In analyzing civilian casualties, UNAMI utilizes as wide a range of sources and types of information as possible, which are analyzed for reliability and credibility. Attempts are made to crosscheck and verify such information from other sources before conclusions are drawn and published. Sources include, for example, testimony of victims, victims’ relatives, witnesses, and evidence provided from health personnel, community elders, religious and civil leaders, local, governorate and central Government departments and officials, UN and other International Organizations, the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and UNAMI Security Section (SSI), media reports, members of the international community, civil society, and NGOs. Where security does not permit direct access to the location of an incident, UNAMI relies on a range of techniques to gain information through reliable networks.

Every effort is made to ensure that data contained in UNAMI reports is as comprehensive as possible; however, the data presented is not exhaustive. Where UNAMI is not satisfied with the evidence concerning a particular incident it will not be reported. In some instances, investigations may take several weeks before conclusions can be made. This also means that conclusions concerning particular incidents or alleged violations may be adjusted as more information comes to hand and is analyzed. However, if information is equivocal, then conclusions will not be drawn until more satisfactory evidence is obtained, or the case will be closed without conclusion and it will not be

* Figure provided by Ministry of Health. During 2008 the numbers of wounded by month were not tabulated by the MoH.
included in statistical reporting or analysis. As information is updated, and conclusions and statistics are modified, this can result in slight differences in reporting of the same incident or variations in statistics reported by UNAMI over time.

In some incidents where civilian casualties are alleged, the status of the reported victim(s) as civilian is disputed or is equivocal. In such cases UNAMI is guided by all the information to hand, as well as the applicable standards of international humanitarian and human rights law in determining whether the victim should be classified as a civilian, as a person actively participating in hostilities, or as status unknown.

In light of the above-noted limitations in methodology, UNAMI does not claim that the information it provides is complete, and it may well be that UNAMI is under-reporting the extent, nature or seriousness of the effect of armed violence and acts of terrorism on the civilian population.