

COMPARISON OF MODUS OPERANDI OF TERRORIST'S ATTACKS - VEHICLE RAMMING ATTACK AND FIREARM ATTACK

DORA LAPKOVA & KLARA JENCKOVA

Abstract: *This article is focused on Soft targets, especially on cultural events. The cultural events are specific in that they can be closed and open spaces, the visitors are very diverse, and the organisers have different funding and security knowledge. The aim of our research is to analyse the terrorist's attacks on Soft targets. We try to find some trends, which can be helpful for us to plan security measures. In this article, we describe two types of attacks – vehicle-ramming attacks and firearms attacks. In the first part, we introduce this area – the Soft targets – and in the other parts, we describe the trends of terrorist's attacks. In the end, we compare these two types of attacks. During our research, we analysed more than 100 attacks in Europe from 2014 to 2018.*

Key words: *soft targets, terrorist, attack, vehicle-ramming attack, firearms attack*



Authors' data: Lapkova, D[ora]*; Jenckova, K[lara], Tomas Bata University in Zlín, Zlín, Czech Republic, dlapkova@utb.cz

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1. Introduction

The Soft targets are very discussed theme in present days. Many security experts analyze the terrorist's attacks in the past, because they try to find some possibilities for protection. But this is very complicated. The terrorists are several steps before us, so all security measures are the reaction on past attack. When we plan the protection of the Soft targets we try to be proactive – new methods of protection, be active and solve the problem. The very important part of security is the system of reactions and the situation when the system can improvise. The waiting on attacks and to react in the moment of the beginning of attack is a bad way of protection.

Ob. Cit.: "As "Soft Targets" can be referred to those objects, (open) spaces, or events characterized by the accumulation of a large number of people, the absence or low level of security measures against violent assaults and their omission among critical infrastructure and hard target objects." [1]

In this article, we are focused on the cultural events. They are specified their place and time. The security measures for cultural events is a very demanding process, especially because each event is unique and original (each event is therefore associated with a different range and intensity of risks). In order to ensure the safety of events, it is also necessary to look at other characteristics, in particular the type of cultural event (sports, cultural, social, religious, etc.); the length and venue of the event and, last but not least, its accessibility (limited admission; public or private events).

The most frequently chosen type of attacks on Soft targets, in Europe since 2014, include (in this order) - shooting; cold weapon attack; vehicle-ramming attack; a suicide attack and an attack using an explosive system. These types of attack are combined in many cases.

2. Cultural events and attacks on them

"Cultural events can be defined based on a combination of two words - culture and event (action), respectively based on a combination of their definition concepts. By combining these formulations, the following delineation can be achieved: cultural events are pre-planned events with a clearly defined place and time, the main aim of which is to present spiritual and material values created by man." [2]

Cultural events can be characterized based on many criteria. In terms of safety, however, they are the most important - the place and its accessibility. Other essential criteria are - duration of the event; number of participants; the importance of the event or the frequency/periodicity of the event.

For the security measures, the knowledge of the process of attacks is very important. It is necessary to know a type of attack (also called modus operandi), potential of dead, a place, number of people etc.

In this article, we are chosen two modus operandi – vehicle and firearms. These attacks are very dangerous, and we met with them in the past in Europe. We analyzed 47 attacks – 28 attacks with firearms and 19 vehicle-ramming attacks. We are focused on Europe from 2014 to 2018 [3].

2.1 Vehicle-ramming attacks

In this part, we show several graphs with the number of vehicle-ramming attacks, the number of victims and their depending. The high attractiveness of this modus operandi is mainly due to the ease of attack and vehicle procurement; potentially high casualties and high probability of attack success.

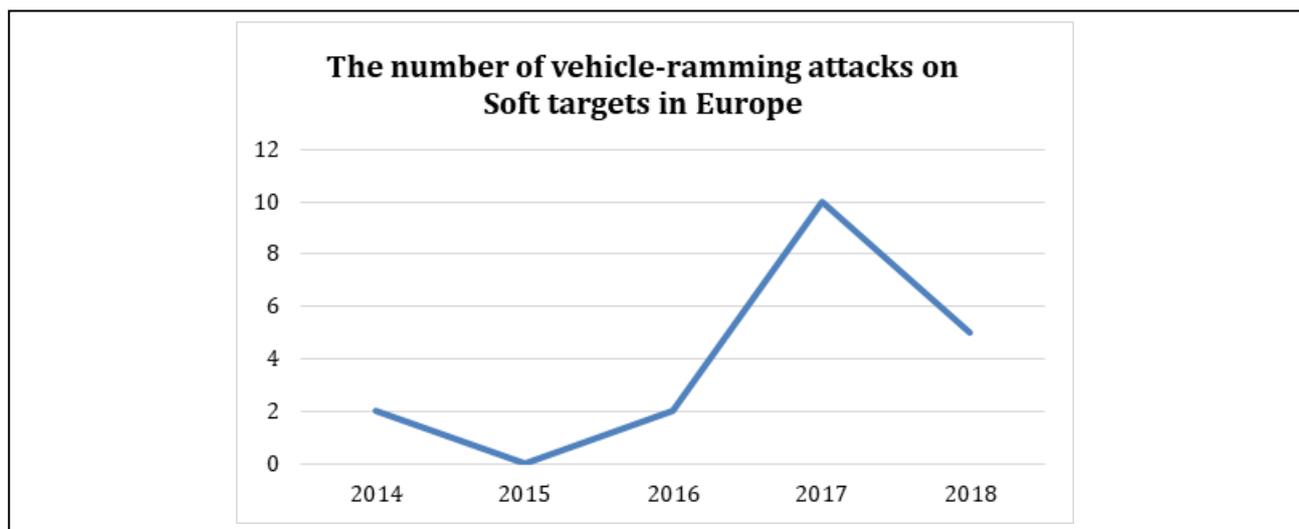


Fig. 1. The number of vehicle-ramming attacks on Soft targets

The worst year was 2017, where 10 attacks were. When we compare the year 2017 with the year 2015, there is a large difference.

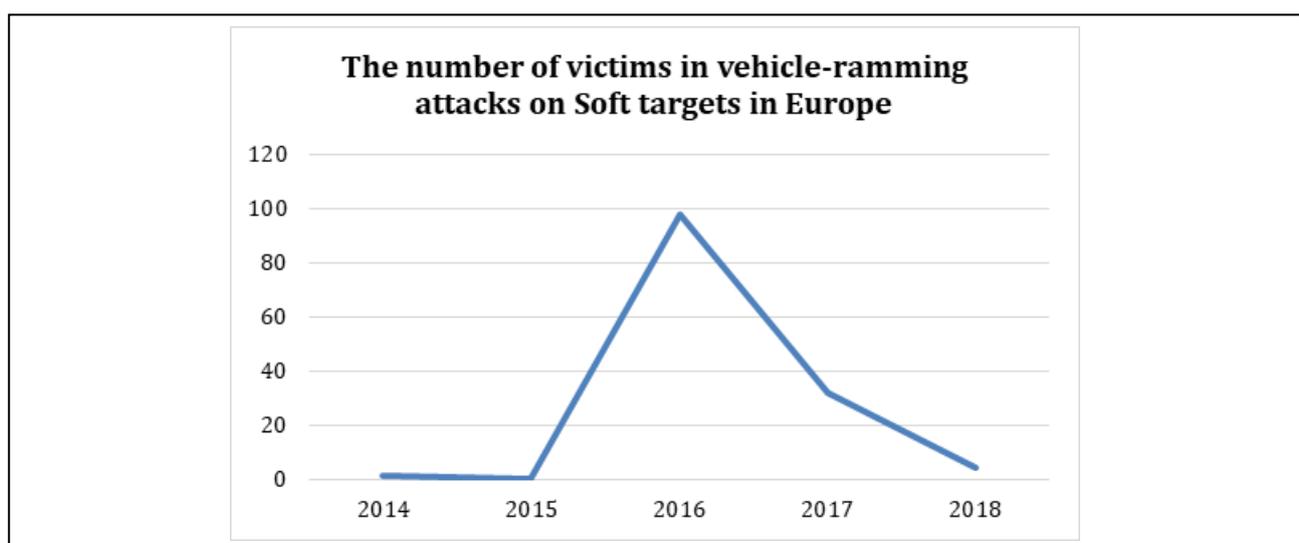


Fig. 2. The number of victims in vehicle-ramming attacks

This graph (Fig. 2) is very interesting because two attacks were in the year of 2016, but 100 dead people. The worst year of 2017 with 10 attacks has 32 victims.

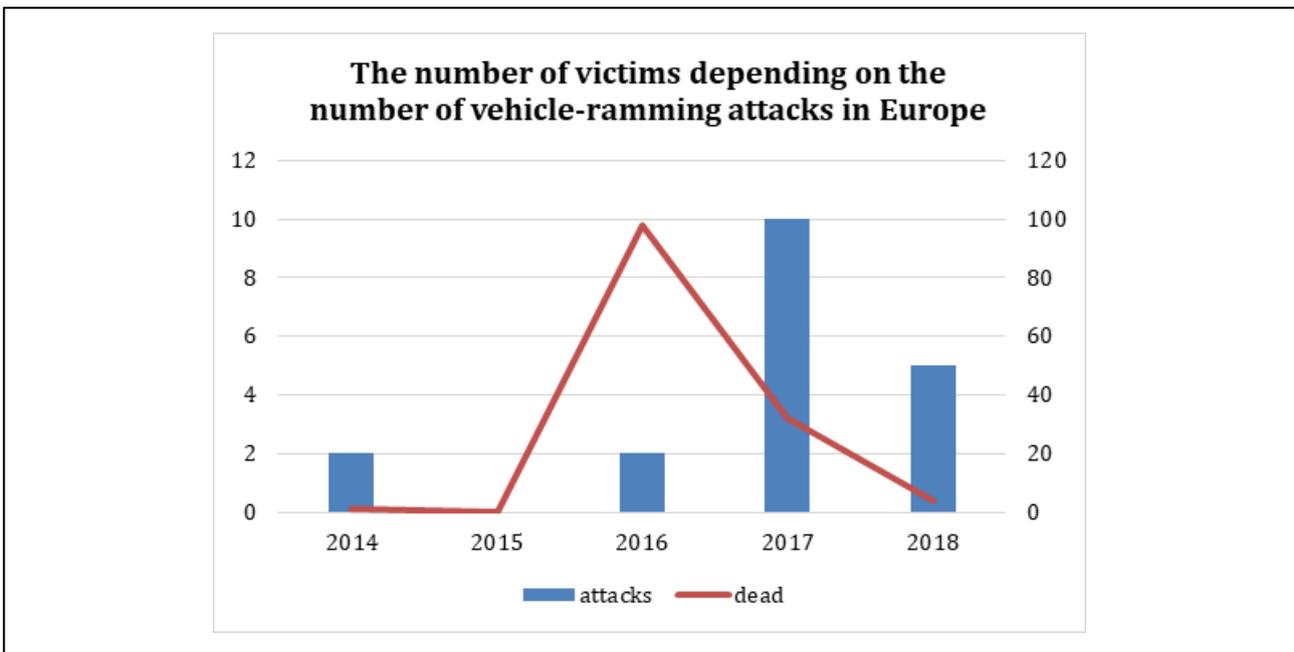


Fig. 3. The number of victims depending on the number of vehicle-ramming attacks

In many cases, firearms, cold weapons or explosive systems were subsequently found in vehicles. Rarely, however, the use of these additional resources has indeed occurred.

The attackers use their vehicles or vehicles owned by their family members or acquaintances. However, the attackers choose also rental cars or stolen vehicles (thus committing a further crime before the attack itself). In these cases, the attackers choose mainly vans (mostly white) or trucks, because of the greatest amount of damage, respectively the highest possible number of victims.

2.2 Firearms attacks

The most often modus operandi in Europe from 2014 to 2018 is the using of firearms. In the following graphs, there are numbers of attack and the number of victims

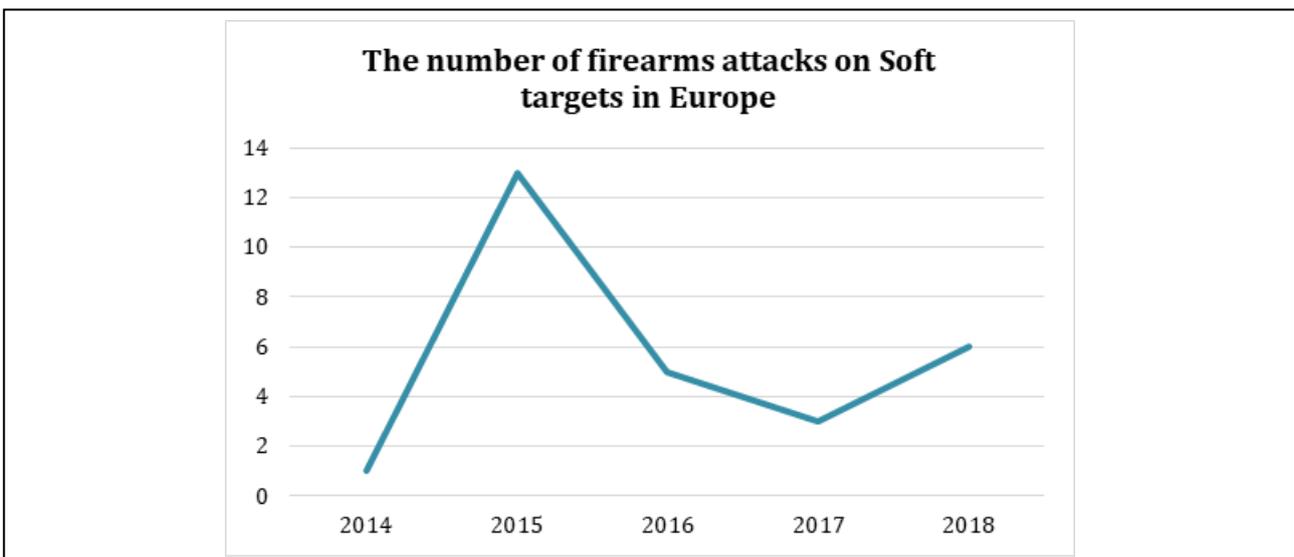


Fig. 4. The number of firearms attacks on Soft targets

The highest number of attacks are in the year of 2015. This situation corresponds with the number of victims (Fig. 5).

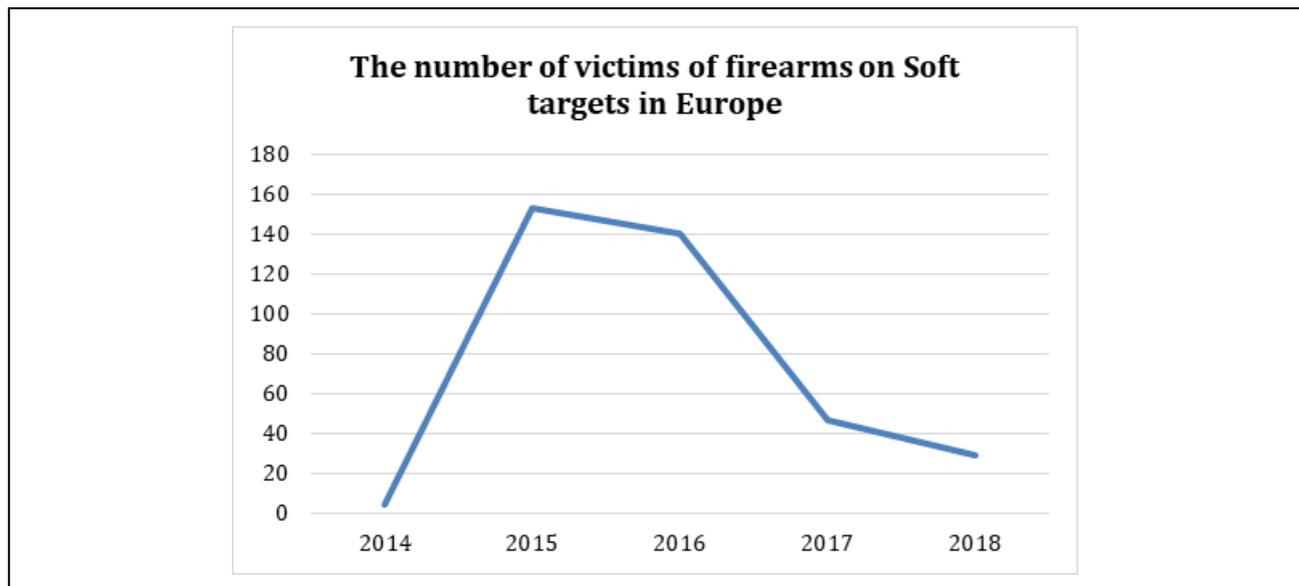


Fig. 5. The number of victims of firearms attacks

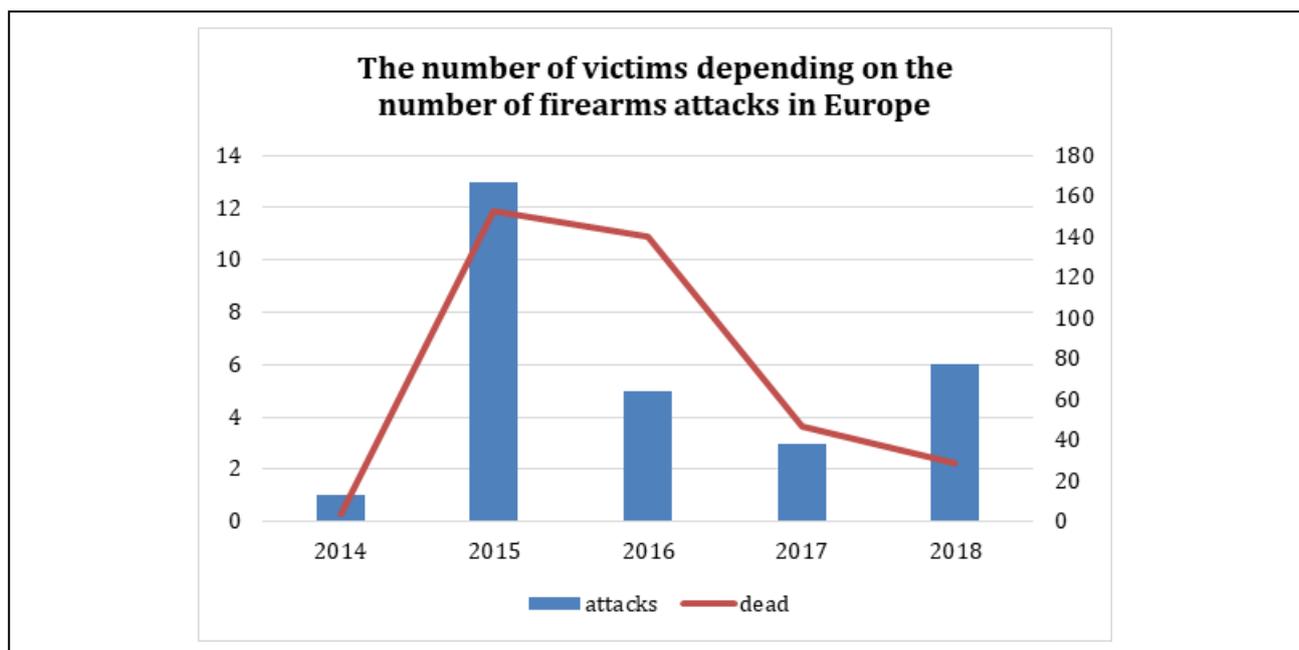


Fig. 6. The number of victims depending on the number of firearms attacks

The number of attacks corresponds to the number of victims. The worst year was 2015.

2.3 Comparison of attack's modus operandi

This part aims to compare the previously describing modus operandi – firearms attacks and vehicle-ramming attacks. We want to find some trends. The results can help us with security measures.

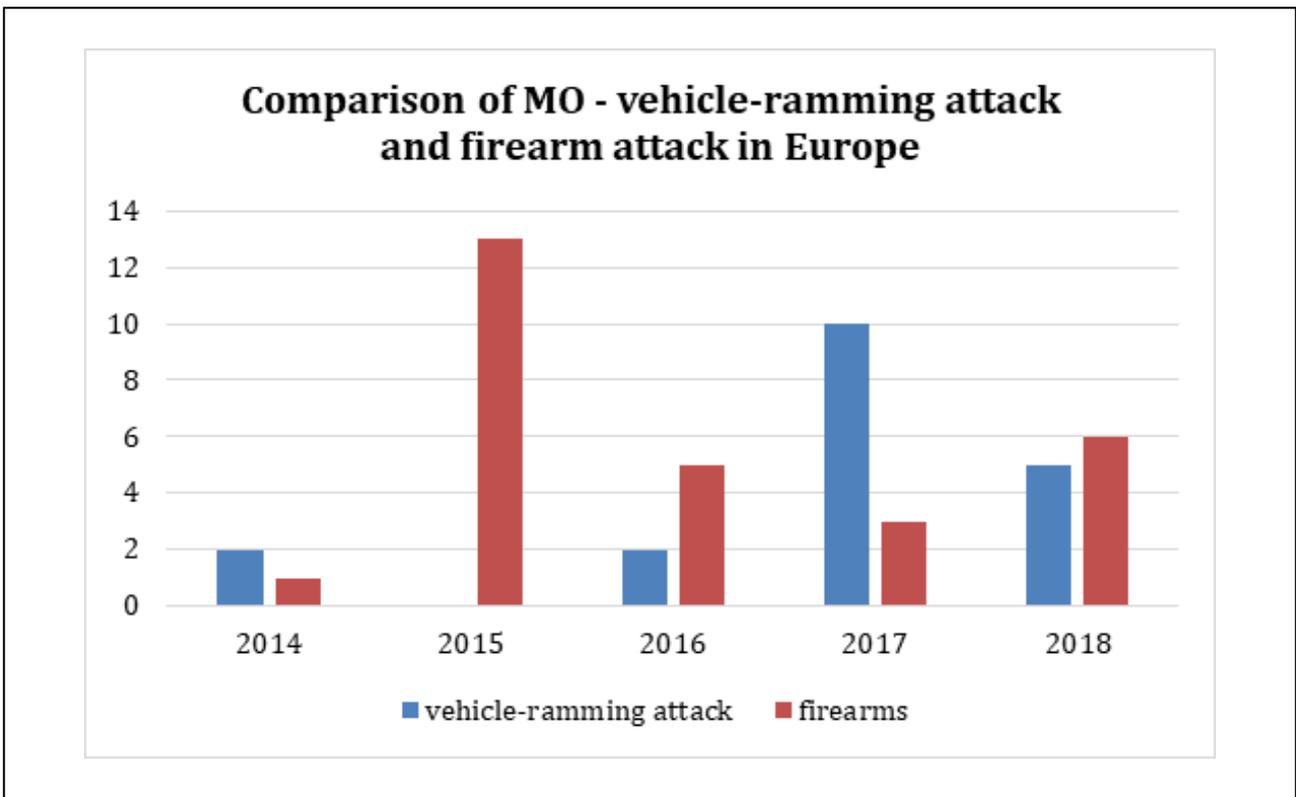


Fig. 7. Comparison of modus operandi – vehicle-ramming attacks of firearms attacks

The firearms attacks are the most often in the year 2015 and the least in the year 2014 and 2016. The vehicle-ramming attacks have the top in the year 2017 and no attack in the year 2015.

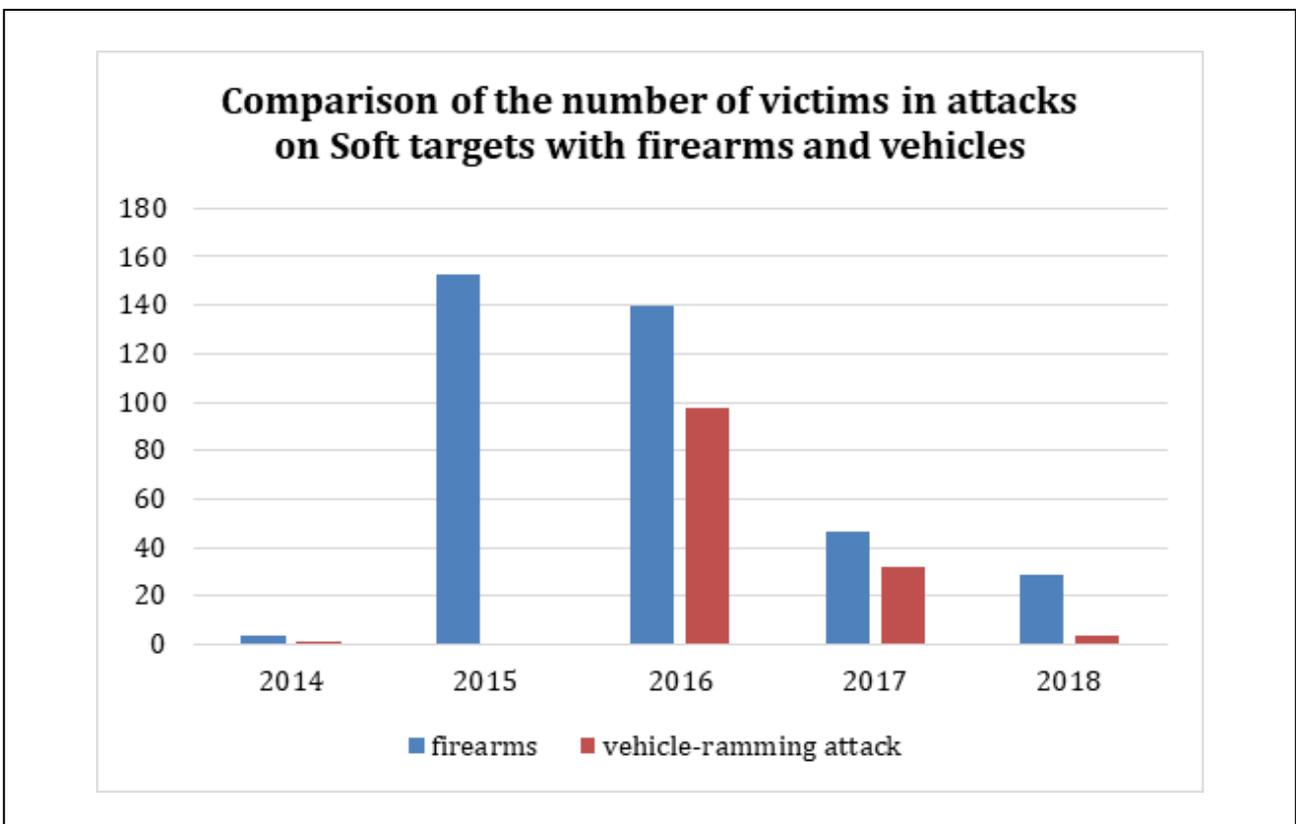


Fig. 8. Comparison of the number of victims with firearms and vehicles

3. Conclusion

The activity of terrorist's in Europe is currently slightly decreasing. However, it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that in attacks on the Soft targets we often encounter attackers mentally unstable or people under the influence of narcotics which do not sympathize with any terrorist group. Vehicle-ramming attacks and firearms attacks are therefore still a very topical problem.

The planning of the security measures is very complicated because we do not know, which modus operandi the attacker will choose, which place and time etc. We try to prepare our objects and people to be careful, to watch their surroundings and to react to a dangerous situation, or on potentially dangerous situation.

Some of the most commonly used safety measures so far include concrete blocks; mobile barriers; fixed/removable/retractable posts; city blocks; barriers designed in the style of concrete pots; stationary vehicles (fire trucks, garbage trucks, etc.); military means.

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