

## **Rethinking Security in the Balkans: The Concept of Weak State and its Implications for Regional Security**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The nation-states are considered to have sovereign control over their territories. However, in weak states, empirical sovereignty of the state is questioned by several actors inside of it, especially in respect of the idea of the state. Insecurities caused by weak states such as terrorism, organized crime, refugee flows, mass migration and regional instability have a spill-over effect. For the moment wars were over in the Balkans region, but insecurities caused by weak states structures constitute an important concern for stability of the Balkans. The main aim of this paper will be to argue that a comprehensive rethinking is required to examine security situation of the region. In this context, the concept of weak state should be given priority in assessing the security predicament of the Balkans.

**Keywords:** *Weak State, Balkans, Non-traditional Security Issues*

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### **Introduction**

Non-state actors and threats have become key factors for contemporary security general and the Balkans security particular. Accordingly, Elke Krahan argues that new security threats do not target states, but societies and individuals.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, issues of domestic order and stability must be given an analytical priority, because they are the primary determinants of most of the conflicts. The collapse of communism, the liberalization accompanied by political and economic vacuum of the institutions and the number of conflicts and wars in the Balkans region led to the impoverishment of the population. These factors also created a fertile ground for growth and spread of non-traditional security issues. That's why, with the beginning of the 1990s, it is necessary to rethink the security predicament of the Balkans region.

Theoretically, there is a strong correlation between the weak state and security issues, and the challenge to stability in the Balkans comes from the presence of a chain of weak states in the region. Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) and Kosovo can be classified as weak states both in terms of neo-institutional and ideational avenues of the conception of the weak state. In this respect, weak states of the Balkans can slow down the democratization process in the region and promote reproduction of instability and insecurity. This paper will analyze the relationship between the weak state phenomenon and its implications for the regional security situation in the Balkans.

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<sup>1</sup> Elke Krahan, "From State to Non-State Actors: The Emergence of Security Governance", *New Threats and New Actors in International Security*, Elke Krahan ed., (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.7.

The weak state phenomenon in the Balkans stands at the origin of multiple non-traditional security threats not only to individuals but also to communities. The weakness of the state structures in the Balkans region underpins a number of the security problems such as organised crime and corruption which increasingly become the main obstacle to economic development as military conflict diminishes.<sup>2</sup> However, in order to have a proper understanding of weak state structures of the region, it should be stated that the economic, political, or demographic factors can seriously aggravate the underlying ethnic or communal tensions and conflicts. So, there is a direct causality between the absence or lack of state functions and the likelihood of returning to violence in the post-conflict environment. In this regard, both tangible and socially constructed threats to security should be tackled in an integrated approach. For instance, in addition to individual insecurities, BiH experiences radicalization and polarization tendencies in terms of ethnicity.

Geopolitical space of the paper will include the former Yugoslavia (except for Slovenia and Croatia) and Albania, which counts six countries (Serbia, BiH, Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo) without focusing on any particular one.<sup>3</sup> Slovenia is a member states of the EU and Croatia will be accepted as a member state in 2013. So, these two countries are excluded from the analysis in this paper. It will not be used any geopolitical terminology except the term “the Balkans”. Because, while the focus of the study will be on six countries mentioned above, the spillover effect of non-traditional security issues in these countries is felt not only locally but have repercussions regionally and even beyond.

### **1. Contemporary Security Predicament of the Balkans**

After the end of the Yugoslav wars, it can be asserted that the potential for large scale armed conflicts in the Balkans has been, by large, diminished.<sup>4</sup> Given the presence of a plethora of international military forces such as SFOR, KFOR or NATO forces, it would be difficult even to imagine an outbreak of hostilities between the states in the region. Therefore, it may be argued that particularly the non-military challenges are far more numerous and threatening.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the states that emerged from Yugoslavia’s ruins are suffering from non-traditional security problems. Immigration and refugee problems, terrorism, arms, drugs and human trafficking, the spread of organized crime and corruption, are parts of such non-traditional challenges.

The economic sanctions imposed by the international community on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) blocked major commercial routes and have brought tremendous loses to the neighbouring countries. They have created serious

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<sup>2</sup> Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.384.

<sup>3</sup> Kosovo is not UN recognized state although it was recognized by 93 sovereign countries. Therefore, in this article, Kosovo takes place as an important actor of the regional security developments.

<sup>4</sup> Dejan Anastasijevic, “Organized Crime in the Western Balkans” *HUMSEC Journal*, [http://www.humsec.eu/cms/fileadmin/user\\_upload/humsec/Workin\\_Paper\\_Series/Working\\_Paper\\_A\\_nastasijevic.pdf](http://www.humsec.eu/cms/fileadmin/user_upload/humsec/Workin_Paper_Series/Working_Paper_A_nastasijevic.pdf), 10 May 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Radovan Vukadinovic, “Challenges to Security in Southeast Europe”, *South-East Europe Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 5, 1999, p.4.

internal problems such as grey economy, corruption, illegal trade and the appearance of criminal conduct in the highest political structures<sup>6</sup> in Balkan states, often deteriorate the human rights situation even more.

In addition to economic problems, the process of democratic transition in the post-communist Balkan states creates challenges for the new governments in the region. They have just restored or gained their independence and full sovereignty and seek to build a homogenous nation-state, and the population within their political borders consists of more than one ethnic group, each with their own political agendas. Thus, in the post-Cold War era, while most of the Central and Eastern European states achieved a working democracy and were able to maintain domestic peace and security, most of others in the Balkans engaged in bloody wars and civil conflicts in the last decade of twentieth century. So, given the multicultural diversity and the history of ethnic conflicts in the region, the protection of minorities is a major regional issue.

When we talk about national security, we are talking about the security of a particular state, not that of its citizens. However, in order to handle the sources of insecurity in the Balkans, one should rethink the inside of the state actor. Because, while all the states in Balkans possess judicial sovereignty, which is supported by international community, there are challenges to their authority or regimes, originating from the weakness of the state. Given its recent history of wars and continued ethnic hatred and nationalism, domestic realm of security plays a prominent role in this region. The root causes of the conflicts, such as ethno-national aspirations and discriminatory situations, need to be taken into account together with ongoing problems of treatment of minorities and other ethnic groups. The redistribution of economic growth, the access to state services, unequal living standards, lack of respect for other religions and cultures play a major role in creating threats and vulnerabilities.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, in addition to providing individual rights, democratisation also requires recognition of collective rights for all kinds of communities.

Does the lack of strong state structures hamper democratic consolidation in the Balkans? As an answer to this question, in order to increase the chance of consolidating democracy, the state should try to give all citizens a common roof by granting an inclusive and equal citizenship. But many governments in the Balkans tended to consider the existence of different communities (ethnic and political) as a threat, so they exploited and denied citizenship and rights to the members of these communities. In this way, especially ethnic communities cannot participate in the economic, social and political life of the society. This type of exclusion may bring the state from being a solution to being a source of security problems. So, Nizar Messari

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<sup>6</sup> Vera Stojarova, "Organized Crime in the Western Balkans", *HUMSEC Journal*, [http://www.humsec.eu/cms/fileadmin/user\\_upload/humsec/Journal/Stojarova\\_Organized\\_Crime\\_in\\_the\\_Western\\_Balkans.pdf](http://www.humsec.eu/cms/fileadmin/user_upload/humsec/Journal/Stojarova_Organized_Crime_in_the_Western_Balkans.pdf), 10 May 2010.

<sup>7</sup> Wolfgang Benedek, "The Human Security Approach to Terrorism and Organized Crime in Post-Conflict Situations", *Transnational Terrorism, Organized Crime and Peace-Building, Human Security in the Western Balkans*, Wolfgang Benedek, Christopher Daase, Vojin Dimitrijevic and Petrus Van Duyne eds., (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.13.

argues that the state can sometimes represent threats to its citizens and it is especially true for Europe as exemplified by events in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>8</sup>

That is why the object of security should not be the state, since what is really threatened is not an abstraction like the state, but the material and societal well-being of individuals.<sup>9</sup> Intra-state conflicts and enmities in the Balkans had targeted the civilians much more than any other actors in the aftermath of the Cold War and therefore a human oriented security approach became essential both in the peace making process and in security arrangements.<sup>10</sup> Although levels of human insecurity do vary from one country to another in the region, it is clear that most countries share common risks and common concerns. In other words, while the situation is not the same and has not reached the same critical levels in all countries of the region, the perception is still that non-traditional security issues in the Balkans threaten the democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the stability and the economic progress within the region, even with an impact beyond the Balkans.

## 2. The Phenomenon of the Weak State

It is argued that the failed state, which is solely confined to the Third World, is no longer a problem. The disintegration of the former Yugoslavia is a striking example of a failed state that once was one of the most liberal and affluent socialist societies in Eastern Europe.<sup>11</sup> According to a special report commissioned by the UNDP concerning the issue of human security in the Balkans, it is argued that human insecurity in the region is best explained and confronted from the perspective of the 'weak state'.<sup>12</sup>

The traditional conception of security does not take into account domestic variables that affect conflict and order. So, neorealist thinking pays attention only to powerful states, instead of placing the weak and the strong states in a theoretical framework in terms of concept of socio-political cohesion. An analysis of the weak state is necessitated by an outlook from the bottom-up that allows us to observe domestic realm of the security which is mostly related to state-society relations.

Approaches to the weak state in International Relations literature have primarily taken two avenues. The first avenue is the neo-institutional and the second is the ideational approach. The neo-institutional avenue focuses on the institutions within the state and their ability to govern.<sup>13</sup> A weak state is defined not merely as one with

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<sup>8</sup> Nizar Messari, "The State and Dilemmas of Security: The Middle East and the Balkans", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 33, No. 4, 2002, p.416.

<sup>9</sup> Simon Dalby, "Contesting an Essential Concept: Reading the Dilemmas in Contemporary Security Discourse", *Critical Security Studies, Concepts and Cases*, Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams eds., (London: UCL Press, 1997), p.13.

<sup>10</sup> A. Şevket Ovalı, "What is to Be Done: A Complementary Security Architecture for the Balkans", *The Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Security, Challenges to Balkan Security and Contribution of the International Organizations*, 14-15 May 2008, (İzmir: Dokuz Eylül University Press, 2009), p.171.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Linklater, "Globalization and the Transformation of Political Community", *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, John Baylis and Steve Smith ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.624.

<sup>12</sup> Ivan Krastev, *Human Security in South-East Europe*, (Skopje: UNDP Special Report, 1999).

<sup>13</sup> Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

inefficient institutions but one that is unable or unwilling to enforce rules or to implement consistent policies. The structures of weak states encourage the threat of criminal activities and their profitability, due to the ease with which criminal organizations are able to penetrate the state and its institutions.<sup>14</sup> The infiltration by criminal organizations into state structures threatens democracy, democratic institutions and public confidence.

Dysfunction of the state has a direct impact on the fight against organized crime. Thus, it seems clear that the role of ethnicity as a cause generating conflict is not enough to capture all violent conflicts. The ethnicity argument fails to explain why an ethnically homogenous country, such as Albania, had violent domestic conflicts.<sup>15</sup> The government and its apparatus are not willing and/or able to deliver sufficient public services and/or they suffer from severe legitimacy problems. Despite appearing strong with regard to the monopoly of the use of force, it is in fact rather weak when it comes to provision of public services and in terms of its political and administrative systems.

The ideational avenue to studying the weak state is a security-inspired track, which focuses on the idea of the state as a legitimate actor in providing protection for the population.<sup>16</sup> This 'idea' of a legitimate state is born of a bottom-up approach to societal support for the state, referred to as state-society cohesion. So, it is not sufficient to blame weak institutions for weak states, or objective taxonomical accounts measuring states according to the idealised Weberian model. The other main approach to weak states is ideational, whereby the state constitutes an arena of conflict between the government and its citizens.

As characterized by Barry Buzan, the weak state is a state where the level of socio-political cohesion is low because there is no single nation within a state territory and different ethnic groups coexist within one state, the process of state-building is not accomplished and governing elites are concerned with domestic threats rather than with external ones. There is no political and societal consensus within a state or a coherent idea of a state among citizens and at the same time governing elites are not able to impose unity in the absence of such a political consensus. Since the process of state-building is not accomplished in these states and there is no formed nation within state boundaries, i.e. population is composed of different ethnic and cultural groups and the domestic situation is characterized by violence.<sup>17</sup>

Nizar Messari argues that when the state represents a solution to the security needs of one group in the population, it constitutes by nature a source of threat to another group. This is the case because the construction of the state is necessarily an exclusive process, and those who are excluded become in some cases a source of threat. It is at this precise conjuncture that the concept of identity becomes central in the discussion of security.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the societal security is crucial, with questions of

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<sup>14</sup> Stojarova, *op.cit.*, p.92.

<sup>15</sup> Dorian Jano, "How Legacies of the Past and Weakness of the State brought Violent Dissolution and Disorder to the Western Balkan States", *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development*, Issue 14, July 2009, p.5.

<sup>16</sup> Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, Second Edition, (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97-101.

<sup>18</sup> Messari, *op. cit.*, p.420.

national identity often becoming the organising centre of struggle and fear. Societal insecurity involves threats to the fundamental make-up of a society. These are aspects such as values, traditions, customs, language, religion, ethnicity, etc. These characteristics of a given group are often referred to as identity. When speaking of societal dimensions of security, we thus commonly refer to threats to the identity of a particular group. In Balkan states, both avenues of the weak state concept can easily be observed. While the neo-institutional avenue of the concept is mostly related to the state-building process of post-conflict societies, the ideational avenue necessitates an approach that handles state-society relations and the related socio-political cohesion issue.

The reality of war within states does not correspond with Clausewitz's thinking of war as an organized combat between the military forces of two and/or more different states. Wars within states are fought over issues of statehood and relations among communities within states. For Mary Kaldor, new wars are usually fought not for reasons of state or ideology, but for identity and most violence is directed against civilians -that is absolutely central to understanding new wars.<sup>19</sup> Social and political fragmentation and weak inter-group trust are often characteristics of situations of fragility and violent conflict. In situations of fragility, political identity, fragmentation and weak state institutions reinforce each other. They undermine state legitimacy and the formation of strong nation-wide governance systems; and divide citizens. In situations of violent conflict, processes of 'othering' and dehumanisation destroy social relations and networks and leave a legacy of deep mistrust and fear of others. Persistent divisions in the aftermath of conflict result in an unstable peace and the possibility of renewed violence.

### 3. Non-Traditional Security Challenges in the Balkans

Despite some differences in the terms intensity, perceptions of the main security threats are strikingly similar in all countries of the region.<sup>20</sup> For example, the National Security and Defence Concept of Macedonia 2003 defines terrorism, organised crime, illegal migration, illegal trafficking in drugs, weapons, people, strategic and two-fold use materials and corruption as threats to national security.<sup>21</sup> In the same way, the 2008 National Security Strategy of Montenegro lists the following threats: smuggling of drugs and weapons, illegal migration, human trafficking and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>22</sup> It can be easily observed that a large number of threats come from the non-traditional security sectors when one examines the security strategy documents of the states in the region. This is an indicator of the weakness of state institutions and it implies the phenomenon of a weak state which is linked to almost all security threats that affect the countries in the region.

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<sup>19</sup> Mary Kaldor and Alan Johnson, "New Wars and Human Security: An Interview with Mary Kaldor", [http://dissentmagazine.org/democratiya/article\\_pdfs/d11Kaldor.pdf](http://dissentmagazine.org/democratiya/article_pdfs/d11Kaldor.pdf), 12 May 2010.

<sup>20</sup> Istvan Gyarmati and Darko Stancic, *Study on the Assessment of Regional Security Threats and Challenges in the Western Balkans*, (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2007), p.2.

<sup>21</sup> Islam Yusufi, "Macedonia", *Security Policies in the Western Balkans*, Miroslav Hadzic, Milorad Timotic and Predrag Petrovic ed., (Belgrade: Center for Civil-Military Relations, 2010), p.106-107.

<sup>22</sup> Rajko Radevic, "Montenegro", *Security Policies in the Western Balkans*, Miroslav Hadzic, Milorad Timotic and Predrag Petrovic ed., (Belgrade: Center for Civil-Military Relations, 2010), p.129.

### 3.1. Organized Crime

The spread and growth of the forces of organized crime is certainly one of the most significant security risks in the Balkans. The transition from communist rule to democracy, wars in the Balkans region in the 1990s with their economic blockades and war economies, and the presence of weak states in the post-war context provided a favourable environment for networks of organized crime to bloom.<sup>23</sup> So, the phenomenon of crime in the region is a product of post-communist transition and conflicts resulting from the break-up of Yugoslavia rather than being endemic. But it should be emphasised that societal problems and the weakness of the state actor contributed to the growth of organized crime networks. Therefore, organized crime is not only a developmental issue in the Balkans, reflecting the lack of adequately protected property rights and the lack of local employment opportunities. The regional organized crime networks find their expression in the trafficking of illicit goods (such as arms and drugs), economic crime, money laundering, the organisation of illegal immigration and human trafficking.

The problem of organized crime in the Balkans knows no borders and has no ethnic, nationalistic or any other obstacles for a joint action. Indeed, ethnic affiliation did not prevent criminal groups from active cooperation with other groups coming from the hostile camps in BiH or from other states in the region.<sup>24</sup> As Misha Glenny shows that the most striking thing about organized crime in the Balkans is its transnational character, drawing together 'mafia' type structures from across the region regardless of nationalities.<sup>25</sup>

Exploiting chaos, insecurity, lack of proper organization and nonexistence of the rule of law, organized crime networks have established their strongholds in the region and created links with high-ranked political officials and parts of the military establishments.<sup>26</sup> Organized crime's structures are interlinked with the state apparatus and present a real threat not only for individuals, but for the state. Criminal gangs attached to political elites in the various states threaten their transformation, their democratization and the process of integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.<sup>27</sup> It is claimed that organized crime is still often linked with (persons in) state institutions and that because of the nature of the weak states in the Balkans.<sup>28</sup> Under these conditions, the fight against organized crime faces many problems such as the reluctance of local organs to deal with the criminal structures and involvement by the political elite in illegal activities.

The activities of organized crime such as trafficking in drugs, human beings, and weapons are intertwined, and they are deeply embedded in the pervasive culture of corruption in the region. In most countries of the region corruption is endemic, systematic and well organized, and has taken root in state institutions of power,

<sup>23</sup> Stojarova, *op. cit.*, p.91.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.96.

<sup>25</sup> Misha Glenny, "Balkan Organized Crime", *Is There An Albanian Question?*, Judy Batt ed., (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, 2008), p.87-104.

<sup>26</sup> Vukadinovic, *op. cit.*, p.13.

<sup>27</sup> Stojarova, *op. cit.*, p.111.

<sup>28</sup> Benedek, *op. cit.*, p.10.

including the judiciary, police and secret services.<sup>29</sup> So, most countries of the region regard corruption to be among their greatest problems. Corruption is closely tied to organized crime, and this link creates an even bigger problem for states to address, especially when both find inroads into state structures. Because, crime groups promoting a culture of corruption can have a deleterious impact on the social cohesion of states, widespread corruption often leads to a breakdown of the trust and legitimacy people have in states.<sup>30</sup> The Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International shows Macedonia on rank 72, Serbia, Albania and Montenegro equally on rank 85 and BiH on rank 92. Kosovo does not figure in this index.<sup>31</sup> If left unaddressed, corruption and organized crime are likely to lead to state failure, as we have already witnessed in the Balkans.

### 3.2. Terrorism

Terrorism may easily find fertile soil in national and ethnic conflicts, as well as in the consequences of recently ended wars. Minority groups, if unsatisfied with their status, or strengthened nationalist movements may easily become the organizers of terrorist activities.<sup>32</sup> From the viewpoint of Western researchers and policy analysts the threat of terrorism in the region of Balkans stems mainly from the aftermath of the Bosnian wars and the fact that as result of these wars radical Islam has entered the Bosnian and other Balkan areas through different routes. In particular after September 11 concerns have been raised as regards the possible infiltration of Balkan countries by international terrorist groups, among which Al Qaeda of course figures prominently.<sup>33</sup>

In this context, it is argued that Albania faces a further threat as different Islamic terrorist organizations attempt to take advantage of the power vacuum and use Albania as a safe haven for their planning and preparation activity – a strategic risk not just for Albania but for the region as a whole.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, it is argued in a critical manner of above-mentioned argument, while Al Qaeda and other Islamic militants tried to establish their presence in the Muslim-populated parts of former Yugoslavia, such as Bosnia, Kosovo, and Sandzak, they were rejected by the locals, who mostly see religion as a matter of ethnic identification, not faith.<sup>35</sup> Whilst on 17 October 2001 the Embassies of the United States and the United Kingdom in Sarajevo were closed down under threat of terrorist attacks,<sup>36</sup> in 2004 the International

<sup>29</sup> Gyarmati and Stancic, *op. cit.*, p.2.

<sup>30</sup> John T. Picarelli, "Transnational Organized Crime", *Security Studies: An Introduction*, Paul D. Williams ed., (London: Routledge, 2008), p.463.

<sup>31</sup> Transparency International, *Corruption Perception Index 2008*, [http://www.transparency.org/news\\_room/in\\_focus/2008/cpi2008/cpi\\_2008\\_table](http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/2008/cpi2008/cpi_2008_table), 10 May 2012.

<sup>32</sup> Vukadinovic, *op. cit.*, p.12.

<sup>33</sup> International Crisis Group, *Bin Laden and the Balkans: The Politics of Anti-Terrorism*, ICG Balkan Reports, 9 November 2001, no. 119, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/europe/Balkans%202>, 10 May 2012.

<sup>34</sup> Krastev, *op. cit.*, p.16.

<sup>35</sup> Dejan Anastasijevic, "Getting Better? A Map of Organized Crime in the Western Balkans", *Transnational Terrorism, Organized Crime and Peace-Building, Human Security in the Western Balkans*, Wolfgang Benedek, Christopher Daase, Vojin Dimitrijevic and Petrus Van Duyn eds., (London: Palgrave Macmillian, 2010), p.151.

<sup>36</sup> Lyubov G. Mincheva and Ted Robert Gurr, "Unholy Alliances: Evidence on Linkages between Trans-State Terrorism and Crime Networks: The Case of Bosnia", *Transnational Terrorism, Organized Crime and*

Strategic Studies Association came forward with allegations that the London and Madrid bombings had links to Bosnia.<sup>37</sup> Under the effect of such allegations, terrorism is considered by Bosnia's national security policy as one of the highest threats for the stability of both the region and BiH.<sup>38</sup>

The distinction between organized crime and terrorism is made by reference to their ends: criminals seek profits while terrorists have political motives and specifically seek to weaken the state. The existence of trans-state nationalist, ethnic, and religious movements and their transborder identity networks provide settings conducive to collaboration between terrorists and criminals. This collaboration between organized crime and terrorism has eroded the respect for the rule of law. Both undermine confidence in state structures and threaten the security of individuals and communities. Vera Stojarova claims that demilitarization of the KLA and the creation of political parties and military and police forces involving the members of the KLA have provided only a partial solution to the question of the existence of the KLA.<sup>39</sup> High unemployment and the low standing of the law are the reasons that most former KLA fighters have found it easy to slide into organized crime.

### 3.3. Small Arms and Light Weapons

The widespread availability and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW) contributes to conflicts of all types, and is closely related to current concerns such as weak and collapsed states, human rights abuses, and the pantheon of both traditional and nontraditional security issues.<sup>40</sup> In this context, the wars in former Yugoslavia left massive quantities of weapons and other military hardware outside of effective government control. In addition, great numbers of firearms were imported into the region during the Yugoslav conflicts. The partial collapse of the Albanian state in 1997 also fuelled the smuggling of weapons in the region. The situation has certainly much improved since the time of active conflicts. Firearms trafficking is not even mentioned in the Council of Europe's situation reports on organised crime in the region.<sup>41</sup> But Iztok Prezelj emphasises that any major political and security destabilization could immediately revert the otherwise positive trend in the field of small arms and light weapons.<sup>42</sup>

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*Peace-Building, Human Security in the Western Balkans*, Wolfgang Benedek, Christopher Daase, Vojin Dimitrijevic and Petrus Van Duyne eds., (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.202.

<sup>37</sup> International Strategic Studies Association, *Madrid Bombings Highlight Extent and Capability of Islamist Networks*, 2004, <http://128.121.186.47/ISSA/reports/Balkan/Mar1204.htm>, 17 May 2012.

<sup>38</sup> Olga Palinkasev, "View from Bosnia and Herzegovina - Study on the Assessment of Regional Security Threats and Challenges in the Western Balkans", *Study on the Assessment of Regional Security Threats and Challenges in the Western Balkans*, Istvan Gyarmati and Darko Stancic eds., (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2007), p.79.

<sup>39</sup> Stojarova, *op. cit.*, p.102.

<sup>40</sup> Mike Bourne, "The Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons", *New Threats and New Actors in International Security*, Elke Krahnman ed., (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.155.

<sup>41</sup> United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, *Crime and its Impact on the Balkans and Affected Countries*, March 2008, p. 84, [http://www.unodc.org/documents/Balkan\\_study.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/Balkan_study.pdf), 12 May 2012.

<sup>42</sup> Iztok Prezelj, "The Small Arms and Light Weapons Problem in the Western Balkans", *Transnational Terrorism, Organized Crime and Peace-Building, Human Security in the Western Balkans*, Wolfgang Benedek, Christopher Daase, Vojin Dimitrijevic and Petrus Van Duyne eds., (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.207-226.

In the environment of high unemployment, wild privatization, fast democratization, weak governments, corruption, unsolved war-related issues, painful memories, war criminals moving freely and internally displaced people and refugees who do not want to or cannot return, the availability of SALWs may create some alternative windows of opportunity for solving problems by violence.<sup>43</sup> The key victims of proliferation of SALWs are actually individuals in the region. Since, in the Balkans region, SALWs still continue to be a problem in the post-conflict time, analysis of national security documents of countries of the region shows that many documents indicated the illegal trade with and availability of conventional weapons as a security threat.

### **3.4. Demographics Dynamics of Security and Human-Trafficking**

Demographic dynamics and population movements have important ramifications for human security. Serious human security concerns persist in the form of displaced persons facing poverty, unemployment and limited access to such social benefits as education, justice and freedom of movement. Therefore, the forced migration of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are severe destabilizing factors for the Balkan region. Displacement became a serious issue in the Balkans after millions of refugees and IDPs were littered across the region (the majority in BiH, Kosovo, and Serbia) as a result of the wars in the 1990s and during the 2001 internal strife in Macedonia. In spite of efforts for solving human displacement, according to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), as of January 2009 there were 132,071 refugees and 352,905 IDPs remaining in the Western Balkans.<sup>44</sup>

Connected to demographic security of the region, human-trafficking is another non-traditional security issue. Human trafficking is perceived as a grave human rights abuse and a serious transnational crime.<sup>45</sup> The destruction of social fabric caused by the war, coupled with massive migrations, and the economic collapse, worked together to create fertile ground for dealers in human beings. The Balkans is simultaneously the source and the transit route of, and the destination for the trafficking of human beings, who largely fall in two categories: women, used for sex trafficking, and illegal migrants, heading for Western countries. The International Organization of Migration estimates that 120,000 women and children are trafficked through the Balkans alone each year.<sup>46</sup>

### **Conclusion**

There is an assumption that politico-economic reconstruction defined as strengthening of the state and introduction of market economy can automatically foster sustainable peace. But rebuilding a state after a conflict is about far more than repairing damaged buildings and re-establishing public institutions. Fundamentally, it

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<sup>43</sup> Prezelj, *op. cit.*, p.210.

<sup>44</sup> Assessing Human Security in the Western Balkans, *CSIS-EKEM Policy Report*, November 2010, [http://csis.org/files/publication/101105.CSIS-EKEM\\_PolicyBrief4.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/101105.CSIS-EKEM_PolicyBrief4.pdf), 12 May 2010.

<sup>45</sup> Alja Klopčič, "Trafficking in Human Beings in Transition and Post-Conflict Countries", *Human Security Perspectives*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2004, p.11.

<sup>46</sup> Crime and its Impact on the Balkans and Affected Countries, *op. cit.*, p.75.

is about restoring the people's trust and confidence in governance systems and the rule of law, rebuilding relationships at all levels, and providing the population with greater hope for the future. These processes are all critical to the consolidation of peace and security in fragile post-conflict situations. When they are neglected, the re-emerging threat of conflict is very real.

The strengthening of weak states is dependent on the success of state-building processes. And state-building processes of the weak states in the Balkans are closely related to the European integration process of the region. But most of the threats targeting the physical integrity and dignity of human beings are locally produced and unique to the region. Therefore, it is argued that a bottom-up approach which would provide participation of civil society in agenda-making process rather than setting up a human security agenda in Brussels is necessary.<sup>47</sup> Because, a top-down approach of state-building ultimately leads to a 'top-down local democracy' which does not answer to people's concrete needs. Obviously, each post-conflict reconstruction system emerges in response to that conflict system's specific set of circumstances and it will thus be unique in its composition and prioritisation.

The post-communist state weakness in the Balkans is a specific kind of state weakness, because it is also a post-conflict state weakness. Therefore, conflict legacies in the form of ideology, actors and structure continue to shape post-conflict development, including the (re)building of the state. In this process, capable state structures would limit non-state actors' manoeuvre room and opportunities to pursue their political and/or economic agendas. So, attention should be paid to the internal environment of the state actor where violence and instability are the main issues on the agenda. The human security approach can be usefully applied to the fight against non-traditional security issues such as terrorism and organized crime in post-conflict situations. The concept's focus is on the security needs of the individual, who is the main victim of non-traditional security threats.

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<sup>47</sup> Ovali, *op. cit.*, p.177.

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