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US War Zone Deaths Rising for First Time in Six Years

Escalations in US operations across the world have led to an increase in the number of US troops being killed in war zones, with 2017 [the first time the year-over-year deaths have risen in six years](#).



26 soldiers were killed in 2016, down from 28 in 2015. This year still has a month and a half to go, and the figure is already up to 31. That death toll does not include a number of sailors killed in ship collisions, which were not inside war zones.

This is not close to the number of US combat deaths during the height of the US occupation of Iraq, with over 1,000 troops killed in 2007. Still, there is every reason to believe that the trend will be continued increases in deaths.

That's because deployments aren't just being done in the usual warzones of Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, but increasingly US troops are finding themselves in harms way in places

like Niger, where they are in small numbers with little access to backup when things turn bad.

In early October, 4 US soldiers were killed in Niger when they and Nigerien forces were ambushed by ISIS-linked fighters. The rest of the US soldiers had to be evacuated by French helicopters from neighboring Mali, but the four were left behind, at least one likely alive at the time.

There are about 1,000 US troops in Niger now, about 500 in Somalia, and countless more deployed in dozens of countries across Africa. Indeed, there are many thousands of US troops deployed abroad whose current location is not public knowledge.