



Afghanistan Casualties: Military Forces and Civilians

Susan G. Chesser
Information Research Specialist

February 3, 2011

Congressional Research Service

7-5700

www.crs.gov

R41084

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 includes 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.af/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. Both services attribute their reported information to officials of the NATO-led ISAF or local Afghan officials. Pajhwok Afghan News frequently concludes its accounts with statements from representatives of the Taliban, however, these figures 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.

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 February 3, 2011, 10 a.m. EST from October 7, 2001

	Fatalities In and Around Afghanistan ^a	Fatalities in Other Locations ^b	Total Fatalities ^c	Wounded in Action	
Hostile ^d	1,126	11	1,137		
Non-Hostile ^e	242	84	326		
Total	1,368	95	1,463	Total	10,264

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

- a. "Fatalities in and around Afghanistan" includes casualties that occurred in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan.
- b. "Other locations" includes casualties that occurred in Guantanamo Bay (Cuba), Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, the Philippines, Seychelles, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Yemen.
- c. Fatalities include two Department of Defense civilian personnel.
- d. 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/.
- e. 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 February 3, 2011

Year	Total Deaths	Total Wounded in Action
2001	11	33
2002	49	74
2003	45	99
2004	52	214
2005	98	267
2006	98	401
2007	117	750
2008	155	793
2009	311	2,144
2010	499	5,182
2011 through February 3	28	307

Source: U.S. Department of Defense, Statistical Information Analysis Division, <http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/oefmonth.pdf>.

Table 3. Deaths of Coalition Partners in Afghanistan

Country	# of Deaths	Country	# of Deaths
Australia	21	Lithuania	1
Belgium	1	Netherlands	24
Canada	155	New Zealand	2
Czech Republic	3	Norway	9
Denmark	40	Poland	25
Estonia	8	Portugal	2
Finland	1	Romania	17
France	52	South Korea	1
Georgia	5	Spain	30
Germany	45	Sweden	4
Hungary	4	Turkey	2
Italy	32	United Kingdom	350
Latvia	4		
Total Non-U.S. Coalition Fatalities		838	

Sources: 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/OperationsFactsheets/OperationsInAfghanistanBritishFatalities.htm>; Australia’s Department of Defence, <http://www.defence.gov.au/op/afghanistan/info/personnel.htm>; “Factbox: Military Deaths in Afghanistan,” Reuters News, January 27, 2010.

Table 4. Afghan Casualties

Group	Period	# of Casualties	Note
Afghan Civilians	January 2011a	74 killed 116 injured	These deaths include a member of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and her family, as well as the deputy governor of Kandahar province. Three attacks by suicide bombers or roadside bombs resulted in 50 deaths.
	January 1, 2010- December 31, 2010b	2,421 killed 3,270 injured	Anti-government elements, which include the Taliban and other individuals or groups who engage in armed conflict with the government of Afghanistan or members of the International Military Forces, were reported responsible for 63% of the civilian deaths. More than 690 civilians died by improvised explosive devices. Pro-government forces caused 21% of the total civilian deaths.

Group	Period	# of Casualties	Note	
Afghan National Army	2009c	2,412 killed 3,566 injured	67% of civilian deaths were attributed to actions of anti-government elements (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.	
	2008d	2,118 killed		
	2007d	1,523 killed		
	January 2011e	3 killed 4 wounded		
	January 1 - December 31, 2010f	806 killed 775 wounded	Information released by General Zahir Azimi, spokesman for the Afghan Defence Ministry.	
	2009h	292 killed 859 wounded		
	2008i	259 killed 875 wounded		
	2007i	278 killed 750 wounded		
	Afghan National Police	January 2011e	7 killed 5 wounded	
		January 1 – December 31, 2010j	1,250 killed 743 wounded	
2009k		639 killed 1,145 wounded		
2008l		724 killed 1,209 wounded		
2007l		688 killed 1,036 wounded		

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

- a. Press reports from Reuters, the Pajhwok Afghan News agency, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, and “Family Vanishes in Attack on Market,” *The New York Times*, January 30, 2011.
- b. “The Civilian Human Cost of the War in 2010,” press release of the Afghanistan Rights Monitor, February 1, 2011, <http://www.arm.org.af/>.
- c. 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>.

- d. 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.
- e. Press reports from Reuters and the Pajhwok Afghan News agency.
- f. "Afghan Army Casualties Increase," Pajhwok Afghan News, December 22, 2010; "More Than 800 Afghan Soldiers Killed This Year, Army Says," Trend News Agency [Azerbaijan], December 22, 2010.
- g. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, April 30, 2010, p. 58, http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/Apr2010/SIGARapril_Lores.pdf; response via e-mail 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.
- h. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2009, p. 55, http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/Jul09/pdf/Report_-_July_2009.pdf; *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, October 30, 2009, p. 62, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/Oct09/pdf/SIGAROct2009Web.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/jan2010/pdf/SIGAR_jan2010.pdf.
- i. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2009, p. 55, http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/Jul09/pdf/Report_-_July_2009.pdf.
- j. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, April 30, 2010, p. 64, http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/Apr2010/SIGARapril_Lores.pdf; response via e-mail 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.
- k. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, July 30, 2009, p. 60, http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/Jul09/pdf/Report_-_July_2009.pdf; *Quarterly Report to the United States Congress*, October 30, 2009, p. 66, <http://www.sigar.mil/pdf/quarterlyreports/Oct09/pdf/SIGAROct2009Web.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/jan2010/pdf/SIGAR_jan2010.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/Jul09/pdf/Report_-_July_2009.pdf.

Author Contact Information

Susan G. Chesser
Information Research Specialist
schesser@crs.loc.gov, 7-9547