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<http://news.antiwar.com/2015/01/01/76000-estimated-killed-in-syrian-war-in-2014/print/>

76,000 Estimated Killed in Syrian War in 2014

By Jason Ditz

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The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a pro-rebel mouthpiece based in London, has issued an assessment of the annual death toll in the nation's ever-growing civil war, estimating 76,021 killed nationwide.

The Observatory broke down their figures by faction, as well, showing that no group was particularly spared in the conflict, finding 22,627 killed were soldiers or members of pro-government militias, with some 17,000 hardcore Islamists slain, 15,000 from more moderate rebel factions, and 17,790 civilians.

The breakdown is likely to be far more controversial than the overall toll, as different factions inevitably have wildly different definitions of civilians, and auxiliary militias stuffed into those figures are often really just able-bodied men seen as supportive of a faction.

2014 saw the war increasingly divided among factions, with ISIS growing into a huge faction, but finding itself targeted by rival rebels early on. By the end of summer, they'd more or less defeated all those rivals, retaking lost territory and then some.

The insinuation of the United States into the war in the fall added yet another faction to the conflict, and saw the moderate rebels, seen as pro-US, sustaining major losses when al-Qaeda began being targeted by the US and turned on them in retaliation.

As it stands, Syria's government holds the southwest, al-Qaeda's Nusra Front holds much of the northwest, and ISIS holds virtually the entire east, apart from tiny Kurdish holdings in the far northeast. Moderate factions have less territory still, only a handful of towns in the northwest, and a few holdings along the Jordanian border in the south.