

Explosive Violence: January 2012

The data presented in this report is based on information gathered by AOAV's Explosive Violence Monitoring Project (EVMP). The data presented does not claim to capture every casualty or incident of explosive violence, but is indicative of the scale and scope of explosive weapon use.

Casualties and incidents

Total incidents	191
Incidents in populated areas ¹	121
Total casualties ²	2,727
Total killed	985
Total injured	1,742
Civilian ³ casualties	2,195 (80%)
Total civilians killed	706
Total civilians injured	1,489
% of casualties in populated areas who were civilians	90%
% of casualties in other areas who were civilians	45%

Country	Civilian casualties	Armed actor casualties	Number of incidents
Iraq	899	97	65
Syria	296	56	17
Pakistan	250	58	25
Afghanistan	178	94	35
Nigeria	157	33	3
Libya	94	0	2
Somalia	71	139	11
Sudan	42	0	2
DRC	36	16	1
India	35	6	9

Countries affected by explosive violence in January

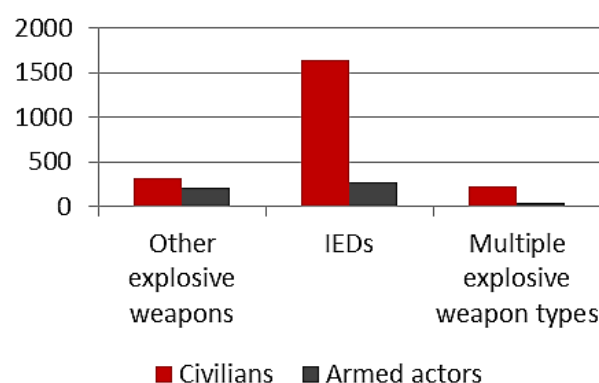
Iraq

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were responsible for a high number of the civilian casualties recorded by the EVMP in January. IEDs caused 75% of the recorded civilian casualties of explosive violence. This is a significant increase compared with the overall percentage of civilians who the EVMP recorded killed or injured by IEDs during 2011 (55%).

Many of these casualties occurred in Iraq, every recorded civilian fatality from explosive violence in the last month was caused by IEDs (219 civilian deaths were reported). This was in large part due to a series of bombings which killed and injured Shiite pilgrims as they travelled to the city of Karbala and other holy sites in the south of the country.

In one of the worst incidents, 53 civilians were killed on 14 January as they walked to a shrine on the outskirts of the southern city of Basra.⁴ Witnesses and officials claimed that the blast, which also injured 137 people, occurred when a man detonated an explosive vest next to a police checkpoint in the town of al-Zubair.⁵

Total casualties by explosive weapon type



A government employee who had been part of the public procession described the aftermath of the explosion, saying "I saw several dead bodies and wounded people, including children on the ground asking for help. There were also some baby strollers left behind at the blast site."⁶ Forty-five people were killed in a similar explosion earlier in the month,

when an IED was detonated amongst a large crowd of pilgrims who had gathered at a roadside rest stop near the city of Nasiriya on 5 January.⁷

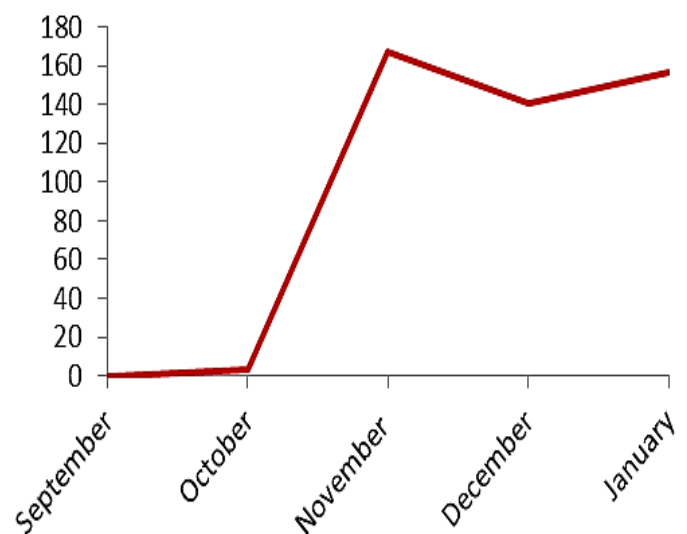
The annual pilgrimages in January have been routinely targeted by IED attacks that cause extremely large numbers of civilian deaths and injuries. Pilgrims were reported among the casualties in ten incidents of explosive violence in the last month. In those ten incidents 371 civilian casualties were recorded, representing 41% of the 899 civilian casualties that were reported in all incidents of explosive violence in Iraq this January. The EVMP recorded a similar pattern of harm in the same period last year. January 2011 also saw particularly high numbers of civilian casualties in Iraq, and at least a quarter of the 998 civilian casualties of explosive violence were reported as pilgrims.⁸

Nigeria

On 20 January a series of bombs and shootings left 186 people dead in the Nigerian city of Kano. There were no reports of how many people were left injured. Boko Haram claimed responsibility for the coordinated attacks which involved more than 25 explosions at locations throughout the city including police stations, a secret police headquarters, and immigration offices. Thirty three of those killed were described as security personnel. Shortly after the attacks police reported finding hundreds more IEDs, including ten car bombs.⁹ A week later it was reported that hundreds of fearful parents were keeping their children out of schools,¹⁰ and many people have fled the town.¹¹

The EVMP has recorded an escalation of violence in Nigeria in the last three months, with 465 civilian casualties recorded from explosive violence since 1 November 2011. The incident recorded in Kano is the third coordinated attack since November involving widespread explosive weapon use by Boko Haram. IED attacks on churches and banks in Damataru on 4 November killed 148 people, and the bombing of a Christmas mass ceremony in Madalla left 94 people dead and injured. A spokesperson for the United Nations Secretary-General described how *“the Secretary-General is appalled at the frequency and intensity of recent attacks in Nigeria, which demonstrate a wanton and unacceptable disregard for human life.”*¹²

Civilian casualties from explosive violence in Nigeria since September 2011



Libya

On 15 and 16 January militias from the two neighbouring towns of Gharyan and Assabia near Tripoli fired at one and other with artillery, rockets, mortars, and tank shells, killing and injuring 94 people. The commander of the Gharyan council claimed that Assabia fighters ‘fired 120 rockets yesterday at us. Today they are using rocket launchers and there is an exchange of fire. Some houses were damaged.’¹³ These are the first casualties from explosive violence in Libya that the EVMP has recorded since 13 November 2011.

The presence of large numbers of explosive weapons outside of state control in Libya continued to be a threat to both national and regional security. On 31 October, the United Nations Security Council singled out the proliferation of man-portable surface-to-air missiles (MANPADS) as a concern, particularly as they could be used to fuel terrorist activities in the region.¹⁴ The US State Department claimed on 2 February that of the 20,000 MANPADS present in Libya before the collapse of Gaddafi’s regime, only 5,000 have been accounted for.¹⁵

Explosive Violence Developments- January 2012

The United Nations condemned the aerial bombing of a refugee transit centre in South Sudan which injured a boy and disrupted humanitarian operations.¹⁶

The Turkish government agreed to provide compensation for the families of 35 civilians who were mistakenly killed in an air strike in the village of Uludere on 28 December 2011.¹⁷

Monitoring of satellite images identified an apparent artillery barrage in a town in South Kordofan, Sudan.¹⁸

President Obama acknowledged the US’ use of drones in Pakistan saying, *“drones have not caused a large amount of civilian casualties [...]”*¹⁹

Explosive Violence Monitoring Project (EVMP)

Methodology: Information is gathered from English-language news sources on incidents of explosive violence with at least one reported casualty. The EVMP uses an RSS reader to scan Google news for key terms which relate to explosive weapon use: *explosion *grenade *shell * mortar * cluster munitions *cluster bomb *mine *rocket *missile *bombing *bomb *IED *explosive *artillery *air strike. Information is extracted on: the date, time, and location of the incident; the number and status of people killed and injured; the weapon type; the reported user and target; the detonation method and whether displacement or damage to the location was reported. The EVMP is not an attempt to comprehensively capture all incidents of explosive violence around the world but to serve as a useful indicator of the scale and pattern of harm. Direct casualties are just one aspect of the impact of explosive weapons in populated areas. Damage to civilian infrastructure, psychological and socio-economic impacts on individuals and communities, and the danger of UXO are seldom reported in news sources. Further information on the EVMP is available [here](#).

¹ Incidents are designated as occurring in populated areas if: a) It is stated in the source (e.g. a busy street, a crowded market etc); b) If an incident occurs in or near a pre-defined location which is likely to contain concentrations of civilians: Commercial premises, Entertainment venues, Hospitals, Hotels, Encampments (IDPs, Refugees, Nomads), Markets, Places of worship, Police stations, Public gatherings, Public buildings, Public transport, Schools, Town centres, Urban residential neighbourhoods, Villages/ compounds. Other locations recorded include: Agricultural area, Armed Base, Road, and Transport-related infrastructure. Incidents which occurred in these locations are recorded as 'Populated area' if details of the media report state that they were located in or next to any of the locations classified as likely to be populated. If there is insufficient or unclear information, then it is recorded as 'Unclear', and combined with the 'Not reported as populated area' category for analysis.

² The EVMP uses the term 'casualties' to refer to both deaths and injuries.

³ Actors are defined as civilians if they are not identifiable in reports either as armed actors or security personnel.

⁴ 'Suicide bombing hits Shiite pilgrims at major ritual in Iraq, 53 killed,' *Xinhua*, Baghdad, 15 January 2012, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-01/15/c_131360598.htm, (accessed 16 February 2012)

⁵ 'Bomb kills dozens of Shia pilgrims in south Iraq,' *Associated Press* hosted in *The Guardian*, 14 January 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/14/bomb-kills-shia-pilgrims-iraq>, (accessed 16 February 2012)

⁶ Majid Hussein, quoted in *Associated Press*, 'Bomb kills dozens of Shia pilgrims in south Iraq,' hosted in *The Guardian*, 14 January 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/14/bomb-kills-shia-pilgrims-iraq>, (accessed 16 February 2012)

⁷ Raheem Salman and Alexandra Zavis, 'Iraq bombings targeting Shiites kill 71,' *Los Angeles Times*, 5 January 2012, <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jan/05/world/la-fg-iraq-bombings-20120106>, (accessed 17 February 2012)

⁸ John Leland, 'Car Bombings Kill Dozens on Pilgrims' Route in Iraq,' *The New York Times*, Baghdad, 20 January 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/21/world/middleeast/21iraq.html?>, (accessed 16 February 2012)

⁹ Kolade Adeyemi, 'Police: 10 bomb-laden vehicles found in Kano,' *The Nation*, 24 January 2012, <http://www.thenationonlineeng.net/2011/index.php/news/34359-police-10-bomb-laden-vehicles-found-in-kano.html> (accessed 17 February 2012)

¹⁰ Mark Lobel, 'Nigeria schools empty after Nigeria attacks,' *BBC*, Kano, 28 January 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16763960> (accessed 17 February 2012)

¹¹ 'Boko Haram Bombings: Igbo Flee Kano,' *PM News*, 23 January 2012, <http://pmnewsnigeria.com/2012/01/23/boko-haram-bombings-igbo-flee-kano/> (accessed 17 February 2012)

¹² 'Nigeria death toll exceeds 150,' *Associated Press*, 17 February 2012, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2012/01/22/nigeria-sunday.html> (accessed 17 February 2012)

¹³ Mahmoud Habboush, 'Two killed and 36 hurt in Libyan clashes,' *Reuters*, 15 January 2012, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/01/15/libya-militia-idINDEE80E01020120115> (accessed 17 February 2012)

¹⁴ United Nations Security Council Resolution 2017 (2011), 31 October 2011, <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Libya%20S%20RES%202017.pdf> (accessed 17 February 2012)

¹⁵ Kate Brannen, "U.S. still hunting for missing Libyan MANPADS", *Defense News*, 2 February (2012) <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120202/DEFREG02/302020009/U-S-Still-Hunting-Missing-Libyan-MANPADS> (accessed 17 February 2012)

¹⁶ Mireille Girard, UNHCR, quoted in 'South Sudan: UN condemns refugee camp air raid,' *BBC*, 24 January 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16705278>, (accessed 17 February 2012)

¹⁷ Ahmet Dönmez, 'Compensation for Uludere victims totals TL 150,000,' *Today's Zaman*, Ankara, 20 January 2012, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-269144-compensation-for-uludere-victims-totals-tl-150000.html>, (accessed 17 February 2012)

¹⁸ 'Checkpoint: Evidence of SAF control of refugee routes to South Sudan,' *Satellite Sentinel Project*, Human Security Alert, 27 January 2012, <http://www.satsentinel.org/sites/default/files/SSP%2025%20Checkpoint%20012712.pdf>, (accessed 20 February 2012)

¹⁹ Barack Obama, quoted in 'Barack Obama admits US drone strikes on Pakistan,' *The Telegraph*, 31 January 2012, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/9050993/Barack-Obama-admits-US-drone-strikes-on-Pakistan.html>, (accessed 20 February 2012)