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Afghanistan Casualties: Military Forces and Civilians

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Summary

This report collects statistics from a variety of sources on casualties sustained during Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), which began on October 7, 2001, and is ongoing. OEF actions take place primarily in Afghanistan; however, OEF casualties also include American casualties in Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Guantanamo Bay (Cuba), Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, the Philippines, Seychelles, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Yemen.

Casualty data of U.S. military forces are compiled by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), as tallied from the agency's press releases. Also included are statistics on those wounded but not killed. Statistics may be revised as circumstances are investigated and as records are processed through the U.S. military's casualty system. More frequent updates are available at DOD's website at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/> under "Casualty Update."

A detailed casualty summary of U.S. military forces that includes data on deaths by cause, as well as statistics on soldiers wounded in action, is available at the following DOD website: <http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/castop.htm>.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) does not post casualty statistics of the military forces of partner countries on the ISAF website at <http://www.isaf.nato.int/>. ISAF press releases state that it is ISAF policy to defer to the relevant national authorities to provide notice of any fatality. For this reason, this report uses fatality data of coalition forces as compiled by CNN.com and posted online at <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2004/oef.casualties/index.html>.

Reporting on casualties of Afghans did not begin until 2007, and a variety of entities now report the casualties of civilians and security forces members. The United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) reports casualty data of Afghan civilians semiannually, and the U.S. Department of Defense occasionally includes civilian casualty figures within its reports on Afghanistan. The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, http://www.aihrc.org/2010_eng/, and the Afghan Rights Monitor, <http://www.arm.org.af/>, are local watchdog organizations that periodically publish reports regarding civilian casualties. From July 2009 through April 2010, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) included statistics of casualties of members of the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police in its quarterly reports to Congress. SIGAR has ceased this practice, and there is no other published compilation of these statistics. This report now derives casualty figures of Afghan soldiers and police from the press accounts of the Reuters "Factbox: Security Developments in Afghanistan" series, the Pajhwok Afghan News agency, the Afghan Islamic Press news agency, *Daily Outlook Afghanistan* from Kabul, and the *AfPak Channel Daily Brief*. These services attribute their reported information to officials of the NATO-led ISAF or local Afghan officials. The Afghan news agencies frequently include statements from representatives of the Taliban; however, any figures such spokesmen provide are not included in this report.

Because the estimates of Afghan casualties contained in this report are based on varying time periods and have been created using different methodologies, readers should exercise caution when using them and should look to them as guideposts rather than as statements of fact.

This report will be updated as needed.

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The following tables present data on U.S. military casualties in Operation Enduring Freedom, deaths of coalition partners in Afghanistan, and Afghan casualties, respectively.

Table 1. Operation Enduring Freedom, U.S. Fatalities and Wounded
(as of December 6, 2012, 10 a.m. EDT from October 7, 2001)

	Fatalities in and Around Afghanistan ^a	Fatalities in Other Locations ^b	Total Fatalities ^c	Wounded in Action	
Hostile ^d	1,700	11	1,711		
Nonhostile ^e	338	107	445		
Total	2,038	118	2,156	Total	18,109

Source: U.S. Department of Defense, <http://www.defense.gov/news/casualty.pdf>.

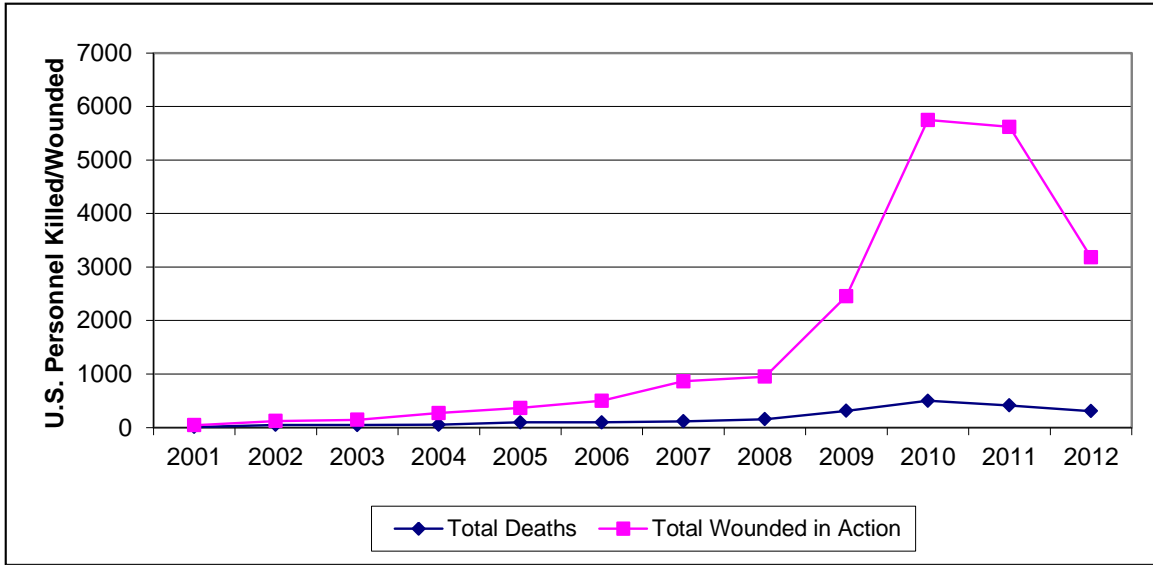
- “Fatalities in and around Afghanistan” includes casualties that occurred in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan.
- “Other locations” includes casualties that occurred in Guantanamo Bay (Cuba), Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, the Philippines, Seychelles, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Yemen.
- Fatalities include three Department of Defense civilian personnel.
- According to the Department of Defense *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, as amended through 31 August 2005, a “hostile casualty” is a victim of a terrorist activity or a casualty as the result of combat or attack by any force against U.S. forces, available at http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/.
- The above-named reference defines a “nonhostile casualty” as a casualty that is not directly attributable to hostile action or terrorist activity, such as casualties due to the elements, self-inflicted wounds, or combat fatigue.

Table 2. American Casualties by Year Through December 6, 2012

Year	Total Deaths	Total Wounded in Action
2001	11	33
2002	49	74
2003	45	99
2004	52	217
2005	98	268
2006	98	403
2007	117	748
2008	155	795
2009	311	2,144
2010	499	5,247
2011	414	5,204
2012 through December 6	306	2,877

Source: U.S. Department of Defense, Statistical Information Analysis Division, https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/report_oeof_month.xhtml, with the addition of three Department of Defense civilian personnel.

Figure I. American Casualties by Year Through December 6, 2012



Source: Created by CRS based on data from U.S. Department of Defense, Statistical Information Analysis Division, https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/report_oef_month.xhtml.

Table 3. Deaths of Coalition Partners in Afghanistan

Country ^a	# of Deaths 2012	Total # of Deaths	Country	# of Deaths 2012	Total # of Deaths	Country	# of Deaths 2012	Total # of Deaths
Albania	1	1	Germany		52	Poland		36
Australia	7	39	Hungary		6	Portugal		2
Belgium		1	Italy	5	49	Romania		19
Canada		158	Jordan		1	South Korea		1
Denmark		42	Latvia		4	Spain	1	35
Estonia		9	Lithuania		1	Sweden		4
Finland		2	Netherlands		25	Turkey	12	14
France	10	88	New Zealand	6	10	United Kingdom	44	438
Georgia	3	12	Norway		10			
Total Non-U.S. Fatalities of the International Security Assistance Force							88	1,059

Source: CNN Casualties in Afghanistan, <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/war.casualties/table.afghanistan.html>; Canada’s Department of National Defence, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/news-nouvelles/fallen-disparus/index-eng.asp>; United Kingdom Ministry of Defense, <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/FactSheets/OperationsInAfghanistanBritishFatalities.htm>; Australia’s Department of Defence, <http://www.defence.gov.au/op/afghanistan/info/personnel.htm>; Ministero della Difesa, http://www.difesa.it/OperazioniMilitari/op_intern_corso/ISAF/Pagine/IncidentieCaduti.aspx; “Factbox: Military Deaths in Afghanistan,” Reuters News, August 12, 2012.

- a. Countries listed indicate the nationality of the military forces, not of the individuals. For example, Fijians who were killed while fighting in French forces are counted as French. Similarly, citizens of other nations who fight in American military forces are counted as Americans.

Table 4. Afghan Casualties

Group	Period	Number of Casualties	Note
Afghan Civilians	January-June 2012 ^a	1,145 killed 1,954 wounded	Civilian casualties dropped 15% in 2012 through the end of June compared with the same period of 2011. International and Pro-Government Forces were responsible for about 10% of the casualties. Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) caused 33% of civilian deaths and injuries in 2012. Targeted killings of pro-government officials by Anti-Government Elements ^b (AGEs) increased 53% compared with the first six months of 2011.
Up to 11,864 civilians were killed in Afghanistan from 2007, when the United Nations began reporting statistics, to the end of 2011.	2011 ^c	3,021 killed 4,507 injured Includes 495 targeted killings of local, provincial, and district government officials and workers.	AGEs killed 2,332 civilians, 77% of all conflict-related civilian deaths. Pro-government forces were responsible for 410 civilian deaths. It is unclear who caused the remaining 279 deaths.
	2010 ^d	2,777 killed 4,343 injured	AGEs were reported responsible for 75% of the civilian deaths and 78% of civilian injuries.
	2009 ^e	2,412 killed 3,566 injured	67% of civilian deaths were attributed to actions of AGEs (78% of these deaths were caused by improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks). 25% of civilian deaths were attributed to pro-government forces. 8% of civilian deaths were the result of cross-fire or improperly detonated ordnance.
	2008 ^f	2,118 killed	
	2007 ^f	1,523 killed	
Afghan National Army and National Directorate of Security Operatives	January-June 2012 ^a	173 killed 327 wounded	As of August 23, 2012, 53 Afghan soldiers and police officers had been killed and 22 others wounded this year by their Afghan colleagues. ^g
	2011 ^a	511 killed 256 wounded	

Group	Period	Number of Casualties	Note
Afghan National, Local, and Border Police	2010	821 killed ^h 775 wounded ⁱ	Information released by General Zahir Azimi, spokesman for the Afghan Defence Ministry.
	2009 ^j	292 killed 859 wounded	
	2008 ^k	259 killed 875 wounded	
	2007 ^k	278 killed 750 wounded	
	January-June 2012 ^a	349 killed 418 wounded	On June 30, 2012, dozens of Taliban fighters reportedly crossed the border from Pakistan and stormed a village in Nuristan province. Four suicide bombers targeted the house of the local police chief. Six policemen and up to eight civilians died in the 12-hour long battle. It was reported that up to 20 Taliban also died.
	2011 ^a	569 killed 552 wounded	
	2010 ^l	1,292 killed 743 wounded	
	2009 ^m	639 killed 1,145 wounded	
	2008 ⁿ	724 killed 1,209 wounded	
	2007 ⁿ	688 killed 1,036 wounded	

Source: Compiled by the Congressional Research Service from noted sources.

- a. United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Afghanistan Mid-Year Report 2012: Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, July 2012, p. 1, http://unama.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=-_vDVBQY1OA%3d&tabid=12254&language=en-US; press reports from Reuters, the Pajhwok Afghan News agency, *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, the Afghan Islamic Press, and the *AfPak Channel Daily Brief*.
- b. In its Mid-Year Report on *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) defines Pro-Government Forces as the Afghan forces that participate in military or paramilitary counter-insurgency operations and are in direct or indirect control of the Government of Afghanistan. These forces include local defense forces, local police, the Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police, National Directorate of Security, and the Afghan Border Police. UNAMA identifies the Anti-Government Elements (AGEs) as non-state groups or individuals currently using arms to oppose the Government of Afghanistan or international military forces. These groups include those identified as the “Taliban” as well as additional groups, such as the Haqqani Network, Hezb-e-Islami, Lashkari Taryyiba, and others.

- c. United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, *Afghanistan: Annual Report 2011, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, February 2012, p. 1-2, 4, http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/UNAMA%20POC%202011%20Report_Final_Feb%202012.pdf.
- d. United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, Human Rights Unit, *Afghanistan: Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, 2010*, March 2011, p. i-1, <http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/human%20rights/March%20PoC%20Annual%20Report%20Final.pdf>.
- e. United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, Human Rights Unit, *Afghanistan: Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, 2009*, January 2010, p. 1, <http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/human%20rights/Protection%20of%20Civilian%202009%20report%20English.pdf>.
- f. United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, Human Rights Unit, *Afghanistan: Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, 2008*, January 2009, p. 12, http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/human%20rights/UNAMA_09february-Annual%20Report_PoC%202008_FINAL_11Feb09.pdf.
- g. “Attacks on Afghan Troops by Colleagues Are Rising, Allies Say,” *The New York Times*, August 23, 2012.
- h. “Bomb Kills Five U.S. Troops in Southern Afghanistan,” Reuters News, August 11, 2011.
- i. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, April 30, 2010, p. 58, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2010-04-30qr.pdf>; response via email from the staff of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, August 9, 2010; and press reports from Reuters and the Pajhwok Afghan News agency.
- j. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2009, p. 55, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2009-07-30qr.pdf>; *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, October 30, 2009, p. 62, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2009-10-30qr.pdf>; and Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, January 30, 2010, p. 64, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2010-01-30qr.pdf>.
- k. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2009, p. 55, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2009-07-30qr.pdf>.
- l. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2009, p. 60, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2009-07-30qr.pdf>; *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, October 30, 2009, p. 66, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2009-10-30qr.pdf>; and Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, January 30, 2010, p. 69, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2010-01-30qr.pdf>.
- m. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2009, p. 60, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2009-07-30qr.pdf>; *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, October 30, 2009, p. 66, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2009-10-30qr.pdf>; and Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, January 30, 2010, p. 69, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2010-01-30qr.pdf>.
- n. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2009, p. 60, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/2009-07-30qr.pdf>.

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