

The War on Terror Led to over 4.5 million Deaths

America's post-9/11 wars have led to more than 4.5 million deaths, according to a major new report from the Costs of War Project at Brown University. Roughly 1 million of these deaths came from direct combat in war zones across Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Somalia, and Yemen, while the remaining 3.5 million are "indirect deaths" that resulted from the conflicts' "destruction of economies, public services, and the environment," according to the report. The sobering findings highlight the long-term effects of the Global War on Terror, which has been the deadliest fight of the 21st century so far. The death toll, which Brown researchers described as a "reasonable and conservative estimate," rivals that of major post-WWII conflicts, including the wars in Korea and Vietnam. "In a place like Afghanistan, the pressing question is whether any death can today be considered unrelated to war," said Stephanie Savell, the report's author, in a statement. "Wars often kill far more people indirectly than in direct combat, particularly young children." Savell explained on Twitter that, while each war has complex causes, she chose to include conflicts where "U.S. counterterrorism has played a vital role in at the very least intensifying the violence."

General Elections Bode Well for Ruling Alliance in Presidency and Legislature

Turkey's presidential election will go to a runoff in two weeks after incumbent President Recep Tayyip Erdogan won 49.5% of the vote, opposition challenger Kemal Kilicdaroglu won 44.89%, and ultra-nationalist Sinan Ogan won 5.17%. In the National Assembly, according to preliminary results, the ruling People's Alliance coalition gained 321 seats, the opposition Nation Alliance coalition won 213 seats, and the opposition Labor and Freedom Alliance coalition won 66 seats. Despite polling that indicated greater likely gains for the opposition, the current results mean Erdogan and his ruling coalition are likely to retain their control over the presidency and the legislature, as many of Ogan's supporters will likely turn to Erdogan during the May 28 run-off. However, this is the first time a Turkish presidential election has gone to a second round, indicating that support for Erdogan has slipped over time. If Erdogan does win the election, he will be positioned to approve Sweden's bid to join NATO by July's summit. Although social media swirled with rumors that ballot counting was being deliberately delayed in opposition areas, the opposition levied no major accusations of fraud or vote stealing.