

## MASS SHOOTING: A NEW PHENOMENON IN SLOVAK MEDICOLEGAL WORK EXPERIENCE

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**Summary:** Crime and criminality have a long history in various cultures of the world. In Slovakia, particularly organized criminality began to fully develop in the 90-ties of the 20th century. In most cases with lethal end, an attack was led against one or two persons. Only one "massacre", in which 10 members of one "underworld clan" were killed, was recorded. Despite the existence of organized crime in Slovakia, no case was monitored, in which one individual would use a firearm against several people, as often happens in the U.S. or in Western Europe.

**Keywords:** mass shooting.

The aim of this study is to demonstrate a "unique" case in the history of Slovak criminality and to analyze the causes and consequences of shooting that occurred in Bratislava on the 30th of August 2010 in the morning, when a 48-year-old man in a period of 16 minutes attacked and killed, using a firearm, 7 victims, injured 16 people, and then used the weapon against himself. The study focuses on the victims that were killed and on the perpetrator.

Examinations of the dead body of the offender and the victims were carried out at the scene of death and subsequent autopsies with complete macroscopic morphological evaluation and additional laboratory examinations (histological, toxicological,

haematological, X-ray examination, and the test proving the presence of gunshot powder) were done at the Institute of Forensic Medicine of Health Care Surveillance Authority in Bratislava. One section of ballistic tracks was evaluated – the firearms and cartridges of the offender at the crime scene.

At the scene of death 8 dead bodies were found: 1 perpetrator on the street below the balcony of adjacent block of flats and 7 victims. Five victims in 1-bedroom apartment neighbouring with the apartment of the perpetrator (2 victims in the bathroom and 3 in the living room); 1 victim on the street in front of the block of flats at the residence of the offender and 1 "random" victim in an

apartment in the block of flats at the opposite side of the street. Similar autopsy findings were found by all the victims. Predominantly penetrating wounds of the head and chest were detected. The cause of death was hemorrhagic shock in five cases and central death in two cases.

Autopsy findings of the perpetrator: penetration wound of the thorax caused by police, gunshot wound of the head caused by the perpetrator himself. Concentration of acetone: in the blood 143.13 mg.kg<sup>-1</sup> (0.14 %), in the urine 850.42 mg.kg<sup>-1</sup> (0.85 %). The result of the test proving the presence of gunshot powder: smears from the thorax negative, smears of the head positive.

The concentration of acetone detected in blood sample of the offender 143.13 mg.kg<sup>-1</sup> is according to the literature data above the physiological concentration of acetone in blood. Severe toxic effects after the use of acetone occur when the concentration of acetone in blood is at least 200 - 300 mg.l<sup>-1</sup>, as described in the literature. The behaviour of people after taking solvency (e.g. acetone) may be in some cases unpredictable and openly aggressive towards the surroundings. Abstinence symptoms are manifested as mental irritability, which may culminate in hostile and aggressive behaviour. Besides, the necropsy and histological examination of the tissues of the offender did not show any signs of starvation or diabetes.

During the examination at the crime scene, a long firearm - self-loading rifle (machine rifle) no. CZ 858 Tactical, cal. 7.62 x39 mm, homemade adapted to fire a dose, was found near the body of the offender. This type of rifle is designated for sporty target shooting. In a cloth bag, which was hanging over the offender's shoulder, 10 big and 3 small full containers for self-loading rifle were detected a total number of 330 loads.

Behind the trouser belt of the perpetrator, two short firearms - pistols CZ (cal. 9x19 mm Luger) with 4 full containers were found - altogether 87 loads. At the crime scene, 5 additional empty big containers for self-loading rifle were traced.

Altogether, 140 cartridges fired from self-loading rifle CZ 858 Tactical, were found, 25 of which were traced in the apartment of the victims and 115 on the street. This testifies the fact that the perpetrator of the attack used only one weapon a self-loading rifle CZ 858 Tactical. Out of 25 projectiles that were found in the apartment of 5 victims, 12 projectiles directly hit the victims.

Police fired at the offender 15 times, with one bullet hitting the offender in the chest.

Former policeman shot away the family from the neighbouring apartment in Bratislava and in front of the block of flats he shot another member of this family. Then he wounded 16 people walking through the street and finally he used the weapon against himself. This incident has changed the lives not only of the inhabitants of Bratislava but has also taken the attention of media abroad, since a similar tragedy had not occurred in the history of the Slovak republic before.

The family that was shot by the perpetrator was objectionable for all of its neighbours for a long time. Several complaints and petitions had been submitted against the family. Whether the mass murder of the family members had been planned in advance or was a result of "*furor brevis*" is the subject of speculations. The perpetrator was a sporty shooter and this could have determined him to his own „easy“ way of solving the problem. He had 6 weapons in legal possession and possessed a firearm certificate.