

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR IRAQ RECONSTRUCTION

SIGIR Special Report Number 2:  
The Human Toll of Reconstruction or  
Stabilization during Iraqi Freedom



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# **SIGIR SPECIAL REPORT NUMBER 2**

**THE HUMAN TOLL OF RECONSTRUCTION OR STABILIZATION  
OPERATIONS DURING OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM**

**Special Report, July 27, 2012**

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# Introduction

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*This report is dedicated to the memory of Paul Converse, a SIGIR auditor who died on March 24, 2008, after being wounded during an indirect fire attack in Baghdad's Green Zone. Five other SIGIR employees were wounded while working in the Green Zone during 2007.*

Since its creation by the Congress in November 2003, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) has produced about 400 reports, including audits, inspections, lessons learned studies, and Quarterly Reports to the Congress. Collectively, these reports comprise a comprehensive account of what the American taxpayers received for the approximately \$60 billion the Congress made available for the reconstruction or stabilization of Iraq. None of SIGIR's previous reports focused on the human cost of the multitudinous efforts to rebuild Iraq's infrastructure, train Iraqi police and security forces, and re-structure Iraq's governmental institutions. This report attempts to close that reporting gap.

Thousands of civilian and military personnel who deployed to Iraq since 2003 devoted their energies to stabilizing and reconstructing the war-torn country. Stories abound of service members and civilians killed while performing duties related to reconstruction or stabilization operations. This second SIGIR Special Report gathers together all available data regarding the human toll of U.S. reconstruction or stabilization efforts during Operation Iraqi Freedom and offers two lessons for consideration.

## Background

SIGIR's second Special Report presents a record of the reconstruction and stabilization-related deaths that occurred in Iraq from May 1, 2003 (the declared end of major combat operations), through August 31, 2010. We did not count deaths from Operation New Dawn, which began on September 1, 2010, and continued through December 15, 2011, when U.S. forces finally withdrew. When SIGIR began this project, Operation New Dawn was still active, so data gathered about that operation would have been incomplete.

### *Defining Reconstruction or Stabilization*

Section 3001(i)(2) of Public Law 108-106 defines reconstruction contracts under SIGIR's purview as:

any major contract or other agreement that is entered into by any department or agency of the United States government that involves the use of amounts appropriated or otherwise made available for the reconstruction of Iraq with any public or private sector entity for any of the following purposes:

- (1) To build or rebuild physical infrastructure of Iraq.
- (2) To establish or reestablish a political or societal institution of Iraq.
- (3) To provide products or services to the people of Iraq.

DoD refers to reconstruction or stabilization missions as “stability operations.” DoD Instruction 3000.05 defines stability operations as “encompassing various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States, in coordination with other instruments of national power, to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential government services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.”

For this report, we counted a casualty as reconstruction- or stabilization-related if:

1. The casualty occurred on a mission that was inherently reconstruction- or stabilization-focused. Examples include U.S. Army Civil Affairs projects, DoD’s program to train Iraqi Security Forces, Iraq Project and Contracting Office projects, and Commander’s Emergency Response Program projects; or
2. The primary mission of the affected party at time of death was specifically related to reconstruction or stabilization. Examples include missions to award microgrants, train Government of Iraq officials, inspect a water treatment plant, escort convoys carrying reconstruction materials, or personnel movements to or from project sites.

We did not count the following as reconstruction- or stabilization-related:

1. Casualties that occurred during combat missions, such as route clearance missions, patrols, raids, ambushes, or other lethal missions normally associated with traditional combat operations.
2. Casualties that occurred during combat support missions, such as resupply missions, local area census-taking, mosque monitoring, or meetings with Iraqis to gain intelligence. (Convoy casualties were counted only if the convoy was specifically identified as carrying reconstruction materials.)
3. Casualties that occurred from accidents.
4. Suicides or homicides.
5. Deaths as a result of natural causes.
6. Casualties that occurred before May 1, 2003 (the declared end of major combat operations in Iraq).

# Reconstruction or Stabilization Casualties

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## Deaths

SIGIR identified a total of 719 people killed while engaged in reconstruction or stabilization activities in Iraq between May 1, 2003, and August 31, 2010. This number includes 318 Americans (U.S. military, federal civilian employees, and U.S. civilian contractors), 111 third-country nationals, 271 Iraqis and 19 of unknown nationality who were working in support of the U.S. reconstruction or stabilization mission during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The actual number of deaths related to reconstruction or stabilization activities is certainly higher than 719. For several reasons, an exact calculation is not possible. First, no agency managed a central database for reconstruction or stabilization casualties. Each U.S. government entity involved in Iraq's reconstruction—the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of State (DoS), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—maintained its own employee casualty database. The Department of Labor (DoL) maintains a database of civilian contractors of all nationalities that were killed in Iraq who worked for or were contracted by U.S.-based companies or were insured through U.S. insurance carriers and notified DoL through the Defense Base Act.

Second, the databases we could access often did not contain enough detail to confirm whether a casualty was stabilization- or reconstruction-related. For example, there were 1,047 military casualties where the type of mission could not be determined.

Finally, there was no central source of information on third-country nationals or Iraqi civilians killed while working on or in support of U.S. projects. Table 1 shows the results of our database review. See Appendix A for more details on SIGIR's methodology.

**Table 1—Reconstruction related deaths in Operation Iraqi Freedom (May 1, 2003 to August 31, 2010)**

|                         | INFRASTRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE | POLICE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT | NATIONAL-LEVEL SECURITY FORCE TRAINING | TOTAL      |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|------------|
| U.S. Military           | 119                           | 97                              | 48                                     | 264        |
| U.S. Civilians          | 35                            | 16                              | 3                                      | 54         |
| Third Country Nationals | 107                           | 4                               |  | 111        |
| Iraqis                  | 240                           | 22                              | 9                                      | 271        |
| Unknown                 | 12                            | 6                               | 1                                      | 19         |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>513</b>                    | <b>145</b>                      | <b>61</b>                              | <b>719</b> |

Americans suffered 44% of the total reconstruction or stabilization-related deaths, including 264 from the Department of Defense (37%) and 54 U.S. federal civilian employees and U.S. civilian contractors (8%).

Iraqis suffered at least 271 deaths while working on U.S.-supervised reconstruction or stabilization efforts (38%).

Third-country nationals incurred 111 casualties (15%). An additional 19 people (3%) were killed whose nation of origin could not be determined (they were either third-country nationals or Iraqis).<sup>1</sup>

Where possible, we have documented the type of project each person was working on at the time of his or her death, organizing the data into three categories: infrastructure and governance, police training, and Iraqi armed forces training.

- The infrastructure and governance category includes all projects that addressed the civil reconstruction of Iraq such as those developing electrical, water, oil, health care, and transportation infrastructure; and those developing Iraq's civil society such as education and human rights. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) was the principal participant in this category, but USAID, DoS, and other federal agencies also played important roles. The category includes DoD's Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) projects.
- The police training category includes all projects and activities undertaken to rebuild Iraq's police force through the recruitment of new police, the creation of new training academies, and the re-training of retained Iraqi police officers. DoD led this effort, supported by civilians retained under a DoS-managed contract.
- The Iraqi armed forces training category includes all projects and activities in support of establishing and training the Iraqi armed forces. DoD had the lead on this effort.

The majority of reconstruction-related casualties occurred in the infrastructure and governance category, which chiefly included projects funded by the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF), the Economic Support Fund, and the CERP. The majority of deaths, amounting to at least 513 personnel (71%), died supporting projects seeking to develop Iraq's infrastructure and civil society. The majority of deaths were Iraqi (240).

The police training category proved very dangerous as well, accounting for 145 casualties (20%). Multiple appropriations funded the programs in this category, including the IRRF, the Iraq Security Forces Fund (ISFF), Army Operations and Maintenance funds, and the State Department's International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) fund. Most casualties in this category involved Department of Defense personnel (97), the agency managing this mission. Sixteen U.S. civilian contractors, twenty-two contracted Iraqis, four third-country nationals, and six others of unknown nationality (all interpreters) were killed while training the Iraqi police.

Finally, the Iraqi armed forces training category had 61 casualties (8%): 48 U.S. military, 3 U.S. civilians, 9 Iraqis (mostly interpreters working for the U.S. military), and 1 person of unknown nationality. The IRRF, the ISFF, and Army Operations and Maintenance funds supported the Iraqi armed forces development and training.

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<sup>1</sup> Percentages add up to more than 100% due to rounding.

## **Wounded**

Combing through various sources, we identified at least 786 people reportedly wounded while performing reconstruction or stabilization-related missions in Iraq. This included 289 U.S. service members, 17 U.S. civilians, 109 third-country nationals, 334 Iraqis and 37 others (nationality undetermined).

Although records provided by USACE, USAID, and the Army—and some open source information—contained death notices, we found no formal recordkeeping system maintained by any agency that provided enough detail to determine what mission a person was performing when he or she was injured. Thus, we could not develop a reliably comprehensive accounting of persons wounded or injured personnel during reconstruction or stabilization operations. As with the total death number, the actual number of wounded or injured is probably much higher than what we found.

## **Kidnappings**

We accounted for at least 198 people kidnapped while working on U.S.-supervised reconstruction or stabilization projects. USACE reported at least 148 Iraqis kidnapped while working on USACE reconstruction projects from May 2006-December 2007. USAID reports identified 42 Iraqis as well as 8 third-country nationals kidnapped while working on USAID projects from 2004-2010. We do not know how many of these kidnap victims were taken simply because of their involvement with U.S. reconstruction efforts or how many were later freed.



# Military Deaths

The United States military suffered a total of 4,409 deaths during Operation Iraqi Freedom, including 3,479 hostile deaths and 930 non-hostile deaths (see Table 2).<sup>2</sup>

**Table 2—Total U.S. Military Casualties in Operation Iraqi Freedom (May 1, 2003 to August 31, 2010)**

| CASUALTY CATEGORIES             | ARMY         | NAVY <sup>a</sup> | MARINES      | AIR FORCE | TOTAL        |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Killed in Action                | 1,918        | 62                | 664          | 29        | 2,673        |
| Died of Wounds <sup>b</sup>     | 610          | 1                 | 187          |           | 798          |
| Died While Missing in Action    | 3            |                   |              |           | 3            |
| Died While Captured or Detained | 4            | 1                 |              |           | 5            |
| <b>Total Hostile Deaths</b>     | <b>2,535</b> | <b>64</b>         | <b>851</b>   | <b>29</b> | <b>3,479</b> |
| Accident                        | 413          | 19                | 121          | 13        | 566          |
| Illness                         | 72           | 9                 | 6            | 5         | 92           |
| Homicide                        | 23           | 4                 | 7            | 2         | 36           |
| Self-inflicted                  | 180          | 4                 | 37           | 2         | 223          |
| Undetermined                    | 9            | 2                 |              |           | 11           |
| Pending <sup>c</sup>            | 1            | 1                 |              |           | 2            |
| <b>Total Non-hostile Deaths</b> | <b>698</b>   | <b>39</b>         | <b>171</b>   | <b>22</b> | <b>930</b>   |
| <b>Total Deaths</b>             | <b>3,233</b> | <b>103</b>        | <b>1,022</b> | <b>51</b> | <b>4,409</b> |

<sup>a</sup> Navy totals include Coast Guard.

<sup>b</sup> Includes died of wounds where wounding occurred in theater and death occurred elsewhere.

<sup>c</sup> Pending means final category to be determined at a later date.

Of the 3,479 hostile deaths, 3,376 were killed after the declared end of major combat operations on May 1, 2003. Of those, SIGIR could determine the missions for 2,359 personnel or about 70%. Of this complement, we identified 264 hostile deaths as having occurred while the deceased was performing a reconstruction or stabilization mission (11%). Table 3 shows the results of our analysis.

<sup>2</sup> Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) began on March 19, 2003, and formally ended on August 31, 2010. The Department of Defense tracks casualties by service and in several categories. These statistics are periodically updated and available at the Statistical Information Analysis Division (SIAD) Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) website: [https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/casualties\\_oif.xhtml](https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/casualties_oif.xhtml). The data in Table 2 is taken from the DMDC website as of July 6, 2012.

**Table 3—U.S. Military Casualties Related to Reconstruction or Stabilization in Operation Iraqi Freedom (May 1, 2003 to August 31, 2010)**

|   | INFRASTRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE | POLICE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT | NATIONAL-LEVEL SECURITY FORCE TRAINING | TOTAL      |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|------------|
| Army  | 113                           | 87                              | 34                                     | 234        |
| USMC  | 2                             | 10                              | 9                                      | 21         |
| Navy  | 4                             |                                 |  | 4          |
| Air Force                                   |                               |                                 | 5                                      | 5          |
| <b>Total DoD Uniformed Killed In Action</b> | <b>119</b>                    | <b>97</b>                       | <b>48</b>                              | <b>264</b> |

### *Army*

Army personnel accounted for 2,492 of the casualties occurring between May 1, 2003, and August 31, 2010. SIGIR was able to determine the missions for 1,840 of these casualties or 74%. We found that 234 were killed while performing duties related to reconstruction or stabilization operations (13%).

Approximately 48% of the Army’s reconstruction or stabilization-related casualties occurred in the infrastructure and governance category. The police training category suffered 37% of the casualties, and the Iraqi armed forces training category accounted for 15%.

Army commissioned officers were more likely than enlisted soldiers to be killed on reconstruction or stabilization missions. Twenty-five percent of all Army officer deaths occurred during these operations. Officers generally played a larger role in reconstruction or stabilization missions. For example, the transition teams that trained the Iraqi police forces and national security forces were more officer-heavy than maneuver unit platoons of similar size.

Table 4 shows the results of our analysis.

**Table 4—Yearly U.S. Army Casualties Related to Reconstruction or Stabilization in Operation Iraqi Freedom (May 1, 2003 to August 31, 2010) by Mission**

| YEAR         | INFRASTRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE | POLICE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT | NATIONAL-LEVEL SECURITY FORCE TRAINING | TOTAL      |
|--------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|------------|
| 2003         | 8                             | 3                               |  | 11         |
| 2004         | 7                             | 2                               | 3                                      | 12         |
| 2005         | 14                            | 18                              | 3                                      | 35         |
| 2006         | 21                            | 12                              | 17                                     | 50         |
| 2007         | 35                            | 25                              | 3                                      | 63         |
| 2008         | 15                            | 12                              | 7                                      | 34         |
| 2009         | 9                             | 12                              | 1                                      | 22         |
| 2010         | 4                             | 3                               |  | 7          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>113</b>                    | <b>87</b>                       | <b>34</b>                              | <b>234</b> |

### ***Marines***

Marines accounted for 795 of the hostile deaths that occurred between May 1, 2003, and August 31, 2010. SIGIR was able to determine the mission for 436 of these casualties, or 55%. Of these 436 deaths, we found that 21 or 5% occurred during reconstruction or stabilization operations.

### ***Navy and Air Force***

The Navy and the Air Force suffered 90 hostile deaths between May 1, 2003, and August 31, 2010. SIGIR was able to determine the mission for 53 of these casualties or 57%. We found that four Navy personnel were killed while working in reconstruction or stabilization operations, while the Air Force suffered five casualties.

# Civilian Deaths

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We defined civilian casualties to include U.S. citizens, third-country nationals, and Iraqi citizens working in support of a reconstruction or stabilization project. As with each death category previously reviewed, civilian death data is incomplete due to weak data management systems. Nevertheless, we were able to calculate that at least 455 civilians were killed by hostile acts while working on reconstruction or stabilization operations in Iraq.

## United States Civilians

SIGIR identified 321 U.S. civilians who died during Operation Iraqi Freedom, including 220 whose mission at time of death we could determine. Of those, SIGIR found that 54 were killed while performing duties related to reconstruction or stabilization projects (25%). Table 5 shows the results of our analysis.

**Table 5—U.S. Civilian Deaths Related to Reconstruction in Operation Iraqi Freedom (May 2003-August 2010)**

|                            | INFRASTRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE | POLICE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT | NATIONAL-LEVEL SECURITY FORCE TRAINING | TOTAL     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|-----------|
| DoD                        | 1                             |                                 |  | 1         |
| DoS*                       | 6                             |                                 |  | 6         |
| United Nations             | 2                             |                                 |  | 2         |
| SIGIR                      | 1                             |                                 |  | 1         |
| USAID                      |                               |                                 |  | 0         |
| Contractors                | 25                            | 16                              | 3                                      | 44        |
| <b>Total U.S. Citizens</b> | <b>35</b>                     | <b>16</b>                       | <b>3</b>                               | <b>54</b> |

\*Includes two civilians who were working for the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA).

## Third-country Nationals

Data on third-country nationals killed in Iraq while working under U.S.-funded contracts is incomplete because of the paucity of information on what third-country nationals may have been working on at time of death. USAID, whose chief mission in Iraq was reconstruction or stabilization, provided us with casualty data from its implementing partners. USACE and Army reports sometimes referenced third-country nationals who were killed. Open-source articles also contained information on third-country nationals killed while working on reconstruction or stabilization projects. From data drawn from these various sources, we identified 111 third-country nationals killed while working on reconstruction or stabilization missions in Iraq.

### *USAID*

USAID identified 24 third-country nationals employed by its implementing partners who were killed. USAID's data categorizes all non-Iraqi employees working for its implementing partners as expatriates, including Americans, but it could not tell us whether any of its reported casualties were Americans. All of USAID's third-country national deaths occurred while conducting infrastructure and governance missions.

### ***U.S. Army Corps of Engineers***

Twenty third-country nationals were killed supporting USACE reconstruction efforts during OIF, including 16 killed while providing security for USACE reconstruction or stabilization projects. In addition, 10 third-country nationals were killed while transporting reconstruction materials on other reconstruction convoys that USACE tracked.

### ***Open-source Information***

From open-source articles, SIGIR identified 57 third-country nationals killed on reconstruction or stabilization missions that were not noted by any other agency.

## **Iraqi Civilians**

There was no central database of Iraqi civilians killed while supporting U.S. reconstruction or stabilization projects. SIGIR identified at least 271 Iraqis who were killed while working on reconstruction or stabilization projects. This included 95 reported by USAID, 91 reported by USACE, 40 other local national contractor deaths noted from previous SIGIR inspections, 30 identified from open-source articles, and 15 identified in official DoD records and significant activity logs.

Many of the Iraqis killed on such reconstruction or stabilization operations served as interpreters. This number does not include Iraqi Security Forces killed while partnering with American transition teams or maneuver units, or “Sons/Daughters of Iraq” security forces funded by CERP.

USACE provided comprehensive casualty data for third-country nationals and Iraqis only from May 2006 through August 2008. USACE also provided other data on some casualties from 2009.

In all likelihood, there were significantly more Iraqi civilian casualties killed while working on U.S.-supervised reconstruction or stabilization efforts than the available data revealed.

## **Civilians Whose Nationality Is Unknown**

SIGIR found 19 instances where the nationality of the civilian fatality could not be determined. For example, a casualty report might refer to a fatality as an interpreter or a driver but not provide any information about the victim’s nationality.

# Lessons for Consideration

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SIGIR identified two lessons for consideration.

1. **Reconstruction or stabilization operations conducted in combat zones present potentially lethal threats to all participants, including military, contractors, U.S. government civilians, third-country nationals, and host country citizens. Planning for such operations must anticipate this threat.**

Reconstruction or stabilization operations are sometimes described as “soft,” “non-kinetic,” or “non-lethal” missions, but when they occur in a combat zone, these characterizations are a misnomer. The human losses suffered in Iraq (and outlined in this report) underscore the point that when such operations are conducted in combat zones, they are dangerous for everyone involved, military and civilian, U.S. and non-U.S. alike. Given the broad risks inherent in such operations, leaders and planners should consider threat mitigation when deciding to conduct reconstruction or stabilization operations missions in combat zones.

2. **Poor casualty data management during reconstruction or stabilization operations obscures the actual human cost of such operations. Reliably integrated databases must be developed and implemented prior to commencing future reconstruction or stabilization operations.**

One measure of the cost of reconstruction or stabilization operations is the number of casualties suffered. Without accurate records, there cannot be a reasonably complete evaluation of the human cost of reconstruction or stabilization efforts. U.S. agencies involved in such missions should develop systems that effectively track all casualty data related to stabilization or reconstruction operations.

## Appendix A—Scope and Methodology

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In conducting this analysis, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) relied primarily on official casualty reports from the military services and agencies involved in reconstruction to determine the number of reconstruction-related deaths during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), from May 1, 2003–August 31, 2010. SIGIR did not include data prior to May 1, 2003, the end of combat operations, or data from Operation New Dawn, which lasted from September 1, 2010, until December 15, 2011. At the time SIGIR began this project, Operation New Dawn was still active, so data gathered about that operation would have been incomplete.

SIGIR contacted the Department of Defense (DoD); the Departments of the Army, Air Force, and Navy; the Department of State (DoS); the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); the Department of Labor (DoL); the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); and several insurance carriers and private companies for casualty information. The Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Operations Integration Center provided access to classified military “Significant Activity” data.

SIGIR focused on the 3,479 hostile deaths and not the 930 non-hostile deaths (those who died because of accident, suicide, or natural causes). Official casualty investigations provided the best information, but in many cases an official investigation was not available (see the section on “Sources” for further explanation). The official casualty investigations that were available noted specifically the mission service members were performing when they were killed. In some cases units conducted multiple missions on the same patrol, of which a reconstruction mission was one.

Based on these definitions, we counted a casualty as a reconstruction or stabilization casualty if:

- the casualty occurred on a job that was inherently reconstruction or stabilization focused.
- the primary mission at the time of death was specifically related to reconstruction or stabilization.

We did not count the following as a reconstruction or stabilization casualty:

- casualties that occurred during combat missions, such as route-clearance missions, patrols, raids, ambushes, or other lethal missions normally associated with traditional combat operations
- casualties that occurred during combat support missions, such as resupply missions, local area census-taking, mosque monitoring, or meetings with Iraqis to gain intelligence (Convoy casualties were counted only if the convoy was noted as specifically carrying reconstruction materials.)
- casualties that occurred from accidents
- suicides and homicides
- deaths as a result of natural causes

- casualties that occurred before May 1, 2003 (the declared end of major combat operations in Iraq)

American maneuver units frequently “partnered” with Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) on combat missions, particularly in the later stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Partnering was encouraged and later made mandatory for all but sensitive missions in order to assist in the development of the ISF and to demonstrate to the Iraqis “what right looks like.” Service members who became casualties while partnered with ISF units were not considered to have died while on a reconstruction-related mission unless the mission itself was reconstruction- or stabilization-related. For example, a soldier assigned to an infantry battalion partnered with an Iraqi Army unit on a reconnaissance mission would not be considered to be involved in a reconstruction-related activity. A soldier partnered with an Iraqi Army unit to attend a school project grand opening would be.

In 2004 the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq (MNSTC-I) was created to develop, train, and assist the ISF. To speed the development of the ISF at lower unit levels (down to battalion level), MNSTC-I formed small “transition teams.” Transition teams were small groups of experienced officers and non-commissioned officers specifically designed to embed with various types of ISF units and provide hands-on assistance. Unlike maneuver units, the transition teams’ primary purpose was development of the ISF. For this reason, transition team members whose deaths were hostile deaths were considered reconstruction- or stabilization-related.

It was possible to reasonably conclude that a service member was *not* performing a reconstruction or stabilization mission by noting the type of unit to which the service member was assigned, the Military Occupational Specialty of the service member, the summary description provided to the public, and/or the date of the casualty. Some examples of casualties we did not count include the following:

- an Air Force non-commissioned officer assigned to a logistics readiness squadron killed while in a long-haul convoy near the Kuwaiti border
- a Navy petty officer assigned to an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) unit
- a soldier assigned to a transportation unit on a logistics convoy not noted as carrying reconstruction materials
- a soldier assigned to a Special Forces team or Ranger battalion

Information from insurance carriers was not detailed enough to determine what mission a contractor was performing when he or she was killed. However, in some cases it was possible to determine the duty the contractor was performing based on the type of contract. For example, a civilian hired to provide food service to American forces would not be considered killed while working on reconstruction. A civilian hired to advise the Iraqi government or build a project would be considered killed while working on a reconstruction mission, unless the person died of natural causes, accident, suicide, or homicide.



## Sources

The various U.S. government agencies involved in Iraq reconstruction, notably DoD, DoS, and USAID, maintain separate casualty databases and statistics. DoL tracks the numbers of contractors of all nationalities killed in Iraq who worked for U.S.-based companies or were insured through U.S. insurance carriers.

SIGIR contacted each of the federal agencies involved in reconstruction or stabilization in Iraq and several others who had potentially useful casualty information. They are summarized below:

**Department of Defense.** DoD tracks casualties by service and classifies them in several categories. These statistics are periodically updated and available at the Statistical Information Analysis Division (SIAD) Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) website:  
[https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/casualties\\_oif.xhtml](https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/pages/casualties_oif.xhtml)

DMDC casualty statistics do not identify the mission an individual was engaged in when he or she was killed. This level of detail is frequently located at the service level, most often in the official casualty investigations maintained at the respective service's human resource commands.

Casualty information from OIF released publicly by DoD included general information such as when and where the death occurred and to what city, state, unit, or agency a service member or civilian belonged. Although casualty details evolved and improved over time, usually the information available publicly did not provide enough detail to determine the mission the person was performing when he or she was killed. "Killed while performing combat duties in Baghdad," for example, was often the only information released.

DoD also provided data from its Synchronized Pre-Deployment and Operational Tracker (SPOT). This data included the names, dates, and locations of deaths and injuries of American contractors serving in Iraq. When used with other information, this list helped to identify American civilians killed performing reconstruction or stabilization missions in Iraq.

**Army.** SIGIR reviewed more than 1,200 official casualty records at the Army Human Resources Command and at Army Central Command (ARCENT). The Army also provided casualty information about 160 federal (mostly DoD contractors) and non-federal civilians who were killed during OIF.

These official records often contained details on the mission a soldier was performing at the time of his or her death. In some cases, individual records provided details on missions during which multiple soldiers and sometimes civilians were killed. For example, an IED that killed two soldiers in one event might be listed under only one name.

Army casualty policy evolved over the course of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Investigations were conducted according to guidance contained in Army Regulation 15-6. These investigations, which are classified, were normally completed by brigade-sized or smaller units. Unlike casualty information that was made public, the investigations provided details about the missions soldiers were performing when they were killed.

Prior to April 2006, casualty investigations were required only for operational accidents or potential friendly fire casualties. On April 7, 2006, the Army required Army Regulation 15-6 investigations for all hostile deaths. These investigations were held at the unit (usually brigade) level.

In December 2009, then-Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I) issued instructions making MNC-I the single repository for all death investigations in Iraq. The order required units to send all such investigations (past, present, and future) to MNC-I. When MNC-I disbanded in December 2009, United States Forces-Iraq (USF-I) became the repository for all Iraq death investigations. All OIF casualty records on file in Iraq were transferred in November 2011, to ARCENT at Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina, shortly before USF-I disbanded and redeployed from Iraq.

Prior to March 26, 2010, Army Human Resources Command at Ft. Knox, Kentucky, received a copy of Army Regulation 15-6 investigations when families of deceased soldiers requested a copy. Since then, Army Human Resources Command also receives a copy of all Army Regulation 15-6 death investigations.

As a result of this evolving policy and the constant rotation in and out of Iraq of brigade-sized units, some official Army casualty investigations were not on file at either Army Human Resources Command or Army Central Command, especially for casualties before 2006.

**Marines.** The U.S. Marine Corps Casualty Section provided a list of Marines killed during OIF and gave SIGIR access to investigations on file at their headquarters in Quantico, Virginia. The Marines investigate hostile deaths differently than the Army. The commander of a Marine killed in combat conducts a “Preliminary Inquiry” as soon as possible after a casualty has occurred. If the commander determines that the cause of death was clearly the result of enemy contact and there was nothing suspicious about the death (such as, for example, suicide or fratricide), the inquiry is considered complete. A very small number of hostile deaths ever received a more rigorous “Command Investigation.” In most cases, a preliminary inquiry does not contain enough detail to determine what specific mission a Marine was conducting when he was killed.

**Navy and Air Force.** The Navy and Air Force provided SIGIR with lists of their OIF casualties containing brief descriptions of the events.

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.** USACE provided SIGIR with information on Iraqis and third-country nationals killed during OIF while providing security for USACE movements and projects. USACE provided daily Situation Reports from May 2006–December 2007 and other casualty reports from 2008 and 2009 that included details of contractor casualties on USACE-supervised projects as well as other reconstruction projects. USACE supervised reconstruction operations centers in Iraq that tracked the movement of all reconstruction logistics convoys, including those supporting non-USACE reconstruction efforts.

In finalizing this report, we considered written comments from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, dated July 20, 2012, on a draft of this report. We addressed these comments as appropriate, and their comments are printed in their entirety in Appendix B.

**Department of State.** The Department of State provided lists of employees and American citizens (non-military) killed in Iraq. The list of American citizens killed during OIF contains

the name, date, location, and usually a brief description of the cause of death. The total number of American civilians killed during OIF came primarily from this list.

**USAID.** USAID provided SIGIR with a chart showing the numbers of killed, wounded, and kidnapped contractors employed by them who were casualties in Iraq from 2004-2010 (this included the first three months of “Operation New Dawn”—October–December, 2010).

**Department of Labor and Insurance Carriers.** DoL maintains information on contractors of all nationalities that were killed or injured in Iraq. This data is submitted to them by insurance carriers that document deaths and lost time due to injuries. DoL provided SIGIR a list of the contractors killed or injured during Operation Iraqi Freedom, but this information does not identify the mission a contractor was on when he or she was killed. Of the dozens of insurance companies who insure contractors, only six reported any Iraqi contractor deaths to the DoL. SIGIR contacted three of the largest insurance carriers who reported deaths, but they did not have the detail necessary to determine what mission a civilian was performing when he or she was killed.

**Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization (JIEDDO).** JIEDDO maintains a database of Significant Activity reports from OIF. These reports identify attacks against Coalition Forces, ISF, or Iraqi civilians, as well as significant missions by Coalition Forces or ISF against insurgents and terrorists. JIEDDO provided SIGIR with the significant activity reports they had on file that discussed fatalities.

Normally just a few paragraphs, significant activity reports do not have the level of detail contained in official casualty investigations. However, they were useful to help determine the missions of the casualties that could not be identified using service official investigations, in particular USMC casualties.

**Open-Source Casualty Sites.** In some cases SIGIR used open-source documents to confirm or deny what a particular person was doing when he or she was killed. Open-source documents were used only if details of a casualty were not available through official investigations or in significant activities files. Obituaries and unit memorials available online provided useful information.

Open-source casualty sites available on the internet such as “icasualties.org” and “iraqbodycount.org” contained less information about military casualties than what was available through official sources. They were, however, useful for providing basic information about civilian casualties and links to other open sources.

**Contractors.** Several of the largest companies that sent civilian contractors to Iraq provided SIGIR with information on casualties they suffered. These included Aegis, ArmorGroup International (G4S), DynCorp International, Erinys, Global Linguistics Solutions, and Kellogg Brown & Root (KBR).

**Third-Country Nationals and Iraqi Civilians.** The Government of Iraq did not track the number of Iraqi civilians killed specifically while working on U.S.-funded or supervised reconstruction or stabilization missions. In some cases official casualty investigations or

significant activity logs noted third-country national and Iraqi civilian casualties who were also killed in attacks that harmed Americans.

**Previous SIGIR Reports.** SIGIR documented cases of violence directed at contractors and Americans in previous inspections and reports that were not reported elsewhere:

- 24 Iraqi construction workers killed while building the Basrah Children's Hospital (SIGIR Report 08-160; one of the 24 was also noted in USACE data)
- Three Iraqi construction workers killed while working on the al-Kharkh Courthouse (SIGIR Report 06-058)
- Three Iraqi workers killed at the Baghdad Municipal Waste Landfill (SIGIR Report 06-067)
- Three Iraqi construction workers killed at the Nassiriyah Water Treatment plant (SIGIR Report 07-116)
- Five Iraqis killed while working on the Fallujah Wastewater Treatment Facility (SIGIR Report 08-144)
- Two Iraqi construction workers killed at the Rabeaa Point of Entry Screening Facility (SIGIR Report 09-172)
- One subcontractor site manager murdered in his office and several others injured while working on the Khan Bani Saad Correctional Facility (SIGIR Report 08-138)

# Appendix B—Management Comments

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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
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CEMP-TAD-RIT

20 JULY 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR)

SUBJECT: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Response to SIGIR Special Report Number 2  
"The Human Toll of Reconstruction and Stabilization During Operation Iraqi Freedom"

1. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) appreciates the opportunity to review the draft report.
2. General and specific comments are provided in the enclosure.
3. My point of contact for these comments is Mr. John Daley (202) 761-5844

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. B. Balocky", with the date "7/20" written to the right.

James B. Balocky, P.E., SES  
Chief, Transatlantic Division  
Regional Integration Team  
Directorate of Military Programs

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Comments on Draft SIGIR Special Report Number 2 “The Human Toll  
of Reconstruction and Stabilization During Operation Iraqi Freedom”**

General Comments:

1. The report mentions that USACE only provided data from May 2006 to Aug 2008, but doesn't reflect that USACE subsequently provided additional data for 2008 and 2009.
2. In a number of reported cases, Iraqi casualties and kidnappings did not occur at project sites. Some occurred while travelling to or from work or at other times. In these cases, it was not always evident that the incident related to the individual's involvement in US reconstruction projects or whether it occurred as a result of general insurgent activity or criminal activity. As a result, the report should add a clarifying statement that not all those killings and kidnappings were necessarily related to the reconstruction activity.

Specific Comments:

Page 5: “USACE reports identify at least 138 Iraqis working on USACE reconstruction projects as kidnap victims from May 2006-December 2007. USAID reports identify another 42 Iraqis kidnapped while working on USAID projects from 2004-2010. It is generally unknown how many of the kidnapping victims were later freed.”

USACE Comment: USACE was not asked for information on the number of kidnapping victims that were freed; however, in numerous cases, USACE reports did include follow-up information on freed victims.

Page 10: “USACE could provide casualty data for third-country nationals and Iraqis only from May, 2006 through August, 2008. Casualty data outside of this period was not provided, but anecdotal evidence suggests that there were significantly more Iraqi civilian casualties killed while working on U.S.-supervised reconstruction and stabilization efforts.”

USACE Comment: USACE provided additional casualty data covering 2008 and 2009 calendar years. This paragraph should be revised to reflect the extended period covered by the data provided.

## Appendix C—Acronyms

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| <b>Acronym</b> | <b>Description</b>                                |
|----------------|---|
| CERP           | Commander's Emergency Response Program            |
| DoD            | Department of Defense                             |
| DoL            | Department of Labor                               |
| DoS            | Department of State                               |
| OIF            | Operation Iraqi Freedom                           |
| SIGIR          | Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction |
| USACE          | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers                      |
| USAID          | U.S. Agency for International Development         |
| USMC           | U.S. Marine Corps                                 |

## **Appendix D—Report Team Members**

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This report was prepared under the direction of Craig Collier, Senior Advisor to the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction.

The following employees also directly contributed to this report:

Christie Jones (SIGIR)

Timothy Reuter (Contractor, Caerus Associates)

Shauna Sweet (Contractor, Caerus Associates)