



# Afghanistan Casualties: Military Forces and Civilians

**Susan G. Chesser**  
Information Research Specialist

November 16, 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 November 16, 2011, 10 a.m. EDT from October 7, 2001)

	<b>Fatalities in and Around Afghanistan<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Fatalities in Other Locations<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Total Fatalities<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>Wounded in Action</b>	
Hostile <sup>d</sup>	1,440	12	1,452		
Non-Hostile <sup>e</sup>	283	91	374		
Total	1,723	103	1,826	Total	14,837

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

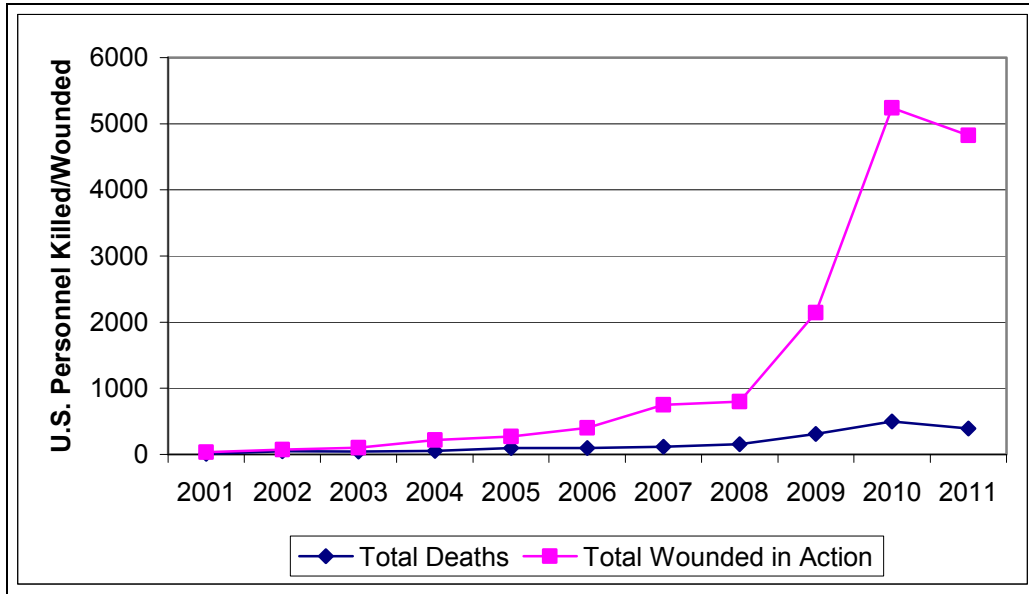
- a. "Fatalities in and around Afghanistan" includes casualties that occurred in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan.
- b. "Other locations" includes casualties that occurred in Guantanamo Bay (Cuba), Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, the Philippines, Seychelles, Sudan, Tajikistan, 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 November 16, 2011**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Deaths</b>	<b>Total Wounded in Action</b>
2001	11	33
2002	49	74
2003	45	99
2004	52	218
2005	98	268
2006	98	400
2007	117	749
2008	155	795
2009	311	2,142
2010	499	5,240
2011 through November 16	391	4,820

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

Figure I. American Casualties by Year Through November 16, 2011



Source: Created by CRS based on data from 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 2011	Total # of Deaths	Country	# of Deaths 2011	Total # of Deaths
Australia	12	32	Latvia		4
Belgium		1	Lithuania		1
Canada	4	158	Netherlands		25
Czech Republic	1	3	New Zealand	2	4
Denmark	3	42	Norway	1	10
Estonia	1	9	Poland	7	30
Finland	1	2	Portugal		2
France	22	76	Romania	2	19
Georgia	3	8	South Korea		1
Germany	7	52	Spain	4	34
Hungary	2	6	Sweden		4
Italy	9	44	Turkey		2
Jordan	1	1	United Kingdom	35	385
<b>Total Non-U.S. Coalition Fatalities</b>				<b>117</b>	<b>955</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, November 15, 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-October 2011 <sup>a</sup>	2,177 killed 2,928 injured	At least 10 civilians were killed and 42 injured when two magnetic bombs attached to a fuel tanker on the road to the U.S. Bagram Airfield exploded.
	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.
	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	
	<b>Afghan National Army</b>	January-October 2011 <sup>e</sup>	283 killed 221 wounded
2010		821 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 and Local Police</b>		January-October 2011 <sup>e</sup>	491 killed 466 wounded

Group	Period	# of Casualties	Note
	2010 <sup>j</sup>	1,292 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. United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, *Afghanistan: Mid-Year Report 2011 Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict*, July 2011, <http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/2011%20Midyear%20POC.pdf>; and *May Deadliest Month for Afghan Civilians*, June 11, 2011, [http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Press%20Statements/June09\\_%202011\\_UNAMA%20POC\\_Eng.pdf](http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Press%20Statements/June09_%202011_UNAMA%20POC_Eng.pdf); United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, *The Situation in Afghanistan and Its Implications for International Peace and Security*, September 21, 2011, <http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/SG%20Reports/110921%20SG%20Report%20on%20Afghanistan%20FINAL.pdf>; and various press reports.
- 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. "Bomb Kills Five U.S. Troops in Southern Afghanistan," Reuters News, August 11, 2011.
- 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 and "Bomb Kills Five U.S. Troops in Southern Afghanistan," Reuters News, August 11, 2011.

- 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](mailto:schesser@crs.loc.gov), 7-9547