



RESEARCH BRIEF

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Data in Brief

- Three years of data (2018–20)
- Top global perpetrator of terrorist incidents
- Deadliest terrorist organization in the world
- Suffers significant casualties among perpetrators of the incidents

The Taliban has sustained a high level of violence directed toward law enforcement and national military.

Profile: The Taliban

The Taliban was the most prolific and deadliest terrorist organization over the previous three years. The incidents committed by the Taliban are spread across Afghanistan, with the largest concentrations in the Kunduz (7.9 percent), Faryab (7.7 percent), Kandahar (6.8 percent), and Ghazni (6.2 percent) provinces. In 2020 the Taliban was responsible for 1,330 terrorist incidents and 7,445 fatalities. While these figures represent a decrease of 10 percent in the number of incidents and 6 percent in the number of fatalities from 2019, they still account for 13 percent of all incidents and one fourth of all fatalities attributed to terrorism globally.¹

Targets of Taliban Attacks

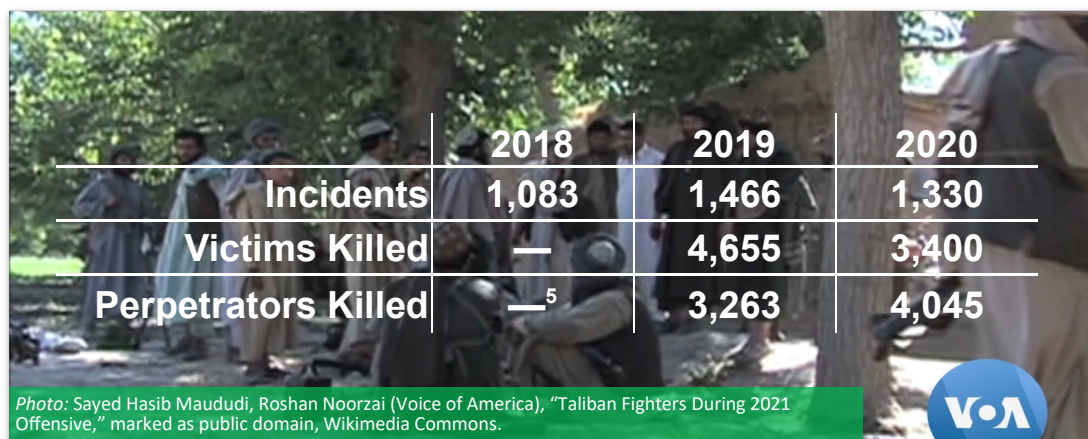
The data from 2018–20 illustrate that the Taliban's goal to supplant the Afghan government heavily influences the intended victims of their attacks:

Law Enforcement officials are nearly 4 times as likely to be the target of a Taliban attack, compared with other perpetrators.²

National Military members are nearly 2 times as likely to be the target of a Taliban attack, compared with other perpetrators.³

Heavy Losses

These acts targeting law enforcement and military targets come at a hefty cost to the Taliban, as 7,308 perpetrators were reported killed as a result of Taliban incidents in 2019 and 2020. Further, the Taliban suffers significantly higher casualties per incident than any other terrorist organization in the world, with a mean of 2.61 perpetrators killed per Taliban incident, compared with 0.65 for other perpetrators.⁴



	2018	2019	2020
Incidents	1,083	1,466	1,330
Victims Killed	—	4,655	3,400
Perpetrators Killed	—⁵	3,263	4,045

Photo: Sayed Hasib Maududi, Roshan Noorzai (Voice of America), "Taliban Fighters During 2021 Offensive," marked as public domain, Wikimedia Commons.

In 2020 the number of Taliban perpetrators killed increased by 23 percent, surpassing its number of victims.

¹Global incidents (n=10,035) and fatalities (n=29,389) in 2020. ²Significant odds ratio OR=3.831. ³Significant odds ratio OR=1.999.

⁴ $[t(3192.97) = 20.04, p < .000]$. ⁵Fatality data were not separated by perpetrators and victims until 2019.

The Global Terrorism Trends and Analysis Center (GTTAC) was created by Development Services Group, Inc., and our partner TraCCC of George Mason University to support our work for the Department of State's Bureau of Counterterrorism (No. GS-10F-0166K, 19AQMM18F2561). The GTTAC database collects and classifies open-source data on terrorism incidents globally and is used to support the development of Annex of Statistical Information for the Country Reports on Terrorism. Data used in this report are from the GTTAC database. Views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not reflect the position of the United States government.