

PREVENTION AND SUPPRESSION OF ARMS SMUGGLING IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Ilija Racić¹, PhD

Faculty of Business Studies and Law, University Union – Nikola Tesla, Belgrade, Serbia

Miljkan Karličić

Lawyer, Belgrade, Serbia

Nenad Radović, PhD

University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies, Belgrade, Serbia

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the mechanisms for countering arms smuggling in the Republic of Serbia through normative, institutional, and operational frameworks. Special emphasis is placed on identifying existing challenges in inter-institutional coordination, operational efficiency of competent authorities, as well as evaluating current legal solutions in terms of their compliance with international standards and obligations arising from the European integration process.

The aim of the paper is, through an interdisciplinary approach, to contribute to the improvement of security strategy and operationalization of measures for more effective prevention and suppression of arms smuggling, in accordance with contemporary security challenges and the international obligations of the Republic of Serbia.

Design/Methods/Approach: The research will be conducted as theoretical, which is why it will employ a combination of philosophical, general scientific, and logical methods. Among the philosophical methods, the study will utilize dialectical, positivist, and structuralist approaches. Among the general scientific methods, the research will apply historical-comparative analysis, comparative methods, statistical methods, and modeling. Within the corpus of logical methods, the study will employ analysis and synthesis, specialization and generalization, concretization and abstraction, induction and deduction, as well as definition and classification. The method of content analysis (both qualitative and quantitative) will be applied to relevant scientific and expert works available in scientific monographs, journals, and conference proceedings; documentation from relevant scientific research projects; and appropriate doctrinal and formal-legal sources.

Findings: Arms smuggling represents a complex and multidimensional security challenge with significant implications for national and regional security. The geopolitical position of the Republic of Serbia, located at the crossroads of key Balkan and pan-European routes, makes it particularly vulnerable to flows of illicit arms trafficking, both as a transit and as a destination country. The analysis also includes quantitative indicators regarding seizures and detected smuggling attempts, modalities of smuggling routes, as well as profiles of participants in these criminal activities. Furthermore, the paper discusses the importance of international police and intelligence cooperation, including engagement within mechanisms such as EUROPOL, SELEC, and FRONTEX. Based on identified weaknesses, guidelines are proposed for enhancing the strategic and tactical response of the state, which involve

¹ ilija.racic@fppsp.edu.rs



strengthening technical capacities, developing specialized units, improving criminal law legislation, and continuous training of personnel engaged in the prevention and suppression of arms smuggling.

Originality/Value: This paper presents an innovative and interdisciplinary approach to studying the mechanisms for preventing and suppressing arms smuggling in the Republic of Serbia, integrating normative, institutional, and operational dimensions. Special attention is given to identifying and analyzing key challenges in inter-institutional coordination and evaluating the compliance of the national legal framework with international standards, particularly within the context of European integration processes. The study contributes to the development of scientific literature by providing a systematic and theoretically grounded analysis based on a combination of philosophical, general scientific, and logical methods, as well as the application of qualitative and quantitative content analysis.

The scientific contribution of this paper lies in expanding existing theoretical frameworks in security studies and criminology through a specific analysis of arms smuggling in a geopolitically sensitive region, as well as in developing practical recommendations for improving state security policies. The research findings provide a basis for further empirical studies and enhance the understanding of the complexity of contemporary security threats.

The social contribution of this work is reflected in raising awareness about the seriousness of the arms smuggling problem and its impact on national and regional security, as well as promoting more effective prevention measures that can contribute to societal stability, strengthening the rule of law, and protecting citizens.

This paper holds significant practical value for improving security policies and operational measures and represents a relevant contribution to the further development of academic and professional discourse in the fields of security studies and criminology.

Keywords: arms smuggling, national security, organized crime, normative framework, police cooperation.

About the authors

Ilija Racić, PhD, was born on December 18, 1983, in Ivanjica. He graduated from the Higher School of Internal Affairs and the Criminal Police Academy according to the curriculum of the Police Academy in Belgrade, where he particularly distinguished himself during his studies by achieving an average grade of 9.25, which earned him an award from the Minister of Internal Affairs, ranking him among the top three students of his generation. In 2016, he completed second-cycle studies – specialist academic studies in criminology at the Criminal Police Academy in Belgrade, in the program “Executive Management in the State Administration System” with an average grade of 9.88, earning the professional title of “Criminology Specialist”. In April 2022, he became the first in the history of the Criminal Police University to successfully defend a doctoral dissertation titled “Organizational Adaptation of the Police to the Needs of Implementing the Police-Intelligence Model in the Republic of Serbia” at the Criminal Police University in Belgrade, at the department of criminology and law. He achieved an average grade of 9.12 throughout his studies, thus earning the title of Doctor of Criminology. By the decision of the Minister of Internal Affairs during 2015 and 2016, he participated as a member of the Working Group in the development of the first “National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organized Crime Threat (SOCTA)” and the “Regional Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organized Crime Threat”. Furthermore, upon the decision of the Minister of Internal Affairs in 2016 he became a member of the POM Team and actively participated in the establishment and implementation of the police-intelligence model within the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia. In his



capacity as a professional associate, he contributed to the development of the first Serbian manual entitled “Police-Intelligence Model”.

By the decision of the Police Director from October 2016, he took part in the preparation of the first “Strategic Public Safety Assessment” and the first “Police Strategic Plan”. In 2018, he received the minister’s commendation for improving the work of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Since January 1, 2019, by the decision of the Police Director, he has been permanently assigned to the Police Directorate headquarters as the Chief Coordinator, holding the rank of Police Lieutenant Colonel. Since May 18, 2023, he has been appointed as the Deputy Chief of the Police Director’s Cabinet, holding the rank of Police Colonel. In October 2023, he was appointed an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Business Studies and Law at the University “Union - Nikola Tesla” Belgrade, at the Department of Security and Political Sciences. He is a member of the Management Board at the Institute for Criminological and Sociological Research and a member of the editorial board of the journal *Bezbednost* (Security).

Miljkan Karličić, a PhD candidate, finished basic studies in Belgrade University, Law Faculty (1986), and he passed the Bar exam with the Ministry of Justice (2005). In 2013 he became a Master of Law, after completing Criminal Law Module, Faculty of Law, University of Belgrade, and his master’s thesis topic was “Detecting and Proving Economic Crimes with Special Reference to Tax Evasion“. He is the author of several professional and scientific papers and participated in numerous conferences in country and abroad. Also, he is a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of International Criminal Law.

Professor **Nenad Radović**, PhD, currently the Vice-Rector for Inter-Institutional Cooperation at the University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies in Belgrade – Zemun. Previously, he was the Head of the Department of Criminal Investigation from 2019 to 2021. He graduated from the Police Academy in 1997 and completed his master’s degree in 2001. In 2008, he earned his PhD at the Faculty of Law, University of Belgrade, with the dissertation titled “Trafficking in Human Beings as a Form of Organized Crime”.

Throughout his academic career, he has published numerous articles in both domestic and international journals. He has also authored a textbook, “Criminal Investigation,” and a monograph, “Prevention of Organized Crime”. At the University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies, he currently teaches several courses in the social sciences and humanities at the undergraduate, master’s, specialist, and doctoral levels. E-mail: nenad.radovic@kpu.edu.rs

INTRODUCTION

The genesis of weapon development is closely tied to the existence of humanity and the human need to create various tools for survival. The earliest “armed” objects were stones and bones; however, as humanity evolved, these objects gradually took on the form of “weapons” such as the bow and arrow. Their primary purpose was hunting and ensuring survival of humans as individuals, while their secondary purpose became defense against enemies and participation in conflicts among warring groups within communities. (Dupuy, 1990)

With technological progress and the discovery of iron and bronze, a revolutionary stage in the development of weapons began, marked by the emergence of the first swords, axes, and other items featuring sharpened blades. The invention of gunpowder in ancient Chinese civilization ushered in the era of firearms, introducing projectiles, explosions, and gunpowder-based barrels. The industrialization era and the advancement of technology led to the emergence of machine guns, tanks, aviation, submarines, radio-electronic, and nuclear weapons. The First and Second World Wars accelerated the



development of mass and industrial production, as well as the growth of expertise in weapon engineering. (Dupuy, 1990)

The evolution of weapon development, wars, uprisings, and the rise of organized crime have all contributed to the growing demand for weapons. This demand provided criminal groups with opportunities to generate illicit financial gain through the sale of arms. (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2022) In this sense, the term ‘arms smuggling’ arises, which encompasses the illegal transfer, sale or supply of weapons, ammunition, parts and other components without the necessary permits or contrary to national and international regulations. It can be said with certainty that arms smuggling originated alongside organized trade itself, when merchants and mercenaries historically transported weapons across the borders of different states. (Clarke, 2020)

The emergence of arms smuggling in the Republic of Serbia was influenced by numerous political and economic factors resulting from the wars of the 1990s, both in the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and in the area of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija. The demand for weapons during the wartime period increased significantly, which consequently led to higher production in domestic factories, as well as smuggling and the purchase of weapons on the so-called “black market”. (Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia, 2020) The mobilization of the population, that is, of militarily capable reservists, led to a situation in which weapons used during the conflicts were often not returned to military depots under the pretext that they had been “lost”. This enabled the illegal trade and sale of such weapons to criminal groups for the purpose of obtaining unlawful financial gain. (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2018) The rise of crime in the 1990s also created increased demand for weapons and stimulated organized production in illegal workshops, where unlawfully acquired weapons were frequently modified, falsified, or re-engraved with counterfeit markings. The end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century saw the emergence of large-scale stockpiles, specialized “brokers”, illegal trafficking routes, and covert deliveries. (Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia, 2020)

The Republic of Serbia strives to establish a balanced state of protection for people and property, and to safeguard constitutionally and legally guaranteed human and minority rights and freedoms, including the promotion and support of the rule of law. This is achieved and maintained through the application of preventive and repressive measures within the scope of internal affairs. The objective of internal affairs operations is to enhance a comprehensive mechanism for identifying, preventing, prosecuting, and adjudicating offenses related to the illegal manufacture, possession, carrying, trade, and smuggling of firearms, their components, ammunition, and explosive materials, in accordance with international standards. (The Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2016)

Despite the fact that more than two decades have passed since the wartime events, arms smuggling in the Republic of Serbia continues to represent a strategic priority. This is evident in the domains of prevention (through national strategies), operational procedures, and normative regulation — all of which constitute the subject of research in this article. (UNDP SEESAC, 2004)

STRATEGIC MEASURES IN THE PREVENTION AND SUPPRESSION OF ARMS SMUGGLING IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Based on the international obligations assumed under the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its accompanying Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and



Ammunition, as well as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, the Republic of Serbia adopted the Strategy for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2010–2015. This Strategy represents the first national-level strategic document defining institutional activities in the Republic of Serbia aimed at reducing the risks associated with small arms and light weapons in all aspects of security. (The Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2010)

Considering that European integration and membership in the European Union represent a national interest and a strategic commitment of the Republic of Serbia — and that the values of the European Union are the same values that the Republic of Serbia supports and seeks to further promote — in order to fulfil the requirements for opening Negotiation Chapter 24 – Justice, Freedom, and Security, which includes the area of small arms and light weapons (SALW) control, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted, at its session held on 24 May 2016, a negotiating position by which the Republic of Serbia undertook the obligation to align with the EU *acquis communautaire* in Chapter 24 and to be fully prepared for its implementation by the time of accession. (The Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2016)

Additionally, within the framework of the Berlin Process — a diplomatic initiative focused on the future enlargement of the European Union — at the London Summit, held from 9 to 10 July 2018, the Roadmap for a Sustainable Solution to the Illegal Possession, Misuse, and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Their Ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024 was confirmed. (UNDP SEESAC, 2019) Given that the development of various forms of serious and organized crime has been driven and strengthened by the increased quantity and availability of illegal firearms — as evidenced by the amount of seized weapons and the rising number of incidents involving firearms and explosive devices, which indicate a high potential threat to public security — the Republic of Serbia adopted the Strategy for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons for the period 2019–2024 (hereinafter: the Strategy). This Strategy represents a continuation of the efforts of Serbian institutions to reduce the risks associated with small arms and light weapons in all aspects of national security. (The Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2019)

The Strategy was adopted with the aim of ensuring the safety and security of citizens through the effective and efficient control of small arms and light weapons, by establishing a comprehensive and sustainable mechanism for identifying, preventing, prosecuting, and adjudicating cases of illegal possession, misuse, and trafficking of firearms, ammunition, and explosive materials. To ensure the realization of all undertaken obligations, the Republic of Serbia created a mechanism for effective planning and monitoring of efforts in the field of SALW control at both strategic and operational levels. Within this established mechanism, the Government of the Republic of Serbia formed the Council for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons. To enable the implementation of the planned efforts by the Council's members, the Minister of the Interior established a Special Working Group consisting of 37 members from 18 institutions, with the main task of continuously monitoring and assessing the impact of SALW-related issues on society and the general security of citizens, as well as submitting initiatives to the Council for the development of new policies in the field of small arms and light weapons control. (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2024)

The established mechanism was designed to facilitate the fulfilment of the Republic of Serbia's obligations in the area of SALW control through the implementation of two key documents: The Strategy for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2019–2024, and The Roadmap for a Sustainable Solution to the Illegal Possession, Misuse, and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Their Ammunition in the Western Balkans by 2024. The goal of imple-



menting these documents is to meet the sole defined interim benchmark for the field of small arms and light weapons that the Republic of Serbia received upon opening Negotiation Chapter 24 – Justice, Freedom, and Security. (OEBS, 2024)

As all partners in the Western Balkans reaffirmed the Roadmap for a Sustainable Solution to the Illegal Possession, Misuse, and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Ammunition, and Explosives in the Western Balkans by 2030 during the EU–Western Balkans Ministerial Forum held in Budva on 28–29 October 2024, work commenced on the development of a new public policy document — the Programme for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Ammunition, and Explosive Materials, accompanied by an Action Plan, in accordance with the Law on the Planning System of the Republic of Serbia, and with the goal of harmonization with the revised regional Roadmap for the Western Balkans by 2030. (The Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2025)

The Programme for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Ammunition, and Explosive Materials in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2025–2030 represents a continuation and expansion of activities aimed at strengthening the efficiency of all relevant entities involved in the field of SALW control in the Republic of Serbia.

The Programme focuses in particular on:

- further alignment of national legislation with international standards;
- intensifying efforts to suppress misuse, illicit manufacturing, illegal possession, carrying, storage, trade, and diversion of firearms, ammunition, and explosives from legal to illegal channels;
- strengthening institutional capacities for the regular control of legal flows of small arms, ammunition, and explosives;
- improving the control of domestic and foreign trade in arms;
- reducing incidents committed with firearms and lowering the number of illegally owned weapons among citizens;
- raising public awareness of the dangers of illegal possession and irresponsible use of firearms, ammunition, and explosives;
- removing surplus small arms, light weapons, ammunition, and explosive materials from stockpiles in Serbia;
- enhancing multilateral and bilateral cooperation in this domain. (Small Arms Survey, 2024)

Furthermore, the adoption of the Programme for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2025–2030 is intended to ensure the fulfilment of indicators defined within the EU Growth Plan for the Western Balkans. Within the Growth Plan, three key indicators have been established in the area of SALW control:

- the adoption and implementation of the new public policy document;
- the adoption and implementation of amendments to the Criminal Code;
- the adoption and implementation of a new Law on Weapons and Ammunition. (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2024)

Following the tragic events at *Vladislav Ribnikar* Elementary School in Belgrade and in the village of Dubona near Mladenovac in May 2023, the Ministry of the Interior launched a comprehensive national campaign for the surrender of unregistered firearms. The campaign lasted from 8 May to 30 June 2023 and was implemented in cooperation with international partners. As part of the campaign, three informational video spots were produced and broadcast on all national, regional, and local television stations. In addition, two types of informational flyers were designed and distributed across all cities and municipalities throughout Serbia. The campaign featured a strong visual identity — approximately 750 billboards, both LED and printed, were placed at key locations to encourage citizens to voluntarily surrender weapons. Intensive communication was also conducted via the Ministry's

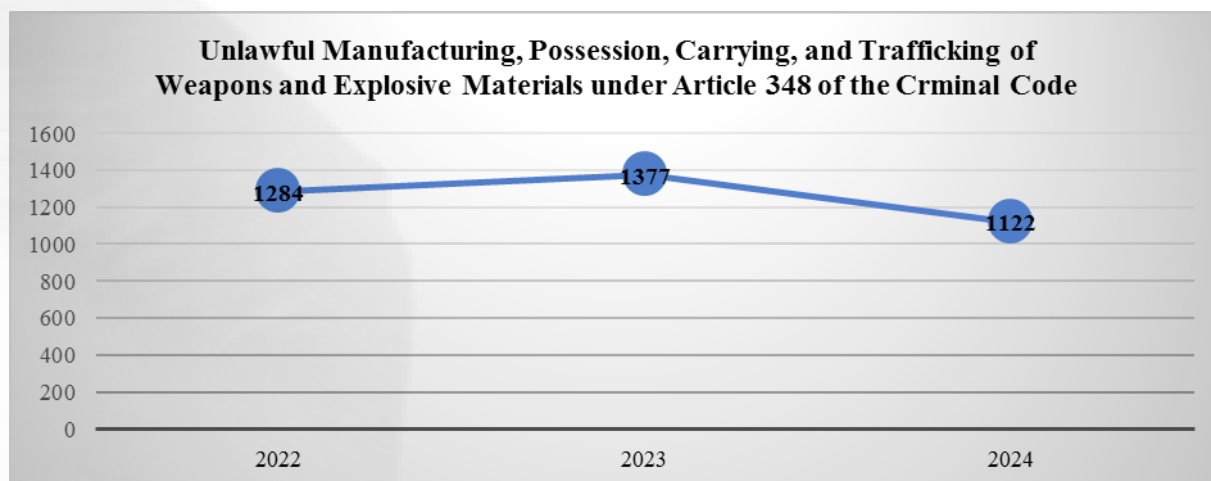
official social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube), as well as through media appearances by police officers in both printed and electronic outlets. As part of these efforts, three additional educational video clips were produced, aimed at raising public awareness regarding the safe storage and handling of firearms. (Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia, 2023)

OPERATIONAL MEASURES AIMED AT PREVENTING AND SUPPRESSING ARMS SMUGGLING IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

For the purposes of this study, operational measures aimed at preventing and suppressing arms trafficking in the Republic of Serbia are understood as a set of criminal-intelligence activities implemented through the criminal-intelligence cycle, whose decision-making processes are supported by produced criminal-intelligence information. The first function of the criminal-intelligence cycle encompassed the application of planning and processing functions, under which the then Minister of the Interior issued the Order on the Surrender of Unregistered Firearms from 8 May to 30 June 2023, thereby improving the procedure for surrendering weapons. Media campaigns were conducted, three informational video spots were produced, and 750 billboards were designed across Serbia; two types of informational flyers were printed; a large number of visuals and two types of info-cards were posted on social media; and more than 300 media appearances by police officers were realized on various television stations. All of the above contributed to an increased number of voluntary surrenders of unregistered firearms, ammunition, and explosive devices. During the period covered by the Order, citizens surrendered 32,926 pieces of unregistered firearms, 3,864,898 rounds of ammunition that were held without authorization, and a large quantity of gunpowder and explosives. In the period from 16 March 2020 to 17 August 2020, an amnesty/legalization of weapons was carried out during which a total of 146 firearms, 11 bombs, 10 explosive devices and 2,977 rounds of ammunition of various calibres were surrendered. (Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia, 2023)

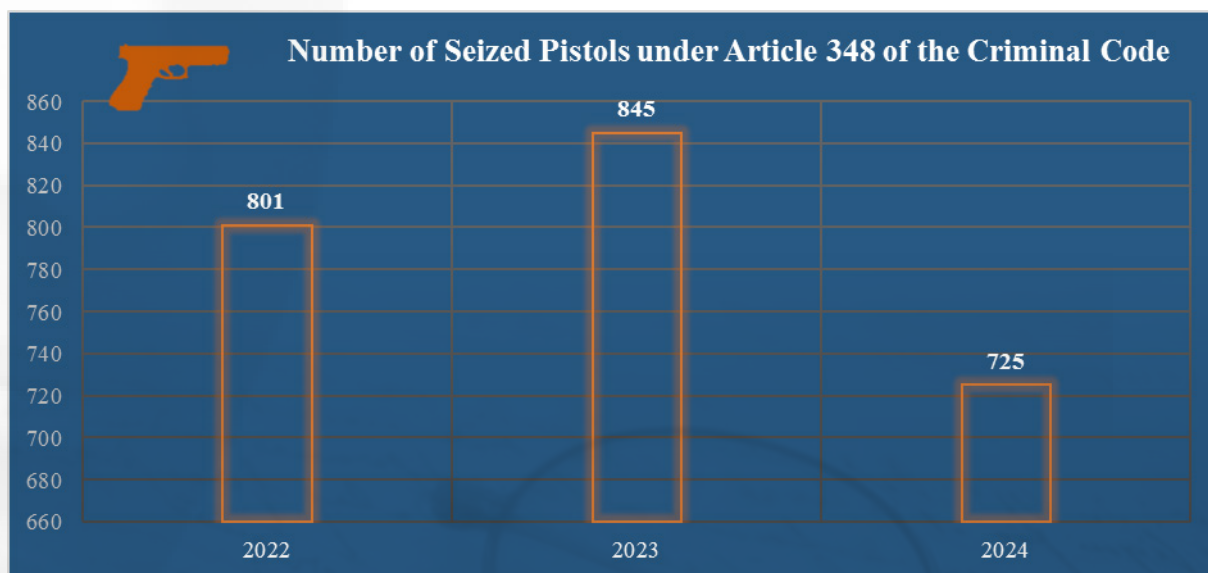
The analytical function pointed to significant statistical data indicating trends in arms smuggling in the Republic of Serbia, modus operandi, smuggling routes, and international cooperation, which are further elaborated in the text. The accumulated quantities of firearms in the Western Balkans continue to represent a serious security risk, since these weapons are used daily for smuggling, organized crime, and various other criminal offenses, including domestic homicides. Illegal weapons are smuggled into Serbia from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija, as well as from Turkey via Bulgaria and North Macedonia, and are then frequently transferred further to Western European countries (Belgium, France, Norway, and Denmark). There is an increasing tendency to smuggle convertible weapons (gas, starter and signal pistols) from Turkey and Bulgaria, which are illicitly converted into firearms in illegal workshops in the territory of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija. Police officers find weapons concealed in passenger vehicles, trucks and buses in specially constructed hiding places — bunkers — most often light weapons such as pistols, revolvers and automatic rifles. (Frontex, 2023)





Graph No. 1: Overview of the Criminal Offence of Unlawful Manufacturing, Possession, Carrying, and Trafficking of Weapons and Explosive Materials under Article 348 of the Criminal Code²

In the period from 2022 to 2024, a total of 3,783 criminal offences of Unlawful Manufacturing, Possession, Carrying, and Trafficking of Weapons and Explosive Materials were recorded. The lowest number of such offences was registered in 2024 (1,122 cases), representing a 25% decrease compared to 2023 (1,377 cases), when the highest number of these offences was recorded. In terms of the gender structure of offenders under Article 348 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia, male perpetrators are overwhelmingly dominant. Regarding the age structure, all adult age groups are almost equally represented among the offenders. Of particular concern is the emergence of juvenile offenders among those committing this criminal offence.



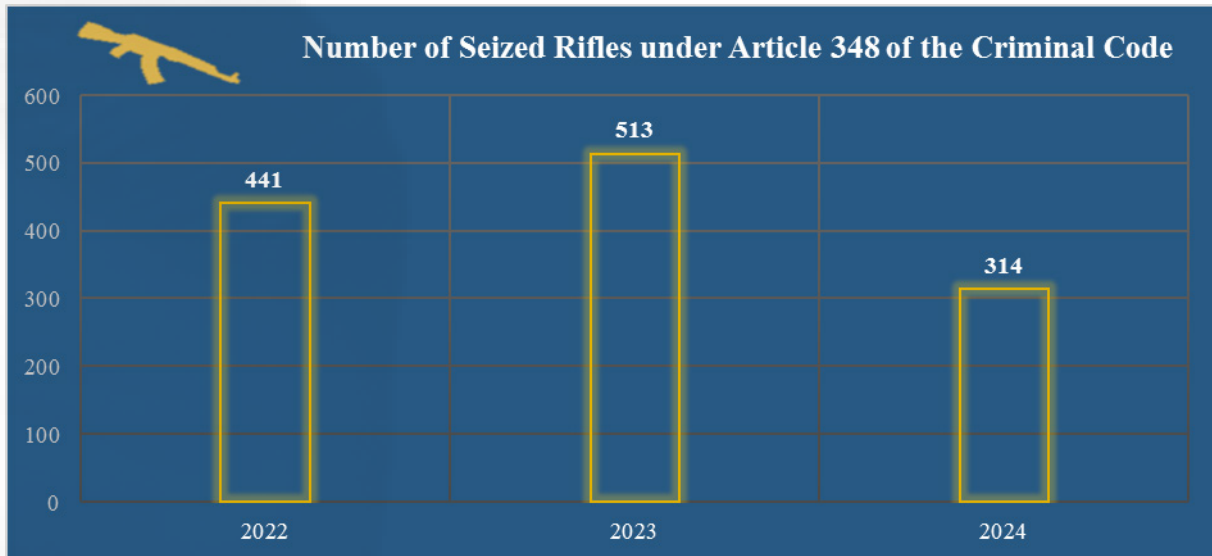
Graph No. 2: Number of Seized Pistols under Article 348 of the Criminal Code³

During the observed period, a total of 3,948 firearms were confiscated. The lowest number of seizures was recorded in 2024 (1,100 firearms), representing a 20% decrease compared to 2023 (1,380) and

² Statistic data of the Ministry of Interior.

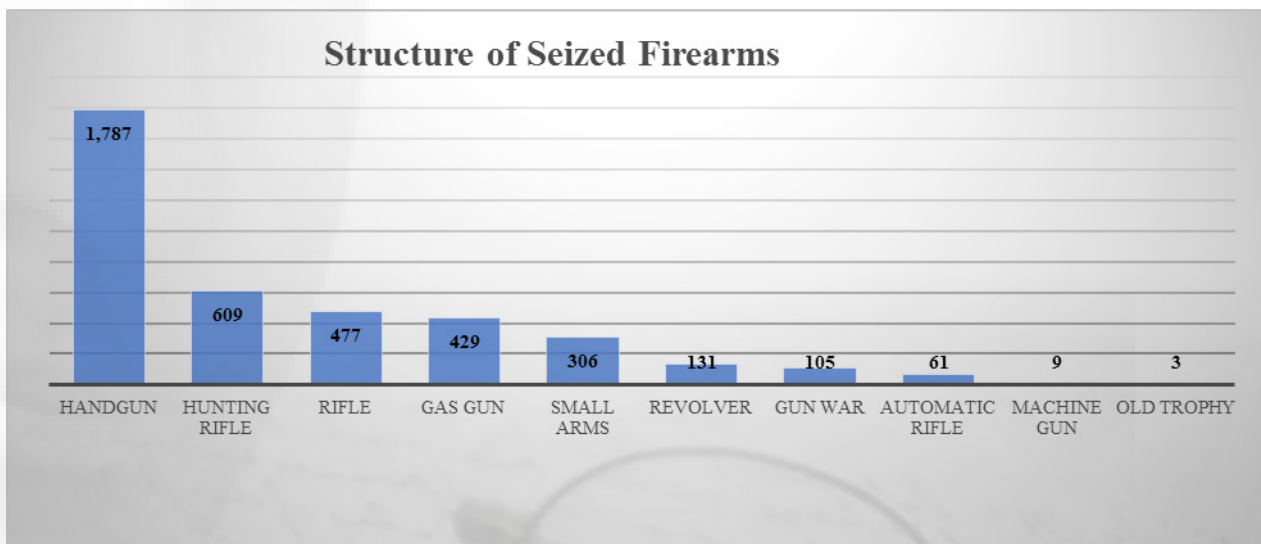
³ Ibid

a 25% decrease compared to 2022 (1,468). The majority of seized weapons were pistols (on average around 800 units) and hunting rifles.



Graph No. 3: *Number of Seized Rifles under Article 348 of the Criminal Code*⁴

In addition to pistols, a significant quantity of rifles was also seized (314 in 2024), representing a 39% decrease compared to 2023 and a 29% decrease compared to 2022. A total of 95,526 rounds of ammunition were confiscated, with the highest amount recorded in 2024 (35,325 rounds). The quantities of rifle and pistol ammunition seized were almost equal.



Graph No. 4: *Structure of Seized Firearms*⁵

From the perspective of international cooperation, significant contributions have been made with Europol, which is assessed as highly important in preventing and combating various forms of serious and organized crime. Based on cooperation with Europol, Serbia achieves excellent results, as evidenced by the number of activities in which it participates and the continuous increase in the number of mes-

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

sages exchanged via the SIENA channels, made possible through Europol's support. (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2024) Special consideration has been given to Europol priorities according to the EMPACT Policy Cycle, supported by the establishment of a Working Group that monitors these activities. The Ministry of Internal Affairs participates in a total of 73 operational activities under all 10 EMRAST Operational Action Plans for the 2024–2025 period, acting as co-leader in four of these operations. For the tenth consecutive time, Serbia also participated in the joint Southeast Europe Action Days. (The Government of the Republic of Serbia, 2025)

The commitment of the Ministry of Interior to preventing and suppressing serious and organized crime in the period from 2019 to 2024 can also be observed through the operational results achieved in combating the illegal possession and misuse of firearms, ammunition, and explosive devices. During this period, a total of 9,116 pieces of various firearms, 230,043 rounds of ammunition of different calibres, and 702 grenades and other explosive devices were seized. Enhanced information exchange is carried out during participation in operational actions in accordance with the EMRIT operational action plans, with the note that active participation of our representatives in EMPACT operational activities for the Firearms priority has been ensured since 2020 (in 2020 we participated in a total of 6 operational actions, in 2021 in 6 operational actions, in 2022 in 7 operational actions, in 2023 in 7 operational actions, and in the upcoming two-year period participation in 9 operational actions is planned). (Small Arms Survey, 2024)

REGULATORY MEASURES AIMED AT PREVENTING AND COMBATING WEAPONS SMUGGLING IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Regulatory measures in the field of small arms and light weapons (SALW) control in the Republic of Serbia aim to align domestic legislation with international obligations, specifically frameworks established by the United Nations, OSCE, European Union, and the regional Western Balkans Roadmap for addressing illegal possession, misuse, and trafficking of small arms, ammunition, and explosives. (United Nations, 2004) Key issues identified in the regulatory framework include the development and amendments to the Law on Weapons and Ammunition. During 2021 and 2022, two drafts of amendments were prepared and subjected to public consultation, with corresponding reports drafted. Following tragic events in Serbia — specifically the shooting at the *Vladislav Ribnikar* Primary School and the mass killing in Dubona — in May 2023, the Government issued Conclusion No. 37, instructing the Ministry of Internal Affairs to prepare amendments to the law to tighten conditions for possession and carrying of short firearms. These amendments have not yet been adopted. (Small Arms Survey, 2024)

Additionally, the Ministry of Justice, on the initiative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, prepared a draft amendment to the Criminal Code, modifying the existing Article 348 and introducing five criminal offenses related to illegal possession, carrying, production, trafficking, and smuggling of firearms, ammunition, and explosives, as well as unauthorized testing, stamping, marking, or forgery of marks and stamps on weapons, devices, or ammunition. (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2024)

In the field of export and import controls of arms and military equipment, in addition to the main Law, all accompanying by-laws necessary for its implementation have been adopted, fully aligned with the relevant European Union regulations and international standards in this area. The aforementioned Law, as well as the by-laws, were adopted in 2014 and have been in force since then. The legislative and regulatory framework for issuing licenses for the export and import of arms and military equipment,



as well as for the provision of brokering services and technical assistance, was established in the Republic of Serbia in 2014, with the entry into force of the above-mentioned Law and the accompanying by-laws. A National Annual Report on the export and import of arms and military equipment, the provision of brokering services, and technical assistance is regularly prepared and submitted to the Government for adoption, and to the National Assembly for information, along with regular annual reports prepared in accordance with the country's international obligations arising from its membership in international organizations. (OEBS, 2024)

CONCLUSION

The Republic of Serbia, due to its geographical position, will remain predominantly a transit country in the smuggling of weapons, while a portion of the weapons will be intended for the local market. The 2023 Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment of the Republic of Serbia identifies, as a key assumption regarding future developments, the expected emergence of Flobert-caliber weapons, deactivated and acoustic weapons that may subsequently be reactivated, i.e., restored to their original caliber. The emergence of 3D-printed weapons is also anticipated. Such weapons are not yet present in the Republic of Serbia; however, there is a possibility that they will soon appear on the illegal market. A priority of the Ministry of Interior will be to fulfill the overarching objectives of the Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Programme of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2025–2030, through reducing threats stemming from the illicit manufacture, possession, carrying, trafficking, and smuggling of firearms, their components, ammunition, and explosive materials, as well as through a comprehensive criminal-justice response. The Republic of Serbia has committed to harmonizing its legislative and regulatory framework on the control of firearms, ammunition, and explosive materials with international standards; improving evidence-based and intelligence-led arms-control policies and practices; strengthening national mechanisms for combating misuse, illicit manufacture, illicit possession, carrying, trafficking, and smuggling of firearms, ammunition, and explosive materials; reducing supply, demand, illicit trade, misuse, and unlawful production, possession, carrying, and smuggling of firearms, ammunition, and explosives through preventive and control measures; and reducing the risk of proliferation and diversion into illicit channels by enhancing stockpile security, safety, and disposal measures. The results of these objectives will become measurable after 2030, which marks the end of the Action Plan's implementation period.

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