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American Genocide In The Middle East: Three Million and Counting

by David Goodner

Deaths directly and indirectly attributable to the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq have neared one million people, a body count higher than the genocides in Rwanda and Sudan combined, according to a new report released by [Just Foreign Policy](#).

That brings the U.S. caused death count in the Middle East to over three million people, and that's not even counting fatalities in Afghanistan or Palestine.

The Just Foreign Policy report is an update to two controversial studies published by the prestigious British medical journal the Lancet. In 2003, the Lancet reported over 100,000 excess deaths in Iraq were attributal to the U.S. invasion. That study may be read [here](#).

In 2006, the Lancet updated their study and found over 600,000 excess deaths in Iraq since the U.S. invasion. That study may be read [here](#).

The killing of Iraqis since the U.S. invasion includes violence caused by the overwhelming air and ground power of U.S. military forces, mortalities caused by the destruction of civilian infrastructure, and disappearances and murders caused by sectarian conflict and internal power struggles among different Iraqi factions.

The report's methodology is controversial because it bypasses the normal model of death verification - which requires documenting each and every individual body tallied by governments, hospitals, and morgues - and instead uses a model first developed to estimate deaths caused by earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, and other natural disasters, where bodies are often never found.

Many defenders of the occupation of Iraq claim that a withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq would spark a genocide as sectarian conflict and civil war escalated out of control. Indeed, violence may increase temporarily in the short term following a U.S. withdrawal. Nature abhors a vacuum and competition among Iraqi factions for power may increase as they rush to fill the void.

However, what is clear is that the U.S. invasion and continuing occupation of Iraq in and of itself constitutes a kind of genocide. American economic sanctions against Iraq in the 1990s killed one million civilians, [according to a 2003 study by the Centre for Population Studies](#). And the U.S. funded both sides of the Iran/Iraq war in the 1980's, contributing to well over one million Arab and Persian casualties, according to Farhang Rajaei in a 1993 article published by the University of Florida titled *The Iran-Iraq war: the politics of aggression*.

Now an additional 996,836 Iraqis have been killed since the U.S. invasion in 2003. The instability and sectarian conflict were stoked by this unilateral, preemptive, and illegal invasion, and there is little hope of the internal conflict ending while Iraq is under foreign military occupation.

This situation is historically similar to the colonial period, where infighting between African and other indigenous tribes around the globe increased because of the havoc wreaked by colonial powers and their divide-and-conquer strategies.

Indeed, the seeds of conflict and disputes between ethnic groups, e.g. in Rwanda, were planted by Western colonialism. People of color around the world reap what we sow.

The immediate future of Iraq looks grim, with solutions ranging from bad to worse. Our only hope of ending the senseless violence is an unconditional and immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq, followed by some kind of responsible assistance by the U.N. and Arab peacekeeping forces.

If the Iraqis have to go to civil war to sort out the mess that our government has left them in, let them. It will eventually burn itself out like in Lebanon and, without any further interference from the West besides reconstruction and reparations, the Iraqis will be able to begin rebuilding their devastated country.

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