

Kolbarnews Report on the Number of Kolbars Killed and Injured in 2024

The year 2024 has ended with all its crises and challenges, yet for the Kurdish porters (Kolbars) of Kurdistan, this year remains a painful reminder of the continuation of one of the most harrowing human tragedies in the region. The following report not only addresses the shocking statistics of deaths and injuries among Kolbars during this year but also seeks to provide a clearer picture of the urgency and scope of this unconventional phenomenon and the dire circumstances that Kolbars face.

The phenomenon of Kolbari is not a job but rather a manifestation of an exploitative system that questions the human dignity of the people in this region. It stems from a complex interplay of rentier capitalism, historical national-class discrimination, and structural inequalities. Within this framework, Kolbars have been turned into cheap and disposable labor, operating outside the boundaries of "law" and pushed to the margins of even the minimal legal protections. They lack access to insurance, pensions, or even the basic right to life.

Over the past year, amid broader political, military, and economic crises in Iran, conditions for the impoverished and vulnerable segments of society, including Kolbars, have worsened. The impacts of war-mongering, rising inflation, unemployment, and heightened economic restrictions have made Kolbari an unavoidable choice for families grappling with chronic poverty and joblessness. Coupled with the regime's security-focused and repressive policies, the borders of Kurdistan have become perilous zones for the people of this region and for Kolbars. The Islamic regime, by intentionally avoiding the creation of development infrastructure, perpetuating discrimination, militarizing the borders, and employing systematic violence, has blatantly targeted the lives of Kolbars.

Kolbars, who traverse treacherous paths daily, facing deadly risks and the irreparable consequences of their work to secure a meager livelihood for their families, are, in reality, the true victims of policies that not only disregard their economic contributions but trample on their human dignity, rendering every aspect of their lives unlivable. The increasing presence of children, adolescents, the elderly, educated individuals, and even women among Kolbars underscores the worsening and expanding nature of this crisis.

This report emphasizes that phenomena such as Kolbari in Kurdistan and Sukhtbari in Balochistan should not be accepted as jobs or voluntary choices. These are merely the visible tips of an iceberg emerging from deep-seated political crises, historical discrimination, and systemic exploitation in these regions. Addressing such issues, alongside other socio-economic crises in Kurdistan and Iran, requires collective solidarity and struggle.

We draw your attention to the statistics compiled by Kolbarnews:

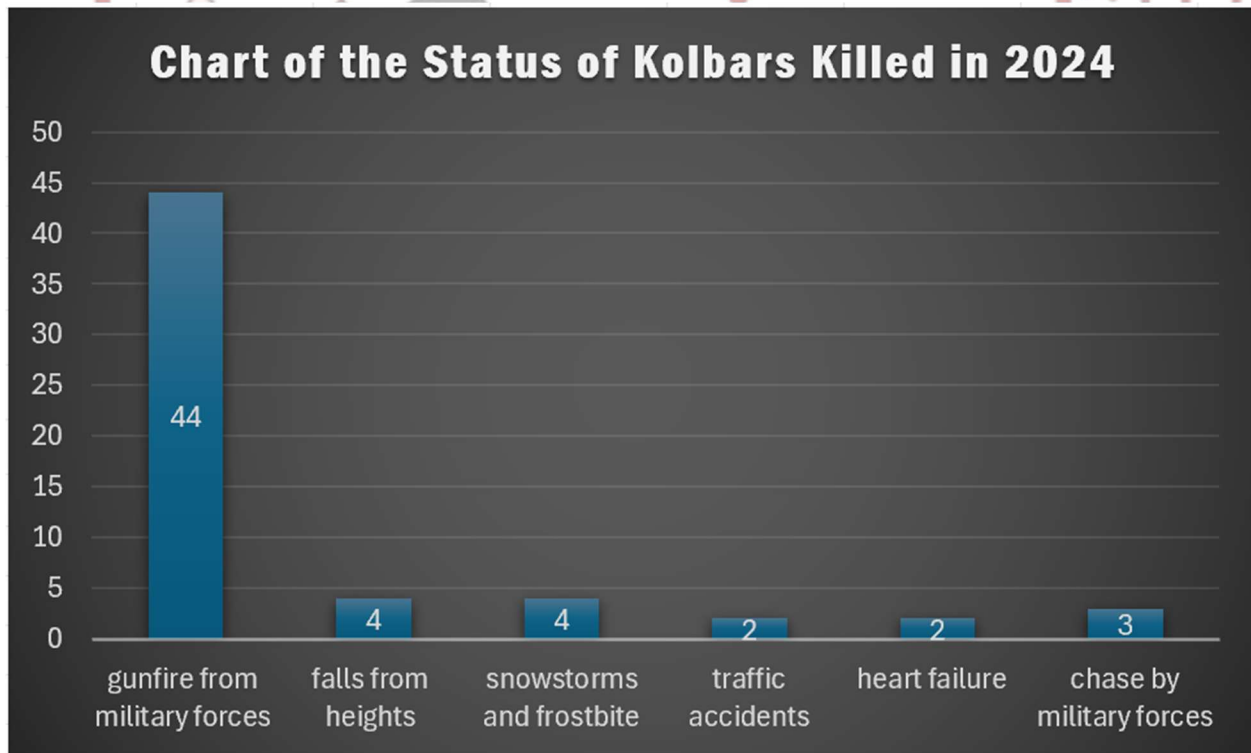
According to the statistics recorded by Kolbarnews, in 2024, a total of 345 Kolbars in the border areas and along the routes between the provinces of West Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, and Kermanshah were killed and injured due to factors such as direct gunfire from regime military forces, avalanches, frostbite, landmine explosions, falls from mountains and heights, and other incidents.

- ❖ **Of this total, 59 Kolbars (17%) were killed, and 286 Kolbars (83%) were injured.**
- ❖ **A 15% increase in the number of Kolbars killed and injured compared to 2023.**
- ❖ **Of the 345 Kolbars killed and injured in 2024, a total of 259 cases (75%) were due to direct gunfire from the regime's military forces.**
- ❖ **Of the total 345 Kolbars killed and injured in 2024, 22 Kolbars (6%) were under the age of 18, with one of them dying due to frostbite.**

English

The situation of the fatalities is as follows: Of the total 59 Kolbars killed:

- 44 cases were due to direct gunfire from military forces.
- 4 cases were due to falls from heights while performing Kolbari.
- 4 cases were due to getting trapped in snowstorms and frostbite.
- 2 cases were due to traffic accidents while going to or returning from Kolbari.
- 2 cases were due to heart failure while Kolbari.
- 3 cases were due to traffic accidents during a chase by the regime's military forces.

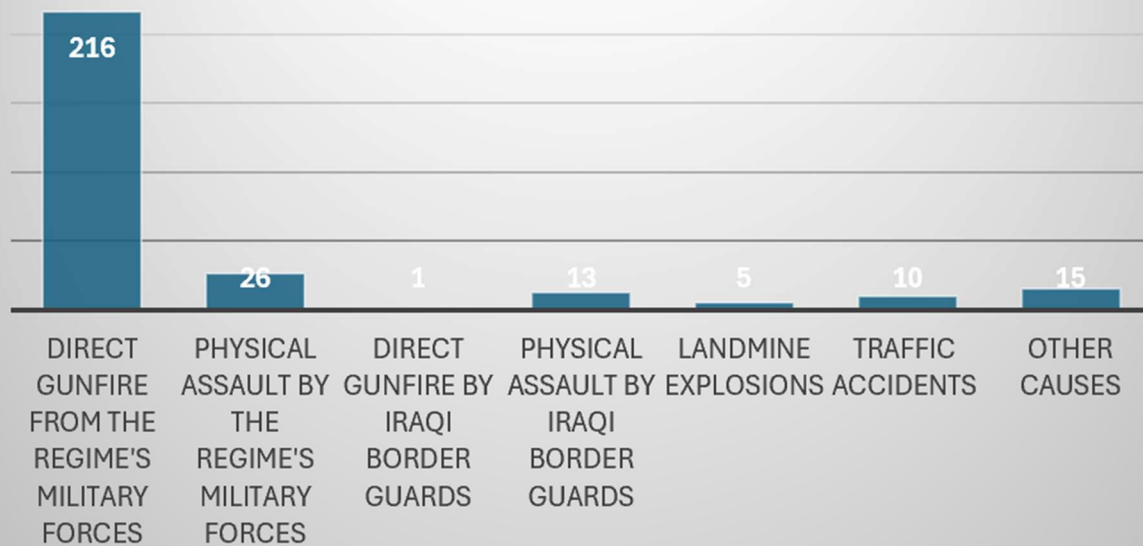


The status of the injured is as follows: Of the total 286 kolbars injured:

- 216 cases were due to direct gunfire from the regime's military forces.
- 26 cases were due to physical assault by the regime's military forces.
- 1 case was due to direct gunfire by Iraqi border guards (Harasa Al-Hudood).
- 13 cases were due to physical assault by Iraqi border guards (Harasa Al-Hudood).
- 5 cases were due to landmine explosions during kolbari.
- 10 cases were due to traffic accidents while going to or returning from kolbari.
- 15 cases were due to other causes.

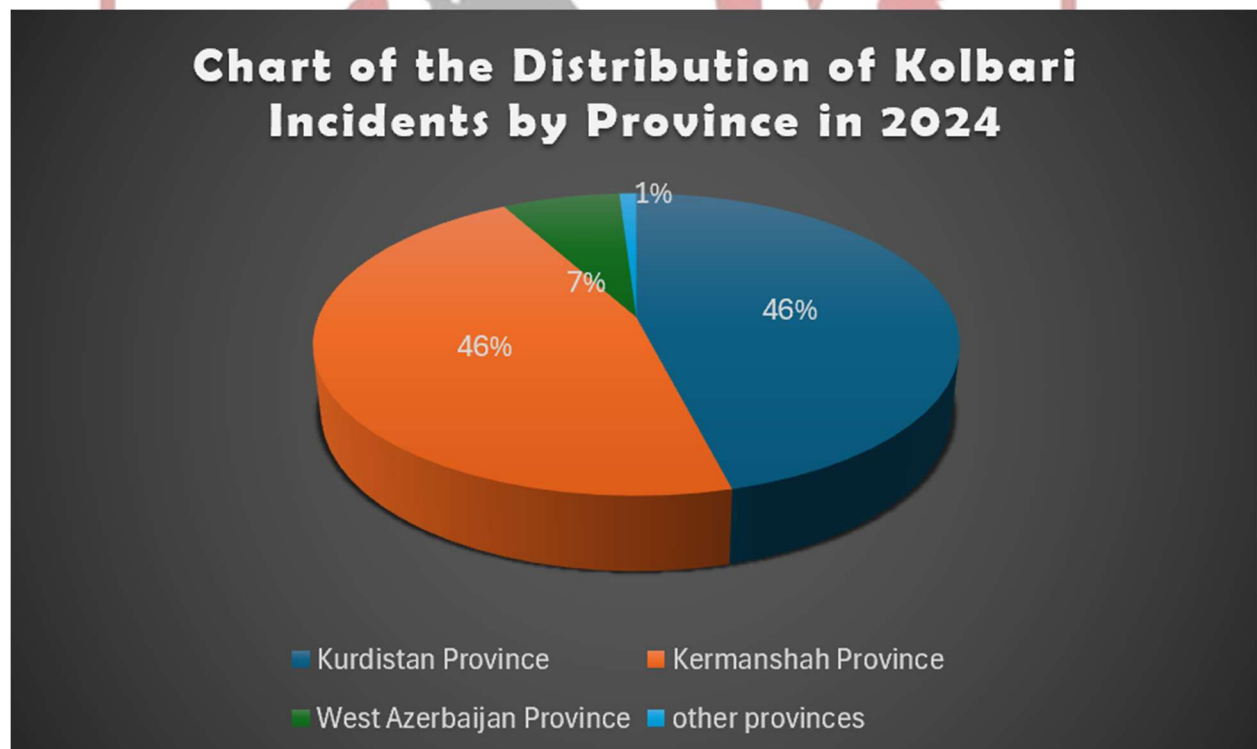


Chart of the Status of Kolbars Injured in 2024



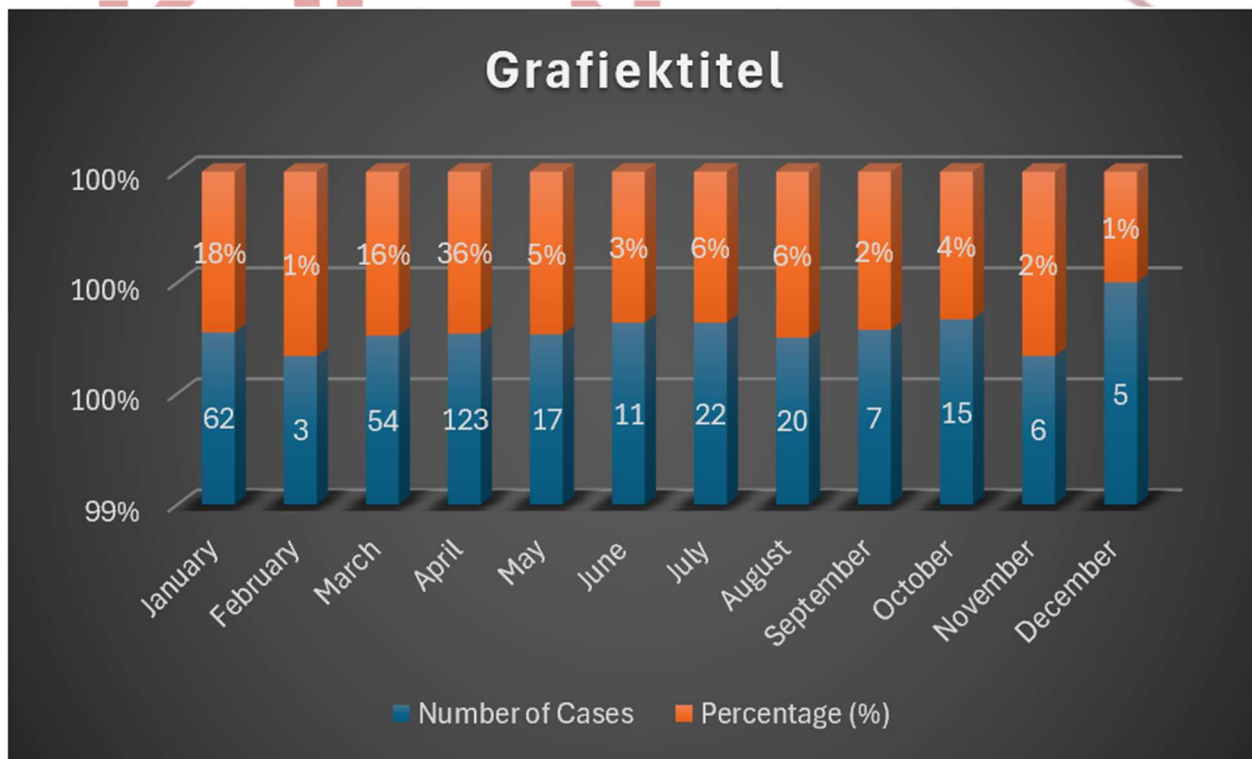
The provincial distribution of kolbari incidents in 2024, broken down by provinces, is as follows:

- In the border areas and routes of Kurdistan Province, 160 kolbars (46%) were killed and injured.
- In the border areas and routes of Kermanshah Province, 157 kolbars (46%) were killed and injured.
- In the border areas and routes of West Azerbaijan Province, 24 kolbars (7%) were killed and injured.
- In the border areas and routes of other provinces, 4 kolbars or petty traders (1%) were killed and injured.



The statistics of Kolbars killed and injured in 2024, broken down by the months of the year:

| Month | January | February | March | April | May | June |
|-----------------|---------|----------|-----------|---------|----------|----------|
| Number of Cases | 62 | 3 | 54 | 123 | 17 | 11 |
| Percentage (%) | 18% | 1% | 16% | 36% | 5% | 3% |
| Month | July | August | September | October | November | December |
| Number of Cases | 22 | 20 | 7 | 15 | 6 | 5 |
| Percentage (%) | 6% | 6% | 2% | 4% | 2% | 1% |



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