

Body Count Report Reveals at Least 1.3 Million Lives Lost to US-Led War on Terror

Although a conservative estimate, physicians' groups say the figure 'is approximately 10 times greater' than typically reported

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The rubble of a home reportedly hit by a U.S.-led coalition airstrike in Kafar Daryan in Syria. (Photo: Sami Ali / AFP/Getty Images)

How do you calculate the human costs of the U.S.-led War on Terror?

On the 12th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, groups of physicians attempted to arrive at a partial answer to this question by counting the dead.

In their joint report— [Body Count: Casualty Figures after 10 Years of the 'War on Terror'](#)—Physicians for Social Responsibility, Physicians for Global Survival, and the Nobel Prize-winning International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War concluded that this number is staggering, with at least 1.3 million lives lost in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan alone since the onset of the war following September 11, 2001.

However, the report notes, this is a conservative estimate, and the total number killed in the three countries “could also be in excess of 2 million, whereas a figure below 1 million is extremely unlikely.”

Furthermore, the researchers do not look at other countries targeted by U.S.-led war, including Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Syria, and beyond.

Even still, the report states the figure “is approximately 10 times greater than that of which the public, experts and decision makers are aware of and propagated by the media and major NGOs.

In Iraq, at least 1 million lives have been lost during and since 2003, a figure that accounts for five percent of the nation’s total population. This does not include deaths among the estimated 3 million Iraqi refugees, many of whom were subject to [dangerous conditions](#) during this past winter.

Furthermore, an estimated 220,000 people have been killed in Afghanistan and 80,000 in Pakistan, note the researchers. The findings [follow](#) a United Nations report which finds that civilian deaths in Afghanistan in 2014 were at their highest levels since the global body began making reports in 2009.

The researchers identified direct and indirect deaths based on UN, government, and NGO

data, as well as individual studies. While the specific number is difficult to peg, researchers say they hope to convey the large-scale of death and loss.

[Speaking with Democracy Now!](#) on Thursday, Dr. Robert Gould, president of the San Francisco Bay Area chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility and co-author of the forward to the report, said:

“[A]t a time when we’re contemplating at this point cutting off our removal of troops from Afghanistan and contemplating new military authorization for increasing our operations in Syria and Iraq, this insulation from the real impacts serves our government in being able to continue to conduct these wars in the name of the war on terror, with not only horrendous cost to the people in the region, but we in the United States suffer from what the budgetary costs of unending war are.”

According to Gould’s forward, co-authored with Dr. Tim Takaro, the public is purposefully kept in the dark about this toll.

“A politically useful option for U.S. political elites has been to attribute the on-going violence to internecine conflicts of various types, including historical religious animosities, as if the resurgence and brutality of such conflicts is unrelated to the destabilization cause by decades of outside military intervention,” they write. “As such, under-reporting of the human toll attributed to ongoing Western interventions, whether deliberate or through self-censorship, has been key to removing the ‘fingerprints’ of responsibility.”

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