

# US Cops Kill Every 8 Hours in 2015

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*One could easily get the impression from watching the corporate mass media or listening to public officials like President Obama and FBI director James Comey that the police death toll is rising rapidly and policing is an especially deadly occupation.*

In his Jan. 20, 2015, State of the Union address, Obama drew an equal sign between the danger faced by police and those who are the victims of police brutality and murder:

“We may have different takes on the events of Ferguson and New York. But surely we can understand a father who fears his son can’t walk home without being harassed. Surely we can understand the wife who won’t rest until the police officer she married walks through the front door at the end of his shift.”

Speaking on Jan. 4 at the funeral of a New York City police officer who was shot and killed, Comey said he was “shocked and bewildered” by the number of police killed in 2014.

“One hundred and fifteen were killed last year,” he said. “That’s a shocking increase from 2013. I don’t understand evil and I cannot try.” Comey claimed that 100 police had been killed in 2013.

But both Obama’s equal sign and Comey’s statistics are falsifications of reality.

**As of February 13, U.S. police have killed at least 131 people in 2015**, an average of three per day, the vast majority by gunfire. Last year, police killed more than 1,100 people according to the [killedbypolice.net](#) website, nearly three times the number reported by local and state police and sheriff’s departments to the FBI. The FBI reporting is voluntary, and many departments, large and small—including New York City—do not participate.

U.S. cops kill at up to 100 times the rate of police in other capitalist countries.

As in years past, a large majority of those killed by the police in 2015 have again been young African Americans and Latinos. The two youngest were both 17-years-old, Kristiana Coignard of Texas and Jessica Hernandez of Colorado. The oldest was 87-year-old Lewis Becker from rural upstate New York.

**In the first 44 days of 2015, while 13 police died while on duty, no police were killed by hostile action**, according to the pro-police website, “Officer Down Memorial Page.” All of the reported deaths have been attributed to illness or accidents.

The “Officer Down” site records every police, sheriff, prison guard, Border Patrol and other civilian agency and military police fatality, including those outside the country. It is very

thorough, even reporting on the deaths of K-9 police dogs.

Many federal, state, local government agencies as well as colleges and universities have their own police departments. There are railroad police, transit police, forestry police, park police, fish and game police, and many, many more.

“Officer Down” lists 122 police fatalities in 2014. Of those, 63 were due to illness or accident, 59 by hostile action. In 2013, the same source reported 112 police killed, 73 due to illness or accident, 39 by hostile action. In 2012, 130 were killed, 65 by hostile action. In 2011, 180 were reported killed, 87 due to attacks.

All together, there are well over 1.5 million police and prison guards in the U.S. According to the 2013 report by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics on fatal injuries, “Police and sheriff’s patrol deputies” ranked as the 41st most dangerous occupation, with far lower death rates than not only such jobs as logging, mining, fishing, and farming, but also plane piloting, truck driving and recycling.

Yet police receive far higher pay than nearly all of those employed in more hazardous occupations. The relatively high salaries and pension benefits received by police are justified to the public on the basis of the supposed great danger the police face.

The glorification of the police by the corporate media and politicians, the exaggeration of the dangers they face, and the high pay most receive are all due to the role the police play as the protectors, not of the people but of a system based on capitalist exploitation and national oppression.

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