



Ready or not?

**Exploring the prospects for collecting
illicit small arms and light weapons in Kosovo**



July 2009

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Acronyms

| | |
|---------------|--|
| BCRP | Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery |
| BICC | Bonn Institute for International Centre for Conversion |
| ESDP | European Security and Defence Policy |
| EU | European Union |
| EULEX | European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo |
| FIQ | Forumi për Iniciativa Qytetare/Forum for Civic Initiatives |
| ISAC | Illicit Small Arms Control Project |
| IWPR | Institute for War and Peace Reporting |
| KFOR | Kosovo Force (NATO) |
| KP | Kosovo Police (formerly known as KPS) |
| KSF | Kosovo Security Force |
| MARRI | The Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative |
| NGO | non-governmental organisation |
| RMDS/G | Regional Micro-Disarmament Standards/Guidelines |
| SACIM | Small Arms Control in Macedonia |
| SALW | small arms and light weapons |
| SALWCP | Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Project |
| SAS | Small Arms Survey |
| SEESAC | South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of SALW |
| SFOR | Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina |
| SSR | security sector reform |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNMIK | United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo |
| UNTAES | United Nations Transitional Authority in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium |
| WED | Weapons in Exchange for Development |

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Executive summary

SAFERWORLD AND THE FORUM FOR CIVIC INITIATIVES (FIQ) have been tracking attitudes towards weapons¹ and security issues in Kosovo since March 2006.² This report has been prepared in the context of a new law on weapons, which is currently being finalised in Kosovo, and a weapons collection strategy, which is being drafted to accompany the implementation of the new law.³ It presents a selection of the most recent research findings, with a view to informing any future weapons collection initiative in Kosovo. The report focuses on the *illicit, civilian* possession of weapons in Kosovo, and on *voluntary* weapons collection initiatives targeted at such illicit civilian possession, unless otherwise specified. The report first provides an overview of lessons learnt from previous weapons collection initiatives in South Eastern Europe based on available literature and key informant interviews. It then gives an insight into current perceptions of human security and weapons possession in Kosovo, and local views on future weapons collection initiatives, based on research undertaken in Kosovo from December 2008 to March 2009.⁴ On this basis, the report offers a set of recommendations (summarised below).

Experience from previous voluntary collection initiatives undertaken in the region indicates that programmes which are not based on a detailed understanding of the causes of weapons ownership (demand factors) and/or which are not designed to address these factors are likely to have a limited impact. Experience of using different kinds of incentives is mixed, and while raising awareness and changing attitudes to weapons ownership is recognised as a fundamental aspect of any successful initiative, insufficient time and resources are often allocated to dealing with these issues.

The survey data indicates that perceptions of insecurity are still the main cause of illicit civilian weapons ownership in Kosovo. However, the relationship between weapons ownership and insecurity is complex and different communities (urban and rural, etc) have different specific concerns and motivations for not wanting to part with their weapons. People in Kosovo are generally sceptical (and in the case of Kosovo Serbs, dismissive) of the chances of a future weapons collection initiative being successful. The majority of Kosovo Albanians believe that only improvements in the security situation will convince people to surrender their weapons, while Kosovo Serbs cannot foresee their communities ever being willing to give up their weapons. The two groups also hold very different views on which institutions should undertake a weapons collection.

¹ 'SALW' (small arms and light weapons) and 'weapons' are used interchangeably throughout the report.

² Previous SafePlace publications can be found on the project website: <www.safeplaceproject.org>

³ At its 66th meeting on 29 May 2009, the Kosovo Government approved the request by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to initiate the procedure for drafting a national strategy on the collection of illegal weapons.

⁴ See Annex 1 for methodology. Where appropriate, the report also draws on data from earlier surveys in the series, conducted in March 2006, December 2006, June 2007 and April/May 2008.

Key recommendations

The research and analysis presented in this report suggest that conducting a weapons amnesty and collection will not at the present time yield significant positive results in Kosovo, because a number of preconditions are not yet in place. The overarching recommendation presented in this report is that any future weapons collection should only take place as part of a broader strategy, which is based on a detailed understanding of the factors that drive the demand for weapons. The following points should be considered if and when undertaking a weapons collection in Kosovo:

Before the weapons collection period

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment aimed at mapping the attitudes and perceptions of Kosovo's SALW owners to ensure demand factors are addressed, and to set out a baseline against which to measure impact.
- Ensure that national and local politicians from all of the main political parties are seen to support and participate in the weapons collection campaign, and that it does not become undermined by party political differences.
- Allow sufficient time and resources to conducting awareness-raising about the objectives and scope of the collection process.
- Ensure that there is sufficient capacity within Kosovo's institutions to conduct a weapons collection campaign before commencing.
- Mobilise the public to participate actively in the collection initiative.

Involving the right actors

- The Kosovo Security Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, is best placed to lead the collection campaign.
- Kosovo civil society should be involved extensively and early on.
- International actors should not take the lead in designing the collection campaign, but they can provide technical and financial assistance.
- Donor support, in particular, should be limited to mainly providing financial support, and this should be defined and agreed ahead of time.

Factors to consider when designing the weapons collection

- Ensure that the approach used in the collection campaign is locally appropriate and takes into account the situation of local communities.
- The use of incentives will have little effect before security needs are met. Incentives may be appropriate if designed according to the local context.
- Timing is difficult, as the collection should avoid major holidays and periods where physical access to rural/mountain areas is constrained (winter). All things considered, September to November seems to be the most appropriate time of year.
- Allow time for the wider public to gain sufficient confidence in the collection process to participate – the initiative should not be too short.
- Ensure the collection initiative is Kosovo-wide and seen to target all regions and communities equally.
- Ensure transparency and accountability of the process and guarantee the anonymity of those surrendering their weapons.

After the weapons collection

- The end of the amnesty period should be clearly marked by the government announcing that the new law on weapons is now in place and enforcing it.
- Publicly destroy the collected weapons after the end of the amnesty period. This is important to create confidence in the process and signal a break with illicit civilian weapons possession.
- The collection initiative should be measured by its broader impact on reducing the harmful impact of illicit weapons in Kosovo, not just by the number of items collected.

1

Introduction

THE PROBLEM OF ILLICIT CIVILIAN WEAPONS POSSESSION IN KOSOVO is not new. Research indicates that rates of illegal weapons ownership already far exceeded the rate of registered weapons in 1989,⁵ and throughout the tumultuous 1990s, events in neighbouring countries resulted in the influx of illegal arms across the borders and into Kosovo. The 1998–99 war further contributed to weapons proliferation and many of these arms continue to be held illegally in Kosovo today.

It should be stressed here that due to the many sensitivities surrounding the issue, it is very difficult to gather reliable figures on illicit civilian weapons possession. With this caveat in mind, the current number of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the illegal possession of individual citizens and other groups in Kosovo has been estimated to be around 317,000⁶. However, this estimation is already dated (2006) and it should therefore be taken as a rough approximation. While the precise number of weapons under illegal possession can be subject to debate and merits further research, there is still broad opinion that levels are of a magnitude that continue to threaten the safety and security of citizens:⁷ Kosovo suffers relatively high levels of armed violence, and the high level of weapons ownership in Kosovo also means that during periods of heightened political tension, situations have real potential to turn violent and put human life at risk.⁸

Attempts have been made in the past to address the problem of illicit small arms ownership in Kosovo and a range of approaches have been employed. Among these are: ad hoc intelligence-led ‘search and seize’ operations undertaken by UNMIK/KFOR/KPS (now KP); the Illicit Small Arms Control Project (ISAC) undertaken by UNDP; and weapons collection, destruction, and amnesty programmes led by KFOR/UNMIK. Past voluntary weapons collection initiatives have been designed and implemented by international institutions, without the full backing of Kosovo’s own leadership, in part because of security concerns linked to disagreements over Kosovo’s status.⁹ As a result of this, and a number of other factors (which are further explored in section 2), these initiatives are generally considered to have had limited impact.

With the drafting of a new Law on Weapons, the Kosovo Government is currently taking new steps to regulate and strengthen the legal framework for weapons possession. The law is likely to be approved later in 2009/early 2010, and a new Division of Small Arms will be established under the Department for Public Security in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Government has also announced its decision

⁵ *South Eastern Europe SALW Monitor 2004*, (SEESAC, 2004), <<http://www.seesac.org/index.php?content=54§ion=3>>, accessed 20 February 2009.

⁶ *SALW Survey of Kosovo* (SEESAC, 2006), <<http://www.seesac.org/reports/KOSOVO.pdf>>, accessed 18 February 2009.

⁷ *Op cit*, *SALW Survey of Kosovo*.

⁸ This was the case during the period of violent riots and ensuing tensions in 2004. For overview of impact of SALW in Kosovo see *Op cit*, *SALW Survey of Kosovo*, pp 17–35.

⁹ *Ibid* pp V, 57, 58 and 78.

to begin drafting a strategy on the collection of illegal weapons.¹⁰

Circumstances in Kosovo have changed since the last weapons collection initiatives were undertaken, and the current context presents a new set of opportunities and challenges, which will influence any new initiative's chances of success. Kosovo has witnessed a change in security provision. Most UNMIK forces have been withdrawn, EULEX has been deployed and KFOR is currently working on establishing the new Kosovo Security Force (KSF). There are indications that KSF might become partially operational as soon as September 2009, while full operational capacity is expected in 2010.¹¹

Added to these changes in the security structures are political and economic developments, which have the potential to cause increased tension or instability in the short to medium term. The Government declared independence in February 2008. While the Kosovo Albanian majority has broadly welcomed this move and generally feels that this new situation will contribute towards longer-term stability for Kosovo, it has at the same time caused concern for the future among parts of the Kosovo Serb population. Looking to the immediate future, there are factors with the potential to impact negatively on social stability: local elections are to be held in November 2009 and the effects of the global economic crisis are increasingly being felt in Kosovo.

The research presented in this report demonstrates that feelings of insecurity are still a key factor in driving the demand for arms in Kosovo. Specifically, this research focuses on the lack of human security, consisting fundamentally of two basic components: 'freedom from want' (for example, economic security, health, food security and environmental security) and 'freedom from fear' (personal and political security, stability of tenure, etc). Human security should be seen as a more people-focused concept than previous definitions, which tended to focus on the security and stability of the state; and a wider one, in that it attempts to capture a broader range of factors which cause people to feel secure or insecure.

The research shows that if people in Kosovo are to be convinced to part with their weapons, more needs to be done to address their security concerns. In particular, the survey shows that such an initiative would be met with deep scepticism and mistrust by the Kosovo Serb community. This would suggest that the time is not yet right in Kosovo for a weapons collection to be able to yield successful results. Furthermore, the research findings indicate that the factors driving the demand for weapons are complex: crime, social factors, economic motives and the use of weapons for hunting and sports also play a part in motivating illicit weapons possession. The Government needs to ensure that the factors driving the demand for weapons are understood and addressed before it undertakes a weapons collection. A weapons amnesty and collection initiative may in itself not be a suitable response to the high rates of illicit weapons possession in Kosovo. The overall recommendation of this report is that **any future weapons collection should only take place as part of a broader strategy, which is based on a detailed understanding of the factors that drive the demand for weapons.**

This report begins with providing an overview of lessons learnt from previous weapons collection initiatives in South Eastern Europe, based on available literature and key informant interviews (section 2). It then uses research findings drawn from household surveys, focus group interviews and key informant interviews, to outline current perceptions in Kosovo of security and weapons possession and local views on possible future weapons collection initiatives (section 3). Finally the report lists a set of recommendations, the aim of which is to offer practical ideas on how to increase the chances of a weapons collection initiative in Kosovo being successful and how to ensure that the process is locally owned, suited to the local context, and conflict-sensitive.

¹⁰ The Kosovo Government announced at its 66th meeting on 29 May 2009 its decision to approve a request by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to initiate the procedure for drafting a national strategy on the collection of illegal weapons, as well as a national strategy and action plan on crime prevention and reduction. Also see 'Kosovo has 400,000 unlicensed weapons', *Koha Ditore*, 23 March 2009.

¹¹ 'Kosovo Security Force to become partially operational by September', *emportal*, 21 April 2009, <<http://www.emportal.rs/en/news/serbia/85883.html>>, accessed 27 May 2009.

2

Lessons from weapons collection initiatives in South Eastern Europe

KOSOVO AND THE WIDER REGION have witnessed a number of weapons amnesties and collection initiatives (both voluntary and forced) to address the high rates of illicit weapons ownership among the civilian population, much of which is a result of the series of armed conflicts the region has experienced. These collection initiatives have had mixed results: as indicated in the list of selected examples in table 1, the number of collected weapons has often been very low compared to the estimated number of illicit SALW in civilian possession, even bearing in mind the caution with which one should treat these figures. In particular, weapons collection rates in Kosovo seem to have been low compared to those of neighbouring countries.¹²

Most of the available literature on weapons collection initiatives in South Eastern Europe focuses on initiatives undertaken in the late 1990s and first half of the 2000s. There are indications that the thinking around collection initiatives and arms control has developed since then, and that for example, more efforts are now made to incorporate collection initiatives into broader strategies for arms control and reform processes.¹³ Nonetheless, past experiences from the region provide valuable lessons for the implementation of any future weapons collection initiatives in Kosovo.

The section focuses mainly on voluntary weapons collections, and it is based on available literature and interviews with key informants, many of whom were personally involved in previous collection initiatives.¹⁴

¹² Op cit, *SALW Survey of Kosovo*, p 78. Indeed, a local two-week amnesty organised by KFOR in Gjilan/Gnjilane in 2005 resulted in no surrendered weapons at all. See, 'UN Commander calls on citizens to hand over illegally held weapons', *KosovaLive*, 10 February 2006, <www.seesac.org/press>, accessed 16 April 2009.

¹³ See for example UNDP's current overview of arms control in the Western Balkans: <<http://europeandcis.undp.org/hivaidis/show/B93B9EE1-F203-1EE9-B9BBDE4602211C40>>, accessed 6 May 2009.

¹⁴ This chapter is based on available literature, and less emphasis is put on recent weapons collection initiatives in the region because of a lack of available material describing these. An overview of initiatives before 2006 is provided in the SEESAC/ Saferworld South Eastern Europe SALW Monitors (www.seesac.org). For a list of other useful documents, see Annex 2.

Table 1: Weapons collection initiatives in South Eastern Europe referenced in this section

| Geographic focus | Project under which collection was undertaken | Year | Main implementer – donors | Approach | Context | Number of weapons collected |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------|---|---|---|--|
| Albania (Gramsh) | Gramsh Pilot Project | 1998–1999 | Albanian Government – UNDP | First example of Weapons in Exchange for Development (WED) approach. For the last phase (2003–2004), WED was combined with community policing. | Social crisis: Large numbers of illicit arms in circulation due to looting by civilians of weapons depots in 1997. | Total number of weapons collected 1997–2005 was 201,365. The estimated number of weapons looted in 1997 was 524,226 ¹⁵ . Illicit weapons holdings prior to 1997 are unknown. It is therefore impossible to estimate what percentage of total illicit weapons the collected weapons represent. Due to the success of the Gramsh project, WED was applied in other Albanian regions and then became a much used approach in other countries |
| Albania (Diber and Elbasan) | Weapons in Exchange for Development (WED) project | 2000–2002 | UNDP – US, UK, Sweden, UNDP, Denmark and Norway | | | |
| Albania (several locations) | Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Project (SALWCP) | 2002–2003 | UNDP – Finland, Netherlands, Sweden, UNDP BCPR, EU and Luxembourg | | | |
| Albania | Support to Security Sector Reform (SSSR) | 2003–2004 | UNDP – Finland, Ireland, UNDP, BCPR | | | |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | Operation Harvest | 1998–2006 | SFOR and local authorities. From 2004 EUFOR and local authorities | Combination of forced disarmament ¹⁶ (SFOR/EUFOR search and seize actions) and voluntary collections | Post-conflict: 1992–1995 war in BiH resulted in high levels of illicit SALW ownership throughout the country. Heavy international post-war presence, both security/peacekeepers (SFOR, EUFOR, EUPM) and international governing bodies (OHR) | From 2003–2006, the Operation yielded about 15,151 SALW ¹⁷ . The estimated number in circulation is around 500,000. Over time, a decreasing numbers of weapons were handed in. |
| Croatia | Amnesty and collection projects/ Farewell to Arms | 1992–2002 | Croatian Government and UN/UNTAES | Series of voluntary amnesties, combined with a national buy-back programme in 1997 | Post-conflict: high number of illicit SALW as a result of the 1991–1995 war. UNTAES presence from 1996 to 1998. | From 1992–2002, 61,011 SALW were seized by the Government, and 14,439 by UNTAES. In 2006, the estimated number of illicit SALW was 597,000. ¹⁸ |
| Kosovo | KFOR amnesty | May 2001 | KFOR | One-month general amnesty period | Inflow and post-conflict: looted SALW from Albania, and 1998–1999 Kosovo war. The May 2001 amnesty followed an agreement between NATO and KLA for handover of KLA weapons. The September 2003 collection took place after a summer of clashes between groups of Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians (see text). | In 2001, about 665 SALW were collected ¹⁹ , and in 2003, 155 weapons were collected. The estimated number of illicit weapons in circulation in Kosovo is 317,000. ²⁰ |
| Kosovo | Illicit Small Arms Control Project (ISAC) 1 | 2002–2003 | UNDP – Japan, Canada, UNDP | Initially WED, targeted at a limited number of areas, but approach was later changed to a competition between municipalities for the available funds. | | |

| Geographic focus | Project under which collection was undertaken | Year | Main implementer – donors | Approach | Context | Number of weapons collected |
|-------------------------|---|-----------|----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Macedonia ²¹ | Small Arms Control in Macedonia (SACIM) I | 2003–2004 | Macedonian Government – UNDP | Lottery tickets given to individuals in exchange for weapons | Inflow and post-conflict: SALW from Albania, and armed conflict in 2001 between Albanian and Government forces | 7,571 SALW collected. Between 100,000 and 450,000 illicit SALW in circulation (estimate) ²² |
| Serbia | National amnesty/ collection | 2003 | Serbian Government – UNDP SEESAC | Short and intense period of search-and seize operations during state of emergency by state security forces. Followed by voluntary hand-ins | Post-conflict and trigger event: large numbers of JNA arms remaining in circulation after the 1991–1995 war. Operations were sparked off by the assassination of Zoran Đinđić in February 2003, which created a swell of public support for SALW control. ²³ | 2,046 weapons were confiscated and 47,853 weapons voluntarily handed in or registered in 2003. A 2005 estimate put the number of illicit weapons in Serbia at 900,000. |

¹⁵ Turning the page: *small arms and light weapons in Albania* (Saferworld, 2005), <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/publications.php/115/turning_the_page>, accessed 6 May 2009.

¹⁶ When the term 'disarmament' is used in this report, it refers to weapons collection activities that are not (entirely) voluntary, e.g. 'search-and-seize' operations or negotiated handovers from groups of ex-combatants, etc.

¹⁷ Kauer E. *Weapons Collection and Destruction Programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, (Österreichs Bundesheer, 2007), <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/small_arms_weapons_collection_destruction_e_kauer.pdf>, accessed 20 March 2009.

¹⁸ *SALW Survey of Croatia* (SEESAC, 2006), <<http://www.seesac.org/reports/FINAL%20PDF.pdf>>, accessed 6 May 2009.

¹⁹ *Needs assessment of small arms and light weapons in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (UNDP & CSS, 2003).

²⁰ Op cit, SALW survey of Kosovo.

²¹ Also referred to as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (or FYROM), in the interest of readability 'Macedonia' will be used as shorthand throughout the text.

²² Brethfield J, *BCPR Strategic Review Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, (Small Arms Survey, 2006), <http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/sa_control/macedonia.pdf>, accessed 16 March 2009.

²³ Op cit, *South Eastern Europe SALW Monitor* 2004.

Getting the objectives right and measuring success

A central point of this report is that the objective of a weapons collection initiative is not simply to transfer illicit weapons from the hands of civilians to an official authority. As the collection should be undertaken as part of a wider arms control programme, the objective of the collection should be to contribute towards the overall goal of reducing the harmful impact on society of illicit weapons in civilian possession and contributing to conflict prevention – whether through a reduction in numbers of illicit arms, through better prevention of their misuse or through post-conflict confidence building. Therefore, the indicators against which the success of a weapons collection is measured should reflect these broader objectives of arms control.

However, very often the number and type of weapons and ammunition collected is used not only as the main, but indeed as the only indicator of success.²⁴ This is understandable, as the number of collected weapons and ammunition is a tangible and easily communicated indicator. However, examples from the region demonstrate that this is an insufficient measure of success, which fails to capture a number of other results, and which reflects a rather narrow interpretation of the objective and purpose of weapons collection initiatives.

For example, even in cases when weapons collection campaigns do not result in people handing in their illegal weapons, they may lead people to change the way they store them, which can bring about improvements in security. This can both be a result of an accompanying awareness-raising campaign, leading to people knowing more about the dangers posed by irresponsible or accidental handling (e.g. by children in the household), or a result of fear that the weapon will be confiscated during a forced collection. In Albania: "...weapons collectors [were] noting that people were not simply hiding guns under their beds, but in more ingenious or awkward-to-reach places."²⁵ To the extent that this makes the weapons harder to access and brings about a decrease in 'impulse' or accidental use of weapons in domestic incidents, this is a positive effect of the collection campaign – an effect which is overlooked if focus is narrowly on the number of weapons collected.²⁶

This focus also risks overlooking other positive effects. One strand of activities under UNDP's Illicit Small Arms Control (ISAC 1) project in Kosovo focused on the registration of weapons for sports and hunting. This part of the project was quite successful, resulting in significant numbers of weapons registered. However, since weapons collection and not weapons registration was considered the primary objective of the programme,²⁷ the number of registered weapons was not used as an indicator of project success, even despite its significant and positive impact on bringing down the number of illicit arms in circulation. Instead, focus was on the very modest number of weapons collected (155²⁸), and on this basis, the programme was widely considered a failure.

In addition, weapons collections can serve more symbolic purposes: for example, a public demonstration that the country/area is moving away from armed conflict towards a peaceful future. These examples suggest that the indicators against which impact of an initiative is measured need to be broader and more sophisticated, taking into account wider (and sometimes unintentional) effects of the initiative in reducing the harmful impact of illicit weapons on society and contributing towards peace. Surveying the weapons collection initiatives of the region, SEESAC notes that "the results in terms of collected weapons totals are not, however, the real indicators of success. Bringing illicit weapons under legal control, an increased awareness of the dangers of SALW and reinforcing post-conflict confidence are other important areas

²⁴ In addition, the quality of the collected weapons is sometimes included. For example, Saferworld's report on SALW in Albania suggests that the condition of the weapons that are surrendered should be taken into account when assessing impact of a weapons collection: if the majority are old and unusable weapons, then the action has only a limited impact on increasing security. *Op cit, Turning the Page*.

²⁵ *Op cit, Turning the page*, p 121.

²⁶ Interview with Adrian Wilkinson, former Head of SEESAC, 20 March 2009.

²⁷ Wille C, *Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCRP) strategic review of Kosovo*, (Small Arms Survey, 2006), <http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/sa_control/BCPRStra-kosovo.doc>, accessed 22 February 2009.

²⁸ *Ibid*. See also Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), 'Macedonia: Weapons Collection a Success, But Many Stick to their Guns', 17 December 2003, <<http://www.rferl.org/content/Article/1105360.html>> accessed 16 April 2009.

addressed by weapons collections.”²⁹

Rather than focusing on the number of weapons collected, measures of success should reflect the broader objectives to which the collection initiative is contributing. They should include for example: number of weapons registered, decrease in weapons casualties, changes in the attitudes to weapons possession, increased awareness about risks and dangers of possessing illicit weapons, improvements in feelings of security and increased trust in security providers. Indicators should also reflect impact of the initiative on different parts of society, i.e. children and youth, women, and different ethnic, language and religious groups. Comprehensive qualitative and quantitative baseline data reflecting the selected indicators needs to be collected before the collection initiative is designed and implemented.³⁰

Understanding and addressing the demand factors

Experience from the region (as well as our survey data – see section 3) suggests that the predominant reason (or demand factor) for weapons possession is most often the perception of insecurity and that, in order for a weapons collection to be successful, people’s security needs must be met. Measures to improve perceptions of security by building better relations between citizens and police, such as community safety projects and community-based policing, have yielded positive results across the region,³¹ and experience from Albania has shown that, through police-community consultations, continuous dialogue and a trusting relationship can be established and can influence people’s willingness to part with their firearms and seek alternative (non-violent) solutions to addressing the root causes of crime and insecurity.³²

However, while this logic is accepted, in reality, the time-consuming and sensitive task of building citizens’ trust in security providers has been underestimated in previous weapons collection initiatives: as is highlighted in an assessment of the ISAC 1 project in Kosovo, “The attempt to build trust between the police force and the community appears to have been based on a single seminar. Clearly a single event cannot be expected to change the institutional culture of the police.”³³ The relatively disappointing results of this collection initiative (see table 1) partly reflects the insufficient attention given to building public trust in security providers before the collection went ahead. This stresses the importance of linking the weapons collection with broader security and justice sector reform efforts, in particular community-based policing and community safety programmes.³⁴

While insecurity is probably the single most important factor affecting the demand for weapons, the relationship between weapons ownership and insecurity is complex. Results from the survey data (see section 3) demonstrate how different communities, and groups of people within them, have very specific concerns and different motivations for not wanting to part with their weapons. Social, political and economic demand factors should also be considered in the design of a weapons collection: for example, in a situation of poverty people may hold on to their weapons because of their current or potential financial value on the black market. Cultural and social practices can also provide a perceived need for people to hold onto their weapons and may influence the level of acceptance of weapons in society.³⁵ These diverse demand

²⁹ *South Eastern Europe SALW Monitor 2005*, (SEESAC, 2005), p 7.

³⁰ For more information about the methodology used for the perceptions surveys undertaken under SafePlace, see Annex 1. For a discussion of (mainly quantitative) indicators of SALW Control programmes, see Op Cit, *Performance indicators for the Monitoring and Evaluation of SALW Control Programmes*.

³¹ *Creating Safer Communities: Lessons from South Eastern Europe*, (Saferworld, 2006), <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/publications.php/236/creating_safer_communities_lessons_from_south_eastern_europe>, accessed 23 April 2009.

³² *Philosophy and Principles of community-based policing*, (SEESAC, 2003), p 6.

³³ Op cit, Wille C.

³⁴ Rynn S, *Weapons collection and SSR – A complex relationship*, (unpublished).

³⁵ Previous surveys of so-called ‘gun culture’ in the Balkans have stressed that tradition and history should not be ascribed too much significance in motivating weapons ownership, and that focus should be on security concerns. See *The rifle has the devil inside. Gun culture in South Eastern Europe*, (SEESAC, 2006), <<http://www.seesac.org/reports/Gun%20Culture%20FINAL.pdf>>, accessed 15 April 2009.

factors can only be understood after a comprehensive assessment of the attitudes and perceptions of Kosovo's SALW owners has taken place, as well as a mapping of the concrete impact that illicit weapons have on society. This is vital to designing appropriate responses, and also stresses the need for any weapons collection to be built into a coherent SALW control programme.³⁶

No weapons collection campaign can be successful unless it is based on a detailed understanding of the reasons for weapons ownership (demand factors) and the impact of illicit SALW ownership on society.

The complex reasons why people continue to possess weapons illicitly demonstrate that a weapons collection should not be an isolated event, but should be an integrated element of a broader SALW control strategy, which again should be carefully co-ordinated with other reform processes: both ongoing security and justice sector reform initiatives³⁷, but also broader reform processes aimed at improving democracy, accountability and good governance.

Using the right incentive

Understanding and addressing the demand factors is probably the most important aim of any weapons control programme, and a key precondition for a weapons collection initiative to succeed. However, the use of incentives can be integrated into a collection initiative to create momentum and motivate owners of illicit weapons to surrendering their arms. Many different types of incentives, both individual and collective, including financial, material, developmental etc, have been offered during past collection programmes in the region and these have had varying degrees of success, depending on how well they have been matched with specific cultural, social and economic contexts.

Individual incentives in the form of *cash for weapons* (buy-back programmes) were used in Croatia in 1996, where individual financial reward was built into the third of a series of weapons collection phases which took place from 1992–2002. The project was considered a relative success in terms of number of weapons collected, but the approach raised some concerns and was not used again. One key informant summarised the negative effects of the buy-back approach, “Payback programmes are positive because you motivate people, but you stimulate illegal activities for people to sell and buy arms”.³⁸

Because of its negative impact in potentially fuelling a black market for arms and stimulating trafficking, most donors have abandoned the buy-back approach, and for the same reasons it should not be considered in a Kosovo context.

Another version of providing individual incentives, which attempts to alleviate the negative impact of the buy-back scheme, is a *lottery system* in which people receive a lottery ticket in return for handing in their weapon. This approach was used in Macedonia in 2003. To maximise impact and ensure broad donor support, individual incentives for handing in weapons had a development/social aspect. For example, in Macedonia, where unemployment is high, the prizes included a car with a taxi licence and a computer with a language or IT course.³⁹ Despite the modest number of weapons collected in comparison with the estimated numbers in circulation (see table 1), the

³⁶ Weapons control can be defined as ‘activities which aim to reduce the social, economic and environmental impact of uncontrolled SALW proliferation and possession’. ‘Annex A – Glossary and Definitions’ in Performance Indicators for the Monitoring and Evaluation of SALW Control Programmes, (SEESAC, 2004) p 18, <<http://www.seesac.org/reports/PI%20Discussion%20Paper.pdf>>, 14 February 2009.

³⁷ An integrated approach to tackling armed violence is championed by the Geneva Declaration process, which also draws attention to the link between development and armed violence, and to the need to mobilise development organisations to integrating issues like conflict prevention, SALW and violent crime into their work. The Geneva Declaration is available at <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/pdfs/Geneva_Declaration_Process_FINAL.pdf>

³⁸ Interview with Trpe Stojanovski, Director of MARRI (the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative), 3 March 2009.

³⁹ Interview with Adrian Wilkinson, 20 March 2009.

45-day initiative was generally considered successful, perhaps in particular as a symbolic event in the country's progress towards peace.⁴⁰

The lottery model is an improved version of providing incentives for individuals, but prizes need to be attractive enough to raise people's interest. Tying the prize to employment-related opportunities (training or income-generating equipment) could be a sensible approach in Kosovo, where unemployment rates are high.

Other weapons collection initiatives in the region have used **collective incentives**, such as the so-called *weapons in exchange for development (WED)* programmes. This approach was piloted in Gramsh in Albania 1998–2000, and consisted of offering development aid in return for surrendered weapons, with the communities themselves identifying aid targets. In the words of a key informant, “the idea of weapons collection in exchange for development projects was successful”.⁴¹ The Gramsh pilot project set “important precedents for weapons collection best practice”⁴², and the approach was replicated and applied to other localities, first in Albania (in Elbasan and Diber, with less success) and then in other countries across the region, sometimes taking the form of a competition where the community handing in most weapons would receive development funds. Whether by design or by chance, the WED approach seems to have been particularly appropriate to the Albanian context at that specific time. Some reasons for this could include a situation of poverty (thus a demand for development projects), a relatively homogeneous population, and a recent history of taking action collectively rather than individually.

However, transferring the model to other contexts without sufficient adjustment has proved to limit its effectiveness. One of the countries where this approach was used was Kosovo, where WED constituted the model for the ISAC 1 collection in 2003. However, here the WED approach had much less success, for several reasons. Broadly speaking, the approach seemed to be directly replicated and not sufficiently adjusted to the different specific, divided and conflict-affected context of Kosovo.⁴³ Also, unlike in Albania, weapons ownership does not seem to be considered a collective/community issue but an individual choice, and collective incentives were therefore misplaced.⁴⁴ Questions were also raised about the appropriateness of focusing on rewarding municipal authorities: because of high levels of corruption, many citizens doubted that any prize money would ever benefit them, and this was therefore not an appropriate incentive to motivate broad participation.⁴⁵ Also, doubts have been raised whether a WED approach would attract interest in Kosovo, as years of exposure to development assistance may have lessened the immediate desire for such projects.⁴⁶

The points raised above would suggest that collective incentives (including the WED approach) are not suitable for Kosovo. However, findings from the household survey, and feedback from focus groups participants (see section 3) as well as conversations with citizens in communities such as Gërmovë/Grmovo have all indicated that in some locations, there is a local interest in a WED-type approach, and that not every-one is dismissive of its potential to have a positive effect.

⁴⁰ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), ‘Macedonia: Weapons Collection a Success, But Many Stick to their Guns’, 17 December 2003, <<http://www.rferl.org/content/Article/1105360.html>>, accessed 16 April 2009.

⁴¹ Interview with Ramazan Beka, NGO Movement for Disarmament, Albania, 13 March 2009.

⁴² Op cit, *South Eastern Europe SALW Monitor 2004*, p 25.

⁴³ Op cit, Rynn S.

⁴⁴ Interview with Adrian Wilkinson, 20 March 2009. For an overview of incentives see also SEESAC, *Regional Micro-Disarmament Standards/Guidelines (RMDS/G) and SALW Control Measures*, 4th Edition (SEESAC, 2006), available at <[http://www.seesac.org/resources/RMDS%2001.10%20%20Guide%20to%20RMDS%20\(Edition%204\).pdf](http://www.seesac.org/resources/RMDS%2001.10%20%20Guide%20to%20RMDS%20(Edition%204).pdf)> accessed 14 April 2009.

⁴⁵ Mustafa A and J Xharra, ‘Kosovo Gun Amnesty Setback’, IWPR, 16 October 2003, <http://www.iwpr.net/index.php?apc_state=hen&s=o&o=p=bcr&s=f&o=155804> accessed 14 March 2009.

⁴⁶ Furthermore, there is a risk that the WED approach could have similar negative effects to the buy-back model: in Albania, one interviewee reported that communities expressed readiness to buy weapons in order to win the development project, thus demonstrating the risk of the use of incentives fuelling weapons trafficking. Op cit, *Turning the page*, p 113.

Collective incentives have yielded mixed results in the region, and have had little or no effect in Kosovo. However, the decision on whether or not to use collective incentive should be based on an analysis of the local context: despite all the reasons for scepticism, there may be communities in Kosovo where a WED-type approach could have a positive effect.

However, using incentives without addressing demand factors risks only ‘scratching the surface’ of the problem, as demonstrated by the fact that people will willingly hand over their old and unusable weapons to receive the benefit in the form of financial reward, a development project or a lottery ticket, while keeping their fully functional weapons (a problem also referred to above). Although the option of specifying that only weapons in working order qualify for rewards – or ‘upping the reward’ by, for example, offering several lottery tickets for the bigger or more functional weapons – may help to reduce such problems⁴⁷, it is unlikely to substantially increase success as long as people feel they have reason to keep a weapon at home.

If the underlying reasons for people feeling the need to own weapons illegally are not addressed, it is difficult to conceive of incentives that will be attractive enough to convince people to hand in their weapons. The priority ultimately therefore needs to be addressing the demand factors.

Raising awareness and changing attitudes to weapons ownership

While in theory there seems to be a recognition among governments, international institutions and donors that changing perceptions and attitudes to weapons possession is a vital component of any weapons collection programme, judging from the weapons collection initiatives undertaken in the region, this has often not been reflected in practice. In Kosovo, one assessment found that “Another weakness of the project was that it was far too optimistic in assuming that public attitudes could be changed within a short space of time. In retrospect, it was clearly unrealistic to assume that deeply ingrained public attitudes towards gun holding could be changed by an information campaign lasting a few months.”⁴⁸ Similarly, in Macedonia, awareness raising was not prioritised or given enough time to have a deep impact. Awareness-raising activities began in September 2003, not leaving much time for impact before the weapons collection began two months later, in November.⁴⁹

While the issue of ‘gun culture’ is complex and contested,⁵⁰ in many Balkan countries there are deep-seated social and cultural attitudes towards weapons ownership which need to be challenged in order for SALW control efforts to be effective. Changing institutionalised attitudes towards weapons ownership requires a long-term effort that stretches beyond a relatively short life of a typical programme intervention.

A weapons collection initiative can only be successful if there is broad public consensus about the need for such an action. The awareness-raising component therefore needs to be a priority; it must be given sufficient resources and time, and must be initiated early on to ensure it has time to have an impact before the collection is undertaken.

TV and newspaper reports can play an important role in raising awareness about the collection and promoting debate on weapons ownership. For example, in Macedonia

⁴⁷ This approach was suggested to the UNDP project managers in Kosovo, but was rejected as it was deemed to difficult to implement (interview with Adrian Wilkinson, 20 March 2009).

⁴⁸ Op cit, Wille C.

⁴⁹ Op cit, *South Eastern Europe SALW Monitor 2004*. Other assessments gave a more positive review of the awareness raising campaign, see op cit, Brethfeld J.

⁵⁰ See section 3: ‘Why do people feel they need weapons?’

“...there was a very good journalist who reported very well on the issue”⁵¹ and this was deemed to have boosted the collection campaign significantly.

However, national-level campaigns are not always enough. Key informants in Kosovo told us that: “Previous campaigns (in Kosovo) were not well organised, they were too formal. They never reached the communities.”⁵² Key informants stressed the importance of targeting specific communities in order to change local attitudes and promote debate at the local level.

Generic public information and awareness campaigns alone are unlikely to change deep-seated attitudes or to mobilise people into taking action. To ensure that awareness-raising campaigns have maximum impact at the local level, their messages and approach need to be relevant to the local context and to different audiences and therefore local community members should be closely consulted on their design. Awareness-raising efforts should not be limited to one-way communication, but should stimulate debate and engagement around issues of illicit weapons possession.

Geographic location and scope of the collection

Some weapons collection initiatives have focused on a few identified areas or communities rather than on the whole country. One example is the 1998–99 Gramsh pilot project in Albania, and the following phases which also focused on a limited number of areas (see table 1). Also in Macedonia, most SALW control initiatives focused only on areas affected by the 2001 conflict. Other areas were largely neglected, despite indications that high rates of crime and armed violence posed significant problems there.⁵³ This raises concerns over the criteria used to select one area over another. It also raises the question of how an uneven collection of weapons may impact on relations (power, conflict, etc) between local communities.

A geographically selective approach may also impact on the level of public support or participation in the initiative. Knowing that not all communities (or not all parts of the population) are handing in their weapons can potentially discourage people from handing in theirs. In the Kosovo context, this is a relevant observation, in particular where Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb communities live side by side and where there is little interaction or trust between the two (this point is further supported by the survey findings, see section 3). This reinforces the point that a successful voluntary weapons collection initiative must be designed according to a careful analysis of the local context.

A geographically selective approach can have negative consequences on local relations and on the efficiency of the weapons collection. The particular context in Kosovo indicates that a Kosovo-wide initiative is the more suitable approach.

Timing and duration

Experience indicates that choosing when to undertake a weapons collection can determine the chances of success. Incidents such as high-profile shootings can transmit a powerful message about the impact of armed violence and can have a certain ‘shock effect’ that spurs governments to take action and the population to surrender their weapons.⁵⁴

Conversely, undertaking a voluntary collection initiative during or after a steady deterioration in the general security situation can have a negative effect on the chances

⁵¹ Interview with Trpe Stojanovski, 3 March 2009.

⁵² Interview with Alban Krasniqi, former Director of the Kosovo Youth Network, 2 March 2009.

⁵³ Op cit, Brethfeld J.

⁵⁴ Op cit, Rynn S.

of success. In Kosovo, an amnesty and voluntary weapons collection took place as scheduled in September 2003 despite a summer of rising tensions. This was deemed to have caused local community leaders to withdraw their support for the action and to be one of the reasons for the initiative's low impact.⁵⁵ Timing is a factor that should be carefully considered and, while it is important to have an agreed timetable for the action, there needs to be some flexibility in order that the programme can react to relevant events.

The security situation and possible security trends need to be taken into account when deciding when to undertake a weapons collection or a weapons amnesty.

Choosing how long the collection period should be also poses its own dilemmas. Experience shows that most of the weapons collected are handed in during the last part of the amnesty period, which would suggest that some time is needed for people to become aware of the initiative, and assess its merits before deciding whether to hand in their weapon. However, while allowing for adequate time for the collection to have maximum impact, experience from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania indicates that continuing amnesties over a longer time is likely to yield diminishing results, as resources are diverted elsewhere and people become more indifferent to the campaign messages.⁵⁶ Also, extending the amnesty period for too long risks creating confusion among citizens as to what the rules are regarding weapons possession,⁵⁷ and creates the risk that citizens begin to view the state of amnesty as the norm. It also undermines the chances of success of the amnesty/collection: if the owners of illicit weapons do not believe that the weapons legislation will be enforced in the future, they have little reason to make use of the amnesty while it is in place.

One option for ensuring maximum awareness of and confidence in the initiative can be to conduct a 'rolling' collection, during which the collection team visits the different locations several times, for example doing two rounds of collection. This would serve to raise awareness of the amnesty in the first round, which would then encourage more people to participate in the second round.⁵⁸ The two visits could be interspersed with a related event such as a lottery draw or a widely advertised weapons destruction to further raise awareness of the collection.

The collection/amnesty period should not be too short. Adequate time is needed to raise awareness of the process and convince people of its merits. On the other hand, the amnesty period/collection should not continue or be extended for so long that the process loses momentum and people lose interest.

Who should design and implement a collection?

In order to ensure that the weapons collection is supported widely and a general consensus is built around the issue of illicit weapons, the authorities responsible for implementing it should identify, consult and involve all the relevant stakeholders. Ensuring the right mix of actors is likely to greatly increase the chance of success. Implementers of the collection process should include for example: technical experts (on collection, handling and storage); local community representatives; and a mutually-respected party (someone who is considered neutral by stakeholders). However, who plays these roles in each collection will of course differ according to the local context.

⁵⁵ Op cit, Wille C.

⁵⁶ Op cit, Kauer E; op cit, *Turning the page*, p 116; op cit, *South Eastern Europe SALW Monitor 2004*, p 26.

⁵⁷ Op cit, *Turning the page*, p iii.

⁵⁸ Interview with Adrian Wilkinson, 20 March 2009.

Political leaders

A common lesson learnt from past initiatives is that while real local ownership is the ideal which all weapons collections should aspire to, buy-in from local political leaders is a minimum requirement for success. One reason for the poor performance of the 2003 Kosovo ISAC project was the lack of declared support from Kosovo's senior political leaders, who felt that the actions were premature as long as the status issue was not resolved.⁵⁹ This was a sentiment also widely reflected in the population.⁶⁰

Lack of buy-in and support from all parts of the political elite can thus pose severe problems for a programme. In Albania, political divisions were 'putting the project at stake'⁶¹, with leaders of different political parties using the weapons collection to score political points.⁶²

Conversely, leading politicians expressing public support or actively participating serves to strengthen the credibility of the initiative. For example, in Macedonia, the (Macedonian) Minister of Interior and the (Albanian) Deputy Chief of the Counter Intelligence Service publicly handed in their private weapons during the collection in 2003.⁶³ A key informant noted that even now, "In Macedonia, collected weapons are subject to public destruction once a year during the global week of action against illicit SALW. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior lead the action and the weapons are destroyed in the presence of the public, and international organisations, donors, etc are invited to attend. ...It is important to communicate to the citizens how the government will take forward the issue now and in the future"⁶⁴ As noted by one key informant, "crucial to any weapon collection initiative is political will".⁶⁵

Experiences indicate that a Kosovo government-led initiative is more likely to receive backing (at least among Kosovo Albanians) than one designed and implemented by international actors. It is however important that all the major political parties – including those in opposition – publicly support the initiative, so party politics are not allowed to undermine it.

International actors

There is evidence that the engagement of international actors can have an important mobilising effect: in Albania, UNDP was deemed to have "injected momentum" in the process at a time when it was neither a priority for the Albanian Government, nor for the rest of the international community.⁶⁶ But a general observation is that international donors need to be sensitive to the local context, and be aware of the potential of their own priorities or fixed timelines to impact negatively on the success of programmes.

For example, UNDP in Kosovo was under pressure from various sides to carry out the 2003 ISAC weapons collection, and to use a certain approach. The donors made the use of the WED approach a condition for their support to UNDP's project, and key actors within UNMIK and KFOR were championing the initiative, putting pressure on UNDP to carry out the collection despite internal concerns over the timing and the suitability of the approach. This context also limited UNDP's ability to adjust the project to changing circumstances such as the before mentioned deterioration in the security situation.⁶⁷

⁵⁹ Op cit, Rynn S.

⁶⁰ Matveeva A and Paes W, *The Kosovo Serbs: An ethnic minority between collaboration and defiance*, (Saferworld, BICC and Friedrich Nauman Foundation, 2003), p 41.

⁶¹ Interview with Ramazan Beka, 13 March 2009.

⁶² Interview with Todi Grazhdani, former Head of Directorate for Community Policing and Weapons Collection, Albania, 13 March 2009; Interview with Ramazan Beka, 13 March 2009.

⁶³ Op cit, *South Eastern Europe SALW Monitor 2004*.

⁶⁴ Trpe Stojanovski, Macedonia, 3 March 2009.

⁶⁵ Interview with Ramazan Beka, 13 March 2009.

⁶⁶ Op cit, *Turning the page*, p 112.

⁶⁷ Interview with former UNDP official, 20 March 2009.

International actors can bring expertise, perceived neutrality and impetus to a weapons collection programme. However, they should respect the local context and be sensitive to the potential negative impact of imposing their own priorities, approaches and timeframes.

Donors should take a backseat in the design, management and implementation of any weapons collection process. Although donors should not be the driving force behind the initiative, they should be committed to ‘staying the course’, not imposing external priorities, and not withdrawing their financial pledges before the process is complete. To ensure that donors’ own financial circumstances do not jeopardise the success of the weapons collection campaign, all financial arrangements should be agreed and finalised in advance of the initiative.

Security forces

Security forces are often the main implementing actor of weapons collections initiatives, including in South Eastern Europe. These can be broken down into two broad categories:

- **International peacekeeping/security forces:** In the immediate post-conflict context of the late 1990s/early 2000s in the Balkans, local security forces were considered overly compromised or unequipped to carry out weapons control or collection initiatives. International actors therefore took on this role, often first and foremost as implementers of the negotiated disarmament of local militias/armies, as part of the terms of a peace agreement and broader post-conflict stabilisation. However, also in terms of civilian, voluntary weapons amnesties and collections, international peacekeeping or security providers have played the part of a ‘neutral’ and trustworthy actor. They can, however, face certain challenges in terms of limited knowledge of local context and culture, which can limit or jeopardise their ability to establish the necessary trust to carry out broader civilian voluntary weapons collections.
- **Local security forces:** In situations where local security forces are seen as credible and trustworthy, they should bear the responsibility for collection initiatives. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Operation Harvest, which was initiated by SFOR and EUFOR, seems to have demonstrated increased success rates when members of the local police and army of RS Republika Srpska began playing a more active role.⁶⁸

With time, responsibility for weapons collection operations in the region has increasingly been handed over to local security forces, and this process is also taking place in Kosovo. However, as is detailed in the survey findings in section 3, there is still scope in the Kosovo context for international security forces to play the part of a perceived ‘neutral’ implementer of a weapons collection.⁶⁹ But in the end, the key issue is not whether the implementing institution is international or local, but the level of public trust it enjoys. At the ISAC collection in Kosovo in 2003, KFOR was the main body collecting SALW at collection points, and people could also hand in their weapons at police stations⁷⁰. One key informant told us, “It should be carefully discussed and decided if police stations should be used as collection points as they were in the past, as this may make people hesitant to surrender their weapons”.⁷¹ Similar considerations have been put forward with reference to the Albanian experience.⁷² One way of overcoming this issue is to involve civil society actors, see next section.

⁶⁸ Europe Intelligence Wire, ‘Operations Harvest gives better results with domestic forces; SFOR’, 17 March 2004.

⁶⁹ Again, in the Kosovo context, international forces are not considered ‘neutral’ or trusted by all citizens. See section 3 for an analysis of people’s views on which institutions are trusted, and on which ones should undertake a weapons collection in Kosovo.

⁷⁰ Op cit, *SALW Survey of Kosovo*.

⁷¹ Interview with Major Granit Fetahu, Kosovo Police, Member of the drafting group on the law on weapons, 10 February 2009. Another key informant noted that also due to their location, police stations in Kosovo can not be considered suitable collection points (comments given via email 2 June 2009).

⁷² Op cit, *Turning the page*, pp 118–119.

In the interest of building of local capacity and strengthening of credibility and local ownership, local security actors should take the lead where possible in implementing collection initiatives, preferably in co-operation with local civilian actors (see below). However, while international security forces have drawn down in most countries in the region, there is potentially still a role to play for them in Kosovo. This role should be defined on the basis of the views of the population (see section 3) by the authorities charged with the process.

Civil society and community leaders

Experiences from across the region shows that civil society has a number of crucial roles to play to improve the impact of weapons collections, not just in terms of raising awareness of the initiative and creating debate and challenging attitudes on illicit weapons possession (which has traditionally been the role of civil society), but even broader than that: participating in the actual collecting of weapons, and creating linkages between military/security institutions and the wider population.

In terms of *mobilising the population and raising awareness*, civil society organisations have been supporting collection initiatives by, for example, producing materials, organising events, implementing development projects, and conducting school campaigns. For example, in Macedonia, “The involvement of NGOs and community groups clearly contributed to the broad public support for the collection and the success of the initiative”.⁷³ In Kosovo, local CSOs were instrumental in organising various events (a parade, TV debates, public meetings) producing a film and engaging the media.⁷⁴ Also in Albania, the involvement of different actors, from national police service to community and religious leaders, celebrities, international organisations and civil society, contributed to yielding positive results.⁷⁵

In particular, there have been positive experiences with including civilian actors such as local NGOs and community leaders and *giving them a role in the actual collection process*.⁷⁶ For example, in Macedonia “voluntary surrender was greatly assisted by local municipal weapons collection commissions established as part of the initiative”.⁷⁷ The results of the survey also back up the statement put forward by the key informant above: that although many (Kosovo Albanian) respondents believe Kosovo Police is the ‘natural’ choice for an implementing agency, not everyone will feel comfortable handing in their weapons at a police station (see section 3). Civilian committees can be perceived to be less intimidating than military or security actors, but it is essential that such committees are as representative of the local population as possible, with all communities represented. Involving civil society extensively in all aspects of the design and implementation of the collection initiative also signals a broadening out of responsibility for weapons control – from being something which is perceived as the exclusive domain of military actors and security institutions, to being an issue which each individual community has a shared responsibility for addressing.

Civil society plays an important role in awareness raising, mobilisation, monitoring and oversight, and its potential to provide a non-threatening interlocutor in the collection itself should be considered. Particularly in the Kosovo context, where Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serbs are divided in terms of which institutions they trust, involving local community leaders and civil society is vital.

⁷³ Op cit, *South Eastern Europe SALW 2004*, p 103.

⁷⁴ Interview with Alban Krasniqi, 2 March 2009.

⁷⁵ Op cit, Rynn S.

⁷⁶ Interview with Adrian Wilkinson, 20 March 2009.

⁷⁷ Op cit, Wille C.

3

Perceptions of security and weapons in Kosovo

THIS SECTION OUTLINES KEY FINDINGS from a household survey, ten focus group discussions and ten key informant interviews conducted in December 2008 to March 2009 (sample sizes and methodology are outlined in Annex 1). Saferworld and FIQ have been tracking attitudes towards SALW and security issues since 2006.⁷⁸ Where the surveys reveal a noteworthy change in perceptions over time on a certain issue, this is referenced in the text. The section provides an insight into current perceptions of security and weapons in Kosovo, and outlines different communities' views on the design and outcome of any future weapons control or collection initiative.

Perceptions of safety and security are sensitive subjects and people remain very uncomfortable discussing weapons-related issues in particular. As mentioned earlier, this means that statistical data should be taken as estimates only. This section uses qualitative data (gained from focus group discussions and key informant interviews) to validate the statistical data and to gain more in-depth insight into people's perceptions. When several indicators of discomfort are taken together, it is possible to discern a slight trend since 2006 towards more openness in discussing weapons.⁷⁹ However, it seems that there are still some fundamental barriers to deep discussion on this subject. This emphasises that there is still much work to be done to build trust and support engagement on these issues.

Do weapons make people feel safer?

On the surface, weapons possession does not make people feel safer. Around two thirds of respondents (67.6%) said that possessing firearms does not/would not make them feel safe. This is higher than the figure for last year (60.8% in February 2008) and may suggest that perceptions about the effect of firearms on safety are changing. Focus group discussions, particularly with Kosovo Albanians, corroborate this: many participants stated that weapons did not provide safety when they were questioned directly on this issue. Participants stated, for example, that "firearms are dangerous"⁸⁰ and "I don't think they [firearms] offer security... firearms just increase the number of conflicts."⁸¹

⁷⁸ Previous SafePlace publications can be found on the project website, <www.safeplaceproject.org>

⁷⁹ Since March 2006, the number of respondents answering 'don't know/no answer' to SALW-related questions has been decreasing slightly. This trend for greater openness in discussing SALW issues is also discernable among government representatives during a conference organised in Kosovo by Saferworld on 20 November 2008.

⁸⁰ Focus group participant, female, 47, Podujevë/Podujevo.

⁸¹ Focus group participant, male, 48, Deçan/Deçani.

Furthermore, 69.5% of respondents said that they would not acquire a firearm if they were able to (up from 66.5% in March 2008). The main three reasons cited for not wanting to acquire a gun were:

- 'do not need one'
- weapons are 'dangerous for family, especially children'
- 'do not like guns.'

In focus group discussions, several respondents also stressed the potential of guns to escalate an argument into violence and even death. As one man put it, "If I knew that I had a gun at home, in a situation where I was really edgy and mad, the probability that I would use the gun is very high."⁸²

However, people still link weapons with safety in an insecure environment. Focus groups and key informant interviews suggest that the scepticism about the ability of weapons to bring safety may not mean that the majority of people in Kosovo are prepared to give up their firearms. In some focus groups, participants were quick to state that firearms did not provide security. However, when questioned further on the issue, several went on to describe the benefits of weapons for personal security and some even contradicted themselves by stating that, given the chance, they would acquire a firearm to protect themselves. For example, when asked whether firearms offer security, one focus group participant said, "No, not for me." Yet later, when asked whether they would want to possess a weapon, the same participant replied, "If someone were to offer me one [a firearm], I would definitely accept it ... because I feel safer knowing I own a weapon."⁸³ This indicates, as one key informant noted, that "there is an increase in people's awareness that they should not own firearms, but the security situation is as it is," so people appear less able to feel safe without them.⁸⁴ As one participant put it, "citizens are afraid and feel insecure. That is why they are reluctant to give up their weapons. I am sure that they would gladly give up their weapons if they felt safe."⁸⁵ This suggests that improvements to people's safety and security are required before a voluntary weapons collection or amnesty takes place. It is clear that past awareness-raising campaigns have had some impact on public attitudes towards weapons, but the evidence here indicates that changing deep-seated values and practices requires sustained, long-term public engagement with the issue.

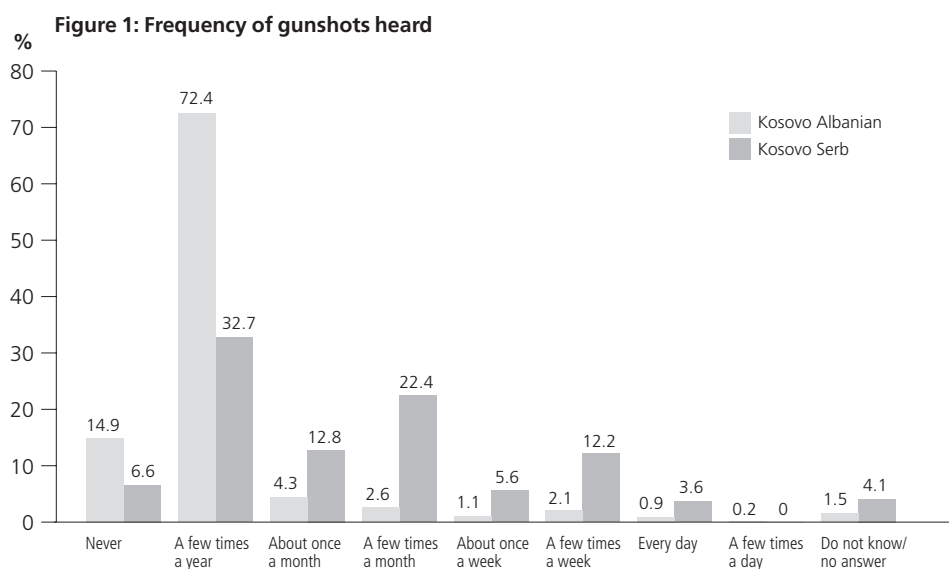
Kosovo Serbs in particular feel that possessing firearms provides security. 32.7% of Kosovo Serb respondents, compared to 24.2% among Kosovo Albanians said that firearms provided security. In addition, 24.5% of Kosovo Serb respondents felt their neighbourhood was somewhat unsafe or very unsafe (compared to 4.2% of Kosovo Albanians), and Kosovo Serbs tended to hear more gunshots in their communities than the Kosovo Albanians (see figure 1).

⁸² Focus group participant, male, 56 years old, Deçan/Dečani (Junik).

⁸³ Focus group participant, male, 41, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

⁸⁴ Interview with Rustem Mustafa, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Internal Affairs and Security, 20 February 2009.

⁸⁵ Focus group participant, male, 65, Prishtinë/Priština.



This finding is corroborated by Kosovo Serb focus group participants, among whom there was an awareness of the limits and dangers of weapons, but views such as, “possessing a firearm brings you absolute safety”⁸⁶ and “our safety would be completely at risk if we handed in our weapons”⁸⁷ were not uncommon. Kosovo Serb focus group participants also noted the psychological significance of possessing firearms, indicating that for them, firearms increase confidence and help alleviate fears for personal safety: “I think that weapons rather offer psychological security more than anything. If one owns a weapon it gives you a sense of power.”⁸⁸ It is clear that convincing many Kosovo Serbs to hand in their weapons will be difficult. Therefore, the success of any weapons collection initiative in Kosovo Serb areas will depend on the degree to which it is based on local consultation – and to the extent possible, local participation – to ensure the specific needs and concerns of this group of citizens are taken into account.

Rural residents are more inclined to believe that possessing weapons makes or would make them safe. On average, 29.7% of rural respondents held this belief compared to 20.7% of urban respondents. Furthermore, 31.7% of rural respondents said they would acquire a firearm if they could, compared to 23.2% of urban residents. In focus group discussions, urban residents often associated fears for their safety with crime, whereas residents living in border towns and villages mentioned the need to protect themselves against external threats to their communities more often. For example, a participant of a rural focus group in a border village said, “Until Kosovo has a reliable police and a strong army, which are capable of defending its territory, I think we need to carry weapons as a means of protecting our territories from any possible threats,”⁸⁹ while a participant of an urban focus group said, “You don’t feel safe in the streets and even in your own home. Robbers and thieves... can break into your home, beat you up, steal anything they want to steal and even kill you for all they care.”⁹⁰ There are some areas of Kosovo which display the above sensitivities associated with weapons acutely, demonstrating severe insecurity and the need for a very carefully tailored local approach to any weapons control or collection effort. The divided town of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica provides a stark example.

⁸⁶ Focus group participant, male, 25, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

⁸⁷ Focus group participant, male, 37, Brezovicë/Brezovica/Shtërpçë/Štrpce.

⁸⁸ Focus group participant, male, 22, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

⁸⁹ Focus group participant, male, 60, Kamenicë/Kamenica.

⁹⁰ Focus group participant, male, 65, Prishtinë/Priština.

Mitrovicë/Mitrovica focus

“There is so much theft going on in private homes. That’s why having a gun would be better.”⁹¹

“I think that knowing who our bordering neighbours are, I feel safer knowing I have a gun.”⁹²

As the above quotes from focus group discussions in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica show, the city combines both urban and border-area insecurity factors: the fear of crime and the fear of a threat from across the river which divides the city. This may help explain why residents of this city feel particularly vulnerable.

- 15.5% of respondents in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica described their neighbourhood as unsafe (compared to a Kosovo-wide average of 7.5%).
- Mitrovicë/Mitrovica has the highest number of gunshots heard in all of Kosovo (see figure 3).
- Mitrovicë/Mitrovica also has the highest number of residents who believe that a violent conflict is very likely in the next five years (28.5%, compared to a Kosovo-wide average of 16.5%).
- It is therefore perhaps no surprise that residents of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica are most inclined to believe that possessing a firearm will improve their safety (35.5%, compared to the Kosovo-wide average of 25.5%). 37% of respondents here said they would acquire a firearm if they were able to (compared to a 27.8% Kosovo average).
- Furthermore, a larger proportion of the people in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica who declared themselves willing to acquire a firearm said they would do so because of fear of conflict/war or instability (20.3% in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, compared to a Kosovo average of 4.5%)
- Citizens here are also the least inclined to believe that a weapons amnesty carried out in the next six months will be successful: 24.0% of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica residents, compared to a Kosovo-wide average of 14.8%, believe that nobody would hand in their weapons.

When asked whether she would like a firearm, one Mitrovicë/Mitrovica focus group participant said, “I would not mind having a weapon in the house. I feel that in the area where I live, one cannot risk staying unarmed.”⁹³

What are people’s perceptions of the level of weapons ownership in Kosovo?

There are significant differences in firearm possession across different regions and municipalities. In focus group discussions, no participants admitted personally to possessing illegal firearms (and very rarely legal firearms), and they largely denied the presence of firearms in their own communities. However, the majority of participants discussed the safety situation in Kosovo in a way which acknowledged the widespread proliferation of weapons. For example, in a focus group discussion in an apparently close-knit village in Podujevë/Podujevo, one participant was adamant to point out that, “In our homes, we do not possess firearms,”⁹⁴ while later, another participant said, “Once we feel safe and nobody persecutes us, we can surrender them [our weapons].”⁹⁵ Other focus group participants admitted that, “We all know that many citizens own weapons”⁹⁶ and that, “The number of weapons in circulation is tremendous.”⁹⁷

Proxy indicators of firearm possession illustrate significant regional differences in firearm possession across Kosovo. Comparing a number of indicators for possession in Gjakova/Đakovica and Ferizaj/Uroševac (see figure 2), highlights the extent of variation between regions with different geographical, historical and economic features.

⁹¹ Focus group participant, male, 41, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

⁹² Focus group participant, male, 41, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

⁹³ Focus group participant, female, 53, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

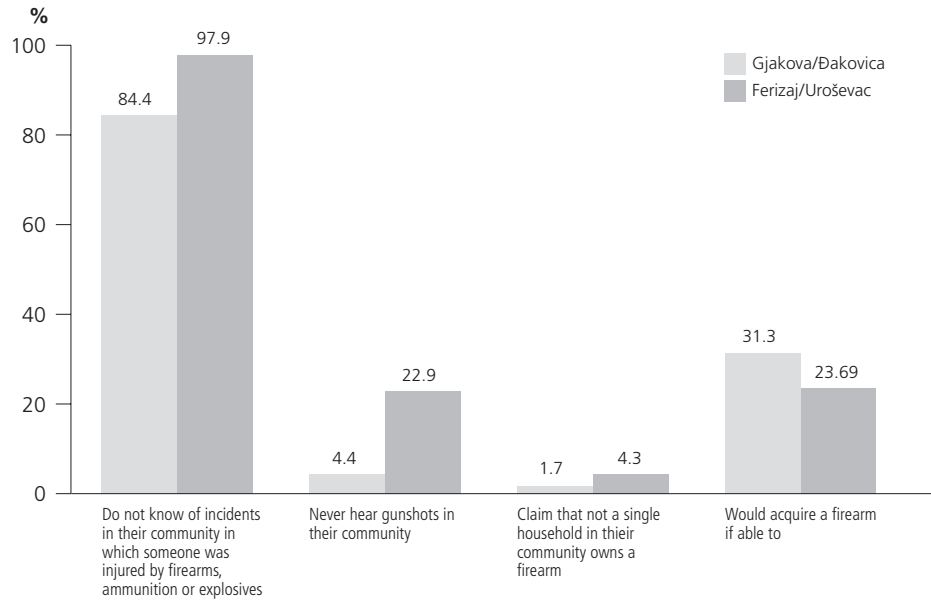
⁹⁴ Focus group participant, female, 42, Podujevë/Podujevo.

⁹⁵ Focus group participant, female, 35, Podujevë/Podujevo.

⁹⁶ Focus group participant, male, 49, Kamenicë/Kamenica.

⁹⁷ Focus group participant, male, 56, Prishtinë/Priština.

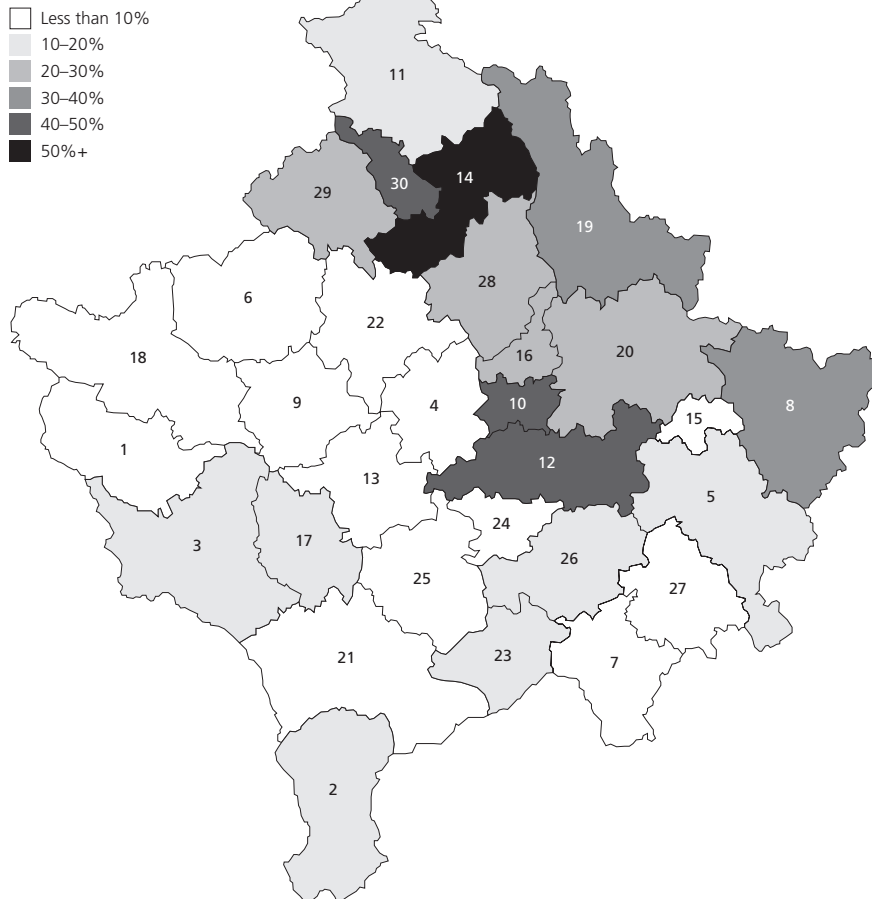
Figure 2: Gjakova/Đakovica–Ferizaj/Uroševac comparison



The insecurity stemming from living in close proximity to borders with states perceived to be hostile may be a factor driving weapons ownership in some border areas, as a focus group participant from Podujevë/Podujevo (close to the border with Serbia) confirms: “We cannot hand in our weapons, because we live near the border and because the state does not offer us security.”⁹⁸ However, as figure 3 shows, the geographical pattern of weapons ownership in Kosovo is not clear-cut, indicating that many other historical, political and social factors also play a part.

Figure 3: Percentage of respondents hearing gunshots once a month or more, by municipality

1. Dečan/Dečani
2. Dragash/Dragaš
3. Gjakovë/Đakovica
4. Gillogovc/Glogovac
5. Gjilan/Gnjilane
6. Istog/Istok
7. Kačanik/Kaçanik
8. Kamenicë/Kamenica
9. Klinë/Klina
10. Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje
11. Leposaviq/Leposavić
12. Lipjan/Lipljan
13. Malishevë/Mališevo
14. Mitrovicë/Mitrovica
15. Novobërdë/Novo Brdo
16. Obiliq/Obilić
17. Rahovec/Orahovac
18. Pejë/Peć
19. Podujevë/Podujevo
20. Prishtinë/Priština
21. Prizren/Prizren
22. Skenderaj/Srbica
23. Shtërpçë/Štrpce
24. Shtime/Štimlje
25. Suharekë/Suva Reka
26. Ferizaj/Uroševac
27. Viti/Vitina
28. Vushtrri/Vučitrn
29. Zubin Potok/Zubin Potok
30. Zvečan/Zvečan



98 Focus group participant, male, age unknown, Podujevë/Podujevo.

These indicators of regional variation in weapons ownership point to an important factor to consider when designing a weapons collection initiative. It is essential that a comprehensive small arms survey is carried out before the process begins in order to determine the number of illegal weapons in circulation. Despite the obvious difficulties in obtaining accurate figures for illicit weapons possession, a survey provides a baseline against which to measure impact and different levels of gun ownership need to inform the targets that are set for collection in each region or municipality.

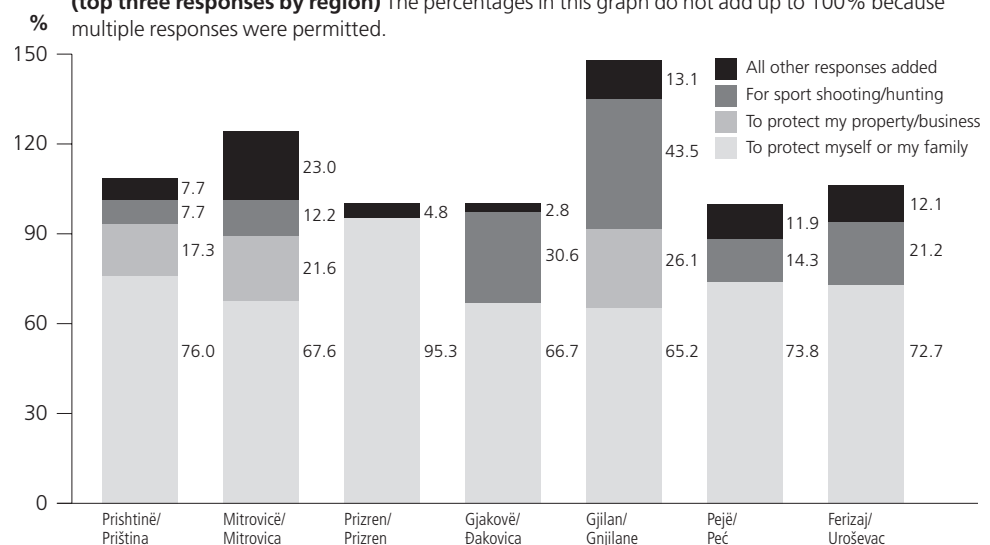
Perceptions of the level of firearm possession in neighbouring communities is an important factor in people's willingness to surrender their own weapons. 29.9% of Kosovo Albanians and 60.2% of Kosovo Serbs believe that concerns about violent conflict are an important or very important factor in making people hold onto their weapons rather than handing them into the authorities. Focus group discussions also reveal a perception in some communities that they must keep up with other communities' levels of firearms (or rather, their perceptions of those levels). A Kosovo Albanian focus group participant stated that "Serbs carry weapons and so we have to carry them too to defend ourselves"⁹⁹ and a Kosovo Serb focus group participant said, "Albanians think that we are well armed... It is important for the enemies to think that we have guns. And when it comes to how much, that remains a secret."¹⁰⁰ This suggests it is imperative that neither Kosovo Albanians nor Kosovo Serbs perceive themselves as the sole target of any weapons control initiative and that both groups, as well as associated political parties, are perceived to support the initiative.

Why do people feel they need weapons?

There is significant variation in the reasons why people feel they need firearms between regions and between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs. On average, 27.8% of respondents said that they would choose to own a firearm if they were able to. As previous surveys have shown,¹⁰¹ far the most common reason stated by respondents for choosing to own a firearm is to protect oneself or one's family (see above for rural/urban variation on self-protection).

There is considerable variation in responses across Kosovo's regions (see figure 4). For example, the perceived need to protect one's property or business appears to be more widespread in rural rather than in urban areas and more common in certain regions, such as Gjiilan/Gnjilane, perhaps indicating that security providers are less visible or less trusted here.

Figure 4: What are the main reasons you or your family would choose to own a firearm? (top three responses by region) The percentages in this graph do not add up to 100% because multiple responses were permitted.



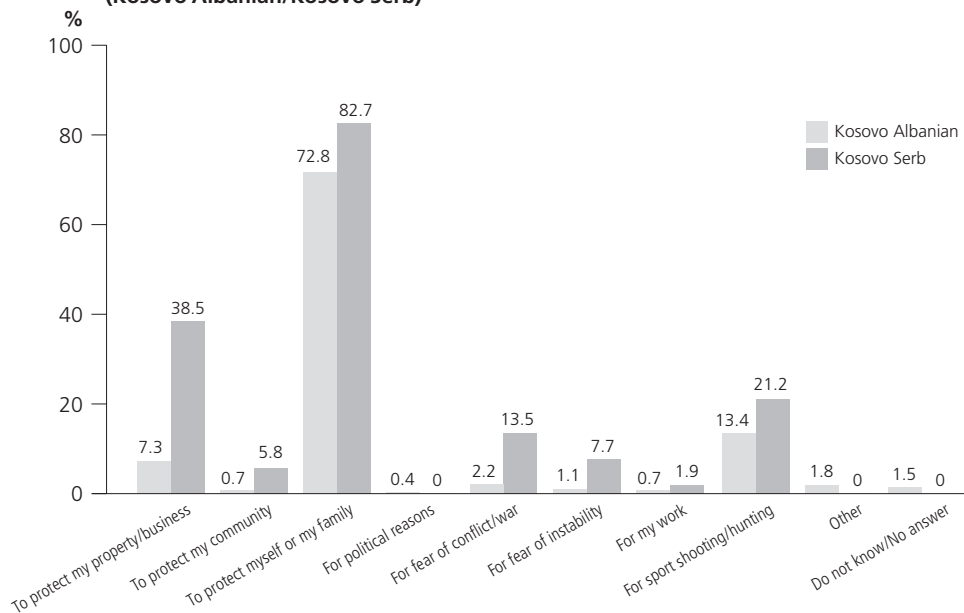
⁹⁹ Kosovo Albanian focus group participant, male, 20, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

¹⁰⁰ Kosovo Serb focus group participant, male, 37, Brezovicë/Brezovica.

¹⁰¹ *Through the cross-hairs: A survey of changing attitudes towards small arms in Kosovo* (Saferworld, 2008) p 8, <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/publications.php/366/through_the_cross_hairs>, accessed 15 March 2009.

Kosovo Serbs in particular also feel that protecting their property or business is an important factor (see figure 5), indicating that many more Kosovo Serbs than Kosovo Albanians feel that their personal property and/or their business is or could come under threat. This may be due to a lack of trust in security providers.

Figure 5: What are the main reasons you or your family would choose to own a firearm? (Kosovo Albanian/Kosovo Serb)



There are also some significant differences in the reasons given for weapons ownership between male and female respondents. Survey data shows that women are less inclined to acquire firearms than men. 76.8% of female respondents (compared to 63.7% of male respondents) would choose not to acquire a firearm if they were able to. This finding does not imply that women feel safer than men (there are no large gender differences in feelings of safety), but women who say that they would not acquire firearms state reasons such as ‘do not know how to use one’ and ‘afraid of firearms’ more often than men (12.3%, compared to 1.7% of male respondents, and 9.4%, compared to 2.7% of male respondents, respectively). Among those respondents who would acquire a firearm if they could, there are significant differences in demand factors between genders. Women appear to be more concerned about protecting themselves and their families than men: 85.0% of female respondents (compared to 66.2% of male respondents) said they would acquire a weapon in order to protect themselves or their family. Women also named fear of conflict/war more often than men: 6.7%, compared to 2.8% of male respondents.

While some older citizens mention ‘gun culture’ and tradition as factors driving weapons possession, some younger respondents associate weapons with violence and intimidation. ‘Gun culture’ is frequently referred to in the context of weapons ownership in the Balkans.¹⁰² History, tradition and culture were indeed also mentioned by several focus group participants in relation to weapons ownership in Kosovo. However, when respondents to the household survey were asked about the importance of different factors in making people keep their weapons rather than handing them in to the authorities, 74.2% of respondents felt that the tradition requiring men to have weapons was ‘not at all important’ or ‘not important’ (with rural residents ascribing this factor slightly more significance than urban residents).

References to tradition and cultural reasons for carrying weapons were slightly more frequent among older respondents. Younger respondents appear to have their own reasons for carrying weapons. Speaking about young people’s use of weapons, an elderly focus group participant claimed that, “as far as the younger generation is

¹⁰² Op cit, *The rifle has the devil inside: Gun Culture in South Eastern Europe.*

concerned, I believe they own weapons because they consider them like toys and nothing else”.¹⁰³ In a focus group with young people in their early 20s, participants spoke of weapons being “kept for fun only”¹⁰⁴ and “cases when someone carries a gun because of disputes they have with their friends, when drunk, [they] shoot a couple of bullets in the ground or play mafia.”¹⁰⁵

18–29-year-old respondents are also slightly more likely to believe that possessing firearms makes or would make them safer (31%, compared to a Kosovo-wide average of 25.5%). This finding corresponds to younger people feeling less safe in their neighbourhood (11.9% of 18–29 year-olds describe their neighbourhood as “somewhat unsafe” or “very unsafe”, compared to an overall average of 7.5%) and it may be linked to an increase in proliferation of weapons among urban youths. Furthermore, although only an average of 5.6% of respondents mentioned ‘self-defence’ when asked in which situations weapons were most often used in Kosovo, the figures were highest among the 18–29 year-olds (7.7%). This suggests that this group perceives armed self-defence to be more prevalent than older respondents. Related to this, more 18–29-year-olds claimed that weapons were used in fights between individuals over personal issues, in comparison with older respondents (11.3%, compared the average of 7.5%). This situation was also quoted twice as often in urban than in rural areas. Together, these indicators may suggest problems of armed youth, particularly in urban areas, and imply that weapons are used here as a means of violence or intimidation when tackling confrontations between individuals.

The disparities in demand factors between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs and between different regions, age groups and genders found in the survey data and focus groups discussions is only an indication of the different reasons people have for owning weapons. A comprehensive assessment of the attitudes and perceptions of Kosovo’s SALW owners should be carried out before any weapons collection programme begins to ensure the demand factors of each group are tackled in a manner which addresses their needs specifically. The only way to be sure that this is done effectively is to involve representatives of each social group (youth, women, minorities, elderly, etc) in the design and implementation process.

Despite the evident links with security, weapons are perceived to be mostly used during celebrations and hunting. The third most important factor motivating weapons ownership is for ‘recreational’ purposes: sports shooting/hunting (see figure 5). Perhaps not surprisingly, this factor was quoted primarily by male respondents, and more often in rural areas. Also, when asked to name situations when weapons were most often used in Kosovo, the two top responses were celebrations and hunting, with significant differences between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs. While nearly 90% of Kosovo Albanians pointed to celebrations as a situation where weapons were most often used, only 51.5% of Kosovo Serbs mentioned celebrations – conversely, 56.1% of Kosovo Serbs referred to ‘hunting’ against only 20.7% of Kosovo Albanians.

These findings point to an important issue: even if security, economic and other demand factors are addressed, it seems likely that a significant segment of society will wish to retain their weapons for so-called recreational purposes. This would suggest that the Government should focus its efforts on finding ways of mitigating the misuse of such weapons, by registration or limiting weapons permitted for ‘recreational’ purposes to i.e. hunting weapons. This should be combined with a long-term strategy to eradicate the practice of celebratory shooting, stressing the dangers and promoting alternatives means of celebration.

¹⁰³ Focus group participant, male, 60, Kamenicë/Kamenica.

¹⁰⁴ Focus group participant, female, 22, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

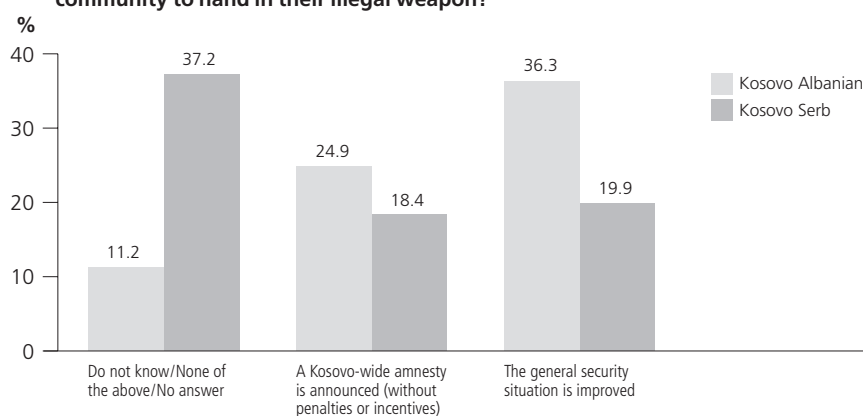
¹⁰⁵ Focus group participant, male, 25, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

What do people think about weapons collections?

Overall, the Kosovo population is pessimistic about the potential impact of a campaign to collect illegally-owned weapons. Most respondents predict that if an amnesty campaign were organised in the next six months, it would only be partially successful. Kosovo Serbs are even more sceptical than Kosovo Albanians (see figure 6).

Only an average of 23.3% of respondents believe that a Kosovo-wide amnesty would convince people to surrender their weapons. Here, there is not too big a difference between Albanians (24.9%) and Serbs (18.4%). Kosovo Serbs are slightly more sceptical, with 10.7% replying ‘none of the above’ – and 23.5% answering ‘do not know’, when asked what would convince people in their communities to give up their weapons. Focus group discussions also recorded a higher level of scepticism among Kosovo Serb participants: “I am 100% sure that people would not give up their weapons... people would laugh if they heard of a campaign to collect firearms”¹⁰⁶ and “the result of this campaign would be a pure ZERO.”¹⁰⁷

Figure 6: In your opinion, which of the following would best convince people in your community to hand in their illegal weapon?



While Kosovo Serb focus group participants most commonly rejected the idea that voluntary surrender of firearms could be successful under any circumstances, Kosovo Albanians’ scepticism appears to result from their *current* feeling of insecurity, without ruling out weapons surrender in the future: “I don’t think this is the best time to organise this kind of initiative. For now, we as citizens have to be guaranteed the total integrity of our borders before people feel confident to proceed with this action.”¹⁰⁸ This indicates that a weapons amnesty conducted in the near future will not be successful among Kosovo Albanians – and that even if the amnesty and collection are delayed, a large section of Kosovo Serbs is not likely to hand in their weapons.

Concern about lack of security is considered the most likely reason why people will not surrender their weapons. When asked what causes people to hold on to their weapons, the most common response was concerns about threats to the family (45.5% considered this important or very important), followed by concerns about inter-ethnic conflicts (34.8%).¹⁰⁹ However, Kosovo Serbs feel much more insecure than average, with 74.4% considering concern for their families important or very important, and 60.2% considering concerns about inter-ethnic conflicts important or very important. These findings help explain the prevailing pessimism about an amnesty campaign in the next six months, as well as the differences in Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb attitudes towards a possible campaign.

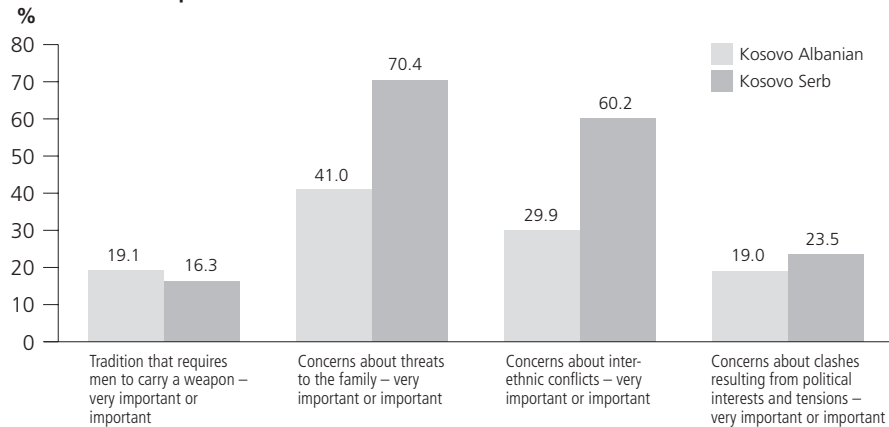
¹⁰⁶ Focus group participant, female, 22 years old, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

¹⁰⁷ Focus group participant, male, 36 years old, Brezovicë/Brezovica.

¹⁰⁸ Focus group participant, male, 65 years old, Prishtinë/Priština.

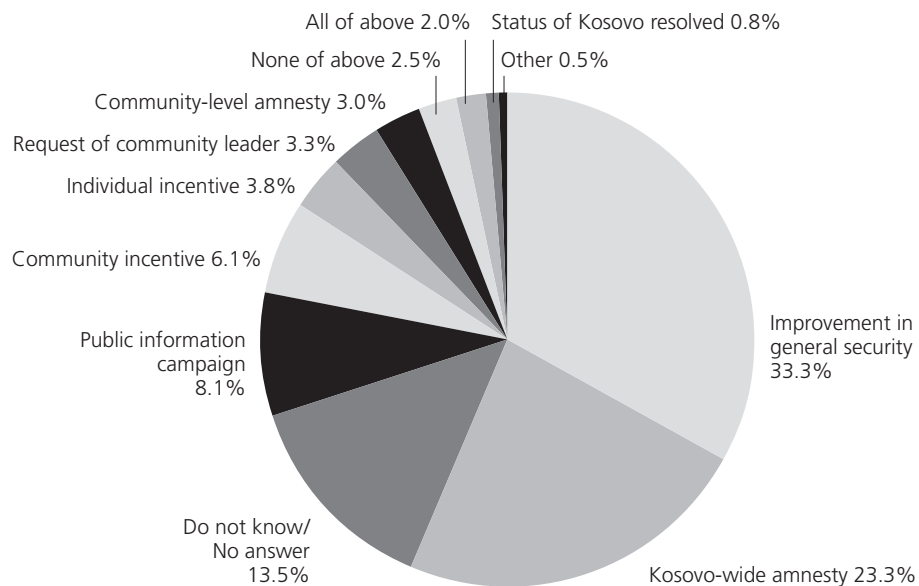
¹⁰⁹ The question about inter-ethnic conflict was posed in reference to concerns about the risk of violent conflict between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs.

Figure 7: How important do you think the following factors are in making people hold on to their weapons and not hand them in to the authorities?



The need to address underlying security fears prior to an amnesty and/or weapons collection is also clear from the responses given to the question “In your opinion, which of the following would best convince people in your community to hand in their illegal weapons?” Improvement of the security situation was the primary factor, attracting a third of overall response (see figure 8).¹¹⁰

Figure 8: In your opinion, which of the following would best convince people in your community to hand in their illegal weapons?



Focus group discussions confirm that safety and security are the most important and influential factors in the success of any weapons collection initiative: “When the country is ready to offer us all-time safety and security, that’s when they should prohibit weapons.”¹¹¹ Key informants with experience of previous weapons collection initiatives also recognised the importance of providing security before weapons are collected:

“Motive is the essence! As long as there is a motive [for weapons possession] it will be difficult to organise and implement successful initiatives – before any amnesty takes place, government structures should work on addressing the motive. We should ask ourselves: do people feel safe at home, on the street, in restaurants, in the evening; can children go to school and be free from fear? These questions should be asked and properly addressed before any amnesty takes place. If there is better security provision then there wouldn’t be any motive/need for people to own arms and those individual cases of illegal possession would be ‘fought’ by citizens themselves.”¹¹²

¹¹⁰ The reply ‘Status of Kosovo resolved’ was only listed as an option to Kosovo Serb respondents.

¹¹¹ Focus group participant, male, 67, Deçan/Deçani (Junik).

¹¹² Interview with Rrustem Mustafa, 20 February 2009.

There is a considerable lack of knowledge and understanding about how weapons amnesties and collections work. Some focus group discussions revealed that participants appear to be uninformed about the basic concepts of voluntary weapons collections. There was suspicion about what would happen after a collection, as reflected by one participant, “The police take the weapons, and then proceed according to their rules”;¹¹³ misunderstandings about the purpose of an amnesty, for example the belief that surrendered weapons will be examined as part of criminal investigations;¹¹⁴ and a lack of understanding regarding the destruction of collected weapons, as is evident here: “I would give them to the KSF [Kosovo Security Force] because they don’t have enough weapons as it is, so additional ammunition would be helpful.”¹¹⁵

This lack of understanding indicates that any information campaign preceding a collection should make the purpose and process of the collection and what will happen to the weapons afterwards entirely clear. Complete transparency and openness during the campaign will help alleviate suspicions about the end-use of collected weapons and will help dispel rumours and misunderstandings which could otherwise deter people from participating. As information gaps can not be predicted, question and answer sessions will be an important part of any information campaign preceding a collection. Key informants also stressed that, “debates are very important. There should be TV debates with politicians and debates at community, village, individual-level.”¹¹⁶ These are not only important for informing citizens about the planned initiative, but they offer an opportunity to convince people to hand in their weapons. As a key informant pointed out, “Debates are very helpful in gaining public support for the government’s initiatives, not only weapons collection initiatives, but also efforts to improve human security.”¹¹⁷ Bringing the dangers of illicit arms to people’s attention is the first step. This is particularly relevant when years have passed since the last large scale incidence of conflict, and the fear of armed violence has become less immediate, perhaps being replaced with concerns over issues such as unemployment, corruption or poor healthcare. The responsible government department must therefore identify ways of effectively bringing the issue onto the public agenda and raise awareness of its harmful impact on society.

Who should implement a weapons collection?

Overall, the majority (71.9%) of respondents feel that, if a collection took place, people in their community would be willing to hand in their weapons to the Kosovo Police. But, perhaps not surprisingly, the overall average disguises huge variations between different groups: 85.5% of Kosovo Albanians would choose Kosovo Police, against only 5.1% of Kosovo Serbs.

¹¹³ Focus group participant, male, 66, Podujevë/Podujevo.

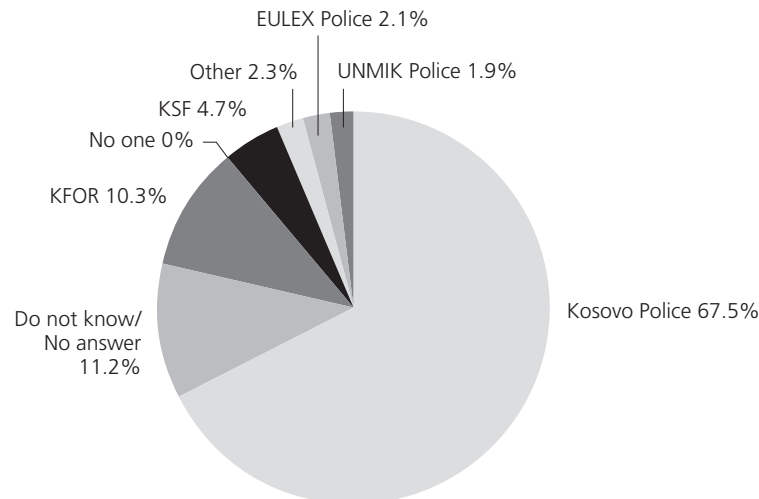
¹¹⁴ Focus group participants, Prishtinë/Priština.

¹¹⁵ Focus group participant, male, 21, Prishtinë/Priština.

¹¹⁶ Interview with Ramazan Beka, 13 March 2009.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Alban Krasniqi, 2 March 2009.

Figure 9: If there were a campaign to collect weapons, which organisation should be primarily responsible for implementing it? (aggregated)



This preference is reflected in focus group discussions, where most Kosovo Albanians agree, considering it natural that the Kosovo Police should be in charge. In the words of one Kosovo Albanian focus group participant, “It should be the Kosovo Police... This is an institution that serves and offers protection for the citizens of our country”.¹¹⁸

However, the high percentage of respondents naming the Kosovo Police as the preferred institution to implement weapons collection should not be taken as evidence that the Kosovo Police is an appropriate actor to undertake a weapons collection everywhere in Kosovo. Focus group discussions revealed that some people are not convinced that the Kosovo Police could be trusted to implement such a programme, and participants, particularly from urban areas, had several suggestions for other institutions which might be more appropriate. Suggestions included KFOR, EULEX and civil society organisations. One focus group participant felt that “organising this initiative with the aid of civil society would prove to be more successful than organising them through government”¹¹⁹ while another suggested, “the community should organise a sort of council... every village in the Republic of Kosovo should create a council that will manage the collection of firearms voluntarily but without taking notes.”¹²⁰ These comments were echoed by some key informant interviewees, who warned that some citizens would not feel comfortable handing their weapons in at police stations and therefore a variety of actors and locations for collection points need to be considered (see also section 2: who should design and implement a collection).¹²¹

Kosovo Serbs do not trust the Kosovo Police, or many other institutions, to carry out a voluntary weapons collection. Many Kosovo Serb focus group participants felt that Kosovo Police officers “do not have a relationship with the population”¹²² and said, “we do not have any kind of contact with them”.¹²³ One participant said, “It is easier for me to communicate with a KFOR member rather than a Kosovo Police officer. I trust KFOR much more”.¹²⁴ This sentiment is reflected in the survey data, with 28.6% of Kosovo Serb respondents naming KFOR as the preferred organisation to conduct a weapons collection campaign (compared to 6.7% of Kosovo Albanians). In focus groups, Kosovo Serb participants also distinguished between nationalities of KFOR troops. “There is a big difference between soldiers coming from different states. We consider Ukrainians almost as ours. We have a lot of trust in them. We don’t trust the German KFOR that is in Prizren at all, nor the American KFOR.”¹²⁵

¹¹⁸ Focus group participant, male, 37, Kamenicë/Kamenica.

¹¹⁹ Focus group participant, male, 56, Prishtinë/Priština.

¹²⁰ Focus group participant, male, 48, Deçan/Dečani.

¹²¹ Interview with Adrian Wilkinson, 20 March 2009. Interview with Alban Krasniqi, 2 March 2009.

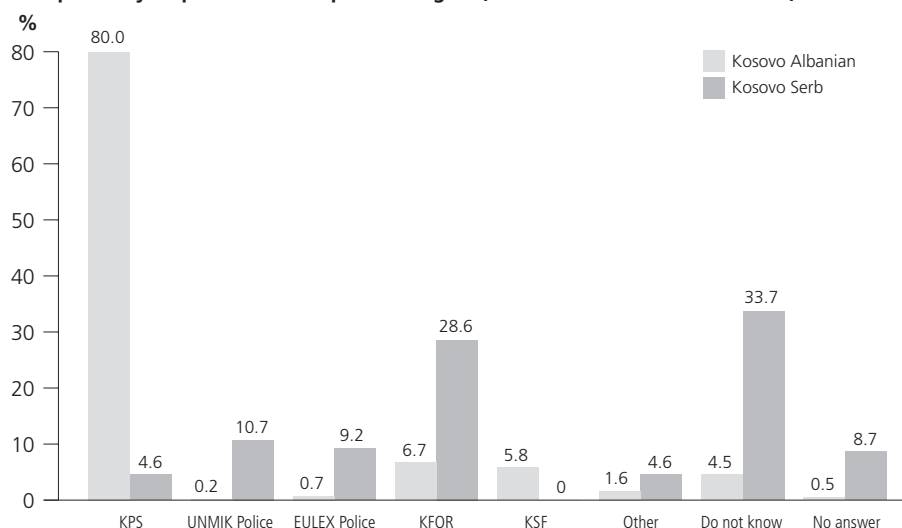
¹²² Focus group participant, male, 22, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

¹²³ Focus group participant, male, 25, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

¹²⁴ Focus group participant, male, 23, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

¹²⁵ Focus group participant, male, 37, Brezovicë/Brezovica.

Figure 10: If there were a campaign to collect weapons, which organisation should be primarily responsible for implementing it? (Kosovo Albanian/Kosovo Serb)



However, when asked to whom people in their community would prefer to surrender their weapons, 21.6% of Kosovo Serb respondents replied ‘no one’ and 30.6% that they ‘do not know’. Focus group discussions confirm that this is because there are few organisations that Kosovo Serbs would entrust with such a task: “To which authorities should they hand the weapons? There is no authority here, where you should hand in your weapons. We have the UNMIK police here, but no one trusts them.”¹²⁶ Kosovo Serb focus group participants also said, “Serbs would hand in their weapons to Serbia’s army only”¹²⁷ and “I cannot imagine a situation where Serbs would give up their weapons to the institutions you have just mentioned.”¹²⁸

The findings here show how important it is to choose a trusted actor to implement a weapons collection initiative. Perceptions of actors who can be trusted to carry out a weapons collection differ across Kosovo, indicating that it will be essential for the success of the campaign to have different actors responsible for the implementation in different regions and communities.

Most respondents feel that any collection of weapons should be undertaken by a local, not a foreign, organisation. When discussing to whom arms should be surrendered, a focus group participant from Podujevë/Podujevo replied, “To ours, not to the foreigners.”¹²⁹ Sentiments about the need for an organisation which has a close connection to the population to organise a weapons collection were echoed by focus group participants in other regions, however, in Deçan/Dečani, for example, KFOR was also considered ‘close’: “These two [KFOR and Kosovo Police] are closer to the population [than UNMIK].”¹³⁰ Key informants also mention local ownership as a factor to be taken into account. “Any future initiatives should be locally owned... I stress once again, not the organisations that ran these initiatives until now (international organisations). The sole international involved should be the donor.”¹³¹ This finding underlines the need for an actor which is trusted by the local population to undertake the weapons collection campaign. This suggests that the lead should be taken by the Kosovo government and international organisations should limit their role to those areas where they can add value.

¹²⁶ Focus group participant, male, 44, Brezovicë/Brezovica.

¹²⁷ Focus group participant, male, 25, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

¹²⁸ Focus group participant, female, 22, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica.

¹²⁹ Focus group participant, female, 35, Podujevë/Podujevo.

¹³⁰ Focus group participant, male, 47, Deçan/Dečani.

¹³¹ Interview with Alban Krasniqi, 2 March 2009.

What would convince people to hand in their weapons?

Few respondents (9.9%) feel that offering any kind of incentive would convince people to hand over their weapons. As figure 8 suggests, the majority of people feel that if there were improvements in general security, people would be willing to hand in their weapons without incentives. This finding confirms that addressing demand factors should be the main priority, and that the collection implementers should not rely on the use of incentives providing the required motivation.

Of those participants who believe incentives or rewards should be given to people who surrender their weapons, views are mixed as to what would be the best incentive. Household survey data indicates that 6.1% of respondents believe that communal incentives should be offered, compared to only 3.8% believing that individual incentives should be offered. This tallies with the views prevalent in some communities: for example, citizens in Gërmovë/Grmovo, where Saferworld carries out project work, have expressed publicly that they believe that a WED approach would yield good results in their local area.¹³² However, messages coming out of focus groups and key informant interviews are more mixed. Some believe that individual incentives may be more appropriate in Kosovo. One focus group participant explained, “Nobody would surrender their weapons if they were not to be rewarded individually. It would be better if the reward method was designed to be given individually than collectively, because those who surrender their weapons would feel that they are being treated unfairly if they were to gain the same reward as the ones who have not surrendered anything of value.”¹³³ A key informant in Kosovo also shares the view that “Incentives should be at the individual level. Collective incentives can exclude people as not all of them have the same needs.”¹³⁴ It is also felt that incentives could be innovative. For example, another key informant suggests, “Being aware of the economic situation and unemployment,” incentives for people to hand in their weapons could include, “employment for one member of the family.”¹³⁵ While it is clear from the analysis that incentives alone will not be enough to convince people to surrender their weapons, once demand factors are addressed, incentives which have been specifically designed according to local circumstances may be an appropriate measure to set the collection process in motion.

Participants are unanimous in the belief that recording the personal data of people surrendering weapons will debilitate any voluntary collection process. Most focus group participants believed that asking people who hand over their weapons for information about themselves such as name, address or the source of the weapon, would scare people away from participating. “It goes too far when someone asks information regarding the source of the weapon. It is difficult to find people with firearms who comply with this procedure.”¹³⁶ Consequently, it was felt that the only way a weapons amnesty or collection can succeed is if it is “completely anonymous and [they record] no information from anybody.”¹³⁷ Key informant interviewees also pointed out the importance of communicating this to the wider public in order to build confidence in the process. “It should be clear that no information will be collected from people who hand over their weapons.”¹³⁸

Many respondents feel that it is important to take the time of year into consideration when planning a weapons amnesty. Kosovo Albanian respondents agree that weapons are used more during public holidays and celebrations (e.g. weddings and New Year). It may therefore be wise to take the season into consideration when organising a collection. Focus group participants stated that, “...during the summer time lots of weddings occur and no one would bother getting rid of their weapons at that time”¹³⁹

¹³² Conference on Community Safety Experiences organised by Saferworld and FIQ on 12 February 2009.

¹³³ Focus group participant, male, 22, Prishtinë/Priština.

¹³⁴ Interview with UNDP official, 5 February 2009.

¹³⁵ Interview with Major Granit Fetahu, 10 February 2009.

¹³⁶ Focus group participant, male, 48, Deçan/Dečani.

¹³⁷ Interview with UNDP official, 5 February 2009.

¹³⁸ Bardhyl Jashari, acting Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Kosovo, 24 February 2009.

¹³⁹ Focus group participant, male, 20, Prishtinë/Priština.

and, “Weapons are usually used more often during national holidays or some other holidays. [Collection] can be, for example, a few days before Flag Day and a few days after this holiday.”¹⁴⁰ A number of key informants also noted the importance of the season. “The period to organise the amnesty: not during the period of Ramazan or other religious fasting periods and not during the wedding periods and holidays. Season is very important in order to reach everybody”¹⁴¹ and, “Amnesties should not be organised during the winter period or during the [summer] holidays.”¹⁴² Based on this, it seems that, while there is no perfect time of year to implement this type of action in Kosovo, late autumn may be the most appropriate time.

¹⁴⁰ Focus group participant, male, 48, Deçan/Deçani.

¹⁴¹ Interview with UNDP official, 5 February 2009.

¹⁴² Interview with Major Granit Fetahu, 10 February 2009.

4

Recommendations

Questions to consider

BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE LESSONS LEARNT from the region and of the findings from the household surveys and focus group discussions, a number of questions emerge which should be posed before a decision is made about whether, when and how to conduct a weapons collection programme in Kosovo.

- 1. Is it the right time?** People still feel reluctant to discuss weapons, and they generally still do not feel safe. While the declaration of independence has meant a certain degree of political clarity, this has not yet resulted in the majority of people trusting Kosovo's institutions to guarantee everyone's safety.
- 2. Would a collection receive broad support?** Kosovo Serbs, in particular, feel insecure, and express deep scepticism about their participation in any such initiative. Kosovo Serb unwillingness to participate can have a negative effect on the willingness of other parts of the population to participate, particularly in areas where Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian communities are neighbours.
- 3. Is a voluntary collection the right approach?** The data indicates that the problems with illicit SALW possession in Kosovo today is linked to a range of factors including security concerns, crime, culture, income generation (i.e. the existence of a black market for weapons), etc – suggesting that the problem of illicit civilian SALW possession cannot be fully addressed by merely holding a voluntary weapons collection.
- 4. What are the risks?** A poorly executed weapons collection can be counter-productive. Loss of credibility of public institutions, decline in public trust in security-providers and increased perceptions of insecurity can be among the results. If the collection will not be appropriately implemented and adequately resourced (not enough qualified staff, not enough funds, etc), it should not be done at all.

In the current context of Kosovo, Saferworld argues that the answers to these questions indicate that **any future weapons collection should only take place as part of a broader strategy, which is based on a detailed understanding of the factors that drive the demand for weapons.** Developing the new law on weapons is an important first step, but an effective SALW control strategy should also include *inter alia* measures for effective implementation of legislation (registration of arms and reviewing current weapons permits), as well as raising awareness about the risks of illicit SALW, creating debate about SALW possession, and ensuring the effective control of arms exports, transfers and imports.

There are existing security and justice sector reform initiatives into which a weapons collection campaign could be integrated and which have created institutions and processes able to contribute significantly to the success of the collection campaign.

- Integration of a weapons collection into existing reform processes requires improved co-ordination with initiatives linked to security sector reform programmes and development programmes with an armed violence agenda. This may be achieved by bringing together all the government bodies and ministries, donors and implementing organisations involved in such initiatives to share information and experience gained so far. The planned establishment of bodies dealing with SALW and security issues within the Ministry of Internal Affairs would provide structures which could be drawn on for such co-ordination. The timeframe of the collection programme should reflect the considerable effort that is required to achieve such co-ordination.
- The collection initiative should fit logically into the reform process. For example, a collection should not be carried out before the KFS is capable of protecting the border, the KP is trusted by all citizens to provide internal security and the justice system is able effectively to penalise illicit possession of SALW. Before progress is made in other areas of the reform process, it is highly unlikely that a weapons collection initiative will be successful.
- Once the reform process has achieved suitable security conditions for a collection initiative to take place, institutions and mechanisms created through security sector reform can be used to contribute to the success of the collection campaign. For example, school safety programmes have brought into being a number of school councils (parent and student councils),¹⁴³ which could be used to reach out to the community. Similarly, the Municipal Community Safety Councils which are now established in Kosovo's municipalities could be involved in the co-ordination process.

Recommendations

The findings outlined on the preceding pages point to a number of **recommendations** which can increase the chances of success of any future voluntary weapons collection initiative in Kosovo. In addition, it should be stressed that there exists a host of detailed guidelines and technical advice which should be consulted on how to design and implement voluntary weapons collections (some examples are listed in Annex 2).

What should happen before the amnesty/collection period?

- **Conduct a comprehensive assessment aimed at mapping the attitudes and perceptions of Kosovo's SALW owners.** This assessment should be used to ensure that the design of the collection campaign addresses the diverse demand factors for weapons ownership in Kosovo and can be used as a baseline for measuring achievements of the campaign.
- **Ensure that national and local politicians from all of the main political parties are seen to support and participate in the weapons collection campaign.** This is necessary in order that the campaign does not become politicised and that no political, religious or social group within Kosovo perceives itself as an unequal target of the campaign. One mechanism for ensuring multi-party participation is a cross-party steering group, which manages and co-ordinates the collection initiative.
- **Allow sufficient time and resources to conduct awareness-raising about the collection process.** To ensure that the rules and purpose of the collection are clear to the public, conduct a Kosovo-wide information campaign explaining the details of the collection and amnesty process. Do not change these rules once the campaign has started.
- **Ensure that there is sufficient capacity within Kosovo's institutions to conduct a weapons collection campaign before commencing.** Ensure that financial, technical and project management resources are in place before the initiative starts. A failed campaign can be counter-productive.

¹⁴³ *Safety in Schools – Challenge for the community and institutions* (FIQ, 2008), <http://www.fiq-fci.org/images/publications/siguria_ne_shkolla_2008_fiq.pdf>, 20 March 2009.

- **Mobilise the public to participate actively in the collection initiative.** This can be done through a lengthy, well-designed and engaging campaign, which uses facts gathered from diverse sources (health, education, security and justice sectors etc) to convince the public that civilian weapons possession is undesirable. The campaign should:
 - involve civil society groups and members of the public from different constituencies in the design and implementation of the campaign
 - co-operate with local and national media
 - organise national and local-level public debate around the issues of SALW
 - tailor messages and information according to the audience.

Who should be involved in the collection process and what role should they play?

- **The Kosovo Security Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, is best placed to lead the collection campaign.** The Kosovo Government should take the lead in the planning and implementation of the initiative, and the Security Council is the natural lead body to head up and co-ordinate the process
- **Kosovo civil society should be involved extensively and early on.** Identify and involve a representative range of civil society actors from the very beginning of the initiative. These can include school directors, hospital staff, youth organisations, faith leaders, women's groups, local NGOs, etc. A suggested framework could be to establish a Kosovo-wide network of local individuals and smaller organisations, represented by a handful of civilian actors who participate in planning meetings and act as a link between the implementing institutions and the wider network. The actors need to represent all groups in Kosovo, and should:
 - inform a comprehensive collection of baseline data prior to the collection
 - contribute to the design of the collection approach
 - lead a campaign to mobilise the public to participate in the surrender of weapons and to become active advocates of a Kosovo free of illicit SALW
 - form part of local 'community committees' undertaking/implementing the collection process.
- **International actors should not take the lead in designing the collection campaign, but they can provide technical and financial assistance.** UNDP and EULEX should provide technical expertise and accompaniment as appropriate. KFOR should use their role as a mutually-respected party (where this is the case) to monitor the process of collection.
- **Donor support should be limited and defined and agreed ahead of time.** Limit donor support to providing funding, and ensure financial contributions are agreed and in place ahead of the initiative.

What must be considered when designing the weapons collection?

- **Ensure that the approach used in the collection campaign is locally appropriate and takes into account the situation of local communities.** The approach needs to be adapted to the local context to reflect the social and political diversity of Kosovo. In particular, the action needs to take into account the particular situation of individual Kosovo Serb communities. This means that while the approach is led by the Kosovo government at the national level, on a local level implementation should correspond to the local situation.
- **The use of incentives will have little effect before security needs are met. Incentives may be appropriate if designed according to the local context.** Collective incentives have been tried and have failed in Kosovo, but research findings suggest that this

approach should perhaps not be dismissed completely. If individual incentives are used, a lottery-type model may be appropriate, particularly if it incorporates employment opportunities.

- **September to November seems to be the most appropriate time of year.** The timing of the collection and amnesty period should not coincide with major public or religious holidays, local or national elections,¹⁴⁴ anniversaries of major political, military or historical events or the wedding season, and should not be held during seasons when access to remote villages is difficult.
- **Allow time for the public to gain sufficient confidence to participate in the collection process.** Also, the process should be designed in a manner to maximise awareness of and confidence in the initiative. For example, a rolling, week-long collection could be conducted simultaneously in two or three of Kosovo's regions, so that each region has two collection periods with several weeks interval for further awareness-raising, publicity and public confidence-building.
- **Ensure the collection initiative is Kosovo-wide and seen to target all regions and communities equally.** People will be less willing to hand in their weapons if they believe other groups are participating less, or not at all, in the collection.
- **Ensure transparency and accountability of the process and guarantee the anonymity of those surrendering their weapons.** Clear statements need to be made that nobody who hands in a weapon will be identified or prosecuted during the action, in order to build confidence in the process.

What should be done after the collection/amnesty period has finished?

- **The end of the amnesty period should be clearly marked by the government announcing that the new law on weapons is now in place and enforcing it.** The public must be made to take seriously the consequences of illegal weapons possession after the end of the amnesty period.
- **Publicly destroy the collected weapons after the end of the amnesty period.** This is necessary in order to maintain public confidence that surrendered weapons will not be sold on or misused, and public destruction events can be used as opportunities for promoting the new law on weapons. Bearing in mind that SALW destruction is often postponed or not achieved, UNDP and other actors should think creatively about how best to support the Government in ensuring the destruction of collected weapons and ammunition.
- **The collection initiative should be measured by its broader impact, not just by the amount of items collected.** Apart from number, type and quality of weapons collected, indicators could for example include changes in:
 - numbers of weapons-related violent incidents
 - incidences of celebratory shooting
 - attitudes to weapons ownership
 - perceived levels of safety and security
 - views on security providers and public institutions, etc.

¹⁴⁴ As national elections are often scheduled for November, efforts should be made to avoid conducting the initiative in an election year.

5

Conclusion

THE RESEARCH INDICATES THAT PEOPLE IN KOSOVO are feeling slightly more comfortable speaking about weapons; however, it must be remembered that this slight shift comes from a low starting point, and there is still a widespread reluctance to engage publicly on issues of weapons possession. Feelings of insecurity remain the predominant reason why people want to own weapons. As a result, there is currently a general scepticism over the chances of a successful weapons collection initiative in Kosovo, and for many Kosovo Serbs, deep mistrust prevails. Indeed, there is little evidence in the way of past positive Kosovo-focused experiences to point to.

In this context, any weapons amnesty or collection initiative needs to be carefully considered, and should be designed in the context of a wider programme of work to improve security and address in a holistic manner the underlying issues creating a demand for arms. The control and/or collection of illegal weapons is a societal project and to this end, Kosovo's society needs to develop an inclusive and serious debate on what sorts of weapons regime society really wants. A poorly planned or inflexible collection project only risks making it more difficult for Kosovo's leaders to begin to bring civilian possession under control.

The declaration of independence in February 2008 may present the Kosovo authorities with an opportunity to convince the Kosovo Albanian majority that now is the right time to hand in their illicit weapons, but at the same time it presents an even greater challenge for the process to gain the trust and backing of Kosovo Serbs. In this context, a flexible and locally-specific approach is needed, and realistic goals should be set for any future weapons-related initiative. In the end, the people of Kosovo do not wish to live in a society where illicit weapons are widespread and their use continues to harm innocent civilians. However, as long as people feel unsafe because of fear of crime or aggression, it will be difficult to persuade them to hand in their weapons, regardless of the incentives offered.

Annex 1: Methodology

This paper is based on data collected in December 2008. Each of these tracker surveys comprises a household survey and a series of focus groups.

The household survey in December 2008 was conducted throughout Kosovo and a representative sample of 1,200 respondents was selected to gather the data. The standard margin of error is 2.89% at a confidence level of 95 percent. The data for this study was gathered principally from interviews with heads of households and where appropriate, women (regardless of their position in a household). Because a large majority of heads of household in Kosovo are men, in order to provide an adequate gender balance, women were interviewed in every second and fourth household. In total, 52.5% of respondents were male and 47.5% were female. All were over 18 years old.

Ten focus groups on security provision were used to validate the data from the household survey and to investigate more deeply the sensitive issues around security provision. Focus groups were composed as follows:

Male and female participants, aged 40–53, South Mitrovicë/Mitrovica (urban)
Male and female participants, aged 19–24, Prishtinë/Priština (urban)
Male and female participants, aged 53–65, Prishtinë/Priština (urban)
Male participants, aged 56–78, Deçan/Dečani (rural)
Male participants, aged 38–49, Deçan/Dečani (urban)
Male participants, aged 62–71, Podujevë/Podujevo (urban)
Female participants, aged 35–49, Podujevë/Podujevo (rural)
Male participants, aged 37–60, Kamenicë/Kamenica (rural)
Male and female participants, aged 22–25, North Mitrovicë/Mitrovica (urban)
Male participants, aged 37–46, Shtërpcë/Štrpce (rural).

The paper also includes data from surveys following a similar methodology conducted in March 2006, December 2006, June 2007 and November 2008.

Key informants included:

Ramazan Beka, NGO Movement for Disarmament, Albania

Major Granit Fetahu, Kosovo Police, Member of the drafting group on the Law on Weapons

Todi Grazhdani, former Head of Directorate for Community Policing and Weapons Collection, Albania

Bardhyl Jashari, acting Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Kosovo

Alban Krasniqi, former Director of the Kosovo Youth Network

Rrustem Mustafa, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Internal Affairs and Security

Trpe Stojanovski, Director of MARRI (Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative)

Adrian Wilkinson, former Head of The South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC)

Annex 2: Recommended reading

The following publications can usefully be consulted in more detail for lessons learnt from previous weapons collections initiatives, and for technical advice and guidelines on weapons amnesties and collections. Some of them are referenced elsewhere in the report.

Aslihan Celenk, Ayse (BICC) and Ryan Nichols (ed.), *BCPR Strategic Review Albania*, (Small Arms Survey, 2006). Available at <http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/sa_control/BCPR_Strategic_Review-ALBANIA.doc>

Bonn International Center for Conversion and Monterey Institute of International Studies (SAND), *Tackling Small Arms and Light Weapons: A Practical Guide for Collection and Destruction*, (BICC, 2000)

Brethfeld J, *BCPR Strategic Review Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, (Small Arms Survey 2006). Available at <http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/sa_control/macedonia.pdf>

Center for Peace and Disarmament Education and Saferworld, *Turning the page: Small arms and light weapons in Albania*, (2005). Available at <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/publications.php/115/turning_the_page>

Faltas, Sami 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*, (BICC/SEESAC, 2003)

Saferworld/FIQ, *Through the cross-hairs: A survey of changing attitudes towards small arms in Kosovo*, November 2008. Available at <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/publications.php/366/through_the_cross_hairs>

SEESAC, *Media operations during SALW Control interventions* (2004). Available at <<http://www.seesac.org/reports/Study%20-%20Media%20Operations.pdf>>

SEESAC, *The rifle has the devil inside. Gun culture in South Eastern Europe*, (2006). Available at <<http://www.seesac.org/reports/Gun%20Culture%20FINAL.pdf>>

SEESAC, *RMDS/G 01.10 (Guidelines): Guide to Regional Micro-Disarmament Standards/ Guidelines (RMDS/G) and SALW control measures*, (2006). Available at <[http://www.seesac.org/resources/RMDS%2001.10%20%20Guide%20to%20RMDS%20\(Edition%204\).pdf](http://www.seesac.org/resources/RMDS%2001.10%20%20Guide%20to%20RMDS%20(Edition%204).pdf)>

SEESAC, *RMDS/G 05.10 (Guidelines): SALW Collection Activities*, (2006). Available at <[http://www.seesac.org/resources/RMDS%2005.10%20SALW%20Collection%20\(Edition%204\).pdf](http://www.seesac.org/resources/RMDS%2005.10%20SALW%20Collection%20(Edition%204).pdf)>

SEESAC, *RMDS/G 05.20 (Guidelines): SALW Destruction, Fourth Edition*, (2006). Available at <[http://www.seesac.org/resources/RMDS%2005.20%20SALW%20Destruction%20\(Edition%204\).pdf](http://www.seesac.org/resources/RMDS%2005.20%20SALW%20Destruction%20(Edition%204).pdf)>

SEESAC, *SASP 3 – SALW Awareness Support Pack*; (2007). Available at <<http://www.seesac.org/index.php?content=47§ion=2>>

SEESAC, *Performance Indicators for the Monitoring and Evaluation of SALW Control Programmes – Discussion Paper*. (2004). Available at <<http://www.seesac.org/reports/PI%20Discussion%20Paper.pdf>>

Wille, Christina and Nichols, Ryan (ed.), *BCPR Strategic Review Kosovo* (Small Arms Survey, 2006). Available at <http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/sa_control/BCPRStra-kosovo.doc>

Saferworld works to prevent and reduce violent conflict and promote co-operative approaches to security. We work with governments, international organisations and civil society to encourage and support effective policies and practices through advocacy, research and policy development and through supporting the actions of others.

COVER PHOTO: Destruction of illicit weapons at the camp of Swedish KFOR in Hajvali/Ajvalija, attended by senior Kosovo and international officials, May 2007.

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