



# Afghanistan Casualties: Military Forces and Civilians

**Susan G. Chesser**  
Information Research Specialist

May 18, 2011

**Congressional Research Service**

7-5700

[www.crs.gov](http://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/](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, *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. 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 May 18, 2011, 10 a.m. EDT from October 7, 2001)

	Fatalities In and Around Afghanistan <sup>a</sup>	Fatalities in Other Locations <sup>b</sup>	Total Fatalities <sup>c</sup>	Wounded in Action	
Hostile <sup>d</sup>	1,216	11	1,227		
Non-Hostile <sup>e</sup>	254	88	342		
Total	1,470	99	1,569	Total	11,411

**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/](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 May 18, 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	5,226
2011 through May 18	134	1,410

**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 <sup>a</sup>	# of Deaths	Country	# of Deaths
Australia	23	Lithuania	1
Belgium	1	Netherlands	24
Canada	156	New Zealand	3
Czech Republic	3	Norway	10
Denmark	39	Poland	26
Estonia	8	Portugal	2
Finland	2	Romania	19
France	57	South Korea	1
Georgia	7	Spain	30
Germany	48	Sweden	4
Hungary	4	Turkey	2
Italy	33	United Kingdom	365
Latvia	4		
<b>Total Non-U.S. Coalition Fatalities</b>		<b>872</b>	

**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, May 17, 2011.

- 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	# of Casualties	Note
<b>Afghan Civilians</b>	January-April 2011 <sup>a</sup>	341 killed 618 injured	At least 30 civilians were killed and more than 100 wounded in April during protests against a Florida church burning a Quran.
	2010 <sup>b</sup>	2,777 killed 4,343 injured	Anti-government elements (AGEs), 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 75% of the civilian deaths and 78% of civilian injuries. The number of civilians assassinated by AGEs increased 105%, to 462 persons, compared with civilian assassinations in 2009.

Group	Period	# of Casualties	Note	
<b>Afghan National Army</b>	2009 <sup>c</sup>	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 <sup>d</sup>	2,118 killed		
	2007 <sup>d</sup>	1,523 killed		
	January-April 2011 <sup>e</sup>	66 killed 29 wounded	News sources include the report that, as of March 16, 21 soldiers had been killed in the previous 21 days.	
	2010	806 killed <sup>f</sup>  775 wounded <sup>g</sup>	Information released by General Zahir Azimi, spokesman for the Afghan Defence Ministry.	
	2009 <sup>h</sup>	292 killed  859 wounded		
	2008 <sup>i</sup>	259 killed  875 wounded		
	2007 <sup>i</sup>	278 killed  750 wounded		
	<b>Afghan National Police</b>	January-April 2011 <sup>e</sup>	48 killed 51 wounded	
		2010 <sup>i</sup>	1,250 killed  743 wounded	
2009 <sup>k</sup>		639 killed  1,145 wounded		
2008 <sup>l</sup>		724 killed  1,209 wounded		
2007 <sup>l</sup>		688 killed  1,036 wounded		

**Source:** 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, *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, the *AfPak Channel Daily Brief*, and “Family Vanishes in Attack on Market,” *The New York Times*, January 30, 2011.
- b. 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>.

- 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](http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/human%20rights/UNAMA_09february-Annual%20Report_PoC%202008_FINAL_11Feb09.pdf).
- e. Press reports from Reuters, the Pajhwok Afghan News agency, *Daily Outlook Afghanistan*, and the *AfPak Channel Daily Brief*.
- 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](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](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](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](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](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; "Blast Leaves 2 Afghan Soldiers Dead in Logar," Pajhwok Afghan News, January 8, 2011, 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](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](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](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