

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 23, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

CC:

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Caine
Commander of United States Central Command, Admiral Cooper
Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Anthony Tata

Secretary Hegseth:

First, we wish to honor the service members who have lost their lives in Operation Epic Fury and extend our deepest condolences to their families. We thank all those who continue to serve in harm's way. Their sacrifice is why we write to express our concern regarding the Department of Defense's (DoD or the Department) public reporting and statements on U.S. military casualties associated with Operation Epic Fury. We formally request a comprehensive accounting of the number of service members who have been killed, wounded, or injured in support of the operation.

The American people, Congress, service members, and their families are entitled to a full and accurate accounting of the human costs of war. The information currently available to the public suggests that the Department has not consistently provided timely and comprehensive public casualty reporting throughout the conflict.

The Pentagon's [Defense Casualty Analysis System](#) (DCAS), which the Department has described as being "regularly updated," has reported inconsistent casualty figures, raising additional questions about the transparency and reliability of the Department's public reporting and statements.

For example, on July 20, 2026, the DoD's chief spokesman, Sean Parnell, publicly stated: "While nearly 100 service members were deemed to have some degree of injury since July 7, 2026, 96% have returned to duty" ([Statement posted to X, @SeanParnellASW, July 20, 2026](#)). However, DCAS listed 14 service members killed ([despite wide reporting of 18 service members killed as of July 20, 2026](#)) and 447 injured during Operation Epic Fury and recorded zero wounded in action for the month of July as of July 21, 2026.ⁱ Both the total casualties and the monthly July casualty data still do not reflect the Department's public acknowledgment on July 20th of nearly 100 additional injuries in July. We are concerned that DCAS is not being maintained at the granular level and calls into serious question the completeness and reliability of

the aggregate totals. [*Stars and Stripes*](#) also reported on this data inconsistency. Such discrepancies prevent Congress and the public from determining the true human cost of the ongoing operation.

Congress has a constitutional responsibility to oversee military operations and ensure that casualty reporting is both timely and accurate. From the start of Operation Epic Fury in February 2026, this administration has failed to provide timely updates on the military readiness, personnel, and financial impacts of this war. Delays or inconsistencies in publicly reporting these casualty figures further impede Congress's ability to conduct oversight and limit the public's understanding of the operation's costs. This lack of transparency undermines confidence that military families and the American people are receiving a complete and accurate accounting of the sacrifices made by those serving in uniform.

To better understand the Department's casualty reporting practices during Operation Epic Fury, we request responses to the following questions **no later than Thursday, July 30th, 2026**:

1. As of the date of your response, what is the total number of U.S. service members who have been killed, wounded in action or received care for injuries sustained while supporting Operation Epic Fury, including those who returned to full duty after care?
 - As reported in DCAS, please provide details on the casualty types (hostile vs. non-hostile), and all DCAS reporting categories (Grade, Age, Sex, Component, Race, Ethnicity) across each Service.
 - Do these numbers include all battle injury (BI) and disease and non-battle injury (DNBI) reporting provided to the Services by U.S. Central Command?
 - If not, please provide the corresponding figures from U.S. Central Command.
2. According to [*The New York Times*](#), a U.S. military official stated that U.S. Central Command is not required to publicly disclose information about injured service members, particularly when they quickly return to duty. Does the Department still receive this information from CENTCOM, even if it's not posted publicly on DCAS? Please explain the communication and updates OSD receives from CENTCOM, including the frequency and timing.
 - How does U.S. Central Command determine whether a service member has returned to duty 'quickly enough' to not publicly disclose this injury?
 - In how many cases has U.S. Central Command determined that a service member has returned to duty 'quickly enough' for it to not disclose those injuries to the public?
3. Are there service members who were killed or wounded in action while deployed to the region in support of another named operation (e.g., Operation Inherent Resolve) who are not included in the Defense Casualty Analysis Systems' accounting for Operation Epic Fury?
 - If so, how many by category? Please specify for each DoD casualty reporting category in detail, as of the date of your response.

4. As referenced earlier in this letter, why does the [DCAS "Casualties by Month" report](#) not reflect the July 2026 injuries the Department has publicly acknowledged, as of July 21, 2026?
 - Has the underlying July casualty data been entered into DCAS? If so, why is it not displaying? If not, when will it be publicly available?
 - Given that the granular monthly data is incomplete, what specific assurance can the Department provide that the aggregate operation totals are complete and accurate?
 - What is the Department's standard process and timeline for entering monthly casualty data into DCAS, and who is responsible for ensuring its accuracy?
 - How frequently is DCAS updated for Operation Epic Fury? What is the average lag between a casualty event and its entry into DCAS, and what accounts for the July wounded-in-action figure still displaying zero (as of July 21, 2026)?
5. Provide a breakdown of all Operation Epic Fury casualties that separate hostile-fire wounded in action from non-battle injuries. Given the Department's official statement that the wounded total includes injuries "entirely unrelated to combat operations," how does the Department define "injury," "wounded in action," and "casualty" for the purpose of Operation Epic Fury reporting?
6. How many service members have been screened for, and diagnosed with, a concussion or traumatic brain injury (TBI) in connection with Operation Epic Fury? Are those cases counted within the wounded-in-action total, and what is the Department's process for updating casualty counts as delayed TBI diagnoses emerge?
7. With respect to the three Iranian attacks on U.S. forces in Jordan reported to have occurred in the week before the July attack:
 - How many service members were injured in each attack?
 - Are those injuries reflected in DCAS? If not, why not?
 - Who authorized the decision not to publicly disclose those attacks or the associated injuries, and on what legal or policy basis?
8. Given the number of casualties sustained to date, what is the Department's and CENTCOM's current assessment of the operation's impact on personnel, unit readiness, and operational capability in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility? Please include the following in your response or in a classified annex:
 - The readiness and manning of affected units, including any degradation resulting from casualties;
 - Availability and sustainability of medical and personnel resources in theater; and
 - Overall operational capability to sustain current and projected mission requirements.
9. Given the number of casualties sustained to date, does the Department and U.S. Central Command assess that sufficient medical, evacuation, personnel recovery, and other support resources are in place to respond to a mass casualty scenario in the theater?

- If yes, please describe the capabilities, resources, and contingency plans currently in place, including any recent adjustments made based on casualty trends observed during the operation.
 - If no, what are the capability gaps, resource constraints, or additional requirements needed to ensure an adequate response to a mass casualty event?
10. Will the Department commit to providing Congress with a comprehensive written casualty accounting on a recurring, weekly basis that draws directly on U.S. Central Command's casualty reporting? If so, which office will be responsible for producing it?

We appreciate your prompt attention to these questions and expect a timely and complete response. Our service members and their families deserve nothing less than a full and honest accounting of the costs of this war.

Sincerely,



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



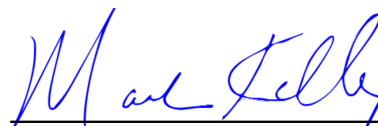
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



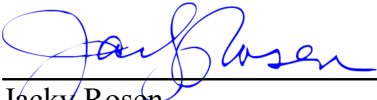
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Elissa Slotkin
United States Senator

ⁱ As of delivery of this letter on Thursday, July 23, 2026, DCAS reports 18 deaths and 447 total casualties.