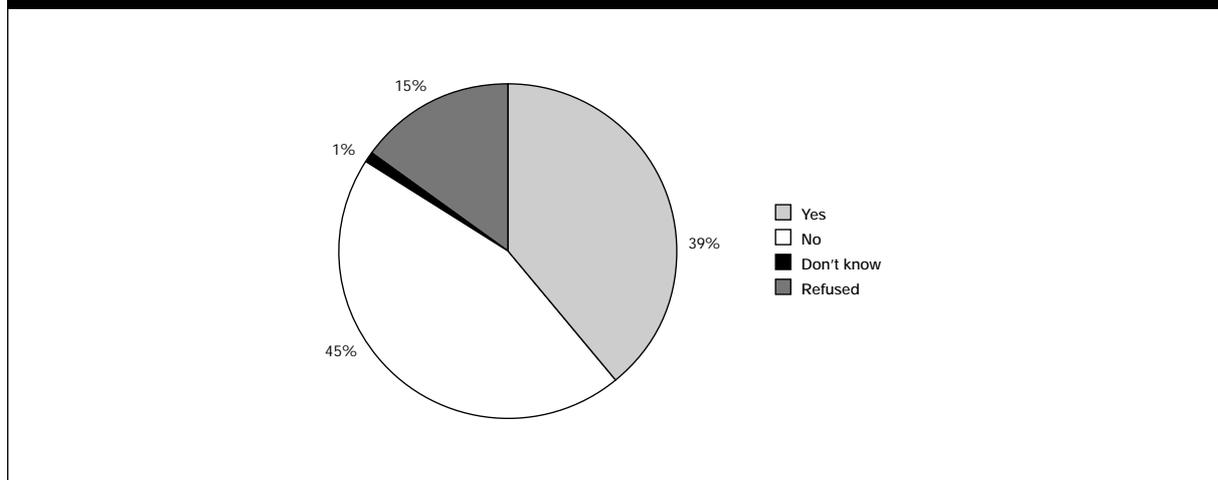
Perceptions of small arms and light weapons in Macedonia

Twelve participatory focus group interviews held in nine cities throughout Macedonia,²⁰⁰ a 1,157-person household survey, and interviews with officials and citizens were conducted to gauge Macedonian perceptions on gun availability and use, the security environment, security providers, and the upcoming weapons collection initiative. The main perception of Macedonians seems to be that small arms are a pervasive aspect of the society and those charged with controlling them are inept, thus causing individuals to feel increasingly responsible for their own security and welfare.

Perceptions of gun availability, gun use, and the security environment

Despite the fact that 40 per cent of all household respondents say that there are too many guns in Macedonia and the belief of the majority of respondents that guns are dangerous,²⁰¹ more than half of the Macedonian population said that they would acquire guns legally if given the opportunity (see Figure 6.6). Those from larger cities or urban areas comprise the majority (64 per cent) of individuals of this persuasion, and the same percentage agreed that they would do so for personal protection, especially in Skopje and in larger towns (80 per cent). By ethnic group, 61 per cent of Macedonians and 40 per cent of Albanians say they would acquire guns legally if given the chance. Moreover, 27 per cent of Macedonians and 8 per cent of Albanians are supportive of gun ownership at a young age.

Figure 6.6 Answers to the household survey question, 'Do you think that there are too many guns in your local area?'



These statistics beg inquiry into the factors underlying these seemingly contradictory views. The research suggests that the answer lies in Macedonians' perception of the environment in which they live. Focus group participants say that gunfire at festivities such as weddings and baptisms, sporting events, and other celebrations is common in Macedonia. Guns are also found in bars and nightclubs on a regular basis. Approximately 25 college-age citizens explained that guns are considered 'fashionable'. Despite the view that guns represent a desire to be 'trendy' rather than a desire to engage in violence, the majority of the population, according to focus group participants, believe that guns are used primarily for the purpose of intimidation and the resolution of conflict. They suggest that quarrels and disagreements are now more likely to escalate into violence with the use of weapons than they were years ago, when such behaviour was very uncommon and nearly unthinkable.

In addition to the pervasive existence of guns, several other factors contribute to Macedonians' everyday sense of insecurity. Most focus group participants are concerned about high levels of crime, despite the relatively average crime rate Macedonia has compared to the rest of the region. In fact, according to household survey results regarding security perceptions, only 3 per cent of respondents admitted that they or members of their family have been victims of a crime in the last three months. The criminal incidents were fairly evenly distributed among respondents throughout Macedonia, with most occurring in Skopje. The results also indicate that there were equal numbers of criminal attacks across ethnic groups. Regarding the kinds of criminal incidents respondents or their family members experienced, 40 per cent involved threats, 25 per cent assaults, 8 per cent robberies, and 8 per cent muggings. 16 per cent of the reported criminal incidents involved a firearm, which in international comparison can be considered a relatively high figure (see Table 6.1).²⁰² The limited number of incidents experienced among respondents, the limited number of incidents involving gun use, and the average crime rate appear to make an overriding concern with crime a seemingly unjustified explanation for the extraordinary sense of insecurity among Macedonians.

Table 6.1 Percentages of firearm victimization in robberies, assaults, and threats in Macedonia, Central and Eastern Europe, and Western Europe

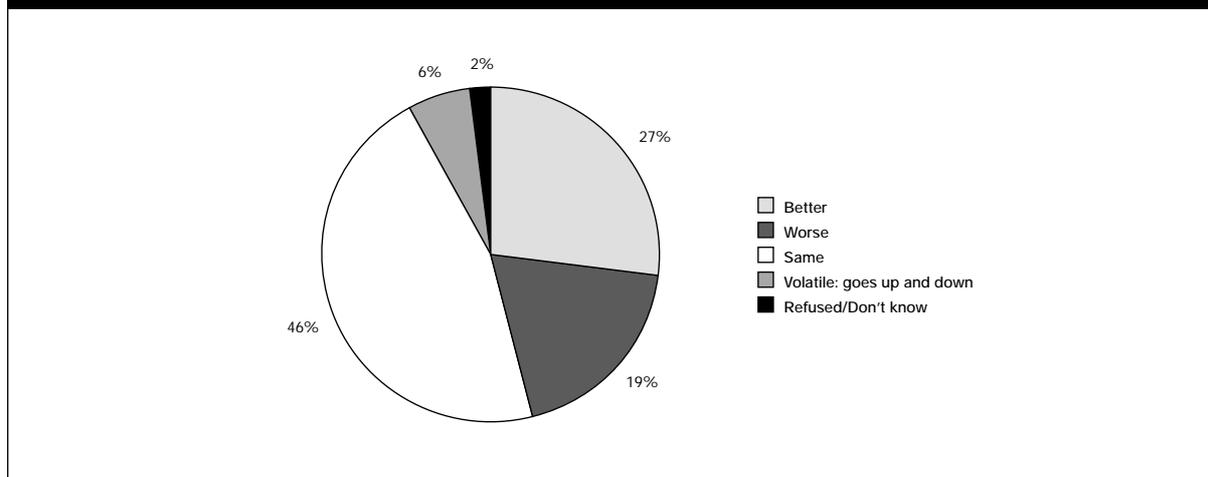
	Macedonia	CE Europe	Western Europe
Robbery	8%	4.97%	5.52%
Assaults and threats	25%	6.25%	1.24%

Source: John Van Kesteren, Firearms ownership and crime data from the International Crime Victim Surveys, *background paper, Small Arms Survey, Geneva 2003.*

Part of the reason for this apparent contradiction is that Macedonians are most likely threatened by the *nature* of the crimes being committed throughout the country. Participants suggest that criminals in Macedonia are well-armed, that handguns are the most commonly used firearm, and that ‘cold’ weapons such as knives and bats are most easily obtained and most frequently used. But what might contribute to heightened perceptions of crime is the fact that participants in every town except Bitola have seen automatic weapons, such as AK-47s, in public. Indeed, 40 per cent of those surveyed believe that criminals primarily possess guns, and focus group participants repeatedly mentioned organized crime as a main source of insecurity in Macedonia. As mentioned above, there is an increase in gun-related incidents where automatic weapons and explosives are being used, and an increase in group-related incidents. This research and the crime statistics mentioned earlier in this report support the conclusion that the changing nature of crime heightens fears and perceptions of insecurity among Macedonians. Other concerns are unemployment, poverty, poor interethnic relations,²⁰³ a lack of respect for the law, and the ineffectiveness of the police to ensure law and order.

Moreover, one cannot discount the fact that most of the perception of Macedonia as unsafe, according to focus group research, is attributed to the 2001 conflict. Household survey results support this view, with a majority of respondents stating that they consider the security of their area to be the same as in 2001 (see Figure 6.7). One third of the population believes that the number of weapons in society has increased since the conflict, especially in Skopje where 44 per cent of those surveyed thinks the numbers of guns have increased. Related to this, 28 per cent of Skopje survey respondents say that their security is worse than in 2001. All ethnic groups, aside from 45 per cent of Albanians who think guns have decreased since the conflict, think that numbers of guns have increased. The Albanian figure is somewhat undermined by the fact that Albanians claim to hear the most gunshots on a regular basis. Eighteen per cent reported hearing gunshots daily and 14 per cent reported hearing shots several times a week. This result is more than twice that of any other ethnic group. Even if close to half of Albanians believe guns have decreased and half of Albanians surveyed consider their security situation to be improving since 2001, Albanians feel less safe in their communities compared to other ethnic groups. Anecdotal and interview data indicate that Albanians feel less secure because of higher rates of gun availability, higher rates of crime, and ineffectiveness of policing in their communities.²⁰⁴ One third of the population believes the number of weapons is about the same as before the conflict. Rural residents dissent in part from these views, since 38 per cent of them see some improvement.

Figure 6.7 Security perceptions in 2003 compared to the situation in 2001



Numbers also indicate that personally knowing gun owners or having perceptions about the level of knowledge of gun safety in society are not primarily responsible for feelings of insecurity. Thirty-five per cent of respondents say they do not know anyone who owns a gun—33 per cent of ethnic Macedonians and 41 per cent of Albanians. Eight per cent of ethnic Macedonians and 5 per cent of Albanians know up to 10 people with a gun, and 6 per cent of Macedonians and 4 per cent of Albanians know more than 20 people with guns. Half of the survey respondents are confident that those who own guns are aware of self-storage and handling. Sixty-one per cent of those in rural areas agree, but only 30 per cent of those in Skopje and urban areas agree. Moreover, 47 per cent of ethnic Macedonians and 61 per cent of ethnic Albanians suggest that they believe gun owners are aware of safety procedures.

Perceptions of security providers

With regard to the perceptions of Macedonia's security providers, two main themes emerge from focus group research. The first is the general disappointment, lack of faith, and perception of ineptness that participants have towards a variety of governmental authorities. The second is the consequential assumption of responsibility that Macedonians take for their own security. The significance of this latter point cannot be understated because it contributes to sustaining the gun norm that is perpetuated by both the pervasiveness of guns in Macedonian society and the perception that guns solve problems.

Participants suggest that law enforcement and justice are by and large corrupt in Macedonia, from the street level to the higher courts. They view the MOI in particular as incapable of maintaining stability and providing security for its citizens.²⁰⁵ An overwhelming majority of participants discussed their own previous negative experiences or encounters with the police. They cited a lack of presence and proactivity on the part of the police to actually deter or apprehend criminals. If and when criminals get to the courts, they encounter legal institutions that participants view as full of 'corrupt' and 'irresponsible' people who are too political, easily bribed, and responsible for an 'uneven distribution of justice'. The government, in their view, has shown little interest in eradicating the corruption that has been present for more than a decade.

International organizations have taken an interest in addressing issue areas where government efforts are lacking or need support. While a majority of focus group participants desire further stabilizing activities sponsored by members of civil society, internationals are often perceived as encouraging further

insecurity. One participant in Prilep commented, 'The presence of internationals...is just a cover-up for destabilization, intelligence agents, and the like.' In Albanian areas, such as Tetovo and Kumanovo, internationals and NGOs have been generally viewed positively and are encouraged to continue 'point[ing] to the problems [in society]' and to continue to 'bridge the ethnic divides'. Such efforts in Albanian areas have prompted some ethnic Macedonian participants to express irritation that so much money has been slated for minorities, especially the ethnic Albanian community.

Given the general degree of scepticism with which Macedonians regard their government officials, security personnel, and civil society actors, it is not surprising all focus group participants cite their own roles as Macedonian citizens as central to providing security for their country. They believe that Macedonian citizens should be the most concerned with the stability and security of their country, but they also held the view that citizens should obey and respect the laws on firearms, weapons collection, and other measures on security. Household survey results show a slight ethnic split in the extent to which citizens hold these views, however. Overall, 84 per cent of respondents see the MOI as the primary security provider regarding robberies, and 73 per cent see it as the main actor to whom the population would turn regarding personal safety. Based on ethnicity, Albanians, Serbs, and Roma communities are more likely to turn to family and friends if facing a crime or security concern. Albanian and Roma respondents also place more trust in international military organizations.

Perceptions of gun control and collection

While focus group participants agreed that there is a great need to disarm the citizens of Macedonia, there was heightened scepticism concerning the efficacy of the recent collection initiative, and a broad consensus that a successful approach to control efforts would have to involve all facets of society from law enforcement to the family unit.



© Reuters/Peter Andrews

Ethnic Albanian villagers load mortars and machine guns onto a tractor trailer in the village of Radusa, a stronghold of the National Liberation Army, as part of the weapons collection effort in September 2001.

Asked before the amnesty period, citizens doubted that the collection initiative would accomplish meaningful disarmament, largely because they felt that those who ultimately participate in the initiative will be the individuals who own only *legal* weapons. Individuals who possess illegal weapons, they said, would not participate based on the disbelief that officials will implement any new enforcement of the law following the amnesty period. Moreover, participants are sceptical of the efficacy of 'reward programmes' designed to induce people to turn in weapons. Most of them feel that such programmes would only create a black market for the weapons. A small portion of participants, however, thought that some kind of compensation should be given to citizens who hand in weapons of value, particularly because of high levels of unemployment and poverty in Macedonia. Finally, citizens were sceptical because they believed that those who do turn in weapons would still keep an additional weapon at home.

These citizens also had plenty of advice for law enforcement officials regarding weapons control efforts and gun collection initiatives. As discussed above, respondents overall felt that the Ministry of Interior needs to take a more pro-active approach towards these efforts.²⁰⁶ To convince citizens that the government is serious about controlling weapons, participants suggested that the government implement a period of 'crackdown' with an intense police presence involved in conducting investigations, house-to-house searches, seizures of illegal weaponry, and harsh punishments of those found with unlicensed weapons and those who ignore the law following the amnesty period. Indeed, participants believe that if the law is not upheld and penalties are not enforced upon future violators, then this and any future weapons collection initiatives will be doomed to fail. Additionally, participants suggested that the police conduct reviews of those citizens in possession of a weapons licence to see if they actually do meet the criteria for the licence (i.e. health, mental health, lack of criminal record, no pattern of violent behaviour). Many participants felt strongly that most of the licences that citizens currently possess were issued because of their political affiliation or connections with the highly publicized rule of the VRMO.

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Aside from these tactical recommendations for government and law enforcement, participants highlighted two specific issues to be addressed if effective control and collection are to become a reality—Macedonian customs and Albanian weapons possession. First, groups pointed to smuggling at the border as obstacles to weapons control, stating that it is the responsibility of customs to stop it. Like their view of other government entities, however, participants were concerned about the high levels of corruption in the organization. Nevertheless, they felt that better customs controls and more thorough searches at the border were necessary. Second, groups reaffirmed the common belief that most of the weapons in society are in the possession of the ethnic Albanians and that the upcoming collection initiative should focus on these areas if they are to attain success. Although these comments came primarily from the ethnic Macedonian participants, the ethnic Albanian participants also acknowledged that the problem of weapons possession is felt in both ethnic groups and that stronger measures are necessary.

Focus groups further revealed that there is a sense among Macedonians that families and other non-governmental entities have an important role to play in changing behaviour and values regarding weapons in society. It is their belief that nothing can be achieved without the support of citizens manifested through efforts in civil society. Some groups encouraged NGOs in particular to remain present in society and to continue to pressure the government and the citizens to reform on issues of weapons control and security. Participants affirmed that the family and the school system must also lead in providing future generations with the critical morals and value systems needed to make better judgements about weapons and violence.

Gendered perceptions of small arms and light weapons

Household survey results show little variation between the perceptions of men and women on most issues. The more pronounced differences relate to the percentages of men and women who would choose to acquire a gun legally if the opportunity were to present itself, and the reasons for doing so. Differences also existed regarding the frequency with which respondents see firearms in their neighbourhood. Most striking were the responses of men and women regarding their feelings of personal security, their attitudes on the number of guns in society, and their opinions on gun collection and control. In these areas, respondents seem inconsistent in their attitudes and in part contradict attitudes found in focus group research.

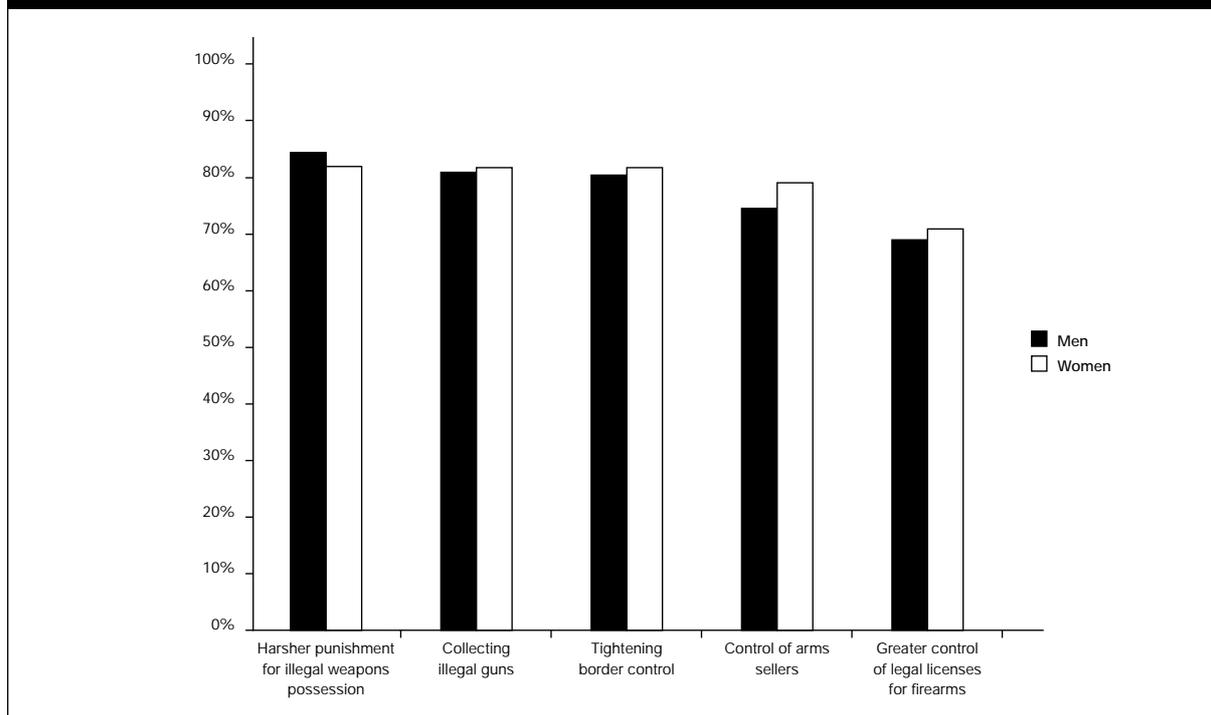
The most prominent of these contradictions concerns the pervasiveness of guns in society. To the question of how often they see firearms in their neighbourhood (aside from with army and police personnel), 76.5 per cent of women answered 'never'. More than half of men, 56.5 per cent, concurred; 28.2 per cent of men and 16.6 per cent of women said they see guns 'less often' in their societies. Added together, 84.7 per cent of men and 93.1 per cent of women responded that, aside from army or police personnel, they see firearms in their neighbourhood never or less often. Moreover, 66.7 per cent of men and 65.7 per cent of women believe that their town/neighbourhood is safer than other areas. Approximately 20 per cent of each gender thought it was the same as other areas, and about 11 per cent of each gender answered 'more dangerous'. What this indicates is that most men and women in the sample feel safe and are not likely to see guns in their neighbourhood on a regular basis.

Despite the fact that respondents feel safe in their neighbourhoods and rarely if ever see guns, a majority of both men and women answered that they felt security in their area compared to conflict-ridden 2001 was either the same or had gotten worse. While 46.3 per cent of men and 43.8 per cent of women felt security has 'stayed the same', 17.7 per cent of men and 20.1 per cent of women felt security has 'gotten worse'. The true perception is clouded further by the percentage of men and women who said that there are too many guns in their area: 42.3 per cent, women (vs. 37.6 per cent of men) thought that there are too many guns in their area, despite the fact that more than 75 per cent of them said that they never see guns in their neighbourhood. For each gender, the majority agreed, however, that the owners of 'too many guns' are criminal groups (48.5 per cent of men, 41.5 per cent of women).

There is little variation regarding gendered views of measures to tighten security. Adding together the percentages of respondents who answered 'a lot' or 'somewhat' to each policy, the results are as follows (see Figure 6.8):

- Harsher punishment for illegal weapons possession: 85 per cent men, 82.8 per cent women ('a lot'—66 per cent men, 62.9 per cent women);
- Collecting illegal guns: 81.7 per cent men, 82.1 per cent women ('a lot'—59.1 per cent men, 56.4 per cent women).
- Tightening border control: 80.7 per cent men, 82.7 per cent women ('a lot'—43.5 per cent men, 47.7 per cent women);
- Control of arm sellers: 74.2 per cent men, 78.6 per cent women ('a lot'—50 per cent men, 52.3 per cent women);
- Greater control of legal licences for firearms: 68.7 per cent men, 71.3 per cent women ('a lot'—39.3 per cent men, 42.9 per cent women).

Figure 6.8 Answers to the household survey question, 'Which of the following will increase security a lot?'



Although most of the respondents selected the collection of illegal weapons as a means to increase security, 15.4 per cent of men and 18.4 per cent of women said such an initiative would be 'unsuccessful'. This figure, however, is only about half of the 36.5 per cent of men and 30.9 per cent of women who said such an action would be 'very unsuccessful'. Asked whether people who own guns illegally would hand them over in the upcoming collection, 78.4 per cent of men and 74.4 per cent of women said 'no'.

One final but startling deviation from focus group research is worth noting: 52.4 per cent of men and 67.4 per cent of women believe that having guns is dangerous to their families. Thirty per cent of men and only 20.5 per cent of women chose the alternative opinion offered—that having a gun helps to protect the family. Yet, 50.3 per cent of men and 66.1 per cent of women would acquire a gun legally if given the opportunity to do so. Only 28.5 per cent of women compared to 45.4 per cent of men said that they would not. While the male figures could more or less add up, the female figures are problematic. Despite the fact that more than 60 per cent of women feel guns are dangerous to families, approximately the same percentage of women would acquire a gun legally if given the chance. In response to the question, 'What would be the main reason for your household to acquire a gun legally?', 72.7 per cent of women answered 'to protect myself/my family', compared to 60.9 per cent of men.

Impact conclusion

The picture we have of the impact of small arms in Macedonia varies depending on the source of data. Actual medical and crime figures, for example, do not necessarily paint a significantly negative portrait of the impact. Overall focus group and survey data, however, suggest that Macedonian citizens are concerned about their security and safety and perceive the general availability and distribution of small arms in society to be rather threatening. To be successful, therefore, any intervention must address the perceptions of Macedonian citizens and enhance the country's collective security environment.

VII. Control measures

This section outlines some crucial aspects for the effective control of small arms and light weapons in Macedonia. These relate to the regulation of arms trade (import, export, and trans-shipment), namely licensing procedures, criteria, inter-agency oversight, stockpile management, border control, verification procedures, penalties, transparency, and civil society involvement, together with regional and international involvement and cooperation.²⁰⁷ Each aspect is evaluated in an attempt to assess national small arms measures and to determine where gaps might exist and what improvements may be needed, especially in terms of possible future accession of Macedonia to the European Union. The section also aims to raise awareness regarding elements that require more attention, underscoring the gaps between policy and practice, and stressing the need for enhancing small arms control measures. The measures are assessed against European Union standards, such as those generally accepted in the OSCE document on small arms and light weapons and the EU Code of Conduct.

Currently, it seems small arms controls in Macedonia are minimal and not appropriately employed in practice. In spite of some efforts by the international community to stabilize and secure the country after the 2001 conflict, little progress has been made in implementing effective control measures; the variance between policy and practice remains Macedonia's greatest weakness.

Licensing procedures, criteria, and inter-agency oversight

The licensing of export, imports, and trans-shipments of weapons are governed by three 2002 laws: the *Law on Manufacture and Trade in Weapons and Military Equipment*, the *Law on Arming and Military Equipment*, and the *Law on External Trade*.²⁰⁸ These laws outline the criteria required to conduct government approved arms sales and give oversight to the Ministry of Economy for commercial export and import of weapons, and to the Ministries of Defence and Interior for the civilian licensing process. The export criteria outlined in these laws do not meet the standards of the EU Code of Conduct. In order to correct this discrepancy, a new draft law, entitled *Law on Arms*, reportedly controls the export, import, and transfer of weapons more closely through a stricter export licensing process. The draft law will also include criteria for control measures that conform to European standards, such as the marking of newly produced weapons and ammunition, improved record keeping on the licensing process, and stricter controls on companies that are issued a licence. The adoption and effective implementation of such a law would require a number of changes in both the necessary infrastructure (such as additional personnel and equipment) and the political will towards reform to reform the export controls process.²⁰⁹

As mentioned in the Guns in Macedonia section of this report, civilian possession is regulated by the 1993 *Law on Procurement, Possession, and Carrying of Weapons*. This law authorizes citizens to be licensed to carry weapons if they are at least 18 years old, mentally fit, physically capable of possessing and carrying a weapon, free from a criminal record, and free of any indication of possible misuse of the weapon.²¹⁰ The previously discussed draft *Law on Arms* would also update the current legal documents on civilian arms possession to European Union standards.²¹¹ The new law would address the procurement, possession, and carrying of arms and maintain the Ministry of Interior's oversight over the civilian licensing process.²¹² Although the new law does update several provisions that govern civilian possession, however, it does not modify the current penalties for violation of this law in accord with European standards. The draft states that violation of this law would incur either a monetary fine of

up to 300,000 denars (USD 5,000) or prison sentence of up to 90 days, seizure of all weapons, and revocation of all licences to possess weapons for three years or of the licence to carry arms for up to one year.²¹³ These penalties are rather minimal when compared to those employed by other European countries, and may not effectively deter potential violators from breaking the law.²¹⁴

Stockpile management

The significant amount of weapons stockpiled by the armed forces and police also contributes to the numbers of small arms and light weapons in the country (see section on Guns in Macedonia, *above*, for specific stockpile numbers). Officials at the ministries of Defence and Interior maintain that their stockpiles are well controlled and subject to strict stockpile management. One source close to the military reports, however, that there is inadequate control and accountability for official Macedonian stockpiles. Moreover, there are large numbers of small arms and light weapons in the army that are obsolete and not well secured.²¹⁵ Insufficient security for these stockpiles leaves them vulnerable as a potential depot to be raided in any future flare-ups of hostilities.

Border controls and customs authority

As previously discussed, Macedonian border security is relatively weak—especially regarding its borders with Kosovo and Albania. Some experts at international organizations have cited the cause of this weakness as the Macedonian government's unwillingness to accept ownership of the problem of border security and its inability to garner the political will necessary to implement reforms. As Macedonia borders on a total of three countries and one international protectorate, officials routinely dismiss the issue of the borders as being 'someone else's problem'.²¹⁶ This disinterest is evident in the minimal checkpoints located at the border and the lack of equipment and training needed to implement new security procedures.²¹⁷ Presently the borders are patrolled by the armed forces, but the EAR's Border Management advisors are working with the Macedonian government to shift these responsibilities to the police, harmonize legislation to European standards, and improve inter-agency communication between the two border agencies.²¹⁸

While the Macedonian army is in charge of the security of the borders as part of their responsibilities under the Ministry of Defence, the Customs Administration is charged with the control of the movement of goods across all points of entry into the country under the 2000 customs law.²¹⁹ Although they retain a reputation of inefficiency and corruption,²²⁰ customs officials have begun taking steps towards reforming their agency. In the spring of 2003, they made a number of successful seizures of ammunition and weapons at the borders, deployed eight mobile enforcement units, and began conducting internal affairs investigations of employees suspected of misconduct.²²¹ Reforms of both the armed forces and the Customs Authority were hindered in the past by a lack of resources, but it is believed that the EAR's assistance on this issue will enable both organizations to commit to serious reforms of their agencies. Insufficient funds and technology necessary for the successful management of the borders, as well as minimal inter-agency communication, and a lack of organizational will to adapt to changes in agency leadership are just some of the challenges that have plagued both border agencies in the past.²²² However, officials are hopeful that the EAR's involvement may in fact enable these agencies to improve their border management skills.

Verification procedures

The lack of resources and communication procedures between customs and border officials translates into minimal verification and monitoring of exports, imports, and transfers of weapons in and out of the country. As of June 2003, customs officials were not mandated to inspect vehicles carrying cargo across the border, but only to verify the paperwork documenting the shipment.²²³ Due to the limited number of personnel working at the border at any given moment, discrepancies occur, and the inadequacy of the inter-agency process in place hinders border officials from catching errors.²²⁴ This may be remedied, however, as the Customs code on procedure is in the process of being re-drafted to conform to European standards. Accordingly, the operational role of the Customs Administration for verification and monitoring of goods will be strengthened under the new legislation.²²⁵

Penalties and enforcement capability

Enforcement of the laws on weapons trade and possession remains minimal. Any possession of unregistered weapons is deemed to be in violation of Article 396 of the Criminal Code entitled 'Illegal Possession of Weapon and Explosive Materials'. Although penalties for arms possession violations are listed in this legislation, as well as in the *Law on Procurement, Possession, and Carrying of Weapons*, enforcement of this law remains negligible. During the five-year period between 1998 and 2003—which includes the 2001 conflict—a total of only 883 criminal charges were filed for illegal weapons possession in spite of the large numbers of small arms and light weapons circulating in the country, which translates into an average of only 161 charges filed per year. These charges were filed against a total of 1,228 offenders and involved a total of 9,876 weapons seized during these proceedings (see Table 7.1).²²⁶

Table 7.1 Types and numbers of small arms and light weapons seized by Macedonian police, 1998–2003

Types of weapons	Numbers of weapons
Military weapons	3,119
Hunting weapons	571
Sports weapons	279
Rest ²²⁷	5,915

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Report on the Republic of Macedonia on the Implementation of the United Nations Action Programme to Combat Illicit Trafficking in SALW, May 2003.

Despite the end of open hostilities following the conflict of 2001, official sources suggest that the trans-border smuggling and illegal possession of weapons in Macedonia persists.²²⁸ Considering the quantities of illegal weapons alleged to be circulating in this country and in the region, the low numbers of charges and seizures indicate that the majority of smugglers of illicit small arms and light weapons are not being apprehended or prosecuted under the current law. Although they are clearly not functioning as much of a deterrent for smugglers, the listed penalties in the criminal code for illegal weapons possession range from fines of USD 100 to USD 5,000, seizure of property, and up to 10 years' imprisonment, but they remain poorly enforced.²²⁹ Moreover, enforcement is hindered by a lack of communication among government agencies. Customs officials do not regularly communicate with the police, nor with the MOD border guards. Information on smugglers is often not shared among parties and intelligence is reportedly not used to enforce the law and crack-down on smuggling.²³⁰

Domestic and international transparency

Inter-agency communication on arms transactions in Macedonia is minimal, and domestic information sharing practices of the Macedonian government about practices relating to small arms and light weapons has been consistently inadequate.²³¹ This may be poised to change, however, as Hari Kostov, the Minister of Interior, Tito Petkovski, a member of parliament from the ruling party SDSM, and Zarko Karadjovski, a member of parliament from the opposition party VMRO-DPMNE, appeared on a political TV talk show to discuss the gun collection initiative in September 2003.²³² These efforts may bode well for future efforts to promote openness and transparency on issues surrounding small arms.

Currently, the country does not rank high in international transparency either. Macedonia does not publish arms export reports or present data on transfers of small arms and light weapons to the UN Comtrade database. However, in 2003, the country submitted for the first time an annual report on the implementation of the *UN Programme of Action*.²³³

Civil society involvement

A few local NGOs are working on small arms and light weapons, but most have had only limited success engaging the government on the issue.²³⁴ The NGOs have been much more active in the community and in organizing and implementing projects such as art contests reflecting 'life without guns' and exchanging toy guns for books. NGOs are also involved in the media and awareness campaign related to the forthcoming gun collection effort. One NGO, Journalists for Children and Women's Rights and Protection of the Environment is a registered participant with the IANSA network and is also the regional focal point for the Balkan Action Network on Small Arms (BANSAs).²³⁵ Although BANSAs is intended to be an effective regional network aimed at tackling the spread of small arms and light weapons in the Balkans through the outreach of NGOs, its efficacy is limited as it suffers from a lack of direction in the organization's goals, as well as minimal participation by regional NGOs. One particular obstacle that hinders NGOs from working together in Macedonia—as in many countries throughout the region—is the fierce competition for financial resources. The different organizations are often placed in competition with one another for funds, which results in minimal cooperation and collaboration between these few NGOs on the issue.²³⁶

Regional and international cooperative efforts

The Republic of Macedonia has been involved with various activities addressing the problem of small arms and light weapons on the national and regional levels. The government recognizes that the significant amounts of weapons present in the country and those circulating through the region affect the stability and security of Macedonia as a whole.²³⁷ Hence the government is actively cooperating with the NATO/EAPC, the Stability Pact, Southeastern Europe Small Arms Clearinghouse (SEESAC), OSCE, UNDP, and the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative Regional Center for Combating Transborder Crime (SECI Center) on issues of weapons control and regional security through participation in regional conferences, consultations, and agreements. These organizations are reciprocating with legal advice and technical support to further Macedonia's future European integration and membership in NATO. Additionally, government officials have participated in regional and international conferences on border control and control measures on small arms and light weapons that aim to address these problems in the region. In spite of its participation in national and regional activities regarding small arms, the government apparently has not yet garnered the amount of political will necessary to implement new elements of a control system.

VIII. Conclusion

Since the Macedonian crisis in 2001, there has been some progress towards an improved security environment in the country. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that tensions remain high and that conflict is still quite possible. Small arms and light weapons are still too plentiful in Macedonia. Citizens express their concerns about weapons availability, but seem to lack the willingness to give them up as their concerns about safety continue. Government controls on small arms have been enhanced on paper, but still lack the proper implementation. Smuggling and cross-border crime remain problematic.

Ultimately, national, regional, and international attention to the various security problems in Macedonia must be increased, confidence must be built, controls must be strengthened, and transparency must be facilitated. For these things to happen, external encouragement and assistance is required. Incentive concepts to encourage voluntary surrender of arms such as Weapons in Exchange for Development (WED) or other international efforts will fail, however, unless people believe in the peace process. There will be little widespread voluntary disarmament without an acceptable political environment. Moreover, WED and similar concepts are likely to be most effective when disarming civilians who trust the security forces. For Macedonia, this means that unless the trust in the police force is improved, weapons collection efforts are likely to be effective only among ethnic Macedonians and will probably achieve less in ethnic Albanian communities. Indeed, Macedonia has had some success with its recent gun collection effort, but much more remains to be done.

Following the end of the 2001 crisis, only a limited process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration began, but was never fully completed. NATO's Operation Essential Harvest acted as a limited disarmament effort that served more as a confidence-building measure, never meant to be a full disarmament campaign. Demobilization of the NLA immediately followed the end of Operation Essential Harvest, and was followed months later by the demobilization of the Macedonian military and police reservists. But with such a high unemployment rate, Macedonia is now in desperate need of a reintegration programme for demobilized combatants from both the NLA and the state security forces. A reintegration programme including job training and education could help turn unemployed former combatants into useful members of society; they would then be less likely to take up arms for criminal reasons or engage in violent political protest.

Good governance in Macedonia, like elsewhere, is the key for long-term plans to enhance peace and stability. Without it, short-term efforts such as gun collection are likely to fail. Therefore, the political will to act, to reform current legislation, and to enforce existing laws must be in place if disarmament initiatives in Macedonia are to bear fruit.

Further research is still needed. Despite the best efforts of this research team, much more data is needed to truly understand the impact of small arms and light weapons in Macedonia. Transparency and better data collection by state authorities would help future research projects.

Endnotes

- ¹ For the sake of brevity, the remainder of the report will refer to 'Macedonia' or the 'Republic of Macedonia' instead of 'The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia', the official name recognized by the United Nations.
- ² In 1994, ethnic Macedonians represented 64.2 per cent and ethnic Albanians 25.2 per cent of the total population of the Republic of Macedonia; CIA World Factbook at www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mk.html#Geo.
- ³ See Jens Reuter, 'Zur Geschichte der UÇK', in Jens Reuter and Conrad Clewing, *Der Kosovo-Konflikt: Ursachen, Verlauf, Perspektiven*, Klagenfurt, Wieser Verlag, 2000; and Stephan Lipsius 'Untergrund-organisationen im Kosovo: Ein Überblick', *Südosteuropa*, Vol. 47, No. 1–2, pp. 75–82.
- ⁴ For more on the referendum and the boycott, see Henryk J. Sokalski, *An Ounce of Prevention: Macedonia and the UN Experience in Preventive Diplomacy*, Washington, D.C., United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003, pp. 40–41.
- ⁵ See Sokalski.
- ⁶ See Sokalski, pp. 65–93; and Keith Brown, *Macedonia: Prevention Can Work*, USIP Special Report 3/00, 27 March 2000, <www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr000327.pdf>.
- ⁷ See Sokalski, pp. 95–151.
- ⁸ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 1998: Macedonia*, <www.hrw.org/worldreport/Helsinki-18.htm>.
- ⁹ See Sokalski; and Violeta Petroska-Beska 'Early Warning and Preventive Action: Macedonia', in Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Vigilance and Vengeance: NGOs Preventing Ethnic Conflict in Divided Societies*, Washington, D.C., Brookings Institute Press, 1996.
- ¹⁰ The Macedonian security forces and in particular the Ministry of Defence were left with limited armaments and equipment following the Yugoslav National Army's withdrawal from the territory of Macedonia. Meanwhile, the UN and Greece imposed arms embargoes on the former Yugoslavia. The unilateral Greece embargo effectively blocked trade to the south, while the UN-imposed embargo blocked all trade with Macedonia's biggest trading partner, Serbia.
- ¹¹ Sokalski, pp. 67–71 and 87–90; and Kurt Bassuener, *The Future of Macedonia: A Balkan Survivor Now Needs Reform*, USIP Special Report 67, <www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr67.html>.
- ¹² While most ethnic Albanian refugees from Kosovo eventually returned home, many ethnic Roma who formerly lived in Kosovo refused to return home due to alleged fears of reprisal attacks by ethnic Albanians who believed the Roma were complacent in Serbian repression of ethnic Albanians. See: Rainer Mattern, *Kosovo: Situation der Minderheiten*, Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe, Bern, 16 April 2002, p. 16. See also Nikolaus Steinberg, 'Macedonia: Refugees Face Deportation', IWPR, Balkan Crisis Report (BCR), No. 466, Skopje, 30 October 2003.
- ¹³ Andreas Heinemann-Grüder and Wolf-Christian Paes, 'Wag the Dog: The Mobilization and Demobilization of the Kosovo Liberation Army', BICC Report No. 20, Bonn, 2001.
- ¹⁴ Iso Rusi, 'From Army to Party: The Politics of the NLA', in *Ohrid and Beyond: A Cross-ethnic Investigation into the Macedonian Crisis*, IWPR: London, 2002, pp. 19–34.
- ¹⁵ Tim Ripley, 'Intentions Unclear as NLA Hands over Arms', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 October 2001.
- ¹⁶ For more on the Ohrid Framework Agreement, see: Vasko Popetrevski and Veton Latifi, 'The Ohrid Framework Agreement Negotiations', in *Ohrid and Beyond: A Cross-ethnic Investigation into the Macedonian Crisis*, IWPR: London, 2002, pp. 49–57.
- ¹⁷ Wolf-Christian Paes, 'Weapons Collection in the Context of Peace Negotiations: Macedonia's Harvest Revisited', in *Small Arms Survey: Development Denied*, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 289. See also Alice Ackermann, 'Macedonia in a Post-peace Agreement Environment: A Role for Conflict Prevention and Reconciliation', *The International Spectator*, Vol. 37, No. 1, January–March 2002, pp. 71–82.
- ¹⁸ See Brenda Pearson, 'Putting Peace into Practice: Can Macedonia's New Government Meet the Challenge?', USIP Special Report 96, November 2002, <www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr96.html>; and European Stability Initiative (ESI), 'The Other Macedonian Conflict', ESI Discussion Paper, Berlin, 20 February 2002.
- ¹⁹ During the conflict, reports from international journalists focused on ethnic discrimination as the main motivation for the NLA. See BBC News Online, 'Fighting Rages in Northern Macedonia', 2 July 2001, at <news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1417395.stm>; BBC News Online, 'Q&A: The Macedonian Peace Process', 21 November 2001, at <news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1331772.stm>; and Altin Raxhimi, 'Ethnic tension simmers in Macedonia', CNN.com, 9 March 2001, at <www.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/europe/03/09/macedonia.analysis/index.html>.
- ²⁰ Interviews conducted with former NLA rebels in Tetovo, Skopje, and Kumanovo, April–July 2003.
- ²¹ For more on this incident and the Macedonian conflict in general, see: Biljana Vankovska, 'Current Perspectives on

- Macedonia: Part I—The Path from “Oasis of Peace” to “Powder Keg” of the Balkans’, a four-part series published through the Heinrich Böll Foundation, available at <www.boell.de/en/05_world/1733.html>.
- ²² For more, see Dragan Nikolic, ‘Macedonian Border Dispute Nearing End’, IWPR, BCR, No. 221, Skopje, 22 January 2001; Agim Fetahu, ‘Macedonians Enraged by Kosovo Vote’, IWPR, BCR, No. 339, Skopje, 30 May 2002; and Steve Liewer, ‘Kosovo Ethnic Albanians Angry at UN Decision to Turn Their Land over to Macedonia’, *European and Pacific Stars & Stripes*, European edition: Kosovo Bureau, 5 March 2002.
- ²³ For more on corruption in Macedonia and its involvement in the 2001 conflict, see Robert Hislope, ‘Organized Crime in a Disorganized State: How Corruption Contributed to Macedonia’s Mini-War’, *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 49, No. 3, May/June 2002, pp. 33–41; International Crisis Group (ICG), ‘Macedonia’s Public Secret: How Corruption Drags the Country Down’, *ICG Balkan Report*, No. 133, Skopje/Brussels, 14 August 2002; Vankovska, ‘Current Perspectives on Macedonia’.
- ²⁴ Robert Alagjovzovski, ‘Lions and Tigers and Elections’, originally appeared in Transitions Online (<www.tol.cz>), *TOL: Intelligent Eastern Europe, Balkan Reconstruction Report*, Skopje, 22 July 2002; Saso Ordanoski, ‘Reading between the Lions’, IWPR, BCR, No. 278, Skopje, 10 September 2001; Ripley, ‘Stakes High in Macedonia Election’, *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, August 2002, pp. 40–41.
- ²⁵ Pearson.
- ²⁶ ICG, ‘Macedonia’s Public Secret’.
- ²⁷ Andreas Klein and Latifi, ‘Die Opposition gewinnt die Parlamentswahlen in Mazedonien’, in *KAS Auslandsinformationen*, October 2002, pp. 74–75.
- ²⁸ James Pettifer, ‘Ali Ahmeti and the New Albanian Political Party in FYROM’, in *Südosteuropa*, Vol. 51, No. 1–3 2002, pp. 88–92.
- ²⁹ See ‘New Gun Battle in Macedonia,’ CNN, 4 April 2002, at <www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/04/04/macedonia.clash>.
- ³⁰ Ordanoski, ‘New Insurgent Group Appears to Threaten Macedonian Elections’, *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, September 2002, pp. 36–37.
- ³¹ The OSCE posted its largest task force to date: some 900 elections monitors. NATO continued its military mission to provide security to the international observers.
- ³² For a report about the incident, see <www.mhc.org.mk/eng/a_izveshtai/a_2003-05mi.htm>.
- ³³ Ismail Sinani, ‘AKSH: Pas dy javësh fillon lufta në Maqedoni’, *Fakti*, Skopje, 3 June 2003, p. 5.
- ³⁴ Dejan Nikolovski, *Dnevnik*, Skopje, 4 July 2003, p. 13.
- ³⁵ Ordanoski, ‘Macedonian Police Caught in the Middle’, *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, 1 November 2001; Ordanoski, ‘Lions and Tigers’, p. 43.
- ³⁶ Ordanoski, ‘Lions and Tigers: The Militarization of the Macedonian Right’, in *Ohrid and Beyond: A Cross-ethnic Investigation into the Macedonian Crisis*, IWPR: London, 2002, p. 43.
- ³⁷ Ordanoski, ‘Lions and Tigers’, p. 43.
- ³⁸ Ordanoski, ‘Lions and Tigers’, p. 43.
- ³⁹ Ordanoski, ‘Macedonian Police Caught in the Middle’; Ordanoski, ‘Reading between the Lions’; Alagjovzovski, ‘Lions and Tigers and Elections’.
- ⁴⁰ Interviews with NATO and OSCE officials, Skopje, June–July 2002.
- ⁴¹ Interviews with NATO, OSCE, and Ministry of Interior officials, Skopje, June–July 2002.
- ⁴² Ordanoski, ‘Macedonian Police Caught in the Middle’.
- ⁴³ Interviews with MOI officials, June–July 2002. See also report at <www.law.nyu.edu/eecr/vol11_12num4_1/constitutionwatch/macedonia.html>.
- ⁴⁴ Todor Stojcevski, ‘Macedonia: Lions Menace Ends’, IWPR, BCR, No. 401, Skopje, 28 January 2003; Alagjovzovski, ‘Lions and Tigers and Elections’; Ordanoski, ‘Lions and Tigers: The Militarization of the Macedonian Right’, in *Ohrid and Beyond: A Cross-ethnic Investigation into the Macedonian Crisis*, IWPR: London, 2002, pp. 44–45.
- ⁴⁵ Alagjovzovski, ‘Lions and Tigers and Elections’; Ordanoski, ‘Reading between the Lions’, pp. 40–41.
- ⁴⁶ Stojcevski.
- ⁴⁷ See ‘Stockpiles’ chapter of the *Small Arms Survey 2001*, p. 69.
- ⁴⁸ See authors’ interviews at the Macedonian Police Academy and with officials at the MOI, May and June 2003.
- ⁴⁹ Author’s conversations with experts and analysts familiar with weapons stockpiles, September–October 2003.
- ⁵⁰ Zoran Kusovac, ‘Macedonia Teeters on the Brink of Disaster’, *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, vol. 13, no. 6, June 2001, p. 17; Ripley, ‘Insurgency in Macedonia Drives Balkans Arms Trade’, *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, 1 July 2001.
- ⁵¹ Kusovac, ‘Macedonia Teeters on the Brink of Disaster’, pp. 16–19.
- ⁵² Kusovac, ‘Macedonia Teeters on the Brink of Disaster’, p. 12.
- ⁵³ UN Security Council resolution 713 (25 September 1991).
- ⁵⁴ Ripley, ‘Insurgency in Macedonia Drives Balkans Arms Trade’.

- ⁵⁵ Kusovac, 'Macedonia Teeters on the Brink of Disaster', p. 12.
- ⁵⁶ Ripley, 'Insurgency in Macedonia Drives Balkans Arms Trade'.
- ⁵⁷ Kusovac, 'Macedonia Teeters on the Brink of Disaster', pp. 16–19.
- ⁵⁸ Kusovac, 'Macedonia Teeters on the Brink of Disaster', pp. 16–19.
- ⁵⁹ *Jane's Information Group*, 'Corruption in Macedonia', Foreign Report, 7 February 2002, <www.janes.com>.
- ⁶⁰ Ripley, 'Croatia Bolsters Macedonian Forces', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 12 September 2001, <www.janes.com>.
- ⁶¹ See Michael Evans and Anthony Lloyd, 'Russia and Ukraine Secretly Fly Arms to Macedonian Forces', *The London Times*, 22 August 2001, <web.lexis-nexis.com>.
- ⁶² Ripley, 'Macedonia Talks Peace but Prepares for War', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol. 13, No. 9, September 2001, p. 3.
- ⁶³ Ministry of Defence, 'Template for Annual Information on SALW Import', Annex 4, Report for calendar year 2001. Information provided by MOD officials, Skopje, August 2003.
- ⁶⁴ John Hill, 'Vlado Buckovski: Macedonian Minister of Defence', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 13 August 2003.
- ⁶⁵ Hill.
- ⁶⁶ Ministry of Defence stockpiles as of 21 August 2003, information provided by MOD officials, Skopje, August 2003.
- ⁶⁷ Interviews with MOD officials, June–August 2003; MOD Report to OSCE, 'Annex 1: Template for the National Stockpile Management and Security Procedures', 1 April 2003.
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- ⁶⁹ Kusovac, 'How Many Weapons in Macedonia?', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 29 August 2001.
- ⁷⁰ Milan Gorjance, 'Small Arms and Light Weapons and National Security,' paper prepared for the workshop on SALW and the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, Ljubljana, 27 January 2000; also cited in Bonn International Centre for Conversion, *Conversion Survey 2002: Global Disarmament, Demilitarization and Demobilization*, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft: Baden-Baden, 2002, pp. 126–128.
- ⁷¹ Interviews with former and current employees of the Ministry of Interior, June–August 2002.
- ⁷² See Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), *Report on the Republic of Macedonia on the Implementation of the United Nations Action Programme to Combat Illicit Trafficking in SALW*, May 2003.
- ⁷³ Interview with the head of the Organized Crime and Firearms Trafficking Unit, Ministry of Interior, Skopje August 2002.
- ⁷⁴ Mire Markoski, director of the Organized Crime and Firearms Trafficking Unit, Ministry of Interior, Macedonia. (Quoted in and translated from: Delevska.)
- ⁷⁵ Delevska.
- ⁷⁶ Interview with UNDP office in Tirana, Albania, April 2003.
- ⁷⁷ Macedonian Information Centre, 'About 700,000 Pieces of Illegal Weapons in Macedonia and the Region', Skopje, 18 July 2001; *Dnevnik*, 'Vo Makedonija i regionot ima okolu 700,000 parchnja crno oruzja', Skopje, 18 July 2001.
- ⁷⁸ The nationwide household survey was administered and results compiled by the Institute for Democracy, Solidarity and Civil Society (IDSCS) in Skopje.
- ⁷⁹ The last census, conducted in 2000, is highly controversial and has never been fully recognized as accurate in Macedonia. If we use the census population figure of about 2,033,568, our estimate of potential illegal weapon owners would range from 110,759 to 170,200. Regardless of which census figure is used, a margin of error of +/- 3.2 per cent (estimated by the IDSCS after completing the household survey) should also be taken into consideration. Moreover, the percentage of those who own guns in Macedonia could be even higher, given that researchers involved in conducting the household survey reported that some respondents who answered 'no' to the question about gun ownership did not appear to be telling the truth (i.e. researchers noted long pauses or sceptical grins before respondents answered with 'no').
- ⁸⁰ A International Crime Victimization Survey conducted by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) in 2000 suggests, in fact, that within its region, Macedonia has the third highest rate of gun ownership per person (the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia placing first and Albania coming in second). See the survey data at <www.unicri.it/icvs/index.htm>.
- ⁸¹ Author's interviews with NLA ex-combatants, May–June 2003.
- ⁸² Ripley, 'Intentions Unclear as NLA Hands over Arms', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 October 2001; Ordanoski, 'Lions and Tigers: The Militarization of the Macedonian Right', in *Ohrid and Beyond: A Cross-ethnic Investigation into the Macedonian Crisis*, IWPR: London, 2002, p. 38.
- ⁸³ Kusovac, 'How Many Weapons in Macedonia?' *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 29 August 2001.
- ⁸⁴ Interview with OSCE officials, Tetovo, June 2003.
- ⁸⁵ 'How Many Groups, How Many Guns?', *The Economist*, 25 August 2001, pp. 26–27.

- ⁸⁶ Kusovac, 'How Many Weapons in Macedonia?'.
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⁹⁰ Ripley, 'Intentions Unclear as NLA Hands over Arms', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 October 2001.
⁹¹ Ripley, 'Insurgency in Macedonia Drives Balkan Arms Trade', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 7 July 2001.
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⁹⁶ ICG, 'Macedonia's Public Secret'.
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¹⁰⁰ Ripley, 'Insurgency in Macedonia Drives Balkans Arms Trade'.
¹⁰¹ Blerim Haxhijaj, 'The NLA's Arms Suppliers', IWPR, BCR, No. 272, Pristina, 17 August 2001.
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¹⁰⁵ Ripley, 'Intentions Unclear as NLA Hands over Arms'; Ripley, 'Insurgency in Macedonia Drives Balkan Arms Trade'; Kusovac, 'How Many Weapons in Macedonia?'.
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¹¹⁵ Belgzim Kamberi, 'Albanian Guerrilla Wanted by All', IWPR, BCR, No. 426, Presevo, 29 April 2003.
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¹¹⁹ See MICEI Web site at <www.micei.com.mk>.
¹²⁰ Ripley, 'Insurgency in Macedonia Drives Balkans Arms Trade'.
¹²¹ 'How Many Groups, How Many Guns?', *The Economist*, 25 August 2001, pp. 26–27.
¹²² Fisher.
¹²³ Vladimir Jovanovski and Lirim Dulovi, 'A New Battlefield: The Struggle to Ratify the Ohrid Agreement', in *Ohrid and Beyond: A Cross-ethnic Investigation into the Macedonian Crisis*, IWPR: London, 2002, p. 61.
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- ¹³⁹ <www.smallarms.org.mk>, 18 December 2003; the Web site gives no similar reference for firearms.
- ¹⁴⁰ Author's correspondence with UNDP, Skopje, 17 December 2003.
- ¹⁴¹ <www.smallarms.org.mk>, 18 December 2003.
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- ¹⁴⁴ See Sami Faltas and Wolf-Christian Paes, *You Have Removed the Devil From Our Door: An Assessment of the UNDP Small Arms and Light Weapons Control (SALWC) Project in Albania*, SEESAC, APD 20, Belgrade, 30 October 2003, particularly pp. 15–19; Anna Khakee and Nicolas Florquin, *Kosovo and the Gun*, Special Report, Small Arms Survey, Geneva, 2003.
- ¹⁴⁵ In the village of Shengjergj in Tirana prefecture (population 4,500), individual citizens held more than 2,000 guns in the wake of the 1997 political riots, despite the fact that the nearest arms depots, from which the guns were taken, was more than 30 kilometres away over difficult mountain roads. When interviewed in the summer of 2003 on behalf of UNDP, the village elders admitted to having succumbed to a 'national paranoia' during the crisis period, despite being far removed from the trouble zones.
- ¹⁴⁶ Among them is the *Kanun i Skënderbeut* (Law of Skanderbeg), the *Kanun i Papazhulit* (Law of Priest Julius) and the *Kanun i Malësisë së Madhe* (Law of the High Mountains); see Michael Schmidt-Neke, 'Der Kanun der Nordalbanischen Berge: Hintergrund der Nordalbanischen Lebensweise', in Robert Elsie, ed., *Der Kanun*, Peje, Dukagjini Balkan Books, 2001, p. 13.
- ¹⁴⁷ Gjin Marku, 'The Kanun Bastardized', in *Kanun: Periodical Magazine for Human Rights*, No. 2, 2000–2001, Tirana, pp. 26–29.
- ¹⁴⁸ Neritan Alibali, 'Some Opinions on Ways of Collecting Arms in Albania', paper prepared for the Albanian Atlantic Association Seminar on Possible Alternatives and Ways for the Collection of Arms in Albania, Tirana 24–25 October 1998.
- ¹⁴⁹ Khakee and Florquin, p. 31.
- ¹⁵⁰ Michael Schmidt-Neke, p. 24; the author explains that incarceration was not acceptable as punishment for a man of honour in traditional Albanian society.
- ¹⁵¹ Milan Gorjanc.
- ¹⁵² Gjin Marku, p. 10.
- ¹⁵³ Gjin Marku, p. 27.
- ¹⁵⁴ CIA World Fact Book at <www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mk.html#Geo>.
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- ¹⁵⁹ Authors' interview with an official from the EAR, Skopje, May 2003.
- ¹⁶⁰ Authors' interview with an official from the EAR, Skopje, May 2003. Also see ICG, *Moving Macedonia toward Self-Sufficiency*.
- ¹⁶¹ Comments made by NATO Secretary Lord George Robertson, Ohrid Regional Conference on Border Security and Management, 22 May 2003. Quoted in Valentin Nesovski, 'Co-operation to Open Balkan Borders,' *Southeast European Times*, 28 May 2003, at <www.balkantimes.com>.
- ¹⁶² ICG, *Macedonia's Public Secret*.
- ¹⁶³ Ian Davis, Chrissie Hirst, and Bernardo Mariani, *Organized Crime, Corruption, and Illicit Arms Trafficking in an Enlarged EU*, Saferworld report, December 2001, p. 25.
- ¹⁶⁴ Authors' interview with an official at the Customs Administration, Skopje, Republic of Macedonia, June 2003.
- ¹⁶⁵ *Way Forward Document*, Ohrid Regional Conference on Border Security and Management, 22 May 2003. See also EAR, 'Training of Border Guards for the Monitoring of the Green Border', at <www.ear.eu.int/macedonia/fyrom-a1a2d3f4.htm>; see also, NATO HQ Skopje, '2nd Border Security Management Meeting', 30 June 2003, at <www.afsouth.nato.int/organization/NHQSKOPJE/FRONT%20PAGE/Second%20Meeting%20in%20Tirana/SecondMeetingInTirana.htm>.
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- ¹⁶⁷ EAR, 'Training of Border Guards for the Monitoring of the Green Border'.
- ¹⁶⁸ Authors' interview with an official at the EAR.
- ¹⁶⁹ Authors' interview with an official at the Customs Administration, Skopje, June 2003.
- ¹⁷⁰ See corruption indices at <www.vitosha-research.com/corind/seldi_apr2002eng.htm#5>.
- ¹⁷¹ Authors' interviews with officials at the EAR, May 2003, and the Customs Administration, Skopje, June 2003. See also, <www.customs.gov.mk>.
- ¹⁷² See Khakee and Florquin.
- ¹⁷³ Authors' interviews with government officials at the Ministry of the Interior and with an official at a local Macedonian NGO, Skopje, June and July 2003.
- ¹⁷⁴ Authors' interview with a government official at the Ministry of the Interior, Skopje, June 2003; see also, *Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: The Nature of the Problem*, Saferworld, June 2002, p. 55.
- ¹⁷⁵ Authors' interviews with officials from UNDP, Tirana, Albania, March 2003, and with officials in Macedonia and Kosovo, April 2003.
- ¹⁷⁶ EAR, 'Training of Border Guards for the Monitoring of the Green Border'.
- ¹⁷⁷ Olaf Werner, presentation at NATO/EAPC/SEE group seminar on the Collection of SALW and Regional Control Regimes, 19 March 2003; authors' interview with an official from the EUBM, Skopje, May 2003; authors' interviews with an ex-combatant in Skopje, May 2003; and Khakee and Florquin.
- ¹⁷⁸ 'Border Guards Thwart Attempt to Smuggle Arms Into Kosovo,' *Belgrade Tanjug Domestic Service*, 28 February 1999.
- ¹⁷⁹ Authors' interview with an official from the EAR, Skopje, May 2003.
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- ¹⁸² Authors' interview with officials from the Macedonian Ministries of Defence and Interior, the EAR, the OSCE, and various Macedonian NGOs, April–June 2003.
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- ¹⁹¹ The figure is based on hospital data covering the last six months of 2000 and the first six months of 2002.
- ¹⁹² UNDP *Human Development Report 2003*, at <www.undp.org/hdr2003/pdf/hdr03_complete.pdf>.
- ¹⁹³ The figure is based on hospital data covering the last six months of 2000 and the first six months of 2002.
- ¹⁹⁴ The figure is based on hospital data covering the last six months of 2000 and the first six months of 2002.
- ¹⁹⁵ The hospitals are located in Tetovo, Kumanovo, Struga, Strumica, and Prilep.
- ¹⁹⁶ The numbers of gunshot incidents are not necessarily consistent in the two papers. For the purpose of this report, an average of the two numbers is presented.
- ¹⁹⁷ There is no data for the remaining 6 per cent.
- ¹⁹⁸ The calculation takes into account Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, and Moldova.
- ¹⁹⁹ See INTERPOL crime statistics at <www.interpol.int>. For Macedonia's criminal victimization rate compared to those within its region, see the International Crime Victimization Survey conducted by UNICRI at <ruljjs.leidenuniv.nl/group/jfcr/222/icvs/data/CE_vic.htm>.
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- ²⁰¹ For survey results that also provide a view of weapons in Macedonian society as threatening, see ADI and Saferworld, p. 6.
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- ²⁰³ Participants in Kocani and Strumica perceive themselves to be more secure due to their mono-ethnic environment.
- ²⁰⁴ See author's personal interviews in Macedonia, February–June 2003, and focus group research, April–May 2003.
- ²⁰⁵ For additional survey results that confirm the distrust of authorities in Macedonia, see ADI and Saferworld, p. 7.
- ²⁰⁶ The opinions of ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian respondents and participants vary on this issue. Ethnic Macedonians, for example, are more likely than ethnic Albanians to suggest that the police should be responsible for gun collection. For results that confirm this finding, see ADI and Saferworld, p. 9.
- ²⁰⁷ Various international and regional small arms and light weapons agreements and instruments, such as the *UN Programme of Action* and the OSCE Document on SALW, served to inform the framework developed for this research effort. For the UN document, see <disarmament.un.org/cab/poa.html>; for the OSCE document, see www.osce.org/docs/english/fsc/2000/decisions/fscew231.htm; for the EU Code of Conduct, see <www.smallarmssurvey.org/source_documents/Regional%20fora/European%20Union/EU%20res%20B4-0033_98.pdf>.
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- ²⁰⁹ Authors' interviews with Macedonian officials from the MOI, NATO and NGOs, Skopje, June 2003.
- ²¹⁰ Articles 11–19, Law on the Procurement, Possession, and Carrying of Arms, *Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*, No. 26/93.
- ²¹¹ *Draft: Proposal for the Passage of a Law on Arms*, MOI, Skopje, May 2002, p. 1.
- ²¹² *Draft: Proposal for the Passage of a Law on Arms*, MOI, Skopje, May 2002, p. 1.
- ²¹³ Articles 65–70 of the *Draft: Proposal for the Passage of a Law on Arms*, MOI, Skopje, May 2002.
- ²¹⁴ Additional and more stringent penalties for illegal possession of a weapon exist under Article 396 of the Criminal Code of Macedonia. See Section V, Smuggling and trafficking in Macedonia.
- ²¹⁵ Authors' interview with officials from the Ministries of Defence and Interior, as well as with a former government official, May 2003.
- ²¹⁶ Authors' interview with an official from the EUBM, May 2003.

- ²¹⁷ See the map showing the location of the 13 customs checkpoints in Macedonia at www.ttfse.org/default.aspx?p=94&c=87.
- ²¹⁸ See map at www.ttfse.org/default.aspx?p=94&c=87; EAR, 'Training of Border Guards for the Monitoring of the Green Border'.
- ²¹⁹ See EAR, 'Training of Border Guards for the Monitoring of the Green Border'; and the 2000 Law on Customs, at www.customs.gov.mk.
- ²²⁰ Based on information collected from 12 participatory focus groups held in nine cities throughout Macedonia (Skopje, Kocani, Prilep, Tetovo, Kumanovo, Gostivar, Bitola, Strumica, and Stip). See also, corruption perception statistics at www.vitosha-research.com/corind/seldi_apr2002eng.htm#5.
- ²²¹ Authors' interviews with officials at the EAR, May 2003; the Customs Administration, June 2003; a NATO official, June 2003; see also, www.customs.gov.mk.
- ²²² Authors' interviews with an official at the EAR, May 2003, and with an official at the Customs Administration, June 2003.
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- ²²⁷ As stated specifically by the MFA in its *Report on the Republic of Macedonia on the Implementation of the United Nations Action Programme to Combat Illicit Trafficking in SALW*, May 2003.
- ²²⁸ Author's interview with an official at the MOI, Skopje, June 2003.
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- ²³⁰ Authors' interviews with officials at the Macedonian MOI, MOD, and Customs Administration, and with officials at the EAR, May and June 2003.
- ²³¹ Authors' interviews with officials at the MOI, NATO, MOD, and several local NGOs, May and June 2003.
- ²³² CUMU, a political TV show broadcast on Macedonia's A1 TV, 30 September 2003.
- ²³³ See disarmament.un.org:8080/cab/docs/nationalreports/2002/macedonia.pdf.
- ²³⁴ These NGOs include Journalists for Children and Women's Rights and Protection of the Environment (JWCE), the Institute for Democracy, Solidarity and Civil Society (IDSCS), FORUM, and CIVIL.
- ²³⁵ See *Macedonia: SEESAC Short Mission Report*, at www.undp.org.yu/seesac/about/maced1.htm.
- ²³⁶ Authors' interviews with representatives from the Macedonian NGOs FORUM and JCWE, June 2003.
- ²³⁷ MFA, *Report on the Republic of Macedonia on the Implementation of the United Nations Action Programme to Combat Illicit Trafficking in SALW*, May 2003.

Appendix 1: Chronology of the 2001 Macedonian crisis

- 21 January 2001 NLA forces attack a Macedonian police station in the village of Tearce, killing one policeman and wounding three.
- 16 February 2001 An ethnic Macedonian television crew is 'arrested' by NLA forces in the village of Tanusevci and later released. Macedonian security forces respond to the incident, sparking a battle to secure the village.
- 23 February 2001 Skopje–Belgrade Border Agreement signed, settling an outstanding dispute about the border between the former Yugoslav republics. The agreement gives Macedonia roughly 12 sq. km of Kosovo territory while Serbia gains about 2.5 sq. km from Macedonia. The Agreement demarcates the border according to international best practice, using natural features of the terrain wherever possible, but it is signed without any input from representatives of Kosovo.
- 27 February 2001 The ARM halts its advance on the village of Tanusevci and requests KFOR troops to dislodge rebel elements from the border area.
- 4 March 2001 Two ARM soldiers are killed when their vehicle drives over a landmine near Tanusevci. A third soldier is shot by sniper fire.
- 5 March 2001 The ARM launches an offensive to retake Tanusevci, forcing NLA fighters to withdraw from the village, with some NLA forces entering Kosovo territory.
- 10–11 March 2001 US, Polish, and Lithuanian KFOR troops occupy Kosovo border villages of Debalde and Mijak.
- 12 March 2001 Macedonian security forces enter the village of Tanusevci while rebels withdraw to villages of Brest and Malina.
- 14 March 2001 During an ethnic Albanian peace protest in Tetovo, small arms fire directed at Macedonian security forces erupts from hills surrounding Tetovo. For several days, guerrilla fighters fire in the general direction of the town. One civilian is killed in the crossfire.
- 17 March 2001 An ARM helicopter crashes while reinforcing a garrison on top of Mount Sar, killing one of the flight crew and wounding 12 police officers.
- 20–25 March 2001 ARM soldiers begin an offensive to retake the hills surrounding Tetovo, eventually retaking all positions held by the NLA.
- 29 March 2001 During a military offensive along the Kosovo border, two civilians are killed, including a British journalist, and 12 are injured when a 120 mm mortar lands on the Kosovo side of the border. The mortar was allegedly fired by ARM troops at fleeing NLA guerrillas, but after an official investigation, Macedonian security forces denied any responsibility.
- 28 April 2001 A convoy of Macedonian security forces is ambushed on the road between Selce and Vejce villages near the Kosovo border. Four police officers and four soldiers from the army's elite Wolves unit are killed and another six are wounded. Following the release of the names of the men killed in the attack, anti-Albanian riots break out in the men's hometowns of Bitola and Prilep. Mobs destroy Albanian-owned shops and homes, while one ethnic Macedonian is shot by an Albanian restaurant owner acting in self-defence.
- 3 May 2001 Near the village of Vakcince, two ARM soldiers are killed and one is captured by NLA guerrillas. The ARM launches an offensive the same day to retake Vakcince and Slupcane.

- 7 May 2001 The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) announces that hundreds of civilians are caught in the crossfire between NLA guerrillas and the ARM in the villages of Vakeince and Slupcane. The ICRC brokers a ceasefire in order to remove civilians from their villages.
- 8 May 2001 Prime Minister Ljupco Georgievski announces the formation of the Unity government, which includes all the main ethnic Albanian and Macedonian parties in Parliament.
- 4–18 June 2001 Rebel fighters cut the water supply to the city of Kumanovo. The city's residents remain without running water and dependent on emergency shipments of water.
- 14 June 2001 President of Macedonia Boris Trajkovski announces a peace plan, officially requesting help from NATO to end the conflict.
- 22 June 2001 Macedonian security forces begin an offensive to dislodge rebel positions in Aracinovo, from where the rebels have threatened to strike the Skopje airport.
- 26 June 2001 The siege of Aracinovo ends. A convoy of NATO troops from Kosovo removes the rebel forces along with their entire arsenal from Aracinovo to another rebel-held village in the Lipkovo region. Anti-Western riots break out in Skopje and mobs storm the Macedonian parliament building, burn UN and OSCE vehicles, and attack a BBC correspondent.
- 27 June 2001 United States President George W. Bush issues the 'Blacklist', an executive order freezing the financial assets of persons who threaten international stabilization efforts in Southeast Europe. The list includes leading members of the National Liberation Army (NLA or UÇK), Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja, and Bujanovac, and the Kosovo Protection Corps.
- 28–29 June 2001 United States Special Envoy James Pardew and European Union Special Envoy François Léotard arrive in Macedonia to negotiate an agreement between political parties in Parliament for constitutional reforms to end the crisis.
- 29 June 2001 North Atlantic Council approves a plan for Operation Essential Harvest, on four conditions: 1) the signing of the political agreement by main parliamentary leaders, 2) a Status of Forces Agreement with the Republic of Macedonia and agreed conditions for the Task Force, 3) an agreed plan for weapons collection, including an explicit agreement by the ethnic Albanian armed groups to disarm, and 4) the establishment of an enduring ceasefire.
- 8 August 2001 An ambush on a convoy of Macedonian soldiers results in 10 deaths on the Skopje–Tetovo Highway.
- 10–12 August 2001 In a highly criticized police raid, Macedonian police kill 10 civilians and arrest more than 100 men in the village of Ljuboten.
- 13 August 2001 The main political parties in the Macedonian Parliament sign the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The signatories agree to constitutional changes and reforms to better the situation of Macedonia's minority communities.
- 26 August 2001 Operation Essential Harvest begins collecting weapons voluntarily surrendered by guerrillas of the National Liberation Army.
- 26 September 2001 Operation Essential Harvest officially ends with the collection and destruction of 3,875 pieces of weaponry and 397,625 mines, explosives, and ammunition.
- 27 September 2001 NATO's Operation Amber Fox begins. The leadership of the NLA announces the end of the conflict and the demobilization of the NLA.
- 9 October 2001 The president of Macedonia grants amnesty to NLA rebels.
- 16 November 2001 The Macedonian Parliament approves the Ohrid Framework Agreement and the reforms to the constitution.

Appendix 2: The small arms problem in Macedonia: The research matrix

Research goal:

To analyse and understand the extent of the small arms and light weapons (SALW) problem in Macedonia following a period of weapons acquisition and distribution and violent conflict.

Specific research objectives include:

- to highlight the political, economic, historical, social, and cultural context relevant to understanding the SALW situation
- to assess the geographic and demographic distribution, availability, possession, and use of SALW
- to highlight SALW circulation, trafficking, and proliferation
- to show the impact of SALW on society—direct and indirect
- to outline measures established and needed to control, solve, and otherwise manage the SALW situation
- to sketch implications of SALW problems based on data gathered and analysed

Research objectives	Data required	Data sources
1. to highlight the political, economic, historical, social, and cultural context relevant to understanding the SALW situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • levels of development and stability before and after independence (pre-1991 and post-1991), before and after conflict (pre-2001 and post-2001) • causes of the conflict • historical and cultural interpretations of weapons possession and use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary (government documents and statistics, interviews) and secondary sources (historical accounts, expert interpretations) • workshop with expert analysts from Macedonia with anthropological, sociological, psychological, historical, and political perspectives
2. to assess the geographic and demographic distribution, availability, possession, and use of SALW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SALW acquisition, possession, distribution, storage, and use among Macedonian authorities (police and military forces), paramilitary forces, private security firms, ex-combatants and civilians • types of SALW that have been acquired, are possessed and distributed throughout Macedonia • SALW production in Macedonia—sales and distribution as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary (government documents and statistics, interviews with relevant authorities, officials, and experts, invoices, end-user certificates, focus groups) and secondary (international and local media, expert analyses, and relevant databases) sources • upper and lower thresholds to be established and adjusted for loss, collection, and destruction • past and present collection programme data and information • surveys of paramilitary forces and ex-combatants if feasible
3. to highlight SALW circulation, trafficking, and proliferation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trafficking sources; in-country and trans-border movements • key transit points • SALW prices, sources, buyers, and value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary (government official and expert interviews, documents, border site inspections) and secondary (international and local media, expert analyses, international organization authorities, and relevant databases) sources • community focus groups • review of weapons collection data

Research objectives	Data required	Data sources
<p>4. to show the impact of SALW on society—direct and indirect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impact on health and welfare (fatalities and injuries) of Macedonian population • impact on political and economic development and stability • impact on criminal activity • impact on community perceptions of security and insecurity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review of patient records at five area hospitals—one in Tetovo and one in Kumanovo (primarily Albanian communities in the 2001 conflict area), one in Strumica and one in Prilep (mainly Macedonian communities outside of the conflict area), and one in Struga (an ethnically mixed town outside of the conflict area)—to establish the fatal and non-fatal injuries attributed to SALW, as well as the demographics of the injuries • statistics, documents, and interviews with officials and experts relevant for political and economic development • crime statistics obtained from police forces • focus groups conducted in six Macedonian towns (Skopje, Kochani, Prilep, Tetovo, Kumanovo, and Bitola); questions centre on definitions of security and insecurity, identification of key security providers, key users of weapons, types of weapons in the area and types of actions in which they are used, and weapons possession and use among youth and in schools (focus group leader facilitates participant preparation of lists, maps, and comparisons)
<p>5. to outline measures established and needed to control, solve, and otherwise manage the SALW situation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legal bases (laws, regulations, and decrees) • customs authorities and border controls • licensing of SALW exports, imports, transits, trans-shipments, and civilian possession • government cooperation (interagency processes and oversight) • use of export and possession criteria • acceptance of and adherence to norms of non-proliferation • involvement in regional and international regimes and cooperative efforts • domestic and international transparency—sharing of information, standardized and regular reporting • NGO, civil society participation and efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary (government documents, reports, laws, regulations, decrees; interviews with officials, authorities and experts; budgetary commitments; personnel figures; observation of procedures and on-site/border inspections/visits) and secondary (international and local media; expert analysis; relevant databases) sources • interviews with NGO and civil society actors and consideration of NGO and civil society programmes
<p>6. to sketch implications of SALW problems based on data gathered and analysed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SALW problem in general • specific SALW problems • general and specific findings and their significance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis based on ideas of causation and/or correlation • the process of SALW acquisition, distribution, availability, proliferation traced and connected to various direct and indirect impacts • measures evaluated based on effectiveness (level of and capacity for development and implementation of control measures)

Appendix 3: Macedonia household survey

M-1. ID Number of the respondent

M-2. Date of the survey

M-3. Region

1. Electoral unit 1
2. Electoral unit 2
3. Electoral unit.3
4. Electoral unit 4
5. Electoral unit 5
6. Electoral unit 6

M-4. Area

1. Rural (all rural areas, including villages around Skopje)
2. Smaller towns (Demir Hisar, Krusevo, Struga, Kicevo, Resen, Kavadarci, Negotino, Gevgelija, Kratovo, Kriva Palanka, Sveti Nikole, Kocani, Vinica, Berovo, Pehcevo, Radovis and Valandovo)
3. Bigger towns (Bitola, Prilep, Ohrid, Tetovo, Gostivar, Veles, Kumanovo, Stip and Strumica)
4. Skopje (City municipalities: Gazi Baba, Karpos, Kisela Voda, Centar, GorCe Petrov and Suto Orizari)

M-5. Municipality

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Centar | 24. Berovo | 46. Negotino |
| 2. Karpos | 25. Pehcevo | 47. Gevgelija |
| 3. Saraj | 26. Delcevo | 48. Bogdanci |
| 4. Kondovo | 27. Makedonska Kamenica | 49. Mogila |
| 5. Kisela Voda | 28. Kriva Palanka | 50. Novaci |
| 6. Sopiste | 29. Kratovo | 51. Ohrid |
| 7. Studenicani | 29. Kratovo | 52. Meseista |
| 8. Makedonski Brod | 30. Veles | 53. Struga |
| 9. Cair | 31. Caska | 54. Labunista |
| 10. Cucer Sandevo | 32. Ilinden | 55. Delogozdi |
| 11. Suto Orizari | 33. Zelenikovo | 56. Velesta |
| 12. Gazi Baba | 34. Prilep | 57. Kicevo |
| 13. Aracinovo | 35. Krivogastani | 58. Vranestica |
| 14. Gorce Petrov | 36. Strumica | 59. Resen |
| 15. Kumanovo | 37. Bosilovo | 60. Bitola |
| 16. Lipkovo | 38. Vasilevo | 61. Capari |
| 17. Staro Nagoricane | 39. Novo Selo | 62. Demir Hisar |
| 18. Stip | 40. Murtino | 63. Sopotnica |
| 19. Sveti Nikole | 41. Valandovo | 64. Krusevo |
| 20. Probistip | 42. Radovis | 65. Dolneni |
| 21. Kocani | 43. Konce | 66. Tetovo |
| 22. Cesinovo | 44. Kavadarci | 67. Vratnica |
| 23. Vinica | 45. Rosoman | 68. Tearce |

69. Jegunovce
70. Zelino
71. Xepcista
72. Sipkovic
73. Kamenjane
74. Bogovinje

75. Gostivar
76. Negotino
77. Vrapciste
78. Cegrane
79. Vrutok
80. Dolna Bawica

81. Mavrovi Anovi
82. Debar
83. Rostu{a
84. Zajas
85. Oslomej

M-6. Team Code

M-7. The survey is done in the:

1. first visit
2. second visit
3. third visit

M-8. Note the time of beginning of the survey (what time)

M-9. Note the time duration of the survey

D-1. Gender

1. Male
2. Female

D-2. Age

1. 14–18
2. 19–29
3. 30–39
4. 40–49
5. 50–59
6. 60 and above

D-3. Ethnic Background

1. Macedonian
2. Albanian
3. Serbian
4. Turkish
5. Vlach
6. Roma
7. Bosnian
8. Other

D-4. Education

1. Pre-elementary
 2. Elementary
 3. High school with specialization
 4. High school
 5. Higher education or not finished university
 6. University education
-

7. refuses / do not know

D-5. Are you

1. EmployedGo to D-6
2. HousewifeGo to D-7
3. Student or volunteerGo to D-7
4. Retired/disabledGo to D-6
5. Unemployed and looking for workGo to D-6
6. Unemployed but not looking for workGo to D-6
7. refused / don't knowGo to D-7

D-6a. (Filter: Ask only the ones who responded 'unemployed and looking for work' or 'unemployed but not looking for work') What is your occupation, or what do you do for a living?

1. Student, pupil
2. Worker (production, services)

D-6b. (Filter: Ask only those who have answered: 'employed', 'retired/disabled', 'unemployed/looking for work', 'unemployed/not looking for work'): What is your profession, or the job you do, although that is not your precise skill (specialization)? (Questioner: for the unemployed and the retired/disabled ask for their profession at the time they worked. Write and circle below.)

1. Student, pupil
2. Worker (in production, services, etc.)
3. Clerk, civil servant (civil service, banks, administration)
4. Farmer
5. Private business – self-employed and free practice
6. Private business with employees
7. Retired with a part-time job
8. Retired
9. Housewife
10. Unemployed
11. Other. Write it:
12. Intellectual

D-7. (Ask everyone) Who is the head of the household?

1. The respondentSkip to D-12
2. Other personSkip to D-8

D-8. (Filter) Is the head of the household male or female?

1. male
2. female

D-9. What relation are you to the head of the household?

1. The head of the household is spouse of the respondent.
2. The head of the household is a parent or father/mother in law of the respondent.
3. The head of the household is a child of the respondent.
4. The head of the household is a brother/sister of the respondent.
5. Other (note it) _____

D-10. What is the formal level of education completed by the head of the household?

1. Pre-elementary
2. Elementary
3. High school with specialization
4. High school
5. Higher education or not finished university
6. University education
7. _____
8. Doesn't know/refuses

D-11. What is the profession of the head of the household? (Questioner: for those who are unemployed or retired/disabled, ask about their profession at the time they worked. Write below and code.)

1. Student, pupil
2. Worker (manufacturing, services, etc.)
3. Clerk, civil servant (civil service, banks, administration)
4. Farmer
5. Private business – self-employed and free practice
6. Private business with employees
7. Retired with part-time job
8. Retired
9. Housewife
10. Unemployed
11. Other. Write it:
12. Intellectual

D-12. Here is a list of monthly expenses of a household. Tell me, what are the average expenses of your household? (show the table)

1. 0–50 euros
2. 51–100 euros
3. 101–150 euros
4. 151–200 euros
5. 201–250 euros
6. 251–300 euros
7. 301–500 euros
8. 500+ euros
9. Doesn't know/refuses

The next questions are related to the experiences with safety in the past 3 months.

Saba household survey questionnaire

Q-1a. Has anyone in this household been a victim of a crime or a violent encounter (in the last 3 months)? Has anyone else?

1. Yes (Go to Annex 1 and fill out for each incident)
2. No
3. Refused
4. Don't know

Q-1b. Has anyone in this household been threatened or made to feel fearful (in the last 3 months)?
Has anyone else?

1. Yes Go to Annex 1 and fill out for each incident
2. No
3. Refused
4. Don't know

Q-2. Whom would you address/call if your car, motorcycle, or other asset were robbed? (Single response)

1. Turn to relatives, friends, and neighbours for help
2. Go to the police (Ministry of Interior)
3. Go to former members of armed forces
4. Go to international military organizations (NATO, EUFOR)
5. Go to private security company or similar
6. Turn to community elders
7. Turn to the head of the family

96. Other (specify) _____

97. Nothing (no point in doing anything)
98. Refused
99. Don't know

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Q-3. Whom would you address/call if someone threatened to kill you? (Single response)

1. Turn to relatives, friends, and neighbours for help
2. Go to the police (Ministry of Interior)
3. Go to former members of armed forces
4. Go to international military organizations (NATO, EUFOR)
5. Find private protection (security company or similar)
6. Turn to community elders
7. Turn to the head of the family

96. Other (specify) _____

97. Nothing (no point in doing anything)
98. Refused
99. Don't know

Q-4. Ideally, who do you think should be responsible for security? (Single response)

1. Local government
2. MOI (Ministry of Interior)
3. ARM (Army)
4. former members of armed forces
5. international military organizations (NATO, EUFOR)
6. Private security firms
7. The neighbourhood or family

97. Others (specify) _____

98. Refused
99. Don't know

Q-5. Some people feel that having a gun helps to protect their families. Other people believe that having guns is dangerous to their families. Which opinion is closest to your own?

1. Helps protect
2. Makes no difference
3. Is dangerous

-
4. Refused
 5. Don't know

Q-6a. Do you think that there are too many guns in your local area?

1. Yes (Go to Q-6b)
2. No (Skip to Q-7)

-
3. Refused (Skip to Q-7)
 4. Don't know (Skip to Q-7)

Q-6b. (Filtered) Among whom from your local area? (Multiple response)

1. Criminal groups
2. Businessmen
3. Politicians
4. In households
5. Among ex-fighters/ex-military

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-
7. Other (specify) _____
 8. Everybody
 9. Refused
 10. Don't know

Q-7. (Ask all) In the recent past, what types of violent crimes and violence problems occurred often in the local area? (Multiple response)

1. Armed robbery
2. Pick-pocketing
3. Kidnapping
4. Threats
5. Murder
6. Assault/beatings
7. Rape
8. Gangs
9. Fighting
10. Violence related to smuggling
11. Revenge
12. Domestic violence
13. Drunken disorder
14. Burglary
15. Drug dealing

-
96. Other (specify) _____
 97. There are no violent crimes or violence problems whatsoever

- 98. Refused
- 99. Don't know

Q-8. Do you think your town/neighbourhood is safer, the same, or more dangerous than other areas in Macedonia?

- 1. Safer
- 2. Same
- 3. More dangerous

- 4. Refused
- 5. Don't know

Q-9. Since when has your household been in this area?

- 1. Less than 1 year(Skip to Q-11)
- 2. One year to 5 yearsGo to Q-10)
- 3. From 5 to 10 years(Go to Q-10)
- 4. More than 10 years(Go to Q-10)

Q-10. (Filtered) Compared to 2001, is the security in this area better or worse?

- 1. Now is better
- 2. Gotten worse

- 3. Stayed the same
- 4. Volatile: goes up and down
- 5. Refused
- 6. Don't know

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Q-11. How much do you think each of the following will increase security? Do you think that tightening border control will increase security a lot, increase it somewhat, make it the same, or make the situation worse in Macedonia? And how much would security increase?

	A lot	Somewhat	The same	Worse	Ref.	DK
a) Tightening border control	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) greater control of legal licences for firearms	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) Control of arm sellers	1	2	3	4	5	6
d) harsher punishment for illegal weapons possession	1	2	3	4	5	6
f) collecting illegal guns	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q-12. What do you think is an appropriate age for a person to possess a gun?

- 1. Younger than 15 years
- 2. 16-20 years
- 3. 21-30 years
- 4. Older than 31

- 5. A man does not need to have a gun
- 6. Refused
- 7. Don't know

Q-13. What do you think is an appropriate age for starting to handle weapons?

1. Younger than 15 years
2. 16–20 years old
3. 21–30 years old
4. Older than 31

-
5. Should not start handling a gun
 6. The later the better
 7. Refused
 8. Don't know

Q-14a. On average, how often do you hear shots in your neighbourhood? (Show card)

Q-14b. Apart from with the police and army, how often do you see firearms in your neighbourhood? (Show card)

	Q-14a	Q-14b
	Hear	See
Never	1	1
Less often	2	2
Once a month	3	3
Once a week	4	4
Several times a week	5	5
Daily	6	6
<hr/>		
Refused	7	7
Don't know	8	8

Q-15. How do you think the number of firearms in your neighbourhood changed after the 2001 events? Has the number decreased, increased, or remained the same?

1. Has decreased
2. Has increased
3. The same

-
4. Refused
 5. Don't know

Q-16. Do you think that the presence of guns in your community has an overall impact on the economic development and the standard of living? Is the impact one that increases or decreases economic development and the standard of living?

1. Increases the development and standard, a lot
2. Increases the development and standard, some
3. Has no influence
4. Decreases the development and standard, some
5. Decreases the development and standard, a lot

-
6. Refused
 7. Don't know

Q-17. Would you say that the impact of gun possession in your local community is positive, somewhat positive, negative, somewhat negative or that it has no influence on the following?

P SP N SN NO DK

1. Education
2. Local infrastructure
3. Foreign investments
4. Business development
5. Personal income

Q-18a. Do you know how many households in your local area HAVE firearms? (Show card)

1. A lot
2. Most households
4. Very few have
5. Not a single household

-
6. Refused
 7. Don't know

Q-18b. Do you know how many households in your local area DO NOT HAVE firearms? (Show card)

1. A lot
2. Most households
4. Very few have
5. Every household has a gun

-
6. Refused
 7. Don't know

Q-19. In your opinion, what is the most common reason for the people in your local area to keep firearms? (Multiple response)

1. Personal protection
2. Protect property
3. Protect community
4. Political security
5. Work
6. Sport shooting
7. Left over from the crisis
8. For hunting
9. Valued family possession
10. Part of the tradition

-
97. Others (specify) _____
 98. Refused
 99. Don't know

Q-20a. What is your personal assessment: what is the average number of weapons that people have in their household?

1. 1
2. 2

3. Up to 3
4. From 3 to 5
5. Up to 5

-
6. Don't know
 7. Refuse

Q-20b. On average, what types/makes do you think are the most common in Macedonia? (Multiple response)

1. Pistols/revolvers
2. Automatic rifle (such as AK-47)
3. Hunting rifle (single-shot, bolt)
4. Shotgun (non-automatic or pump)
5. Medium or heavy machineguns
6. Explosives

-
97. Other (specify) _____
 98. Refused
 99. Don't know

Q-21a. If your household had the opportunity to acquire a gun legally, would you choose to do so?

1. No (Skip to Q-21b)
2. Yes (Go to Q-21c)

-
3. Refused (Skip to Q-21d)
 4. Don't know (Skip to Q-21d)

Q-21b. (Filtered: Ask those who would NOT acquire in Q-21a) What is the main reason that your household would choose NOT to own a weapon? (Multiple response)

1. Do not like guns
2. Dangerous for family in the house (i.e. children)
3. Don't need one
4. Dangerous for community
5. Don't know how to use one
6. Afraid
7. Only women in the house
8. Licence too costly/difficult to obtain

-
97. Other (specify) _____
 98. Refused
 99. Don't know

Q-21c. (Filtered: Ask those who WOULD acquire in Q-21a) What would be the main reason for your household to choose to acquire a gun legally? (Multiple response)

1. To protect myself/ my family
2. To protect my property
3. To contribute to the overall safety of my local area

4. For political reasons
5. I have a risky profession
6. Sport shooting
7. Because a lot of people have guns
8. For hunting

-
97. Other (specify) _____
98. Refused
99. Don't know

Q-21d. If it is not a secret, could you tell us whether you know some one from your local area who has a gun?

1. I don't know any
2. I know 1 person
3. I know up to 5 persons
4. I know up to 10
5. I know up to 15
6. I know up to 20
7. More than 20

-
98. Refused
99. Don't know

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Q-22. To the best of your knowledge, are the people who have a weapon aware of safety measures such as those relating to gun storage and usage?

1. Yes
2. No

-
98. Refused
99. Don't know

Q-23a. In your opinion, what is the best approach for collecting illegal guns in your local area? (Show card)

1. People would be willing to do it today, with no conditions
2. Improvement of the economic situation of local area
3. Proclamation of amnesty
4. Offering cash
5. Striking agreement in the local community
6. If there were less crime
7. If there were a severe penalty
8. Full implementation of the Framework agreement
9. In return for community development projects
10. If individuals could enter a competition for prizes (e.g. a car, furniture, scholarship for children)
11. If police were less aggressive
12. If police were more effective

-
96. None
97. Other (specify) _____

- 98. Refused to answer
- 99. Don't know

Q-23b. There is an announcement for the collection of illegal weapons. In your opinion, this initiative will be generally

- 1. Very successful
- 2. Successful
- 3. Unsuccessful
- 4. Very unsuccessful

-
- 5. Refused
 - 6. Don't know

Q-23c. Do you believe that people who own guns illegally will hand them over in the upcoming weapons collection initiative?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No (Skip to Q-23d)

-
- 98. Refused
 - 99. Don't know

Q-23d. (Filtered: Ask only those who said NO in Q-23c.) What types of weapons do you think people are most likely to keep?

- 1. Pistols/revolvers
- 2. Automatic rifle (such as AK-47)
- 3. Hunting rifle (single-shot, bolt)
- 4. Shotgun (non-automatic or pump)
- 5. Medium or heavy machineguns
- 6. Explosives

-
- 97. Other (specify) _____
 - 98. Refused
 - 99. Don't know

Q-24. If a lottery were to be held in your municipality in which only those surrendering illegal weapons were allowed to participate, with winning individuals selected at random, which of these prizes would ensure the highest number of participants in your opinion?

- 1. New set of household furniture (one prize per 1000 people)
- 2. New stereo, DVD player, and TV (one prize per 1000 people)
- 3. Scholarship for two of winner's children (one prize per 30,000 people)
- 4. New washing machine, cooker, and refrigerator (one prize per 1000 people)
- 5. New car (West European model), (one prize per 30,000 people)
- 6. New motorbike (one prize per 30,000 people)

-
- 7. Something else (specify)
 - 8. Refused
 - 9. Don't know

Q-25a. In your opinion, what types of municipal improvements are most needed by people in your neighbourhood? (Multiple response – show options to respondent)

1. Better water supply
2. Better electricity supply
3. Improvements to waste management
4. Improved sewage treatment
5. Street lighting
6. Improvements to local school
7. Health centre
8. Playgrounds or playing fields for children
9. Kindergarten
10. Employment scheme
11. Loans to start or develop a small business
12. Clean-up of rivers
13. Bus shelters
14. New or improved bus service
15. Road-building or rehabilitation

98. Refused

99. Don't know

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Q-25b. How likely do you think it is that people will hand in their weapons, if they have any, in exchange for the community development projects that are most needed in your municipality? (single response)

1. Is it very likely
2. Is it somewhat likely
3. Is it somewhat unlikely
4. Is it very unlikely
5. Don't know

Q-26a. In the upcoming collection of illegal guns, what percentage of the existing guns do you think will be collected?

1. Up to 10 per cent
2. From 10 to 30 per cent
3. From 30 to 50 per cent
4. From 50 to 70 per cent
5. From 70 to 90 per cent
6. More than 90 per cent

98. Refused

99. Don't know

Q-26b. Who do you think should be responsible for the upcoming collection of illegal weapons for it to be successful:

1. Government
2. Parliament
3. MOI
4. ARM

5. Local government
6. Political parties
7. NGO
8. NATO
9. EUFOR/EU
10. Under the auspices of a foreign country or international organization

-
97. Other (specify)
 98. Refused
 99. Don't know

Q-27. If someone in your country, for whatever reason, needed to acquire a weapon, how do you think that he could accomplish this? (Multiple response)

1. Would not be able to get one
2. Would have to ask around
3. Buy one from the black market
4. Know of a hidden cache
5. Buy from a friend
6. Borrow one
7. Get from family member
8. Get in specific town/region (specify) _____
9. Get a licence and buy a gun

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97. Other (specify) _____
 98. Refused
 99. Don't know

Q-28a. Before we finish, we have just one more question for you. If it is not a secret, can you tell us whether you personally have a firearm?

1. Yes (Skip to 28b)
2. No

-
3. Refused
 4. Don't know

Q-28b. Would you be willing to tell us what type of firearm you have?

1. Pistol/revolver
2. Hunting rifle (single-shot, bolt)
3. Shotgun (non-automatic or pump)
4. Automatic rifle (such as AK-47)
5. Medium or heavy machinegun
6. Explosives

-
7. Refused
 8. Don't know

Appendix 4: Household survey responses to selected questions

Q-2. Whom would you address/call if your car, motorcycle, or other asset were robbed?

Answers	% of all respondents	% of ethnic Albanian respondents	% of ethnic Macedonian respondents
Relatives, friends, neighbours	7.2	16.5	4.3
MOI	83.6	65.8	89.0
Former members of armed forces	1.9	7.1	0.4
International military organizations	1.1	3.4	0.2
Private security company	1.6	4.9	0.5
Community elders	0.3	0.8	0.2
Head of family	2.1	0.8	2.6
Other	0.6	0.4	0.7
Nothing (No point in doing anything)	0.8	0.0	1.1
Refused	0.0	0.0	0.0
Don't know	0.9	0.4	1.0

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Q-3. Whom would you address/call if someone threatened to kill you?

Answers	% of all respondents	% of ethnic Albanian respondents	% of ethnic Macedonian respondents
Relatives, friends, neighbours	12.1	21.4	8.8
MOI	72.9	46.6	81.7
Former members of armed forces	3.0	10.9	0.7
International military organizations	1.6	5.3	0.4
Private security company	2.9	7.9	1.1
Community elders	0.5	1.1	0.2
Head of family	2.8	1.9	3.2
Other	0.9	0.0	1.2
Nothing (No point in doing anything)	1.6	0.8	1.6
Refused	0.3	1.1	0.0
Don't know	1.6	3.0	1.1

Q-4. Ideally, who do you think should be responsible for security?

Answers	% of all respondents	% of ethnic Albanian respondents	% of ethnic Macedonian respondents
Local government	6.8	16.2	4.1
MOI	81.6	59.8	88.1
ARM (army)	3.4	1.5	4.0
Former members of armed forces	1.2	5.3	
International military organization	3.5	11.3	0.9
Private security firms	1.1	0.0	1.6
Neighbourhood or family	1.3	3.0	0.9
Others	0.2		0.1
Refused	0.5	1.9	0.1
Don't know	0.4	1.1	0.2

Q-5. Some people feel that having a gun helps to protect their families. Other people believe that having guns is dangerous to their families. Which opinion is closest to your own?

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Answers	% of all respondents	% of ethnic Albanian respondents	% of ethnic Macedonian respondents
Helps protect	26.2	35.7	23.0
Makes no difference	11.8	7.5	12.4
Is dangerous	58.4	53.0	61.0
Refused	0.7	1.9	0.4
Don't know	2.9	1.9	3.2

Q-6a. Do you think that there are too many guns in your local area?

Answers	% of all respondents	% of ethnic Albanian respondents	% of ethnic Macedonian respondents
Yes	39.5	38.7	39.6
No	44.7	36.1	47.6
Don't know	1.1	3.4	0.5
Refused	14.7	21.8	12.3

Q-6b. (Filtered) Among whom from your local area? (Multiple response)

Answers	% of all respondents	% of ethnic Albanian respondents	% of ethnic Macedonian respondents
Criminal groups	45.5	42.2	46.9
Businessmen	6.6	3.9	7.5
Politicians	3.7	3.9	3.7
In households	6.6	7.8	6.5
Among ex-fighters/ex-military	9.7	7.8	9.6
Other	0.7	0.0	0.9
Everybody	19.8	19.6	19.9
Refused	0.2	1.0	
Don't know	7.3	13.7	5.0

Q-7. In the recent past, what types of violent crimes and violence problems occurred often in the local area? (Multiple response)

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Answers	% of all respondents	% of ethnic Albanian respondents	% of ethnic Macedonian respondents
Armed robbery	11.9	14.3	10.8
Pick-pocketing	14.3	18.0	13.2
Kidnapping	1.1	1.9	0.7
Threats	5.0	4.5	4.9
Murder	3.1	7.1	1.9
Assault/beatings	15.6	3.0	20.3
Rape	0.3	0.4	0.4
Gangs	2.3	4.1	1.9
Violence related to smuggling	1.4	1.5	1.3
Revenge	0.8	1.5	0.5
Domestic violence	1.0	1.5	0.7
Drunken disorder	11.3	21.1	8.6
Burglary	15.5	6.4	18.1
Drug dealing	4.5	4.1	4.8
Other	1.7	3.4	1.0
There are no violent crimes or violence problems whatsoever	7.3	2.6	8.5
Refused	0.3	1.5	0.0
Don't know	2.4	3.0	2.2

Q-10. (Filtered) Compared to 2001, is the security in this area better or worse?

Answers	% of all respondents	% of ethnic Albanian respondents	% of ethnic Macedonian respondents
Now is better	27.4	50.4	20.5
Gotten worse	18.7	14.3	19.0
Stayed the same	45.3	28.2	51.3
Volatile: goes up and down	6.3	1.9	7.8
Refused	0.3	0.8	0.2
Don't know	2.0	4.5	1.2

Q-18a. Do you know how many households in your local area have firearms?

Answers	% of all respondents	% of ethnic Albanian respondents	% of ethnic Macedonian respondents
A lot	12.6	12.0	12.4
Most households	22.7	19.5	24.5
Very few have	29.2	24.1	30.8
Not a single household	8.2	7.5	8.4
Refused	1.5	4.1	0.6
Don't know	25.8	32.7	23.3

Q-19. In your opinion, what is the most common reason for the people in your local area to keep firearms? (Multiple response)

Answers	% of all respondents	% of ethnic Albanian respondents	% of ethnic Macedonian respondents
Personal protection	54.2	53.4	54.3
Protect property	8.7	9.8	8.6
Protect community	2.2	4.9	1.3
Political security	2.2	4.1	1.5
Work	3.0	3.4	2.9
Sport shooting	2.3	0.8	2.8
Left over from the crisis	4.4	7.9	2.9
For hunting	13.4	4.5	16.8
Part of the tradition	3.0	3.4	3.0
Others	1.1	0.4	1.2
Refused	0.7	1.5	0.5
Don't know	4.7	6.0	4.0

Q-20b. On average, what types/makes do you think are the most common in Macedonia? (Multiple response)

Answers	% of all respondents	% of ethnic Albanian respondents	% of ethnic Macedonian respondents
Pistols/Revolvers	63.9	56	66.3
Automatic rifle	9.3	16.2	7.4
Hunting rifle	14.1	5.6	16.9
Shotgun	2.4	3.4	2.3
Medium or heavy machineguns	1.1	2.6	0.5
Explosives	0.9	0.8	1.0
Other	0.1	0.4	0.0
Refused	0.6	2.3	0.1
Don't know	7.6	12.8	5.5

Q-21a. If your household had the opportunity to acquire a gun legally, would you choose to do so?

Answers	% of all respondents	% of ethnic Albanian respondents	% of ethnic Macedonian respondents
Yes	56.6	39.8	61.4
No	38.6	52.3	34.6
Refused	1.3	2.6	1.0
Don't know	3.5	5.3	3.0

Q-21c. (Filtered: Ask those who WOULD acquire in Q-21a) What would be the main reason for your household to choose to acquire a gun legally? (Multiple response)

Answers	% of all respondents	% of ethnic Albanian respondents	% of ethnic Macedonian respondents
Protect myself/family	64.4	68.1	61.3
Protect my property	8.9	10.9	8.0
Contribute to overall safety of my local area	2.4	6.5	0.7
Political reasons	2.0	3.6	1.4
I have a risky profession	2.0	0.7	2.8
Sport shooting	4.5	2.2	5.2
Because a lot of people have guns	2.4	2.2	2.4
For hunting	10.9	5.8	14.3
Other	1.1	0.0	1.7
Refused	0.2	0.0	0.3
Don't know	1.1	0.0	1.7

Q-23b. There is an announcement for the collection of illegal weapons. In your opinion, this initiative will be generally

Answers	% of all respondents	% of ethnic Albanian respondents	% of ethnic Macedonian respondents
Very successful	7.7	20.3	3.7
Successful	35.8	37.2	35.6
Unsuccessful	16.6	12.8	18.5
Very unsuccessful	34.2	20.3	38.0
Refused	0.5	1.5	0.2
Don't know	5.2	7.9	4.0

