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Book Author(s): Katharine Hall and Dale Stahl

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Introduction

As expressed in the U.S. Army counterinsurgency (COIN) field manual (FM), two of the main goals of military operations in the COIN context are to secure the population and separate the insurgency from the populace.¹ Achieving these aims is of paramount importance to realizing other objectives of a COIN campaign. Logically, securing the population requires some understanding of what is happening to it:

- the level of violence it is experiencing
- the types of hostilities occurring and the targets being attacked
- the effects that these hostilities have on the population and on the organizations seeking to respond to the population's needs
- the role the military believes it should assume in response to this situation.

This monograph examines these requirements in the context of current COIN operations in Iraq and seeks to address the question of how the U.S. military can collect information on civilian violence to improve its COIN campaigns in general.

This document's findings are primarily based on an examination of two sources. The RAND Corporation first examined quantitative material on violence against Iraqi civilians produced by various non-RAND organizations, including the United Nations (UN), the Iraqi government, and independent institutions. It then became apparent that RAND itself had the capacity to provide additional quantitative

¹ U.S. Department of the Army, FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, December 2006.

material that would enable a more complete analysis. RAND therefore generated its own dataset of violent incidents against civilians in Iraq. This second dataset, the primary source for this document, represents a compilation and filtering of two different collection efforts: the Iraq Body Count (IBC), undertaken by a group of independent scholars, and the RAND–Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT) database, a joint project between RAND and MIPT. Based on the requirements of time and funding, this dataset is limited to 2006. However, it demonstrates the potential of a more robust information collection and analysis effort. In addition to these two data sources, the RAND study team carried out field research in Amman, Jordan, in May 2007 to obtain firsthand accounts from on-the-ground observers of the conflict. These observers included journalists, independent researchers, Iraqi citizens, nongovernmental organization (NGO) workers, UN officials, and others.

The second chapter of this document describes and examines the current, publicly available quantitative data on Iraqi civilian fatalities. Much of these data are contradictory or subject to political considerations, and the second chapter also provides an analysis of these issues. The third chapter presents an analysis of RAND's own 2006 dataset, which represents the most comprehensive compilation of open-source material on the subject. This analysis introduces some important findings regarding attacks on Iraqi civilians, and raises a number of important questions. The fourth chapter reviews recent developments in Iraqi civilian fatalities in 2007 and seeks to place the findings of the previous two chapters into the context of U.S. military COIN doctrine. The final chapter proposes a framework for better documentation of civilian fatalities in Iraq and in general.