

# Cross-border Counterterror Operations Database

---

METHODOLOGY: INCLUSION CRITERIA AND VARIABLES

February 3, 2017



# Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction .....  | 3  |
| Overview .....  | 3  |
| Inclusion Criteria .....  | 3  |
| State action against non-state actor(s) .....                   | 3  |
| The act must be a cross-border incident.....                    | 3  |
| The operation must be outside of conventional battlefield ..... | 4  |
| Excluded Cases.....   | 4  |
| Conventional Battlefield?.....                                  | 5  |
| Database Variables .....  | 6  |
| Incident Information .....                                      | 6  |
| Number of Strikes.....  | 6  |
| Rules concerning strike ambiguity.....                          | 7  |
| Extended Incident.....  | 8  |
| Border Conflict.....  | 8  |
| Time of Day.....  | 8  |
| Incident Location.....  | 9  |
| Attacking Country .....   | 9  |
| Country Attacked.....   | 9  |
| Action Information .....  | 9  |
| Action Types .....  | 10 |
| Weapon Information.....   | 12 |
| Weapon Types .....  | 12 |
| Unclear Criteria .....  | 14 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Conflicting Reports .....  | 14 |
| Defaulted Values .....   | 14 |
| Level of Reporting.....  | 15 |
| Targets.....   | 15 |
| Target-Type Classification .....                                     | 15 |
| Object Types .....   | 15 |
| Networks.....  | 17 |
| Fatality Categories.....   | 17 |
| Civilians .....  | 17 |
| Suspected Militants .....  | 18 |
| Unknowns .....   | 18 |
| Counting the Dead .....  | 18 |
| Determining the Range.....   | 19 |
| Primary Source Selection.....  | 19 |
| Related Issues: Indefinite language and multi-strike ambiguity ..... | 21 |
| Source Breakdown .....   | 24 |
| Sources of Information .....   | 24 |
| Number Killed .....  | 24 |
| Target Details.....  | 25 |
| Details Concerning Those Killed .....                                | 25 |
| Type of Press.....   | 26 |
| Appendix I: List of Press Reports by Country/Region .....            | 27 |

# Introduction

## Overview

This document reflects the collection and coding rules for the Cross-border Counterterrorism Operations Database, maintained by the Center for the Study of Targeted Killing (CSTK) at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. CSTK seeks to document all cases of cross-border incidents including targeted killings, capture operations, and other forms of aggression committed by states against non-state actors that occur outside of armed conflicts. This database has been created using publicly available, unclassified source materials. These include media outlets, and to a lesser extent, existing datasets, secondary source materials such as books and journals, and legal documents.

## Inclusion Criteria

In order to consider an incident for inclusion in the database, all three of the following attributes must be present:

### **State action against non-state actor(s)**

The State must be the one carrying out the act and those targeted must be non-state actors (such as terrorist organizations, armed rebel groups, etc.).

### **The act must be a cross-border incident**

The incident must be an operation that is passing, occurring, or performed across a border between two countries.

### *Cross-border Exceptions*

Exceptions to this rule are cases in which the State Actor conducts operations against targets inside contested territory. For example, Israel carrying out strikes in West Bank and Gaza Strip. In such cases we err on the side of inclusion without making assumptions regarding the legal status of the contested territory.

## The operation must be outside of conventional battlefield

This database is limited to operations that do not occur within clear cut and sustained armed conflicts. In cases where there is doubt whether an armed conflict exists, we lean towards inclusion. In the next section we clarify our use of the term “conventional battlefield”.

## Excluded Cases

In order for an incident to be included in the database the operation must be directed at non-state actors. As a result, certain incidents of cross-border violence will not be recorded. More specifically, incidents in which soldiers of the attacking country target people who are not part of an NGO (which could include rebels, guerillas, partisans, etc.) are excluded. Exception to this rule are instances in which the attacking country suspected the target of being a non-state actor prior to the incident taking place. For example, a case where Israeli security guards killed a Palestinian man at the Israel-Gaza border because they *mistook him for a resistance fighter* would be included in the database.

Examples of excluded cases include:

- On Wednesday, 18 September 2013, a Palestinian fisherman was injured and consequently one of his fingers was amputated when Israeli naval troops opened fire at Palestinian fishing boat on board of which 5 fishermen were sailing nearly 6 nautical miles off Gaza Harbor.
- The Israeli forces fired rubber bullets and stun grenades at stone-throwing Palestinians who were protesting against the fierce Israeli clampdown on the city. Israeli soldiers fired tear gas to disperse the demonstrators, injuring a number of them, including a 17-year-old girl.
- The Israeli military have shot dead a Palestinian woman who locals say was mentally ill, near the Gaza-Israel security barrier. The Israeli military said the woman was part of a group that ignored orders to leave the area, at which point they fired at the legs of the group, hitting one.
- A Palestinian man has been shot and wounded by Israeli forces, while collecting stones in a field in the northern part of the besieged Gaza Strip. The Israeli regime confirmed the shooting and said the man along with several others entered a prohibited area.

- A number of Israeli tanks and bulldozers infiltrated into Palestinian-owned lands in the town of Beit Hanoun on Monday , razing Palestinian farmlands and forcing the farmers to leave the area.

## Conventional Battlefield?

By conventional battlefield we refer to hostilities occurring within a legally recognizable armed conflict, whether international and non-international (i.e., civil war). International armed conflict is generally understood to encompass any armed clash between states (i.e., with at least one state fighting on either side). The legal standards for what qualifies as non-international armed conflict are contested, so there is a substantial gray area. We err towards the side of inclusion, and consider a range of indicators, for example, the numbers of people being killed and injured, whether the army is involved, the types of weaponry being used, the number of people being displaced by the fighting, etc. As a rough rule of thumb, where 1000 or more persons are being killed in a year as a result of sustained fighting, we think that there is generally a state of non-international armed conflict. However, we think that this status may also be reached when fewer people are killed, but fighting or violence is regular, involves the army and particularly the use of heavy weapons (artillery bombardments, aerial strikes, etc.), troops being captured and exchanged, temporary ceasefires being negotiated, etc. Given the range of factors which may be considered, and the uncertainty of standards regarding each and all, we think that it is inevitable that there will be disputes over where the threshold of non-international armed conflict is reached. As a general practice, we try to include cases in the grey area, or where the situation on the ground is varying (switching back and forth across the boundary of armed conflict).

# Database Variables

## Incident Information

- Records
- Strikes

When documenting cases of cross-border incidents we display the number of entries in the database (Records) and the number of strikes reported. It is possible for a single Record in our database to represent an incident in which multiple attacks occurred (i.e., a Record with multiple strikes). It is also possible to have a single Record with zero strikes documented. This occurs when recording cross-border incidents that do not involve an attack (e.g., capture operations and intelligence gathering missions).

## Number of Strikes

In general, an operation will be treated as a single event even when involving multiple weapons releases or multiple barrages of missiles or bombs. In some cases, however, when at least two sources from two separate media outlets document a substantial break in the firing of missiles, or barrages, we will distinguish two separate events. To be considered a break in the operation, there must either be evidence that the operations were separated either by geographic distance or time.

Examples of language implying geographic distance between strikes include:

- ‘A drone fired two missiles at a compound in Razmak. Meanwhile, two vehicles were attacked in Datta Khel.’;
- ‘Drones attacked compounds in the villages of Machi Khel and Datta Khel on Friday.’

Examples of language implying a temporal break in the operation include:

- ‘then a few minutes later the drone fired two missiles at the compound’; (2) ‘Sometime after the initial attack, the drone fired at a vehicle in the compound’ (3) ‘Moments after the first attack, people rushing to the scene of the previous attack were fired on by the drone.’

Examples of language that does not imply a break in the operation include:

- 'A drone fired two missiles at a car and then a house in Angoor Adda.'

### Rules concerning strike ambiguity

There are times when the number of strikes cannot be determined from the available information. This usually occurs when a source covers a large operation in which multiple strikes took place but the exact number is never specified. This often tends to be the case when documenting non-U.S. strikes (e.g., Turkish attacks). In such cases, the smallest logical number is catalogued. In determining this we consider two factors:

#### *Number of Targets Hit*

For example, when a report stated:

"Some 70 targets came under fire and our planes, which completed their duties successfully, returned to their bases safely at 3:15 p.m. (1315 GMT)," the [Turkish] military said in statement. It said the raids had begun at around 3 a.m. (2400 GMT Sunday).

- **This is interpreted as at least 70 strikes occurring from 3:00am to 3:15pm.**

#### *Number of Locations Hit*

For example, when a report stated:

Iraqi officials said 10 villages were bombed early on Sunday morning [by Turkish military aircraft], leaving at least one woman dead and two others wounded.

- **This is interpreted as at least 10 strikes occurring as 10 villages were hit.**



When the smallest logical number of strikes cannot be determined from the available information the default value is set to 1.

### Extended Incident

This field is used to record whether or not the duration of a cross-border operation extended more than 24 hours.

**True**     The duration of an incident extended more than 24 hours.

**False**    The duration of an incident extended less than 24 hours.

### Border Conflict

This field is used to record whether or not the operation occurred on or along the border.

**True**     The operation occurred on or along the border.

**False**    The operation did not occur on or along the border.

### Time of Day

- Morning (12am – 11:59am)
- Afternoon (12:00pm – 5:29pm)
- Evening (5:30pm – 7:59pm)
- Night (8:00pm – 11:59pm)
- Unclear

### Incident Location

#### Attacking Country

This field identifies the state launching the operation. It can include additional countries in cases of joint operations.

### *Probability*

In certain cases there may be some uncertainty whether an incident was carried out by the country listed. In such cases, whatever uncertainties surround the data are noted here. If there are no issues regarding the attacking state then this field is left blank.

### **Country Attacked**

This field identifies the country or location where the incident occurred. This includes territories, dependencies, areas of special sovereignty and areas whose status is contested.

When documenting the case we try to breakdown the targeted location into five sections: (1) Country, (2) Region, (3) Division, (4) Subdivision and (5) Locale.

- Country
- Region
- Division
- Subdivision
- Locale

### **Action Information**

This field captures the general method of attack and the type of operation whenever it can be determined. It consists of ten categories, which are defined below. Multiple action types can be recorded for an incident.

When multiple action types apply, the primary mode of attack is coded first followed by the additional values. For example, if a targeted killing operation is carried out through the use of an explosive, the Action Type is first coded as Explosion and then Targeted Killing. More examples are provided below.

When a report stated:

- *Izz Eldine Subhi Sheik Khalil, 42, died instantly in a car bombing.* This is first coded as “Explosion” followed by “Targeted Killing”

- *A drone fired four missiles at militant hideouts killing five people believed to be members of the Afghan Taliban.* This is coded as “Airstrike”
- *Some 300 Turkish troops have crossed over into northern Iraq at 3 a.m. in an overnight operation hunting Kurdish separatist fighters.* This is coded as “Ground Operation”
- *Sayid Isa Jabar Tziam, 31, a senior member of Hamas in the southern Gaza Strip, was killed by IDF sniper fire.* This is first coded as “Shooting” followed by “Targeted Killing”

## Action Types

- Airstrike
- Explosion
- Shelling
- Shooting
- Targeted Killing
- Ground Operation
- Capture Operation
- Intel
- Other
- Unknown

### *Airstrike*

An attack where the primary effects are caused by unmanned aircraft, manned aircraft or cruise missiles. Unless explicitly stated, “Airstrike” is also included as a default value when any of the aforementioned weapons is inserted as a value in the “Weapon” category.

### *Explosion*

An attack where the primary effects are caused by explosives. Unless explicitly stated, “Explosion” is also included as a default value when Explosives is inserted as a value in the “Weapon” category.

### *Shelling*

An attack where the primary effects are caused by artillery and/or tank fire. Unless explicitly stated, “Shelling” is also included as a default value when Artillery and/or tank is inserted as a value in the “Weapon” category.

### *Shooting*

An attack where the primary effects are caused by Firearms. Unless explicitly stated, “Shooting” is also included as a default value when Firearms is inserted as a value in the “Weapon” category.

### *Targeted Killing*

An operation where the primary objective is to kill specific, named persons. This category does not include attacks on non-specific members of a targeted group, or even named individuals, unless there is reason to believe the target was designated in advance.

### *Ground Operation*

This value only applies if ground troops are involved in a cross-border incident. This does not include instances in which cross-border fire occurs but the troops themselves do not enter the targeted state.

### *Capture Operation*

An operation where the primary objective is to capture specific, named persons.

### *Intel*

An operation where the primary objective is to gather intelligence.

### *Other*

If the type of action has been identified but does not fit into one of the above categories it is coded as “Other”.

### *Unknown*

The action type cannot be determined from the available information.

## Weapon Information

Information on the type of weapons used in an operation are recorded for each case.

### Weapon Types

- Drone
- Manned Aircraft
- Cruise Missile
- Explosives
- Artillery
- Tank
- Firearms
- Melee
- Poisoning
- Other
- Unknown

#### *Drone*

Drones are Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) that are piloted remotely.

#### *Manned Aircraft*

All aircraft piloted from inside the vehicle. For countries known to not deploy drones for airstrikes “Manned Aircraft” is inserted as a default value when “Airstrike” is inserted as a value in the Action category.

#### *Explosives*

This value includes grenades, sticky bombs, car bombs and dynamites.

#### *Artillery*

This value includes Field artillery (field guns, Howitzers, etc.), Specialized guns, Mortars, Rockets and Transport-built-in artillery (Tank guns).

### *Firearms*

The use of guns, rifles, machineguns, bazookas, RPGs and other small arms. “Firearms” is inserted as a default value when “Shooting” is inserted as a value in the Action category.

### *Melee*

A weapon that does not involve a projectile in which the user and target are in close contact. Can include Blunt Objects, Hands, Feet, Fists, and Knives.

### *Other*

A weapon that has been identified but does not fit into one of the above categories.

### *Unknown*

The weapon type cannot be determined from the available information.

## Unclear Criteria

This field is used to indicate whether or not the category in question was clearly reported. This criteria is applied when reporting weapon types, action types, names and groups identified in sources.

|              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| <b>True</b>  | It was clear.   |
| <b>False</b> | It was unclear. |

In certain cases there may be some uncertainty whether a particular weapon was deployed or a type of action took place. For example, when incidents are being reported sources may attribute the attack to drones while others claim it was launched by a manned aircraft. In these ambiguous cases, the most probable weapon and/or action type is selected but it would also be marked as unclear. For example, in cases of possible drone attacks online users would see the weapon field coded as “Drone” followed by an exclamation point indicating that it was **unclear** which weapons were used. When evaluating the categories to determine if it should be marked as “unclear” we consider three factors:

## Conflicting Reports

If there are conflicting reports regarding the type of weapon and/or action the most probable type is selected while also being marked as unclear.

## Defaulted Values

In certain cases a default value is selected depending on the situation. For example, whenever “Shooting” is inserted as an action variable “Firearms” is the default value for Weapon types. In another example, when evaluating Turkish cases where “Airstrike” is inserted as an action variable “Manned Aircraft” is the default value. The underlying assumption in this example is that the Turkish military is not deploying drones to strike targets so the aircraft is assumed to be manned. Overall, anytime Default values are used we also mark them as unclear. **Note:** This criteria only applies when selecting weapon types.

## Level of Reporting

To be certain that a particular weapon was deployed to conduct an operation we require at least two sources from two different media outlets reporting the type of weapon before it is deemed credible. Exceptions to this rule are cases in which the attacking state confirms the type of weapon used. For example, if the Turkish military releases a statement claiming their jets struck targets in Iraq and it is the only source documented in the incident it is still considered credible. **Note:** This criteria only applies when selecting weapon types.

## Targets

### Target-Type Classification

In practice, it is often not possible to know what the target was for a strike, as the intended targets are not released on a consistent basis. The best that we can do in most cases is to offer educated guesses. When a high value target (HVT) is reported killed in a strike, for example, we generally assume that that HVT was the primary target. When sources identify the targets as associated with a specific network, we identify that network as the target. When sources

suggests that those killed were associated with multiple networks we list each of those networks beginning with that connected with the most senior militant.

## Object Types

- Compound
- Vehicle
- Religious Institution
- Telecommunication
- Gatherings
- Marketplace
- Weapon Depot
- Other
- Unknown

### *Compound*

This value covers attacks on houses, hujras, training camps, shelters, hideouts, and caves. This does not include attacks on madrassas and other objects related to religious institutions.

### *Vehicle*

This value includes attacks on cars, motorbikes, trucks, and other transportation related objects (bicycles, horses, etc.). It can also include individuals accompanying vehicles.

### *Religious Institution*

This value includes attacks on religious institutions (mosques, churches, madrassas, etc.).

### *Telecommunication*

This includes attacks on facilities and infrastructure for the transmission of information. More specifically this value includes things like communication centers.



### *Gatherings*

This value includes attacks against ceremonial events. This includes Funerals, Weddings, Religious events and other types of special occasions. This does not include attacks occurring in a marketplace.

### *Marketplace*

This value includes any attacks against targets in a marketplace or shopping quarter. This includes bazaars. This does not include any subcategories related to “Gatherings”.

### *Weapons Depot*

Other names included in this category are: Ammunition Supply Point (ASP), Ammunition Handling Area (AHA), Ammunition Dump, Ammunition Stores, Weapon Stores, Weapons Caches, Ammunition Depot, Storage Site and Weapons Storage Facility.

### *Other*

This value includes operations against targets which do not fit into other categories. Some examples include check-point, and terrorist positions (or positions held by terrorists). It can also include attacks on a person (or persons) in public space that is not inside a compound or vehicle (for example, men traveling on foot or outside a building).

### *Unknown*

The target type cannot be determined from the available information.

## **Networks**

This field contains the name of the group that was targeted and/or the affiliation (network) of those killed. In order to ensure consistency in the usage of group names for the database, we use the standardized list of group names found in the Big Allied and Dangerous (BAAD) dataset (<http://www.start.umd.edu/baad/database>) and the Global Terrorism Database.

If no information about the targeted group is available, this field is left blank.

### *Subgroups*

When a faction within an umbrella organization is targeted both the faction and overall group is recorded. For example, when a report stated:

- That “five members of the Al-Quds Brigades, Islamic Jihad's armed wing, were killed” then we recorded both Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and al-Quds Brigades in the database.

## **Fatality Categories**

### **Civilians**

All of those killed unequivocally described as civilians, bystanders, or locals uninvolved in the fighting were categorized as "civilians". Also classified in the group of "civilians" were all women and children under the age of 15 who were not expressly identified as taking part in militant activities. More details on our classification of children is provided below.

### *Children*

As noted above, CSTK considers all those who are fourteen or under as children. The rationale here is that the Geneva Conventions set fifteen as the legal minimum age for recruitment into armed forces and for participation in hostilities, so it makes sense to allow for at least the possibility that those over the age of fourteen could legally be combatants. Moreover, this standard corresponds with what is generally meant by describing someone as a child in everyday speech, and correspondingly matches the impression (or image) that is conveyed by a report that a child has been killed or injured.

### **Suspected Militants**

Where an individual killed was identified explicitly as "Taliban", "terrorist", "suspected terrorist", "foreign fighter", "extremists", "suspected militant", or "militant" they were catalogued as "suspected militants".

## Unknowns

If it was impossible to determine whether an individual killed was accurately categorized as a suspected militant or a civilian they were placed into the category of unknowns.

### *Neutral term*

When reporting an incident media outlets will sometimes use neutral terminology when describing those killed. Neutral terms are descriptions that fail to clarify whether an individual killed was a suspected militant or a civilian (like the term ‘people’). In these cases, the casualties are placed into the category of unknowns. Similarly, terms like “local tribesman” do not indicate whether or not the person described is also a local militant. In this scenario, we have also interpreted “tribesman” as a neutral term, like “people,” and not a claim that the casualties were “civilians” or that they were “militants.”

## Counting the Dead

When classifying casualties resulting from an operation we provide the (1) range of people reported killed in an attack and more precise numbers based on the (2) aggregate primary source.

### Determining the Range

The range is created using the lowest and highest number of deaths reported. Each incident has a total death toll (or range) and then specific sub-counts for “suspected militants,” “civilians,” and “unknowns.”

### Primary Source Selection

In examining each strike, we compared the existing news accounts and chose the one which was most detailed, well referenced and updated, referring to it as the primary source. It is from these primary sources that our main datasets are drawn (although our textual descriptions of each strike include many of the pertinent details offered in other sources). The selection of primary sources was based on three criteria from the source breakdowns: first, the amount of detail concerning the attack and the identity of those killed (including locations, names, backgrounds, and associations); second, the range of sources cited (such as government

officials, militants, local officials, eyewitnesses); and third, the most updated information (in particular, newly emergent details and delayed effects such as when those injured in strikes later die).

In instances where no single source provided a clearly best overview of a strike based on all, or at least most, of these criteria, multiple primary sources were chosen. This was done usually for three reasons: (1) A high-value target was reported to have been killed in an attack, but the article outlining that death did not exhaustively describe the strike; (2) No single source provided all of the major data points for each strike, requiring a second primary source to fill in the gaps in the information; (3) An updated report gave important additional details but did not cover all of the key points identified in an earlier article, resulting in those two articles together providing the most detailed account. When classifying the fatalities from our primary sources, we always used low-end estimates of suspected militants killed and high-end estimates of civilians.

### *Varying Accounts*

When numerous reports vary within the primary source(s) we seek out the most credible account. The most credible account is determined by two criteria: (1) the level of detail offered; (2) variety of sources that agree with the same account (government, militant, and local). In the rare circumstance that no account in the primary source is clearly the most credible, the following special rules apply:

- The strike details will note that the varying accounts were not reconcilable based on the normal criteria;
- If all accounts claim that those killed are suspected militants, the lowest reported statistic is used;
- If all accounts claim that those killed were civilians, the highest reported statistic is used;
- If all accounts claim that those killed were "people" (or another ambiguous term), they are counted as "unknowns" and the highest reported statistic is used;

- If one account claims that all of those killed were suspected militants, while another claims that all were civilians, the highest reported number of dead will be added to the unknowns category;
- If one account claims that those killed were all civilians, while another claims that some of those killed were militants, the number of alleged suspected militants will be considered unknowns (since accounts conflict) and the remainder as civilians.

For Example

- Account 1 - "Seven civilians were killed"
- Account 2 - "Two of those killed were militants"
- CSTK's Classification: Seven total killed, 5 civilians, and two unknowns.

If one account claims that those killed were all suspected militants, while another claims that some of those killed were civilians, the number of claimed civilians will be considered unknowns (since accounts conflict) and the remainder as suspected militants.

- Account 1 - "Seven militants were killed"
- Account 2 - "Two of those killed were civilians"
- CSTK's Classification: Seven total killed, 5 suspected militants, and two unknowns.

## Related Issues: Indefinite language and multi-strike ambiguity

There are two overarching issues of the classification and counting of casualties which require comment, in particular indefinite language and multi-strike ambiguity. Both of these topics are discussed below.

### *Rules concerning indefinite language*

When the primary source uses indefinite language concerning a group of individuals who have been killed, but then refers to some civilians or militants (as per the foregoing definitions), the

smallest logical number is catalogued for that category, the rest are categorized as unknowns.

Common instances of indefinite language alongside their interpretations include:

- Plural form is used (without any specific number): interpreted as two;
- A couple: interpreted as two;
- Some: interpreted as two;
- Several: interpreted as three;
- A few: interpreted as three;
- Most: interpreted as the lowest number of dead that accounts for more than 50% of the total killed.

For example, when a report stated:

- that "eight people were killed, including militants" then we classified those killed as 2 suspected militants and 6 unknowns;
- that "eight people were killed, including a couple of militants" then we classified those killed as 2 suspected militants and 6 unknowns;
- that "eight people were killed, including some civilians" then we classified those killed as 2 civilians and 6 unknowns;
- that "eight people were killed, including several militants" then we classified those killed as 3 suspected militants and 5 unknowns;
- that "eight people were killed, including a few militants" then we classified those killed as 3 suspected militants and 5 unknowns;
- that "eight people were killed, most of whom were civilians" then classified those killed as 5 civilians and 3 unknowns.

A couple of actual examples and the reasoning for their classification include:

- Seventeen people were killed. A security official said "some" of the dead were suspected members of Al-Qaeda, but "most" of those killed were civilian members of the Al-Tays and Al-Ameri clans. – Here we would first find that to meet the 'most' qualification, the civilian count must be at least nine. Next, we would classify 'some' militants as two suspected militants. Finally, we would classify the remaining six people as unknowns for a result of two suspected militants, nine civilians, and six unknowns;
- An official said three suspected al-Qaida militants were killed. Local tribal leaders said several children were also killed – First, we would classify the three suspected al-Qaida militants as suspected militants. Next we would interpret 'several' children as three children for a total of three suspected militants and three civilians killed.

#### *Rules concerning multi-strike ambiguity*

There are two issues to note in the classification of fatalities in cases where multiple strikes are reported in the same article (multi-strike reports). The first issue relates to instances where fatality statistics are not offered for individual strikes in a multi-strike case. The second issue concerns sources in which details concerning the militant or civilian status of the dead are offered for the combined death toll, but such descriptors are not given for each strike.

#### *Merge casualty data and strikes into one Record*

In some multi-strike reports, separate fatality data is not offered. In these instances, the strike details, including the combined fatalities, will be added to the database as a single Record which represents the total number of strikes and overall death toll. For example, if it is reported that 10 suspected militants and 8 civilians were killed in five strikes one Record would be added to the database. In this single Record, the combined death toll (10 suspected militants and 8 civilians) and the number of strikes (5) would be documented. This explains why users may see a difference in the number of records returned and the total number of strikes documented when searching through our database.

The second issue concerns cases where the total fatalities are described as including militants and civilians, but the dead are described as people in each case. For example:

At least 18 suspected militants and civilians were killed on Tuesday, official sources said:

- 1st strike: Local officials said that two missiles were fired at two suspected compounds killing four people;
- 2nd strike: Local people were searching the place for survivors when the drone fired two missiles, killing four more people and injuring three others;
- 3rd strike: A pickup truck carrying the wounded people from Ghulam Khan was targeted near another abandoned refugee camp called Nawab camp. Two missiles were fired in which four people were killed;
- 4th strike: Sources said that two cars were heading towards the destroyed truck when the drone fired another volley of missiles, leaving another six people dead

In this instance, we would also create a single Record with a total of four strikes documented. With regard to the status of those killed, we would classify the fatalities for the source report based on the lowest logical number for both militants and civilians - in this case, two suspected militants and two civilians, with the remaining 14 as unknowns.

## Source Breakdown

In order to perform stable and consistent analysis, each source for each strike includes a source breakdown. This source breakdown contains all of the pertinent details to a strike offered by a specific source. The source breakdown contains eight elements: source name, link, date, source of information relating to target, relating to those killed, the reporting of numbers (number of suspected militants, number of civilians, number of missiles, etc.) on the site and the type of press.

- **Source Name:** The name of the publication outlet will be placed on the top-left corner of each strike breakdown
- **Link:** The source name on the top-left of each source breakdown will also serve as a link to the source



- **Date:** The date of publication for the source (where available) will appear to the right of the source name/link

## Sources of Information

This field records all the source types that made claims about the strike in the news report.

Source types include U.S. or Pakistani intelligence officials, local officials, local residents, Taliban spokespersons, reporters, local doctors, eyewitnesses, etc. When identifying source types we only noted those who offered details related to the incident (not those who discussed other events in the report).

## Number Killed

Here we insert the numbers reported in the news outlet that was being analyzed:

- **People:** The total number of killed was inserted in this field
- **Suspected Militants:** The number of suspected militants was inserted in this field
- **Civilians:** The number of civilians killed was inserted in this field
- **Children:** The number of children killed was inserted in this field
- **Unknowns:** The number of unknowns killed was inserted in this field
- **High Value Targets:** The number of HVTs killed was inserted in this field

## Target Details

This section has five specific areas that we attempt to fill out:

- **Location:** This field will be used to display the location of the strike that was reported in the given article
- **Time:** This field will be used to display the time the incident took place. Some articles reported the exact time (ex. 9:00 PM), but often the source would give a general time of day, such as “evening”, “afternoon”, “morning”, “early in the day” and so forth.

- **Type of Target:** This field does not focus on the individuals but rather the perceived target-type (i.e., compound, vehicle). Vehicle would be considered the type of target in the following instance: 'six suspected members of Osama Bin Laden's al-Qaeda network were killed while travelling in a jeep.'
- **Details on Type of Target:** When further details were provided concerning the type of target, they were inserted into this field. Using the above example, a hypothetical input for this section would be 'arms, traces of explosives and communications equipment were found in the wrecked jeep.'
- **Additional Details:** This category is intended for details that were related to the incident, but did not fit into any of the other categories. For example in this field we would insert "Abu Hamza Rabia had escaped a similar attack at his location in Mosaki in Mirali on Nov 5." This detail is unrelated to the type of target. Additionally, it is unrelated to those individuals killed as it discusses a target escaping a drone attack. Other details included are details concerning those injured the strike.

## Details Concerning Those Killed

This section has two specific areas that we attempt to fill out:

- **Status of Casualties:** Three potential status IDs can be inserted for this strike: (1) Suspected Militants; (2) Civilians; and (3) Unknowns.
- **Additional Details:** When further details are provided concerning the individuals killed in an attack it is inserted into this field. This section is concerned with details related to those killed and, additionally, concerned with what they were doing in the moments leading up to the strike. If the ethnicity of those killed is specified, or if the report mentions foreigners were among those killed, it is inserted into this section.

## Type of Press

We also distinguish sources by country and/or region. If the source is not a news outlet it is coded as "Other". An example of how certain news outlets are coded is provided below (see Appendix I for a more comprehensive list):

**Pakistani Press:** *Geo News, Dawn, Daily Times, The Nation (Islamabad)*

**U.S. Press:** *Associated Press, New York Times, Washington Post*

**European Press:** *The Guardian, Financial Times, Der Spiegel, AFP*

*Source Origin: Handling Duplicates*

When coding news outlets we always try to identify the original source. For example, news articles will sometimes rely on wire services like AP and AFP when covering an incident. In these cases we breakdown the news article by the original content. For instance, if the media outlet is Dawn but it is sourcing AP for its content we code it as “U.S. Press”. We make a distinction however, between an article completely sourcing a wire service and an article mixing other wire services to their own original content.

## Appendix I: List of Press Reports by Country/Region

| U.S. Press   | Pakistani Press  | European Press   |
|--|--|--|
| The Associated Press<br>the Los Angeles Times<br>The New York Times<br>The Washington Post<br>The Wall Street Journal<br>NBC News<br>Time<br><br>Voice of America (VOA)<br>Bloomberg News<br>Cable News Network (CNN)<br>Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS News)<br>United Press International, Inc (UPI)<br>Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN)<br>International Business Times<br>The Christian Science Monitor<br>The Atlantic | Geo News<br>Dawn<br>The Daily Times<br>The Nation (Islamabad)<br>The News International<br>The Express Tribune<br>Pakistan Tribune<br><br>Pakistan Today<br>Tribal News Network<br>Newsweek Pakistan | The Guardian<br>The Economist<br>The Financial Times<br>Der Spiegel<br>Agence France-Presse (AFP)<br>Reuters<br>British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)<br>Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty<br>Sunday Times<br>The Telegraph<br>Financial Times (FT)<br><br>Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA) |
| Chinese Press  | Indian Press   | Yemeni Press   |
| Xinhua<br>China Daily<br>People's Daily Online   | Press Trust of India<br>Indo-Asian News Service (IANS)<br>The Hindu  | Yemen Post<br>Marib Press<br>Almasdar Online<br>Saba News Agency (SABA)  |
| Turkish Press  | African Press  | Israeli Press  |
| Anadolu Agency<br>Hurriyet Daily News  | Shabelle Media Network<br>eNCA<br>Ghana News Agency  | Haaretz<br>Y Net News<br>Jerusalem Post  |

|                                |                           |   |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
|                                |                           | Times of Israel<br>Jewish Telegraphic Agency<br>Israel National News                            |
| <b>Qatari Press</b>            | <b>U.A.E. Press</b>       | <b>Palestinian Press</b>  |
| Al Jazeera                     | Al Arabiya<br>Gulf News   | Ma'an News Agency<br>Palestine News Network (PNN)<br>Palestine Chronicles<br>All Voices<br>Wafa |
| <b>Russian Press</b>           | <b>Kuwait Press</b>       | <b>Iranian Press</b>  |
| Russia Today (RT)<br>Pravda.ru | Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) | Press TV  |