



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF WAR

1400 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1400

June 9, 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOW FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Directive-type Memorandum 26-001 – “Credible Information for Public Communications Regarding Casualty and Fatality Figures”

References: See Attachment 1.

Purpose. In accordance with the authority in DoD Directive (DoDD) 5122.05 and Section 1053 of Public Law 118-159 (known as the “Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025” or the “NDAA for FY 2025”), this directive-type memorandum (DTM):

- Establishes policy, assigns responsibilities, and provides procedures for public communications regarding the assessment of casualties and fatalities during hostilities.
- Is effective June 9, 2026; it must be incorporated into DoD Instruction (DoDI) 5400.13. This DTM will expire effective June 9, 2027.

Applicability. This DTM applies to OSW, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of Inspector General of the Department of War, the Defense Agencies, the DoW Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the DoW (referred to collectively in this DTM as the “DoW Components”).

Definitions. See Glossary.

Policy. In making assessments of casualties and fatalities during hostilities, DoW Components will not cite as authoritative in any public communications casualty and fatality figures derived from U.S.-designated terrorist organizations, governmental entities controlled by U.S.-designated terrorist organizations, or any sources that rely on figures provided by U.S.-designated terrorist organizations.

Responsibilities. See Attachment 2.

Procedures. See Attachment 3.

Releasability. Cleared for public release. Available on the Directives Division Website at <https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/>.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean Parnell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sean Parnell
Assistant to the Secretary of War for Public
Affairs

Attachments:
As stated

ATTACHMENT 1

REFERENCES

DoD Directive 2311.01, “DoD Law of War Program,” July 2, 2020
DoD Directive 3115.18, “DoD Access to and Use of Publicly Available Information (PAI),”
June 11, 2019, as amended
DoD Directive 5122.05, “Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (ATSD(PA)),”
August 7, 2017
DoD Directive 5142.01, “Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs (ASD(LA)),”
September 15, 2006
DoD Instruction 1300.18, “DoD Personnel Casualty Matters, Policies, and Procedures,”
January 8, 2008, as amended
DoD Instruction 3000.17, “Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response,” December 21, 2023
DoD Instruction 5015.02, “DoD Records Management Program,” February 24, 2015,
as amended
DoD Instruction 5230.09, “Clearance of DoD Information for Public Release,” January 25, 2019,
as amended
DoD Instruction 5230.29, “Security and Policy Review of DoD Information for Public Release,”
August 13, 2014, as amended
DoD Instruction 5400.04, “Provision of Information to Congress,” March 17, 2009
DoD Instruction 5400.13, “Public Affairs (PA) Operations,” October 15, 2008
DoD Instruction 5405.03, “Development, Submission, and Approval of Proposed Public Affairs
Guidance (PPAG),” February 18, 2016
DoD Instruction 5410.01, “Release of Information Concerning Incidents Involving DoD
Personnel or Senior Personnel,” September 5, 2024
DoD Manual 5400.07, “DoD Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Program,” January 25, 2017
Executive Order 13224, “Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions With Persons Who
Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism,” September 23, 2001
Public Law 118-159, Section 1053, “Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National
Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025,” December 23, 2024
United States Code, Title 8, Section 1189
United States Code, Title 50, Section 1702

ATTACHMENT 2
RESPONSIBILITIES

1. ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF WAR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS (ATSW(PA)).

In addition to the responsibilities in Paragraph 4., the ATSW(PA):

a. Establishes public affairs (PA) procedures and guidance to implement Section 1053 of the NDAA for FY 2025 in accordance with DoDD 3115.18.

b. Issues public affairs guidance (PAG) to address matters during hostilities that are of national security and defense interest in accordance with DoDDs 2311.01 and 5122.05 and DoDIs 1300.18, 3000.17, 5400.13, and 5405.03.

2. UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR FOR INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY AND UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR FOR POLICY. In addition to the responsibilities in Paragraph 4., the Under Secretary of War for Intelligence and Security and the Under Secretary of War for Policy jointly advise the ATSW(PA) in identifying credible information and references in DoW reports or intelligence relating to U.S.-designated terrorist organizations, governmental entities controlled by U.S.-designated terrorist organizations, or any sources that rely on figures provided by U.S.-designated terrorist organizations for public communications products or activities.

3. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR FOR LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS. In addition to the responsibilities in Paragraph 4., the Assistant Secretary of War for Legislative Affairs establishes legislative affairs procedures and guidance to implement Section 1053 of the NDAA for FY 2025 in accordance with DoDD 5142.01.

4. OSW AND DOW COMPONENT HEADS.

The OSW and DoW Component heads:

a. Develop guidance and procedures to implement Section 1053 of the NDAA for FY 2025.

b. Refer to approved PAG for current talking points that address matters during hostilities.

c. Ensure records and information established and created in accordance with this issuance are retained in accordance with DoDI 5015.02 and DoW Component records disposition schedules.

ATTACHMENT 3

PROCEDURES

IDENTIFYING PROHIBITED REFERENCES AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION REGARDING CASUALTY AND FATALITY FIGURES.

In making assessments of casualties and fatalities during hostilities, DoW personnel are prohibited from citing as authoritative in any public communications casualty and fatality figures derived from U.S.- designated terrorist organizations, governmental entities controlled by U.S.- designated terrorist organizations, or any sources that rely on figures provided by U.S.- designated terrorist organizations. DoW personnel who are charged to assess casualty and fatality figures during hostilities or who are involved in the preparation of public communications must be mindful that adversaries and U.S.-designated terrorist organizations attempt to inflate or obscure fatality figures for their benefit, including to further their cause. Adversary misuse of quantitative data points, such as numbers of fatalities and casualties, aids in masking the military effect or misrepresenting the damage from a military operation to manipulate public reaction or narrative. DoW spokespersons and officials risk the credibility of the DoW or their Component when they amplify unreliable casualty and fatality figures as part of their public communications.

a. DoW personnel will apply approved PAG in public communications regarding matters that occur during hostilities.

b. All DoW personnel, in particular PA writers and speech writers and Legislative Affairs staff members, must carefully review references used to generate public communications and other products when PAG on a matter that occurs during hostilities is not available. Casualty and fatality figures derived from U.S.-designated terrorist organizations, governmental entities controlled by U.S.-designated terrorist organizations, or any sources that rely on figures provided by U.S.-designated terrorist organizations will not be incorporated as authoritative into any public communication product. Information may be included in order to rebut or dissociate the DoW from such figures.

c. To maintain the DoW's credibility and comply with the DoW's Principles of Information in DoDD 5122.05:

(1) DoW public communications regarding casualty or fatality figures will be based on credible information consistent with DoDD 2311.01 and DoDIs 1300.18 and 3000.17.

(2) If credible information regarding casualty and fatality figures is not available from an appropriate source, then DoW personnel will not attempt to estimate figures and will instead state that the DoW cannot provide an assessment at this time.

(3) DoW personnel must not corroborate unverified casualty or fatality figures.

(4) DoW personnel must only reference casualty and fatality figures that have been cleared for public release in public communications regarding hostilities.

d. Casualty and fatality figures prepared for public communication must go through appropriate review before release in accordance with applicable DoW policy, which may include, but is not limited to, DoDD 5122.05; DoDIs 1300.18, 3000.17, 5230.09, 5230.29, 5400.04, 5405.03, and 5410.01; and DoDM 5400.07.

e. DoW personnel will refer to Department of State's Bureau of Counterterrorism for the current list of Terrorist Organizations at <https://www.state.gov/terrorist-designations-and-state-sponsors-of-terrorism/>.

f. DoW personnel must assess the use of figures or data by another U.S. or foreign government agency report or statement to ensure it is not derived from a prohibited source, before relying on such figures or data as authoritative in public communications.

g. DoW PA offices must not corroborate statements or claims made by U.S.-designated terrorist organizations in responding to media inquiries.

GLOSSARYPART I. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	MEANING
ATSW(PA)	Assistant to the Secretary of War for Public Affairs
DoDD	DoD directive
DoDI	DoD instruction
DoW	Department of War
DTM	directive-type memorandum
FY	fiscal year
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
OSW	Office of the Secretary of War
PA	public affairs
PAG	public affairs guidance

PART II. DEFINITIONS

These terms and their definitions are for the purpose of this issuance.

TERM	DEFINITION
adversary	A person, group, or force that opposes or attacks another.
casualty	A person, including but not limited to a DoW civilian or member of the military, who is injured, killed, captured, or missing in action.
credible information	Information that a reasonable person would believe to be sufficiently accurate for the purpose for which the information will be used. The totality of the circumstances is to be considered, including the reliability of the source (e.g., the source's record in providing accurate information in the past and how the source obtained the information), and whether there is contradictory or corroborating information.
DoW personnel	Service members, DoW civilian employees, and DoW contractors in the performance of a DoW contract deliverable.
fatalities	Deaths that occur as a result of specific hostilities, events, situations, or causes.

TERM	DEFINITION
hostilities	Any conflict subject to the law of war, including conflicts between States and terrorist groups.
public communications	Official DoW information for dissemination through any form of public information media, including, but not limited to, testimonies, reports, or statements.
spokesperson	An individual who is chosen to speak on behalf of the DoW, its components, or a principal.
terrorist organization	Any organization so designated by the Secretary of State pursuant to Section 1189 of Title 8, United States Code or Section 1702 of Title 50, United States Code, and Executive Order 13224.