TRACKING IED HARM

Monitoring improvised explosive device use and why we need the data
Report by
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“IED Attacks in Afghanistan” research conducted by Joanna Wright

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Iain Overton, Robert Perkins, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and all who cooperated with this research.

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The aftermath of an IED attack in Afghanistan (courtesy Joanna Wright)

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INTRODUCTION

The use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) has grown at an alarming rate over the last decade. From 2011-2013 AOAV recorded a 70% global rise in the number of civilians killed or maimed by such terrible things as roadside bombs and suicide attacks. The vast majority of the casualties of IED attacks are civilians, particularly when these weapons are used in populated areas. In 2013, 62% of all IED attacks occurred in populated areas, where 91% of the casualties were civilians.¹

In just three years AOAV recorded an IED attack in 66 countries and territories. While the use of these weapons is a global problem, they are particularly harmful in Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan, where they cause death and destruction on a daily basis.

The use of IEDs has a certain predictable impact on civilians: these weapons devastate families and communities, cause life-changing injuries and create an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty.

Despite this, there is still relatively little data available on the use and impact of IEDs. And yet it is crucial that such data is collected. Not only to help us understand the impact of these weapons, but also to show us how this impact may change depending on the circumstances in which they are used.²

Without data it is virtually impossible to quantify and address the harm caused by IEDs. Without data we are unable to fully realise the needs of victims of IEDs. It was recognised at a Chatham House expert roundtable in September 2014 that more needed to be done on the collection and dissemination of data.

This report aims to highlight what is, and what is not, being done in terms of IED data.

The report is divided into two sections.

In the first, Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) shows who is currently collecting data on the impact of IEDs; explores the limitations and gaps in the current data; and highlights examples of what we believe is good practice in IED data collation.

This is not a comprehensive survey. Rather, the aim of this report is to include all major data collection efforts and focus on those that are freely available. It only considers those organisations currently collecting data, so bodies such as the RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents and International Terrorism: Attributes of Terrorist Events dataset (ITERATE) are not specifically noted in this report.³

Finally, this report investigates a specific example, looking at the data collection efforts in a country plagued by IEDs: Afghanistan.

Our ultimate goal is to show how understanding the scale of the rising problem of IEDs in the world is one vital step towards reducing the harm that they cause, one that cannot continue to be overlooked.
COMPARING THREE YEARS OF EXPLOSIVE VIOLENCE: 2011-2013

IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES: AOAV DATA

+70% INCREASE IN CIVILIANS KILLED & INJURED

2011

2013

2011 17,499 KILLED & INJURED BY IEDS
81% OF THESE CASUALTIES WERE CIVILIANS.

2012 20,917 KILLED & INJURED BY IEDS
85% OF THESE CASUALTIES WERE CIVILIANS.

2013 26,887 KILLED & INJURED BY IEDS

A GLOBAL PROBLEM

66 COUNTRIES & TERRITORIES HAVE REPORTED AT LEAST ONE CIVILIAN CASUALTY FROM IEDS.

DATA: AOAV, based on English-language media reports.

IED ATTACKS IN POPULATED AREAS

91% OF CASUALTIES IN POPULATED AREAS WERE CIVILIANS

42% OF CASUALTIES IN OTHER AREAS WERE CIVILIANS

2011 31% OF ATTACKS OCCURRED IN POPULATED AREAS

2012 58% OF ATTACKS OCCURRED IN POPULATED AREAS

2013 62% OF ATTACKS OCCURRED IN POPULATED AREAS

61% OF CASUALTIES IN POPULATED AREAS WERE CIVILIANS

58% OF CASUALTIES IN OTHER AREAS WERE CIVILIANS

2011

2012

2013

501+ INCIDENTS

101-500 INCIDENTS

51-100 INCIDENTS

11-50 INCIDENTS

6-10 INCIDENTS

2011

2012

2013

2011

2012

2013

62,000 KILLED & INJURED BY IEDS

2012

2013

91,000 KILLED & INJURED BY IEDS

85,000 KILLED & INJURED BY IEDS

81% OF THESE CASUALTIES WERE CIVILIANS.

76% OF THESE CASUALTIES WERE CIVILIANS.

76% OF THESE CASUALTIES WERE CIVILIANS.

62% OF ATTACKS OCCURRED IN POPULATED AREAS

51% OF ATTACKS OCCURRED IN POPULATED AREAS

62% OF ATTACKS OCCURRED IN POPULATED AREAS

91% OF CASUALTIES IN POPULATED AREAS WERE CIVILIANS

81% OF CASUALTIES IN POPULATED AREAS WERE CIVILIANS

85% OF CASUALTIES IN POPULATED AREAS WERE CIVILIANS

91% OF CASUALTIES IN POPULATED AREAS WERE CIVILIANS

58% OF CASUALTIES IN POPULATED AREAS WERE CIVILIANS

62% OF CASUALTIES IN POPULATED AREAS WERE CIVILIANS

58% OF CASUALTIES IN POPULATED AREAS WERE CIVILIANS

62% OF CASUALTIES IN POPULATED AREAS WERE CIVILIANS

66 COUNTRIES & TERRITORIES HAVE REPORTED AT LEAST ONE CIVILIAN CASUALTY FROM IEDS.

DATA: AOAV, based on English-language media reports.
IEDS AND DATA COLLECTION

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have been used for hundreds of years. However, their threat has grown exponentially in the 21st century, as methods and means of warfare have adapted to modern threats such as insurgencies and terrorism. Warfare today rarely means the armies of two or more countries fighting according to the traditional laws of armed conflict. It has grown to involve rebel forces, armed groups, and terrorists, with the majority of armed conflicts now being fought within countries’ borders.

The modern rise of IEDs reflects this shift in warfare. In many countries armed groups have ready access to the materials required to manufacture IEDs which can be put to deadly use anywhere in the world. For example, in Iraq stockpiles of munitions not secured in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion left non-state armed groups with a massive supply of explosives and other materials from which they created IEDs.

The use of IEDs also hugely and disproportionately affect civilians, especially when they are used in populated areas. According to AOAV data, 91% of casualties from IEDs in such areas in 2013 were civilians. In common with all explosive weapons, IEDs affect an area with blast, heat and fragmentation. Their deadly effects kill and maim both civilians and non-civilians alike, without distinction. The use of large car bombs or victim-operated pressure plate IEDs, in a market, crowded street, or residential neighbourhood puts civilians at grave risk of grievous harm.

While a certain amount of information about IEDs is known, more data is required to fully understand their impact globally.

We know that the use of IEDs causes death and destruction, but the exact scale of this devastation is unknown. We know of some particularly harmful

Police and security forces survey the scene after an IED explosion in Afghanistan.
tactics used by armed groups, such as detonating a second IED a short time after an initial attack in order to kill and maim those helping the initial victims, but we do not know where these tactics are most prevalent. We do not fully know how insurgents and armed actors gain access to the materials required to make IEDs. We do not know the full impact that IEDs have on the delivery of humanitarian assistance and aid.

And we do not know, for instance, what their use does to a community and its own sense of fear; why, for instance, people continue to visit a coffee shop struck by two IED attacks in so many months, or how many school journeys are fraught with fear, or families whose livelihoods are destroyed in a blast of blood and shrapnel.\(^7\)

Crucially, for the purposes of this report, it is not fully understood who is doing what when it comes to the collection of data on the use of IED attacks.

**WHY IS IED DATA COLLECTED?**

The current data being collated on IEDs arises from a number of different ambitions.

Commercial companies, who sell their data to clients, generally do so for risk analysis, in order to demonstrate the security of a country or region. The recording of IED attacks plays an important role in providing this information. However the profit motive equates to a lack of general transparency, and it was difficult for AOV - and others - to access such data without incurring high costs.

One industry that demands detailed knowledge of IED incidents is the insurance industry. Some insurance companies have very complex software in order to calculate the risks of terrorist incidents, including IED attacks. Others use third party companies to provide the information. Roger Davies, a leading international specialist in the area of countering IEDs with 27 years of experience in the military, as a businessman and as a strategic adviser and a member of AOV's board, told AOV that a single insurance company can insure 100 million buildings globally against terrorist damage. A company insuring such a vast number of buildings requires data on the use of IEDs in order to fully assess costs. The data required ordinarily includes: what a typical IED is; what range of IEDs are seen; where they are used; why they are used; and how much damage can be caused by an IED.

Then there are security companies and States, as well as organisations, who record data on IEDs in order to develop counter-IED technology to protect people who might be exposed to their effects.\(^8\) The nature of IEDs means that they are very hard to prevent and counter. As much information as is possible to collect about these weapons is needed in order to try to limit their impact on civilians and armed actors.

There are also those organisations that collect data on the use of IEDs in order to determine the humanitarian impact of these weapons. These organisations, both on the ground and through desk-based surveys, record information on IED attacks in order to demonstrate their full impact on armed actors and civilians. These groups are the most accessible and, from AOV's perspective, the most utilitarian of all IED data collecting organisations. In this way they are the focus of this report.

Each of these organisations records data for different reasons, but many do so in order to fully understand and respond to the humanitarian impact of IEDs. From their impact on aid workers to their affect on civilian populations, the availability of data is crucial.

AOAV considered 50 organisations, fully analysing 18 of the most relevant in this report.

**LIMITATIONS**

As will be seen, some common limitations are evident in the collection of data on the use of IEDs. In many cases data collection efforts are fledgling, and very little comprehensive and clear data exists. While this is undeniably due in part to the inherent difficulty of finding information on IED use and recording it in a detailed manner, some common problems are evident.

**Terminology**

The first of these limitations is the problem of terminology. Many organisations only record an
attack if it meets their definition of a ‘terrorist incident.’ This inevitably necessitates a political framing of an incident which is not always useful, the main problem of which surrounds the definition of ‘terrorism.’ There is no one universally-agreed upon definition and so those organisations collecting data on terrorist incidents all have a slightly different definition of what terrorism actually is.

For example, the Global Terrorism Database defines terrorism as “the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.” This is narrower and more strictly defined than others. The Terrorism in Western Europe: Events Data (TWEED), for example, see terrorism as “theoretically a form of violence that uses targets of violence in an indirect way in order to influence third parties.”

These varied definitions not only have the potential to limit the number of incidents which are actually recorded, but they also make it impossible to use their datasets in any sort of comparative way.

Some databases, such as TWEED, only include in their definition of terrorism ‘international’ events. This means that domestic incidents, in which those killed or injured are nationals of the country in which the attack took place, are not included. For instance, two domestic Russian passenger aircraft were brought down by two female suicide bombers on 24 August 2004 in almost identical attacks. According to Roger Davies, since only one of the incidents killed non-Russians, only one of them was included as an ‘international’ terrorist incident for data purposes. Even though the attacks were essentially identical in motive and method, the second incident was not included, highlighting the difficulties caused by a limiting definition or methodology.

The databases recording terrorist incidents often fall foul of a wider problem regarding data on IED incidents: the categorisation of each incident as being caused by an IED specifically.

Organisations such as the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) do not disaggregate their data by weapon type. This means that a manual search is required to determine whether an incident was an IED attack or not. In databases with thousands of records, this would be hugely time-consuming and fraught with the potential for inaccuracies.

Very few casualty counting organisations coding data by weapon type include a data field that
specifies whether an incident was an IED attack or not, or whether the deaths and injuries were caused by an IED specifically, rather than a manufactured explosive weapon like an aircraft bomb or tank shell. Since a bomb can be either manufactured or improvised, the categorisation of an incident as merely a bomb provides very limited information. To give a few examples, the Global Terrorism Database includes IEDs in the field of “explosives / bombs / dynamite”; the World Terror Watch does not distinguish between “bomb” and IED attack; and Iraq Body Count does not use common terms to record the weapon used in the incidents it codes, leading to hundreds of descriptions, many of which could apply to IED attacks. This makes any analysis of IED incidents extremely difficult. The confusion in defining IEDs is not something that simply affects organisations collecting data, it is also matched by a disparity in definitions at the policy level. This has obstructed the collective ability to tackle the problem of IED use.

Any mechanisms for collecting data on IED use should ensure, AOAV believes, that incidents are coded in such a way as to make it clear when they are caused by IED attacks as opposed to more general terms such as ‘bomb’ or ‘explosive’ which could incorporate commercial ordnance used by state forces.

**Language**

A common limitation which has been observed during the course of this research is that of language. Many organisations, including AOAV, use open source material such as media reports in order to collect data on casualties and IED incidents. Many of these media reports are English-language. It is recognised that English-language reports will not capture all global incidents, and that even in a conflict or armed violence situation which is ‘high profile,’ a number of incidents will inevitably be missed and consequently not included in such databases.

Large incidents, and those which are particularly newsworthy, will often be captured by English-language news reports, but smaller incidents resulting in low numbers of casualties may easily fail to be reported internationally. This means that, over time, they are not always reliable in terms of absolute numbers.

**Geographical limitations**

Few organisations record comprehensive global data on the use of IEDs, many having a more narrow geographic focus. As mentioned, some organisations collect global data on terrorist incidents, but there are clear limitations to this data. Some organisations, such as the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) and the European Bomb Data System (EBDS) only collect data for incidents occurring in a specific region, for instance.

Regarding IEDs specifically, the extent and quality of the data varies from region to region, and between countries. There is some significant data available on countries such as Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, which are plagued by violence, due to organisations focusing on these countries. Bodies such as the Iraq Body Count (IBC), the Center for Documentation of Violations in Syria (VDC Syria), and the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), all document incidents in their respective countries. The breadth and detail of this data is not, however, repeated in countries without a specific data collection body. Again this prevents comparative analysis.
ORGANISATION PROFILES

Very few organisations exist which comprehensively record IED incidents and their impact upon civilians. This section will consider the principal data collection bodies and organisations that do this.\(^1\) It is not intended to be a comprehensive list, but an overview of key bodies currently collecting data, or have collected data in the very recent past.

**ACTION ON ARMED VIOLENCE (AOAV)**\(^2\)

**Records**

Deaths and injuries caused by explosive weapon use globally.\(^3\)

**Background**

AOAV began recording those killed and injured by explosive weapons globally in October 2010. UN and government leaders have repeatedly cited the data in order to demonstrate the harm caused by explosive weapons. The database records the number of civilians and armed actors killed and injured in each explosive weapon incident across the world. The type of weapon in each incident is recorded, as is, amongst other things, the location of the incident, whether any women or children were killed or injured, and whether the attack was a suicide attack. As with many datasets in this list, AOAV does not focus solely on IED use.

The aftermath of the Boston 2013 Marathon bombing.

In this instance, the focus is on documenting the harm caused by a wider group of explosive weapons, which also would include the likes of rockets, missiles and other manufactured bombs. In incidents of IED use, the database includes a field allowing an incident to be coded either as a “roadside bomb,” “car bomb,” or more generally as a “non-specific IED” if the weapon in question falls outside of either narrow category. AOAV only records events that have resulted in a death or injury of at least one person, and does not document failed or threatened IED attacks.

AOAV produces an annual Explosive Violence Monitoring Report detailing the impact of explosive weapons on civilians globally.\(^4\) This report provides total figures for recorded civilian deaths per year, and additionally includes an analysis of casualties from specific weapon types, including IEDs. Annual figures of civilian casualties are provided, as are details of those countries which were most impacted. Monthly updates are published throughout the year.

**Methodology**

AOAV has a detailed and publicly-available methodology. AOAV gathers information from English-language news sources on incidents of explosive violence with at least one reported casualty.\(^5\) AOAV uses an RSS reader to scan Google news for key terms which relate to explosive weapon use. The data is manually recorded and analysed.
Limitations
The AOAV data is not available to the public to download, although it is provided to those who request it and have a genuine research interest in the data.

AOAV acknowledges the limitations in their methodology regarding using only English-language news sources: “AOAV does not attempt to comprehensively capture all incidents of explosive violence around the world, instead this data is intended to serve as a useful indicator of the scale and pattern of violence.”

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM RESEARCH (ICPVTR)

Records
Current and emerging terrorist threats, focusing on the Asia-Pacific region.

Background
The ICPVTR has a Terrorism Database called the Global Pathfinder, a “one-stop repository for information on the current and emerging terrorist threat.” The database contains profiles of terrorist groups, terrorist and counter-terrorist incidents, as well as things like terrorist training camps.

Its purpose is to assist policy-makers, practitioners, private businesses, as well as academic and research institutes dealing with terrorism. A representative from the Center told AOAV that: “the analyses and data will allow you to stay ahead of and respond to the threat of political violence and terrorism.”

Methodology
A representative from the ICPVTR told AOAV that principally the data was drawn from open sources.

Limitations
The database is available only through subscription. The subscription fee is US$6,000 per subscription cycle of 6 months. A free trial is not available, so AOAV could not assess the data itself.

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR COUNTER-TERRORISM

Records
Global terrorist attacks, terrorist organisations and activists in addition to statistical reports.

Background
The ICT was founded in 1996. Its ‘Incidents and Activists Database’ is a comprehensive survey of open sources of intelligence, and is “one of the most all-encompassing non-governmental resources on terrorist incidents in the world.”

The database has recorded over 33,000 terrorist incidents since 1975, including information on successful terrorist attacks, foiled attacks, and counter-terror operations. It also includes background and follow-up information.

A monthly report is published, providing a summary and analysis of terrorist attacks and counter-terrorism operations, and an annual report is released.

Relevant to this report, the ICT includes information on suicide attacks and bombings, including IED attacks. The aim of the report, as stated by the ICT, is to identify patterns and trends of worldwide terrorist activity, which includes the scale and impact of IEDs. The report includes details of casualty figures, perpetrators, targets, organisations associated with each attack, sources of funding, and weapons used.
ICT’s global framing is broken down into regions and countries, and focuses on the most significant incidents. The ICT is an academic institute and relies solely on private donations and revenue from events, projects and programs.

Methodology
The ICT reports do not mention a particular methodology, except for stating that they use open sources. In the reports themselves, incidents are referenced to news reports, but without hyperlinks. For example, an incident may be coded as: “BBC, “British pair who travelled to Syria admit terror charges”, July 8, 2014”.

Limitations
The data is reported in annual and monthly pdf reports, and no public database is available. This means that the data is not particularly searchable. While the reports include information regarding weapon types used in each attack, there is no way to search for results involving IEDs. Manually reviewing each incident would be required.

The reports only record those incidents defined as ‘terrorist.’ This excludes those attacks deemed not to fall under the definition of terrorism.

The ICT itself acknowledges that it is an incomplete database, stating in its 2013 report that “it should be noted that… the ICT database team tends to cover only significant attacks in ‘hotspot areas’, such as Iraq and Syria, and major incidents with high casualty figures.”

GLOBAL TERRORISM DATABASE (GTD)

Records
Data on global domestic and international terrorist incidents from 1970 to 2013, with annual reports planned for the future.

Background
The GTD was established in 2001, when the University of Maryland obtained a database of terrorist incidents between 1970 and 1997 from the Pinkerton Global Intelligence Services (PGIS). The PGIS database identified terrorism incidents from wire services, government reports, and major international newspapers. Its purpose was to assess the risk of terrorism for its clients.

Initially, those at the University of Maryland digitalised the existing data, but in 2006 they were given funding from the Human Factors Division of the Department of Homeland Security to extend the GTD beyond 1997. It is currently maintained by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland. The data is used by other organisations, such as the Institute for Economics and Peace, and provides the data background for reports such as the Global Terrorism Index.

The data is available online and to download. It is searchable in a number of fields including date, country, attack type, target type, weapon type, casualties, fatalities, and injuries. Regarding weapon type, fields include biological, chemical, firearms, and explosives / bombs / dynamite. IEDs are included in the explosives / bombs / dynamite field, but are not specifically coded on the database, however incidents can be searched in a separate field for detonation method like ‘pressure trigger’ and ‘remote trigger.’

On the website ‘IED’ can be searched, returning over 920 incidents. The entire database contains over 125,000 incidents.

This IED in Baghdad destroyed 20 cars, causing as many as 30 casualties in 2006.
Methodology

Open sources are used to compile the database, including those found through Lexis-Nexis and Opensource.gov. GTD claims that 25 to 35 data collectors, who are fluent in six languages, typically find 10,000 potential incidents each day. Relevant incidents are then included in the database.

Limitations

The major problem with the GTD is that it has used four different methodologies for data collection. Only in 2011 did the University of Maryland itself begin collecting the data, at which point it changed its methodology and standards. This means that the data is inappropriate for the analysis of terrorist trends, including IED incidents, over time. The GTD does state as much, but the data continues to be used by organisations and academics to analyse terrorism trends. GTD data is used widely by the media and by policymakers, and it has been argued that the use of this data may "become the basis for policy decisions," even though it is flawed.

Regarding IEDs, as the database does not code IEDs as a separate weapon type, it is difficult to use the data to consider any trends in IED use. The database also only includes those incidents which meet its definition of terrorism, meaning it has limited utility for global analysis.

EUROPEAN STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY CENTER (ESISC), WORLD TERROR WATCH (WTW)

Records

Alerts and analysis of the threats posed globally by international organised violence, whether linked to terrorism, organised crime, maritime piracy, social unrest or insurgencies.

Background

The World Terror Watch is a paid subscription service which produces customised reports, analysis, and daily, weekly, or monthly briefings responding to the needs of each client.

Subscribing to the full WTW gives clients access to:

- Real time email alerts. Between 5 December 2014 and 21 December 2014, AOAV received over 640 e-mail alerts.
- Access to an online database containing thousands of incident reports, including details of those killed and injured in each incident
- Situational briefings delivered by email analysing the most important security-related events of the week
- A Q&A service that provides answers to specific questions in 12 to 24 hours

They offer a 15 day free trial subscription, which gives access to the database. The database can be searched for the following fields: date; keywords; country; modus operandi; nature; perpetrator; and incident type. The results are
mapped and colour coded by incident. Incidents can be categorised as: an ambush; arrests; bomb or grenade; military action; riots and civil unrest; statement; other.

Each incident can be expanded, with a significant amount of data available for each, including the number of those who were killed or wounded.

Methodology
WTW told AOAV that they have a multilingual team of analysts who search for information on hundreds of websites and social media. This information is then verified and entered into the database. The WTW currently has the following language capabilities: English, French, Spanish, Italian, Arabic, Russian, Azeri and Turkish.

Limitations
The database cannot be downloaded, and in filtering the data on the website they make no distinction between ‘bomb’ and ‘IED’. The database can be searched for ‘IED’ and if the description contains the word IED then the result will be shown.

There is a high cost to this database that is a significant barrier to its public utility. The cost varies from EURO 360 per year for access to information on one region of the world for one user, accessing only the database or receiving a weekly briefing, to EURO 30,000 for access to global data, a subscription to email alerts, weekly briefings, unlimited users, and unlimited Q&As per month.

INSECURITY INSIGHTS, SECURITY IN NUMBERS DATABASE (SIND)

Records
Incidents which impact upon the delivery of aid globally.

Background
Insecurity Insights, based in Geneva, was established by Nathan Taback, Christina Wille and Robin Coupland in 2008. The overall mission of Insecurity Insights is to generate data on the impact of armed violence and insecurity with an aim of developing a model which enables the predication of violence, and policies to prevent this. This would include, but is not limited, to the impact of IEDs.

IEDs found in Iraq in 2005.
Insecurity Insights runs the Security in Numbers Database. This database records incidents which affect aid workers and the delivery of aid. Wille told AOV that an incident does not have to kill or injure an aid worker in order to be included in the database, the incident must however, impact upon the delivery of aid. Deaths, injuries and damage to organisations’ property are recorded.

Methodology
Wille told AOV that the recording methodology includes both open-source and information provided to them by humanitarian organisations. In terms of the open source data, they subscribe to news providers with a specific humanitarian outlet, such as Reuters and Relief Web, receiving daily humanitarian alerts. These alerts are then manually analysed, and any relevant incident is recorded in the database.

Secondly Insecurity Insights works with humanitarian agencies in the field. These organisations confidentially provide Insecurity insights with information about any incidents which have impacted their delivery of aid. These incidents are then inserted into the SIN. The incidents reported by the agencies themselves are very rarely captured by open-source news reports. The incidents reported by the agencies tend to “describe how even smaller events really impact on [organisations’] ability to work.” Organisations providing data to be included in the SIN are provided with access to the database.

Limitations
Regarding the impact of IEDs specifically, the database does not disaggregate data fully. Wille told AOV that while they have the category of IED in their database, if any real analysis was to be done on IED attacks specifically, then the data would need to be looked at again in order to ensure that the data was coded accurately: “there may be a certain number of events that could be additionally classified if someone with a bit more specific case knowledge would look at it.”

The majority of the open source data is English language news stories, with some French. Wille told AOV that it is difficult to get Spanish sources, and therefore Latin American is under-represented in the database. She estimated that 80% of open sources are English language, with 19% being French and the final 1% being other languages.

The database is not available to the public, so it is difficult to analyse its content and utility.

CHICAGO PROJECT ON SECURITY AND TERRORISM, SUICIDE ATTACK DATABASE (CPOST)

Records
A complete list of suicide attacks around the world since 1982.

Background
The Suicide Attack Database is run by the Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism, an international security affairs research institute based at the University of Chicago. This freely available database is “the best and most comprehensive suicide attack database available.”

It was created post-9/11, when, as Keven Ruby, a researcher for CPOST told AOV, “there was a general realisation that there was not a very good understanding of suicide terrorism or suicide attacks.”

Established in 2004, the database comprises of a complete list of suicide attacks since 1982. The entire database is freely available to the public, searchable by a number of fields, and downloadable (either in full or part). This enables users themselves to review and analyse the data, making it a useful tool for researchers.

In order to be included on the database, an attack must meet two criteria:

1. At least one attacker must kill him or herself to kill others;

2. The suicide attack must be verified by at least two independent sources.

Failed and possible attacks are not included in the database.
From 1982 to August 2014, the database contained a total of 4,031 attacks in over 40 countries.

The database is searchable online by the following fields: year; location; group; campaign; target type; weapon; and gender. C-Post does not explicitly define a suicide attack by the weapon used (i.e. whether it involved an IED). However all the incidents in the dataset include explosive devices. Within the ‘weapon’ field, it can be searched by airplane, belt bomb, car bomb, and unspecified. The database is regularly updated, and is suitable for on-going analysis.

Targets are coded as security, political, and civilian. This is useful in analysing the impact of suicide attacks on the community, and specifically their impact on civilians.

Sources
Primarily CPOST uses open-source news websites and archives such as Lexis Nexis and OpenSource.gov. Such sources tend to provide information on the target of an attack, the weapon used, and details of casualties. CPOST also uses militant websites, martyr videos, and social media to find claims of attacks and any information not contained in the media.

Limitations
The Suicide Attack Database only records those IED incidents involving a suicide component. This is a relatively small percentage of all IED incidents: AOA data from 2013 found that just under a fifth of IED incidents globally were reported to involve suicide attacks. While the database shows important trends in the use of suicide IEDs, its utility is limited to this.

To be included in the database, an incident must be independently verified by two sources which are available to the public. While this increases the reliability of the database, incidents which are only reported by one source will not be included.

SOUTH ASIA TERRORISM PORTAL (SATP)

Records
Terrorist events in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Background
The SATP is “an endeavor to achieve an understanding of the world of terror, in order to stop it.” The SATP was established by the Institute for Conflict Management, a non-profit set up in 1997 in New Delhi. It records information on terrorist incidents, and has a daily terrorism update. This update includes where possible, for each incident, names of casualties and how they were killed or injured, including if the cause was an IED.

The SATP also publishes the South Asia intelligence review, a weekly assessment of terrorist incidents.

Limitations
The data cannot be downloaded, so it is difficult to fully analyse. The data cannot be searched by weapon, and incidents are not specifically coded as being caused by IEDs, so it is of limited utility.

ARMED CONFLICT LOCATION AND EVENT DATA PROJECT (ACLED)

Records
Incidents of political violence in developing states, with on-going data collection focused on Africa only.

Background
ACLED claims to be the “most comprehensive public collection of political violence data for developing states.” It contains information on the specific dates and locations of political violence, the types of event, the groups involved, fatalities and changes in territorial control.

The database contains historic data from 1997, and is updated on a real-time basis.
Over 80,000 incidents had been recorded as of early 2014. The purpose of the project is that the “data can be used for medium- and long-term analysis and mapping of political violence across developing countries through use of historical data from 1997, as well as informing humanitarian and development work in crisis and conflict-affected contexts through real-time data updates and reports.”

The database can be downloaded for free by the public.

The database contains fields such as date, time, event type and the number of fatalities. IED incidents are captured by the database, but the type of weapon used in an incident is not specifically noted.

**Methodology**

ACLED uses three sources:

1. Local, regional, national and continental news media is reviewed daily;
2. NGO reports are used to supplement media reporting;
3. Africa-focused news reports and analyses supplement daily media reporting.

Every ACLED incident requires at least one source, and the source is contained in the database. While the link to the source is not included, the publication details are, enabling the user to find the original source. Caithriona Dowd, Senior Researcher at ACLED, told AOAV that “for many events, a combination of sources is reviewed for information on a single event, with the intention of triangulating data from a variety of sources.” The data is collected by individual researchers, and inputted into the database manually.

**Limitations**
The ACLED data is not coded by weapon type. The database is extremely comprehensive, but it is difficult to search it by incident caused by IEDs. The only way to do this is to manually search through the ‘notes’ field, and identify individual incidents which have been caused by IEDs. With a database containing over 80,000 incidents, this is time-consuming and inefficient.

**IRAQ BODY COUNT (IBC)**

**Records**

Civilian deaths in Iraq since the 2003 invasion, and a separate running total which includes combatants.

**Background**

IBC was founded in January 2003 by volunteers from the UK and USA who “felt responsibility to ensure that the human consequences of military intervention in Iraq were not neglected.”

The database includes deaths caused by US-led coalition forces and paramilitary or criminal attacks by others. At a minimum, each incident recorded includes the number of people killed, where, and when. However, the data can be much more extensive, including details of the following:
As much detail as possible is recorded in a standard format, which also ensures that double counting does not occur. The database can record a range of deaths, with the highest and lowest number of deaths published by at least two independent sources being recorded.

The database is free and able to be downloaded by the public. It contains 18 variables, including weapon type, and is relatively easily searched. IBC also releases its distinct original press and media sources to “bona-fide enquirers for research and verification purposes.”

Methodology
IBC uses English language media reports of violent events and bodies being found as the primary sources for their data, although the reports do not always originate in English. These media reports are supplemented by the “review and integration” of hospital, morgue, NGO and official figures. All incidents must be reported by a minimum of two independent sources. Where this is not possible, the incident will be marked as ‘provisional.’

Limitations
For the purposes of this survey, the principal limitation is found in the coding of the weapon used in each incident. There appears to be no common terms used by those entering incidents into the database, which makes it extremely difficult to search the database for incidents which involved an IED. For example, under ‘weapons,’ one can find a myriad of descriptions, including: “a car packed with explosives,” “car bomb,” “roadside bomb,” “bomb in cart,” “bomb in cart near café.” This makes any analysis of the use of IEDs in Iraq very difficult, if not impossible.

SYRIAN OBSERVATORY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (SOHR)

Records
Daily and total deaths of civilians, protesters and armed actors in Syria since the beginning of the uprising in March 2011.

Background
The SOHR was established in May 2006 in order initially to raise awareness of human rights and freedom of speech violations in Syria. Rami Abdelrahman, a Syrian national who now lives in Coventry, England, runs it, and the organisation is not associated or linked with any political body.

In March 2011 the group began counting deaths from the Syrian uprising and conflict, including those caused by IEDs. The numbers of deaths recorded by SOHR have been regularly reported by NGOs and international newspapers in coverage of the conflict.

Methodology
Abdelrahman says that he receives reports of fatalities from over 200 individual sources within Syria, who he stays in contact with via mobile phone and Skype. According to The New York Times, four men inside Syria help to report and collate the information provided by activists. Incident reports are published on the website, alongside information regarding fatalities.

Limitations
The data provided by the SOHR is presented in incident reports, and a downloadable database does not exist. This makes it difficult to search for specific information. Since international media is banned from Syria, it is extremely difficult to verify the information provided by the SOHR.
Afghan National Army search for IEDs.

**CENTER FOR DOCUMENTATION OF VIOLATIONS IN SYRIA (VDC SYRIA)**

**Records**

Violations of human rights in Syria.

**Background**

The VDC has been monitoring human rights violations in Syria since April 2011. Its mandate is to “monitor and document all crimes and violations against human rights in Syria, and attempt to protect and enhance these rights in the culture of the Syrians.”

The group documents deaths, including names where possible, detainees, those who are missing and those who are kidnapped. It terms those who are killed by government forces as “Syrian martyrs,” but also records regime casualties. Statistics are published on a weekly, monthly and yearly basis, with total figures and graphs available on the website.

The database, while not downloadable, is searchable in a number of fields, including “cause of death.” One of the data fields defined as a cause of death is “explosion” which includes deaths caused by IEDs. However, “explosion” does not necessarily mean an IED was the cause of death, for example one “explosion” death is provided as being caused by “the explosion of a cluster bomb from an earlier shelling.”

Extensive information is recorded for each death, with information including, where possible, name, status (i.e. civilian or non-civilian), ID card number, martyrdom location, cause of death and notes. The records also include photographs where possible, and notes which generally contain specific weapon information.

**Methodology**

The Center has more than 30 activists in several Syrian cities and regions, and a team of coordinators who live both inside and outside Syria. Those activists inside Syria gather and document information on human rights violations. They also depend on “reliable sources like field hospitals, cemeteries, casualties’ families and some of the media centers.”

Initial information is collected the day of, or in the days following, an incident.

In the days, weeks, and months after, lists of those who were killed are sent to the field activists to ensure that there are no errors and that as much information as possible is contained in each record.

**Limitations**

The data is not broken down specifically enough to determine the number of deaths caused by IEDs in Syria. While such information is contained in the notes of each record, it is not easily searchable.

**THE GLOBAL DATABASE OF EVENTS, LANGUAGE, AND TONE (GDELT)**

**Records**

“Identifies the people, locations, organisations, counts, themes, sources, and events driving our global society every second of every day, creating a free open platform for computing on the entire world.”

**Background**

GDELT was set up by Kalev Leetaru at the University of Illinois. It codes events from riots and
protests to diplomatic exchanges and peace appeals. It is thought that the database may be able to be used to predict future violence and anticipate political events. Leetaru says the goal of the project is “to create a free and open global resource for the quantitative study and mapping of global conflict and cooperation.”

The database is free for the public to download, but its size and scope require a significant knowledge of data management to use the database. It has over 250 million events in over 300 categories, stretching back to 1 January 1979 and is updated daily.

The data is also available in monthly and daily files.

Methodology

The dataset is built around automated content analysis of new articles. These articles, which are taken from “all national and international news coverage from the New York Times, all international and major US national stories from the Associated Press, and all national and international news from Google News with the exception of sports, entertainment, and strictly economic news,” are fed into a computer and run through a specific algorithm designed to extract and code events.

Limitations

The dataset is massive and not entirely searchable. Incidents are not specifically coded as having involved IEDs, and the size of the database means it would be very difficult to identify such information. The user requires significant experience and knowledge of datasets just to make sense of the data.

Sources are not reported, creating a lack of transparency in the data collecting process. This prevents third party verification of the data. Sources may also be biased towards English language reported incidents.

EUROPEAN UNION BOMB DATA SYSTEM (EBDS)

Records

Information and intelligence on explosives and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear related incidents.

Background

The EBDS was developed as a platform for the exchange of information and intelligence on explosives and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear related incidents. It was initially funded from 1 December 2008 to 31 March 2010 by the European Commission for the Prevention of and Fight against Crime, and had a budget of EURO 788,683. It was then funded by AMITA, a Canadian IT company specialising in safety, security and emergency management.

The information contained in the database is authoritative; derived from official sources such as National Bomb Data Centres and other governmental bodies. It is “based on official sources, preventing wrong assumptions or assessments based on, often misleading, open source information.” The database is available at no cost to experts from “relevant EU authorities,” and is available in 22 different languages.

Limitations

The database is not available widely. The information contained in the database therefore has limited wider utility and an analysis of the database itself by members of the public is impossible.
BOMB ARSON TRACKING SYSTEM (BATS)41

Records
Arson and explosive incidents in the US.

Background
In 2004, the Attorney General mandated that all of the US Department of Justice’s arson and explosives datasets be consolidated into a single database, BATS. It was developed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the US Bomb Data Center to “better enable to reporting of arson and explosives-related incidents to the national database by federal, state, and local agencies.”

It is free to use for these agencies, and allows bomb technicians and investigators to perform trend analysis and compare incidents. Theoretically, all IED-related incidents in the US should be reported and included in BATS.

Methodology
US bomb squads should report incidents to the database for inclusion. Little information is available on the methodology, and only US agencies can access the database.

Limitations
While the database should theoretically contain all data related to IEDs in the US, it has been reported that only 27% of US bomb squads were reporting to the database. Of these 27%, only half were reporting all incidents.42 This means the database remains inappropriate for an overall analysis of IED use in the US.

NATIONAL BOMB DATABASES
A number of countries have their own national databases which record incidents involving bombs and explosives, therefore including IEDs. Each of these databases is slightly different, and the information available on each varies.

The Canadian Bomb Data Center (CBDC), for example, records the criminal use of explosives in Canada, producing a public yearly report detailing the number of criminal incidents involving explosives, including when an IED is recovered.40 They also detail the number of deaths and injuries, divided per Canadian state. Police can access “an extensive library of information about explosives disposal and post-blast investigation,” as well as consulting with CBDC experts.

Canadian police services are encouraged to submit their statistics to the CBDC, but are not obliged to, meaning that the database is not “wholly reflective of all explosive incidents.”45

Australia has one of the world’s oldest bomb data centres, the Australia Bomb Data Centre having begun operations on 1 July 1978.42 Its role is to “collect, collate, interpret and disseminate data gathered from within Australia and overseas, concerning explosives and incendiaries, whether commercial, military or improvised.”43 Its primary objective is to provide information to participating agencies and “assist in reducing the loss of life and damage caused by the unlawful use of explosives.” Government agencies and commercial organisations can access the information, and publications are released to the public.

These are two examples of many national bomb databases, and they demonstrate both the importance and the limitations of these centres. It is very important that governments and domestic police forces record data on the use of explosives and IEDs, and that this information is shared with government and security agencies. However, the data is largely not available to parties out with these specific categories, so is of limited utility and is difficult to analyse.

AXON
The AXON Global IED Partnership was initiated by the Australian Defence Force, partnering with Palantir Technologies, in April 2014. It is a pilot program and is currently in a trial phase until at least April 2015. The trial was announced as an official Australian trial at the Convention of Certain Conventional Weapons, Ammended Protocol II
meeting in Geneva. AXON aims to encourage nations and jurisdictions to reduce the barriers to information sharing and includes functionality to allow basic post event IED data sharing in a smart repository. Information to be shared focuses on event data such as date, location, and type of IED incidents.

The pilot program is designed and being project managed by the Australian Defence Force Counter IED Task Force (ADF CIEDTF). AXON Project Manager, Major Simon Patching, indicated the intention of the program is for participating nations and entities to provide officially sanctioned data from relevant authorities who deal with IEDs. Even basic IED data such as date, location and type of IED, can be enough to provide a more meaningful picture of IED activity, without providing information which may be required to remain confidential for police investigations and judicial processes.

As at February 2015, some 12 countries and entities such as UNMAS and INTERPOL are taking part in the trial. As well as being a repository of IED incidents, the project interface provides participants the ability to conduct valuable data analytics. Patching emphasized the need for the CIED community to reconsider a default setting of classifying and keeping IED event data on closed systems. AXON advocates a ‘justify to classify’ approach with a view to bringing about cultural change in the community to improve collaboration between nations and jurisdictions. He spoke of the benefit of sharing information, and providing as much information as possible so that countries can act appropriately on the basis of reliable data. Project participants have equal access to the data; whoever provides data then has access to all other data.

**Limitations**

At the moment the AXON project is in a trial phase, so it is difficult to analyse how successful or otherwise the project will be once this phase ends. A post trial report will be provided at the April 2015 meeting of the CCW APII in Geneva.

The database is aimed to provide officials of nations and select CIED community institutions (eg UNMAS) officially derived, accurate basic post event data. Consideration to how NGOs (more broadly) and other organisations could have access to the database is being considered, but is not currently a function of the trial. Patching indicated the Project team and participants were learning constantly through undertaking this project. In particular, he mentioned the importance of bringing the international community together to create a common IED language (lexicon) which was appropriate for a multilingual and multijurisdictional environment.

Patching also discussed the importance of establishing an agreed international standard for IED event data sharing. He spoke of a general understanding with the CIED community that improved information sharing is essential to tackling the problem into the future, but much work needs to be done to overcome the default setting of officials to consider all IED event data protected. The AXON team is encouraged by the appetite shown by the community for such a data repository and is committed to improving data sharing between nations and jurisdictions through thought and action leadership.

**Methodology**

Participating countries and select CIED community entities may provide data to the AXON team which is then ingested to the repository for use by the collective. Data is provided via official channels – a key distinction from sourcing open source information about IEDs which can not be verified.
IED ATTACKS IN AFGHANISTAN

The collection of data on the use of IEDs is crucial; it helps us to fully understand the impact of these weapons, frames the debate on trying to control their use, and allows us to grasp their human cost. Current data collection efforts, as shown above, do not capture the extent of the harm caused by IEDs. There is little knowledge about how the data which is being collected is subsequently used by states, organisations and other bodies to limit attacks on the ground. This report has established that while there is a wide range of datasets cataloguing elements of the IED problem, none fully capture the global scale of the threat. In the second half of this report, AOAV contextualises a specific dataset and its role in combatting the impact of IEDs. The report takes one of the field-leaders in IED data collection, run by the United Nations in Afghanistan and considers what is being done there in terms of data collation and in terms of a response to that data.

In Afghanistan, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is carrying out extensive data collection efforts into civilian harm, including that caused by IEDs. According to AOAV data, Afghanistan was the third most IED-affected country between 2011 and 2013, with 7,979 total casualties in 931 incidents. Of these casualties, 5,437 were civilians. UNAMA carries out data collection and analysis on the use of IEDs in Afghanistan, and can be used as an example of why such data collection is important in trying to reduce the harm the weapons cause.

**UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN**

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) was established by the UN Security Council in 2002. Its mandate has been renewed since then, most recently by Security Council resolution 2145 (2014). In relation to the collection of data on civilian casualties caused by IED events, UNAMA is mandated to:

- “Monitor [...] the situation of civilians”, which involves collection and analysis of data;
- “Coordinate efforts to ensure their protection,” which is a challenge given the ongoing violence in Afghanistan;
- “Promote accountability,” which can be achieved through the impartial use of data on civilian casualties.

Since 2007 UNAMA has published a comprehensive, impartial analysis of civilian casualties in Afghanistan, from conflict-related violence, in mid-year and annual reports. UNAMA also undertakes advocacy based on the findings of their data, aimed at strengthening the protection of civilians and “initiatives to promote compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law, and the Constitution and laws of Afghanistan among all parties to the conflict.” The Security Council resolution also emphasises capacity building among Afghan organisations to enable data collection and associated protection efforts.

**What does UNAMA data show?**

IED data features prominently in the reports. UNAMA data shows that between 2009, when systematic records began to be kept, and 2013, IEDs were the primary cause of civilian casualties in Afghanistan.

The data is stark reading. Civilian casualties from IEDs, including from suicide attacks, nearly doubled between 2008 and 2011. 2011 was the worst year on record to date. Civilian deaths caused by IEDs and suicide attacks reached a peak of nearly 1,400, accounting for 60 per cent of all fatalities attributed to anti-government elements.

The data shows that most IED incidents take place in the south, notably Kandahar and Helmand, and that this region showed a decline in the first half of 2014 compared to previous
years - though they remained by far the most severely-impacted.

UNAMA reporting also indicated, however, that civilian deaths and injuries increased in that time in several other regions of Afghanistan. This might be explained by the fact that the Central region includes Kabul and 2014 has also been an election year, so a rise of IED attacks there might be said to reflect attempts to destabilise the political process.

UNAMA's data collection has demonstrated that IEDs consistently pose the greatest threat to civilians in Afghanistan (figure 1). Year on year, the majority of violent civilian deaths in the country are attributed by UNAMA to ‘anti-government elements’. Of these, IEDs were easily the leading cause. The simplest and starkest message of UNAMA's data collection is that the most effective way to protect civilians from a brutal violent death is to tackle and reduce the incidence of IED use in the country.

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNAMA CIVILIAN CASUALTY REPORTING**

The reporting of IEDs in Afghanistan was often basic, and sometimes confused, particularly in the labeling of device and initiation types.61

The development of UNAMA's protection of civilians reports shows how a recording initiative can transform from basic data collection to a document that highlights specific threats, counters propaganda and is used to advocate for measures to reduce civilian casualties. To this end AOAV believes it to be a vital lesson for others to learn from, and is a model for future action for existing data collection efforts.

Notable, too, in the UNAMA report is their engagement with the Taliban, who are now sent a copy of the report, and have responded to UNAMA and mentioned the need to avoid civilian casualties in public statements. This engagement with those behind the IED attacks with the data proving the human impact of their attacks is relatively unheard of.

Given the complexities of the situation, and as UNAMA themselves point out, calls from Taliban leaders to reduce the use of IEDs have not necessarily translated into a reduction of their use in the field. This is not to say a similar call in another environment would not have a demonstrable impact, however.

There are lessons that could be learned from the development of UNAMA twin data collection and advocacy work in Afghanistan which would have the potential to improve IED reporting and its use in attempts to reduce civilian casualties both in Afghanistan and in other countries.

**Early reports**

UNAMA's first report on the protection of civilians in Afghanistan was published in 2007. This report was basic: comprising a count of fatalities (1523) and a list of incidents, outlining the events and the numbers killed.

UNAMA did include a definition of the classification of civilians for the report, as well as both pro and anti-government elements. There was a caveat that some information was not possible to verify, but there was not a full methodology given.

The 2007 report was descriptive, not analytical, and took no measure to identify the most lethal types of weaponry in terms of civilian casualties. In the individual incident accounts IEDs are classified by basic type, with vehicle-borne IEDs, body-borne IEDs, and general IEDs. There was no identification of the specific impact or threat of victim-operated devices, such as those triggered by pressure plates (where the weight of a person or object presses a connection together, triggering a device) or trip wires.

The UNAMA 2008 civilian casualty report was significantly more comprehensive than the 2007 report. It recorded a 40 per cent increase in civilian fatalities from the previous year. There was a clear identification of the trend that IEDs (including suicide attacks) accounted for more Afghan civilian deaths than any other tactic used; UNAMA recorded 725 non-combatant deaths from IEDs in 2008, just over a third of civilian casualties that year.62

A discussion of technical aspects of IED type was not included in the report, so there was no
separate category for victim-operated devices. The report did count IED incidents, and identified the use of IEDs in crowded areas as a major cause of civilian casualties. The report stated: “Throughout 2008, insurgents have shown an increasing disregard for the harm they may inflict on civilians in such attacks.”

Notable developments to the 2007 report included an analytical overview of trends seen over the year, contained a clear methodology, and outlined some of the steps taken by groups to mitigate civilian casualties.63

The report had a short section on civilian perceptions of anti-government violence. Suicide and IED attacks, combined with “violent intimidation” were noted for causing a loss of quality of life, income and “other forms of socio-economic hardships”. The report contains information on the impact of IEDs, including their creation of a loss of quality of life, income, and “other forms of socio-economic hardship.” It also stated the disappointment felt by Afghan civilians that the Afghan government and the international community had not brought security to the country.

The difficulties in collecting data were explicitly addressed. The report cites a briefing to the Security Council made by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, who stated: “Due to limited access, we simply do not have a complete picture of the nature and scope of the humanitarian caseload in Afghanistan. For humanitarian actors, this lack of access is a constant source of frustration and concern”.

Expanding the report

2009 marked a sea-change in UNAMA’s approach to data collection. Looking beyond simply recording the national casualty toll without context, the 2009 UNAMA civilian casualty report put a far greater emphasis on civilian casualties caused by anti-government elements.64

In 2009, 2,412 civilian casualties were reported - of which 1,630 (67 per cent) were recorded as being caused by anti-Government elements, 596 (25 per cent) by pro-Government forces (PGF) and the remaining eight per cent not possible to attribute to either side.65 Almost half as many civilians were violently killed in 2009 as in 2008.

Over 1,000 civilians were killed in IED and suicide attacks. IEDs and suicide attacks were clearly identified as being the primary killer of civilians, accounting for 44 per cent (1,054) of all civilian casualties. The prominence of IEDs in the dataset was reflected in the attention given to these weapons in UNAMA’s report.

Figure 1. UNAMA annual civilian casualty figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Civilian casualties (fatalities)</th>
<th>Attributed to anti-government elements</th>
<th>Caused by IED and suicide attacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1523</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2118</td>
<td>1160</td>
<td>725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2412</td>
<td>1630</td>
<td>1054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2777</td>
<td>2080</td>
<td>1141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3021</td>
<td>2332</td>
<td>1398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2754</td>
<td>2179</td>
<td>1196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2959</td>
<td>2311</td>
<td>1217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the first time, the 2009 report separated suicide attacks (281 civilian casualties, 17 per cent of those killed by anti-government elements) from other types of IEDs (773 civilian fatalities, 47 per cent of non-combatants killed by anti-government elements). The report noted: that “since the intensification of the insurgency in 2006, there has been a gradual but continual shift by AGEs towards the use of asymmetric attacks, such as IEDs and suicide attacks.”

It also documented the trend of complex attacks being carried out by groups. These were incidents in which multiple weapon types are used together in a sustained assault, often including both suicide bombers and others with conventional weapons.

As in the previous year, the report provides analysis that highlights that civilians are being killed by devices that were intended to target military forces. Such information is crucial to know, and provides a solid basis for advocacy surrounding the argument that civilians bear the brunt of the harm from IED attacks, even when this is not their intended result. It shows that IEDs, as with other explosive weapons, can have wide-area effects that are difficult to limit and control to one target among a crowd.

The 2009 report, however, addresses neither the types of IEDs which cause the most civilian casualties, nor their deployment methods. The lack of this information leaves a major gap in the messaging that can be sent to anti-government elements, particularly over the use of indiscriminate, victim operated IEDs.

**2010-2013: THE TALIBAN RESPOND**

**Held to account**

By 2010 UNAMA recording and reporting had moved further towards becoming a mechanism of accountability that aimed to advocate with all major groups involved in the conflict. A recommendations page was placed prominently at the start of the report. These recommendations encourage anti-Government elements to, amongst other things, collect and disseminate data on civilian casualties resulting from their actions, including IED attacks.

The Taliban appeared to respond to this request, opening the Department of Prevention of Civilian Casualties within their Military Commission. They operate a mobile telephone number, which appears still to be working, but after several calls
made on behalf of AOV in December 2014, remains unanswered. The role of the department has been noted, but its effectiveness and impact is in doubt: “Every caution should be taken to protect life and property of the public during Jihadic operations, so that, God forbid, someone is harmed. The Department of Prevention of Civilian Casualties should seriously pay attention to its task to prevent civilian casualties.”

UNAMA’s recommendation is important, and all anti-Government elements should be encouraged to adopt it. This is particularly the case since it is still common practice for anti-Government elements in Afghanistan to deny or minimise responsibility for the fatalities and injuries they cause through IED attacks and other methods. The 2010 report showed the clear call-and-response of direct advocacy, and the power of stigmatising certain practices. While the changes implemented by the Taliban in this case may have had little impact, it showed that even non-state armed actors—often thought to beyond the reach of direct public appeal—respond to objective, evidence-led advocacy.

Since being ‘named and shamed’ by UNAMA’s reporting on civilian harm, the Taliban has consistently and specifically responded to the annual civilian casualty report, a fact that underlines its concern at the political and strategic, if not the moral, cost of being seen to have killed civilians. This engagement, however tangential, demonstrates the importance of data collection in engaging with those actors who use IEDs which result in civilian harm.

In the 2011 report UNAMA noted that Taliban statements had recognised the need to protect civilians. UNAMA noted, however, that their data showed that there was not a reduction in civilian casualties following these statements. Notably, Taliban statements showed that they were putting the “onus of civilian protection on the civilian population and not on the parties to the conflict”. An example of this was cited in the 2011 report in the form of a call for civilians to avoid “gatherings, convoys, and centers of the enemy so that they will not become harmed during attacks by the Mujahidin against the enemy.”

In addition to referring to international humanitarian law, UNAMA used the 2011 section on Taliban statements to emphasize that the Taliban’s code of conduct – the Layha- also calls to minimise civilian casualties. The inclusion of this section was a useful development as it highlighted the fact that Taliban leadership called on its fighters to minimise civilian casualties; this could then be juxtaposed against the reality on the ground.

**Changing Practice: Pressure-plate IEDs**

Since 2011 UNAMA has used their data and messaging to advocate against the use of victim operated, pressure plate IEDs, for instance. UNAMA’s data demonstrates that these devices cause a particularly high level of suffering to civilians because they are indiscriminate in their means of detonation. UNAMA took the messages of this data to challenge the use of these specific devices in face-to-face lobbying in 2011 and 2012, reminding the Taliban that not only are they banned internationally but also violate the Taliban’s own landmine ban that the group set in place in 1998, branding the weapons anti-Islamic and anti-human. Victim-operated IEDs are considered de facto anti-personnel landmines in the eyes of the law, sharing their principal function and threat of detonating under the foot pressure of a person, be it child or soldier, without distinction.

Despite this, the Taliban responded with claims that they were not using victim operated IEDs. It is difficult to draw a direct causal link between data that highlights the use of IEDs in a manner that causes civilian casualties and subsequent changes in Taliban tactics.

Perhaps the observation and engagement has had some impact, though.

In 2013 UNAMA noted a reduction in use of pressure plate IEDs by nearly 40 per cent over the previous year. If it did have an impact, though, it was short lived. This trend has not continued in 2014.

The comparative decline in pressure-plate IED use and impact in 2013 may result from more prosaic factors than direct evidence-based advocacy. It
is difficult to distinguish battlefield tactics from responses to UNAMA messaging. Victim-operated IEDs, particularly pressure plates, have been used by insurgents to target military vehicles and patrols that used electronic counter measures (ECM) to interfere with signals to devices that were detonated electronically with initiators such as garage door openers and cell phones. ECM was commonly used by international military forces but is typically not deployed on Afghan security force vehicles and patrols, meaning they can be targeted with radio-controlled IEDs. Nevertheless, Afghan insurgents have had less use for pressure plate devices as international military forces protected by ECM have played a less prominent role since the draw down in late 2011.

While it is impossible to say with any certainty whether UNAMA data and messaging also had an impact on the Taliban’s use of IEDs, the existence of such data is crucial. Without evidence, advocacy efforts lose impact and value. Without it, it is easy for violators of humanitarian and human rights law, for killers of civilians, to dismiss claims of bad practice and evade accountability.

Systematic and transparent data collection is the objective basis for hard conclusions that civilians are often casualties of IEDs planted to target military personnel or equipment, and that their use continues to cause destruction across the country.

As discussed earlier, in 2012 analysis of the Taliban’s public statements found that the insurgents may have sought to respond to UNAMA’s previous criticism of the use of victim-operated IEDs. The report stated: “Several statements provided examples of Taliban targeting criteria and elaboration of their IED tactics, with a particular emphasis on their use of operator controlled IEDs rather than victim-activated devices. The specific emphasis on targeting criteria and use of remote controlled IEDs is arguably aimed at countering findings and reports the Taliban used pressure plate victim-activated IEDs.”

Despite this claim, though, there is clear evidence of Taliban propaganda at work in this regard, as not all statements are backed up by hard facts. This was most notably demonstrated in a Taliban response to a UNAMA press statement on civilian casualties from victim-operated IEDs. In it,
the Taliban claimed only to have used remote-controlled IEDs, rather than "live landmines"; this despite UNAMA having recorded nearly 300 incidents of the Taliban using these devices.69

In one case, for instance, UNAMA found that the Taliban had claimed a strike that was later proven to have used a victim-operated device. This detailed breakdown of incidents and Taliban counter-claims is not exhaustive, but provides hard evidence that underlines the fact that the Taliban are using plenty of victim operated devices despite official denials.

Perhaps as a result of its persistent public pressure, in 2013 UNAMA noted a nearly 40 per cent reduction in the use of pressure plate IEDs compared to the previous year. This did not mean that IEDs declined in prominence however. Remotely-detonated IED attacks rose 80 percent in 2013. While theoretically allowing far greater control than the indiscriminate pressure-plate bombs, remote-control IEDs are still capable of killing and injuring civilians in great number, particularly when used in populated areas. Nevertheless, the decline in one of the most egregious IED types in common use in Afghanistan was an encouraging early indicator of the potential impact of evidence-led advocacy.

Sadly, conclusions are inconclusive at the time of writing, as the first half of 2014 saw a reversal of this positive trend, with an apparent return of pressure plate IEDs in Afghanistan.

2013: Taliban data collection

In 2013 the Taliban claimed that it had established a data and evaluation gathering 'special committee' under its military commission, intended to document civilian harm arising from Taliban actions, including their continuing use of IEDs.

While welcoming this news, UNAMA highlighted several critical concerns that challenged the credibility and impact of this new committee. In particular, UNAMA challenged the Taliban’s definition of a 'civilian', publishing an excerpt from a Taliban definition which broadly covered elderly men, women, children and ‘common people’ living ‘ordinary’ lives, and noting that this was not in compliance with international humanitarian law.

UNAMA also argued that “It is also not clear how the Taliban defines 'negligent acts resulting in civilian casualties' for the purposes of its internal investigation and referral to a sharia court.”
THE IMPORTANCE OF UNAMA ADVOCACY

As shown above, UNAMA’s advocacy uses data collection in three ways:

1. Raising public awareness about the severity of the IED issue;

2. Advocacy by UNAMA and the humanitarian community with ISAF / NATO and the international community on the need for increased resources allocated to counter-IED efforts. UNAMA shares figures and trends with ISAF, and has visited C-IED schools to find gaps in the Afghan National Security Force’s capacity and advocate for support from ISAF and the international community;

3. Public reporting to encourage the Taliban and other anti-government elements to change the way they use IEDs to harm fewer civilians.

UNAMA has spoken of the challenges they face, such as the lack of access by their teams to locations where civilian casualty incidents occur for direct observation. Where possible, their investigations are based on primary accounts and on-site investigations, but occasionally this is not possible. They then must rely on reliable networks across all provinces and districts, using as wide a range of sources as possible that are evaluated for credibility and reliability. There is a lack of a strong justice system, meaning that perpetrators are not held to account for the illegal use of IEDs. This impunity makes the need for advocacy even more critical.

Without the UNAMA reports, there would be little public awareness about the broad scope of harm caused by IEDs. The UNAMA reports draw attention to the issue and pressure ISAF / NATO and member states to dedicate more resources toward C-IED. Due to the wide media impact of UNAMA’s reports, they are believed to reach a great part of Afghan society.

UNAMA’s negotiation with Anti-government elements may have had an impact on civilian casualties. They noticed, as stated at Chatham House in September 2014, a decrease in IED attacks directly targeting civilians, although civilian casualties of IEDs targeting ANSF members has increased and reached unprecedented levels due to the disregard shown for the indiscriminate and disproportionate impact of IEDs in civilian-populated areas.

UNAMA’s reports are crucial for both information raising and for continued advocacy efforts. Without them, the full extent of harm caused by IEDs in Afghanistan would not be known, and any advocacy work would be far less effective.

IED clearance

In May 2013, UNAMA conducted research on legacy IEDs in Nawzad and Kajaki districts, Helmand province. They consulted with community elders, district officials and local administration regarding the impact of IEDs on their lives. Ongoing conflict between Taliban and military forces from 2008 onwards displaced thousands of families from their homes, in some cases displacing entire villages. Villages remained displaced in 2013 due to heavy concentrations of undetonated IEDs.

Villagers were able to return to homes in areas that have been cleared of legacy IEDs and UXO.

- **Nawzad district**: As of 29 May 2013, de-miners cleared 683 abandoned IEDs and 210 UXO from 2,660,432 meters of land

- **Kajaki district**: As of 30 April 2013, the Demining Agency for Afghanistan had removed 81 abandoned IEDs and 1,198 UXO since July 2012. They cleared 300 homes and 200 families have since returned.

District authorities, tribal elders, teachers and medical practitioners told UNAMA of the positive impact of IED clearance programs on access to education, health, mobility and overall security.
COUNTERING THE IED THREAT

The Afghan Government

UNAMA’s data-led advocacy has also impacted on the response of the Afghan government.

In 2012 a National Counter Improvised Explosive Device Strategy for Afghanistan was brought in by the Office of the National Security Council. Signed in 2012, much of the strategy appears to be focused on transition of counter-IED (C-IED) strategy to the Afghan ministries and security forces.

The document recognised IEDs as indiscriminate weapons, and the major cause of casualties among Afghan civilians and military. Article Six includes the wording: “Terrorists use IEDs as their main tactic against the stability, security, economic and social development of Afghanistan.”

The strategy outlined is far-reaching, including efforts to attack the networks, prosecute perpetrators and limit supplies of lethal aid, including from transnational flows. An example is found in Article One of the document, which says: “A comprehensive approach ensuring intra-governmental cooperation and coordination is essential to ensure the protection of the population, and rightful prosecution of terrorists, thereby leading to a lasting peace and prosperity for Afghanistan and its people. In addition, IED and terrorist networks are not confined by geographical or jurisdictional boundaries, and therefore it is essential to engage with the international community and enable international C-IED cooperation through diplomatic efforts.”

The C-IED strategy has five pillars of delivery – Rule of Law, Security, Governance, Diplomatic Engagement and Public Engagement. The strategy calls for a Public Engagement campaign that both provides education on the IED threat and discourages public involvement in illegal explosives activity. The C-IED strategy was published after the ban on ammonium nitrate ban, Presidential Decree 28, so many of the objectives refer to not supporting the illegal trade in materials that can be used to manufacture Homemade Explosives (HME) as well as more direct support to insurgent bomb making networks.

Afghanistan also has a comprehensive ban on ammonium nitrate and other precursors used to manufacture explosives. A problem is that there is not capacity to implement this effectively.\(^{71}\)

Sections of Article 32 include more general public engagement initiatives on the impact of IEDs:

c. To incorporate C-IED training in all private and public education curriculums, including higher education.

d. To enable Afghan Ulema, Mullahs and other religious scholars, religious centres, social, cultural organizations and religious shuras to educate people through all Mosques, workshops and seminars about the un-Islamic nature of IEDs, and deliver C-IED safety messages.

e. To encourage well known Muslim religious scholars in Afghanistan, and other Muslim countries to deliver verdicts on banning the use of IEDs and suicide attacks for killing civilians and innocent people.

f. To deliver a multi-media programme that exploits all opportunities and mediums to ensure delivery and reinforcement of key messaging themes.\(^{72}\)

Public Engagement is an area where civil society and NGOs can carry out numerous activities. The recommendation, though, that religious leaders carry out public engagement will be difficult to implement. In the 2013 UNAMA civilian casualty report, it was noted that “threats and targeted attacks by Anti-Government Elements against mullahs (religious leaders) they accused of supporting the Government rose as attacks against mullahs and mosques tripled in 2013”.

The 2012 C-IED strategy does not include a requirement to record IED incidents or keep a database, among its 37 Articles. Article 12 does, however, state that one of the objectives of the strategy is to enable intelligence and information sharing. An accurate, transparent database of events would assist programmes operating under all of the pillars, particularly Diplomatic and Public Engagement.
Afghan IED figures would highlight the impact of IEDs and violations of the ammonium nitrate ban, in addition to assisting in planning for healthcare services and compensation schemes to aid victims of attacks.

**Social media**

Social media usage has increased sharply in recent years in urban Afghanistan. A member of civil society in Southern Afghanistan noted that social media has the potential to be a tool to raise awareness of the dangers of IEDs. Increases in phone ownership has also meant that access to social media is not dependent on computer access, so some use of this medium, providing messaging was appropriate, could potentially be used in rural areas.

There are, however, challenges to this simple and seductive IED-countering method. First, there is the threat that media consumers could be targeted as Taliban checkpoints exist in some areas, and monitoring activities include looking through phones for material that can be considered pro-Government. Furthermore, showing some images is problematic in conservative areas in Afghanistan, as they can be deemed inappropriate.

**Radio**

Radio access is common in rural areas. A member of civil society in Southern Afghanistan told AOAV that radio broadcasts are key for informing rural populations of the danger of IEDs and impact of the weapons, in terms of casualties. Taliban also use radio broadcasts in many rural areas, and the member of civil society added that there was more need for elders, religious figures and members of the Government to speak out using this medium.

Radio’s relative accessibility means that it is more likely that counter-IED messaging will reach the large percentage of the population that is either internally displaced or living in areas where there is a heavy insurgent presence. Shura members from Northern Helmand, however, stated that while people may be receptive to radio messages they will be too afraid to take action while the Taliban have presence in the area.

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Destruction of a weapons cache in Iraq, 2005.
**Combating Taliban propaganda**

Shura members from some of the most impacted areas in Afghanistan have described to AOAV a grim situation where Taliban propaganda is widely accepted, and change will be unlikely until civilians are separated from the insurgents. A lack of development was highlighted by residents from rural areas as a major barrier to the impact of counter-IED public engagement, particularly the failure to provide power which could facilitate access to outside information. Rumours are persistent in rural areas, including claims that attacks that cause high numbers of civilian casualties, and those in civilian areas such as mosques and bazaars, are carried out by "foreigners" in order to discredit anti-Government elements.

The danger posed to those speaking out against Taliban actions was highlighted in Kabul in December 2014 when a play condemning suicide attacks, titled 'Heartbeat: Silence After the Explosion', was struck by a teenage suicide bomber. One person was killed and more than ten injured in the strike at the French Cultural Centre. A Taliban spokesman stated that the event was targeted because it was being held "to insult Islamic values and spread propaganda about our jihad operations, especially on suicide attacks." The audience was made up of both Afghan and international civilians. Those injured included many of Kabul’s artists and cultural figures, as well as several Afghan journalists.

The threat of attack makes it difficult to discuss IED threats to civilians in open source, long-term Afghanistan researcher Antonio Giustozzi told AOAV. Residents from Helmand have claimed that independent local community leaders have complained to the Taliban’s Quetta Shura that certain fighting practices are severely impacting civilians and limiting support for the Taliban. They claim this has been met with directives from Taliban leadership to field commanders to avoid populated areas for targeting. From the data it is unclear whether this has occurred. If this type of negotiation is used it is only likely to take place in areas where residents are from the same tribal groups as key Taliban leaders.

A series of demonstrations in Kabul took place in early 2014 after major attacks, including a complex strike at a popular Lebanese restaurant where UN workers were among those killed and a firearms attack at the Serena Hotel, in which a well-respected Afghan journalist and his family were shot at close range. Demonstrators held banners stating ‘Enough is Enough’ and at least one commentator questioned whether it was the start of a nascent peace movement.

In cities in the provinces such demonstrations have been markedly lacking. A worker at the AIHRC based in a major provincial city noted that civil society has not been active in these areas. A further threat they identified is that individuals are unwilling to put themselves at risk. The presence of Taliban sympathisers or informers is notable in many southern cities, likely driving fear in the communities.

Experts told AOAV that the condemnation of IED attacks to the Taliban in rural areas has not brought about change. They argued that there is not enough scope to increase protests in rural areas as religious leaders who are supportive of the Government have been secluded and communities cannot demonstrate in areas where the Taliban live among the people.
CONCLUSIONS

IEDs cause death and devastation globally. Their increasing use has been shown to kill and injure civilians, destroy infrastructure and buildings, and cause displacement on a huge scale.

It is, however, impossible to fully quantify the harm caused by these weapons and to effectively address and tackle this known humanitarian problem without reliable, comprehensive data. We need such data not only in order to provide assistance to the thousands of victims of IED attacks, but also to develop effective counter-IED techniques. Only with such data will the harm caused by IEDs be properly tackled.

This report has shown that a number of agencies and organisations exist which collect data on various aspects of IED use. These organisations can all contribute to the ultimate goal of limiting the impact of IEDs, albeit from different motivations and mandates. AOAV looked at 50 such organisations and agencies, focusing on 18 in this report, and found that current data collection efforts are piecemeal and disjointed, with a lack of coordination and data sharing between bodies.

The field of data collection is affected by some shared limitations, such as geographical limitations and the different focus of each body. Language, and the way the problem is understood, is highlighted as a principal concern. There are few common definitions, which make direct comparisons difficult. Equally, every dataset focuses on slightly different aspects, such as a particular country or region of concern, or a different thematic focus. While this is understandable, it makes any real effort to consolidate and analyse existing data difficult.

The report also shows best practice in collecting data. Organisations should have a clear focus which is well defined and not subject to political bias. Data collected within each focus should be comprehensive, and be sourced from reliable sources, such as UNAMA which requires three independent sources for each incident recorded.

Datasets should be useful to others, and as transparent as possible. The C-POST Suicide Attack Database provides a good example of this, as their data can be searched and downloaded in a very user-friendly manner, making it extremely useful for data analysis by other organisations and individuals.

UNAMA reflects what data collection can and should do. It has developed from carrying out basic data collection to highlighting specific threats, countering propaganda, and advocating for measures to reduce civilian casualties of IEDs. UNAMA learned from and incorporated lessons learned from their own shortcomings, and now challenge the use of IEDs, hold users to account, and provide advice and inform C-IED strategies.

AOAV believes that much more needs to be done to record the use of IEDs, and the resulting civilian casualties. As stated by the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon: “United Nations actors should work together to establish a common United Nations system to systematically record civilian casualties as part of broader efforts to monitor and report on violations or international humanitarian and human rights law, drawing on good practice and expertise from within the United Nations, Member States and civil society.”
RECOMMENDATIONS

AOAV’s policies on reducing the harm caused by IEDs

IED attacks which cause civilian casualties need to be considered an unacceptable form of violence and must be condemned as such. Practical policies to disrupt access to IED materials and bomb-making knowledge need to be implemented nationally and internationally. Victims of this form of violence should receive a full range of support including treatment for psychological harm.

THE USE OF DATA

- The gathering of data is not an end in itself. Those collecting data should then ensure that it has a purpose, and is used for this purpose.
- Data should be used to stigmatise those carrying out IED attacks.
- Data should be used by bodies carrying out advocacy work, to encourage users of IEDs to limit their use in areas where civilian casualties may occur, and to ensure that the rights of victims of IED attacks are fully realised.
- Those carrying out IED clearance, mine risk education, and those attempting to control the transfer of materials used to make IEDs, should use such data to help them understand the full extent of IED use.
- IED data should be used in planning for healthcare services and compensation schemes to aid victims of attacks.

PREVENT FUTURE ATTACKS

- States, the international community and local leaders should work together to stigmatise the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

DATA COLLECTION

- Those who use IEDs should collect data on the impact of their use, including any civilian deaths and injuries.
- Those collecting data should make every effort to ensure that this data is credible, comprehensive, impartial, and not subject to political bias.
- Data should be collected from reliable sources to ensure accuracy and minimising the risk of compromised information.
- Data on the casualties of IEDs should be disaggregated so that stakeholders can accurately assess their impact.
- Data should be shared as fully as possible between interested organisations.

UN AGENCIES

- UNAMA should continue working with the Afghan government to ensure that their current data collection and advocacy model is sustainable and replicated if and when they leave Afghanistan.
- UN agencies should look to UNAMA and copy their model elsewhere, such as in Iraq.


10. AOAV will not specifically consider the TWEED database in this report, as it is no longer carrying out data collection. Jan Oskar Engene, “Terrorism in Western Europe: Events Data (TWEED),” TWEED project home page, http://folk.uib.no/sspje/tweed.htm (last accessed 19 December 2014).

11. AOAV recognizes that reports such as the Cluster Munitions Monitor (www.the-monitor.org/index.php/ML/Our-Research-Products/Cluster-Munition-Monitor) and groups such as the Oxford Research Group (www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk) carry out crucial research and reporting regarding casualty counting, however they are not specifically considered in this report.


15. An incident must occur within a 24-hour period, and be reported as occurring in a geographic location which is more specific than simply the country in which it occurred.


30 The only incidents that do not involve the detonation of an IED are the 9/11 attacks in the US, in which ‘airplane’ is recorded as the weapon type.


47 www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2013/apr/12/gdelt-global-database-events-location


61 Initiative type is crucial when assessing civilian casualties, as victim operated devices such as pressure plates can be set off by anyone or anything.


63 For example, military liaison officers are posted to UNAMA.


73 Interviews were carried out with several shura members from a number of rural areas in Southern Afghanistan, where there is Taliban presence and a severe IED threat. The shura members are elders who decide on community affairs. Their identities and precise locations are not given for security reasons.


ACTION ON ARMED VIOLENCE

Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) is a London, based charity that has a central mission: to reduce harm and to rebuild lives affected by armed violence.

We do this by carrying out field work, research and advocacy to reduce the incidence and impact of global armed violence.

The number of fatalities from armed violence is estimated to be over half a million people killed every year. Around two thirds of these violent deaths are estimated to occur outside conflict situations. Poorer countries are particularly badly affected.

We seek to remove the threat of weapons, monitor the impact of explosive weapons around the world and investigate what causes armed violence – from guns to suicide bombings. We aim to clear land of explosive weapons and work with governments to regulate guns.

We work with victims of armed violence, offering psychosocial assistance, providing opportunities to help them earn a living and to try to reduce conflict at local levels.

We work to build communities affected by armed violence, working with governments and measuring and monitoring the incidences and impacts of armed violence around the world.

To contact AOAV please go to our website: www.aoav.org.uk