

# Number of people killed by police this year in US surpasses 1,000

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The number of people killed by police officers in the United States topped 1,000 Monday, as the reign of police violence and terror in the United States continues unabated.

As of Wednesday evening, 1,006 people had been killed by US police forces since the beginning of the year, according to [killedbypolice.net](http://killedbypolice.net), an aggregator of local news reports of police killings. Since the site tracks only those deaths that are reported in the news, the actual number of victims is likely higher.

A total of 1,108 people were killed by the police last year, according to the database. This year is on track to record nearly 1,200 deaths, at the present rate of 98 people killed every month.

The thousandth person killed by police in 2015 was 28-year-old Matthew Stephen Colligan, whose vehicle was rammed by a heavy-duty police truck during a chase in Klamath County, Oregon. Colligan, who was white, died as a result of injuries caused by the crash.

On Tuesday, six-year-old Jeremy Mardis of Marksville, Louisiana became number 1,002 killed when he was shot multiple times, including once in the head. Police ended a high-speed chase in pursuit of a vehicle he was riding in with a barrage of bullets.

An article in the local media reported: “[Avoyelles Parish Coroner Dr. L. J.] Mayeux said city marshals were chasing [Mardis’s father, Chris] Few after he fled an attempt to serve a warrant. The coroner said Few reached a dead end and was backing into the marshals when they fired. The coroner said the boy was ‘caught in the line of fire’ and was killed.” There is no indication that Few was armed or posed a threat to the officers.

Among the 95 people who were killed in October, 71 of them died from gunshot wounds.

On October 3, two police officers in Los Angeles

responded to a beer bottle being thrown at their rear window by shooting and killing a man walking nearby. They claimed that he was holding an “unknown dark object” in his hands, but that it had been washed away by the rain and was never recovered.

On October 20, a police officer in Boynton Beach, Florida gunned down Corey Jones, a 31-year-old local musician, as Jones was waiting for a tow truck. The plainclothes officer, who was driving an unmarked car, chased Jones 30 yards from his car before shooting him dead. According to Jones’ family, the young man would likely have had no way of knowing who the officer was and may have assumed he was being robbed.

A separate count by the *Guardian* newspaper, based on different methods, records 964 deaths this year at the hands of police. Of these, 443 white, 232 black and 144 Hispanic. The newspaper records that 190 of those killed were unarmed, and less than half possessed a firearm. Seventeen were under the age of 18.

Police who carry out murders in cold blood continue to receive protection from the justice system. On October 27, a local prosecutor in South Carolina said she would not bring charges against the police officer who killed unarmed teenager Zachary Hammond July 26. Simultaneously with the announcement, the prosecutor released a video of the killing that clearly shows, contrary to the officer’s claims, that Hammond posed no threat and was driving away from the officer when he was shot.

Killer cops are protected at every level of government, from local prosecutors to state officials on up to the White House. Despite feigning sympathy for the victims of police violence, the Obama administration has sided with the police in every use of force case that has come up before the Supreme Court.

Following widespread popular opposition over the deployment of militarized police and the National Guard against peaceful demonstrators in Ferguson, Missouri, the White House said it would continue federal programs that have transferred billions of dollars in military hardware to the police.

Obama boasted about his funding for police militarization in a speech before a conference of police chiefs in Chicago last week, declaring, “Right now, we’re helping make sure departments throughout the country have the equipment they need.”

Obama’s remarks followed those of FBI Director James Comey who said that growing popular opposition to police violence and the greater reporting of police misconduct was leading to the growth of violent crime, essentially drawing an equals sign between criticism of the police and the solicitation of criminal activity.

Despite the fact that Comey’s remarks cut across the White House’s attempts to feign sympathy for demonstrations against police violence, House Press Secretary Josh Earnest reiterated that Comey enjoys the “full confidence and support of the president.” In his own remarks, Obama criticized the media for focusing “on the sensational and the controversial” in its reporting on police violence, instead of presenting the police in a favorable light.

Since the killing of unarmed teenager Michael Brown in August 2014, tens or even hundreds of thousands of people have taken part in demonstrations against police violence. Yet the police murders have continued unabated, as has the defense of killer cops by the political establishment.

This fact makes clear that the homicidal violence inflicted every day by the police against workers and young people represents something much deeper and more malignant within society. In working class neighborhoods throughout the United States, the police effectively function as an occupying force, looking upon the working class population essentially no differently than the US military viewed the residents of Baghdad during the occupation of Iraq.

The growth of police violence, like the attack on democratic rights more broadly, expresses the fact that under conditions of ever-greater social inequality, the financial elite that dominates American society responds to mounting opposition and unrest by

systematically building up its police force and arming it to the teeth.



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