

'600 Civilians Killed in U.S. Strikes in Iraq, Syria'

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) – The Pentagon says the U.S.-led coalition airstrikes against purported Daesh targets in Syria and Iraq have killed over 600 civilians since 2014.

The U.S. Department of Defense said in a report that a total of 603 civilian lives had been lost between August 2014 and May 2017, with nearly half of all those deaths occurring in or near the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, the last remaining stronghold of the terrorist group in the Arab country.

The Pentagon's estimate of civilian deaths comes as independent monitors have time and again challenged such reports and revealed that the U.S.-led military campaign has significantly inflicted more civilian casualties.

Airwars, a UK-based non-profit monitoring group, says at least 4,354 civilians have been killed by coalition air strikes in Iraq and Syria during the same period.

The co-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says the 42,234 documented airstrikes in the country have resulted in a minimum estimate of some 7,000 civilians killed by the U.S.-led coalition between 2014 and 2017.



An Iraqi child gazes as he sits for a rest, while fleeing from the Old City of Mosul on July 5, 2017.

In March, Amnesty International accused the coalition of "flagrant violation of international humanitarian law" as it failed to take precautions to prevent a high death toll among civilians in the key Iraqi city of Mosul.

The United States launched a

campaign of airstrikes against Daesh in August 2014 after the terrorist group overran Mosul and parts of Iraq's north and west.

The U.S.-led coalition of 68 nations has been conducting airstrikes against what are said to be the positions of Daesh terrorists inside Syria

since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a UN mandate.

The coalition has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians. It has also been largely incapable of fulfilling its declared aim of destroying Daesh.

Zionist Settler Runs Over, Kills Palestinian Man



This file photo shows a Palestinian Red Crescent Society ambulance in the occupied West Bank.

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – A Palestinian man has reportedly lost his life after a Zionist settler ran him over in the south-central part of the occupied West Bank.

Palestinian security sources said the 37-year-old victim, identified as Omar Ahmad Issa, was struck in the town of al-Khader, located 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) west of

Bethlehem, at around 4 a.m. local time (0100 GMT) on Friday, while riding his motorcycle near a checkpoint leading to the occupied East al-Quds.

The regime's police spokeswoman Luba Samri described the incident as a "road accident" between a private vehicle and a Palestinian motorbike in a statement, noting that Issa was critically injured in the crash and later pronounced dead at the hospital.

There have been scores of "hit and run" incidents targeting Palestinians in different parts of the occupied West Bank, with most of them largely going uninvestigated by the regime's authorities. Some of such events have even resulted in fatalities.

On May 3, an Israeli settler

deliberately ran over an eight-year-old Palestinian child, identified as Laith Yousif Shatat, as the child was standing outside his school in the eastern part of Yatta city, located approximately 8 kilometers south of al-Khalil.

Murad Samir al-Razam, 4, was run over in the center of al-Khalil, situated 30 kilometers south of al-Quds, on April 30. The regime's driver fled the scene after the incident.

The Palestinian child was taken to the Governmental Hospital in al-Khalil to receive medical treatment.

About 600,000 Zionists live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 the regime's occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East al-Quds.

Egyptian Police Kill 2 Men in Shootout in Giza

CAIRO (Reuters) – Security forces killed two men in an exchange of gunfire in Giza, a senior security official told Egypt's state news agency MENA on Saturday.

The official said the men, who were inside an apartment, were fugitive terrorists. They opened fire on security forces as soon as the officers approached to arrest them,

he said. MENA did not specify when the shooting took place.

Egypt's state newspaper al-Ahram said the two men were members of a newly emerged militant group called Hasm, which claimed responsibility for the killing of a homeland security officer outside his home in Qalubiya, a province just north of Cairo, while on his

way to prayers on Friday.

Hasm has claimed several attacks around Cairo targeting judges and policemen since last year.

Egypt faces terrorism led by the Daesh terrorist group in the restive Sinai Peninsula, where hundreds of soldiers and police have been killed since 2013.

The group has also increasingly

carried out attacks in the mainland on security forces and Coptic Christian civilians in recent months, killing around 100 Copts since December.

Other terrorist groups such as Hasm are active in Cairo and other cities where they have targeted security forces, judges and pro-government figures.

Turkish Vice Premier Barred From Visiting Netherlands

ANKARA (Dispatches) – The Netherlands has rejected as "undesirable" a visit by Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Tugrul Turkes to attend an event commemorating the July 2016 failed coup.

"A visit by the Turkish deputy prime minister or any member of the Turkish government is undesirable, given the current situation regarding bilateral relations between our two

countries," the Dutch government said in a statement.

Ankara has said it plans commemoration events in some European cities that have a large ethnic Turkish diaspora.

Turkey witnessed a coup attempt on July 15, 2016, when a faction of the military declared that the government of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was no more in charge of the country. A few hours later, however, the

coup was suppressed. Almost 250 people were killed and nearly 2,200 others wounded in the abortive coup.

Since then, Ankara has been engaged in suppressing the media and opposition groups who were believed to have played a role in the failed putsch. Over 50,000 people have been arrested and 150,000 others sacked or suspended from a wide range of professions, including soldiers, police, teachers,

and public servants, over alleged links with terrorist groups.

Relations between Turkey and Netherlands have deteriorated since March after Dutch authorities banned Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and the country's Family and Social Policy Minister Fatma Betul Sayan Kaya from campaigning among expatriates for Turkey's April 16 constitutional referendum extending Erdogan's power.

G20 ...

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The clashes had blocked U.S. First Lady Melania Trump at her residence on Friday, forcing her to miss a tour of Hamburg harbor, and for G20 organizers to completely alter a program for spouses of visiting leaders.

On Saturday, thousands of anti-riot cops were on standby and helicopters hovered overhead, as some 70,000 people were on the march again, according to organizers.

Trump vs. Putin

Within the summit walls, meetings have also been anything but harmonious. All eyes were also on Trump's diplomatic waltz during the billionaire's first outing to the summit.

His most eagerly awaited encounter was a head-to-head with Russia's strongman President Vladimir Putin -- their first -- which lasted two and a quarter hours on Friday.

A day after Trump slammed Moscow's actions in Ukraine and Syria, the two men had a "robust and lengthy exchange" about allegations of Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. election, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said.

But Tillerson, who was present at the marathon meeting, also said the two alpha-male leaders "connected very quickly" with "very clear positive chemistry". Trump said Saturday that the tete-a-tete was "tremendous".

Further driving a wedge between the UK and the European Union, Trump met Saturday with Prime Minister May and said he was looking forward to a "very powerful" trade deal "very, very quickly".

His comments came despite the EU warning London against negotiating any separate agreement before Britain's divorce from the bloc is complete.

But Trump faced another thorny meeting later, when he was due to hold talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

North Korea's first inter-continental ballistic missile test was expected to top the discussions, with Trump warning Thursday that Pyongyang's military saber-rattling would bear "consequences".

Trump had also said he was considering a "severe" response to its "very, very bad behavior".

Ahead of the talks with Xi, Tillerson said the U.S. would continue to press China to do more to rein in Pyongyang.

"Our engagement is unchanged with China and our expectations are unchanged. We have not given up hope," he added.

Iran ...

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In September 2016, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) dismantled a terrorist group, backed by Saudi Arabia and the United States, in Sistan and Baluchestan.

IRGC forces clashed with several members of the so-called Jaish ul-Adl terror group in Kouhak near the Pakistani border and killed five terrorists.

In June 2016, a police officer and five Jaish ul-Adl members were killed in clashes in the Khash region of Sistan and Baluchestan. A month later, the terrorists killed four Iranian borders guards and fled into neighboring Pakistan.

Muslim ...

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The attack on the supermarket on January 9 came a day after Coulibaly killed a policewoman, and a few days after the assault by other extremists on the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine offices that killed 12 people.

According to investigators, the Tokarev handguns and an assault rifle used by Coulibaly were purchased by a company owned by the wife of a suspected arms trafficker, Claude Hermant.

Hermant, a former mercenary during the wars in former Yugoslavia, claims to have sold them on to another suspected trafficker, identified as Samir L, in a deal aimed at infiltrating a network with the blessing of the French police.

Samir L was one of several people charged in the months following the Hyper Cacher attack for helping Coulibaly obtain the weapons, though all have denied any knowledge of his plans.

Hermant and his wife have been called in twice for questioning in the inquiry, but no charges have been filed.