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From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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Subject: Fw: Libyan estimate: At least 30,000 died in the war (AP)

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Subject: Libyan estimate: At least 30,000 died in the war (AP)

TRIPOLI (AP) — At least 30,000 people were killed and 50,000 wounded in Libya's six-month civil war, the interim health minister said, offering a first detailed estimate of the high cost in lives of bringing down Moammar Gadhafi.

There have been rough estimates in the past, but Naji Barakat, the health minister in the new Libyan leadership, said his figures are based, in part, on reporting from hospitals, local officials and former rebel commanders. Barakat said he'll only have a complete count in several weeks, but that he expects the final figure for dead and wounded to be higher than his current estimates. Libya has a population of just over 6 million.

At least 4,000 people are still missing, either presumed dead or held prisoner in remaining Gadhafi strongholds, including his hometown of Sirte, Barakat told The Associated Press on Wednesday. Others killed in fighting were hastily buried, and are now being exhumed for identification.

Search teams also continue to find secret graves of detainees killed by retreating Gadhafi forces.

Just this week, they dug up more bodies in one area of the Libyan capital Tripoli and two other towns.

Next week, worshippers will be asked to report the dead and missing in their families to the local mosques, said Barakat, in an attempt to get a more detailed figure.

Of the estimated 30,000 dead, about half are believed to have been Gadhafi's fighters, Barakat said.

He said he was told by Libya's new military officials that the Khamis Brigade, commanded by Gadhafi's son Khamis and a core force in Gadhafi's army, lost about 9,000 troops.

One of the hardest hit areas was the port city of Misrata, Libya's third largest, where former rebels and Gadhafi regime forces fought for two months, ending with the retreat of badly battered Gadhafi troops.

At least 2,000 former rebel fighters and civilians were killed in Misrata and thousands more were wounded, including 900 who lost limbs, Barakat said, citing new figures from the Misrata local council.

Reporting is incomplete for the western areas of the country that remained under Gadhafi's control until close to the end of the fighting, including the capital of Tripoli, Barakat said.

For example, little is known about the number of people killed during a brutal crackdown on mass opposition protests in the spring in those areas, he said.

The former rebels entered Tripoli on Aug. 21, but only took control after a week of fierce street battles. Barakat said that at least 1,700 former rebel fighters died in the battle for Tripoli, along with about 100 civilians.

The number of war wounded is currently estimated to be at least 50,000, including some 20,000 with serious injuries, but is expected to rise, Barakat said.

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