



# Syria

*Security, military service and  
the situation of certain profiles*



Syria: Security, military service and the situation of certain profiles

This brief report is not, and does not purport to be, a detailed or comprehensive survey of all aspects of the issues addressed. It should thus be weighed against other country of origin information available on the topic.

The brief report at hand does not include any policy recommendations. The information does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Danish Immigration Service.

Furthermore, this brief report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

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## Executive summary

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Syria's security situation remains fragmented and varies widely across and within regions, shaped by local conditions, sectarian dynamics, and past political affiliations.

Following the fall of the former government, former Assad-era officials — including military, intelligence, and Ba'ath Party members — have faced arrests, dismissals, and violence. Thousands were detained without charges, amid reports of abuse and deaths in custody. Reconciliation efforts have been inconsistent and lacked transparency, while targeted attacks by unidentified armed groups and extremist factions persist. Authorities have taken limited action to curb reprisals and have continued arrest campaigns, especially against prominent individuals.

Since the transition of power in late 2024, Alawites have reportedly faced exclusion from political and military structures, along with discrimination, economic marginalisation, and targeted violence. Despite official pledges of inclusion, the community has experienced growing insecurity, displacement, and sectarian tension under the new authorities.

Despite symbolic gestures such as recognizing Christian holidays with official closures and appointing a Christian minister, Christians have faced harassment, attacks on churches, and deadly violence. While officials condemned such incidents and blamed non-state actors, insecurity led some Christian communities to form volunteer protection groups.

The Syrian conflict has severely impacted women through violence, poverty, and displacement. Gender-based abuse remains common, especially in camps, with limited protection or services. Since the 2024 transition, authorities have pledged to support women's rights, but progress is unclear. Women remain politically underrepresented, and access to education, work, and movement varies regionally. In the first half of 2025, there have been rising reports of abductions and inconsistent rules on gender mixing.

In early 2025, clashes in Jaramana and Sahnaya between Druze fighters, government forces, and Islamist groups left 134 dead and hundreds displaced. Israeli airstrikes followed, and anti-Druze sentiment increased. In May, Druze leaders agreed to surrender heavy weapons and accepted government redeployment. Violence continued, however, in southern Syria, with over 1,120 killed in sectarian fighting and reported extrajudicial killings. By July, a ceasefire had collapsed, and Suweida city came under siege amid worsening conditions.

Mandatory military service has been abolished by the new government, with reinstatement only possible during national emergencies. A voluntary army was formed in December 2024, initially with brief training focused on weapons and Islamic law. Former SAA defectors can apply for reinstatement via an online portal; some now hold senior roles. Non-defecting officers, especially those linked to war crimes, are excluded, while lower ranks may rejoin through

retraining. HTS initiated a reconciliation process requiring former government personnel to surrender documents and await review. Those cleared of war crimes were granted protection and freedom of movement. More than 100 armed factions have joined the MoD, but integration has faced obstacles due to mistrust and loss of revenue. Some groups, including the SDF and factions in Daraa and Suweida, demand local representation and a degree of autonomy.

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## Introduction

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The purpose of this thematic Country of Origin Information (COI) report is to provide an overview of available country of origin information up to and including July 2025 on a number of topics regarding Syria for use in the processing of asylum cases. The report examines the situation of certain groups following the fall of the Assad government in December 2024, including individuals affiliated with, or perceived to be affiliated with, the Assad government, as well as Alawites, Christians, women, and Druze.

In addition, it provides an overview of the general security situation in the country for the period 1 June – 31 July 2025, as an update to the information presented in the Danish Immigration Service's report: [DIS, Syria, Security situation, June 2025](#). Finally, the report addresses the issue of military service in Syria.

The sections on the situation of certain groups and on military service are mainly based on information from the latest COI publications on Syria, particularly the two most recent Country Focus reports from EUAA ([March](#) and [July](#) 2025), as well as [a report](#) published by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in May 2025. The security situation is primarily covered using data on security incidents from ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project).

The Terms of Reference (ToR), which were drafted in consultation with the Asylum Division of the Danish Immigration Service (DIS), are included in Annex 1.

The report is a synthesis of the information obtained from the written sources mentioned above and does not include all details and nuances provided by the sources.

Attention should be called to the changeable security situation in Syria and the fact that the information provided in this report may become outdated. Therefore, the issues addressed in this report should be monitored periodically and brought up to date accordingly.

The report is written in accordance with the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) COI Report Methodology.<sup>1</sup> The research and editing of this internal report were finalised on 30 August 2025.

The report is available on of the Danish Immigrations Service, <http://www.us.dk/>, thus available to all stakeholders in the refugee status determination process as well as to the public. The Danish Immigration Service will continue to systematically monitor developments and conduct in-depth research on these topics to ensure that updated information is made available when relevant.

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<sup>1</sup> EUAA, *EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology*, 22 February 2023, [url](#)

# Abbreviations

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ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
COI	Country of Origin Information
DIS	Danish Immigration Service
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
GBV	Gender-based violence
GSS	General Security Service
HTS	Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham
IDP	Internal Displaced Persons
IS	Islamic State
MoD	Ministry of Defence
Mol	Ministry of Interior
SAA	Syrian Arab Army
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SGG	Syrian Salvation Government
SNA	Syrian National Army
SOHR	Syrian Observatory for Human Rights
ToR	Terms of Reference

# 1. Background

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In the seven months following the fall of the Assad government on 8 December 2024, Syria's current government has launched a range of political, administrative, and economic initiatives aimed at stabilising the country and addressing the consequences of over a decade of conflict. The collapse of the Assad government marked the end of 54 years of Baath Party rule and the beginning of a transitional period led by Ahmed al-Sharaa, appointed president in January 2025.<sup>2</sup>

A new 23-member government was formed on 29 March 2025,<sup>3</sup> with ministries restructured or newly established, and a number of key positions filled by individuals previously affiliated with Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and its formerly Idlib-based civilian administrative body, the Syrian Salvation Government (SSG).<sup>4</sup>

## 1.1. Political and economic developments

Economic conditions remain dire, with little improvement in living standards despite salary increases and public spending initiatives. The Ministries of Economy and of Finance have taken steps to promote investment and reform the financial sector, including re-establishing international economic ties and drafting new legislation. However, structural weaknesses, lack of trust in financial institutions, and limited liquidity have hindered progress.<sup>5</sup> The Syrian pound has seen some stabilisation,<sup>6</sup> but this has not translated into meaningful improvements for the population. Unemployment remains high, and over 90% of Syrians live below the poverty line.<sup>7</sup>

On the security front, the Ministries of Defense (MoD) and Interior (MoI) have focused on restructuring internal forces and consolidating authority. The MoD is working to integrate armed factions and build a new military structure,<sup>8</sup> while the MoI has continued civil registry and immigration functions, reduced passport fees, and pursued drug control efforts.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> DIS, *Syria – Security Situation*, June 2025, [url](#), p. 6; Enab Baladi, *100 Days of Government: Experts Highlight Individual Performance, Weak Governance*, 9 July 2025, [url](#);

<sup>3</sup> DIS, *Syria – Security Situation*, June 2025, [url](#), p. 7; Enab Baladi, *100 Days of Government: Experts Highlight Individual Performance, Weak Governance*, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>4</sup> Enab Baladi, *100 Days of Government: Experts Highlight Individual Performance, Weak Governance*, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>5</sup> Enab Baladi, *100 Days of Government: Experts Highlight Individual Performance, Weak Governance*, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>6</sup> DIS, *Syria – Security Situation*, June 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>7</sup> DIS, *Syria – Security Situation*, June 2025, [url](#), p. 8; Enab Baladi, *100 Days of Government: Experts Highlight Individual Performance, Weak Governance*, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>8</sup> DIS, *Syria – Security Situation*, June 2025, [url](#), p. 6; Enab Baladi, *100 Days of Government: Experts Highlight Individual Performance, Weak Governance*, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>9</sup> Enab Baladi, *100 Days of Government: Experts Highlight Individual Performance, Weak Governance*, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

In the service sectors, efforts to rehabilitate infrastructure, improve healthcare, and advance digital communications have faced delays or limited impact. The healthcare system remains highly dependent on international NGOs, while the education sector has seen minimal reform despite plans to improve curriculum and infrastructure. Key issues such as access to education for returning refugees and modernisation of higher education have yet to be addressed in a substantive manner.<sup>10</sup>

Experts have criticised the current government for lacking a unified governance strategy, noting fragmented decision-making, outdated administrative systems, and the premature formation of committees without clear frameworks.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Enab Baladi, *100 Days of Government: Experts Highlight Individual Performance, Weak Governance*, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>11</sup> Enab Baladi, *100 Days of Government: Experts Highlight Individual Performance, Weak Governance*, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

## 2. Security situation: June-July 2025

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### 2.1. General security situation

The MoI reorganised internal policing by merging the police and security departments into a unified agency and deploying representatives across provinces. While reports indicate a decline in theft and kidnapping incidents in major cities such as Damascus and Aleppo, these types of crimes continue to be prevalent in other areas, particularly along the Syrian coast. The overall security environment remains impacted by the post-conflict context and the widespread availability of weapons among armed groups and civilians.<sup>12</sup>

The security situation in Syria remains highly localised making it difficult to generalise, as conditions differ significantly between and within regions. Factors influencing the security environment include historical affiliations with either the opposition or the former government, sectarian and political dynamics, and specific local conditions.<sup>13</sup>

Since early 2025, the current government has expanded control in key cities and regions of Syria, but continues to face significant security challenges. In March, pro-Assad loyalists launched an insurgency in coastal areas, triggering intense hostilities and mass displacement, though the frequency of such attacks later declined.<sup>14</sup>

Ongoing issues include revenge killings, sectarian assassinations, kidnappings, and widespread criminality, particularly in areas affected by a security vacuum and socioeconomic instability. In the northeast, while an integration agreement with the SDF reduced armed clashes, tensions remain and institutional unification is unresolved.<sup>15</sup>

Although some areas have seen a reduction in reported incidents in recent months, the overall situation remains fragile. Hostilities continue in parts of the country, including Israeli operations in the south and incidents in Latakia and Tartous. In regions such as Hama, Aleppo, Idlib, Homs, Rural Damascus, and Deir Ezzour, the presence of extremist Islamist groups contributes to ongoing insecurity through targeted killings, kidnappings, and robberies.<sup>16</sup>

In July 2025, long-standing tensions between Druze and Bedouin communities in southern Syria escalated into sectarian violence following the reported abduction of a Druze merchant near Damascus. Government forces were deployed to Suweida but later withdrew after Israeli airstrikes reportedly targeted their positions, citing the protection of Druze civilians. Armed

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<sup>12</sup> Enab Baladi, *100 Days of Government: Experts Highlight Individual Performance, Weak Governance*, 9 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>13</sup> DIS, *Syria – Security Situation*, June 2025, [url](#), p. 11

<sup>14</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 89

<sup>15</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 90-91

<sup>16</sup> DIS, *Syria – Security Situation*, June 2025, [url](#), p. 11

clashes ensued between Druze and Bedouin fighters, with allegations of acts of violence committed by both sides, as well as by security personnel and individuals affiliated with the current government.<sup>17</sup>

2.2. Territorial control

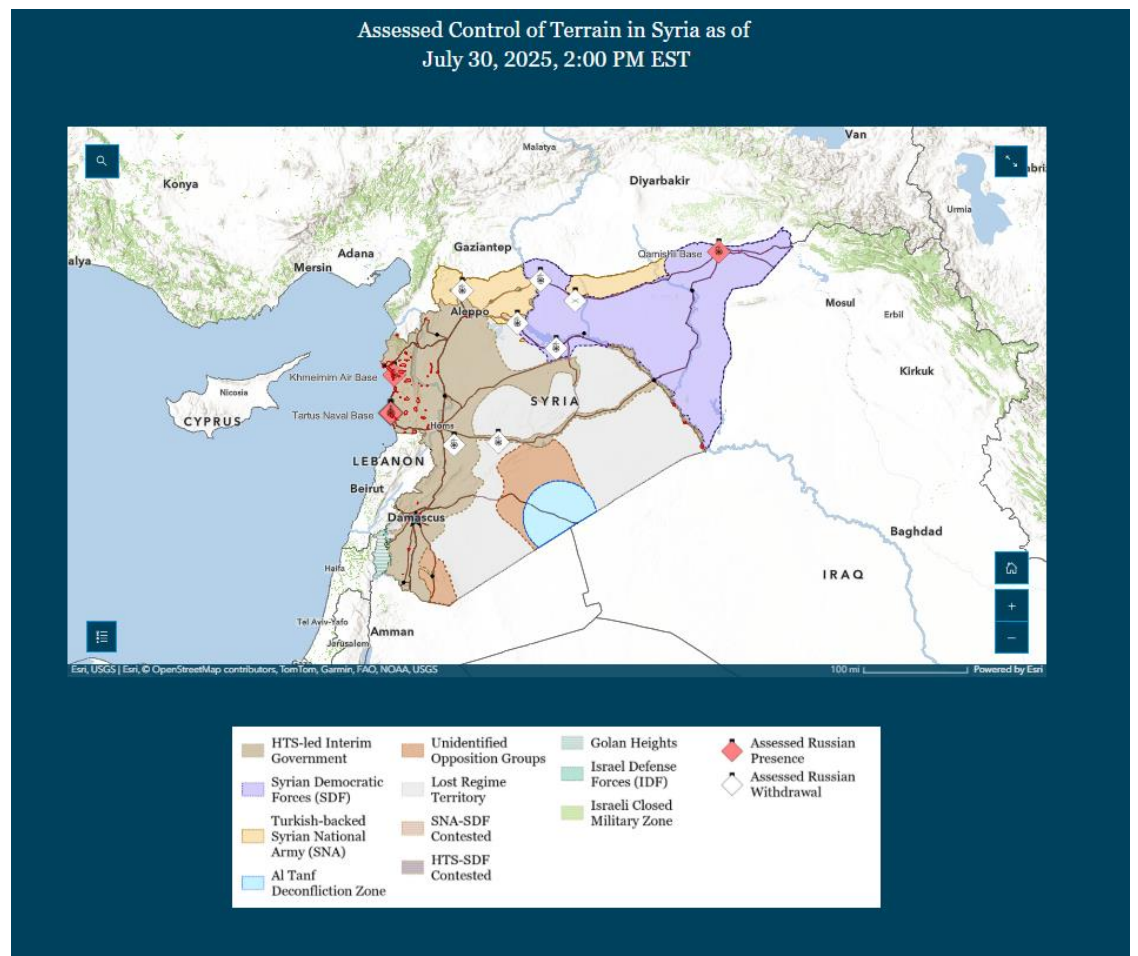


Figure 1: ISW, Assessed Control Terrain in Syria July 30, 2025 at 2:00 pm EST, [url](#)

According to an assessment published on 30 July 2025 by the Institute for the Study of War and the Critical Threats Project, territorial control in Syria remains divided among several actors. The Damascus-based government retains control over western Syria and parts of the south, including major cities such as Damascus, Homs, Hama, and parts of Aleppo. Areas of Suweida governorate are controlled by opposition groups.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> BBC, *Bedouins tell BBC they could return to fighting Druze in Syria*, 20 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>18</sup> ISW, *Assessed Control Terrain in Syria July 30, 2025 at 2:00 pm EST*, [url](#)

Turkish-backed SNA forces control territory in the north, primarily along the Turkish border in northern Aleppo and parts of Raqqqa and Hasakah, while the SDF maintains control over large parts of northeastern Syria, including the majority of Hasakah and Raqqqa, as well as parts of Deir Ezzour. Contested areas are indicated along frontlines between opposing factions, particularly in central and northern regions. Pro-Assad insurgent elements maintain an active presence in several areas, with the strongest presence observed in the coastal governorates of Latakia and Tartous.<sup>19</sup>

### 2.3. Security Incidents in Syria June – July 2025

According to data from ACLED,<sup>20</sup> a significant number of security incidents were recorded across Syria during June and July 2025. The incidents included battles, remote violence (such as explosions), and violence against civilians.<sup>21</sup>

The overall number of recorded incidents increased from June to July. In June, over 350 incidents were documented, while July saw a total of approximately 450. This increase was mainly due to an increase in incidents involving battles. The number of explosions and violence against civilians remained relatively stable between the two months.<sup>22</sup>

Violence against civilians accounted for the highest share of incidents in both months. Battles occurred particularly in July and explosions and other forms of remote violence represented the smallest share in the same month.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> ISW, *Assessed Control Terrain in Syria July 30, 2025* at 2:00 pm EST, [url](#)

<sup>20</sup> ACLED describes itself as 'a disaggregated data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping initiative. ACLED collects information on the dates, actors, locations, fatalities, and types of all reported political violence and protest events around the world.' ACLED, About ACLED, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>21</sup> ACLED uses the term 'security event' when registering these security incidents. In accordance with EUAA's use of ACLED data), the term 'security incident' is used here and solely includes these three event categories: battles; explosions/remote violence; and violence against civilians

<sup>22</sup> DIS analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Syria (4 August 2025)

<sup>23</sup> DIS analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Syria (4 August 2025)

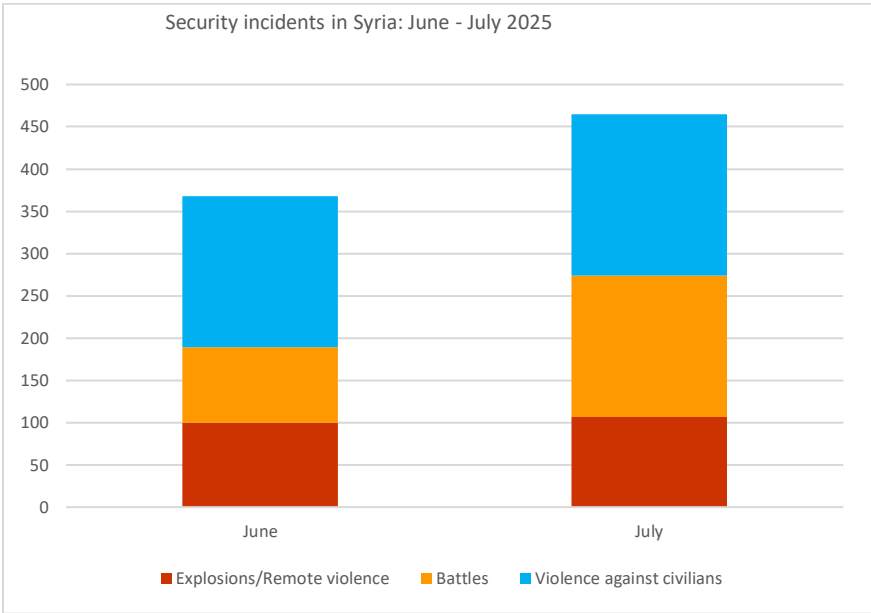


Figure 2: ACLED security events coded as ‘Battles’, ‘Explosions/Remote violence’,<sup>24</sup> and ‘Violence against civilians’ between 1 June and 31 July 2025

In the reporting period from 1 June to 31 July 2025, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) recorded 833 security incidents across Syria. Of these, around 256 were coded as battles, 207 as explosions or remote violence, and 370 as violence against civilians. As in previous months, violence against civilians constituted a substantial proportion of recorded incidents, particularly in governorates such as Deir Ezzour, Daraa, and Suweida.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> ‘Explosions/Remote violence’ includes attacks using landmines, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and chemical weapons, regardless of whether the target is civilian or military; ‘Battles’ involves armed clashes between two organised parties; and ‘Violence against civilians’ refers to deliberate attacks on non-combatant individuals. ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) Codebook, [url](#)

<sup>25</sup> DIS analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Syria (4 August 2025)

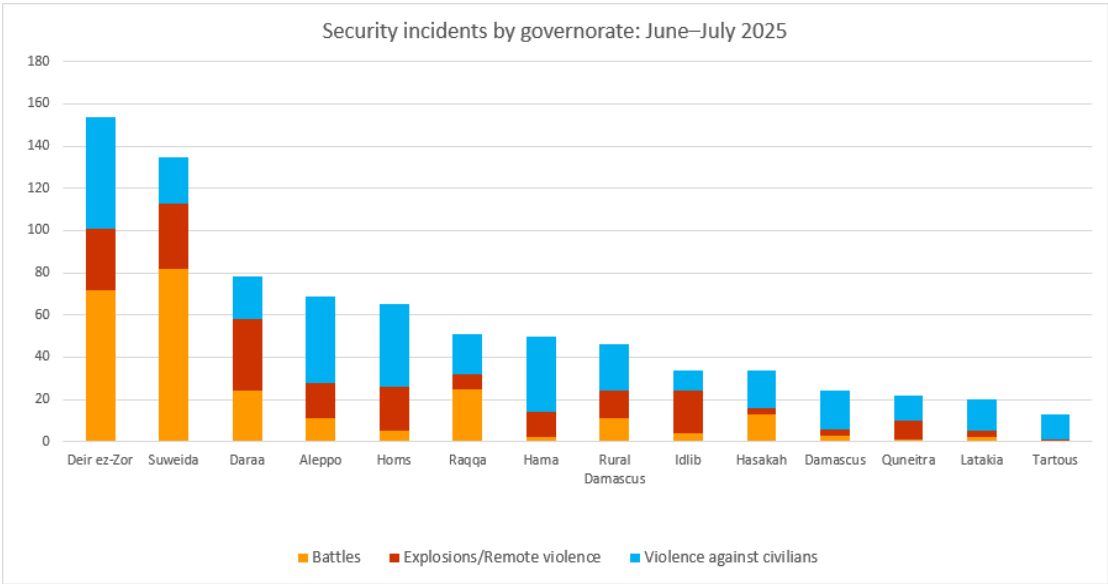


Figure 3: ACLED security events coded as ‘Battles’, ‘Explosions/Remote violence’, and ‘Violence against civilians’ on governorate level between 1 June and 31 July 2025<sup>26</sup>

Geographically, the highest number of incidents was recorded in Deir Ezzour, followed by Suweida and Daraa. Deir ez-Zor accounted for around 154 incidents, with a significant proportion involving both battles and violence against civilians. Suweida and Daraa followed with 135 and 78 incidents, respectively. Aleppo, Homs and Rural Damascus each recorded 69, 65 and 46 incidents, respectively. In contrast, the lowest number of incidents was reported in Damascus, Quneitra, Latakia, and Tartous, all with 79 documented incidents.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> DIS analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Syria (4 August 2025)

<sup>27</sup> DIS analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Syria (4 August 2025)

## 3. Military service

### 3.1. The role of the new military and the ministry of Defence

Following the fall of the Assad government in December 2024, the transitional government immediately began building a new national army under the newly formed MoD. The ministry is tasked with unifying and restructuring a wide range of opposition groups and former armed factions into a single centralised military force.<sup>28</sup>

According to information from the MoD, the establishment of 20 divisions consisting of 10,000 soldiers each has been planned. As of June 2025, approximately half of the targeted number had reportedly been recruited. However, most brigades were still in the early stages of formation. Soldiers' salaries reportedly range from USD 150 to USD 500 per month and are partly funded through seized assets previously belonging to the Assad government.<sup>29</sup>

The leadership of the new military reportedly consists of a mix of former HTS figures, former officers from the SAA, and a limited number of foreign fighters. In late December 2024, 49 new military commanders were appointed, including at least six foreign nationals, while the seven highest-ranking positions were reportedly filled by members of HTS.<sup>30</sup>

#### 3.1.1. General Security Service (GSS)

A parallel security structure has reportedly been established under the MoI, in the form of the GSS. This force is said to comprise primarily former HTS members and individuals previously affiliated with the Idlib-based SSG. The GSS operates as a hybrid entity combining police and paramilitary functions and has assumed responsibilities related to internal security, including patrolling and manning checkpoints.<sup>31</sup>

Despite its broad geographical presence, the GSS reportedly continues to face limitations in capacity and training. Many of the newly recruited personnel are described as inexperienced and as having received minimal instruction. Training is reportedly based on methods previously used by HTS and includes a significant religious component.<sup>32</sup> The GSS has reportedly operated as a transitional military police force, as the regular police structure remains under development.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 28; EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>29</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>30</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 23; NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 30

<sup>31</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>32</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 34

<sup>33</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 21

## 3.2. Military service and recruitment

Mandatory military service has been abolished by the new authorities.<sup>34</sup> It may only be reinstated in the event of a declared national emergency.<sup>35</sup> The MoD has established a professional army based on voluntary enlistment. Recruitment and training began in December 2024, though initial training periods were limited in duration, with some recruits receiving as little as 10 days of instruction focused on weapons handling and Islamic shari'a law. Plans were in place to extend the training period to nine months, contingent on the security situation, following a model previously applied by HTS in Idlib.<sup>36</sup>

The MoD has launched an online application platform allowing former SAA personnel who had defected to apply for reinstatement. The application form requests information such as military background, area of specialisation, and the date of defection. Several former SAA officers are now reported to be leading units within the new army or holding senior positions in the police.<sup>37</sup>

The authorities have also excluded officers from the former SAA who did not defect, particularly those suspected of involvement in war crimes. However, lower-ranking soldiers and non-commissioned officers may apply for recruitment into the military through retraining programmes.<sup>38</sup>

### 3.2.1. Exclusion of non-Sunnis

The military and security apparatus is composed almost entirely of Sunni Muslims. Although non-Sunni individuals—including Alawites and Christians—are, in principle, permitted to apply, religious and ethnic mistrust is said to have created barriers to their inclusion.<sup>39</sup>

According to police officers in Damascus, new recruits were explicitly asked about their religious affiliation. This was explained as part of a strategy aimed at strengthening morale through Islamic legal instruction and codes of conduct. Training was reportedly conducted by former HTS leaders and modelled on HTS's training academy in Idlib.<sup>40</sup>

Some exceptions have been noted. In March 2025, a small number of Christian men reportedly joined the security forces in the Christian-majority area of Wadi Nasara. However, this case

<sup>34</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 23; MEI, *Building Syria's new army: Future plans and the challenges ahead*, 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>35</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 23

<sup>36</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 34

<sup>37</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 23

<sup>38</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 22-23

<sup>39</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 34; EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 22

<sup>40</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 34

appears to be isolated, and sources assess that efforts to integrate non-Sunni individuals into local security structures remain limited or absent.<sup>41</sup>

### 3.3. Amnesty and reconciliation for former soldiers of the Assad government

Following the takeover of power, HTS instructed thousands of police officers, security personnel, and soldiers to undergo a so-called “reconciliation process” (Arabic: *taswiyat wade’*). This process involves the surrender of identification documents, weapons, and vehicles while they await individual investigations. Reception centres are established in each governorate for personnel affiliated with the former government. Individuals who voluntarily surrender themselves and their weapons are issued a certificate granting protection from prosecution and allowing movement inside the country.<sup>42</sup>

On the condition that they have not been involved in massacres or war crimes during the civil war, individuals who obtain reconciliation are permitted to return to civilian life. In the initial weeks following the fall of the Assad government, between 50,000 and 70,000 former soldiers and conscripts from the SAA reportedly surrendered their weapons and were demobilised as part of a general amnesty declared by the new authorities.<sup>43</sup> According to Syrian immigration authorities, more than 50 percent of the travel bans previously imposed by the Assad government—affecting over 8 million Syrians, including individuals wanted for military service—have been lifted.<sup>44</sup>

Despite promises of amnesty, thousands of soldiers, including high-ranking officers, are reported to have been imprisoned. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) estimates that more than 8,000 individuals have been detained without formal charges. Those detained include former SAA soldiers and officers who surrendered, individuals returned from Iraq after attempted escapes, and soldiers who had participated in operations against IS in the Syrian desert and in rural areas around Deir Ezzour.<sup>45</sup>

### 3.4. Integration of armed groups

A key objective of the new authorities has been to bring the country’s numerous armed factions under a unified command. More than 100 armed groups—including former HTS units and elements of the SNA—have been incorporated into the MoD. However, the integration process has encountered practical challenges, as several groups have refused to surrender their

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<sup>41</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 34

<sup>42</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 31; NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 31-32

<sup>43</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>44</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 80

<sup>45</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 32

weapons or submit to central command. This has been attributed to both mistrust of HTS and concerns about losing income from smuggling, extortion, and irregular customs revenues.<sup>46</sup>

For example, the SDF initially rejected integration after their demand for semi-autonomy was denied. Although an agreement was signed in March 2025, its implementation remains unclear. Armed factions in Daraa and Suweida have likewise voiced resistance, including demands for local representation and a degree of autonomy.<sup>47</sup>

The government under President Sharaa aims to establish a new national army based on a centralized command and formal hierarchy, incorporating fighters from numerous armed factions and former SAA officers, both in-country and in exile. The formation plan is divided into three phases. The first phase focuses on establishing military infrastructure, organizational structure, and regional deployment of forces, with integrated factions remaining under their original commanders but placed under oversight by defected officers affiliated with the MoD.<sup>48</sup>

The second phase involves forming specialized units, such as air-defense and armored divisions, to reduce factional cohesion. The third phase depends on negotiations with the SDF, as full integration of SNA is tied to the outcome of these talks. Some SNA factions, particularly Turkmen groups, are not currently included in the integration framework despite Turkish support for the process.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 23; NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 31-32

<sup>47</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 31-32

<sup>48</sup> MEI, *Building Syria's new army: Future plans and the challenges ahead*, 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>49</sup> MEI, *Building Syria's new army: Future plans and the challenges ahead*, 12 June 2025, [url](#)

## 4. The situation of certain profiles

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### 4.1 Individuals affiliated with the Assad government

The term *individuals affiliated with the Assad government* encompasses several groups, including former members of the Ba'ath Party, individuals connected to the former government's security apparatus, and persons who had demonstrated loyalty to Assad or refrained from distancing themselves from the former authorities prior to the transition of power. Since the current government took control of Syria, many of these individuals have reportedly faced repercussions, including dismissals, property confiscation, and forced displacement.<sup>50</sup>

Reports also indicate that individuals suspected of having supported the former Assad government, including alleged informants, have been targeted in acts of revenge, such as looting, kidnappings, and killings. In some instances, perpetrators were reportedly members of criminal groups who impersonated security personnel to carry out these attacks.<sup>51</sup>

#### 4.1.1. *Individuals formerly affiliated with the military or security apparatus*

Following the transition of power, the new authorities reportedly required thousands of former police officers, security personnel, and soldiers to undergo a reconciliation process. Reconciliation centres were established in each governorate to receive individuals affiliated with the former government. However, the process reportedly lacked transparency, applied inconsistent criteria, and was influenced by the security agencies.<sup>52</sup>

In Tartous and Latakia, forces affiliated with the Assad government were reported to have maintained substantial stockpiles of weapons. While many individuals participated in disarmament and reconciliation processes, others declined to do so, referring to the unstable security situation and a perceived need for self-protection. By early 2025, several thousand men were estimated to have avoided reconciliation; some were detained during security operations, while others were reportedly involved in armed resistance against the current authorities.<sup>53</sup> In late January 2025, reports emerged of executions carried out in rural Damascus and Homs by armed actors targeting former government security personnel and individuals perceived as affiliated with the former government.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 104-105

<sup>51</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 105

<sup>52</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 26

<sup>53</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>54</sup> UN HRC, *Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic*, 14 March 2025, [url](#), p.6

Senior figures affiliated with the Assad government, including high-ranking military and intelligence officials, reportedly refrained from participating in the settlement/reconciliation process, instead establishing insurgent networks in the coastal areas. Many senior officers, particularly brigadier generals and above, are believed to have fled abroad or gone into hiding. Pro-government militias such as the National Defence Forces (NDF) and Local Defence Forces reportedly disbanded without a formal surrender, and numerous members are thought to have retained their weapons and evaded disarmament.<sup>55</sup> Prior to the outbreak of violence in Syria's coastal areas in March 2025, individuals reportedly linked to Iranian-backed elements of the Assad government were said to have carried out dozens of attacks on security forces in various governorates beginning in mid-January 2025.<sup>56</sup>

Security forces under the current government conducted operations targeting individuals affiliated with the Assad government. However, these efforts have not been accompanied by formal legal procedures, such as published suspect lists, designated oversight bodies, or established judicial mechanisms. In the absence of such structures, armed groups supportive of the new government are said to have operated without effective control, allegedly committing violations including extrajudicial killings (for more information see section [4.1.2.](#)).<sup>57</sup>

The resulting environment of insecurity and fear is reported to have enabled former Assad-era officers to mobilise supporters and initiate destabilising activities.<sup>58</sup> In June 2025, a former member of the Assad government's forces was reportedly shot and killed by a MoD member in Al-Qamira village, located in the Latakia countryside.<sup>59</sup>

Despite the current authorities' effort to limit or address acts of reprisal against individuals associated with the previous government,<sup>60</sup> 790 individuals, including 26 women and 13 children, have reportedly been killed in retaliatory attacks across various provinces in Syria since early 2025.<sup>61</sup>

Despite official amnesty announcements, reports indicate that large numbers of former military personnel, including high-ranking officers, have been detained. Thousands of individuals — including former Syrian Arab Army (SAA) soldiers and officers who surrendered, returnees from Iraq, those previously involved in fighting against IS, and civilians apprehended during raids or at checkpoints — have reportedly been held without formal charges in detention facilities in

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<sup>55</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 31-32

<sup>56</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>57</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>58</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>59</sup> SOHR, *Ongoing executions | Former member of regime forces shot dead by member of Ministry of Defence in Jabaleh*, 24 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>60</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>61</sup> SOHR, *Ongoing executions | Former member of regime forces shot dead by member of Ministry of Defence in Jabaleh*, 24 June 2025, [url](#)

Hama, Adra, and Harem for extended periods. Some senior military figures were reportedly transferred to Afrin prison without public acknowledgment.<sup>62</sup>

Between March and May 2025, security forces under the current government continued to conduct arrest campaigns targeting individuals alleged to have committed violations during the Assad government's tenure. These operations were concentrated in governorates such as Latakia, Homs, Hama, and Damascus, and resulted in the confiscation of weapons and ammunition. Detainees were reportedly transferred to central prisons in Homs, Hama, and Adra.<sup>63</sup>

Concerns have been raised regarding the legal basis for these detentions, with reports suggesting a lack of judicial oversight, legal representation, or formal charges. Detainees were allegedly held incommunicado and denied access to family visits or legal counsel, amid sporadic reports of mistreatment, including torture. Deaths in custody were also reported in Homs in February with some authorities reportedly pledging to investigate these incidents.<sup>64</sup>

Authorities reportedly released several hundred detainees, including former military officers, after determining that they were not implicated in criminal activities. Observers have noted two apparent patterns in the current government's approach to detained individuals formerly affiliated with the Assad government and accused of human rights violations:

- 1) High-ranking individuals or those associated with serious abuses are often publicly identified upon arrest and tend to remain in detention. However, exceptions exist, such as the case of Fadi Saqr, a former commander of the NDF, who was released despite his prominent position.
- 2) Lower-level officials and former informants are frequently released shortly after arrest.<sup>65</sup>

Thus, individuals with higher public or military profiles are reportedly more likely to be targeted for arrest, whereas those with lower profiles often avoid sustained scrutiny. The treatment of detainees appears to vary, with no uniform procedures in place. Higher-ranking individuals may receive comparatively better treatment, possibly to facilitate information gathering or to ensure they can later be presented in court in acceptable condition. In contrast, lower-ranking individuals are reportedly more exposed to mistreatment, including physical abuse, as indicated by video material circulated during the reporting period.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>63</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 32-33

<sup>64</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 33

<sup>65</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 33

<sup>66</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 33-34

Several arrests of senior figures formerly affiliated with the Assad government have been recorded. These include high-ranking military and intelligence officials accused of involvement in serious violations, such as war crimes and mass killings.<sup>67</sup> In June 2025, the MoI announced the arrest of Wassim al-Assad during a coordinated security operation, citing his alleged involvement in drug trafficking, corruption, and activities linked to the former government.<sup>68</sup>

#### 4.1.1.1. *Violations by non-state actors*

Since December 2024, reports have documented targeted killings of individuals affiliated or suspected of being affiliated with the former government's security or intelligence apparatus, including members of the Air Force Intelligence, National Defence Forces (NDF), Liwa al-Quds, and the Tiger Forces. These incidents, reportedly carried out by unidentified armed actors and Salafi-jihadi factions, appear to be motivated by the individuals' alleged involvement in past violations rather than their sectarian background. Victims have included individuals from Sunni, Alawite, and Shia communities, who were allegedly targeted due to their roles in the intelligence services, security forces, or as informants. Such incidents have occurred across multiple governorates, including Aleppo, Dar'a, Damascus, Deir Ezzour, Homs, Hama, and Latakia.<sup>69</sup>

One group that has claimed responsibility for some of these attacks is Saraya Ansar al-Sunnah, a radical Sunni militant group that emerged in early 2025. The group has expressed ideological alignment with IS and has vowed to target Alawites, Shia Muslims, and loyalists of the Assad government. It is described as a decentralised network relying on independently operating individuals. Most of its claimed attacks have taken place in Homs, with additional incidents reported in Aleppo, Hama, Latakia, and Tartous, targeting individuals such as religious figures, journalists, and former security personnel.<sup>70</sup>

In April 2025, a group known as the Special Accountability Force emerged in northern Aleppo governorate, reportedly aiming to target individuals accused of involvement in human rights violations under the Assad government. A subsequent increase in vigilante attacks was recorded, including executions of alleged collaborators—mainly Sunni individuals—in Hama and Aleppo, as well as attacks on Alawites in Homs, western Dar'a, and Latakia. Unidentified gunmen, often using motorcycles, were also reported to have carried out assassinations against individuals accused of supporting the Assad government.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 34

<sup>68</sup> Enab Baladi, *Interior Ministry arrests Wassim al-Assad*, 21 June 2025, [url](#); AP, *Syrian authorities arrest Bashar Assad's cousin on drug trafficking charges*, 21 June 2025, [url](#); DR, *Assads fætter anholdt i Syrien for narkosmugling*, 21 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>69</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 34-35

<sup>70</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 35-36

<sup>71</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 36

In response, the current authorities issued a fatwa in June prohibiting revenge killings and extrajudicial retaliation, calling for disputes to be addressed through formal legal channels. The impact of this measure remained unclear as of July 2025.<sup>72</sup>

#### 4.1.2. *Former members of the Ba'ath Party*

Following the transition of power in Syria in late 2024, the new administration did not implement a wide-ranging de-Ba'athification process similar to that carried out in Iraq after 2003. However, the activities of the Ba'ath Party were suspended in December, and the party was officially dissolved in January 2025.<sup>73</sup>

The new authorities reportedly distinguish between senior Ba'ath Party officials, such as central committee members, and ordinary members. Only senior party figures have been required to report to reconciliation centres.<sup>74</sup>

There have been occasional reports of arrests of individuals formerly affiliated with the Ba'ath Party, including a former provincial secretary, although the specific reasons for these detentions have not been made public.<sup>75</sup> However, former membership in the Ba'ath Party does not appear to be a primary reason for arrest, as such affiliation was widespread under the previous system.<sup>76</sup>

#### 4.1.3. *Other individuals affiliated with the Assad government*

Authorities reportedly continue to announce frequent arrests of individuals linked to the former government, particularly targeting former military personnel and medical staff accused of abuses. However, aside from a few high-profile cases, such as that of the former Mufti of Syria who was associated with the endorsement of wartime practices, there appears to be limited action taken against individuals who supported or promoted the previous government's narrative during the conflict.<sup>77</sup>

The targeting of former civilian officials is reported to be selective, with prominent individuals who were visible and outspoken during the former regime's rule were more likely to be detained to allow the authorities to showcase their commitment to justice. In contrast, individuals with lower public profiles are generally not detained unless there are specific allegations against them or connections to former intelligence services. Some former officials

<sup>72</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 36

<sup>73</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 26; NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 107

<sup>74</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 107

<sup>75</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 34

<sup>76</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 35

<sup>77</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 34-35

reportedly remain active in Syria, while others are believed to have left the country or gone into hiding.<sup>78</sup>

The current government forces have reportedly conducted detention campaigns targeting individuals from various professional backgrounds accused of being involved in violations under the former government, including former government employees, doctors previously working in military hospitals associated with security services, and media professionals formerly employed by state-run outlets.<sup>79</sup>

#### *4.1.4. Relatives of individuals affiliated with the Assad government*

Between March and April, relatives of individuals formerly affiliated with the Assad government reportedly faced various difficulties. These included job dismissals affecting, for example, wives and daughters of former security personnel. It remained however unclear whether these dismissals were targeted due to family connections or part of broader public sector restructuring. Alawite families were reportedly among those most affected. There were also reports of home seizures involving relatives of former government supporters, as well as arrests of family members of individuals wanted by the authorities.<sup>80</sup>

## **4.2. Alawites**

Following the transition of power in Syria in late 2024, the new authorities, led by HTS, publicly stated their intention to include members of the Alawite community in future state-building efforts. HTS reportedly engaged in dialogue with local Alawite representatives and indicated that accountability for crimes committed under the Assad government would be pursued through the formal judicial system.<sup>81</sup>

Despite official declarations of inclusion, available information indicates that Alawites were largely excluded from newly established political and military structures.<sup>82</sup> During the offensive in late November and early December 2024, tens of thousands of Alawites reportedly fled to the governorates of Latakia and Tartous or to Lebanon.<sup>83</sup> In the first half of 2025, the situation of Alawites was described as precarious, with reports of discrimination and retaliatory attacks.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 35

<sup>79</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 34

<sup>80</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 106

<sup>81</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 29

<sup>82</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 29

<sup>83</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 92

<sup>84</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 28-29; NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 92; EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 43

#### 4.2.1. Incidents involving forces affiliated with the current government

Following the transition of power, incidents of deadly violence occurred in which Alawites were among the casualties. In most cases, the motives behind the violence were unclear and may have included perceived affiliation with the former government, sectarian identity, criminal activity, or personal disputes. The perpetrators were generally unidentified. No large-scale retaliatory attacks against Alawites were reported during the first month after the transition, although such incidents were reported to have increased from January 2025.<sup>85</sup>

Unverified social media content accused HTS members of involvement in incidents targeting Alawites. Within a month after the downfall of the Assad government, 150 Alawites were reportedly killed by unidentified perpetrators in December 2024 and January 2025.<sup>86</sup>

At the end of January 2025, armed groups reportedly carried out attacks in predominantly Alawite and Shiite areas, including extrajudicial killings in the Homs countryside and in a village in northwestern Hama, where former officers were among those killed. In early February, further attacks against Alawites were reported. The authorities announced investigations into unlawful killings, while also warning against sectarian escalation.<sup>87</sup>

Between 6 and 10 March 2025, widespread violence reportedly occurred in Syria's coastal governorates, particularly Latakia and Tartous, as well as parts of Hama and Homs, involving clashes between the new authorities and Alawite militias affiliated with the former government. The violence was reported to have resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths,<sup>88</sup> including extrajudicial and mass killings, with sectarian and retaliatory motives cited by various sources.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p.94

<sup>86</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 29-30

<sup>87</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 30

<sup>88</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 31; EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 43-45; DIS, *Syria— Security Situation*, 24 June 2025, [url](#), p. 15

<sup>89</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 31; EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 43-45

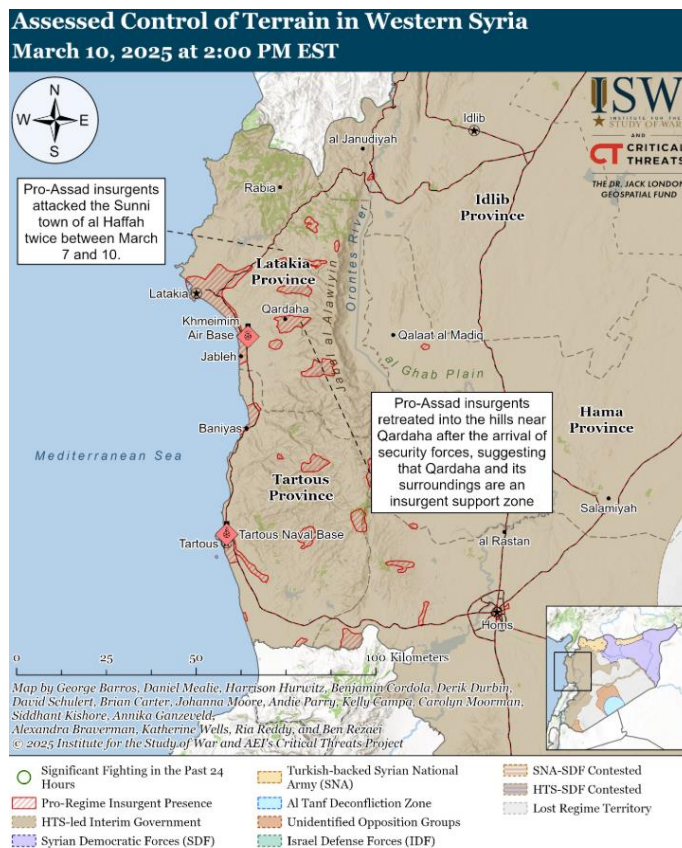


Figure 4: ISW, Assessed Control Terrain in Western Syria March 10, 2025 at 2:00 pm EST, [url](#)

A large number of the civilian victims were reportedly Alawites, with nearly 1,500 Alawites killed and dozens reported missing during incidents that occurred between 7 and 9 March 2025.<sup>90</sup> Sources indicated that factions of the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA), as well as foreign fighters and irregular armed civilians, were among those involved in the violence.<sup>91</sup>

These groups were reported to have operated with limited oversight from the authorities. In contrast, members of the General Security Service (GSS) were described as comparatively disciplined, with limited involvement in reported violations. Following the violence between 6 and 10 March, isolated reports continued to surface of attacks against Alawites allegedly carried out by government forces and affiliated armed groups.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>90</sup> SOHR, *Syrian forces mass\*acred 1,500 Alawites. The chain of command led to Damascus*, 30 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>91</sup> SOHR, *Syrian forces mass\*acred 1,500 Alawites. The chain of command led to Damascus*, 30 June 2025, [url](#); Syria: *Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 44

<sup>92</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 43-45; NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p.95

#### 4.2.2. Incidents involving other actors

Since early 2025, unidentified armed individuals have repeatedly been linked to civilian deaths, frequently targeting people from Alawite-majority areas. Between January and late April 2025, at least 361 civilians were reportedly killed in extrajudicial incidents in Homs and Hama governorates, with most cases occurring in Alawite-populated areas. Following the escalation of violence in coastal areas in March, targeted killings - reportedly carried out by unidentified armed groups operating beyond state control - continued in governorates such as Latakia, Tartous, and Homs. In one instance, at least 20 civilians were killed in Alawite-majority areas of Homs city between 23 and 25 April.<sup>93</sup>

These incidents took place in the context of heightened tensions following government security operations targeting individuals with affiliations to the Assad government. The killings included both targeted attacks against individuals with prior ties to the former government—some of whom had undergone reconciliation processes—and random acts of violence possibly driven by sectarian or retaliatory motives.<sup>94</sup> Additional attacks conducted by unidentified perpetrators targeting Alawites occurred between 10 May and 4 June in Latakia and Hama, resulting in 20 deaths.<sup>95</sup>

Reports indicate that recent killings of Alawites in Homs differ in nature from ongoing revenge attacks targeting individuals affiliated with the Assad government's security apparatus. These incidents appear to be primarily driven by sectarian identity, based on the perception that Alawites as a group are complicit in abuses committed under the former government.<sup>96</sup>

While similar attacks have been reported in Latakia and Hama, they are reportedly most concentrated in specific neighbourhoods of Homs city and surrounding areas. This pattern may be linked to the area's conflict history, where large numbers of Sunni civilians were displaced following violations, including massacres allegedly carried out by Alawite residents. Despite the presence of security forces and GSS checkpoints at the entrances to the city of Homs, attacks on civilians reportedly continued. Some residents have accused the authorities of tolerating or potentially enabling these incidents.<sup>97</sup>

Since early 2025, multiple reports have indicated that dozens of Alawite men and women—particularly from Homs—have been abducted near their homes or workplaces by unidentified perpetrators. In several cases, the victims were later found dead from gunshot wounds. The majority of these incidents occurred in Homs, Tartous, Latakia, and Hama governorates.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>93</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 45

<sup>94</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 45

<sup>95</sup> SOHR, *Syrian forces mass\*acred 1,500 Alawites. The chain of command led to Damascus*, 30 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>96</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 45

<sup>97</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 45

<sup>98</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 45-46

SOHR documented the abduction of at least 50 Alawite women between the beginning of January and April 2025. Some women who were later released reportedly experienced physical abuse, verbal harassment, and possibly sexual violence. Certain community members claimed that some of the abductions were carried out for the purpose of forced marriage, allegedly involving Islamist groups and foreign individuals in Idlib.<sup>99</sup>

#### 4.2.3. *Anti-Alawite rhetoric and incidents involving religious sites*

On 25 December 2024, demonstrations were reported in several cities with significant Alawite populations—including Homs, Latakia, Jableh, Qardaha, and Tartous—following the circulation of a video allegedly showing the burning of an Alawite shrine in Aleppo. According to local religious figures, the footage was believed to have been recorded in late November or early December 2024, around the time Aleppo was taken. Additional incidents involving attacks on Alawite shrines were also reported in areas such as western Hama and western Homs governorates during the same period.<sup>100</sup>

Between late 2024 and April 2025, multiple instances of hostile rhetoric targeting Alawites were documented. This included the use of derogatory terms such as ‘infidels’ and ‘apostates’. Reports also indicated that some Sunni religious leaders publicly called for reprisals and jihad against Alawites.<sup>101</sup>

#### 4.2.4. *Discrimination and economic marginalisation of the Alawite community*

Following the transition of power, many Alawites reportedly lost their positions in the public sector, particularly former employees of the security services. While the dismissals were officially part of a broader restructuring and streamlining of the state apparatus, several sources indicate that Alawites were disproportionately affected.<sup>102</sup>

In addition, numerous families reportedly lost access to government-subsidised housing, and there have been reports of land and property confiscations—particularly in Hama governorate, where up to 2,000 families were allegedly displaced.<sup>103</sup> The Damascus-based authorities also reportedly dismissed an unspecified number of public sector employees—mainly Alawite women working in education—reportedly due to their marriage to individuals affiliated with the former government’s security services.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>99</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 46

<sup>100</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 94

<sup>101</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 94

<sup>102</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 29; EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 46; NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 93

<sup>103</sup> NMFA, *Ambtsbericht Syrië*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 93

<sup>104</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 46

### 4.3. Christians

Before the Syrian civil war started in 2011, Christians made up about 10% of the population. Due to the war, many fled to Lebanon or Western countries, especially Europe. Current estimates suggest Christians now make up only around 2% of the population (about 300,000 people). The Christian population includes various denominations such as Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic, Maronite, and others, historically concentrated in cities like Damascus and Aleppo, as well as in regions such as Latakia and Jazira.<sup>105</sup>

Following the takeover of power in Syria in December 2024, the new leadership, headed by Ahmad Al-Sharaa, has publicly declared its intention to protect religious minorities and promote national unity.<sup>106</sup> However, when a national dialogue conference was held in February 2025 with the aim of involving various segments of society, including Christians, only one of the seven appointed members of the preparatory committee -a Christian activist- came from a religious minority, prompting criticism over a lack of inclusivity.<sup>107</sup>

The 23 December burning of a Christmas tree by HTS-affiliated foreign fighters in a predominantly Christian town in Hama, along with other reports of harassment, triggered protests. In response, Ahmad Al-Sharaa met with Christian church leaders from various denominations to reassure the Christian community. The government arrested those responsible, described the events as isolated incidents, and closed government offices over the Christmas holiday as a symbolic gesture of support.<sup>108</sup> Later, it also appointed a Christian woman, Hind Kabawat, as Minister of Social Affairs and Labour.<sup>109</sup>

According to a report published by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs covering the period 27 November 2024 to April 2025, churches remained open during the reporting period and Christians were able to celebrate their holidays, including Christmas and Easter. Christian leaders generally had good relations with the transitional government during this period.<sup>110</sup>

In Damascus, government forces reportedly secured festivities, although it remained unclear whether Christians elsewhere in Syria enjoyed the same freedom, with some suggesting the government's support was meant to project an image of tolerance.<sup>111</sup> Some reports indicated

<sup>105</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 52

<sup>106</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>107</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 33

<sup>108</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>109</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 53

<sup>110</sup> NMFA, General Country of Origin Information Report Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p. 97

<sup>111</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 53

that many Christians in Damascus kept a low profile, with some avoiding alcohol due to fear and uncertainty.<sup>112</sup>

#### 4.3.1. Incidents targeting Christians

There have been a number of incidents affecting the Christian community in Syria since the fall of Assad's government, including:

- Reported vandalism and attacks on churches in the period December-April 2024, including the destruction of crosses in Al-Suqaylabiyah (Hama Governorate), the shelling of churches in the cities of Hama (Hama Governorate) and Al-Qusayr (Homs Governorate), and an attempted destruction of a church in the village Bloudan (Rural Damascus), with no injuries reported. In several such cases, the perpetrators were not identified.<sup>113</sup>
- SUVs drove through Damascus' Christian Bab Touma district in December 2024, blasting jihadist songs. A circulated photo on social media also showed an armored vehicle displaying threatening messages.<sup>114</sup>
- An armed group entered into the Christian Al-Qassa neighbourhood of Damascus in January 2025, distributing leaflets that demanded strict rules on women's dress—such as the niqab—and banned smoking. HTS deployed patrols, blaming unidentified individuals and denying involvement<sup>115</sup>
- Seven Christians were killed as they were caught in the crossfire during attacks on Alawites in the coastal region in March 2025.<sup>116</sup> According to the report from the Dutch MFA, none of the seven killed Christians seemed to be targeted because of their religious identity.<sup>117</sup> In response to these incidents, Christian communities in Damascus formed volunteer groups to protect their neighbourhoods and churches.<sup>118</sup>
- Reports in late March 2025 on increased public religious proselytization (often referred to as 'calls to Islam') in Damascus, including Islamic preaching, posters, and loudspeakers promoting modest dress. Vehicles broadcasting religious messages circulated in Christian-majority areas like Bab Touma and Dweila. Authorities dismissed the actions as isolated and unofficial, claiming some arrests were made, yet a similar vehicle reappeared in Dweilaa just days later, spreading the same messages.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>112</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>113</sup> NMFA, *General Country of Origin Information Report Syria*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 97

<sup>114</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p.32; Reuters, *Syria's Christians fearful of new Islamist leaders as Christmas approaches*, 23 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>115</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p.32

<sup>116</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 54

<sup>117</sup> NMFA, *General Country of Origin Information Report Syria*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 98

<sup>118</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 54

<sup>119</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 53

- A government decision in March 2025 to close bars in Damascus, which was seen as a potential restriction on societal freedoms. However, the decision was reversed within a week.<sup>120</sup>
- A Christian man killed in the Dweila, a suburb of Damascus, in March 2025 during a confrontation with Salafist preachers.<sup>121</sup>
- An attack in early May 2025 on an alcohol shop in Christian-majority Rablah in Al-Qusayr district of Homs involving physical assault, looting and threats.<sup>122</sup>
- Burning of a Christian family's car in Hemto town (Hama Governorate) in Mid-May 2025 with leaflets left at the scene threatening and insulting Christians.<sup>123</sup>
- Marching of an armed group in predominantly Christian town of Maharda (Hama Governorate) close to Hemto town in May 2025 with slogans seen by the Christian residents as an intimidating act.<sup>124</sup>
- A deadly terrorist attack on 22 May 2025 during a Sunday service at a Greek Orthodox church in Damascus, killing 25 and injuring 60. The attack was allegedly carried out by an IS-affiliated individual.<sup>125</sup>
- A suicide attack on the Saint Elias (Mar Elias) Greek Orthodox Church in Dweila neighbourhood, a suburb of Damascus, in June 2025, killing 25 persons and injuring dozens. Whilst the government blamed IS for the attack, a little-known Sunni extremist group claimed responsibility.<sup>126</sup>

## 4.4. Women

### 4.4.1. *Impact of the conflict on women*

According to a report from the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) published in November 2024, at least 29,064 women had been killed since 2011, and by the end of 2024, 11,268 women remained detained or forcibly disappeared. In 2024, 92 women were killed in conflict-related incidents.<sup>127</sup>

The number of female-headed households increased as a result of the conflict and displacement. In October 2024, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that nearly one in three households in Syria was headed by a woman.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>120</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 52-53

<sup>121</sup> NMFA, *General Country of Origin Information Report Syria*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 98

<sup>122</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 54

<sup>123</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 54

<sup>124</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 54

<sup>125</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 54

<sup>126</sup> France 24, *Shadowy extremist group claims Damascus church attack*, 24 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>127</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025, [url](#), pp.33-34

<sup>128</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 36

By November 2024, SNHR had recorded over 11,500 cases of sexual violence against women since 2011—most of which were attributed to the former Assad government and the Islamic State (IS).<sup>129</sup>

The conflict has disrupted essential services for women, including sexual and reproductive healthcare in areas such as Latakia and Tartous. Displaced women have poor living conditions and challenges feeding their children, while reports have noted rising domestic violence, survival sex, and forced marriage, especially in IDP camps.<sup>130</sup>

UNOCHA noted that 8.3 million women needed humanitarian aid but had less access than men, often due to social norms and lack of documentation.<sup>131</sup> The economic crisis has contributed to an increase in child marriage and domestic violence against women and girls.<sup>132</sup> Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a widespread threat to women and girls in Syria, particularly in insecure areas. UNOCHA estimated in late 2024 that 93% of the 8.5 million in need of GBV assistance were women and girls. Forms of violence included domestic abuse, sexual violence, and exploitation—both offline and online—driven by economic hardship. Underreporting persisted due to stigma and lack of protection services. The country's legislation does not offer full protection against such violations.<sup>133</sup>

Women without male support – including female-headed households, single women and widows – are particularly vulnerable to poverty, discrimination, limited access to healthcare and food, and risks such as statelessness among children. They also face harassment and exclusion in the labour market, as well as barriers to reclaiming property, especially due to missing documentation.<sup>134</sup> Widows, particularly in IDP camps like those in Idlib, have faced heightened vulnerability to economic exclusion, stigma, exploitation, and abuse.<sup>135</sup>

#### *4.4.2. Situation of women following the fall of the Assad's government in Syria*

The consequences for the situation of women and girls in Syria following the shift in power remain unclear.<sup>136</sup>

On 13 March 2025, President Al-Sharaa signed a constitutional declaration, in which Article 21 addresses women's rights.<sup>137</sup> Article 21 affirms that the state shall uphold women's social

<sup>129</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 37

<sup>130</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 60

<sup>131</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 61

<sup>132</sup> NMFA, *General Country of Origin Information Report Syria*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 107

<sup>133</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 61-62; NMFA, *General Country of Origin Information Report Syria*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 108

<sup>134</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025, [url](#), p. 36

<sup>135</sup> NMFA, *General Country of Origin Information Report Syria*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 108

<sup>136</sup> NMFA, *General Country of Origin Information Report Syria*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 107

<sup>137</sup> NMFA, *General Country of Origin Information Report Syria*, May 2025, [url](#), p. 107

status, safeguard their dignity and their role within the family and society, and guarantee their rights to education and employment. It also ensures the protection of their social, economic, and political rights, and shields them from all forms of oppression, injustice, and violence. However, the text notably avoids using the term "equality."<sup>138</sup> As in the previous constitution, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) remains the basis for legislation. However, it remains unclear what this entails in practice for the position of women and girls.<sup>139</sup>

Women are largely absent from top political and administrative positions and are reportedly not represented in trade unions. In December 2024, the interim administration appointed Aisha al-Dibs as head of the Women's Affairs Office, and briefly Maysaa Sabrine as head of the central bank, before she returned to her deputy role. The transitional government included one woman, Hind Kabawat, a Christian, who was appointed Minister of Social Affairs and Employment. She had previously served on the organising committee of the National Dialogue Conference alongside Houda Atassi.<sup>140</sup>

The new leadership has expressed support for women's rights, including education,<sup>141</sup> though access varies regionally. In some universities, especially in Idlib and Aleppo, women reportedly form the majority, partly due to the departure of many young men during the conflict. Employment access also differs by region, and women generally face lower participation rates and wages than men.<sup>142</sup>

However, the government's approach at the national level remains uncertain, especially in terms of women's rights and representation. Some members of the new government have opposed women's involvement in certain roles and criticized previous efforts to promote gender equality.<sup>143</sup>

In 2025, SOHR and the Beirut-based media Daraj reported a rise in kidnappings of women and girls in provinces like Latakia and Tartous, including cases involving Alawite, Druze, and Christian communities. There have been cases of girls being abducted in broad daylight and in non-isolated areas, with some later being released, reported married, or taken abroad.<sup>144</sup>

There have been reports of women's mobility in Syria being restricted due to the security situation. Arbitrary detentions of women were reported in areas controlled by both the interim

<sup>138</sup> Safahat Syriya, 2025 الإعلان الدستوري لسوريا 2025-مقالات وتحليلات- تحديث 21 آذار [Constitutional Declaration of Syria 2025 - Articles and Analysis - Updated March 21, 2025], 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>139</sup> NMFA, General Country of Origin Information Report Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p. 107

<sup>140</sup> NMFA, General Country of Origin Information Report Syria, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 107-108

<sup>141</sup> EUAA, Syria: Country Focus, March 2025, [url](#), p. 34

<sup>142</sup> NMFA, General Country of Origin Information Report Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p. 108

<sup>143</sup> EUAA, Syria: Country Focus, March 2025, [url](#), p. 35

<sup>144</sup> EUAA, Syria: Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), p. 60

government and the SDF, and some were killed or injured in ongoing violence or by war remnants.<sup>145</sup>

The International Crisis Group reported increased harassment of women, including gender segregation imposed by local authorities - often reversed after public backlash.<sup>146</sup> The Danish Immigration Service reported in June 2025 that gender segregation on public transport in Syria — preventing unrelated men and women from sitting together — is regulated inconsistently. It is not clear whether it results from local initiatives or central directives. Occasionally, checkpoint staff have intervened in seating arrangements.<sup>147</sup>

## 4.5. Druze

The Druze community in Suweida has traditionally maintained a degree of autonomy, including through the operation of local militias. In March 2025, an agreement was reached to place the largest Druze militia, the Men of Dignity, under the Ministry of Interior (MoI), while negotiations regarding broader integration into the Ministry of Defence reportedly remained inconclusive as of late May 2025.<sup>148</sup>

### 4.4.1. *Clashes involving Druze militias and government forces in Jaramana and Sahnaya*

At the end of February 2025, clashes were reported between Druze militias and the current government forces in the Jaramana neighbourhood near Damascus, following the killing of a security officer at a checkpoint. The government responded by deploying additional forces to the area and announced plans to arrest those responsible and remove unauthorized checkpoints.<sup>149</sup>

On 29 April 2025, violent clashes erupted in Jaramana and Sahnaya between Druze fighters, government forces, and Islamist armed groups, reportedly triggered by a social media recording allegedly featuring a Druze cleric insulting the Prophet Muhammad—an allegation the cleric and the Ministry of Interior later denied. The violence spread to surrounding areas, including Suweida Governorate, with reports attributing attacks on Druze civilians to a Salafi-Jihadi group, while Druze militia leaders accused elements within the security forces of facilitating or participating in the violence.<sup>150</sup>

In response to the April 2025 clashes, government forces and Druze militias deployed personnel to Sahnaya and Ashrafiyah Sahnaya, and several arrests were made. The fighting reportedly

<sup>145</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 60

<sup>146</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 60

<sup>147</sup> DIS, *Syria, Security situation*, June 2025, [url](#), pp. 31-32

<sup>148</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 49

<sup>149</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 49-50

<sup>150</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 50

resulted in 134 deaths, including Druze fighters, civilians, and government personnel, while hundreds of residents were displaced from the affected Damascus suburbs.<sup>151</sup>

On 30 April and in early May 2025, Israel launched airstrikes in and around Sahnaya and Damascus, citing the protection of Druze civilians. These strikes occurred despite a ceasefire between the government and local Druze leaders.<sup>152</sup>

Following the attacks, anti-Druze sentiment reportedly intensified across the country, leading to online hate speech, campus protests, and student evacuations. Continued insecurity, along with perceptions of state inaction, prompted Druze communities to rely on local militias for protection and to remain on high alert.<sup>153</sup>

In May 2025, Druze representatives in Jaramana agreed to hand over heavy weapons and support the deployment of Syrian security forces. Around the same time, the Suweida governor announced a similar agreement, marking the first government presence in Suweida since Assad's fall and Ahmad al-Sharaa's rise to power. The same month, it was announced that a police force composed of residents from Suweida had begun operating in the governorate.<sup>154</sup>

#### 4.5.2. Violence involving Druze communities in southern Syria

Despite the government's efforts to de-escalate the conflict, local resistance to government forces has led to violent clashes, including sectarian violence involving Druze groups in Suweida and Dar'a, as well as Rural Damascus.<sup>155</sup>

Prolonged tensions between Druze and Sunni Bedouin tribes in Suweida escalated into deadly sectarian violence on 13 July 25, 2025, triggered by the abduction of a Druze merchant on the highway to Damascus, prompting the intervention of forces from the Syrian Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior.<sup>156</sup> These sectarian clashes in Suweida led to hundreds of deaths, including Druze civilians, government forces, and Bedouin fighters, with reports of extrajudicial executions and mass displacement.<sup>157</sup>

Following armed clashes between Druze factions and Sunni Bedouin armed groups in Suweida, government forces withdrew after Israeli airstrikes, prompting reports of serious

<sup>151</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 50

<sup>152</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 51

<sup>153</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 51

<sup>154</sup> DIS, *Syria, Security situation*, June 2025, [url](#), p. 25-26

<sup>155</sup> EUAA, *Syria: Country focus*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 89-90

<sup>156</sup> Enab Baladi, *Local Witnesses: Violations Target Civilians from Suwayda's Bedouin Community*, 17 July 2025, [url](#); BBC, *Bedouins tell BBC they could return to fighting Druze in Syria*, 20 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>157</sup> BBC, *Almost 600 killed in south Syria violence, monitoring group says*, 17 July 2025, [url](#); SOHR, *Escalation in Al-Suwaydaa reaches an end | Military and security forces withdraw after having committed blatant violations and massacres*, 17 July 2025, [url](#); The Guardian, *'Shot in the head, as if executed': four days of violence end with hundreds dead in southern Syria*, 18 July 2025, [url](#); SOHR, *Execution by throwing from apartments and beheading | Grave violations and war crimes committed during clashes in Al-Suwayda*, 19 July 2025, [url](#)

violations — including killings and forced displacement—against Bedouin civilians by armed groups.<sup>158</sup> Violent clashes continued in Suweida City following the reported collapse of a ceasefire, with armed groups launching attacks from several fronts, allegedly with the facilitation of the GSS. Local factions reportedly attempted to repel the attacks amid intensified fighting, a deteriorating humanitarian situation, and significant disruption to medical services, as the city remained under a severe siege.<sup>159</sup>

According to SOHR, over 1,120 individuals were killed during the recent violence. The reported fatalities included 427 Druze fighters and 298 Druze civilians, of whom 194 were allegedly summarily executed by personnel from the defence and interior ministries. Additionally, 354 government security personnel and 21 Sunni Bedouins were killed, including three civilians reportedly executed by Druze fighters. SOHR also stated that 15 government personnel were killed in Israeli airstrikes.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Al Jazeera, Suwayda tense as Syria reels from sectarian fighting, Israeli attacks, 17 July 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, *Local Witnesses: Violations Target Civilians from Suwayda's Bedouin Community*, 17 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>159</sup> SOHR, *Ceasefire violation | Clashes continue in Al-Suwayda and armed groups advance towards residential neighbourhoods*, 21 July 2025, [url](#)

<sup>160</sup> BBC, *Bedouins tell BBC they could return to fighting Druze in Syria*, 20 July 2025, [url](#); BBC, *UN says it has credible reports of summary executions during Syria fighting*, 19 July 2025, [url](#)

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## Annexe 1: Terms of Reference

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1. Security situation: (June/-July 2025)
2. Situation of certain groups
  - 2.1. Individuals affiliated with the Assad government
  - 2.2. Alawites
  - 2.3. Christians
  - 2.4. Women
  - 2.5. Druze
3. Military service