

Justice Dept. Statement

The statistics by TRAC are incorrect. TRAC claims the Civil Rights Division prosecuted 84 defendants last year compared to 159 in 1999. Both figures are inaccurate. The Civil Rights Division prosecuted 151 defendants last fiscal year, compared to 138 in 1999. Every year since 1999 the Civil Rights Division exceeded TRAC's figure (84): 191 in FY 2000; 125 in FY2002, and 123 in FY2003. The Civil Rights Division has kept a record of these numbers for years. The Division has tracked its cases internally -- by investigation and prosecution -- to account for workflow, and to report accurately to Congress.

TRAC erroneously states that the number of complaints has remained constant even as the prosecutions have gone down. As noted in the number above, prosecutions have remained at a high level as the number of complaints dropped from 12,000 in 1999 to around 9,500 in FY2002.

It merits separate mention that the Bush Administration has charged more color-of-law cases, that is it has prosecuted more police officers and other state officials for criminal civil rights offenses, than did the prior administration. From 2001 through 2003, the Department charged 146 such cases, compared to 115 over the prior three years. And in 2004, the Department brought 45 such cases, more than during 1998 (39), 1999 (36) or 2000 (40).

This Administration believes in and has vigorously enforced the criminal civil rights laws.