

How has the conflict in Syria changed since Trump's inauguration?



Policy changes

- Trump delegated more authority to the Pentagon to carry out air strikes and approved a tactical shift from driving ISIS away from populated areas to instead surrounding in its strongholds, some of which are densely populated with civilians
- As of March, the coalition will not announce or confirm troop numbers, locations, or movements in the Middle Eastern theater to maintain tactical advantage and operational security. This policy differs greatly from that of the Obama administration, which maintained transparency of troop movements to the region
- Claiming self-defense, the US military has now had four incidents of attacking pro-Syrian forces, the most recent being the downing of a Syrian fighter jet, all of which happened in the past month



A rise in civilian casualties

- According to data from Airwars, a non-profit group that monitors and reports civilian casualties from airstrikes in Iraq and Syria, the number of civilians killed by airstrikes is set to double under the Trump administration
- While the Coalition reports numbers much lower numbers than Airwars, it does confirm the same trend of increased civilian casualties
- Secretary of Defense James Mattis denies that there have been changes to “extraordinary efforts to avoid innocent civilian casualties,” instead pointing to the fact that the offensives have been in areas with greater civilian populations
- Airwars and other local monitors began reporting the rise in civilian casualties in March of 2017, one month after Mattis presented the defense plan to Trump

Quick numbers*

1077 days of campaign

23,739 airstrikes by the US-led coalition

(the US claims 18,117 of those)

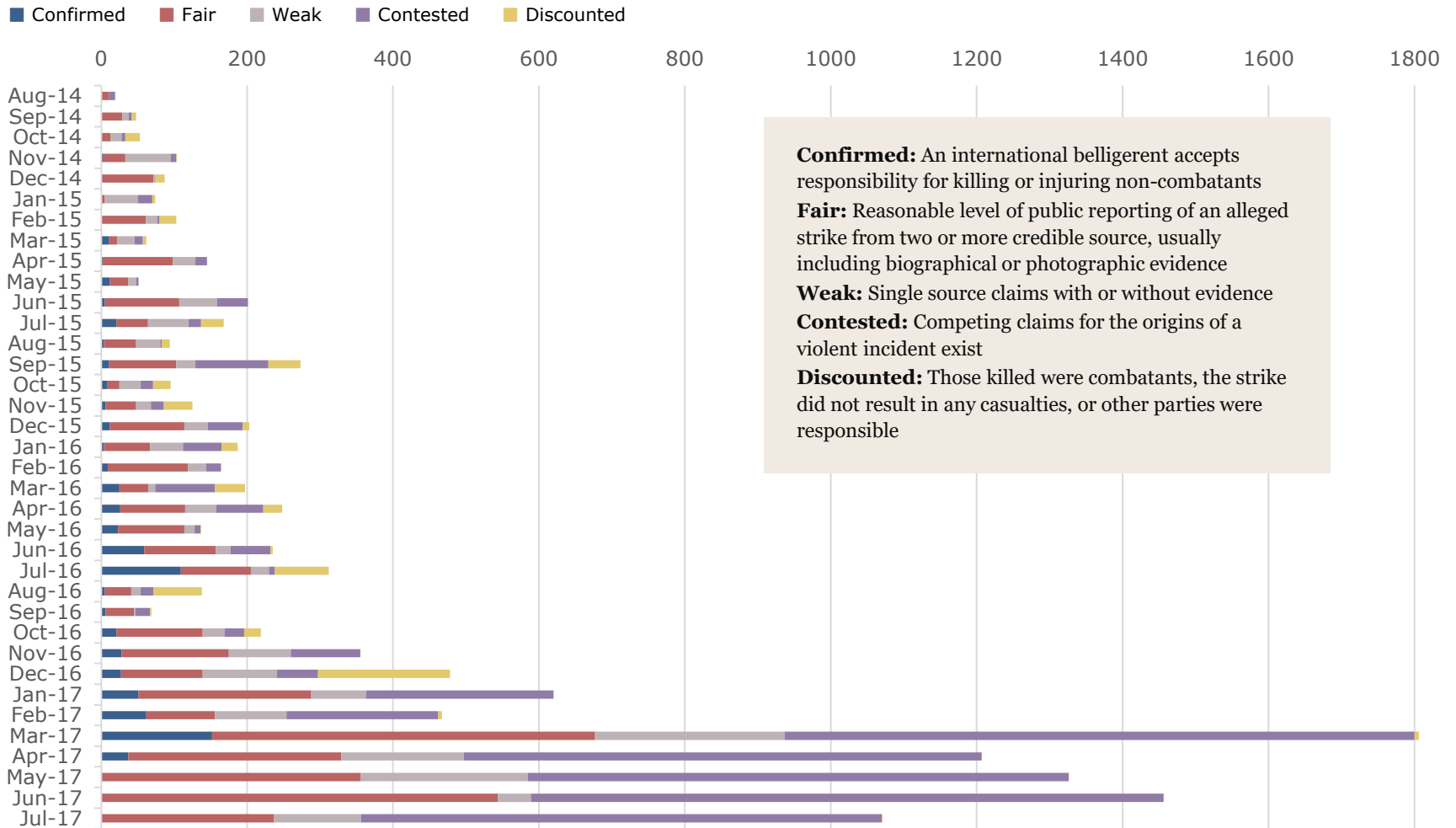
360 civilians killed per month under Trump
(compared with 80/month under Obama)

4,544 minimum civilians estimated killed by coalition

*numbers as of July 20, 2017

Sources: Airwars Data, 2017; Samuel Oakford “Trump’s Air War Has Already Killed More Than 2,000 Civilians” The Daily Beast, July 17, 2017; Paul Szoldra “The Pentagon is no longer going to tell the public how many troops are in Iraq and Syria” March, 31, 2017; Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Kareem Fahim “US aircraft shoots down a Syrian government jet over northern Syria, Pentagon says” June 18, 2017; Department of Defense Special Reports, “Operation Inherent Resolve” 2017.

Civilian casualties by coalition airstrikes in Iraq and Syria



Sources: Airwars Data, 2017