

COSTS OF WAR

Data Sources and Categories:

Information about US military counterterrorism activity is not published in one place or collected for the public by the US Government. Online sources such as the US State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism are not entirely transparent or comprehensive. This map is based on country data assembled from government websites, reputable news sources, and expert input. This information was crosschecked with the most recent State Department publications.

The map only covers counterterrorism activity conducted between 2015 and October 2017. This means that it does not cover all past counterterrorism actions, such as, for example, US military training of security forces in Burundi, Gabon, Ghana, and Liberia, which was documented in the past but not since 2015. The map does not include the many additional countries where the US military is engaged towards goals other than counterterrorism, such as counternarcotics operations in Central and South America or humanitarian aid during the Ebola epidemic in Liberia. Furthermore, the map focuses on the post-9/11 landscape of US military counterterrorism activity, excluding the combat against such groups as the FARC in Colombia, which the US government has reclassified as "terrorists" since 9/11 but which have a long prior history.

The category of "training and/or assistance in counterterrorism" includes only those instances in which the US military actively assists and/or trains other countries' security forces in combating terrorism. The map does not include what the State Department calls, vaguely, "cooperation" or "interagency coordination" with other countries in counterterrorism activities, or even cases in which the US military has consulted countries or regions on the development of counterterrorism plans.

In some cases, US training or assistance is significant, as in for example sending thousands of combat troops to conduct exercises with a country's security forces, and in other cases it is as minor as providing a computerized network for border patrol. Key to a country's inclusion in this map is that the US military claims it is acting to enhance that country's ability to combat terrorism.

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Key sources include: The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, the US Department of Defense's "Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal Approved Areas of Eligibility," the US Department of State's "Country Reports on Terrorism," US embassy websites, David Vine (Associate Professor at American University and expert on US military bases), and mainstream media sources such as the Military Times, National Public Radio, the New York Times, and Reuters.

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