



Iraqi Civilian, Police, and Security Forces Casualty Statistics

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Summary

This report presents various governmental and nongovernmental estimates of Iraqi civilian, police, and security forces fatalities. The Iraq government is releasing increasingly regular data on these deaths. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) releases the monthly pattern of Iraqi civilian, police, and security forces deaths, and it regularly updates total U.S. military deaths and wounded statistics from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), as reflected in CRS Report RS21578, *Iraq: U.S. Casualties*, by Susan G. Chesser. Because the estimates contained in this report are based on varying time periods and have been created using differing 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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Iraqi Ministries Data

For several years, the Iraqi Ministry of Defense, Ministry of the Interior, and Ministry of Health have, on an irregular and incomplete basis, reported deaths statistics for Iraqi civilians, police, and security forces. The process of collecting and distributing such data on the deaths of civilians, police, and security forces seems now to have become more standardized, and over the past year, all three ministries have regularly released similar information to the news media, though not in the form of official press releases.¹

Table 1. Iraq Ministries: Civilian and Police/Security Forces Deaths

Date	Civilian	Police/Security Forces
January 2008 ^a	463	78
February 2008 ^b	633	85
March 2008 ^c	923	156
April 2008	N/A	N/A
May 2008 ^d	504	59
June 2008	N/A	N/A
July 2008 ^e	387	78
August 2008 ^f	383	48
September 2008 ^g	359	81
October 2008 ^h	278	40
November 2008 ⁱ	297	43
December 2008 ⁱ	240	76
January 2009 ^k	140	51
February 2009 ^l	211	47
March 2009 ^m	185	67
April 2009 ⁿ	290	65
May 2009 ^o	134	31
June 2009 ^p	370	68
July 2009 ^q	223	52
Totals	6,020	1,125

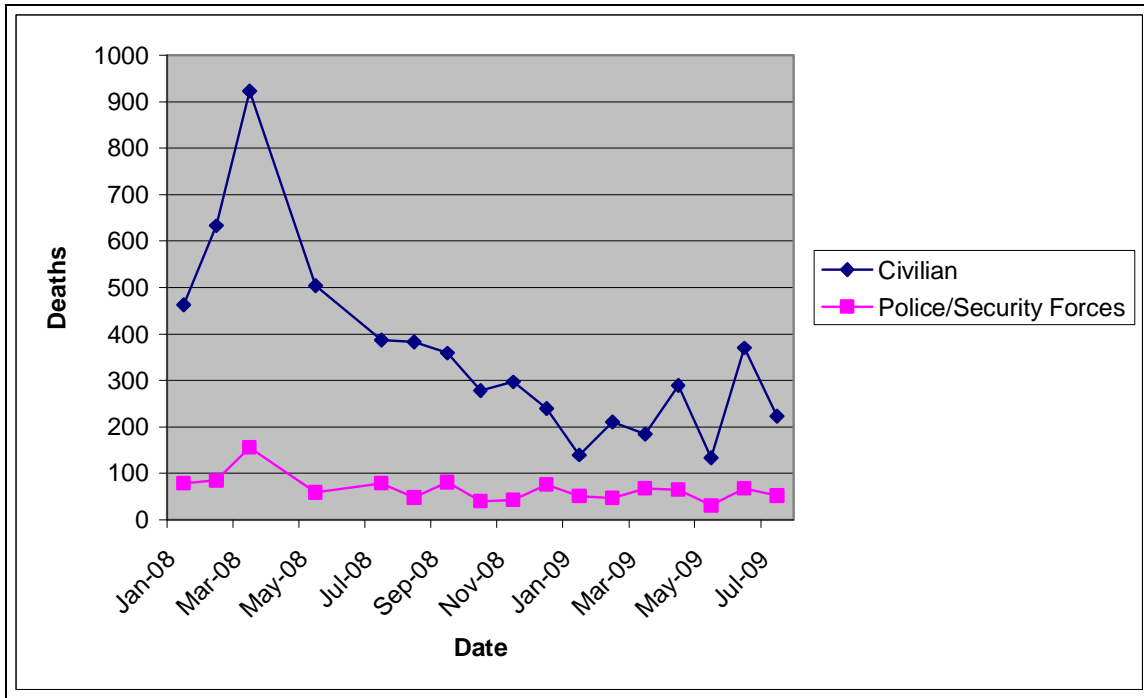
Source: Prepared by CRS using noted sources below.

- "Iraqi civilian deaths down in Jan to 23 month low," *Dow Jones International News*, February 1, 2008.
- Paul Tait, "Iraq Wrapup 3 -Iraq casualties rise again after Qaeda bombs," *Reuters*, March 1, 2008.
- "Iraqi casualties at highest level since mid-2007," *Reuters*, April 1, 2008.
- "Iraq violence dips as U.S. records lowest monthly toll," *Agence France Presse*, June 1, 2008.

¹ News reports continue to differ slightly. For instance, August 2009 articles differed on whether there were 223 or 224 Iraqi civilian deaths in July 2009. Also, data from April and June 2008 are missing.

- e. "Iraq monthly toll down," *Agence France Presse*, September 1, 2008.
- f. Ibid.
- g. "Iraq violence kills 440 in September," *Agence France Presse*, October 1, 2008.
- h. Tina Susman, "World; U.S., Iraqi deaths dip in October," *Los Angeles Times*, November 1, 2008.
- i. "Iraq death toll rises in November," *Agence France Presse*, December 1, 2008.
- j. Salam Faraj, "Iraq hails lowest monthly death toll in nearly three years," *Agence France Presse*, January 1, 2009.
- k. "Iraq death toll 'lowest since invasion,'" *Agence France Presse*, February 1, 2009.
- l. Ammar Karim, "Iraq death toll rises to 258 in February: ministries," *Agence France Presse*, March 1, 2009.
- m. "March violence claims claims 252 Iraqi lives," *Agence France Presse*, April 1, 2009.
- n. "April toll in Iraq the deadliest for seven months," *Agence France Presse*, May 1, 2009.
- o. Sameer N. Yacoub, "May sees dramatic drop in Iraq deaths following bloodiest month of the year; Bombing kills four in Baghdad Monday, signaling capital is far from secure," *Associated Press*, June 2, 2009.
- p. Liz Sly, "June death toll of Iraqis is highest in 11 months; The sharp increase in fatalities could be tied to the U.S. troop withdrawal from cities," *The Los Angeles Times*, July 2, 2009, p. A-24.
- q. "Iraqi death toll down in July: ministries," *Agence France Press*, August 1, 2009.

Figure 1. Iraq Ministries: Civilian and Police/Security Forces Deaths



Source: Various news stories; see "Source" for Table 1, above.

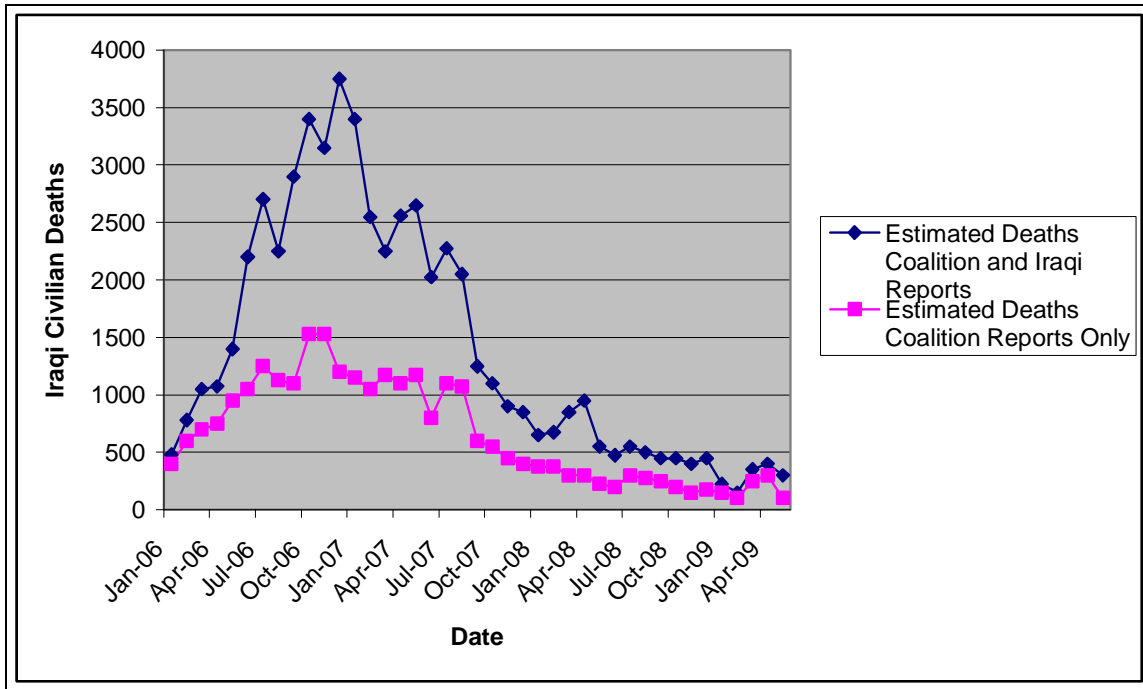
U.S. Department of Defense Data

The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) also tracks Iraqi civilian, police, and security forces deaths and their statistics also show an overall decline in war-related deaths from 2008 to 2009. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "The U.S. military says insurgents are no longer capable of

sustaining prolonged assaults and instead focus on generating bursts of bloodshed. A comparison between the half-yearly figures for this year and last makes it clear that the level of violence is in steep decline. In the first six months of 2008, 4,514 Iraqis died violently; in the first half of this year, that figure fell to 1,657.”²

Readers should note that DOD has not released the specific numbers associated with either **Figure 2**, on Iraqi civilian deaths, or **Figure 3**, on Iraqi Security Forces Deaths, and that instead they are estimated renditions of DOD’s original charts.

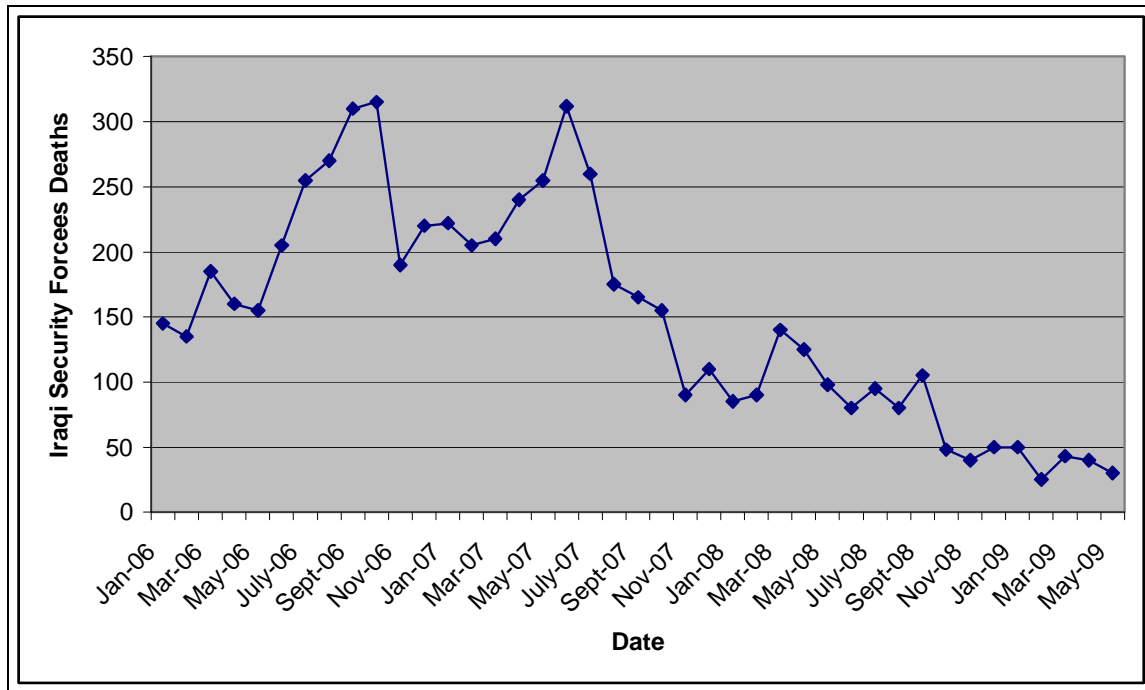
Figure 2. Department of Defense: Iraqi Civilian Deaths, January 2006 - May 2009



Source: CRS rendition of DOD graph, as derived from *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, July 2009, p.24. http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/9010_Report_to_CongressJul09.pdf. Multi-National Corps - Iraq Strategic Plans Assessments Iraq Significant Activities (SIGACTS) III database (Coalition Reports Only) and (Coalition and Iraqi Reports) as of February 2009.

² Liz Sly, “June death toll of Iraqis is highest in 11 months; The sharp increase in fatalities could be tied to the U.S. troop withdrawal from cities,” *The Los Angeles Times*, July 2, 2009, p. A-24.

Figure 3. Department of Defense: Iraq Security Forces Deaths, January 2006 - May 2009



Source: CRS rendition of DOD graph, as derived from *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, July 2009, p.23. http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/9010_Report_to_CongressJul09.pdf.

Government, Academic, Media, and Nonprofit Data

In addition to the government sources, a number of academic, media, and nonprofit groups have released unofficial estimates of Iraqi civilian, police, and security forces deaths. In one study, a team of investigators from the Federal Ministry of Health in Baghdad, the Kurdistan Ministry of Planning, the Kurdistan Ministry of Health, the Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology in Baghdad, and the World Health Organization formed the Iraq Family Health Survey (IFHS) Study Group to research violence-related mortality in Iraq.³ In their nationally representative cluster study, interviewers visited 89.4% of 1,086 household clusters; the household response rate was 96.2%. They concluded that there had been an estimated 151,000 violence-related deaths from March 2003 through June 2006 and that violence was the main cause of death for men between the ages of 15 and 59 years during the first three years after the 2003 invasion. This study did not distinguish different victims of violence, such as civilians versus police or security force members.

The Associated Press has kept a database of Iraqi civilian, police, and security forces dead and wounded since April 2005. According to its database, between April 28, 2005, and August 6, 2009, 38,150 Iraqi civilians and 7,348 Iraqi police and security forces have died.⁴

³ Iraq Family Health Survey Study Group, "Violence-Related Mortality in Iraq from 2002 to 2006," *The New England Journal of Medicine*, January 31, 2008, pp. 484-492.

⁴ CRS discussion with Associated Press, August 6, 2009. They noted that "[t]hese numbers are considered a minimum, (continued...)"

The Iraq Body Count (IBC) bases its online casualty estimates on media reports of casualties, some of which may involve security forces as well as civilians. Using media reports as a base for casualty estimates can entail errors: some deaths may not be reported in the media, while other deaths may be reported more than once. The IBC documents each of the civilian casualties it records with a media source and provides a minimum and a maximum estimate. As of September 15, 2009, the IBC estimated that between 93,096 and 101,596 civilians had died as a result of military action.⁵ In a separate analysis of their data, the IBC also estimated that, between January 2006 and November 2008, 4,884 Iraqi police had been killed.⁶

The Brookings Institution has used modified numbers from the United Nations *Human Rights Report*, the Iraq Body Count, General Petraeus's congressional testimony given on September 10-11, 2007,⁷ and other sources to develop its own composite estimate for Iraqi civilians, police, and security forces who have died by violence. By combining all of these sources by date, the Brookings Institution estimates that between May 2003 and July 16, 2009, 110,578 Iraqi civilians have died and between June 2003 and July 16, 2009, 9,136 Iraqi police and security forces have died.⁸

Finally, the Iraq Coalition Casualty Count (ICCC) is another well-known nonprofit group that tracks Iraqi civilian and Iraqi security forces deaths using an IBC-like method of posting media reports of deaths. ICCC, like IBC, is prone to the kind of errors likely when using media reports for data: some deaths may not be reported in the media, whereas other deaths may be reported more than once. The ICCC estimates that there were 46,058 civilian deaths from March 2005 through August 24, 2009, and 7,893 security forces killed from January 2005 to August 24, 2009.⁹

Table 2 provides Iraqi security forces and police officers casualty estimates from nongovernmental sources, as well as an estimate of deaths using the charts in **Figure 2** and **Figure 3**. These estimates are based on varying time periods and have been created using differing methodologies, and therefore readers should exercise caution when using these statistics.

(...continued)

based on AP reporting. The actual number is likely higher, as many killings go unreported or uncounted. We tally civilian, Iraqi military and Iraqi police deaths each day as reported by police, hospital officials, morgue workers and verifiable witness accounts. The security personnel include Iraqi military, police and police recruits, and bodyguards. Insurgent deaths are not included.”

⁵ Iraq Body Count at <http://www.iraqbodycount.net>. IBC is a nongovernmental organization managed by researchers and volunteers.

⁶ Iraq Body Count at <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/analysis/numbers/surge-2008/>.

⁷ Replicated in the Department of State *Iraq Weekly Status Report*, September 12, 2007, at <http://2001-2009.state.gov/documents/organization/92176.pdf>.

⁸ Brookings Institution, *Iraq Index: Tracking Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq*, July 16, 2009, p. 4, at <http://www.brookings.edu/saban/~media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq%20Index/index.pdf>.

⁹ Iraq Coalition Casualty Count at <http://icasualties.org/Iraq/IraqiDeaths.aspx>. ICCC is a nongovernmental organization managed by researchers and volunteers.

Table 2. Academic, Media, and Nonprofit Iraqi Civilian, Police, and Security Forces Casualty Estimates

Source	Civilians	Police/Security Forces
Iraq Body Count	93,096 – 101,596 ^a March 19, 2003 – September 15, 2009	4,884 ^b (Police only) January 1, 2006 – November 30, 2008
Iraq Coalition Casualty Count ^c	46,058 March, 2005 – August 24, 2009	7,893 (Security Forces only) January 2005 – August 24, 2009
Associated Press ^d	38,150 killed 55,501 wounded April 28, 2005 – August 6, 2009	7,348 killed 8,418 wounded April 28, 2005 – August 6, 2009
Brookings Iraq Index	110,578 ^e June 2003 – July 16, 2009	9,136 ^f June 2003 – July 16, 2009
CRS estimate using the Multi-National Corps - Iraq report, <i>Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, June 2009</i>	57,370 (Coalition and Iraqi Reports) ^g 26,825 (Coalition Reports) January 2006 – May 2009	6,168 ^h (Security Forces only) January 2006 – May 2009
The Iraq Family Health Study (the “WHO study”) ⁱ	151,000 (May include police and/or security forces) March 2003 - June 2006	

Sources: Prepared by CRS using noted sources below.

- a. Iraq Body Count, August 24, 2009, at <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/>.
- b. Iraq Body Count, August 24, 2009, at <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/analysis/numbers/surge-2008/>.
- c. Iraq Coalition Casualties Count, August 24, 2009, at <http://icasualties.org/Iraq/IraqiDeaths.aspx>.
- d. CRS discussion with Associated Press, August 6, 2009. The Associated Press notes: “These numbers are considered a minimum, based on AP reporting. The actual number is likely higher, as many killings go unreported or uncounted. We tally civilian, Iraqi military and Iraqi police deaths each day as reported by police, hospital officials, morgue workers and verifiable witness accounts. The security personnel include Iraqi military, police and police recruits, and bodyguards. Insurgent deaths are not included.”
- e. Brookings Institution, *Iraq Index: Tracking Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq*, July 16, 2009, p. 5, at <http://www.brookings.edu/saban/iraq-index.aspx>.
- f. Brookings Institution, *Iraq Index: Tracking Reconstruction and Security in Post-Saddam Iraq*, July 16, 2009, p. 6, at <http://www.brookings.edu/saban/iraq-index.aspx>.
- g. Derived from *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, June 2009*, p.24. http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/9010_Report_to_CongressJul09.pdf
- h. Derived from *Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq, June 2009*, p.23. http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/9010_Report_to_CongressJul09.pdf. Multi-National Corps - Iraq Strategic Plans Assessments Iraq Significant Activities (SIGACTS) III database (Coalition Reports Only) and (Coalition and Iraqi Reports) as of February 2009.
- i. Iraq Family Health Survey Study Group, “Violence-Related Mortality in Iraq from 2002 to 2006,” *The New England Journal of Medicine*, January 31, 2008, pp. 484-492.

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