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# Syria: Country Focus



# **Syria: Country focus**

## **Country of Origin Information Report**

**July 2025**



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# Acknowledgements

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- Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD)

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# Disclaimer

This report was written according to the [EUAA COI Report Methodology \(2023\)](#). The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care within a limited timeframe. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular application for international protection. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

‘Refugee’, ‘risk’ and similar terminology are used as generic terminology and not in the legal sense as applied in the EU Asylum Acquis, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Neither EUAA nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

On 19 January 2022, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) became the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). All references to EASO, EASO products and bodies should be understood as references to the EUAA.

The drafting of this report was finalised on 23 June 2025. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this report. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the methodology section of the [Introduction](#).



## Glossary and abbreviations

Term	Definition
<b>ACLED</b>	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
<b>DAANES</b>	Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria
<b>ERW</b>	Explosive remnants of war
<b>GSS</b>	General Security Services
<b>HTS</b>	Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>ISIL</b>	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant; also known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Islamic State (IS), or Daesh
<b>MoD</b>	Ministry of Defence
<b>Mol</b>	Ministry of Interior
<b>NDF</b>	National Defence Forces
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights
<b>PKK</b>	Kurdistan Workers' Party
<b>SAA</b>	Syrian Arab Army
<b>SDF</b>	Syrian Democratic Forces
<b>SJAC</b>	Syria Justice and Accountability Centre
<b>SNA</b>	Syrian National Army
<b>SNHR</b>	Syrian Network for Human Rights
<b>SOHR</b>	Syrian Observatory for Human Rights
<b>SSG</b>	Syrian Salvation Government
<b>STJ</b>	Syrians for Truth & Justice
<b>TWI</b>	Washington Institute for Near East Policy



Term	Definition
<b>UCDP</b>	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
<b>UNOCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>UXO</b>	Unexploded ordnance
<b>YPG</b>	Kurdish People's Protection Units



# Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant information for the assessment of applications for international protection, and in particular for use in updating EUAA's country guidance on Syria.

The report covers the period of March – May 2025, and should be read in conjunction the [EUAA COI report: Syria - Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#).

## Methodology

This report was jointly drafted by EUAA and ACCORD and reviewed by EUAA and national COI departments in EU+ countries, as mentioned in the [Acknowledgements](#) section.

This report is produced in line with the EUAA COI Report Methodology (2023)<sup>1</sup> and the EUAA COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide (2023).<sup>2</sup>

## Defining the terms of reference

The terms of reference (ToR) of this report were defined by EUAA based on discussions held and input received from COI experts in the EUAA COI specialist network on Syria and from policy experts in EU+ countries within the framework of a Country Guidance development on Syria. The ToR also build on previous EUAA COI reports on Syria covering the same topics. The Terms of Reference for this report can be found in [Annex 2: Terms of Reference](#) of this report.

## Collecting information

The information gathered is a result of research using public, specialised paper-based and electronic sources until 6 June 2025. Some limited additional information was added during the finalisation of this report in response to feedback received during the quality control process, and at least one interview conducted with an oral source, until 23 June 2025.

## Quality control

To ensure that the authors respected the EUAA COI Report Methodology and that the Terms of Reference were comprehensively addressed, a review was carried out by COI specialists from the countries and organisations listed as reviewers in the [Acknowledgements](#) section. All comments made by the reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were implemented in the final draft of this report, which was finalised on 23 June 2025. EUAA also performed the final quality review and editing of the text.

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

<sup>2</sup> EUAA, Writing and Referencing Guide for EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Reports, February 2023, [url](#)





## Sources

In accordance with EUAA COI methodology, a range of different published documentary sources have been consulted on relevant topics for this report. These include: COI reports by governments; information from civil society, advocacy groups, humanitarian organisations, and NGOs; international and NGO human rights reports; reports produced by various bodies of the United Nations; Syrian and regionally-based media; academic publications and think tank reports and specialised sources covering Syria. All information from these sources was consulted within time constraints.

In addition to using publicly available documentary sources, an interview with the human rights organisation Syria Justice and Accountability Centre was conducted for this report. The source was assessed for their background, publication history, reputability and current ground-level knowledge. The source is further described in [Annex 1: Bibliography](#).

### Sources on security incidents

For data on violent incidents, publicly available curated datasets from the organisation [Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project \(ACLED\)](#) have been used. ACLED is a project collecting, analysing and mapping information on crisis and conflict in Africa, south and south-east Asia and Middle East and provides datasets on conflict incidents. It collects data on violent incidents in Syria, coding each incident with the time and place, type of violent incident, the parties involved and the number of fatalities. The information is collected in a database that is openly accessible, searchable and kept continuously up to date. The data primarily come from secondary sources such as traditional media reports, but also from reports by international institutions and non-governmental organisations, targeted new media platforms, and data provided by local partners of ACLED.<sup>3</sup> On Syria, ACLED incorporates data from a number of partners, including the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), Airwars, the Carter Center, Liveuamap, Syria Direct, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), the London School of Economics' Conflict and Civil Society Research Unit, the International Security and Development Center, and Clingendael Institute.<sup>4</sup>

ACLED codes security incidents as follows:

- **Battles:** violent clashes between at least two armed groups. Battles can occur between armed and organised state, non-state, and external groups, and in any combination therein. Sub-events of battles are armed clashes, government regaining territory and non-state actor overtaking territory.
- **Violence against civilians:** violent events where an organised armed group deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants. It includes violent attacks on unarmed civilians such as sexual violence, attacks, abduction/forced disappearance.

<sup>3</sup> ACLED, Methodology, April 2019, [url](#); ACLED, FAQs: ACLED Sourcing Methodology, March 2023, [url](#)

<sup>4</sup> ACLED, Syria Partner Network, April 2019, [url](#); ACLED, ACLED Integrates New Partner Data on the War in Syria, 5 April 2019, [url](#)



- **Explosions/remote violence:** events where an explosion, bomb or other explosive device was used to engage in conflict. They include one-sided violent events in which the tool for engaging in conflict creates asymmetry by taking away the ability of the targets to engage or defend themselves and their location. They include air/drone strikes, suicide bombs, shelling/artillery/missile attacks, remote explosives/landmines/IEDs, grenades, chemical weapons.
- **Riots:** are a violent demonstration, often involving a spontaneous action by unorganised, unaffiliated members of society. They include violent demonstration, mob violence.
- **Protests:** public demonstration in which the participants do not engage in violence, though violence may be used against them. It includes peaceful protests, protests with intervention, excessive force against protesters.
- **Strategic developments:** information regarding the activities of violent groups that is not itself recorded as political violence, yet may trigger future events or contribute to political dynamics within and across states. It includes agreements, changes to group/activity, non-violent transfers of territory, arrests.<sup>5</sup>

For the purpose of providing information for the assessment of serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict (Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive), only the following type of events have been included in the analysis: battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians.

Additionally, ACLED codes actors involved in security incidents as follows: Actor1 is the 'named actor involved in the event' and Actor2 is the 'named actor involved in the event, while "[i]n most cases, an event requires two actors, noted in columns 'ACTOR1' and 'ACTOR2'". However, event types 'Explosions/Remote violence', 'Riots', 'Protests', and 'Strategic developments' can include 'one-sided events'.<sup>6</sup> The ACLED coding of Actor1 and Actor2 does not necessarily indicate that one is the aggressor (e.g Actor1) and the other one (e.g. Actor2) the target or victim.<sup>7</sup> When focusing on the involvement of specific actors within certain regions, the drafters based their analysis on all those incidents, where ACLED coded the relevant actor either as 'Actor1' or as 'Actor2'. This approach aims to illustrate the general level of involvement of the respective actors in the conflict without distinguishing between Actor1 and Actor2, as these categories, according to ACLED's methodology, do not indicate any differentiation in terms of content/semantics.

Characteristics and potential limits for COI use of ACLED data are:

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<sup>5</sup> ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 7 October 2024, [url](#), pp. 10-20

<sup>6</sup> ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 7 October 2024, [url](#), p. 22

<sup>7</sup> ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 7 October 2024, [url](#), p. 4



- Data primarily come from secondary sources such as media reports. Lack of or underreporting might critically affect the depiction and the assessment of the situation on the ground.
- Geographical precision is variable: the provincial capital will represent the region if no further precisions are available and may be over-represented.

Security incidents numbers and associated graphs/maps at country and governorate level are based on a publicly available ACLED dataset for Middle East.<sup>8</sup> Whenever other sources on security incidents were available over the reference period, ACLED's data have been corroborated/contrasted with other data.

### Sources on civilian casualties

The main source on civilian fatalities in Syria used in this report is the Syrian Network of Human Rights (SNHR). The [Syrian Network for Human Rights \(SNHR\)](#) is a non-profit human rights organisation founded in 2011 which works on documenting human rights violations in Syria. SNHR relies on a network of volunteers in each governorate to compile lists of civilian fatalities and verify victims' identities by photo or video and by speaking with family members, witnesses, and hospitals. SNHR reports fatalities by gender, age, perpetrator, governorate, and other classifications. It only records civilian fatalities – with the exception of the death toll among victims who died due to torture, which includes armed combatants and civilians.<sup>9</sup> Where available, information from other sources documenting civilian casualties in the Syrian conflict (Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, the Syrian Human Rights Committee, Action on Armed Violence, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights) has been included.

Additionally, data on civilian<sup>10</sup> deaths collected by the [Uppsala Conflict Data Program \(UCDP\)](#) has been also included. UCDP is a 'data collection project for civil war'.<sup>11</sup> UCDP provided EUAA with a Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) covering the reference period of the report. UCDP's methodology is explained on its website as well as its GED Codebook.<sup>12</sup> The unit of analysis of UCDP is the 'event'<sup>13</sup> which is defined as '[a]n incident where armed force was used by an organised actor against another organised actor, or against civilians, resulting in at least 1 direct death at a specific location and a specific date'.<sup>14</sup> This leads, among other things, to 'seemingly low estimates' because 'a number of factors can preclude a potential conflict event from inclusion in the UCDP GED', for example, unclear actors or uncertainty about whether

<sup>8</sup> ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>9</sup> For detailed information on SNHR's methodology see [url](#); SNHR, Extrajudicial Killing Claims the Lives of 1,734 Civilians in Syria in 2020, Including 99 in December, 1 January 2021, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>10</sup> According to UCDP methodology, it defines civilians as 'unarmed people who are not active members of the security forces of the state, or members of an organized armed militia or opposition group. Government officials, such as members of parliament, governors, and councilors, are also excluded and are instead seen as representatives of the government of a state'. UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, [url](#), pp. 30-31

<sup>11</sup> UCDP, About UCDP, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>12</sup> UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#); UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>13</sup> UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>14</sup> UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, [url](#), p. 4



fatalities occurred.<sup>15</sup> UCDP provides three estimates for fatalities for each event – a low estimate, a best estimate, and a high estimate. In addition, UCDP provides an estimate of the number of civilian deaths.<sup>16</sup> According to UCDP, ‘it is quite likely that there are more fatalities than given in the best estimate, but it is very unlikely that there are fewer’.<sup>17</sup>

The stricter definition of an event of UCDP excludes violent incidents that are recorded by ACLED. This includes ACLED’s option to assign violent events to ‘unidentified armed groups’. The difference in definitions is one explanatory factor to why the number of events recorded by ACLED can be significantly higher than events recorded by UCDP.<sup>18</sup> In this report, UCDP data have been used to contrast ACLED data and to provide figures on civilian deaths. To reflect the security dynamic in Syria, where the actor behind many security incidents is unknown, EUAA not only includes events that meet all UCDP’s set criteria (codified as ‘clear’ events in the UCDP dataset), but also include events codified as ‘unclear’ and ‘not applicable’.

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<sup>15</sup> UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#)

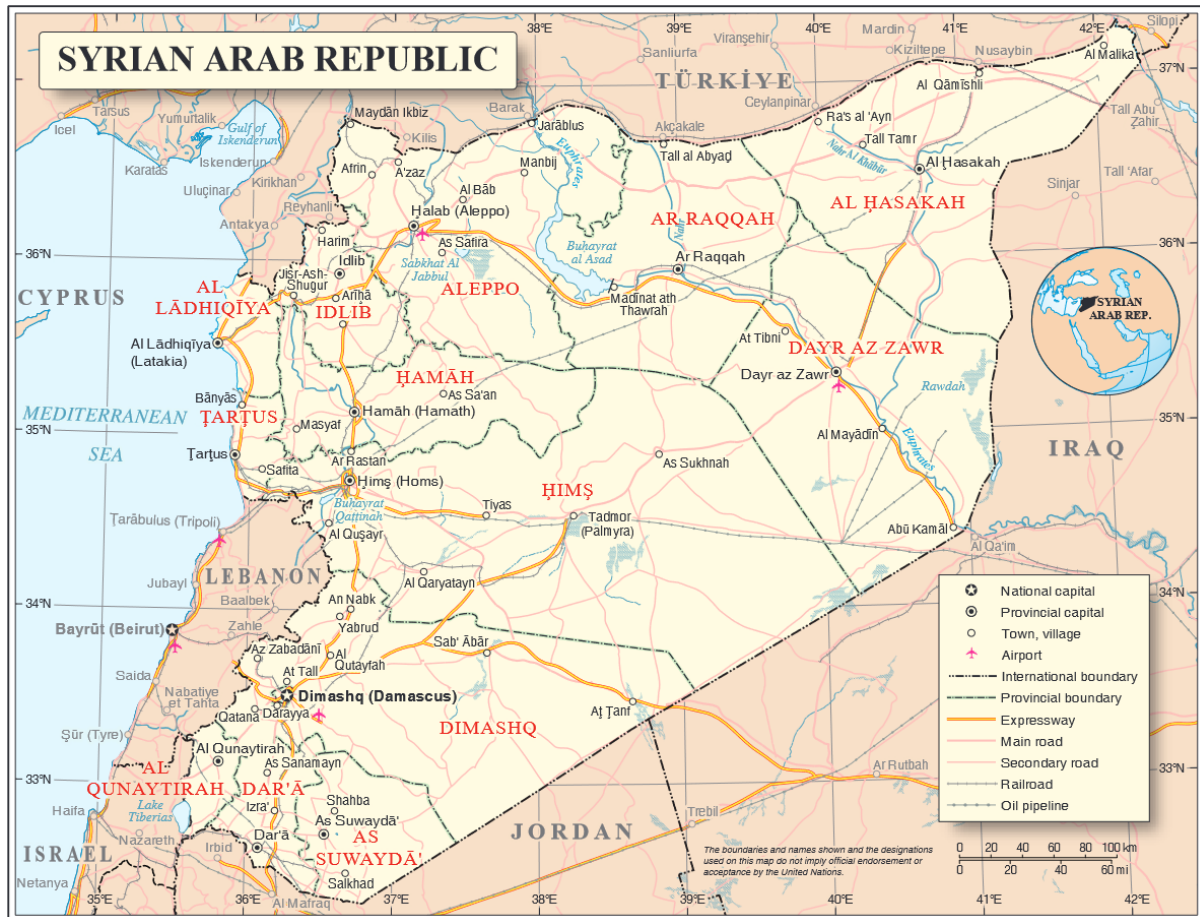
<sup>16</sup> UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, [url](#), pp. 5, 11, 24

<sup>17</sup> UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>18</sup> ACLED, Comparing Conflict Data, Similarities and Differences Across Conflict Datasets, August 2019, [url](#), pp. 5–7



# Maps



Map 1: Syrian Arab Republic, © United Nations<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic, Map No. 4204 Rev. 4, August 2022, [url](#)

# 1. State structure and governance

## 1.1. Separation of powers and government formation

On 13 March, Syrian interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa signed a Constitutional Declaration outlining a five-year transitional period. The constitutional declaration is set to serve as a transitional constitution for five years until a permanent constitution and elections are established.<sup>20</sup> The constitutional declaration also guarantees judicial independence, freedom of expression and media, and political, educational, and labour rights for women.<sup>21</sup>

The Constitutional Declaration establishes a strong presidential system without a prime minister, granting the president sweeping powers with minimal oversight. The president appoints all ministers, vice presidents, and judges of the Higher Constitutional Court, and selects all members of parliament, one third by direct appointment and the rest selected by a 'high committee' he forms. The president can also issue executive orders, propose laws, declare states of emergency for up to three months (with approval from a National Security Council he appoints), and serves as head of the armed forces.<sup>22</sup>

On 13 March, several sources reported the establishment of a National Security Council tasked with overseeing Syria's national security affairs and political policies. The council is chaired by President Ahmad al-Sharaa and includes the ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Defence, and intelligence chief, along with three other seats.<sup>23</sup> The council's duties and operational mechanisms will be defined by directives issued directly by the president.<sup>24</sup> Prominent HTS figures have been appointed to the positions of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice,<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Defence (MoD),<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Interior (Mol) and head of the General Intelligence Directorate.<sup>27</sup>

On 29 March, the interim President announced the formation of a transitional government composed of 23 ministers from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, including Alawite, Christian, Druze, and Kurdish representatives. One woman was appointed to the post of Minister of Social Affairs and Labour.<sup>28</sup> The government is dominated by ministers associated with Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). It also includes technocrats, civil society leaders and ministers who served in the Assad government before 2011.<sup>29</sup> None of the ministers from

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<sup>20</sup> International Crisis Group, What Lies in Store for Syria as a New Government Takes Power?, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>21</sup> Security Council Report, April 2025 Monthly Forecast, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>22</sup> International Crisis Group, What Lies in Store for Syria as a New Government Takes Power?, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>23</sup> France24, Syria's interim president announces formation of national security council, 13 March 2025, [url](#); DW, Syria's interim president creates national security council, 13 March 2025, [url](#); AA, Syrian president issues decree to form National Security Council, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>24</sup> AA, Syrian president issues decree to form National Security Council, 13 March 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, National Security Council in Syria: A necessity imposed by reality, 6 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>25</sup> Carenzi, S., An Evolving 'Popular Incubator': Syria's New Leadership and Its Balancing Act, ISPI, 4 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>26</sup> Rudaw, Syria's new cabinet draws criticism over controversial appointments, 30 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>27</sup> New Arab (The), Former HTS leader Hussein Al-Salama tapped to head Syrian intelligence, 6 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>28</sup> Security Council Report, April 2025 Monthly Forecast, 31 March 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, What Lies in Store for Syria as a New Government Takes Power?, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>29</sup> International Crisis Group, What Lies in Store for Syria as a New Government Takes Power?, 25 April 2025, [url](#)



ethno-religious minorities are affiliated with any known political faction, prompting criticism that their inclusion is tokenistic and lacks genuine political representation. The Kurdish and Druze appointees in the government are not affiliated with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES)<sup>30</sup> nor represent the Druze spiritual leadership or Sweida's armed factions.<sup>31</sup>

In June, a presidential decree announced the appointment of the Supreme Committee for Elections to the People's Assembly who is tasked with overseeing the indirect election of 100 out of the 150 members of the People's Assembly (Parliament) through electoral colleges. It will also define the electoral timeline and set eligibility criteria for both electors and candidates.<sup>32</sup>

## 1.2. Judiciary

The Constitutional Declaration asserts judicial independence but does not include specific safeguards to ensure it. Article 47 permits the president to appoint all seven members of the Higher Constitutional Court without parliamentary or external oversight. Human Rights Watch assessed that, in the absence of mechanisms to guarantee judicial independence or establish an independent body for overseeing judicial appointments, promotions, discipline, and removals, the judiciary's ability to hold the president accountable may be constrained.<sup>33</sup>

According to the authorities, the criminal security apparatus is still being reactivated, and the judiciary requires additional time to function effectively in addressing the situations of Syrians deprived of civil rights by the former government.<sup>34</sup> According to a Global Protection Cluster (GPC)<sup>35</sup> report, in areas under the interim government's control there is reportedly limited access to legal representation for detainees and courts were either partially or not functioning, limiting the access to effective remedies. At the same time, the source assessed that weak governance, lack of fully functional courts, and the ongoing security vacuum have driven a rise in criminal activity and left civilians with 'no access to justice'.<sup>36</sup> As of late May 2025, Syria Justice and Accountability Centre (SJAC) reported that, in areas under the interim government's control, only family and civil courts were operating.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>30</sup> DW, How inclusive is Syria's new technocratic cabinet?, 31 March 2025, [url](#); New York Times (The), Syrians Wake Up to a New Government, 30 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>31</sup> International Crisis Group, What Lies in Store for Syria as a New Government Takes Power?, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>32</sup> OSES, United Nations Deputy Special Envoy for Syria Najat Rochdi - Briefing to the Security Council (17 June 2025), 17 June 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), Syria forms elections committee for People's Assembly amid calls for transparency, 16 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>33</sup> HRW, Syria: Constitutional Declaration Risks Endangering Rights, 25 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>34</sup> Enab Baladi, Can judiciary deliver justice to those deprived of civil rights?, 2 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>35</sup> The Global Protection Cluster is 'a network of nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), international organisations and United Nations (UN) agencies, engaged in protection work in humanitarian crises including armed conflict and disasters. See [url](#)

<sup>36</sup> Global Protection Cluster, Syria Protection Sector - Snapshot Protection Landscape in Syria, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>37</sup> SJAC, A First Step Towards Transitional Justice in Syria, 29 May 2025, [url](#)



### (a) Judicial reforms and transitional justice process

The interim government announced the dissolution of the Counter-Terrorism Courts and has referred 87 of its judges for investigation.<sup>38</sup> Decision No. 120, issued on 28 January 2025, ordered the dismissal of several judges previously affiliated with the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party or who held seats in the People's Assembly.<sup>39</sup> Further dismissals of judges were reported in January, including of 20 judges who served under the Assad government. There was no further information provided.<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, the Ministry of Justice set a deadline in April for defected judges during the Assad regime to apply for reinstatement in a move reportedly aimed at reintegrating experienced legal professionals. The applicants must undergo an investigation and sign a formal pledge of political neutrality.<sup>41</sup> In June, a presidential decree was issued reinstating judges who defected during the Assad regime.<sup>42</sup>

As of April, no transitional justice process had begun<sup>43</sup> and no judicial rulings have been issued concerning the accountability of former Assad regime leaders who were either arrested or reached settlement agreements.<sup>44</sup> As of April, authorities had yet to fulfil the promise to publish 'List No. 1', which was expected to name senior figures responsible for torture and abuses against the Syrian people.<sup>45</sup> Hundreds of officers of the former Assad government remained free<sup>46</sup> while some prominent figures managed to reach a settlement with the authorities, most notably Talal Makhoul, former commander of the regime's Republican Guard, who remains under EU sanctions for his role in crimes against civilians. Meanwhile, the MoI continued to announce arrests of individuals implicated in human rights violations, including those involved in the Tadamon massacre and Major General Atef Najib, former head of Political Security in Dar'a.<sup>47</sup> For further information on the treatment of former soldiers and security personnel of the Assad regime by the interim government see section [2.1.1\(a\)](#).

In May, the government announced the establishment of two government bodies tasked with investigating crimes committed during the Assad rule, compensating victims, and locating thousands of missing individuals: the National Commission on Transitional Justice and the National Commission on Missing Persons in Syria.<sup>48</sup> Human Rights Watch assessed that the Transitional Justice Commission's mandate limits its scope to crimes committed by the Assad

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<sup>38</sup> Syria Direct, Shaking hands: Will the Counter-Terrorism Court's Ammar Bilal escape accountability?, 14 April 2025, [url](#); STJ, Syria: The Minister of Justice Powers in Transitional Government: Reform Imperatives and Legal Constraints, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>39</sup> STJ, Syria: The Minister of Justice Powers in Transitional Government: Reform Imperatives and Legal Constraints, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>40</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies Monitoring Report, 15-30 January 2025, 15 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>41</sup> Syrian Observer (The), Syria's Dissident Judges at the Heart of Judicial Restoration, 15 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>42</sup> New Arab (The), Syrian judges who defected during Assad era reinstated in anti-crime push, 6 June 2025, [url](#); OSES, United Nations Deputy Special Envoy for Syria Najat Rochdi - Briefing to the Security Council (17 June 2025), 17 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>43</sup> Haid, H., Where Does Syria's Transition Stand?, Arab Reform Initiative, 24 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>44</sup> Enab Baladi, Syrians await accountability for their oppressors, 14 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>45</sup> Enab Baladi, Syrians await accountability for their oppressors, 14 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>46</sup> Haid, H., Where Does Syria's Transition Stand?, Arab Reform Initiative, 24 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>47</sup> Enab Baladi, Syrians await accountability for their oppressors, 14 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>48</sup> Reuters, Syria forms transitional justice, missing persons commissions, 18 May 2025, [url](#); <sup>48</sup> SJAC, A First Step Towards Transitional Justice in Syria, 29 May 2025, [url](#)



government, excluding victims of abuses by non-state actors and being unclear on the role of victims in the commission's work.<sup>49</sup>

### **(b) Housing, land, and property issues**

SJAC identified three main categories issues related to property encountered in Syria: individuals returning to find their homes de facto occupied by former regime officials; cases where properties were not only taken de facto but also had their ownership legally transferred to a third party; and situations where armed groups affiliated with the current government have confiscated certain properties, claiming they belonged to former government officials.<sup>50</sup>

Issues surrounding housing, land, and property (HLP) rights such as disputes, lack of property records and destruction remained unaddressed by the current authorities.<sup>51</sup> Local authorities admitted to Refugees International that they lack a clear mechanism to resolve HLP disputes, leaving both returnees and current occupants in legal uncertainty.<sup>52</sup> In May, al-Sharaa issued a decree annulling precautionary asset seizure orders imposed on Syrians between 2012 and 2024<sup>53</sup> which according to the Ministry of Finance affected 91 000 Syrians. The decree will be implemented by the Ministry of Finance in cooperation with the Mol.<sup>54</sup>

Following the fall of the Assad government, informal 'dispute resolution committees' emerged in Damascus and other cities to primarily address property disputes but also financial and social disputes such as marriage and divorce. Operating from mosques and rooted in local customs, these community-led bodies aim to provide quick, amicable resolutions outside the formal court system, which was assessed as largely ineffective. While praised for restoring trust and avoiding legal costs, the committees lack legal authority, face resource constraints, and are vulnerable to local political pressure, raising concerns about their neutrality and enforceability. Researchers at Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) noted that these committees operate without any formal legal basis or administrative mandate, having emerged organically from within local communities. Their decisions are not legally binding due to the lack of executive authority and only gain legal standing if formally adopted through recognised judicial procedures, an uncertainty that can lead to further disputes if parties fail to comply.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>49</sup> HRW, Syria's Transitional Justice Commission: A Missed Opportunity for Victim-Led Justice, 19 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>50</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

<sup>51</sup> SJAC, The State of Justice in Syria 2025, 20 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 2, 7; RI, Beyond the Fall: Rebuilding Syria After Assad, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 14; STJ, Syria: Alternative Committees for Property and Personal Status Disputes: Response to Power Vacuum or Judiciary Marginalization?, 4 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>52</sup> RI, Beyond the Fall: Rebuilding Syria After Assad, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>53</sup> The former Syrian regime enacted a series of laws and legislative decrees concerning property rights that impacted Syrians both inside and outside the country. These measures included the confiscation of movable and immovable property belonging to political opponents or individuals perceived as supporting the opposition, under accusations of supporting so-called "terrorism." Enab Baladi, Presidential decree cancels precautionary asset seizure on Syrians, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>54</sup> Enab Baladi, Presidential decree cancels precautionary asset seizure on Syrians, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>55</sup> STJ, Syria: Alternative Committees for Property and Personal Status Disputes: Response to Power Vacuum or Judiciary Marginalization?, 4 April 2025, [url](#)



### (c) Detention and death penalty

Upon taking control, the interim government released thousands of detainees from detention facilities.<sup>56</sup> The GPC noted that, apart from Assad-era political prisoners, the interim government also freed individuals without due process or oversight.<sup>57</sup>

Following Assad's ousting, an Amnesty International researcher reported that detention centres and prisons were left largely unprotected, with many official records looted, destroyed, or taken by civilians, journalists, or fleeing personnel. In some instances, security forces reportedly burned documents before abandoning the sites, while armed groups and newly released detainees also contributed to the destruction. These documents may have contained critical information on the structure of Syria's security and intelligence apparatus, identities of alleged perpetrators of international crimes, and records on detainees and their fates.<sup>58</sup> The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (UNCOI) noted that, in its mission to Syria in mid-December 2024, it found that documents and evidence from state institutions such as detention centres and military facilities 'may deliberately have been removed, burned or otherwise destroyed'. It further noted improvements made by the authorities in early January to secure and preserve evidence.<sup>59</sup>

The GPC reported that, while torture practices in prisons have 'largely ceased', poor detention conditions persist, with overcrowded and unsanitary makeshift facilities replacing looted or abandoned Assad-era prisons. Limited humanitarian access, absent independent monitoring, and destroyed records further obstruct justice efforts, weaken detainee protections, and threaten long-term stability.<sup>60</sup>

According to an Amnesty International report covering 2024, Syria retained the death penalty and continued to use it, although credible minimum figures on its application were unavailable.<sup>61</sup> No information on the retention or use of the death penalty by the interim government was available.

## 1.3. Security institutions

Security operations are managed by both the MoI and the MoD, with the former operating under a more centralised and structured command,<sup>62</sup> while the latter continues efforts to unify various armed factions under its control.<sup>63</sup> MoI units, including the police and General Security Service (GSS) are largely composed of former HTS and Idlib-based Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) personnel at the leadership level, with local units reporting to Regional

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<sup>56</sup> UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/58/66, 19 March 2025, [url](#), para 5

<sup>57</sup> Global Protection Cluster, Syria Protection Sector - Snapshot Protection Landscape in Syria, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>58</sup> AI, The State of the World's Human Rights; Syria 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>59</sup> UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/58/66, 19 March 2025, [url](#), para 6

<sup>60</sup> Global Protection Cluster, Syria Protection Sector - Snapshot Protection Landscape in Syria, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>61</sup> AI, Death sentences and executions in 2024, 8 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 4, 43

<sup>62</sup> Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>63</sup> Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 28 March 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, What Lies in Store for Syria as a New Government Takes Power?, 25 April 2025, [url](#)





Directors (*mudir mantiqa*) and other security officials at the regional and governorate levels.<sup>64</sup> After it took power, the interim government reorganised its affiliated armed groups around a core of former HTS elements, forming a new security body known as GSS.<sup>65</sup> The GSS was the main policing force of HTS in northwestern Syria, and since the overthrow of Assad became the transitional government's gendarmerie.<sup>66</sup> This force was tasked with nationwide deployment in government-held areas, combining existing fighters with newly recruited personnel.<sup>67</sup>

The Mol has structured its administrative apparatus primarily along geographic lines. Regional Directors coordinate directly with local police stations and act as intermediaries between civilians, civil governance, and local security forces. Despite facing resource and staffing constraints, the Mol is relatively robust and possesses a more developed bureaucratic structure than the MoD, according to Syria analyst Gregory Waters.<sup>68</sup> The prior experience of most Regional Directors in the Idlib administration has contributed to Mol forces having stronger command and generally exhibiting higher professionalism compared to the country's military forces.<sup>69</sup>

The MoD is tasked with overseeing both conventional military operations and the increasingly complex network of checkpoints scattered across the country. These checkpoints are reportedly a major source of friction between MoD and Mol forces, as they operate as semi-autonomous security outposts within areas officially under the jurisdiction of Mol Regional Directors, often undermining their authority and complicating coordination on the ground. The military units that comprise the MoD have a more complex chain of command and maintain varied levels of affiliation with the ministry.<sup>70</sup>

In early June, Syrian military officials stated that the MoD had recruited 100 000 of a planned 200 000 volunteer soldiers<sup>71</sup> to join the new Syrian Army.<sup>72</sup> The new army reportedly consists mainly of members of HTS and other allied armed groups rather than conscripts without military experience. It is envisioned to have 20 divisions of 10 000 troops each, further organised into brigades. A Syrian MoD official stated that most brigades are currently 'at skeleton stage'. Salaries of soldiers reportedly range between USD 150 and 500, paid partly from assets seized from the Assad government.<sup>73</sup> For detailed information on the integration of armed groups into the MoD see section [1.3.2](#).

Regarding the capabilities of the Syrian security forces, U.S. military sources assessed in a report published in April 2025 that the interim government remains in the early stages of establishing effective security across Syria and will likely require sustained foreign assistance. While the interim government's security forces have demonstrated the ability to carry out

<sup>64</sup> Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 28 March 2025, [url](#);

Waters, G., Are Damascus' New Security Reforms a form of Federalism?, Syria Revisited, 18 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>65</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>66</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 16 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>67</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>68</sup> Waters, G., Are Damascus' New Security Reforms a form of Federalism?, Syria Revisited, 18 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>69</sup> Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>70</sup> Waters, G., Are Damascus' New Security Reforms a form of Federalism?, Syria Revisited, 18 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>71</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 4 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>72</sup> National (The), Syria has recruited half of planned 200,000-strong army, military sources say, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>73</sup> National (The), Syria has recruited half of planned 200,000-strong army, military sources say, 3 June 2025, [url](#)





limited ground raids, Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) strikes, and rocket and missile attacks, they possess minimal air defence capabilities and have received limited training in advanced weapons systems.<sup>74</sup> According to International Crisis Group, Israeli airstrikes have destroyed ‘much of Syria’s air force, navy and heavy weaponry’.<sup>75</sup>

### 1.3.1. Military reforms

Upon taking power, the interim government dismissed former regime soldiers and security staff<sup>76</sup> including the police.<sup>77</sup> The authorities have reportedly engaged in rapid recruitment drives for both the police and GSS, though training has been brief and units remain poorly equipped.<sup>78</sup> Officials stated they are rapidly training new police recruits, with classes of 800 - 1 000 individuals graduating every few weeks. Despite these efforts, a New York Times investigation from March revealed that many towns and neighbourhoods still lacked a meaningful police presence. In Homs’ Zahra district, for example, residents retreated indoors by sundown, leaving the streets nearly deserted.<sup>79</sup> In the Christian neighbourhood of Bab Touma in Damascus, local volunteers have stepped in to compensate for the limited police presence, protecting the area from theft and proselytising by Salafist groups.<sup>80</sup>

Although some former police officers have been reinstated<sup>81</sup> and a May agreement between the interim government and Druze leaders provided for the reinstatement of dismissed police officers in Sweida,<sup>82</sup> the government’s pledge to reinstate dismissed police officers had yet to be fulfilled.<sup>83</sup> While individuals have been invited to reapply for their positions, the process lacks transparency and is reportedly discouraging to Alawite applicants.<sup>84</sup> According to analyst Gregory Waters, no visible progress has been made in recruiting non-Sunni locals into the local police and GSS forces. While minority communities, particularly Ismaili, but also some Christian and Alawite areas, do host armed volunteer groups, these formations have not yet been formally integrated into the police command structure, despite months of discussions on the issue. Local officials cite the lack of salaries and qualified trainers as reasons for the delay. However, growing scepticism among minority community members suggests rising doubts about whether integration will ever take place.<sup>85</sup>

The interim government adopted a policy to exclude non-defected officers of the former Syrian Arab Army (SAA), particularly those implicated in repression and war crimes, from the

<sup>74</sup> USDOD, Lead IG Report to the U.S. Congress January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 20

<sup>75</sup> International Crisis Group, A Helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>76</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>77</sup> Reuters, Syria's new leaders turn to Islamic law in effort to rebuild Assad's police, 23 January 2025, [url](#); Economist (The), The great pretender: how Ahmed al-Sharaa won Syria, 5 March 2025, [url](#); AP, One week into a new Syria, rebels aim for normalcy and Syrians vow not to be silent again, 16 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>78</sup> BBC News, Syrian security forces monitored armed civilians who killed Alawites, accused man says, 4 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>79</sup> New York Times (The), As People Are Abducted on Unpatrolled Streets, Syrians Demand Better Protection, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>80</sup> Le Monde, In Damascus, volunteers protect Christian neighborhoods, 11 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>81</sup> Le Monde, In Damascus, volunteers protect Christian neighborhoods, 11 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>82</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>83</sup> International Crisis Group, The New Syria: Halting a Dangerous Drift, 28 March 2025, [url](#); Economist (The), The great pretender: how Ahmed al-Sharaa won Syria, 5 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>84</sup> Economist (The), The great pretender: how Ahmed al-Sharaa won Syria, 5 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>85</sup> Waters, G., Are Damascus' New Security Reforms a form of Federalism?, Syria Revisited, 18 May 2025, [url](#)



future national army. In contrast, enlisted personnel and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) with clean records may be reintegrated into the army or police through requalification programmes.<sup>86</sup>

The MoD announced its intention to include defected officers from the former SAA in the new army.<sup>87</sup> Several high-ranking defected officers were invited to assist in forming the new national army based on their areas of expertise. A delegation of these senior defectors visited Damascus and held talks with the new military leadership to discuss restructuring plans.<sup>88</sup> In April, the MoD launched an online application process inviting former SAA soldiers who defected and joined the Syrian opposition, to re-enlist in the national army.<sup>89</sup> The 16-question form requests personal data, military service history, specialisation, and date of defection.<sup>90</sup> Several former defectors now lead divisions within the MoD<sup>91</sup> or are occupying senior police position such as the police command of Damascus.<sup>92</sup>

On 16 May, Syria 24 published a report claiming that significant security sector reforms are planned within Syria's MoI. The proposed multi-phase process would divide the country into five security regions, each with newly established security structures reporting directly to Damascus. According to the report, the reform aims to streamline the management of security operations, unify MoI policing units under the joint oversight of the Interior and Defence Ministries, and establish new departments focused on addressing insurgent activity.<sup>93</sup>

### 1.3.2. Integration of armed groups

In January 2025, the MoD began forming a new Syrian army by integrating former opposition factions. Many of these groups, including those affiliated with HTS, have joined the MoD structure. Instead of requiring reforms or restructuring, the MoD has largely rebranded these factions as official army divisions or brigades.<sup>94</sup> The MoD reunites different military factions such as core HTS units, HTS-aligned groups, Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) units, and newly established MoD divisions. These military forces operate under a fragmented and complex chain of command, with varying degrees of coordination with the MoD.<sup>95</sup> Despite the government's efforts to integrate armed groups into the new ministry, most have resisted merging.<sup>96</sup> The most prominent ones are discussed in the sections below.

<sup>86</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Rebuilding Security in Syria: Challenges and Strategies for Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration (DDR), and Security Sector Reform, 17 April 2025, [url](#), p. 27

<sup>87</sup> Enab Baladi, Complex steps to establish new Syrian army, 6 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>88</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Rebuilding Security in Syria: Challenges and Strategies for Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration (DDR), and Security Sector Reform, 17 April 2025, [url](#), p. 26

<sup>89</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 28 April 2025, [url](#); FT, Syria's defence ministry opens applications for Assad-era troops, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>90</sup> FT, Syria's defence ministry opens applications for Assad-era troops, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>91</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>92</sup> Waters, G., Are Damascus' New Security Reforms a form of Federalism?, Syria Revisited, 18 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>93</sup> Waters, G., Are Damascus' New Security Reforms a form of Federalism?, Syria Revisited, 18 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>94</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 19 May 2025, [url](#); FDD's Long War Journal, Syrian military integrates Al Qaeda-linked terror group into its ranks, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>95</sup> Waters, G., Are Damascus' New Security Reforms a form of Federalism?, Syria Revisited, 18 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>96</sup> International Crisis Group, A Glimmer of Peace in Syria's North East, 28 March 2025, [url](#); Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 28 March 2025, [url](#); TWI, Inside the New Syria: The First Three Months, 7 March 2025, [url](#)



In May, the MoD announced that all armed groups have been integrated into its structure while stating that ‘remaining small military groups’ had 10 days to complete the process without naming which groups were yet to comply.<sup>97</sup> However, as of late May the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) assessed that the interim government ‘does not exert complete control over various armed factions that make up the MoD’.<sup>98</sup>

#### **(a) SNA factions**

According to ISW, SNA factions continued to control Tal Abyad and Ras al Ain as of May. SNA was assessed to ‘continue to operate in their previous formations and areas’ despite its formal integration into the MoD.<sup>99</sup> SNA factions maintained independent revenue streams through Turkish salaries<sup>100</sup> and have operated autonomously from the MoD.<sup>101</sup>

According to Syria analyst Gregory Waters, some SNA factions such as the Suleiman Shah Brigade are powerful enough to impose their own demands on the ministry and their autonomy has been even more evident in the frequent violations they committed. GSS units, including those stationed along Syria’s coast, often faced resistance when attempting to curb such violations.<sup>102</sup> SNA commanders involved in serious human rights violations have been appointed to key government military positions. They include Mohammad al-Jassem (Abu Amsha) as commander of the 62nd Division, Saif Boulad (Saif Abu Bakr) as leader of the 76th Division, Fehim Isa as Assistant to the Minister of Defence for Northern Affairs, and Ahmed al-Hais (Abu Hatem Shaqra) as commander of the 86th Division.<sup>103</sup> The 86<sup>th</sup> Division is reportedly responsible for Raqqa, Deir Ez-Zor and Hasaka and its commander Ahmed al-Hais (Abu Hatem Shaqra), formerly the leader of Ahrar al-Sharqiya, has been implicated in human rights abuses, including the killing of prominent female Kurdish politician Hevrin Khalaf.<sup>104</sup> In May, the EU placed three of the SNA factions - the Suleiman Shah Brigade, the Hamza Division and their commanders, and the Sultan Murad Division, on its sanctions list due to their role in violence in the coastal areas in March.<sup>105</sup>

Despite the presence of government forces in Afrin since February 2025, STJ reported that SNA factions, particularly the Suleiman Shah Brigade/al-Amshat continued to have a presence in the area.<sup>106</sup> Some SNA factions who integrated into the 72 Division of the army were

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<sup>97</sup> Rudaw, Syria gives armed groups 10 days to integrate into defense ministry, 18 May 2025, [url](#); National (The), Syria's remaining armed rebel groups given 10 days to join state forces, 18 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>98</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 21 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>99</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>100</sup> International Crisis Group, A Glimmer of Peace in Syria’s North East, 28 March 2025, [url](#); Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 28 March 2025, [url](#); TWI, Inside the New Syria: The First Three Months, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>101</sup> Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 28 March 2025, [url](#); USDOD, Lead IG Report to the U.S. Congress January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 22

<sup>102</sup> Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>103</sup> HRW, Syria: Türkiye-backed Armed Groups Detain, Extort Civilians, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>104</sup> MedyaNews, US-sanctioned militia leader assigned senior military role in Syria’s Kurdish-majority regions, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>105</sup> Official Journal of the European Union, Council Decision (CFSP) 2025/1110 of 28 May 2025 amending Decision (CFSP) 2020/1999 concerning restrictive measures against serious human rights violations and abuses, 28 May 2025, [url](#); France24, EU sanctions Syrian militia groups over ethnic violence targeting Alawites, 28 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>106</sup> STJ, Syria/Afrin: Promises by Transitional Authorities to Restore Rights and End Violations Against Kurds, 11 April 2025, [url](#)

operating west of the Tishreen Dam in Aleppo governorate.<sup>107</sup> SNA factions nominally integrated into army divisions were deployed across the country, particularly in Aleppo and Hama governorates.<sup>108</sup>

### **(b) Dar'a factions**

In April, tensions between the interim government and the Eight Brigade, a local armed group controlling Busra al-Sham (Dar'a governorate), triggered by an assassination attempt on a MoD official<sup>109</sup>, prompted the military deployment of the GSS in the area. This ultimately led to the Eight Brigade announcing its dissolution, disarmament and readiness to integrate in the MoD on 13 April. In the period that followed, the GSS established a security presence in the area, set up checkpoints and confiscated the group's heavy weapons<sup>110</sup> while also calling on residents to surrender their weapons.<sup>111</sup> According to Syria expert Haid Haid, the Eight Brigade and its commander Ahmad al-Awda, who had previous ties to Russia and backing from regional powers like the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Jordan,<sup>112</sup> represented a major rival to al-Sharaa in southern Syria.<sup>113</sup> Meanwhile the government started recruiting individuals for the army's main division in Dar'a (the 40<sup>th</sup> Division)<sup>114</sup> near Busra al-Sham in a move interpreted as a way to reduce the influence of the Eight Brigade on the security in southeastern Dar'a.<sup>115</sup> By 10 May, the government reported that the army's 40<sup>th</sup> Division confiscated all weapons held by factions formerly part of the Dar'a Province Central Committee, a coalition of local factions which included the Eight Brigade. Reports indicate that Dar'a Province Central Committee agreed to disband and fully integrate into the 40<sup>th</sup> Division.<sup>116</sup>

### **(c) Druze factions**

Following the violence in parts of Rural Damascus and Sweida in late April and early May, the government reached a security agreement with the Druze sheikhs whereby GSS forces would be deployed in Sweida governorate and would assume control of the Damascus – Sweida road.<sup>117</sup> The interim government agreed that the police force in Sweida governorate would be made up of local residents, with the governor and police chief appointed by Damascus.<sup>118</sup> Druze factions which have had good cooperation with the interim government such as the Men of Dignity, Ahrar Jabal al-Arab Gathering, and Sheikh of Dignity, retained their weapons and reportedly make up approximately 80 % of the GSS in the governorate. The agreement between the interim government and Druze leaders also provides for the reinstatement of dismissed police officers, including those who previously held power under the Assad

<sup>107</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 19 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>108</sup> Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>109</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies for Contemporary Studies, Challenges to Building and Unifying the Syrian National Army: The Case of the Eighth Brigade's Disbandment in Busra al-Sham, 4 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>110</sup> Etana Syria, Brief: The Dissolution of Ahmad al-Awdeh's Groups in Daraa, 16 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>111</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 22 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>112</sup> Syrian Observer (The), Ahmad al-Awda – The Power Broker of Southern Syria, 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>113</sup> Haid, H., Where Does Syria's Transition Stand?, Arab Reform Initiative, 24 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>114</sup> Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>115</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 21 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>116</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>117</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>118</sup> Syria Direct, As tensions run high, will Suwayda's security agreement hold?, 7 May 2025, [url](#)



regime.<sup>119</sup> As of early May, around 700 Druze militiamen were fast-tracked into the GSS in Sweida with a further 1 300 to be processed.<sup>120</sup> Despite the agreement between the interim government and Druze leaders in Sweida, security incidents continued. These included an incident in which an armed group briefly held the governor of Sweida hostage to demand the release of a prisoner.<sup>121</sup>

Meanwhile, Druze communities located outside the main enclave in Sweida have negotiated separate security arrangements and will continue to maintain local security through the retention of arms.<sup>122</sup>

#### **(d) Turkistan Islamic Party**

On 18 May, Syrian media reported that the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP) was reflagged as the 84<sup>th</sup> Division.<sup>123</sup> In June, the U.S. approved the interim government's plan to integrate around 3 500 foreign fighters, primarily from TIP into the 84<sup>th</sup> Division. This decision, marking a departure from the U.S.'s previous stance, was reportedly intended to mitigate the risk of foreign fighters joining non-state extremist armed groups.<sup>124</sup>

## **1.4. Reforms affecting public sector employees**

Starting in December 2024, the interim government issued decisions to dismiss thousands of public sector employees and announced its intention to lay off more than 300 000 individuals in total.<sup>125</sup> The mass layoffs in the public sector resulted in the dismissal of between tens<sup>126</sup> and hundreds of thousands<sup>127</sup> of employees, with some sources estimating the number as high as 400 000.<sup>128</sup> International Crisis Group stated that around 500 000 employees were dismissed from the security sector.<sup>129</sup>

The government laid off security personnel and civil servants, either to assess their involvement in the former regime's abuses or because they were identified as 'ghost employees'.<sup>130</sup> In the security sector, while the police force was disbanded, select officers from the former regime were retained.<sup>131</sup> The government has also dismissed public sector employees, including technical experts, medical and police staff, citing overstaffing as the

<sup>119</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>120</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: April 29-May 6, 2025, 6 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>121</sup> Reuters, Armed group in Syria's Suwayda takes governor hostage for prisoner's release, 21 May 2025, [url](#); ISW and CT, Iran Update, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>122</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>123</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 19 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>124</sup> Reuters, Exclusive: US gives nod to Syria to bring foreign jihadist ex-rebels into army, 2 June 2025, [url](#); ISW and CT, Iran Update, 2 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>125</sup> STJ, Mass Dismissals in Syria After the Regime's Fall, 13 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 7-8

<sup>126</sup> Haid, H., Where does Syria stand after three months of Sharaa rule?, Al Majalla, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>127</sup> MEE, Sacked Syrian workers stage nationwide protests as government targets public sector, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>128</sup> NRC, Beyond Return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, 15 May 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>129</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>130</sup> Forestier, M., Rebuilding the Syrian Nation: Impressions from the Ground, Carnegie Middle East Center, 23 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>131</sup> Economist (The), The warlords of Syria have a daunting to-do list, 25 April 2025, [url](#)





reason. The criteria for dismissal have reportedly been unclear.<sup>132</sup> According to a Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies report, the interim government issued a general directive dismissing all employees appointed by the Ba'ath Party and granting them a three-month paid severance.<sup>133</sup>

According to an STJ investigation, hundreds of cases of dismissals were recorded in sectors of industry, agriculture, health, justice, and local administration. These measures primarily targeted three categories of public sector employees created by measures taken by the former regime: family members of 'martyrs', individuals demobilised from military service who had been appointed to public sector jobs following special recruitment competitions, and employees dismissed due to prior membership in the Ba'ath Party or affiliation with professional organisations, particularly the Women's Union.<sup>134</sup>

According to STJ, in 2024 there were around 2 800 contracts for spouses and children of 'martyrs'. By the end of 2021, around 18 000 demobilised members of the army and security forces were appointed to public sector jobs following special recruitment competitions.<sup>135</sup> After the fall of Assad, hundreds of family members of 'martyrs' and hundreds of demobilised soldiers and military personnel of various ranks who had been appointed to public sector jobs following special recruitment competitions were dismissed from their positions.<sup>136</sup> Members of the Ba'ath Party and its regional and national leadership, as well as individuals who had been transferred to public sector positions from the Women's Union were also dismissed, with 77 employees dismissed from the Ministry of Agriculture and 50 from the Ministry of Telecommunications.<sup>137</sup>

In some cases, employees were reinstated following reversal decisions such as the reinstatement of 421 employees by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, and 144 employees by the Ministry of Economy and Trade in April 2025.<sup>138</sup> In April, the interim government announced the reinstatement of around 14 000 public employees, particularly teachers who were dismissed by the Assad government for participating in anti-government protests.<sup>139</sup> At the same time, thousands of civil servants who were either dismissed or placed on unpaid leave by the current government were also in the process of being reinstated.<sup>140</sup>

According to STJ, the dismissals of public employees were not carried out in accordance with the applicable legal framework, particularly the Basic Law for Public Sector Employees (Law No. 50/2004).<sup>141</sup>

<sup>132</sup> International Crisis Group, The New Syria: Halting a Dangerous Drift, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>133</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Monitoring Report for March 2025, 20 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>134</sup> STJ, Mass Dismissals in Syria After the Regime's Fall, 13 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-12

<sup>135</sup> STJ, Mass Dismissals in Syria After the Regime's Fall, 13 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>136</sup> STJ, Mass Dismissals in Syria After the Regime's Fall, 13 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-11

<sup>137</sup> STJ, Mass Dismissals in Syria After the Regime's Fall, 13 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 12-13

<sup>138</sup> STJ, Mass Dismissals in Syria After the Regime's Fall, 13 May 2025, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>139</sup> New Arab (The), Syrian ministries work to reinstate employees dismissed under Assad, 22 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>140</sup> Syria Report (The), Public Sector Workers Reinstated Amid Government Policy Chaos, 22 April 2025, [url](#); NPA, Syria Begins Reinstatement Process for Dismissed Public Employees, 30 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>141</sup> STJ, Mass Dismissals in Syria After the Regime's Fall, 13 May 2025, [url](#), p. 17





While widespread public-sector layoffs have impacted the broader population, they have disproportionately affected the Alawite community.<sup>142</sup> For more information see section [2.4.2](#).

A 400 % pay raise for public sector workers was promised by the interim government, to be aided by financial assistance from Qatar. Despite the announcement of a Qatari aid package of nearly USD 90 million, with funds amounting to USD 29 million per month over three months starting in June, this assistance would cover only about 20 % of the required budget, according to official figures. Reuters also reported that the Qatari grant excludes the Interior and Defence ministries, reflecting Western concerns over the Islamist affiliations of Syria's new leadership.<sup>143</sup> According to the authorities, the grant would be allocated to workers in the health, education, and social affairs sectors, as well as to non-military retirees.<sup>144</sup>

## 1.5. Implementation of Islamic rules

The constitutional declaration stipulates that Islam is the religion of the president and Islamic jurisprudence the primary source of legislation.<sup>145</sup> This marks a notable shift from the previous constitution, which considered Islamic law as 'a main source' of legislation.<sup>146</sup>

The president established a new *Fatwa* Council tasked with assessing whether legislation conforms to Islamic law. Comprised entirely of Sunni members, the 14-person council includes only a few members directly affiliated with HTS, while others have looser ties and more diverse religious leanings.<sup>147</sup> It is led by Grand Mufti Osama Rifai, a vocal critic of HTS in the past.<sup>148</sup> Observers suggested that HTS is more focused on containing radical dissent and managing religious discourse than on imposing strict Salafi doctrine.<sup>149</sup>

Reports emerged in January 2025 indicating that the new authorities were using Islamic teachings to train a fledgling police force.<sup>150</sup> This move, according to senior police officers, aimed to instil a sense of morality among recruits and is not intended to be imposed on the general population.<sup>151</sup>

During the month of Ramadan, Syria's interim Ministry of Religious Endowments has reportedly ordered the closure of restaurants, cafés, and street food vendors during daylight hours. Despite no official order issued by the government in this regard, public eating or

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<sup>142</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#); STJ, Mass Dismissals in Syria After the Regime's Fall, 13 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 4, 9; Anjarini, S., Investigating the Alawite Massacres, New Lines Magazine, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>143</sup> National (The), Qatari funds 'not enough' for 400% pay rise promised to Syrian public sector workers, 13 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>144</sup> NPA, Qatar pledges \$29 Million grant to support Syrian public sector salaries, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>145</sup> Security Council Report, April 2025 Monthly Forecast, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>146</sup> BBC News, Syria leader signs temporary constitution for five-year transition, 14 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>147</sup> International Crisis Group, What Lies in Store for Syria as a New Government Takes Power?, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>148</sup> Carenzi, S., An Evolving 'Popular Incubator': Syria's New Leadership and Its Balancing Act, ISPI, 4 June 2025, [url](#);

International Crisis Group, What Lies in Store for Syria as a New Government Takes Power?, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>149</sup> International Crisis Group, What Lies in Store for Syria as a New Government Takes Power?, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>150</sup> Reuters, Syria's new leaders turn to Islamic law in effort to rebuild Assad's police, 23 January 2025, [url](#); Jamestown Foundation, How al-Sharaa's New Syrian Regime Masks Its Islamism Behind Bureaucracy, 25 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>151</sup> Reuters, Syria's new leaders turn to Islamic law in effort to rebuild Assad's police, 23 January 2025, [url](#)



drinking would reportedly be punished with up to three months in jail.<sup>152</sup> According to the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), the authorities carried out arrests of individuals accused of publicly breaking the fast during Ramadan, particularly in Hama city.<sup>153</sup> No further information was provided and the information could not be corroborated from other sources.

While no new laws were introduced to formally restrict social life<sup>154</sup>, there were reports of attempts by individuals to enforce Islamic norms in practice, such as flyers being distributed on buses and in Umayyad Mosque in Damascus calling on women to wear full-face veils, and preachers advocating for Islam in Christian neighbourhoods of the capital.<sup>155</sup> In June, the interim government issued a directive requiring women to wear full body swimwear at public beaches and swimming pools.<sup>156</sup> Men are also required to wear a shirt when not swimming and are prohibited from being bare-chested outside designated swimming areas.<sup>157</sup> Private beaches and tourist establishments are exempt from the directive. The government clarified that the directive was intended as guidance only and that no legal penalties would be imposed for non-compliance.<sup>158</sup>

According to International Crisis Group, some local officials have independently implemented restrictions on women's presence in public and professional spaces, including gender segregation in buses, hospitals, and courts. However, these measures were often reversed by authorities following public backlash.<sup>159</sup>

Two violent attacks on nightclubs in and around Damascus<sup>160</sup> in early May sparked widespread fear, as armed assailants stormed multiple venues, assaulted patrons, and forcibly shut down establishments. One woman was killed during the assaults, and rising incidents targeting mixed-gender entertainment venues serving alcohol have raised concerns of growing influence from Islamist armed groups.<sup>161</sup> While the authorities announced arrests after the incident,<sup>162</sup> public scepticism reportedly remained high due to the administration's silence and the conservative leanings of several key figures in the government.<sup>163</sup>

## 1.6. International sanctions

In April, the UK eased sanctions on Syria including restrictions on the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior, national media institutions and on key sectors such as financial services

<sup>152</sup> AP, Syrians begin fasting during first Ramadan without Assad family rule in decades, 2 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>153</sup> SNHR, Arrests Arbitrary 117 least Recorded in Syria in March 2025, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>154</sup> BBC News, Syrians have more freedom after Assad, but could they soon lose it?, 18 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>155</sup> BBC News, Syrians have more freedom after Assad, but could they soon lose it?, 18 April 2025, [url](#); Syrian Observer (The), "Muslims Are More Disturbed Than Christians": Rising Fears Among Syrians Over Islamic Evangelism, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>156</sup> BBC News, Syria government says women must wear burkinis at public beaches, 12 June 2025, [url](#); Guardian (The), Syria asks women to dress modestly on beaches but says bikinis still allowed, 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>157</sup> BBC News, Syria government says women must wear burkinis at public beaches, 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>158</sup> Guardian (The), Syria asks women to dress modestly on beaches but says bikinis still allowed, 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>159</sup> International Crisis Group, A Helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>160</sup> France24, Damascus club shooting sparks fears of restriction on freedoms, 5 May 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), Attack on Damascus nightclub kills woman, Druze shrine burnt in southern Syria, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>161</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>162</sup> France24, Damascus club shooting sparks fears of restriction on freedoms, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>163</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24, 8 May 2025, [url](#)





and energy.<sup>164</sup> In May, U.S. president Donald Trump announced it will lift economic sanctions on Syria.<sup>165</sup> Trump reportedly made five key demands to al-Sharaa: to establish diplomatic relations with Israel under the Abraham Accords; expel all 'foreign terrorists' from Syria; deport 'Palestinian terrorists'; assist the U.S. in preventing an Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) resurgence in Iraq and Syria; and take over responsibility for ISIL detention centres in northeast Syria.<sup>166</sup> The U.S. lifted several sanctions including 'regulations banning U.S. citizens and companies from making most financial transactions with Syrian citizens and entities',<sup>167</sup> and waived for six months a set of sanctions imposed in 2019 under the Caesar Act.<sup>168</sup>

In May, the EU voted to lift its remaining economic sanctions on Syria, maintaining only those related to the Assad regime or to arms and technology that might be used for internal repression.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> BBC News, UK lifts sanctions on Syrian defence ministry, 24 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>165</sup> BBC News, Trump expected to meet Syrian leader after announcing he will lift sanctions, 14 May 2025, [url](#); CNN, Trump announces plan to lift punishing sanctions on Syria, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>166</sup> Security Council Report, Syria: Briefing and Consultations, 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>167</sup> New York Times (The), U.S. Lifts Some Sanctions on Syria, Fulfilling a Trump Pledge, 25 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>168</sup> New York Times (The), U.S. Lifts Some Sanctions on Syria, Fulfilling a Trump Pledge, 25 May 2025, [url](#); USDOS, Providing Sanctions Relief for the Syrian People, 23 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>169</sup> Council of the EU, Syria: Council statement on the lifting of EU economic sanctions, 20 May 2025, [url](#)



## 2. Treatment of certain profiles and groups of the population

### 2.1. Individuals perceived to have supported the former government

#### 2.1.1. Targeting by the interim government

##### (a) Former soldiers and security personnel

After taking power, the interim government ordered thousands of police, security officers, and soldiers to undergo a 'reconciliation' process, requiring them to surrender their identification, weapons, and vehicles while awaiting investigation.<sup>170</sup> Each governorate established centres to receive surrendering regime personnel. Those who surrendered themselves and their weapons were granted a 'security settlement certificate' and assured protection from prosecution.<sup>171</sup> They were allowed to reintegrate into civilian life, provided they had not participated in massacres or war crimes during the civil war.<sup>172</sup> In the initial weeks following the fall of the Assad government between 50 000 and 70 000 former SAA soldiers and conscripts reportedly surrendered their weapons and were demobilised, benefitting from the general amnesty announced by the new government.<sup>173</sup>

The coastal areas of Tartous and Latakia reportedly hold vast stockpiles of weapons which belong to the forces affiliated with the Assad government. While many individuals surrendered their weapons and completed reconciliation processes at designated centres, others refused to disarm, citing the fragile security environment and an ongoing need for self-defence.<sup>174</sup> In early February 2025, between 4 000 and 5 000 men in Latakia and Tartous were estimated by a local source interviewed for a Middle East Institute (MEI) report to have evaded the settlement process/reconciliation, some being caught in security operations while others were reportedly involved in armed resistance against the interim government.<sup>175</sup> Presumably aware that their past crimes would disqualify them from amnesty, senior figures from the former Assad regime, including top military and intelligence officials, avoided the settlement centres and instead began organising insurgent networks,<sup>176</sup> particularly in the coastal areas.<sup>177</sup> Many

<sup>170</sup> New York Times (The), As People Are Abducted on Unpatrolled Streets, Syrians Demand Better Protection, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>171</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Rebuilding Security in Syria: Challenges and Strategies for Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration (DDR), and Security Sector Reform, 17 April 2025, [url](#), p. 27

<sup>172</sup> Zelin, A., Syria's Transitional Honeymoon Is Over After Massacres and Disinformation, TWI, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>173</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Rebuilding Security in Syria: Challenges and Strategies for Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration (DDR), and Security Sector Reform, 17 April 2025, [url](#), p. 28

<sup>174</sup> Franjeh, S., Security along the Syrian coast is a work-in-progress, Al Majaala, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>175</sup> Lister, C., Forestier, M., Idlibi, Q., Reimagining Syria A Roadmap for Peace and Prosperity Beyond Assad, March 2025, MEI, 13 March 2025, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>176</sup> Zelin, A., Syria's Transitional Honeymoon Is Over After Massacres and Disinformation, TWI, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>177</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Clashes on the Syrian Coast: The Facts and The Fallout, 17 March 2025, [url](#)



senior regime officers, particularly brigadier generals and above, have reportedly fled abroad or gone into hiding to avoid potential accountability.<sup>178</sup> Auxiliary militias such as the National Defence Forces (NDF) and Local Defence Forces disbanded without coordinated surrender. Many fighters went into hiding without surrendering their weapons.<sup>179</sup>

In the lead-up to the attacks by Assad loyalists that triggered the violence in the coastal areas in March, Iran-linked remnants of the Assad regime were reportedly responsible for 46 attacks against security forces across multiple governorates since mid-January.<sup>180</sup> According to a Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies report, the dissolution of former military and security institutions left hundreds of thousands unemployed. This combined with the compulsory settlement procedures imposed on members of the dissolved army, police, and security services fuelled resentment and unrest.<sup>181</sup>

Security forces of the interim government launched operations to ‘pursue the remnants’ of the Assad regime. However, according to a Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies report, no list of suspects was published, no transitional body oversaw these efforts, no official procedures for accusation or arrest were established, and no courts were designated to handle legal cases. As a result, armed groups operated unchecked, often engaging in violations including extrajudicial killings. According to the source, the climate of lawlessness and fear created fertile ground for Assad-era officers to rally recruits and initiate destabilising operations across the country.<sup>182</sup> According to International Crisis Group writing in March, the interim government largely prevented or punished acts of reprisal against individuals associated with the Assad government.<sup>183</sup>

Despite amnesty promises, there were reports that thousands of soldiers including high-ranking officers were imprisoned.<sup>184</sup> According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), more than 8 000 individuals including former SAA soldiers and officers who surrendered, soldiers returned from Iraq after trying to escape Syria, soldiers who fought against ISIL in the Syrian desert and Deir Ez-Zor countryside and civilians detained during raids or at checkpoints have been held without charge<sup>185</sup> for 146 days in prisons in Hama, Adra, and Harem. SOHR also reported that some high-ranking military personnel were quietly transferred to Afrin prison, with no official acknowledgement from the authorities.<sup>186</sup> Between March and May, security forces affiliated with the MoI continued to conduct raids and detention campaigns targeting individuals accused of committing violations during the Assad regime’s rule including military personnel and individuals allegedly involved in the March

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<sup>178</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Rebuilding Security in Syria: Challenges and Strategies for Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration (DDR), and Security Sector Reform, 17 April 2025, [url](#), p. 27

<sup>179</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Rebuilding Security in Syria: Challenges and Strategies for Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration (DDR), and Security Sector Reform, 17 April 2025, [url](#), p. 28

<sup>180</sup> Zelin, A., Syria’s Transitional Honeymoon Is Over After Massacres and Disinformation, TWI, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>181</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Clashes on the Syrian Coast: The Facts and The Fallout, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>182</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Clashes on the Syrian Coast: The Facts and The Fallout, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>183</sup> International Crisis Group, The New Syria: Halting a Dangerous Drift, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>184</sup> Economist (The), The warlords of Syria have a daunting to-do list, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>185</sup> SOHR, Having been detained for over 100 days | SOHR calls for disclosing fate of thousands of prisoners in Adra, Harem and Hama prisons. 23 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>186</sup> SOHR, Detained for 146 days | Ministry of defence refuses to disclose fate of detainees in Hama, Adra and Harem prisons, 6 May 2025, [url](#)



attacks against government forces. The arrests were recorded particularly in the governorates of Latakia, Homs, Hama, and Damascus. The operations resulted in the seizure of significant quantities of weapons and ammunition, with detainees transferred to central prisons in Homs, Hama, and Adra (Rural Damascus governorate). According to SNHR, while these campaigns were framed as security operations, it remains unverified whether they were conducted based on lawful judicial warrants.<sup>187</sup> According to the GPC, arbitrary detentions carried out by interim authorities, including of former Assad government officials, intelligence personnel, and militia leaders, have raised concerns over incommunicado detention and the lack of legal safeguards.<sup>188</sup> SJAC stated that those arrested by the interim government are held incommunicado with no access to lawyers or family visits. They are not officially charged or brought to trial since the judiciary is not currently operating. SJAC noted sporadic reports of torture and abuse of detainees held for criminal or security-related reasons, including incidents in Adra prison. Cases of persons who died under torture were reported in Homs in February, with the GSS taking responsibility for some of the deaths and promising to open investigations.<sup>189</sup>

The authorities also released hundreds of persons including former military officers<sup>190</sup> from various detention centres after it was determined that they were not involved in any crimes.<sup>191</sup>

According to Syria analysts Gregory Waters and Kayla Koontz, there are two distinct patterns emerging in the interim government's approach to pursue members of the former regime who had been involved in human rights violations: individuals who held senior positions or were involved in high-profile atrocities are often publicly named upon arrest, and generally remain in detention with some notable exceptions, such as the case of Fadi Saqr (previous leader of the National Defence Forces). In contrast, many lower-level officials and former informants remain at large. Despite frequent reports by locals to the security forces, these individuals are often detained only briefly before being released.<sup>192</sup>

SJAC observed that individuals with a higher profile are more likely to be targeted, while those with a lower profile can more easily avoid attention. According to SJAC, there is no consistent approach to the treatment of detainees. However, it is expected that higher-ranking individuals may receive relatively better treatment, either to extract information or to present them in court later as having been treated appropriately. In contrast, lower-ranking individuals

<sup>187</sup> SNHR, SNHR's Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria. At least 89 Arbitrary Arrests Recorded in Syria in April 2025, 3 May 2025, [url](#), p. 10; SNHR, At least 117 Arbitrary Arrests Recorded in Syria in March 2025, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 10; SNHR, At least 157 Arbitrary Arrests Recorded in Syria in May 2025, 4 June 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>188</sup> Global Protection Cluster, Syria Protection Sector - Snapshot Protection Landscape in Syria, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>189</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

<sup>190</sup> SOHR, Including officers of different ranks | 28 former military officers released from Adra Prison in Rif Dimashq, 20 April 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), Syria frees 300 prisoners for Eid, including ex-Assad officers, 9 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>191</sup> New Arab (The), Syria frees 300 prisoners for Eid, including ex-Assad officers, 9 June 2025, [url](#); SNHR, SNHR's Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria. At least 89 Arbitrary Arrests Recorded in Syria in April 2025, 3 May 2025, [url](#), p. 10; SNHR, At least 117 Arbitrary Arrests Recorded in Syria in March 2025, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>192</sup> Koontz, K., Waters, G., Without Accountability, Syria's Sectarian Violence Will Only Worsen, TWI, 10 June 2025, [url](#)



are reportedly more vulnerable to mistreatment, with some appearing in videos showing signs of physical abuse.<sup>193</sup>

During the reference period, sources documented arrests of high-ranking military and intelligence officials of the Assad government including Brigadier General Bashar Mahfouz, a commander in the 25<sup>th</sup> Division, for alleged war crimes,<sup>194</sup> Major General Mohammad Kanjo Al-Hassan, the former head of the Military Justice Administration under Assad, for his role in mass murders at Sednaya Prison,<sup>195</sup> and Brigadier General Salem Dagestani, the former head of the Investigation Branch in the Air Force Intelligence Directorate.<sup>196</sup>

### **(b) Other categories of professionals**

Sources reported sporadic arrests of other categories of professionals by the interim government forces. For instance, SNHR documented the arrest of individuals suspected of having been involved in violations during the Assad regime's rule such as government employees,<sup>197</sup> doctors working in military hospitals affiliated with the security services,<sup>198</sup> and media professionals who had previously worked for state-run stations affiliated with the Assad regime.<sup>199</sup> The source did not provide additional details.

Infrequent arrests of former Ba'ath party members, including a former provincial secretary,<sup>200</sup> have been reported although information on the reasons behind the arrests have not been provided by the sources. Other notable arrests reported were of a former member of Parliament known for his pro-Assad position<sup>201</sup> and of the former Grand Mufti of Syria, Ahmad Hassoun, who had endorsed the war tactics used by the former regime and is suspected of being involved signing execution orders for thousands of anti-government prisoners.<sup>202</sup> The sources did not provide any additional information regarding the charges brought against them. According to Enab Baladi, authorities announce near-daily arrests of individuals affiliated with the former Assad regime, particularly targeting military officers, personnel, and doctors accused of crimes against Syrians. However, the source assessed that, aside from the

<sup>193</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

<sup>194</sup> NPA, Syrian Interior Ministry Announces Arrest of Former Assad Regime Commander, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>195</sup> France24, Syria's new rulers arrest official behind Saydnaya death penalties, 26 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>196</sup> New Arab (The), Syria arrests leading member of Assad regime's Air Force Intelligence in Aleppo, 20 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>197</sup> SNHR, At least 117 Arbitrary Arrests Recorded in Syria in March 2025, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 10; SNHR, SNHR's Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria. At least 89 Arbitrary Arrests Recorded in Syria in April 2025, 3 May 2025, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>198</sup> SNHR, SNHR's Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria. At least 89 Arbitrary Arrests Recorded in Syria in April 2025, 3 May 2025, [url](#), p. 10; SNHR, At least 117 Arbitrary Arrests Recorded in Syria in March 2025, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 10; SNHR, At least 157 Arbitrary Arrests Recorded in Syria in May 2025, 4 June 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>199</sup> SNHR, At least 117 Arbitrary Arrests Recorded in Syria in March 2025, 10 April 2025, [HYPERLINK "https://snhr.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/M250402E.pdf" url](#), p. 10; Lister, C Syria Weekly: March 18-25, 25 March 2025, [url](#); Lister, C Syria Weekly: March 18-25, 25 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>200</sup> SOHR, Including secretary in former Al-Baath Party | Five civilians arrested in Baniyas countryside, 30 May 2025, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>201</sup> Enab Baladi, Syrian General Security arrests Khaled al-Abboud, 21 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>202</sup> New Arab (The), 'Assad's Mufti' Ahmed Badreddin Hassoun 'arrested' trying to flee Syria for Jordan, 27 March 2025, [url](#)

arrest of former Mufti Ahmad Hassoun, no action has been taken against figures who publicly supported or advanced the Assad regime's narrative during the conflict.<sup>203</sup>

According to SJAC, merely being a former Ba'ath Party member does not in itself lead to targeting, as party membership was mandatory for most of the population. The targeting of former civilian officials appears to be arbitrary. More prominent individuals, who have been visible and made statements during the former regime's rule, may be singled out to allow the authorities to demonstrate a commitment to justice. In contrast, lesser-known individuals are generally not detained unless they are implicated in specific crimes or had ties to the intelligence services.<sup>204</sup>

According to SJAC, aside from the former Minister of Interior, no other members of the Assad government have been detained. Some former officials remain in Syria and continue to appear in the media, while others have either fled the country or gone into hiding, such as the former Minister of Defence.<sup>205</sup>

### **2.1.2. Targeting by non-state armed groups and unidentified actors**

Since December 2024, SJAC has documented targeted revenge killings of male individuals allegedly linked to the Assad regime's military or intelligence services. These killings, reportedly carried out by unidentified armed men, are based on the victims' alleged affiliation with the Assad regime and roles in past violations rather than their sectarian affiliation. Victims have included individuals from Sunni, Alawite, and Shia communities and were reportedly targeted for both formal roles in the intelligence and security of the former government or for being informants. These targeted attacks have occurred across multiple governorates including Aleppo, Dar'a, Damascus, Deir Ez Zor, Homs, Hama, and Latakia.<sup>206</sup>

During the reference period unidentified gunmen and Salafi-jihadi factions<sup>207</sup> carried out assassinations of former members of Assad security forces,<sup>208</sup> including members of the Air Force Intelligence, NDF, Liwa al-Quds, and Tiger Forces.<sup>209</sup> Such incidents were reported in Homs,<sup>210</sup> Aleppo,<sup>211</sup> Dar'a<sup>212</sup> and Hama governorates.<sup>213</sup> One group claiming such attacks is Saraya Ansar al-Sunnah (Supporters of the Sunnah Battalions), a radical Sunni militant jihadist group which emerged in late January 2025<sup>214</sup> and is ideologically aligned with ISIL.<sup>215</sup> It has

<sup>203</sup> Enab Baladi, Syrian General Security arrests Khaled al-Abboud, 21 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>204</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

<sup>205</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

<sup>206</sup> SJAC, Revenge Killings Targeting Assad Regime Affiliates (December 2024 - May 2025), 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>207</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>208</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 15 May 2025, [url](#); ISW and CT, Iran Update, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>209</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 9 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>210</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch Syria April 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>211</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 9 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>212</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>213</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>214</sup> BBC Monitoring, Explainer: New militant group in Syria targets Alawites, Assad loyalists, 13 February 2025, [url](#);

BBC Monitoring, Briefing: New Syria jihadist group claims ongoing attacks on Alawites, 21 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>215</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 19 May 2025, [url](#)

vowed to target Alawites, Shia Muslims, and loyalists of the former Assad government.<sup>216</sup> The group describes itself as a ‘decentralised’ network that operates using a ‘lone wolf’-style strategy, with members operating independently.<sup>217</sup> It has claimed attacks primarily in Homs<sup>218</sup> and to a lesser extent in Aleppo, Hama,<sup>219</sup> Latakia, and Tartous governorates<sup>220</sup> targeting Alawites, including a sheikh and a journalist<sup>221</sup> and members of security forces in the Assad government.<sup>222</sup>

Another group called Special Accountability Force emerged in April in northern Aleppo governorate claiming that its aim is to eliminate former regime collaborators involved in the human rights violations. A rise in vigilante attacks against former regime collaborators was recorded in the period that followed. Reports documented executions, primarily of Sunni collaborators, in Hama and Aleppo, and attacks against Alawites in Homs city, western Dar’a and Latakia.<sup>223</sup> Sources also reported during the reference period that unidentified gunmen often using motorcycles<sup>224</sup> carried out assassinations against Alawites accused of supporting the former government<sup>225</sup> and having been informants.<sup>226</sup>

In June, the interim government issued a *fatwa* through the *Fatwa* Council that prohibits revenge killings and extrajudicial retaliation. The *fatwa* urges citizens to resolve disputes through official legal channels and criminalises acts of retribution.<sup>227</sup> The impact of this measure could not be monitored within the time constraints of this report.

## 2.2. Individuals opposing or perceived to be opposing the interim government

For information on the treatment of individuals perceived to have supported the former government see section [2.1](#).

There is very limited information on the treatment of individuals opposing or perceived to be opposing the new government. SJAC indicated that it has not observed any targeting by the

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<sup>216</sup> BBC Monitoring, Briefing: New Syria jihadist group claims ongoing attacks on Alawites, 21 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>217</sup> BBC Monitoring, Explainer: New militant group in Syria targets Alawites, Assad loyalists, 13 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>218</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 14 April 2025, [url](#); ISW and CT, Iran Update, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>219</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 7 May 2025, [url](#); ISW and CT, Iran Update, 4 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>220</sup> BBC Monitoring, Briefing: New Syria jihadist group claims ongoing attacks on Alawites, 21 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>221</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>222</sup> BBC Monitoring, Briefing: New Syria jihadist group claims ongoing attacks on Alawites, 21 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>223</sup> Koontz, K., Waters, G., Without Accountability, Syria’s Sectarian Violence Will Only Worsen, TWI, 10 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>224</sup> SJAC, The Syrian Government Must Investigate the Targeting of Alawite Civilians in Homs, 13 May 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Three civilians were killed and another injured after being shot by unknown gunmen in the city of Azaz in the Aleppo countryside on May 7, 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>225</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch Syria April 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>226</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>227</sup> OSES, United Nations Deputy Special Envoy for Syria Najat Rochdi - Briefing to the Security Council (17 June 2025), 17 June 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Syrian Fatwa Council prohibits revenge killings outside judicial framework, 6 June 2025, [url](#)





interim government based on journalistic activities, activism, or membership in political parties.<sup>228</sup>

During the reference period there have been some reports of arrests carried out by the interim government's forces on individuals connected to criminal cases, individuals suspected for being involved in attacks carried out by non-state armed groups linked to the former Assad regime against security forces,<sup>229</sup> individuals who had criticised the government on social media, relatives of fugitives who were detained to pressure the latter into surrendering, and persons accused of working with the SDF.<sup>230</sup> The reporting lacks additional details regarding the charges brought to those arrested and their treatment by the authorities.

Following the overthrow of the Assad government, at least one detained journalist was released according to Freedom House. Previously exiled Syrian journalists and foreign reporters have increasingly resumed reporting from within Syria since December 2024, including in areas formerly controlled by the Assad government and have been focusing on uncovering crimes committed during that period, such as those committed at the Sednaya prison.<sup>231</sup> Sources reported that several journalists were attacked and injured by unidentified armed groups and individuals while covering the violence in the coastal areas between the interim government's forces and pro-Assad remnants in March.<sup>232</sup> Other journalists were attacked and threatened by local armed factions in Sweida while covering the signing of an agreement with the government in May. The authorities reportedly intervened to ensure their safety and condemned the attacks.<sup>233</sup>

## 2.3. Individuals opposing or perceived to be opposing non-state armed actors

### (a) Individuals opposing or perceived to be opposing SDF

Between March 2025 and May 2025, SNHR reported that the SDF carried out mass raids and arrests against civilians under the pretext of combating ISIL cells. As noted by SNHR, civilians were arrested for criticising 'SDF practices' in areas it controls<sup>234</sup> and, in March and April 2025, also for expressing support for the new government.<sup>235</sup> In March 2025, particularly in Hasaka and Raqqa governorates, civilians were reportedly arrested and/or detained for replacing SDF

<sup>228</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

<sup>229</sup> SNHR, At least 117 Arbitrary Arrests Recorded in Syria in March 2025, 10 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 7-8; SNHR, At least 157 Arbitrary Arrests Recorded in Syria in May 2025, 4 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-10

<sup>230</sup> SNHR, SNHR's Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria. At least 89 Arbitrary Arrests Recorded in Syria in April 2025, 3 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>231</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025: Syria, 4 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>232</sup> RSF, Deadly clashes in Syria: authorities must ensure journalists' safety and the public's right to reliable information, 11 March 2025, [url](#); CPJ, In Syria, 3 news crews shot at, assaulted while covering deadly clashes, 14 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>233</sup> RSF, Seven journalists attacked in Syria: RSF calls on the authorities to protect reporters, 6 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>234</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8; SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 3 May 2025, [url](#), p. 8; SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 4 June 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>235</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8; SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 3 May 2025, [url](#), p. 8



banners and flags with the Syrian uprising flag during public celebrations following the 10 March agreement to integrate the SDF into Syrian state institutions.<sup>236</sup> Similarly, citing a joint statement by activists in northeastern Syria, Syria Direct reported that, in March 2025, the SDF arrested supporters of the interim government and participants in commemorations of the 2011 revolution.<sup>237</sup> As noted by SNHR, the same month, SDF arrested and/or detained civilians and SNA personnel who had returned to their homes in SDF-held areas after prior displacement.<sup>238</sup> Additionally, on 16 March 2025, SDF forces reportedly vandalised a house allegedly belonging to a former opposition fighter during a security operation in Sayid Hammoud village in the countryside of Hasaka.<sup>239</sup>

In May 2025, the SDF arbitrarily detained civilians ‘in dozens of villages’ in Deir Ez-Zor and Raqqa governorates and in several neighbourhoods of Raqqa city.<sup>240</sup> While SNHR noted that these detentions were linked to expressions of criticism about the SDF, the media outlet New Arab reported that SDF arrests in Raqqa governorate, in which at least 20 people from the neighbourhoods of Al-Mashlab, Al-Sabahia, Al-Khatuniya, Ya’rub, and Al-Mansoura’ were detained, were directed at ‘suspected Assad regime supporters, figures opposed to the SDF and defectors’.<sup>241</sup> Additionally, in May 2025, the SDF reportedly detained relatives of defectors from its forces to pressure them into surrendering. During some of the SDF-conducted raids, its members reportedly physically assaulted women and confiscated personal items from families of the detained persons, including money, gold jewellery, and mobile phones.<sup>242</sup>

Reporting on statistics of arbitrary arrests and/or detentions of civilians by the SDF, SNHR documented 93 cases of arbitrary arrests and/or detentions, including of seven children in March 2025<sup>243</sup> and 53 arrests and/or detentions, including of nine children and one woman in April 2025.<sup>244</sup> In May 2025, SNHR recorded 64 arrests by the SDF, including of four children and two women.<sup>245</sup> In total, 29 persons were released during these three months, after being detained for a period between a few days and a month.<sup>246</sup> Most of the released persons were originally from the governorates of Deir Ez-Zor, Raqqa<sup>247</sup> and Aleppo governorates.<sup>248</sup>

Sources reported instances of violence against media professionals by the SDF, including but not necessarily limited to the following cases. On 5 January 2025, as reported by local media,

<sup>236</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>237</sup> Syria Direct, Can the SDF-Damascus deal withstand internal divisions and geopolitical shifts?, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>238</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>239</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>240</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 4 June 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>241</sup> New Arab (The), Syrian government and SDF carry out raids targeting regime loyalists and drug gangs, 21 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>242</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 4 June 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>243</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>244</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 3 May 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>245</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 4 June 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>246</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 6; SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 3 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6; SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 4 June 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>247</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 3 May 2025, [url](#), p. 8; SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 4 June 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>248</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 3 May 2025, [url](#), p. 8



an SDF drone targeted a reporter covering the fighting between the SDF and Turkish-backed SNA around Manbij in rural Aleppo, resulting in the journalist being injured. At the end of the same month, SDF forces detained for unspecified reasons a media activist in Shafa in rural Deir Ez-Zor, following a raid on his house. On 22 April 2025, an Al-Arabia news channel reporter was detained in Qamishli in rural Hasaka over a Facebook post about corruption cases and the arrest of SDF security officials on drug trafficking charges in Raqqa.<sup>249</sup>

### **(b) Individuals opposing or perceived to be opposing SNA**

In March 2025, the UNCOI reported that following the recapture of Manbij (Aleppo governorate) from SDF in December 2024, SNA fighters threatened and robbed civilians and extorted bribes and valuables from them to pass checkpoints.<sup>250</sup> Similarly, STJ noted that SNA actions in the area brought, next to the increase in security instability, significant human rights violations, including summary executions, killings, arbitrary arrests, and torture.<sup>251</sup> The local media outlet Hedvesti reported that 15 people executed were members of SDF, YPG, or the Forces of the Internal Police of DAANES (*Asayish*).<sup>252</sup>

From January 2025 to April 2025,<sup>253</sup> Tishreen Dam on the Euphrates River near Manbij has become 'a battleground' between SDF and Türkiye-backed SNA. In January 2025, protests started at the Tishreen Dam, over disruption to water and electricity access for over 310 000 people in Manbij and Ayn al Arab/Kobani areas, caused by damage to the dam occurred a month earlier.<sup>254</sup> On 18 January 2025, a strike by the Türkiye-SNA coalition targeted SDF forces near the protest site, killing 20 and injuring more than 120 people,<sup>255</sup> including four journalists.<sup>256</sup> The attack occurred while protesters were performing a traditional Kurdish dance. Another strike hit an ambulance that was transporting one of the injured persons.<sup>257</sup> Between December 2024 and February 2025, three journalists were reportedly killed and eight injured during Turkish and SNA attacks on the Tishreen Dam.<sup>258</sup> As reported by STJ in May 2025, in the Turkish/SNA attacks on the dam, a total of 24 civilians were killed and more than 200 injured.<sup>259</sup>

<sup>249</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>250</sup> Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, Advance unedited version A/HRC/58/66, 14 March 2025, [url](#), para 30

<sup>251</sup> STJ, War Crimes: Turkish/SNA Attacks on Tishrin Dam Killed Civilians, Endangered the Vital Resource, 18 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>252</sup> Hevesti, Manbij: The Rise of Human Rights Violations by Syrian National Army Factions (SNA), 25 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>253</sup> FDD's Long War Journal, Syrian government, SDF, and other factions move to end tensions over strategic dam, 15 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>254</sup> STJ, War Crimes: Turkish/SNA Attacks on Tishrin Dam Killed Civilians, Endangered the Vital Resource, 18 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>255</sup> HRW, Northeast Syria: Apparent War Crime by Türkiye-Backed Forces, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>256</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>257</sup> HRW, Northeast Syria: Apparent War Crime by Türkiye-Backed Forces, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>258</sup> NPA, Media workers in Qamishli protest Turkish attacks against journalists, 18 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>259</sup> STJ, War Crimes: Turkish/SNA Attacks on Tishrin Dam Killed Civilians, Endangered the Vital Resource, 18 May 2025, [url](#)



Furthermore, on 16 March 2025, 10 members of a Kurdish family, including 7 children, were killed in an allegedly Türkiye or SNA-drone attack in an SDF-controlled village south of Kobane.<sup>260</sup>

In a report covering March 2025, SNHR noted that SNA and armed factions carried out arbitrary arrests and/or detentions of people<sup>261</sup> arriving from areas under the SDF control, as well as arbitrary arrests/detentions of an 'ethnic character' in SNA-controlled parts of Aleppo governorate. The latter included civilians arbitrarily arrested or detained over alleged cooperation with the SDF, with such incidents primarily concentrated in 'a number of villages' of Afrin city.<sup>262</sup> SNHR recorded 13 cases of arbitrary arrest/detention by SNA in March 2025, with four persons released within the same month.<sup>263</sup> In total, six arbitrarily arrested or detained persons were released in March 2025,<sup>264</sup> after being detained for a period ranging from a few days to one month. Most of the people released were originally from Aleppo governorate.<sup>265</sup>

## 2.4. Ethno-religious minorities

### 2.4.1. Kurds

Kurds constitute the largest ethnic minority in Syria, with an estimated population of 2 to 2.5 million,<sup>266</sup> or up to 10 % of the country's pre-war population of 23 million.<sup>267</sup> Kurdish population is concentrated in the regions of Afrin, Kobani, and Jazira, neighbourhoods of Aleppo and Damascus cities, and, to a lesser extent, in several districts in Raqqa city.<sup>268</sup>

During a visit to Afrin, Aleppo governorate, in mid-February 2025, interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa pledged to extend the authority of the new government in the region and to end violations, such as arbitrary arrests, extortion, property seizures, and deforestation, committed by Turkish-backed SNA factions, which have controlled the area since 2018.<sup>269</sup> On 10 March 2025, Al-Sharaa and SDF commander Mazloun Abdi signed a tentative agreement to start the integration of the SDF into the new Syrian army.<sup>270</sup> The agreement also promised that Kurds would be given the right to citizenship and other constitutional rights, including the use and teaching of the Kurdish language, while those in displacement would be able to return to their homes.<sup>271</sup> At the beginning of April 2025, SDF forces left predominantly-Kurdish

<sup>260</sup> HRW, Syria, Türkiye-Backed Attack Kills, Injures Family, 29 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>261</sup> SNHR defines these arrests/detentions as 'carried out without any judicial authorization or any involvement of the police, which is the only body officially vested with judicial authorization to carry out arrests and detentions. See, SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>262</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>263</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>264</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>265</sup> SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 10 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>266</sup> MRG, Syria, January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>267</sup> Arab News, Kurdish fighters leave northern city in Syria as part of deal with central government, 4 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>268</sup> GEG, Iraq and Syria: Kurdish Autonomous Regions Under Threat, 4 March 2023, [url](#)

<sup>269</sup> STJ, Syria/Afrin: Promises by Transitional Authorities to Restore Rights and End Violations Against Kurd, 11 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>270</sup> TWI, Facilitating the New SDF Agreement Is Key to Stabilizing Syria, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>271</sup> AP, Syria's government signs a breakthrough deal with Kurdish-led authorities in the northeast, 11 March 2025, [url](#)



neighbourhoods of Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah in northern Aleppo,<sup>272</sup> which had been under their control since 2015.<sup>273</sup>

During negotiations with the interim government, Kurdish political parties emphasised the government protection of Kurdish citizens and their rights as a key demand.<sup>274</sup> As a 'unity conference' held in Qamishli on 26 April 2025, the Kurdish National Unity Parties (PYNK) and the Kurdish National Council (ENKS/KNC) jointly called for Syria to be recognised as a 'multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multi-religious' state and advocated for federalism, recognition of Kurdish as an official language, and restoration of citizenship to Kurds stripped of it after the 1962 census.<sup>275</sup> In response, on 27 April 2025, the new government rejected the federalism proposal as a 'threat to national unity' and a violation to the deal signed with the SDF.<sup>276</sup>

Although pro-Türkiye groups reportedly reduced their military presence in Afrin as of April 2025, Nadine Maenza, president of the International Religious Freedom (IRF) Secretariat and former chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), noted in an interview to Kurdish media Rudaw that removing Turkish-backed militias remained difficult, due to Türkiye's support to Al-Sharaa.<sup>277</sup> In April 2025, STJ reported that despite official announcements about the dissolution of the SNA factions, these groups, including affiliated Military Police, remain active in Afrin, with some of their members redeployed elsewhere.<sup>278</sup> Similarly, in May 2025, Human Rights Watch noted that, although most SNA checkpoints had been removed, the factions continued operating from their former bases.<sup>279</sup> However, regarding Afrin in particular, a Kurdish activist interviewed by media outlet Syria Direct at the end of April 2025 noted that between 70 % and 80 % of SNA factions have left the town.<sup>280</sup>

As noted by Human Rights Watch, despite their prior involvement in serious abuses, SNA fighters have been incorporated into Syria's Armed Forces, with some commanders appointed to senior government and military roles.<sup>281</sup> Following the recapture of Manbij from the SDF in December 2024, SNA factions were reportedly involved in looting homes and shops owned by Kurds. Fearing arrest or murder, many Kurdish residents fled the city.<sup>282</sup>

In January and February 2025, according to sources, Military Police and the Suleiman Shah Brigade (al-Amshat) made arrests in Afrin, including people returning to the area, with some cases involving extortion for their release. On 7 February 2025, one day after the Military Police entered Afrin, it reportedly arrested six people, four of whom were accused of 'raising pro-SDF slogans while welcoming the General Security delegation,' releasing them 18 days

<sup>272</sup> AP, Kurdish fighters leave northern city in Syria as part of deal with central government, 4 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>273</sup> Arab News, Kurdish fighters leave northern city in Syria as part of deal with central government, [url](#)

<sup>274</sup> ISW, Iran Update, April 30, 2025, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>275</sup> Salih, M. A., The Syria of Sharaa and the Syria of Kurds and minorities, The New Region, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>276</sup> Reuters, Syria's Sharaa rejects Kurdish demands for decentralization, 27 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>277</sup> Rudaw, Displaced Kurds, Yazidis fear return to Afrin: Activist, 27 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>278</sup> STJ, Syria/Afrin: Promises by Transitional Authorities to Restore Rights and End Violations Against Kurd, 11 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>279</sup> HRW, Syria: Türkiye-backed Armed Groups Detain, Extort Civilians, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>280</sup> Syria Direct, 'Afrin belongs to its people': More Kurds return to Afrin, while others wait for guarantees, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>281</sup> HRW, Syria: Türkiye-backed Armed Groups Detain, Extort Civilians, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>282</sup> Hevdesti, Manbij: The Rise of Human Rights Violations by Syrian National Army Factions (SNA), 25 December 2024, [url](#)



later.<sup>283</sup> While arrests by SNA decreased in March, according to reports, hundreds of people have remained in detention in SNA-run prisons, supervised by Türkiye.<sup>284</sup> As noted by STJ in April 2025, Afrin prisons and detention centres remained operational and were reportedly used to hold large numbers of Kurdish detainees arrested by various SNA factions ‘on pretextual charges’ such as alleged affiliation with the PKK, SDF, or DAANES.<sup>285</sup>

After the change of the government, Kurdish families who had been displaced from Afrin and other areas affected by the Türkiye-led military operation ‘Olive Branch’ since 2018<sup>286</sup> started returning to their villages.<sup>287</sup> At the beginning of April 2025, media outlet Welet, citing the EKNS in Afrin, reported that more than 20 000 Kurdish families had returned.<sup>288</sup> According to Syria Direct, the number of returnees to Afrin has increased in April 2025, reportedly raising the Kurdish population in the city to an estimated 60-70 % of its total population.<sup>289</sup> In March 2025, Rudaw reported that some settler families of displaced Arabs had left Afrin, abandoning, in some cases, entire villages.<sup>290</sup> As reported at the end of April 2025, in some villages, up to 90 % of former residents have returned, though return rates vary across the region.<sup>291</sup> By the end of May 2025, many settlements in Afrin were reportedly abandoned after SNA families had left.<sup>292</sup>

As reported by Syria Direct on 30 April 2025, the new government has not made any official announcement to encourage their return and guarantee the safety of returnees.<sup>293</sup> Furthermore, as noted by Rudaw in April 2025, there has been no decision of the new government to support the return to Afrin, with some returnee families returning on their own and others with the assistance they receive from the ENKS.<sup>294</sup>

In April 2025, sources noted that the continued presence of SNA militias in Afrin have been preventing Kurdish IDPs from returning.<sup>295</sup> Many Kurdish returnees faced difficulties reclaiming their homes taken over by SNA commanders and fighters or Syrians displaced from elsewhere

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<sup>283</sup> STJ, Syria/Afrin: Promises by Transitional Authorities to Restore Rights and End Violations Against Kurd, 11 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>284</sup> HRW, Syria: Türkiye-backed Armed Groups Detain, Extort Civilians, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>285</sup> STJ, Syria/Afrin: Promises by Transitional Authorities to Restore Rights and End Violations Against Kurd, 11 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>286</sup> Rudaw, Hundreds of Kurdish families return to Afrin as settlers leave, 9 March 2025, [url](#); Welat, 8 Kurdish Families Returned to Their Villages in Afrin, 9 April 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Displaced Kurds, Yazidis fear return to Afrin: Activist, 27 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>287</sup> Syria Direct, Waning hopes: Will Damascus help Afrin’s Kurds reclaim their homes, 12 February 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Hundreds of Kurdish families return to Afrin as settlers leave, 9 March 2025, [url](#); Welat, 8 Kurdish Families Returned to Their Villages in Afrin, 9 April 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Displaced Kurds, Yazidis fear return to Afrin: Activist, 27 April 2025, [url](#); Syria Direct, ‘Afrin belongs to its people’: More Kurds return to Afrin, while others wait for guarantees, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>288</sup> Welat, 8 Kurdish Families Returned to Their Villages in Afrin, 9 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>289</sup> Syria Direct, ‘Afrin belongs to its people’: More Kurds return to Afrin, while others wait for guarantees, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>290</sup> Rudaw, Hundreds of Kurdish families return to Afrin as settlers leave, 9 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>291</sup> Syria Direct, ‘Afrin belongs to its people’: More Kurds return to Afrin, while others wait for guarantees, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>292</sup> NPR, Afrin settlements nearly abandoned after SNA families’ departure, 31 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>293</sup> Syria Direct, ‘Afrin belongs to its people’: More Kurds return to Afrin, while others wait for guarantees, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>294</sup> Rudaw, Displaced Kurds, Yazidis fear return to Afrin: Activist, 27 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>295</sup> TWI, Facilitating the New SDF Agreement Is Key to Stabilizing Syria, 2 April 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Displaced Kurds, Yazidis fear return to Afrin: Activist, 27 April 2025, [url](#)





in the country.<sup>296</sup> Returnees often faced demand for payment to reclaim their homes,<sup>297</sup> with Al-Amshat reportedly extorting between 2 000 and 5 000 US dollars from returning families and imposing taxes on olive farmers.<sup>298</sup> Between December 2024 and January 2025, SNA fighters reportedly detained nine Afrin residents over unpaid taxes, extorting demanding up to 3 800 US dollars from each to be released.<sup>299</sup> As reported in April 2025, in Rajo, Afrin district, the SNA's Ahrar al-Sharqiya faction was extorting shop owners and seizing properties of displaced persons.<sup>300</sup>

In addition to violations of house, land, and property rights and 'potential tensions with host communities' during return to northern Aleppo, the Kurds continuously faced denial of access to civil documentation and basic services.<sup>301</sup> While, as noted by the European Network on Statelessness (ENS), the change of government in Syria could offer an opportunity to address the issue of statelessness,<sup>302</sup> which affects part of the Kurdish population,<sup>303</sup> no information was found regarding the legal status of the stateless Kurds under the interim government.

## 2.4.2. Alawites

Alawites constitute around 1.7 million or 9 % of Syria's population.<sup>304</sup> They are primarily concentrated along Syria's coastal and mountainous hinterlands (Tartous and Latakia governorates), with smaller communities present in Homs, Hama, and Damascus.<sup>305</sup>

### (a) Targeting by interim government forces and affiliated armed actors

Between 6 and 10 March, sectarian violence between the interim authorities and their affiliates on one side, and Alawite militias loyal to Assad, reportedly resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians mainly in Syria's coastal governorates of Latakia, Tartous<sup>306</sup> and to a lesser extent Hama and Homs.<sup>307</sup> These events involved extrajudicial killings, including field executions and mass killings, reportedly driven by retaliatory and sectarian motives.<sup>308</sup> According to sources, most of the civilians killed were members of the Alawite community particularly from Latakia and Tartous governorates.<sup>309</sup> According to SNHR, 1 334 individuals were killed in the violence. Out of these, 887 civilians and disarmed combatants of pro-Assad remnants were killed by

<sup>296</sup> Syria Direct, Waning hopes: Will Damascus help Afrin's Kurds reclaim their homes, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>297</sup> Syria Direct, Waning hopes: Will Damascus help Afrin's Kurds reclaim their homes, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>298</sup> HRW, Syria: Türkiye-backed Armed Groups Detain, Extort Civilians, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>299</sup> HRW, Syria: Türkiye-backed Armed Groups Detain, Extort Civilians, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>300</sup> Syria Direct, 'Afrin belongs to its people': More Kurds return to Afrin, while others wait for guarantees, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>301</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>302</sup> ENS, Syria has the power to change, from one of the biggest statelessness exporters to a role model for the Global North, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>303</sup> EUAA, Syria – Country focus report, October 2024, [url](#), pp. 62-64

<sup>304</sup> France24, In Syria's Alawite area, joy at Assad fall but fear of Islamism, 16 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>305</sup> Shahin, K., The Existential Challenge for Syria's Alawites, NLM, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>306</sup> Security Council Report, Syria: April 2025 Monthly Forecast, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>307</sup> SNHR, Preliminary Report on the Violations that Took Place in the Wake of the Attacks Carried Out by Non-State Armed Groups Linked to the Assad Regime, Mostly in the Governorates of Latakia, Tartus, and Hama, 11 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 5-10

<sup>308</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>309</sup> AP, Syria's worst violence in months reopens wounds of the civil war, 10 March 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)





security forces nominally affiliated with the MoD but operating with relative independence as well as local groups of armed civilians. Around 445 individuals (231 civilians and 214 members of security forces) were killed by pro-Assad remnants.<sup>310</sup>

Sources noted that the majority of civilian deaths inflicted by government security forces were carried out by SNA factions<sup>311</sup> including the Hamza and Suleiman Shah/Amshat divisions,<sup>312</sup> as well as by foreign jihadist fighters<sup>313</sup> and irregular civilians.<sup>314</sup> According to U.S. intelligence, SNA factions involved in the operations ‘probably operated outside the direct control of the authorities during the fighting’.<sup>315</sup> According to information received by Amnesty International, militias affiliated with the government killed more than 100 people in the coastal city of Baniyas on 8 and 9 March 2025. The organisation investigated 32 of the killings and concluded that they were deliberate, targeted against members of the Alawite minority, and unlawful.<sup>316</sup>

By contrast, the involvement of GSS forces in extrajudicial killings was reportedly limited.<sup>317</sup> SJAC stated that GSS forces involved in the operation appeared to be the most disciplined and the least likely to have committed violations against civilians.<sup>318</sup> Sources reported that members of the GSS forces attempted to rescue or protect civilians on the coast from being killed by members of other armed groups.<sup>319</sup>

The violence led to the displacement of around 51 000 people, including 6 000 who fled to Lebanon. Widespread curfews and movement restrictions were imposed, including the closure of the Homs – Latakia highway, leading to the suspension of humanitarian operations.<sup>320</sup>

President al-Sharaa issued a decision to form an independent national committee to investigate the events<sup>321</sup> and authorities reportedly begun prosecuting individuals accused of committing crimes during the insurgent activity in western Syria between 6 and 10 March.<sup>322</sup> On 11 April, Al-Sharaa extended by three months the mandate of the independent fact-finding committee tasked with investigating and reporting on the coastal violence.<sup>323</sup>

<sup>310</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>311</sup> Zelin, A., Syria’s Transitional Honeymoon Is Over After Massacres and Disinformation, TWI, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>312</sup> Etana Syria, Brief: Armed Clashes & Sectarian Violence on Syria’s Coast, 25 March 2025, [url](#); SJAC, SJAC’s Analysis of Atrocities Committed in Latakia and Tartous, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>313</sup> SJAC, SJAC’s Analysis of Atrocities Committed in Latakia and Tartous, 13 March 2025, [url](#); Zelin, A., Syria’s Transitional Honeymoon Is Over After Massacres and Disinformation, TWI, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>314</sup> Zelin, A., Syria’s Transitional Honeymoon Is Over After Massacres and Disinformation, TWI, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>315</sup> USDOD, Lead IG Report to the U.S. Congress January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 22-23

<sup>316</sup> Al, Syria: Coastal massacres of Alawite civilians must be investigated as war crimes, 3 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>317</sup> USDOD, Lead IG Report to the U.S. Congress January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 22-23;

Zelin, A., Syria’s Transitional Honeymoon Is Over After Massacres and Disinformation, TWI, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>318</sup> SJAC, SJAC’s Analysis of Atrocities Committed in Latakia and Tartous, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>319</sup> SJAC, SJAC’s Analysis of Atrocities Committed in Latakia and Tartous, 13 March 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>320</sup> UNOCHA, Syria Situation Report No.4 as of 26 March 2025, 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>321</sup> France24, Syria opens probe into killings targeting Alawite minority group, 9 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>322</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>323</sup> Security Council Report, Syria: May 2025 Monthly Forecast, 30 April 2025, [url](#)



In the aftermath of the violence between 6 and 10 March, sporadic reports of attacks against Alawites attributed to government forces and affiliated armed groups continued to emerge.<sup>324</sup>

### **(b) Targeting by unidentified actors**

Since early 2025, weekly reports have emerged of civilians, often Alawites, being killed by 'unknown gunmen' or 'masked men'.<sup>325</sup> Between January and the end of April 2025, at least 361 civilians were victims of extrajudicial killings in Homs and Hama governorates, according to SNHR, cited by Syria Direct. The majority of these killings occurred in areas predominantly inhabited by Alawites.<sup>326</sup> Following the March violence in the coastal areas, assassinations of Alawites mostly carried out by unidentified gunmen continued, with incidents reported in Latakia, Tartous and Homs governorates.<sup>327</sup> Between 23 and 25 April, SNHR documented the killing of at least 20 civilians in predominantly Alawite-inhabited areas of Homs city. These killings were reportedly carried out by unidentified armed groups operating outside state control following security operations by the GSS targeting individuals linked to the former Assad government, operations that were met with resistance from local groups. The attacks included targeted assassinations of individuals previously affiliated with the Assad government, some of whom had entered into reconciliation agreements, as well as random killings believed to be motivated by sectarian and retaliatory intent.<sup>328</sup>

According to SJAC, unlike ongoing revenge killings targeting individuals linked to the former Assad regime's security apparatus, the killings of Alawites in Homs appear to be based on sectarian identity, driven by the perception that all Alawites were complicit in the Assad regime's actions.<sup>329</sup> SJAC noted that these incidents appear to be geographically concentrated. While similar attacks have been reported in Latakia and Hama, they are most prevalent in certain neighbourhoods of Homs city and nearby areas in Homs governorate. According to SJAC, the perception that Alawites are inherently complicit in the Assad regime's atrocities seems particularly pronounced in Homs, likely due to the city's distinct conflict history during which thousands of Sunni civilians were displaced from Homs following human rights violations, including several massacres, some of which were reportedly carried out by Alawite neighbours.<sup>330</sup>

Despite the presence of security forces in Homs city, including GSS checkpoints at the city's entrances, the attacks on civilians continued according to SJAC. Some civilians have accused the authorities of condoning or even facilitating the murders.<sup>331</sup>

Since early 2025, dozens of Alawite men and women particularly from Homs have reportedly been abducted near their homes or workplaces by unidentified perpetrators, with their bodies

<sup>324</sup> MEE, One month on, killings persist in Syria's Alawi heartlands, 11 April 2025, [url](#); Syria Direct, Extrajudicial killings of Alawites plague Homs city, 9 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>325</sup> SJAC, The Syrian Government Must Investigate the Targeting of Alawite Civilians in Homs, 13 May 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch Syria April 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>326</sup> Syria Direct, Extrajudicial killings of Alawites plague Homs city, 9 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>327</sup> MEE, One month on, killings persist in Syria's Alawi heartlands, 11 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>328</sup> SNHR, No Fewer than 20 Civilians Extrajudicial Killed in Homs City Between April 23-28, 2025, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>329</sup> SJAC, The Syrian Government Must Investigate the Targeting of Alawite Civilians in Homs, 13 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>330</sup> SJAC, The Syrian Government Must Investigate the Targeting of Alawite Civilians in Homs, 13 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>331</sup> SJAC, The Syrian Government Must Investigate the Targeting of Alawite Civilians in Homs, 13 May 2025, [url](#)



discovered days later bearing gunshot wounds.<sup>332</sup> SOHR documented the kidnapping of 50 Alawite women by unidentified actors between the beginning of January and April 2025. Most incidents occurred in Homs, Tartous, Latakia, and Hama governorates.<sup>333</sup> An investigation by Le Monde reported that some of the abducted women who were released had been beaten, insulted and may have suffered sexual violence at the hands of their captors. Some members of the Alawite community claimed that the women were kidnapped for marriage by Islamist factions and foreigners located in Idlib governorate.<sup>334</sup> In April, the UN Special Envoy for Syria, Geir O. Pedersen, 'raised concerns over reports of women and girls being abducted' in Syria without providing additional details.<sup>335</sup>

### **(c) Alawites working in the public sector**

Under the Assad government, more than 80 % of Alawites worked for the state.<sup>336</sup> They received preferential military and security positions,<sup>337</sup> constituted the bulk of the army and intelligence officer corps and occupied most senior government posts as well as the top and executive roles in state-owned industries.<sup>338</sup> During the civil war, wives and children of killed Alawite soldiers received public jobs as compensation for their losses.<sup>339</sup> Many had been hired as 'relatives of martyrs', part of a practice of the Assad government that offered state jobs as compensation to families of fallen soldiers and security personnel, often without actual administrative need.<sup>340</sup> According to a STJ report, in 2024 there were around 2 800 contracts for spouses and children of 'martyrs'. By the end of 2021, around 18 000 demobilised members of the army and security forces were appointed to public sector jobs following special recruitment competitions.<sup>341</sup>

While widespread public-sector layoffs have impacted the broader population, the dismissal of around half a million security sector employees<sup>342</sup> has disproportionately affected the Alawite community,<sup>343</sup> reflecting according to sources both targeted sectarian measures and their overrepresentation in government employment under Assad.<sup>344</sup>

The interim government reportedly dismissed an unspecified number of public-sector workers mainly women in teaching roles, particularly Alawites due to their marriages to security personnel associated with the Assad government. Alawites were overrepresented in teaching

<sup>332</sup> SJAC, The Syrian Government Must Investigate the Targeting of Alawite Civilians in Homs, 13 May 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch Syria April 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>333</sup> SOHR, Absence of law deterrence | 50 Alawite women missing since beginning of 2025, 18 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>334</sup> Le Monde, En Syrie, l'inquiétante disparition de femmes alaouites [In Syria, the worrying disappearance of Alawite women], 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>335</sup> UN News, Situation in Syria 'Extremely Fragile', UN Envoy Tells Security Council, Stressing Rule of Law, New Social Contract, Fair Elections Are Yet to Materialize, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>336</sup> Balanche, F., Alawites Under Threat in Syria?, TWI, 31 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>337</sup> Davis, H., How Desperation Sowed the Seeds of Rebellion in Syria's Latakia Province, New Lines Magazine, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>338</sup> Balanche, F., Alawites Under Threat in Syria?, TWI, 31 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>339</sup> Balanche, F., Alawites Under Threat in Syria?, TWI, 31 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>340</sup> Anjarini, S., Investigating the Alawite Massacres, New Lines Magazine, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>341</sup> STJ, Mass Dismissals in Syria After the Regime's Fall, 13 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>342</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>343</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#); STJ, Mass Dismissals in Syria After the Regime's Fall, 13 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 4, 9; Anjarini, S., Investigating the Alawite Massacres, New Lines Magazine, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>344</sup> Anjarini, S., Investigating the Alawite Massacres, New Lines Magazine, 12 May 2025, [url](#)



jobs.<sup>345</sup> According to International Crisis Group, the spouses were perceived by the authorities as guilty or unreliable by association.<sup>346</sup>

#### (d) Housing, land, and property issues

Sources interviewed by Reuters assessed that security forces affiliated with the interim government have evicted hundreds to potentially thousands of people, mostly Alawites, from their homes. While many evictions targeted former public sector workers who lost their right to government housing after dismissal, hundreds of Alawite families were reportedly forced out of privately owned homes solely due to their sectarian identity.<sup>347</sup> According to an investigation by the Economist, Alawites who were evicted from their houses in Damascus lived in accommodation reserved by the Assad government through the MoD for families of members of the armed forces.<sup>348</sup>

STJ documented the eviction and property seizure of at least 16 families, mostly Alawite, in a residential complex originally designated for army and police officers of the former Assad government in Rural Damascus. Armed groups affiliated with the interim government reportedly carried out arbitrary arrests and forcibly evicted the residents. In some cases, members of these armed groups and their families were allegedly installed in the vacated homes.<sup>349</sup> In May, UNHCR stated that the authorities have reportedly confiscated land belonging to mostly Alawite population in 12 villages in rural Hama governorate despite them having ownership. This has led to the displacement of approximately 2 000 families.<sup>350</sup>

According to senior GSS officials cited by Reuters, the new authorities established two committees to manage properties linked to individuals perceived as affiliated with the former regime, one overseeing confiscations and the other handling complaints.<sup>351</sup>

For detailed information on the situation of Alawites before March 2025, see section 1.3.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria: Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#).

### 2.4.3. Ismailis

The Ismailis (Isma'ilis) are an offshoot of Shia Islam<sup>352</sup> with a population in Syria estimated at around 250 000.<sup>353</sup> They are concentrated in and around the cities of Masyaf<sup>354</sup> and

<sup>345</sup> International Crisis Group, The New Syria: Halting a Dangerous Drift, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>346</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>347</sup> Reuters, Minutes to leave: Syria's Alawites evicted from private homes at gunpoint, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>348</sup> Economist (The), The warlords of Syria have a daunting to-do list, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>349</sup> STJ, STJ Submits Report on Cases of Home Seizures and Arbitrary Evictions of Homeowners in Muadamiyat al-Sham in Damascus Countryside, 18 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>350</sup> UNHCR, Regional Flash Update #26 - Syria Situation Crisis, 9 May 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>351</sup> Reuters, Minutes to leave: Syria's Alawites evicted from private homes at gunpoint, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>352</sup> MRG, Isma'ili Shi'a in Syria, March 2018, [url](#)

<sup>353</sup> BBC News, كيف يشكل التنوع الطائفي والعنقي الهوية السورية؟ [How does sectarian and ethnic diversity shape Syrian identity?], 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>354</sup> Waters, G., Inside Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's diplomatic offensive with Syria's Christians and Ismailis, Atlantic Council, 19 March 2025, [url](#)



Salamiyah in Hama governorate<sup>355</sup> and Qadmus, in Tartous governorate.<sup>356</sup> Salamiyah, which has the highest concentration of Ismaili,<sup>357</sup> is home to the Syrian National Ismaili Council, and has emerged as a key centre of local governance in eastern Hama following the Assad's ouster. The Ismaili Council, historically unaffiliated with armed groups or regime military leaders, played a crucial mediating role in facilitating the peaceful handover of the area to HTS on 4 December 2024. Since then, the Council has taken on administrative duties, supported civil engagement, operated a volunteer security force alongside local police, and formed a joint civilian-military security committee to address violations.<sup>358</sup>

In the coastal city of Qadmus (Tartous governorate) similar cooperation has developed. According to local Ismailis, volunteers have helped bolster understaffed government police units, receiving small arms support and administrative backing from both the new HTS-aligned leadership and the Assad regime-era *mukhtar*. However, their collaboration with the new authorities has drawn violent backlash from pro-Assad Alawite factions. In late February and early March, attacks killed three Ismaili volunteers and officials. During the March uprising in the coastal areas, Ismailis in Qadmus protected interim government forces from insurgents and negotiated their safe exit, actions that led to further threats from loyalist communities.<sup>359</sup>

Ismailis were not represented in the transitional government announced in late March.<sup>360</sup>

No additional information was found regarding the treatment of Ismailis by state and non-state actors within the time constraints of this report.

#### 2.4.4. Druze

The Druze have constituted 3 % of Syria's pre-war population,<sup>361</sup> accounting for a population of approximately 700 000.<sup>362</sup> Historically, they have been concentrated in the southern governorate of Sweida,<sup>363</sup> with smaller communities near Damascus.<sup>364</sup> The Druze call themselves *muwahhidun* (Arabic: 'unitarians')<sup>365</sup> and they are adherents of the monotheistic Druze faith, generally regarded as part of Islam.<sup>366</sup> The Druze faith does not allow any type of

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<sup>355</sup> Waters, G., Inside Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's diplomatic offensive with Syria's Christians and Ismailis, Atlantic Council, 19 March 2025, [url](#); Simerg, Syria: Ismaili Institutions inform Ismailis worldwide that the community is safe, with latest updates from world media, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>356</sup> MRG, Isma'ili Shi'a in Syria, March 2018, [url](#)

<sup>357</sup> USDOS, 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Syria, 26 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>358</sup> Waters, G., Inside Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's diplomatic offensive with Syria's Christians and Ismailis, Atlantic Council, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>359</sup> Waters, G., Inside Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's diplomatic offensive with Syria's Christians and Ismailis, Atlantic Council, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>360</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Syria's New Transitional Government: Ambitions and Challenges, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>361</sup> MRG, Syria, January 2025, [url](#); France24, Syria's Druze: minority caught between Islamist government and Israel, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>362</sup> France24, Syria's Druze: minority caught between Islamist government and Israel, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>363</sup> MRG, Syria, January 2025, [url](#); France24, Syria's Druze: minority caught between Islamist government and Israel, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>364</sup> France24, Syria's Druze: minority caught between Islamist government and Israel, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>365</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, Druze, 25 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>366</sup> NPR, Druze militias are suspicious of Syria's new leaders – and are ready to go to battle, 12 April 2025, [url](#)

conversion, and many of its practices are kept secret.<sup>367</sup> Ethnically the Druze are Arab and they speak Arabic.<sup>368</sup>

Druze communities are also present in Lebanon and Israel.<sup>369</sup> In mid-March 2025, two groups of Druze clerics made pilgrimages to visit Druze religious sites<sup>370</sup> in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights for the first time since the 1974 ceasefire agreement between the two countries.<sup>371</sup> Since the HTS assumed control in Syria, Israel has expressed support for the Druze, including provision of humanitarian aid packages to the community<sup>372</sup> and pledging military protection to the Druze community,<sup>373</sup> rejected by the Druze.<sup>374</sup>

Traditionally, the Druze in Syria have maintained a level of autonomy, including the formation of local militias,<sup>375</sup> consisting of ‘tens of thousands of fighters.’<sup>376</sup> In March 2025, the Syrian government and ‘the residents and elders of Sweida’<sup>377</sup> agreed that the largest Druze militia, the Men of Dignity, would be transferred under the authority of the MoD.<sup>378</sup> Additionally, it was agreed that the governor of Sweida and a police chief would be appointed by the central government.<sup>379</sup> Negotiations between the central government, represented by Laith al-Balous, and the Druze leader Sheikh Hikmat al-Hijri were reportedly ongoing as of end of May 2025, with ‘little meaningful progress’ toward integrating Druze factions into MoD.<sup>380</sup> Further information on the integration of Druze armed groups is available in section (c).

#### (a) Security incidents involving the Druze

At the end of February 2025, clashes between Druze militia and the forces of the new government were reported in Jaramana neighbourhood,<sup>381</sup> three kilometres southeast of Damascus.<sup>382</sup> The clashes began on 28 February 2025, when a Syrian security officer was killed and another injured at a checkpoint in Jaramana,<sup>383</sup> reportedly by an armed militia linked to the former regime.<sup>384</sup> Fighting continued the following day, resulting in one person killed

<sup>367</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, Druze, 25 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>368</sup> France24, Syria’s Druze: minority caught between Islamist government and Israel, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>369</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, Druze, 25 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>370</sup> France24, Syria’s Druze: minority caught between Islamist government and Israel, 30 April 2025, [url](#); BBC News, First Druze crossing in 50 years as Israel courts allies in Syria, 14 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>371</sup> BBC News, First Druze crossing in 50 years as Israel courts allies in Syria, 14 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>372</sup> France24, Syria’s Druze: minority caught between Islamist government and Israel, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>373</sup> MEE, Jaramana: The Damascus suburb targeted by Israel, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>374</sup> New Lines Magazine, Syria’s Druze Grapple with Israel and Militancy, 6 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>375</sup> NPR, Druze militias are suspicious of Syria’s new leaders – and are ready to go to battle, 12 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>376</sup> New York Times (The), What to Know About Syria’s Minorities and Sectarian Violence, 1 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>377</sup> New Arab (The), Syrian government boosts national unity with ‘Suweida integration deal’, 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>378</sup> New Arab (The), Druze leader dismisses chance of agreement with ‘radical’ Syria government after constitution emerges, 14 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>379</sup> New Arab (The), Syrian government boosts national unity with ‘Suweida integration deal’, 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>380</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #25: 26 May 2025, 23 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>381</sup> France 24, Clashes between Syrian forces and Druze gunmen turn deadly, 1 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>382</sup> MEE, Jaramana: The Damascus suburb targeted by Israel, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>383</sup> France 24, Clashes between Syrian forces and Druze gunmen turn deadly, 1 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>384</sup> AA, Syrian security forces deploy in Jaramana to end ‘chaos’, 3 March 2025, [url](#); Al-Jazeera, Syrian forces deployed in Jaramana to end unrest, 3 March 2025, [url](#)



and nine injured.<sup>385</sup> In response, the new government deployed its forces to the area and pledged to arrest those involved in the attacks and to dismantle illegal checkpoints.<sup>386</sup>

On 29 April 2025, violent clashes broke out in Jaramana<sup>387</sup> and Sahnaya involving Islamist armed groups, government security forces, and Druze fighters.<sup>388</sup> The unrest was reportedly sparked by an audio recording circulated on social media, allegedly featuring a Druze cleric<sup>389</sup> insulting the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>390</sup> The cleric rejected the allegations, with the MoI stating that preliminary findings revealed that he was not the person in the video.<sup>391</sup>

The violence quickly spread to the nearby Sahnaya town<sup>392</sup> and Sweida governorate.<sup>393</sup> A Salafi-Jihadi group affiliated with ISIL reportedly claimed responsibility for attacks on Druze civilians in Sahnaya, while Druze militia leaders accused newly integrated 'extremist individuals' within the MoD and MoI of targeting their community.<sup>394</sup> According to Etana Syria,<sup>395</sup> local Sunni factions involved in the fighting with the Druze militia were from Mleiha, Eastern Ghouta, and Dar'a and received 'tacit support' from the new government.<sup>396</sup>

In response to the clashes, MoD and the General Security Forces deployed their forces to Sahnaya and Ashrafiyah Sahnaya, while Druze militias also mobilised their fighters. According to ISW, government efforts to contain the violence helped to restrain retaliatory killings. It was also reported that some Druze fighters joined the government forces in fighting against Sunni extremists, which, as noted by ISW, reflects 'the complexity of the situation and diversity of the actors involved.' The government made several arrests on 30 April 2025.<sup>397</sup> In the clashes, 134 people were reportedly killed, including 88 Druze fighters, 14 civilians, and 32 members of MoI and MoD and affiliated paramilitary units.<sup>398</sup> Moreover, hundreds of people were displaced from the affected suburbs of Damascus.<sup>399</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> France 24, Clashes between Syrian forces and Druze gunmen turn deadly, 1 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>386</sup> AA, Syrian security forces deploy in Jaramana to end 'chaos', 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>387</sup> Al Mayadeen, Clashes in Syria's Jaramana city leave several killed, injured, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>388</sup> BBC News, Deadly clashes in Syria's Druze areas raise fears of widening unrest, 1 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>389</sup> ISW, Iran Update, April 30, 2025, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>390</sup> ISW, Iran Update, April 30, 2025, 30 April 2025, [url](#); Ghadban, R., Syria's Druze Stand Alone, Diwan, Carnegie Foundation, 14 May 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>391</sup> New York Times (The), What to Know About Syria's Minorities and Sectarian Violence, 1 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>392</sup> Tokmajyan, A., Minority Retort in Syria – The country's Druze community, divided and vulnerable, finds itself in the midst of a regional maelstrom, Diwan, Carnegie Foundation, 9 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>393</sup> Syria Direct, As tensions run high, will Suwayda's security agreement hold?, 7 May 2025, [url](#); Tokmajyan, A., Minority Retort in Syria – The country's Druze community, divided and vulnerable, finds itself in the midst of a regional maelstrom, Diwan, Carnegie Foundation, 9 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>394</sup> ISW, Iran Update, April 30, 2025, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>395</sup> Etana Syria is an independent organisation that provides analysis, data, and mapping of developments in Syria. See, Etana Syria, About us, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>396</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>397</sup> ISW, Iran Update, April 30, 2025, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>398</sup> Kurdistan24, 134 Dead in Aftermath of Sectarian Clashes Between Druze and Syrian Security forces, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>399</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 7 May 2025, [url](#)





On 30 April 2025, under the pretext of protecting of Druze civilians,<sup>400</sup> Israel conducted airstrikes ‘in and around Asrafiyat Sahnaya’.<sup>401</sup> Despite a ceasefire agreement had been already reached between the new government and local leaders in Jaramana and Sahnaya, further Israeli strikes were launched on 2 May 2025<sup>402</sup> near the presidential palace in Damascus<sup>403</sup> and on 3 May 2025 across multiple locations, including Rural Damascus, Dar’a, Latakia, and western Hama.<sup>404</sup>

The new government denied responsibility for the violence attributing it to ‘outlaws’.<sup>405</sup> Simultaneously, anti-Druze sentiment surged on social media,<sup>406</sup> with widespread accusations of their support of Israel and the Assad regime<sup>407</sup> and the ‘calls to massacre them’.<sup>408</sup> The government and media ‘either remained silent or issued weak statements’ against anti-Druze hate speech.<sup>409</sup> Anti-Druze hostility reportedly spread across the country. In Hama, protestors reportedly chanted anti-Druze slogans, while in Homs, a university protest included calls for violence against the Druze, prompting many students to return to Druze-majority areas.<sup>410</sup> Syria Direct reported that Druze students were evacuated from universities in Homs, Damascus, Latakia, and Hama, with thousands returning to Sweida amid fears of further reprisals.<sup>411</sup> In response, Minister of Higher Education Marwan Jamil al-Halabi issued a directive prohibiting ‘sectarian rhetoric’ on university campuses.<sup>412</sup> In mid-May 2025, members of a local armed group linked to Sheikh Hikmat al-Hijri-affiliated Joint Operations Room reportedly intercepted a bus carrying students returning from Sweida to their universities, citing security concerns.<sup>413</sup>

As noted by ISW, the outbreak of anti-Druze violence at the end of April 2025 could deter the Druze – and other minority groups – from disarming and integrating into state institutions, while delayed governmental response to violence might deepen ‘Druze fears about the new government’.<sup>414</sup> According to researcher Rabeh Ghadban, many Druze perceive the clashes not as ‘isolated incidents’, but as a part of broader pattern of sectarian hostilities and ‘a continuation of extremist ideologies’ of Syrian president. He also noted that in the absence of effective state protection, the Druze continued to rely on local militias to patrol streets, resolve

<sup>400</sup> BBC News, Israel says it struck near Syria palace over violence in Druze areas, 3 May 2025, [url](#); BBC News, Deadly clashes in Syria’s Druze areas raise fears of widening unrest, 1 May 2025, [url](#); Tokmajyan, A., Minority Retort in Syria – The country’s Druze community, divided and vulnerable, finds itself in the midst of a regional maelstrom, Diwan, Carnegie Foundation, 9 May 2025, [url](#); Ghadban, R., Syria’s Druze Stand Alone, Diwan, Carnegie Foundation, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>401</sup> BBC News, Deadly clashes in Syria’s Druze areas raise fears of widening unrest, 1 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>402</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>403</sup> Tokmajyan, A., Minority Retort in Syria – The country’s Druze community, divided and vulnerable, finds itself in the midst of a regional maelstrom, Diwan, Carnegie Foundation, 9 May 2025, [url](#); Ghadban, R., Syria’s Druze Stand Alone, Diwan, Carnegie Foundation, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>404</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>405</sup> Ghadban, R., Syria’s Druze Stand Alone, Diwan, Carnegie Foundation, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>406</sup> Diwan, Syria’s Misunderstood Minority Question, Carnegie Endowment, 7 May 2025, [url](#);

Ghadban, R., Syria’s Druze Stand Alone, Diwan, Carnegie Foundation, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>407</sup> Diwan, Syria’s Misunderstood Minority Question, Carnegie Endowment, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>408</sup> Tokmajyan, A., Minority Retort in Syria – The country’s Druze community, divided and vulnerable, finds itself in the midst of a regional maelstrom, Diwan, Carnegie Foundation, 9 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>409</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: The Jaramana & Ashrafiyat Sahnaya crisis, 4 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>410</sup> Ghadban, R., Syria’s Druze Stand Alone, Diwan, Carnegie Foundation, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>411</sup> Syria Direct, University students latest pressure point in Damascus-Suwaida tensions, 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>412</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Hamroon Centre Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>413</sup> Syria Direct, University students latest pressure point in Damascus-Suwaida tensions, 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>414</sup> ISW, Iran Update, April 30, 2025, 30 April 2025, [url](#)



disputes, and repel attacks.<sup>415</sup> At the beginning of May 2025, Etana Syria noted that, Druze factions remained 'on high alert' in Sweida.<sup>416</sup>

At the beginning of May 2025, clashes between the Druze and Bedouin groups were reported in the western countryside of Sweida,<sup>417</sup> as well as in neighbouring Dara'a governorate. Mortar strikes on Haran, Al-Thaala, Rasas, and Ara villages left one civilian dead and eight injured, causing dozens of families, mostly women and children, to flee to safer areas.<sup>418</sup>

### 2.4.5. Christians

Before the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011, Christian communities constituted approximately 10 % of the country's population.<sup>419</sup> The civil war led to widespread displacement and emigration among Christian communities, many of whom moved to Lebanon or the Western countries,<sup>420</sup> particularly to Europe.<sup>421</sup> There is no official data on the current number of Christians remaining in Syria,<sup>422</sup> with some estimates suggesting a decline to 2 %<sup>423</sup> or approximately 300 000.<sup>424</sup>

Syrian Christian denominations comprise several churches, such as Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Armenian Apostolic, Syrian Catholic, Maronite, Protestant, Nestorian, Latin, and Chaldean.<sup>425</sup> Prior to the war, Greek Orthodox Christians and Greek Catholics predominantly resided in and around Damascus as well as in Latakia and its coastal region. Syrian Orthodox Christians were primarily located in the Jazira region, Homs, Aleppo, and Damascus, while Syrian Catholics had small communities, particularly in Aleppo, Hasaka, and Damascus. Armenian Christians of various denominations were largely residing in Aleppo, with some communities found in Damascus and the Jazira region.<sup>426</sup>

After the fall of the Assad government, Christian communities expressed concerns about religious freedom, safety, and the ability to practice their faith openly.<sup>427</sup> Additional concerns have been linked to limited inclusion in shaping the new constitution and potential restrictions on societal freedoms, such as interim government's<sup>428</sup> move to close bars in Damascus<sup>429</sup> in

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<sup>415</sup> Ghadban, R., Syria's Druze Stand Alone, Diwan, Carnegie Foundation, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>416</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>417</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 7 May 2025, [url](#); Asharq Al-Awsat, Clashes Erupt between Local Factions, Armed Tribal Groups in Syria's Suwayda, 6 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>418</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat, Clashes Erupt between Local Factions, Armed Tribal Groups in Syria's Suwayda, 6 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>419</sup> DW, Syrian Christians: Debating the past, worry for the future, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>420</sup> New York Times (The), Ancient Syrian Town Seeks Interfaith Peace After Long War, 14 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>421</sup> Syrian Observer (The), "Muslims Are More Disturbed Than Christians": Rising Fears Among Syrians Over Islamic Evangelism, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>422</sup> DW, Syrian Christians: Debating the past, worry for the future, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>423</sup> Vatican News, Syria: 'The few certainties that existed are now gone', 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>424</sup> Church Times, Christians in Syria remain cautious after overthrow of Assad regime, 10 December 2025, [url](#)

<sup>425</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, Syria, 2 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>426</sup> MRG, Syria, January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>427</sup> Syrian Observer (The), "Muslims Are More Disturbed Than Christians": Rising Fears Among Syrians Over Islamic Evangelism, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>428</sup> NPR, What happened when Syria's conservative new leaders tried to shut 60 Damascus bars, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>429</sup> New York Times (The), Syria's Easter Celebrations Pass Peacefully, in Early Test of New Government, 20 April 2025, [url](#)



March 2025, which was reversed within a week. In the new government, Hind Kabawat, Christian and a woman, was appointed as minister of social affairs and labour.<sup>430</sup>

In December 2024, several incidents involving attacks on Christian symbols were reported.<sup>431</sup> The new government condemned these attacks and attributed them to ‘unknown individuals.’<sup>432</sup> There were no reported incidents of violence during the 2025 Easter celebrations.<sup>433</sup> In Damascus, the government forces reportedly provided security for the festivities.<sup>434</sup> However, as noted by the head of a community committee at the Armenian church to The New York Times, it was unclear whether Christians throughout Syria experienced the same level of freedom to celebrate Easter as those in Damascus, where the new government’s support for Easter celebrations might have been aimed at projecting an image of tolerance to journalists and visitors.<sup>435</sup>

At the end of March 2025, the Syrian Observer reported on increased religious proselytisation in public spaces, often referred to as ‘calls to Islam’. They included posters and street preaching promoting modest dress and broadcasting of religious messages with loudspeakers. Vehicles promoting Islam reportedly toured Christian-majority neighbourhoods of Damascus like Bab Touma, Bab Sharqi, Qassa, and Dweila. Responding to a Christian cleric’s complaint, authorities condemned the actions as ‘unofficial’ and ‘individual’, claiming arrests were made and encouraging further reports – though another car was seen again in Dweilaa some days later.<sup>436</sup>

In interviews to media outlets, various Christian figures highlighted a sense of uncertainty and fear.<sup>437</sup> In March 2025, Syrian Orthodox theologian Assad Elias Kattan noted to Deutsche Welle fears of Islamisation and described the political transition as chaotic and the security situation outside Damascus as ‘not always stable.’<sup>438</sup> The same month, writer and researcher Roger Asfar told the Syrian Observer that the threat to the Christian presence in Syria was increasing under the new government, as Christians faced ‘diminishing freedoms and growing religious and societal pressure’, with no signs of improvement in their situation.<sup>439</sup> As noted by the head of the Armenian church’s executive committee in an interview with the New York

<sup>430</sup> New York Times (The), The Only Female Minister in Syria’s New Government Wants to ‘Get Things Done’, 6 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>431</sup> DW, Syrian Christians: Debating the past, worry for the future, 28 March 2025, [url](#); SNHR, SNHR Condemns the Attack on Hama’s Greek Orthodox Archdiocese by an ‘Armed Group’, and Calls on the Current Transitional Authorities to Ensure Accountability, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>432</sup> DW, Syrian Christians: Debating the past, worry for the future, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>433</sup> New Arab (The), Post-Assad, Syrian Christians embrace Easter celebrations as caution looms over nation’s fragile peace, 18 April 2025, [url](#); New York Times (The), Syria’s Easter Celebrations Pass Peacefully, in Early Test of New Government, 20 April 2025, [url](#); New York Times (The), What to Know About Syria’s Minorities and Sectarian Violence, 1 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>434</sup> DAWN, For Syria’s Christians, The First Easte Since Assad’s Ouster Brought Wary Celebration, 24 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>435</sup> New York Times (The), Syria’s Easter Celebrations Pass Peacefully, in Early Test of New Government, 20 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>436</sup> Syrian Observer (The), “Muslims Are More Disturbed Than Christians”: Rising Fears Among Syrians Over Islamic Evangelism, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>437</sup> DW, Syrian Christians: Debating the past, worry for the future, 28 March 2025, [url](#); New York Times (The), Syria’s Easter Celebrations Pass Peacefully, in Early Test of New Government, 20 April 2025, [url](#); Vatican News, Christian Syrians joyful, cautious about possible end of sanctions, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>438</sup> DW, Syrian Christians: Debating the past, worry for the future, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>439</sup> Syrian Observer (The), “Muslims Are More Disturbed Than Christians”: Rising Fears Among Syrians Over Islamic Evangelism, 24 March 2025, [url](#)





Times, many Armenians were considering leaving Syria due to fear about the future.<sup>440</sup> Similarly, in May 2025, a Catholic priest in Aleppo noted to Vatican News that Christians remained cautious and wished to ensure that the right of every community 'to live in dignity' would be respected.<sup>441</sup>

### **a) Security incidents involving Christians**

In March 2025, Christians were caught in the crossfire during attacks on Alawites in the coastal region. AFP journalists were able to confirm at least seven obituaries shared on social media, including for a man and his son reportedly shot while travelling to Latakia, four family members killed in their home 'in an Alawite-majority neighbourhood of the city', and the father of a priest killed in Baniyas.<sup>442</sup> Following the attacks on Alawites, local fears have reportedly grown due to the new authorities' inability to ensure protection.<sup>443</sup> As noted by several sources, after the attacks, Christians in predominantly Christian areas of Damascus formed volunteer groups to defend their neighbourhoods against looting<sup>444</sup> and to protect Christian religious sites from potential attacks.<sup>445</sup>

In early May 2025, a group of unidentified men attacked an alcohol shop in the predominantly Christian town of Rablah in Al-Qusayr district of Homs, assaulting a young man, looting the shop, and directing insults and threats at the town's Christian residents.<sup>446</sup>

In mid-May 2025, the media outlet Syriac Press reported two incidents concerning Christians in Hama governorate. On 15 May, a car owned by a Christian family was set on fire in Hemto town, with leaflets threatening and insulting Christians left at the scene. Three days later, in the predominantly Christian town of Maharda, northwest of Hemto, an armed group reportedly marched throughout the streets chanting 'Our eternal leader is Prophet Muhammad,' which was interpreted by many Christian residents as a deliberate act of intimidation.<sup>447</sup>

On 22 June 2025, a man allegedly affiliated with ISIL opened fire and detonated an explosive vest during a Sunday service at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Prophet Elias (Mar Elias Church) in Damascus's Dweila neighbourhood,<sup>448</sup> killing 25 and injuring 60 people.<sup>449</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> New York Times (The), Syria's Easter Celebrations Pass Peacefully, in Early Test of New Government, 20 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>441</sup> Vatican News, Christian Syrians joyful, cautious about possible end of sanctions, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>442</sup> France 24, Fear among Syrian Christians after deadly attacks, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>443</sup> DW, Syrian Christians: Debating the past, worry for the future, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>444</sup> Le Monde, In Damascus, volunteers protect Christian neighborhoods, 11 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>445</sup> WFIW Radio, Christian watch group rises up to protect community amid growing violence in Syria, 23 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>446</sup> SOHR, Amid threats to kill Christians – Maked men in military uniform attack alcoholic beverages store in Homs governorate, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>447</sup> Syriac Press, Syria's Christians face rising threats amid sectarian tensions and rising Islamist incidents, 19 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>448</sup> BBC News, Suicide bombing at Damascus church kills 22, Syrian authorities say, 23 June 2025, [url](#) Reuters, Syria's Christians ask 'Why us?' after suicide bombing at Damascus Church, 23 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>449</sup> Reuters, Syria's Christians ask 'Why us?' after suicide bombing at Damascus Church, 23 June 2025, [url](#)





## 2.4.6. Dom

Dom (singular Domari), the Middle East Roma,<sup>450</sup> is a diverse and unrecognised ethnic group in Syria.<sup>451</sup> While the community identifies itself by the names *Dom*, *Dummi*, or *Deman*,<sup>452</sup> other communities in Syria refer to them by various other terms, such as *Nawar*<sup>453</sup> – the most commonly used<sup>454</sup> – as well as *Qurbat*, *Zatt*, and *Ghajar*, all of which are considered derogatory.<sup>455</sup> The Dom speak the Domari language within their communities<sup>456</sup> but are also multilingual,<sup>457</sup> speaking Arabic, Kurdish, or a dialect of Turkish, depending on the region where they live.<sup>458</sup> The exact size of the Dom population in Syria is unknown, as many Dom used to conceal their identity due to discrimination, and official statistics did not record ethnic data.<sup>459</sup> Pre-2011 estimates of the Dom population ranged widely, from 100 000 to 500 000,<sup>460</sup> while a report published in a Syrian newspaper in 2012 gave a much smaller figure of over 60 000.<sup>461</sup>

The Dom in Syria have historically lived in rural areas, outskirts of villages,<sup>462</sup> and impoverished urban neighbourhoods.<sup>463</sup> According to a 2004 source cited by researcher Yeşim Yaprak Yıldız in 2016, Dom communities were mainly located in Aleppo and Damascus, with additional settlements found in Saraqib, Latakia, Hama and Homs.<sup>464</sup> Within Aleppo, the Dom communities have been residing particularly in Hadradiye and Sheikh Maqsoud districts. Some Dom groups have reportedly owned land around Damascus and the Jazira region and lived in villages.<sup>465</sup> Although most Dom in Syria pursue a settled lifestyle, their economic activities often involve short-term special mobility,<sup>466</sup> leading to their description as a semi-

<sup>450</sup> Stoupa, E.-P., The Dom in the Middle East: an ethnic group of wandering, Centre for Mediterranean, Middle East & Islamic Studies, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>451</sup> Kharboutli, M., Eternal Outsiders: Roma in Syria, Wanabqa, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>452</sup> Foggo, H. et al, Dom Migrants from Syria Living at the Bottom: On the Road Amid Poverty and Discrimination, November 2016, [url](#), p. 42

<sup>453</sup> Foggo, H. et al, Dom Migrants from Syria Living at the Bottom: On the Road Amid Poverty and Discrimination, November 2016, [url](#), p. 42; Kharboutli, M., Eternal Outsiders: Roma in Syria, Wanabqa, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>454</sup> Foggo, H. et al, Dom Migrants from Syria Living at the Bottom: On the Road Amid Poverty and Discrimination, November 2016, [url](#), p. 42

<sup>455</sup> Kharboutli, M., Eternal Outsiders: Roma in Syria, Wanabqa, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>456</sup> Yaprak Yıldız, Y., Nowhere to Turn – The Situation of Dom Refugees from Syria in Turkey, September 2015, [url](#), pp. 13-16; Foggo, H. et al, Dom Migrants from Syria Living at the Bottom: On the Road Amid Poverty and Discrimination, November 2016, [url](#), p. 42.

<sup>457</sup> Foggo, H. et al, Dom Migrants from Syria Living at the Bottom: On the Road Amid Poverty and Discrimination, November 2016, [url](#), p. 42.

<sup>458</sup> Yaprak Yıldız, Y., Nowhere to Turn – The Situation of Dom Refugees from Syria in Turkey, September 2015, [url](#), pp. 13-16

<sup>459</sup> Yaprak Yıldız, Y., Nowhere to Turn – The Situation of Dom Refugees from Syria in Turkey, September 2015, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>460</sup> Kharboutli, M., Eternal Outsiders: Roma in Syria, Wanabqa, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>461</sup> Yaprak Yıldız, Y., Nowhere to Turn – The Situation of Dom Refugees from Syria in Turkey, September 2015, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>462</sup> Kharboutli, M., Eternal Outsiders: Roma in Syria, Wanabqa, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>463</sup> Foggo, H. et al, Dom Migrants from Syria Living at the Bottom: On the Road Amid Poverty and Discrimination, November 2016, [url](#), p. 42

<sup>464</sup> Yaprak Yıldız, Y., Nowhere to Turn – The Situation of Dom Refugees from Syria in Turkey, September 2015, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>465</sup> Foggo, H. et al, Dom Migrants from Syria Living at the Bottom: On the Road Amid Poverty and Discrimination, November 2016, [url](#), p. 42

<sup>466</sup> Yaprak Yıldız, Y., Nowhere to Turn – The Situation of Dom Refugees from Syria in Turkey, September 2015, [url](#), p. 16



nomadic population.<sup>467</sup> Since the outbreak of the war in 2011, many Dom in Syria had to cease nomadic way of life.<sup>468</sup>

In Syria, the Dom have been engaged in various professions, including playing musical instruments, fortune telling,<sup>469</sup> iron and tin smithing,<sup>470</sup> informal dentistry, and waste collection and sorting.<sup>471</sup> However, the largest number of Dom have been employed as seasonal agricultural labourers or daily workers in construction and transport.<sup>472</sup> Some Domari tribes in Syria have reportedly worked in manufacturing of food equipment and household utensils. Other communities in Syria frequently associate Dom with socially marginalised jobs, such as working in nightclubs and festivals, palm reading, and begging.<sup>473</sup>

The sources noted that the Dom in Syria have faced social and economic marginalisation<sup>474</sup> and discrimination.<sup>475</sup> As reported in 2021, to avoid discriminatory treatment, they often identified themselves as Turkmen, Kurdish, or Arabs.<sup>476</sup>

As reported by the NGO Kırkayak Kültür, based in Gaziantep in Türkiye,<sup>477</sup> many Dom in Syria, particularly those leading settled lives, were ‘documented as Syrian citizens’ and generally did not face obstacles in obtaining citizenship certificates, with their children having access to primary education. However, Dom leading an ‘informal life’ often had no documentation, such as identity cards, passports, and birth certificates. According to the same source, some Dom avoided population registers and official documentation either to evade compulsory military service or due to a traditional worldview without the modern concept of borders between countries.<sup>478</sup> Similarly, a 2016 study noted that the Dom with migratory and nomadic lifestyles had no Syrian citizenship.<sup>479</sup> A study from 2021 also noted that ‘although no official statistics exist, many have never been able to acquire Syrian nationality’.<sup>480</sup>

Following the outbreak of the Syrian war in 2011, the Dom ‘were among the first to be displaced due to their informal housing, lack of documentation, and precarious livelihoods.’

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<sup>467</sup> Foggo, H. et al, Dom Migrants from Syria Living at the Bottom: On the Road Amid Poverty and Discrimination, November 2016, [url](#), p. 42

<sup>468</sup> Kharboutli, M., Eternal Outsiders: Roma in Syria, Wanabqa, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>469</sup> Foggo, H. et al, Dom Migrants from Syria Living at the Bottom: On the Road Amid Poverty and Discrimination, November 2016, [url](#), p. 42; Kharboutli, M., Eternal Outsiders: Roma in Syria, Wanabqa, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>470</sup> Foggo, H. et al, Dom Migrants from Syria Living at the Bottom: On the Road Amid Poverty and Discrimination, November 2016, [url](#), p. 42

<sup>471</sup> Foggo, H. et al, Dom Migrants from Syria Living at the Bottom: On the Road Amid Poverty and Discrimination, November 2016, [url](#), p. 42; Kharboutli, M., Eternal Outsiders: Roma in Syria, Wanabqa, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>472</sup> Foggo, H. et al, Dom Migrants from Syria Living at the Bottom: On the Road Amid Poverty and Discrimination, November 2016, [url](#), p. 42

<sup>473</sup> Kharboutli, M., Eternal Outsiders: Roma in Syria, Wanabqa, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>474</sup> Yaprak Yıldız, Y., Nowhere to Turn – The Situation of Dom Refugees from Syria in Turkey, September 2015, [url](#), pp. 13-16; Diab, J.S and Saban, A., Nomads of the Void: Unpacking the Enigmatic Lives and Survival of Syrian Dom Refugee Women in North Lebanon, Journal on Migration and Human Security, 4 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>475</sup> Foggo, H. et al, Dom Migrants from Syria Living at the Bottom: On the Road Amid Poverty and Discrimination, November 2016, [url](#), p. 42; Albrazi, Z., Report on Citizenship Law: Syria, EUI, July 2021, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>476</sup> Edgcumbe, S., Roma in Iraq and Syria – On the Margins of IDP Protection, Researching Internal Displacement, Working Paper No. 9, December 2021, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>477</sup> Kırkayak Kültür, Who We Are?, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>478</sup> Kırkayak Kültür, Middle East Gypsies, Dom Research Workshop, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>479</sup> Foggo, H. et al, Dom Migrants from Syria Living at the Bottom: On the Road Amid Poverty and Discrimination, November 2016, [url](#), p. 42

<sup>480</sup> Albrazi, Z., Report on Citizenship Law: Syria, EUI, July 2021, [url](#), p. 6





Those who fled to Lebanon ‘settled in makeshift camps along the northern border and in the Beqaa Valley, often among other Syrian refugees.’ However, because of their unclear legal status and absence of registration, they remained excluded from both national support programs and international protection mechanisms.<sup>481</sup> Furthermore, Syrian Dom women refugees in Lebanon reportedly faced particularly severe challenges due to traditional gender roles that marginalise them within their own communities.<sup>482</sup>

No additional information was found regarding the treatment of Dom by state and non-state actors within the time constraints of this report.

### 2.4.7. Palestinians

In 2024, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) estimated the number of Palestine refugees in Syria at 438 000. Around 40 % of them were estimated to live in ‘protracted internal displacement’, facing deteriorating socio-economic conditions.<sup>483</sup> Palestine refugees are spread across 12 refugee camps and ‘various other gatherings’ throughout the country.<sup>484</sup>

According to UNRWA, 89 % of Palestinian refugees in Syria live below the poverty line, defined as living on 2.15 US dollars or less per day.<sup>485</sup> Food insecurity has reportedly increased, affecting 62 % of Palestine refugees in Syria as of March 2024, up from 46 % in September 2022,<sup>486</sup> despite allocating most of their total expenditure to food.<sup>487</sup> As noted by UNOCHA, malnutrition particularly affected children, pregnant women, and the elderly.<sup>488</sup>

As noted by UNOCHA, 25 % of households of Palestine refugees are female-headed, while 30 % of Palestine refugees ‘are classified as extremely vulnerable.’ With only 33 % of adults employed, child labour and early marriage are increasingly affecting children and women. Furthermore, prolonged displacement has also deepened trauma and mental health concerns, yet access to healthcare and education remains limited.<sup>489</sup> Almost 96 % of Palestine refugees in Syria rely on UNRWA assistance, particularly cash support to cover basic needs and access to medical care.<sup>490</sup>

<sup>481</sup> Saban, A., Invisible Struggles: Gender-Based Violence and the Displaced Dom Community in Lebanon, 17 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>482</sup> Diab, J.S and Saban, A., Nomads of the Void: Unpacking the Enigmatic Lives and Survival of Syrian Dom Refugee Women in North Lebanon, Journal on Migration and Human Security, 4 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>483</sup> UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Emergency Appeal 2024, Progress Report for the reporting period 1 January – 30 June 2024, 2024, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>484</sup> United Nations Syrian Arab Republic, Syria – Common Country Analysis, 2024 Update, 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 34

<sup>485</sup> United Nations Syrian Arab Republic, Syria – Common Country Analysis, 2024 Update, 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 34

<sup>486</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities, Syrian Arab Republic, January – June 2025, March 2025, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>487</sup> United Nations Syrian Arab Republic, Syria – Common Country Analysis, 2024 Update, 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 34; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities, Syrian Arab Republic, January – June 2025, March 2025, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>488</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities, Syrian Arab Republic, January – June 2025, March 2025, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>489</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities, Syrian Arab Republic, January – June 2025, March 2025, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>490</sup> UNRWA, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan Emergency Appeal 2024 Progress Report, 5 November 2024, [url](#)





As of early 2025, three Palestine refugee camps in Syria – Yarmouk, Ein al Tal, and Dera'a – remain largely destroyed,<sup>491</sup> despite ongoing efforts to rehabilitate them.<sup>492</sup> In 2024, UNRWA recorded the return of 2 308 Palestine refugees, most of whom came from Lebanon.<sup>493</sup> In March 2025, UNOCHA reported that thousands of displaced Palestine refugees had returned to Syria, primarily from Lebanon. Additionally, 1 010 internally displaced Palestine refugee families, amounting to 3 406 individuals, 'originally from Idlib governorate, have returned to various camps across Syria.'<sup>494</sup>

Palestinian refugee families returning to Syria face 'significant challenges', including limited access to essential services and economic hardship. They rely on UNRWA emergency cash assistance to cover basic needs. In addition to cash support, there is a critical need for non-food items and shelter repair,<sup>495</sup> with efforts being constrained by ongoing funding shortages.<sup>496</sup>

Return movements to Yarmouk, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Syria,<sup>497</sup> began in late 2020, with the population of the camp estimated at 15 300 people (4 500 families), 80 % of whom were Palestine refugees, as of February 2025.<sup>498</sup> A UN assessment conducted between April 2024 to June 2024 found that 72 % of homes of the camp were damaged in the war.<sup>499</sup> In addition to the destruction and damage of the camp's buildings,<sup>500</sup> returnees also reported a lack of electricity, water, and basic services.<sup>501</sup>

Under the Assad government, Palestinian factions maintained a decades-long presence in Syria,<sup>502</sup> operating parallel structures that provided community services such as education, public libraries, healthcare, and day-care and also served as means of recruitment of new members and fighters.<sup>503</sup> After taking control in Syria, HTS prohibited these factions from possessing weapons and running training camps and military headquarters.<sup>504</sup> The new authorities subsequently closed and confiscated the offices, weapons, and military camps of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), Fatah al-Intifada, and al-Sa'iqa.<sup>505</sup>

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<sup>491</sup> United Nations Syrian Arab Republic, Syria – Common Country Analysis, 2024 Update, 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 34; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities, Syrian Arab Republic, January – June 2025, March 2025, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>492</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities, Syrian Arab Republic, January – June 2025, March 2025, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>493</sup> UNRWA, UNRWA in Syria: Factsheet, March 2025, [url](#), p.1

<sup>494</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities, Syrian Arab Republic, January – June 2025, March 2025, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>495</sup> UNRWA, UNRWA in Syria: Factsheet, March 2025, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities, Syrian Arab Republic, January – June 2025, March 2025, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>496</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities, Syrian Arab Republic, January – June 2025, March 2025, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>497</sup> UNRWA, Yarmouk (Unofficial Camp), n.d., [url](#); UNRWA, Rebuilding Lives and Infrastructure: Yarmouk Camp, Syria, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>498</sup> UNRWA, Yarmouk (Unofficial Camp), n.d., [url](#)

<sup>499</sup> UNRWA, Rebuilding Lives and Infrastructure: Yarmouk Camp, Syria, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>500</sup> Enab Baladi, Yarmok Camp: Residents return to a devastated area lacking services, 17 April 2025, [url](#); New Lines Magazine, Amid the Ghosts of a Refugee Camp, 20 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>501</sup> Enab Baladi, Yarmok Camp: Residents return to a devastated area lacking services, 17 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>502</sup> Cradle (The), THS officials order Palestinian resistance factions to disarm, close bases in Syria: Report, 13 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>503</sup> Arab Center Washington DC, A New Opportunity for Palestinians in Syria, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>504</sup> Cradle (The), THS officials order Palestinian resistance factions to disarm, close bases in Syria: Report, 13 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>505</sup> ACW, A New Opportunity for Palestinians in Syria, 21 March 2025, [url](#)



At the end of March 2025, HTS permitted the offices of Islamic Jihad, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), Fatah, and Hamas to stay open, provided they ‘operate within the permissible limits’ imposed by the new government.<sup>506</sup> At the end of May 2025, AFP reported that most of the leadership of Tehran-backed Palestinian factions had left Damascus under pressure from the new government.<sup>507</sup>

No additional information was found regarding the treatment of Palestinians by state and non-state actors within the time constraints of this report.

## 2.5. LGBTIQ persons

For detailed information on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTIQ) persons in Syria, see section 1.3.7. LGBTIQ persons of the [EUAA COI Report Syria: Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#).

The Guardians of Equality Movement (GEM), the first Syrian LGBTIQ organisation,<sup>508</sup> published a report in April 2025 documenting ‘waves of violence’ in the first two months of 2025 against several Syrian transgender women in multiple cities documented by videos showing ‘armed individuals arresting, beating, and threatening them with death and mutilation’.<sup>509</sup> The Freedom in the World 2025 report published in February 2025, indicated that ‘individuals suspected of same-sex relations are at risk of execution by extremist groups’.<sup>510</sup> Another source noted that severe violations occurred ‘without any official investigation’, accountability or legal response with the judiciary remaining indifferent.<sup>511</sup> According to the GPC ‘LGBTQ+ individuals are at increasing risk of severe discrimination, legal persecution, and threats of violence’.<sup>512</sup>

Additional information on LGBTIQ persons could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within the time constraints of this report.

## 2.6. Women

For detailed information on women in Syria, see section 1.3.5. Women of the [EUAA COI Report Syria: Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#).

<sup>506</sup> ACW, A New Opportunity for Palestinians in Syria, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>507</sup> France 24, Palestinian faction chiefs quit Damascus amid pressure : faction sources, 23 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>508</sup> GEM, Who We Are?, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>509</sup> GEM, LGBTQIA+ Individuals In Syria After The Fall Of The Assad Regime, 19 April 2025, [url](#), p.2; Worldcrunch, As Syria Faces New Divides, LGBTQ+ Hate Remains The Most Reliable Consensus, 22 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>510</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Syria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>511</sup> Worldcrunch, As Syria Faces New Divides, LGBTQ+ Hate Remains The Most Reliable Consensus, 22 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>512</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 5



### (a) General overview of violations against women

Due to the security situation in Syria, women's mobility was frequently restricted and a 'rising' number of arbitrary detentions was reported by the International Crisis Group.<sup>513</sup> During the reporting period, women were victims of arbitrary arrests in areas controlled by the interim government and the SDF<sup>514</sup>, and were killed or injured as a result of ongoing confrontations or due to war remnants.<sup>515</sup>

The International Crisis Group noted a growing number of incidents involving the harassment of women. In some instances, restrictive measures, such as the enforcement of gender segregation in public and professional settings, were introduced on the initiative of local authorities. It was noted that in most cases, these measures were subsequently reversed following public backlash.<sup>516</sup> Instances of physical assault against women were documented by the SNHR during some of the mass raids carried out by the SDF in SDF-controlled areas, particularly in northeastern Syria.<sup>517</sup>

The conflict severely disrupted access to essential services for women in areas such as Latakia and Tartous,<sup>518</sup> where all health facilities providing sexual and reproductive health had to be suspended due to the instability.<sup>519</sup> UNOCHA indicated that most women in the newly displaced and temporary shelters were facing significant breastfeeding and child feeding difficulties, including lack of shelter, poor hygiene and sanitation.<sup>520</sup> Domestic violence and sexual exploitation were reportedly on the rise according to the GPC, particularly in IDP camps and shelters where women and girls faced increased risks of survival sex and forced marriage.<sup>521</sup>

The SOHR reported in April 2025 that a 14-year-old girl was kidnapped outside her educational institute in Latakia city and later found abandoned in the forest. In another incident, a young woman was kidnapped in Tartous countryside while returning home from work.<sup>522</sup> SOHR also reported that, since the beginning of 2025, 50 Alawite women have gone missing across several provinces, including Homs, Tartous, Latakia, and Ham.<sup>523</sup> The Beirut-based media outlet Daraj documented multiple patterns in the abduction cases, noting that some girls were kidnapped in broad daylight and non-isolated areas, with some subsequently released, and others contacting their families before disappearing again. In other cases, families were allegedly informed that their daughters had been married or taken out of Syria. Daraj further reported that survivors and families of missing women often remain silent due to

<sup>513</sup> International Crisis Group, A helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#), p.3

<sup>514</sup> SNHR, Monthly report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 4 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>515</sup> SOHR, Old ordinance | One child dies and five injured in landmine explosion eastern of Deir Ezzor, 28 May 2025, [url](#); SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Monthly Report for Victims of Extrajudicial Killing in Syria, 1 June 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Monthly Report for Victims of Extrajudicial Killing in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>516</sup> International Crisis Group, A helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#), p.3

<sup>517</sup> SNHR, SNHR's Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 4 June 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>518</sup> GCHR, Syria, End of an Era: From the Fall of Brutality to the Rise of Uncertainty, 21 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>519</sup> UNFPA, Flash Update #1, 14 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>520</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#), p. 36

<sup>521</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>522</sup> SOHR, Security chaos | Girl evades being kidnapped by a gang in Latakia, 20 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>523</sup> SOHR, Absence of law deterrence | 50 Alawite women missing since beginning of 2025, 18 April 2025, [url](#)



fear of social stigma and reprisals, including direct threats from perpetrators who reportedly monitor social media.<sup>524</sup> The Cradle outlet noted that many kidnapped victims come from Druze, Christian, and Alawite communities.<sup>525</sup>

According to UNOCHA, 8.3 million women were in need of humanitarian assistance and less likely to safely access humanitarian assistance compared to men and boys.<sup>526</sup> Intrahousehold food allocation practices, often prioritising adult males, were reported as well, leaving women and children with limited access to nutritious food.<sup>527</sup> Displaced women, especially those without family support were increasingly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.<sup>528</sup> Female-headed households faced significant challenges in meeting basic needs, including economic exclusion and social stigma, noting that many lacked documentation and remained vulnerable to sexual exploitation with humanitarian aid often difficult to access. Widows and divorced women were particularly vulnerable to housing, land and property (HLP) issues, which further contributed to psychosocial distress and heightened risks of GBV.<sup>529</sup>

According to a report by ACAPS drawing on data collected between November 2024 and March 2025, technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) was a widespread and rapidly escalating concern across Northwest Syria (NWS).<sup>530</sup> TFGBV<sup>531</sup> includes behaviours such as stalking, sexual harassment and exploitation which are carried out using computer and mobile technology.<sup>532</sup> Motivations behind TFGBV included financial and sexual exploitation, revenge, coercion, defamation or reputational harm, or simply to threaten, cause harm to, or harass the targeted individual. TFGBV frequently escalated from digital threats to offline consequences, including physical and sexual violence, so called 'honour killings', and forced marriage.<sup>533</sup>

### **(b) Sexual and gender-based violence**

Gender-based violence (GBV) continued to pose a threat to women and girls in Syria.<sup>534</sup> The risk of exposure to violence for women had increased, particularly in areas experiencing a deterioration in the security situation.<sup>535</sup>

According to a UNOCHA analysis conducted at the end of 2024, 93 % of the approximately 8.5 million people in need of GBV assistance are women and girls. Intimate partner violence,

<sup>524</sup> Daraj, Who Is Kidnapping Syrian Alawite Women in Broad Daylight?, 18 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>525</sup> Cradle (The), 'No safe streets': Lawlessness takes hold of Syria under HTS-led government, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>526</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#), p.14

<sup>527</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#), p.32

<sup>528</sup> GCHR, Syria, End of an Era: From the Fall of Brutality to the Rise of Uncertainty, 21 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>529</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 5, 7

<sup>530</sup> ACAPS, Technology-facilitated gender-based violence in Northwest Syria, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>531</sup> Technology-facilitated gender-based violence, or TFGBV, is an act of violence perpetrated by one or more individuals that is committed, assisted, aggravated and amplified in part or fully by the use of information and communication technologies or digital media, against a person on the basis of their gender. UNFPA, What is technology-facilitated gender-based violence?, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>532</sup> ICRW, Tech-facilitated Gender-based Violence: Overview, 2019, [url](#)

<sup>533</sup> ACAPS, Technology-facilitated gender-based violence in Northwest Syria, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>534</sup> Security Council Report, Syria, June 2025 Monthly Forecast, 1 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>535</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2



domestic violence, economic and emotional violence as well as sexual violence, including rape and sexual harassment, remained widespread concerns. The analysis further noted risks of sexual exploitation, including via online platforms, linked to Syria's deteriorating economic conditions and the use of social media.<sup>536</sup> Social stigma and a lack of accessible protections services were identified as key barriers contributing to the persistent underreporting by the June 2025 UN Security Council monthly forecast. It was noted that funding constraints have led to the closure of 20 safe spaces for women and girls since January 2025, severely reducing access to support services for GBV survivors.<sup>537</sup> Additionally, the termination of US funding was estimated to affect 265 000 people, who were expected to lose access to essential reproductive health services, including maternal healthcare and GBV response services.<sup>538</sup>

A UNOCHA report from March 2025 emphasised that the suspension or closure of Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS) and of other service delivery points has further restricted the availability of and accessibility to lifesaving GBV services, leaving survivors with reduced opportunities to disclose violence and seek support.<sup>539</sup> Distribution areas and humanitarian service delivery points were identified by communities and GBV experts as locations where GBV occurred. Although GBV was reported both inside and outside camps, overcrowded settings were found to increase the risk of exposure to GBV due to limited mitigation measures, including poor lighting, absence of gender separation and absence of trained female staff during distribution.<sup>540</sup>

## 2.7. Children

For detailed information on children in Syria, see section 1.3.6. Children of the [EUAA COI Report Syria: Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#).

### (a) Impact of violence on children

According to UNICEF, more than 500 000 children under five were suffering from life-threatening malnutrition, while 2 million were on the verge of becoming malnourished. Also, at least 5 million children remained at risk from explosive remnants of war, with nearly 300 000 deadly devices scattered across the country.<sup>541</sup> By 26 May 2025 at least 1 023 children and adults had been killed and injured by mines and other explosives remnants since December 2024.<sup>542</sup> Additionally, Save the Children calculated that between December 2024 and February 2025, an average of two children a day have been killed or injured by landmine and

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<sup>536</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#), p.22

<sup>537</sup> UN Security Council, Syria, June 2025 Monthly Forecast, 1 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>538</sup> UNFPA, Syria situation report #2, 10 June 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>539</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to June 2025, 28 March 2025, [url](#), p.25

<sup>540</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#) p.22

<sup>541</sup> UNICEF, As Syria's children step out of the shadows of war, securing their future is more critical than ever, 25 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>542</sup> Halo Trust (The), Syria Deaths and injuries in Syria since fall of the Assad regime, n.d., [url](#)



ERWs, accounting for nearly one in three of these casualties.<sup>543</sup> Since early 2025 to the end of May 2025, SOHR documented the death of 425 civilians, including 107 children, and the injury of 472 others, including 205 children, by explosions of war remnants.<sup>544</sup>

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) indicated that between 40 % and 50 % of children aged 6 to 15 did not attend school.<sup>545</sup> More than 40 % of the nearly 20 000 schools in the country remained closed, leaving over 2.4 million children out of classrooms and over one million at risk of dropping out.<sup>546</sup> The dire humanitarian situation heightened the risk of existing negative coping mechanisms such as child labour and early marriage<sup>547</sup> as families struggled to meet basic needs.<sup>548</sup>

### **(b) Forced recruitment by armed groups**

SNHR documented in June 2025 continued cases of children being detained for transfer to Syrian Democratic Forces training camps without informing their families, indicating ‘a pattern of forced child recruitment’.<sup>549</sup> SJAC verified 49 cases of child recruitment between April 2024 and April 2025, indicating an increase compared to the same period in 2024. Nearly 69 % of those recruited were under 15 years old at the time of recruitment. Most cases occurred in Aleppo governorate (28 cases or 57 %), followed by Hasaka (15 cases or 31 %) and Raqqa (6 cases or 12 %), with all incidents attributed to Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM). Recruited children were often transferred to training camps in other regions, hindering their return.<sup>550</sup> According to ACLED data, between early March and early May 2025, at least 11 girls and young women were reportedly abducted in multiple incidents across northeastern and northern Syria, primarily for conscription, with most incidents attributed to PKK-affiliated groups and the YPG. In a separate incident reported around 29 April 2025, young women and men from Alawite and Druze communities were reportedly recruited in five SDF-affiliated camps in Raqqa under the pretext of employment. They were instead abducted and forcibly recruited into ideological and military training camps.<sup>551</sup>

### **(c) Access to education**

UNOCHA indicated that 2.45 million children remained out of school, with over a million at risk of dropping out, leaving them ‘at higher risk of child protection issues, such as child marriage

<sup>543</sup> Save the Children, Syria: More than 180 children killed or injured by explosive remnants of war in three months as thousands return home, 6 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>544</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance | One child dies and five injured in landmine explosion eastern of Deir Ezzor, 28 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>545</sup> UNDP, The impact of the conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#), p.35

<sup>546</sup> UNICEF, As Syria’s children step out of the shadows of war, securing their future is more critical than ever, 25 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>547</sup> UNICEF, As Syria’s children step out of the shadows of war, securing their future is more critical than ever, 25 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>548</sup> NRC, Beyond return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p.9

<sup>549</sup> SNHR, SNHR’s Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 4 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>550</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, Child Recruitment Practices Continue in Syria Before and After the Fall of Assad, 5 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>551</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)





and child labour'.<sup>552</sup> Damaged infrastructure and displacement severely disrupted access to education.<sup>553</sup> Over half of Syria's education and healthcare facilities were no longer functional, while those still operating faced acute funding shortages.<sup>554</sup> School infrastructure remained critically insufficient for local communities, with overcrowded classrooms, poor sanitation and unsafe learning environments discouraging school attendance. Increasing dropout rates among returnee students were reported. They also faced educational challenges such as curriculum gaps, language barriers and integration challenges, particularly affecting girls and children with disabilities.<sup>555</sup>

A shortage of educational staff was reported.<sup>556</sup> Teachers worked under precarious conditions, often going unpaid for months, with an average monthly salary of USD 70 when paid.<sup>557</sup> This resulted in high turnover rates that compromised the quality of education, which was further undermined by shortages of teaching materials.<sup>558</sup> Other sources indicated that experienced teachers in Syria earned approximately 400 000 SPD (around USD 40), while inexperienced teachers earned about 300 000 SPD (around USD 30).<sup>559</sup> An article by Enab Baladi in March 2025 also noted that schools were affected by a shortage of qualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms and lack of teaching aids. These conditions had led some parents to enrol their children in private schools, despite the high tuition fees, reportedly around 10 million SYP (approximately USD 1 000) per year.<sup>560</sup> The GPC indicated that access to education remained limited in war-damaged areas.<sup>561</sup>

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<sup>552</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#), p.30

<sup>553</sup> NRC, Beyond return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p.7

<sup>554</sup> UNDP, The impact of the conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#), p.9

<sup>555</sup> NRC, Beyond return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p.7

<sup>556</sup> Enab Baladi, Damascus schools: High costs and favouritism, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>557</sup> NRC, Beyond return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p. 2, 8

<sup>558</sup> NRC, Beyond return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p. 2, 8

<sup>559</sup> Enab Baladi, Damascus schools: High costs and favouritism, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>560</sup> Enab Baladi, Damascus schools: High costs and favouritism, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>561</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 5





### 3. Socio-economic situation with a focus on Damascus city

#### 3.1. Economic situation overview

The US sanctions on Syria, progressively isolating the country from the international trade and financial systems since the beginning of the conflict,<sup>562</sup> were lifted in May 2025.<sup>563</sup> In the same month, the EU lifted its sanctions<sup>564</sup> and Syria's arrears to the World Bank were cleared, with financial backing from Saudi Arabia and the State of Qatar.<sup>565</sup>

Despite these developments, Syria continued to face an economic contraction rooted in years of conflict, reduced agricultural production<sup>566</sup> and underfunded humanitarian assistance.<sup>567</sup> The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was projected to contract by an additional 1 % in 2025, following declines of 1.5 % in 2024<sup>568</sup> and 1.2 % in 2023.<sup>569</sup> External debt remained significant in proportion to the country's limited repayment capacity. Estimates from the new government placed Syria's total external debt between USD 20 billion and USD 23 billion.<sup>570</sup> However, the full extent of the Syria's debt was difficult to assess due to the co-existence of recorded and undisclosed financial support over time, with estimates that could reach USD 50 billion.<sup>571</sup>

In April 2025, the World Food Programme (WFP) reported that cash liquidity remained limited, with continued restrictions on bank withdrawals and disruptions to online payment systems.<sup>572</sup> While some electronic payments had resumed, transactions were subject to a daily cap of 1 million Syrian pounds (SYP).<sup>573</sup> Additional reporting indicated that both public and private banks have imposed strict daily withdrawal limits not exceeding 200 000 Syrian pounds (equivalent to about USD 20), with higher caps up to 500 000 pounds in limited circumstances.<sup>574</sup> Some banks resumed currency exchange from US dollars (USD) to SYP at the official exchange rate of SYP 12 060 per USD, whereas exchange companies continued to operate based on the parallel market rate, which depreciated from SYP 10 112 per USD to SYP 11 084 per USD between March and April 2025.<sup>575</sup> Following the change in government

<sup>562</sup> ODI, Lifting sanctions on Syria: a bumpy path, 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>563</sup> Time (The), Breaking Down Trump's Plan to Lift U.S. Sanctions on Syria, 14 May 2025, [url](#); OFAC, Treasury Issues Immediate Sanctions Relief for Syria, 23 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>564</sup> Council of the EU, Syria: Council statement on the lifting of EU economic sanctions, 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>565</sup> World Bank, Syria's Arrears to the World Bank Group Cleared, 16 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>566</sup> Alestiklal, After 14 Years of Decline: Syria Launches New Plan to Revitalize its Agriculture Sector, 1 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>567</sup> IRC, Syria: The IRC urges increased support as Brussels Conference fails to close humanitarian funding gap, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>568</sup> World Bank, Syrian Arab Republic Poverty and Equity Brief: April 2025, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>569</sup> World Bank, Syria: Growth Contraction Deepens and the Welfare of Syrian Households Deteriorates, 24 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>570</sup> PIIE, Syria needs a debt restructuring, but that will be difficult, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>571</sup> Karam Shaar Advisory Limited, Syria in Figures, February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>572</sup> WFP, Monthly Market Price Bulletin Syria, April 2025, issue 124, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>573</sup> WFP, Monthly Market Price Bulletin Syria, April 2025, issue 124, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>574</sup> Strategiecs, Rebuilding the Syrian Economy After a 14-Year Crisis, 4 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>575</sup> WFP, Monthly Market Price Bulletin Syria, April 2025, issue 124, [url](#), p. 1



leadership in December 2024, the central bank pledged to adopt a unified official exchange rate for the SYP.<sup>576</sup>

According to the UNOCHA, household expenditures continued to exceed income levels, including in households with multiple earners. The depreciation of both SYP and Turkish lira, combined with persistent inflation, contributed to significantly increase the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) and Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB).<sup>577</sup> This indicator reflected the cost of living that rose by 21 % in 2024 and more than tripled in the last 2 years.<sup>578</sup> In Hasaka, Raqqa, Deir Ez-Zor governorates and Manbij subdistrict, it was reported that a worker would require the equivalent of 60 days' wages to afford the SMEB.<sup>579</sup> A WFP report in April 2025 noted a spike in bakery bread prices following reductions in subsidies.<sup>580</sup> In the same month, the monthly minimum wage of SYP 278 910 covered only 13 % of the MEB.<sup>581</sup> The national daily wage for unskilled labour reached an average of around 43 000 SYP per day<sup>582</sup> and an experienced teacher earned 400 000 SYP (equivalent to USD 40), while an inexperienced teacher earned 300 000 SYP (equivalent to USD 30).<sup>583</sup> Regional disparities persisted.<sup>584</sup>

At the end of March, estimates by the Kassioune newspaper<sup>585</sup> indicated that the minimum monthly cost of living for a family of five in Damascus had reached SYP 8 million (equivalent to USD 666).<sup>586</sup> According to a socio-economic review commissioned in 2024 by the Country of Origin Information Unit of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, Damascus' overall socio-economic situation was just above the threshold of sustainability.<sup>587</sup>

Fuel prices showed slight declines across both the formal and informal markets.<sup>588</sup> Regionally, diesel prices increased by 6.4 % in Damascus but declined in Aleppo and Hama. Gasoline prices increased moderately in Damascus (4.6 %) and fell in Hama. Domestic gas prices registered a significant drop—by 17.9 % in Hama and 11 % in Damascus—while remaining stable in Idlib.<sup>589</sup>

<sup>576</sup> Reuters, Explainer: Syria's economy: The devastating impact of war and sanctions, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>577</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#), p. 28

<sup>578</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>579</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#), p. 28

<sup>580</sup> WFP, Monthly Market Price Bulletin Syria, April 2025, issue 124, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>581</sup> WFP, Monthly Market Price Bulletin Syria, April 2025, issue 124, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>582</sup> WFP, Monthly Market Price Bulletin Syria, April 2025, issue 124, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>583</sup> Enab Baladi, Damascus schools: High costs and favoritism, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>584</sup> WFP, Monthly Market Price Bulletin Syria, April 2025, issue 124, [url](#), pp. 4, 5

<sup>585</sup> Kassioune, مؤشر قاسيون: انخفاض القدرة الشرائية للأسرة السورية يتتبع انخفاض تكاليف المعيشة, 30 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>586</sup> Daher, J., , Challenges for Syria's Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Process, ISPI, 18 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>587</sup> Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration, Dossier socio-economic review 2024, n.d., [url](#), pp. 8, 12, 13. To allow an overall quantification and comparability of the general economic situation of households in the surveyed areas a composite indicator for the socio-economic surveys was developed. The index is composed of the following dimensions: housing, food and water, basic consumer goods, health services, and labour market and allows a categorization of the survey findings, ranging from sustainable to not sustainable.

<sup>588</sup> Logistics Cluster, Syria Logistics Cluster, Meeting Minutes, Damascus, 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>589</sup> Harmoon Center, Harmoon Centre Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, [url](#)



Three major power generation stations accounting for about 18.25 % of the total national electricity production - Aleppo Thermal Station, the Zayzoun Station in Idlib, and the al-Taim Station in Deir Ezzor - have been destroyed at different times during the conflict.<sup>590</sup> Both returnees and host communities indicated access to electricity as a critical challenge, according to a report by the Norwegian Refugee Council.<sup>591</sup> 81 % of electrical grids in the country were partially damaged, severely affecting economic activities.<sup>592</sup> UNOCHA reported that electricity access remained uneven: while some households depended on the main grid or solar power, 1 in 20 remained entirely without electricity. In Manbij and Kobani alone, over 413 000 people have lost access to electricity due to damage to the Tishreen Dam.<sup>593</sup> In southern and central Syria, the national electricity network remained the main power source for most residents, with the electricity infrastructure being severely affected by the conflict and a prolonged lack of maintenance, repairs, and upgrades. In Homs and Hama, some communities reportedly received electricity for only 45 to 60 minutes every eight hours. Limited access to electricity has influenced some families' decisions to return to Idlib after initially attempting to resettle in southern areas. The lack of reliable electricity also impacted industrial and urban livelihoods, with high generator and electricity costs in industrial zones contributing to increased consumer prices for basic goods.<sup>594</sup> In the governorates of Hasaka, Raqqqa, and Deir Ez-Zor and parts of Aleppo, solar-powered households received an average of 13.6 hours of electricity per day, compared to 7.3 hours for households relying on the public grid.<sup>595</sup>

A UNDP report highlighted that energy production in the country has decreased by 80 %, and 70 % of electricity generation stations have been damaged, leading to a 75 % drop in the national grid's capacity.<sup>596</sup> The transitional government implemented several measures to stimulate economic recovery. In April 2025, according to WFP, it implemented a 21 % reduction in electricity prices for the industrial and agricultural sectors, reopened the Baniyas Oil Refinery, resumed phosphate exports and signed a 30-year contract with a French company to renovate and operate the Latakia port.<sup>597</sup>

## 3.2. Humanitarian situation and assistance

Despite a cessation of hostilities in several areas of the country, humanitarian needs remained critical.<sup>598</sup> In February 2025, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Mswaya said Syria was still struggling with a 'massive humanitarian crisis' affecting more than 70 % of its population.<sup>599</sup> The lack of UN funding, which by April 2025 had covered less than

<sup>590</sup> EUI, Syria's Electricity Sector After a Decade of War: A Comprehensive Assessment, 30 July 2021, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>591</sup> NRC, Beyond return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>592</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to June 2025, 28 March 2025, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>593</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#), p. 28

<sup>594</sup> NRC, Beyond return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>595</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to June 2025, 28 March 2025, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>596</sup> UNDP, The impact of the conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#), p. 38

<sup>597</sup> WFP, Monthly Market Price Bulletin Syria, April 2025, issue 124, [url](#), pp. 1, 2

<sup>598</sup> NRC, Beyond return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p.14

<sup>599</sup> UN news, [بيدرسون: الانتقال السياسي الشامل هو السبيل الوحيد لمعالجة التحديات في سوريا](#) [Pedersen: Inclusive political transition is the only way to address Syria's challenges], 12 February 2025, [url](#)



10 % of projected needs for the first half of the year, was estimated to cause the closure of half of UNHCR's community centres (122) by June 2025 and a 30 % reduction in staff.<sup>600</sup> In the northwest region, the freeze of US-funded activities affected the operativity of health facilities and caused the suspension of water and sanitation services in displacement camps.<sup>601</sup> In May 2025, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that all humanitarian organisations operating in Syria were required by the new authorities to reregister in order to continue their work. Aid workers described the new procedures as more complex than those under the Assad government, requiring the disclosure of operations and funding details and obstructing humanitarian access.<sup>602</sup>

According to UN sources, the number of People in Need (PiN) – an indicator reflecting both infrastructure damage and limited access to essential services - continued to rise across all humanitarian sectors affecting 16.7 million of people.<sup>603</sup> Since 15 December 2024, severe liquidity shortage across the country has impacted the humanitarian programs, leading to suspensions of operations and significant delays.<sup>604</sup>

### 3.3. Employment

Unemployment reached 24 % in 2024.<sup>605</sup> Labour force participation remained low, with significant number of people unable to access job opportunities due to the conflict and displacement.<sup>606</sup> A report by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) found that 73 % of respondents identified unemployment as one of the main risks and barrier to return.<sup>607</sup> In another assessment conducted between December and February 2025, survey participants ranked employment opportunities as the second most important concern after basic service access.<sup>608</sup> Access to livelihoods in Damascus scored 2.1 (challenging), with all other governorates - except Quneitra - assessed as either challenging or not conducive for return based on this indicator.<sup>609</sup> While the assessment recorded that, in areas with existing industry and commerce sectors, at least 85 % of key informants (Kis) reported partial or full operational status, in Damascus, 25 % of the industry and manufacturing sectors were described as non-operational.<sup>610</sup> Another IOM report released in May 2025 noted that the lack of economic opportunities and essential services posed the greatest challenge for returnees.<sup>611</sup> A survey by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) found that only 31 % had secured a temporary job. All

<sup>600</sup> UNOCHA, At Security Council, UN Deputy Relief Chief urges greater support for Syria as millions remain in crisis, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>601</sup> UN news, [بيدرسون: الانتقال السياسي الشامل هو السبيل الوحيد لمعالجة التحديات في سوريا](#) [Pedersen: Inclusive political transition is the only way to address Syria's challenges], 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>602</sup> Human Rights Watch, Syria: New Government Restricts Aid Operations, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>603</sup> UNDP, The impact of the conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 9, 10; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities - January - March 2025, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>604</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to June 2025, 28 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>605</sup> UNDP, The impact of the conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 8

<sup>606</sup> UNESCWA, Syria at the crossroads, January 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>607</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic — Communities of Return Index — Round 1 (15 March - 05 April 2025), [url](#), p. 15

<sup>608</sup> NRC, Beyond return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>609</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic — Communities of Return Index — Round 1 (15 March - 05 April 2025), [url](#), p. 15

<sup>610</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic — Communities of Return Index — Round 1 (15 March - 05 April 2025), [url](#), p. 11

<sup>611</sup> IOM, New Report: Challenging Economy and Unemployment Main Obstacles for Syria Returnees, 14 May 2025, [url](#)



households were found depending on support from relatives, communities, savings or remittances, and none were able to meet their basic needs. Another assessment conducted among returnees indicated that the majority of households were in debt especially in the areas of Aleppo, Dar'a and Rural Damascus.<sup>612</sup>

To mitigate liquidity challenges<sup>613</sup> exacerbated in the past by the ATM malfunctioning due to power cuts, lack of staff<sup>614</sup> and a severe shortage of banknotes,<sup>615</sup> the Ministry of Finance introduced in April 2025 the digital salary directing public institutions to pay their employees through the Sham Cash electronic application starting from May 2025.<sup>616</sup> Unemployment, job losses, and lack of access to essential services remained significant barriers to meeting basic needs. Many households resorted to borrowing money, selling productive assets, or engaging in high-risk or degrading jobs.<sup>617</sup> The lack of job opportunities forced many into low paid and insecure informal jobs.<sup>618</sup> The WFP reported, in April 2025, that the national daily wage for unskilled labour slightly increased by 3 %, reaching an average of approximately SYP 43 000 per day.<sup>619</sup> An analysis by SCPR indicated that, as of February 2025, civil sector workers in regions governed by the Syrian government earned significantly less than their counterparts elsewhere, receiving only 37 % of the wages paid in the SIG and SSG areas and 48 % of those in DAANES areas. Over 200 startups operated within the country, mainly in Damascus, Homs and Aleppo but only a dozen have reached growth stage.<sup>620</sup>

For information on reforms affecting employment in the public sector see section [1.4](#).

### 3.4. Poverty

According to UNDP in February 2025, 90 % of population could no longer afford essential goods and 75 % depended on some form of humanitarian assistance, up from 5 % in the first year of the conflict. The same report indicated that 66 % of the population (equal to 15.8 million) lived in condition of extreme poverty and 60 % of the population (equal to 13.8 million) faced extreme food insecurity.<sup>621</sup> Rising living costs and the depreciating SYP have increased Syrian's dependence on remittances, which exceeded both foreign direct investment (FDI) and humanitarian aid, averaging over 2 billion USD yearly in recent years.<sup>622</sup>

In Damascus, most restaurants experienced a low turnout during Eid al-Fitr, reflecting the difficult economic situation related to company closures and reduced job opportunities. The

<sup>612</sup> NRC, Beyond return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>613</sup> CA-SYR, Syria monthly report April 2025, [url](#), p. 18

<sup>614</sup> CA-SYR, Syria monthly report September 2023, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>615</sup> Economist (The), Syria's economy, still strangled by sanctions, is on its knees, 6 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>616</sup> Syria TV, "شام كاش" [The Ministry of Finance announces the deposit of salaries of public sector workers through the "Cham Cash" application], 12 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>617</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#), p. 28; see also UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic, rapid need assessment, cash, 25 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>618</sup> NRC, Beyond return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p. 2, 9

<sup>619</sup> WFP, Monthly Market Price Bulletin Syria, April 2025, issue 124, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>620</sup> Startup Syria, Rising from the rubble, entrepreneurship in Syria Post-Assad, January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>621</sup> UNDP, The impact of the conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 4, 8, 10

<sup>622</sup> Ispi, Challenges for Syria's Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Process, 18 April 2025, [url](#)



newspaper Enab Baladi, which monitored the activity of restaurants in the Mezzeh and Bab Touma areas of Damascus, noted that families interviewed indicated that visits to restaurants have become limited to ordering drinks, as meal prices had become unaffordable for households with limited incomes.<sup>623</sup>

The UNDP report highlighted that Syria's GDP per capita has fallen to levels nearly equal to the national poverty threshold, which stand at approximately USD 800 per year or USD 2.15 per day.<sup>624</sup> The report further noted that income inequalities have grown since the start of the conflict —reflected in the Gini coefficient<sup>625</sup> that went from 33 in 2010 to 41 by 2024 — and made poverty pervasive across all regions and social groups.<sup>626</sup>

The Standard of Living Index compiled by the IOM, based in the assessment in 1 100 communities and neighbourhoods across all 14 governorates between March and April 2025, recorded an average score of 2.6 out of 5. This score, classified as 'challenging', reflected the limited availability of emergency and specialist health facilities, as well as inadequate access to safe water and sanitation.<sup>627</sup> The Poverty and Equity Brief by the World Bank released in April 2025 indicated that the poverty incidence is heterogeneous across the country. Together Aleppo, Hama, and Deir Ez Zor are home to just 30 % of the country's total population, but account for more than 50 % of the population living in extreme poverty. Poverty rates are highest among female headed households and displaced households, while international remittances have been a critical lifeline.<sup>628</sup> Regional disparities in living conditions persisted. Civil servants working in areas previously controlled by the Syrian government faced the most severe challenges, with wages covering only 5.6 % of basic needs. By contrast, public sector employees in DAANES areas were able to meet 24 % of the essential needs, while those in SIG & SSG areas managed to cover 33 %.<sup>629</sup>

### 3.5. Food security

Between November 2024 and May 2025, an estimated 14.56 million people were food insecure, including 9.1 million classified as acutely food insecure and 1.3 million among them facing severe food insecurity. An additional 5.4 million were identified as at risk of hunger.<sup>630</sup> Soaring inflation and the depreciation of the SYP have significantly reduced purchasing power.<sup>631</sup> According to WFP, Syria remained highly dependent on food imports, making it

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<sup>623</sup> Enab Baladi, Damascus: Weak turnout at restaurants during Eid, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>624</sup> UNDP, The impact of the conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#), p. 18

<sup>625</sup> The Gini coefficient is based on the comparison of cumulative proportions of the population against cumulative proportions of income they receive. It ranges between 0 in the case of perfect equality (that is, each share of the population gets the same share of income), and 1 in the case of "perfect inequality" (that is, all income goes to the individual with the highest income). OECD, Income inequality, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>626</sup> UNDP, The impact of the conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#), p. 18

<sup>627</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic — Communities of Return Index — Round 1 (15 March - 05 April 2025), [url](#), p. 2

<sup>628</sup> World Bank, Syrian Arab Republic Poverty and Equity Brief : April 2025, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>629</sup> SCPR, Monthly Bulletin for Consumer Price Index and Inflation in Syria, Issue (2) – February 2025, 2 February 2025, [url](#), p. 15

<sup>630</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>631</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#), p. 32





vulnerable to fluctuations in global commodity prices and exchange rates.<sup>632</sup> The minimum wage covered only 16 % of the food component of the MEB, making food unaffordable for large segments of the population. Rising commodity prices exacerbate economic challenges, pushing thousands into severe food insecurity.<sup>633</sup> The price of bread rose by 1 % compared to March 2025 and by 382 % compared to 2024.<sup>634</sup> A UNOCHA report released in March 2025 revealed that less than 25 % of surveyed respondents had access to essential nutrition services, including malnutrition screening, feeding counselling, and therapeutic treatment for malnutrition. Assessment visits by the UN mission and NGO partners noted signs of malnutrition, especially underweight, amidst many children under five, across regions of Syria that were not reachable due to security challenges and the political situation.<sup>635</sup> As of April 2025, WFP indicated that Damascus registered the highest MEB in the country for the third consecutive month (equal to SYP 2 403 097), driven by elevated prices for potatoes, apples, eggplants and white beans.<sup>636</sup>

## 3.6. Housing, water, and sanitation

### (a) Housing

According to UNDP, about one-third of housing units – corresponding to 1.3 million - have been either destroyed or severely damaged over the conflict.<sup>637</sup> According to The Humanitarian, ‘There is no one number that captures how many homes, hospitals, and infrastructure have been wrecked over the course of Syria’s war’.<sup>638</sup> The same outlet stated that parts of Damascus like Eastern Ghouta, Qaboun, the Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp<sup>639</sup> and high-rise apartment blocks along the Damascus-Homs international highway<sup>640</sup> were hit by bombing and shelling. Some neighbourhoods were eventually levelled by al-Assad’s government, sometimes under the guise of mine-clearance, security objectives or redevelopment.<sup>641</sup> An article from The Economist described the eastern suburbs of Damascus as ‘a sea of undulating rubble and skeletal ruins’.<sup>642</sup> UNOCHA highlighted how debris and damaged infrastructure continued to hinder the restoration of services and the resumption of business activities particularly as municipal services remained disrupted, with a lack of capacity-building.<sup>643</sup> UNDP assessed that half of Syria’s infrastructure has been destroyed or

<sup>632</sup> WFP, Monthly Market Price Bulletin Syria, April 2025, issue 124, [url](#), pp. 4, 5

<sup>633</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>634</sup> FAO, Agricultural Inputs and Commodity Price Bulletin in the Syrian Arabic Republic, April 2025, Issue #40, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>635</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to June 2025, 28 March 2025, [url](#), p. 42

<sup>636</sup> WFP, Monthly Market Price Bulletin Syria, April 2025, issue 124, [url](#), pp. 4, 5

<sup>637</sup> UNDP, The impact of the conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#), p. 38

<sup>638</sup> New Humanitarian (The), Syrians begin to return to destroyed homes. Will others follow?, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>639</sup> New Humanitarian (The), Syrians begin to return to destroyed homes. Will others follow?, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>640</sup> Alestiklal, How Can Syria Recover after Being Reduced to Rubble?, January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>641</sup> New Humanitarian (The), Syrians begin to return to destroyed homes. Will others follow?, 19 December 2024, [url](#);

Alestiklal, How Can Syria Recover after Being Reduced to Rubble?, January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>642</sup> Economist (The), The warlords of Syria have a daunting to-do list, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>643</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#), p.28





rendered dysfunctional including roads, bridges, power plants, grain mills, storage facilities, and bakeries.<sup>644</sup>

Over 40 % of surveyed returnees by NRC lacked access to adequate shelter. In areas like Aleppo and Rural Damascus, disputes over property rights and duplicated ownership claims were commonly reported<sup>645</sup> with some people having official documentation proving housing or land ownership, and others lacking the necessary official papers to reclaim property.<sup>646</sup> A source interviewed by The Humanitarian highlighted that ‘property violations, and poor real-estate documentation lasted for years,’ and that ‘many houses that weren’t destroyed are now inhabited by new residents.’<sup>647</sup> UNOCHA found that key obstacles preventing people from returning to their homes or improving shelter conditions in Damascus included the lack of basic services such as water and electricity, limited funding and the lack of health and education facilities.<sup>648</sup> As of mid-May 2025, people in Damascus were facing absence of housing, unreliable access to electricity, clean water, healthcare and work.<sup>649</sup> At the end of May 2025, the Syrian energy minister announced an agreement with Türkiye to supply Syria with gas starting from June, addressing the latter's longstanding power shortages.<sup>650</sup> According to a source interviewed by the New Humanitarian rebuilding a house that isn’t completely destroyed would cost at least 50 million SYP (around USD 4 000).<sup>651</sup>

Due to widespread destruction in the suburbs of Damascus, there is a severe shortage of housing and limited availability of residential areas. Additionally, property prices in Damascus city are very high, making renting or purchasing unaffordable for most returnees. While some housing may be available on the outskirts or in more remote areas, the living conditions in these locations are generally poor.<sup>652</sup>

### **(b) Water and sanitation**

Over the past decades, Syria has experienced significant depletion of its water resources, primarily due to economic growth and competition for internationally shared waters.<sup>653</sup> According to UNOCHA, in north-east Syria, water scarcity remains a major challenge, with over 80 % of water supply systems not functioning mainly due to damaged power systems. This caused 1.8 million people to lack access to safe water, including 610 000 residents and IDPs in Hasaka.<sup>654</sup> The Alouk water station was still not operational as of 27 May 2025.<sup>655</sup> Conflict-related damage to strategic assets such as the Tishreen Dam and Alouk Water Station has left hundreds of thousands without reliable access to water or power.<sup>656</sup> In May 2025,

<sup>644</sup> UNDP, The impact of the conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>645</sup> NRC, Beyond Return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, 15 May 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>646</sup> UNHCR, Regional Flah Update #28, Syria situation crisis, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>647</sup> New Humanitarian (The), Syrians begin to return to destroyed homes. Will others follow?, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>648</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic, rapid need assessment, SNFI, 25 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>649</sup> UN News, Syrians heading home find few of the basics needed to survive, 19 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>650</sup> Devdiscourse, Turkey Lights Up Syria: Cross-border Energy Cooperation Launches, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>651</sup> New Humanitarian (The), Syrians begin to return to destroyed homes. Will others follow?, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>652</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

<sup>653</sup> Sada, Syria's Water and Food Security Crisis, 4 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>654</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (January 2025), January 2025, [url](#), p. 40

<sup>655</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 6- As of 27 May 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>656</sup> NRC, Beyond return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p. 2



Israeli military forces reportedly destroyed a local water well located near the Tel Ahmar base in Quneitra province. The well was the primary water source for Al-Asbah Al-Asha and seven surrounding villages, raising concerns over a potential water shortage if further damage to infrastructure occurs.<sup>657</sup>

The poor rainfall precipitation in the 2024/2025 seasons affected the productivity of water resources in the Southern and Northern areas, thereby affecting access to water for the most vulnerable communities, particularly in Damascus, Dar'a, Sweida, and Hasaka.<sup>658</sup> Water supply to Damascus city was reduced due to the depletion<sup>659</sup> of Ein El-Fijeh Spring, which served water to 1.1 million households.<sup>660</sup> The crisis has been further exacerbated by the lowest recorded rainfall levels since 1956.<sup>661</sup> The Damascus City Water Supply Authority declared a state of emergency<sup>662</sup> and introduced strict water rationing measures, reducing daily water provision from 12 to 4 hours - a 66 % decrease compared to the previous year.<sup>663</sup> In an assessment conducted by IOM between March and April 2025, 26 % of key informants in Damascus lacked access to drinking water, 21 % lacked water for hygiene and 19 % did not have access to a sewage system.<sup>664</sup>

As of 27 May 2025, WASH Cluster partners reported serious depletion of groundwater wells in Hasaka governorate and critically low water flow in the Euphrates affecting electricity generation and water supply in Raqqa and Aleppo. IDPs in both north-west and north-east Syria continued to face limited access to water and sanitation services.<sup>665</sup>

### 3.7. Health care

As of December 2024, only 57 % of the hospitals and 37 % of its primary healthcare facilities in Syria were fully functional, while the rest are either partially or completely out of service.<sup>666</sup> In areas like Damascus and Aleppo hospitals remained largely non-operational.<sup>667</sup> In Damascus, 34 % of health centres (29 out of 86) were affected by underfunding, with an impact on approximately 712 000 individuals

Several providers, as reported by Refugees International, indicated that mobile health clinics—previously among the few sources of medical care in rural towns and areas where returnees were beginning to rebuild - were no longer sustainable.<sup>668</sup>

<sup>657</sup> SOHR, New attack | Israeli forces put vital water station out of service in Al-Quneitra, 13 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>658</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Situation Report No. 5 As of 28 April 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>659</sup> CA-SYR, Syria monthly report April 2025, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>660</sup> Euronews, Lowest winter rainfall in Syria for almost 70 years triggers water crisis in Damascus, 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>661</sup> Euronews, Lowest winter rainfall in Syria for almost 70 years triggers water crisis in Damascus, 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>662</sup> Damascusv, [مؤسسة المياه في دمشق وريفها ترفع حالة الطوارئ مع شح الموارد](#) [Water Corporation in Damascus and its countryside lifts the state of emergency with scarcity of resources], 23 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>663</sup> CA-SYR, Syria monthly report April 2025, [url](#), p. 22

<sup>664</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic — Communities of Return Index — Round 1 (15 March - 05 April 2025), [url](#), p. 9

<sup>665</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 6- As of 27 May 2025, [url](#), p. 13

<sup>666</sup> Health Cluster and WHO, Health sector Bulletin, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 2, 5, 6

<sup>667</sup> Refugee International, Beyond the Fall: Rebuilding Syria After Assad, 2 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>668</sup> Refugee International, Beyond the Fall: Rebuilding Syria After Assad, 2 May 2025, [url](#)



The WHO indicated that 15.8 million people - more than 65 % of the total population – were in need of humanitarian health assistance. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) needs were reported to be particularly high in the coastal areas, where stress-related conditions were on the rise.<sup>669</sup> IOM indicated that in Damascus, 7 % of key respondents did not have access to primary health facilities, 69 % did not have access to specialised health facilities and 19 % did not have access to emergency health facilities.<sup>670</sup>

Challenges for the health system included geographic disparities in workforce distribution, underfunding, misallocation of resources, deteriorated healthcare infrastructure and medical equipment, the migration of health professionals and the collapse of supply chains and lack of a unified health information system.<sup>671</sup> In Damascus, human resources distribution was limited by the centralised control of the Ministry of Health, restricting local health directorates' ability to manage staff effectively. Additional challenges included outdated training curricula, poor infrastructures and a lack of coordination between private and public health services. Charitable healthcare institutions, such as the Mouwasat Charitable Hospital in Damascus, transitioned to private operations. Coordination mechanisms, such as health clusters and technical working groups, have been reported as highly ineffective in Damascus and Homs.<sup>672</sup>

Doctors working in areas like Damascus and Aleppo reportedly received monthly salaries as low as USD 30. According to a former official cited by Refugee International, these salaries were sustained through government funding sourced from narcotics revenues.<sup>673</sup> A Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) study found that 66 % of communities reported a lack of medical care for severe illnesses such as cancer and kidney failure, while 61 % indicated the unavailability of treatment services for chronic diseases. Additionally, 57 % reported a shortage of medications for emergency conditions such as pain and infections, and maternal and child health services were found to be lacking in 48 % of cases. The report also noted the disruption of 50 % of health facilities, rendering many non-functional and the spread of infectious diseases due to poor sanitation and overcrowding in displacement camps.<sup>674</sup> IOM identified the lack of specialised health care as a consistent challenge across governorates, including in areas where basic services had been restored. This gap significantly limited the capacity to address chronic illnesses, injuries, and disabilities, particularly among vulnerable groups such as children, older person returnees, and persons with disabilities.<sup>675</sup>

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<sup>669</sup> Health Cluster and WHO, Health sector Bulletin, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 2, 5, 6

<sup>670</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic — Communities of Return Index — Round 1 (15 March - 05 April 2025), [url](#), p. 9

<sup>671</sup> LUGARIT, SAMS, Syria's Health Sector. Challenges And Intervention Priorities, 3 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 7-13, 18, 19

<sup>672</sup> LUGARIT, SAMS, Syria's Health Sector. Challenges And Intervention Priorities, 3 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 7-13, 35, 43, 57

<sup>673</sup> Refugee International, Beyond the Fall: Rebuilding Syria After Assad, 2 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>674</sup> Health Cluster and WHO, Health sector Bulletin, March 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>675</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic — Communities of Return Index — Round 1 (15 March - 05 April 2025), 13 May 2025, [url](#), p. 8



## 3.8. Education

As of 15 December 2024, schools in Syria, including in Damascus, officially reopened.<sup>676</sup> A rapid need assessment conducted by UNOCHA indicated that among the main reasons of children being out of school in Damascus is work, psychological distress and lack of adequate materials and sanitation.<sup>677</sup> For detailed information on access to education see the sub-section [2.7\(c\)](#).

In the capital, 5% of key respondents reported no access to primary education and 10% reported no access to secondary education, according to an IOM assessment conducted between March and April 2025.<sup>678</sup> While a higher number of universities was functioning in cities such as Damascus, Aleppo and Latakia, these institutions were reported to rely on outdated curricula.<sup>679</sup>

## 3.9. Mobility and admittance

### 3.9.1. Freedom of movement and road security

Sources interviewed by DIS reported that freedom of movement has improved since the fall of the Assad government and civilians can generally travel between major cities without facing restrictions. Most fixed checkpoints within urban areas have been removed, and those that remain, primarily on intercity highway, are fewer in number and conduct less stringent checks.<sup>680</sup> At checkpoints, security forces typically inspect individuals' IDs and check for the possession of weapons.<sup>681</sup> The risk of arbitrary arrest at these checkpoints has also significantly decreased.<sup>682</sup> In an interview with EUAA, SJAC noted that it has not recorded violations regarding the freedom of movement in the country in general, in Damascus city or its suburbs.<sup>683</sup>

The road leading from Damascus airport to the city is well secured, with the government actively trying to demonstrate its presence and control.<sup>684</sup> Security was reportedly enhanced at the Sayida Zaynab suburb in Damascus which hosts an important Shia shrine.<sup>685</sup> Security incidents including clashes and kidnappings in April disrupted key transport routes in Rural

<sup>676</sup> Al Jazeera, Syria's schools reopen a week after al-Assad's overthrow, 15 December 2024, [url](#); Modern Diplomacy, Restoring Classrooms, Inspiring Futures in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>677</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic, rapid need assessment, Education, 25 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>678</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic — Communities of Return Index — Round 1 (15 March - 05 April 2025), [url](#), p. 9

<sup>679</sup> WENR, Rebuilding Syria's Education System: Navigating Challenges and Embracing Opportunities, 14 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>680</sup> Denmark, DIS, Syria - Security situation, June 2025, [url](#), pp. 52, 55, 56

<sup>681</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

<sup>682</sup> Denmark, DIS, Syria - Security situation, June 2025, [url](#), pp. 52, 55, 56

<sup>683</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

<sup>684</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

<sup>685</sup> Cambanis, T., Damascus Dispatch: Fear and Hope in a Divided Syria, TCF, 17 March 2025, [url](#); Zelin, A., Rose, C., Browne, G., Syria Trip Report: Next Steps for U.S. Policy, TWI, 8 May 2025, [url](#)



Damascus and Sweida governorates, notably affecting access to Damascus airport and the Sweida-Damascus road.<sup>686</sup>

In a May 2025 report, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) noted that across all governorates, personal security concerns persist, with reports of theft, harassment, kidnapping, and revenge killings. Many residents limit movement after dark due to heightened security risks<sup>687</sup> and the lack of street lighting or electricity, which leaves areas exceptionally dark at night.<sup>688</sup> SJAC noted that kidnappings and criminality are reported in the Damascus suburbs and travel routes between Damascus to Dar'a, Sweida, Homs are not safe, especially at night. Going out at night is not recommended even in Damascus due to security risks.<sup>689</sup>

According to an IOM report, freedom of movement was largely unrestricted across locations of return in all governorates of Syria, with 83 % of key informants (KIs) reporting no significant limitations. However, despite this, most KIs noted incidents over the past 30 days, including petty crime (76 %), HLP disputes (50 %), and attacks involving non-firearm weapons (45 %). These incidents were most frequently reported in the districts of Aleppo, Idlib, and Hama within the respective governorates.<sup>690</sup>

Reports of extortion at checkpoints have become rare<sup>691</sup> and mostly attributed to armed groups nominally affiliated with the state, such as SNA factions in Afrin.<sup>692</sup> Extortion has reportedly been largely eliminated at most checkpoints between SDF and government-controlled areas. However, some incidents have been reported, such as at an SDF checkpoint in the al-Tabqa area (Raqqqa governorate), where passengers were allegedly charged an “exit fee” of 2,000 Syrian pounds.<sup>693</sup>

In Homs city, authorities have set up checkpoints across the city to clamp down on criminality, including separating the Alawite majority neighbourhoods of Al-Arman,<sup>694</sup> Al-Zahra and Al-Nahda from the rest of Homs.<sup>695</sup> Despite the presence of security forces in Homs city, including GSS checkpoints at the city's entrances, the attacks on civilians, particularly Alawites continued according to SJAC reporting from May. Some civilians have accused the authorities of condoning or even facilitating the murders.<sup>696</sup>

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<sup>686</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Harmoon Centre Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>687</sup> Denmark, DIS, Syria - Security situation, June 2025, [url](#), pp. 52, 55; NRC, Beyond Return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, 15 May 2025, [url](#), p. 13; International Crisis Group, The New Syria: Halting a Dangerous Drift, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>688</sup> NRC, Beyond Return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, 15 May 2025, [url](#), p. 13

<sup>689</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

<sup>690</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic — Communities of Return Index — Round 1 (15 March - 05 April 2025), 13 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>691</sup> Denmark, DIS, Syria - Security situation, June 2025, [url](#), pp. 52, 55

<sup>692</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

<sup>693</sup> Enab Baladi, End of “horror journey” on al-Hasakah-Damascus road, 24 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>694</sup> Le Monde, In Homs, which embodies Syria's diversity, the specter of revenge weighs heavy, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>695</sup> New Arab (The), Lawlessness festers in Homs as Syria struggles to rebuild, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>696</sup> SJAC, The Syrian Government Must Investigate the Targeting of Alawite Civilians in Homs, 13 May 2025, [url](#)



### 3.9.2. International flight connections

The flight tracker FlightConnections, which provides information about current flight connections, indicated that, as of 7 May 2025, international flights were being operated to four countries, including Türkiye (Istanbul, Ankara), Jordan (Amman), the UAE (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah), and Qatar (Doha).<sup>697</sup> Flightradar24 also showed flights arriving or scheduled to arrive from Beirut, Muscat, Jeddah, Misrata, Khartoum, Abidjan, Erbil and Kuwait city.<sup>698</sup>

As of January 2025, international flights to Damascus International Airport (DAM) resumed, including routes from Türkiye, Qatar, the UAE, and Jordan. Domestic flights between Damascus and Aleppo had already resumed earlier, on 18 December 2024.<sup>699</sup> The resumption of flights between Syria and Saudi Arabia is reportedly under consideration, although no specific date has been announced.<sup>700</sup> Direct flights between DAM and Bucharest, Romania, were announced to be starting from June by a Romanian airline<sup>701</sup> and the first commercial flight from Bucharest to Damascus landed in mid-June.<sup>702</sup>

In the second half of June, the military escalation in the Middle East led to the temporary closure of airspace<sup>703</sup> and air corridors leading to DAM. Syrian Airlines, the flag carrier of Syria, diverted its flights from DAM to Aleppo International Airport where routes to the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye would be operated. Ground transportation between Aleppo and DAM airport would be provided regularly, according to the airline.<sup>704</sup> Israeli and Iranian forces have exchanged strikes through Syrian airspace, resulting in civilian casualties and damage to property, particularly in southern Syria.<sup>705</sup>

### 3.9.3. Administrative requirements for settling in Damascus

Prior to the fall of the Assad regime, obtaining a security clearance was a prerequisite for establishing residence in any part of Damascus city. For further information see section 2.1.6 EUAA COI report [Syria - Country Focus \(October 2024\)](#). According to SJAC, there are no longer legal requirements such as obtaining a security clearance for individuals wishing to settle in Damascus by renting or purchasing property. While rental leases must be registered with the municipality through a straightforward process, many residents choose to enter into short-term verbal agreements instead.<sup>706</sup> In May, the Syria Report stated that, since the fall of

<sup>697</sup> FlightConnections, Direct flights to Damascus (DAM), last updated 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>698</sup> Flightradar24, Damascus International Airport Syria (DAM/OSDI): Arrivals: 12 to 14 May 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>699</sup> New Arab (The), Which international airlines have resumed flights to Syria?, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>700</sup> AA, Saudi aviation delegation in Damascus to resume flights with Syria, 10 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>701</sup> New Arab (The), Romania's Dan Air to offer direct flights to Syria in June, in EU first, 10 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>702</sup> Syrian Observer (The), First Direct Flight from Bucharest to Damascus in 14 Years Marks Aviation Milestone, 17 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>703</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria reopens airspace for civil aviation, 14 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>704</sup> SANA, Syrian Airlines diverts flights from Damascus airport to Aleppo, 19 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>705</sup> BBC Monitoring, Briefing: Syria silent as Israel-Iran war spills into its airspace, 17 June 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Ongoing escalation in Syrian airspace | Israeli forces shoot down three Iranian drones and shrapnel seriously injures woman in Daraa, 20 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>706</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025





Assad, security clearances have not been issued<sup>707</sup> but they are still required for registering real estate ownership transfers such as sales and donations in the Land Registry.<sup>708</sup>

There is a degree of social discrimination against individuals relocating to Damascus from other parts of the country. While not driven by state policy, this bias stems from a long-standing distinction between Damascenes and non-locals. Locals are often reluctant to rent to newcomers or charge them higher prices, based on the perception that they may not properly maintain the property.<sup>709</sup>

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<sup>707</sup> Syria Report (The), After Assad, 'Security Approvals' Remain an Obstacle to HLP Transactions, 13 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>708</sup> Syria Report (The), After Assad, 'Security Approvals' Remain an Obstacle to HLP Transactions, 13 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>709</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025







## 4. Returnees from abroad

### 4.1. Administrative requirements

Syrians returning to the country must present valid identification, such as a national passport or ID card, to enter. Passports and ID cards issued by the former government are deemed valid. Those without documents but registered in Syria's civil registries may still be allowed entry after their identity is verified through the Civil Affairs database at border checkpoints, at which point they are issued a civil record extract for entry. Additionally, Syrian diplomatic missions abroad are authorised to issue temporary travel documents and passports to facilitate the return of nationals who had lost them. Replacement of lost ID cards can only be done in person inside Syria. UNHCR provides free legal assistance through its partners to IDPs and returnees on issues related to civil documentations including IDs.<sup>710</sup>

Since 8 December 2024, civil registry offices in Syria have suspended the registration of civil events, including births. Under Syrian law, personal status events such as births, deaths, and marriages that occur outside Syria must be registered in accordance with the laws of the country of residence, provided these do not conflict with Syrian legislation (as outlined in Article 17 of the Civil Affairs Law, amended by Law 13/2021). The interim authorities in Syria require all children entering the country to present a birth certificate and be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. For children born abroad who have not been registered in Syrian civil records either through diplomatic missions or domestic civil affairs offices, a birth certificate from the country of birth is required. In exceptional cases, hospital-issued birth notifications may be accepted for unregistered children at the border.<sup>711</sup>

### 4.2. Return trends

According to UNHCR estimates, between 8 December 2024 and 12 June 2025, some 577 266 Syrians returned to Syria from abroad. In total, 938 106 returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024. The main intended locations of return were the governorates of Aleppo (206 938), Damascus (107 346), Rural Damascus (106 396) and Idlib (98 557).<sup>712</sup>

UNHCR estimated that around 200 000 individuals returned from Türkiye and 68 000 from Jordan. The profiles of returnees monitored by UNHCR included mostly working-age adults, including women, female-headed households but also children and older individuals returning from Türkiye, while women and girls were the main returnees from Jordan, followed by children and men of military age (18-40).<sup>713</sup> As of 31 May, UNHCR estimated that 174 112 Syrians

<sup>710</sup> UNHCR, Syria is Home, n.d, [url](#)

<sup>711</sup> UNHCR, Syria is Home, n.d, [url](#)

<sup>712</sup> UNHCR, Syria governorates of return overview as of 12 June 2025, 16 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>713</sup> UNHCR, Regional Flash Update #28 - Syria Situation Crisis, 22 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 3-4



have crossed back to the country from Lebanon since 8 December 2024 using official and unofficial border crossings.<sup>714</sup>

It is not clear if all the returns are permanent. According to humanitarian workers in Lebanon, since December 2024 many Syrians residing in Lebanon have reportedly crossed back into Syria irregularly for short visits to reunite with family, assess their property, and the overall situation in the country following Assad's departure, before returning to Lebanon.<sup>715</sup> UNHCR monitored the arrival of 106 290 Syrians to Lebanon between 8 December 2024 and 31 May 2025.<sup>716</sup> An UNCHR survey carried out in January 2025 noted that 80 % of Syrian refugees expressed their desire to return but only 27 % consider returning within the next year. Around 60 % of refugees stated their interest in having a go and see visit to their homes before deciding to return.<sup>717</sup> Türkiye announced that it will allow Syrians under temporary protection to carry out up to three 'go and see' visits before 1 July 2025 to Syria before deciding to return.<sup>718</sup>

Approximately 8 million Syrians were previously on wanted lists of the former government's security agencies. According to returnee testimonies cited by the New York Times, individuals returning from abroad after the fall of the Assad government have generally not faced repercussions from current authorities. Some were even able to verify their former 'wanted' status under the previous regime. The interim government has announced that individuals wanted for military or reserve service will not face any issues. However, those with prior civil court judgments or civil charges will still be subject to assessment.<sup>719</sup> The Immigration and Passport Office in Damascus claimed to have lifted over 50 % of the travel bans imposed by the Assad government on more than 8 million Syrians. The travel bans affected those who were viewed as opponents of the Assad government and were wanted criminally and judicially.<sup>720</sup> The arrest warrants issued by any of the four intelligence agencies of the former regime or by the military police for the military service are not being enforced.<sup>721</sup>

Testimonies from Syrians living abroad who travelled to the country after the fall of Assad on the roads from Lebanon to Damascus,<sup>722</sup> Amman to Damascus,<sup>723</sup> and Beirut to Damascus and to Sweida<sup>724</sup> indicated the interaction with security authorities at the borders to be brief and welcoming.<sup>725</sup>

According to SJAC, it has not been documented any mistreatment or targeting of returnees from abroad. The interim government has annulled all arrest warrants issued by Assad-era

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<sup>714</sup> UNHCR, Lebanon - Syrian returns & movements snapshot (at 31 May 2025), 3 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>715</sup> Heller, S., Cross-Border Shuffle: Refugee Movement Between Lebanon and Syria after Assad, TCF, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>716</sup> UNHCR, Lebanon - Syrian returns & movements snapshot (at 31 May 2025), 3 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>717</sup> UNHCR, Repatriation explained: why Syrian refugees are voluntarily returning, 12 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>718</sup> Heinrich Boll Stiftung, "Go and see" to return: Turkish policy and Syrian reality, 15 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>719</sup> New York Times (The), In Syria, Being Wanted Went From Something to Fear to a Badge of Honor, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>720</sup> Enab Baladi, Can judiciary deliver justice to those deprived of civil rights?, 2 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>721</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

<sup>722</sup> Zwirahn, F. Syria Is Alive With Possibility, New Lines Magazine, 10 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>723</sup> Zwirahn, F. Syria Is Alive With Possibility, New Lines Magazine, 10 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>724</sup> Syria Untold, My Fleeting Return, 17 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>725</sup> Zwirahn, F. Syria Is Alive With Possibility, New Lines Magazine, 10 January 2025, [url](#); Syria Untold, My Fleeting Return, 17 February 2025, [url](#); Hamdi, I., My emotional trip back to Damascus, Al Majalla, 14 January 2025, [url](#)



security agencies for political reasons but retained those related to criminal cases. During the release of detainees from Assad-era prisons, individuals accused of serious crimes such as murder and robbery were also released. Arrest warrants for these individuals remain in place, reportedly in the hope that they can be apprehended if they attempt to flee the country through border crossings. However, SJAC noted that the Assad government had often used criminal charges, such as possessing a forged passport, commonly used by those fleeing the country, to target activists. With the judiciary still not functioning, many returnees remain in legal limbo due to unresolved criminal charges and are often prevented from leaving the country again. SJAC added that the authorities are working to establish a mechanism to revoke such warrants issued on false grounds by the former criminal police.<sup>726</sup>

According to an NRC report, emerging tensions between returnees and host communities have begun to surface, primarily driven by perceived political or religious affiliations. In former government-controlled areas, resident communities have expressed fears of religious extremism and potential reprisals based on assumptions about returnees' loyalties, concerns that are often mutual. Instances of bullying in schools between host community children and returnee children have been reported, rooted in perceptions of political affiliation linked to areas of displacement.<sup>727</sup>

According to an IOM report based on an assessment of 1 100 communities and 3 508 key informant (KI) interviews across locations in Syria, approximately 78 % of returnees from abroad have returned to their areas of origin. The main challenges to sustainable return cited by returnees were the worsening economic conditions (94 %), unemployment (74 %), and limited access to services (55 %). Concerns related to tensions in the community were noted by 33 % of KIs interviewed by IOM across locations, with Hasaka (93 %) and Tartous (78 %) being the governorates where KIs reported the highest concerns. In contrast, the majority of respondents in Damascus (83 %), Dar'a (76 %), and Aleppo (75 %) reported no such concerns.<sup>728</sup>

At the governorate level, Homs (3.4) and Damascus (3.2)<sup>729</sup> were assessed as being 'partially conducive'<sup>730</sup> for the return and reintegration of IDPs and returnees. In contrast, Rural Damascus (2.1) and Hasaka (2.5) had the least conducive conditions. No governorate or location assessed reached an overall index scoring to be labelled 'mostly conducive' or 'fully conducive' for return and reintegration.<sup>731</sup>

<sup>726</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

<sup>727</sup> NRC, Beyond Return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, 15 May 2025, [url](#), p. 13

<sup>728</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic — Communities of Return Index — Round 1 (15 March - 05 April 2025), 13 May 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>729</sup> IOM uses a five-tier scoring index to indicate the relative conduciveness of conditions for return and sustainable reintegration. The criteria assessed are: safety and security; adequate standards of living; access to livelihoods; housing, land and property; access to documentation. An unweighted average of the five criteria scores is calculated to produce a single composite index for each location, on a 0–5 scale, where higher scores indicate more conducive conditions for return and reintegration. IOM, Syrian Arab Republic — Communities of Return Index — Round 1 (15 March - 05 April 2025), 13 May 2025, [url](#), p. 17

<sup>730</sup> A score between 2.6 – 3.5 indicates that the conditions are 'partially conducive' – some conditions support return, but notable barriers remain.

<sup>731</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic — Communities of Return Index — Round 1 (15 March - 05 April 2025), 13 May 2025, [url](#), p. 15



A NRC report based on over 4 300 interviews and surveys carried out between December 2024 and February 2025 with refugee returnees, IDPs and humanitarian staff identified six main barriers to sustainable return: destroyed infrastructure and lack of services, disrupted education, economic collapse and livelihood insecurity, housing, land and property challenges; safety, and social cohesion concerns.<sup>732</sup> Lack of essential services and infrastructure including access to electricity, schools, hospitals, water and sewage systems was reported by the majority of interviewees but was more pronounced in Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Homs and Dar'a governorates.<sup>733</sup> Over 40 % of returnees interviewed reported no access to housing and issues related to HLP rights such as lacking ownership documents. Destruction of houses was reported by almost half of the respondents, and was particularly higher in Rural Damascus, Aleppo and Homs cities.<sup>734</sup> Safety and security was deemed slightly lower than the overall average by respondents from Damascus while those from Idlib had a higher feeling of safety. According to NRC, the respondents' perceptions of safety are linked to the broader security context, regional dynamics and economic factors such as lack of employment opportunities and limited access to basic services.<sup>735</sup>

According to SJAC, to its knowledge, the interim government does not screen the past activities of Syrian returnees carried out abroad. The source noted that many returnees either hold European passports or have residency status in their host countries. Some have visited Syria and returned without being questioned about their activities while abroad.<sup>736</sup>

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<sup>732</sup> NRC, Beyond Return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, 15 May 2025, [url](#), p. 1

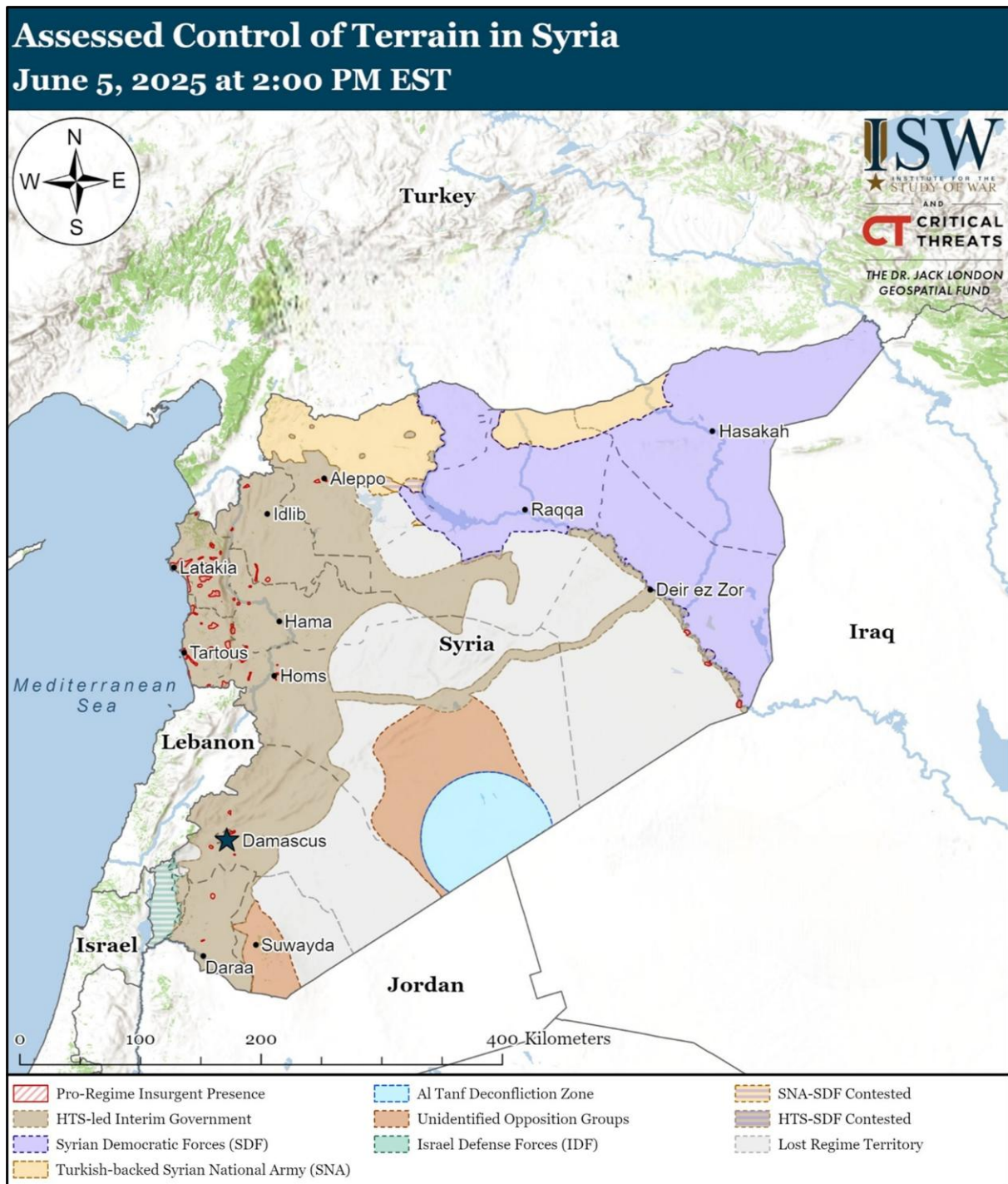
<sup>733</sup> NRC, Beyond Return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, 15 May 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>734</sup> NRC, Beyond Return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, 15 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 9-10

<sup>735</sup> NRC, Beyond Return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, 15 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 12-13

<sup>736</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

## 5. Security situation



**Map 2: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, © Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project, 5 June 2025<sup>737</sup>**

<sup>737</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 5 June 2025, [url](#)



## 5.1. Armed actors

This section covers the main non-state armed groups that are nominally operating outside the interim government's control. The security forces of the interim government and affiliated armed groups, which are nominally integrated in its structures, are discussed in section [1.3](#).

### 5.1.1. Syrian Democratic Forces

Following the 10 March agreement between the government and SDF, several de-escalation and reintegration steps were taken, including the SDF's withdrawal from the Kurdish neighbourhoods of Sheikh Maksoud and Ashrafiyah in Aleppo city in early April<sup>738</sup> and a partial handover of the Tishreen Dam to government forces.<sup>739</sup> As of late April Etana Syria reported that the initial implementation of the SDF-government agreement over the Tishreen Dam brought early progress, including joint patrols and a stated SDF commitment to withdraw from front-line areas.<sup>740</sup>

Meanwhile, Kurdish groups publicly called for decentralisation<sup>741</sup> and convened a national conference in Qamishli, gathering around 400 representatives from major Kurdish political and armed groups, including the SDF, its political arm the Democratic Union Party (PYD), and the rival Kurdish National Council (KNC). Participants collectively rejected the interim authorities' Constitutional Declaration, which they criticised as an attempt to centralise power in Damascus.<sup>742</sup> While reaffirming their commitment to a unified Syria, they issued a joint political statement calling for a federal system in Syria that would unify the administration of all Kurdish-majority areas in the northeast.<sup>743</sup> The conference outcomes sparked a sharp reaction from interim President al-Sharaa, who denounced the resolutions and accused Kurdish groups of attempting to fragment Syrian sovereignty. Al-Sharaa reiterated that decentralisation remains a 'red line' for the transitional government.<sup>744</sup>

As of late April, tensions between the government and the SDF had escalated, leading both sides to reinforce their military positions around the Tishreen Dam.<sup>745</sup> Sporadic clashes between the two sides were reported in May<sup>746</sup> and early June.<sup>747</sup> Negotiations over the disputed Tishreen Dam on the Euphrates River remained unresolved as of late May, with no clear agreement reached.<sup>748</sup>

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<sup>738</sup> AP, Kurdish fighters leave northern city in Syria as part of deal with central government, 4 April 2025, [url](#); BBC Monitoring, Hundreds of Syrian SDF fighters leave Aleppo after deal, 10 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>739</sup> Al-Ahmed, S., The Damascus-SDF agreement two months on: Fragile progress or delayed collapse?, MEI, 9 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>740</sup> Etana Syria, Brief: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>741</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – April 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>742</sup> Etana Syria, Brief: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>743</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>744</sup> Etana Syria, Brief: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>745</sup> Etana Syria, Brief: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>746</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 19 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>747</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 10 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>748</sup> International Crisis Group, A Helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#); Al-Ahmed, S., The Damascus-SDF agreement two months on: Fragile progress or delayed collapse?, MEI, 9 May 2025, [url](#)



In May, ISW reported that SDF have not disarmed, citing fears that elements of the Turkish-backed SNA may target Kurdish communities.<sup>749</sup> In late May, PYD representatives announced that a DAANES delegation plans to negotiate with the government on key national issues, including the structure of the Syrian government and army, as well as potential amendments to the Constitutional Declaration.<sup>750</sup> As of early June, negotiations between the two parties were ongoing and agreements were reached on prisoner exchanges and establishing specialised committees for the implementation of the March 10 agreement.<sup>751</sup>

### 5.1.2. Assad-aligned militias

Former Assad government senior military and intelligence officials formed new groups and networks aimed at fighting against the new authorities. Several new armed formations have emerged since the fall of the Assad regime:

- The Syrian Popular Resistance, with its *Coastal Shield Forces* detachment active in Latakia, Tartous, Homs, and Hama. It is led by former Republican Guard commander Miqdad Fatiha, who has threatened further attacks on the new government following the ambush on 6 March.<sup>752</sup> It is reportedly comprised of former SAA and Assad regime members.<sup>753</sup>
- The Syrian Islamic Resistance Front (*Uli al-Baas*), assessed to likely be an Iranian/Hezbollah proxy, was active in Dar'a and Quneitra. Promoted in Iranian state media as a 'resistance' group, it features typical proxy iconography and was officially formed two months earlier.
- Remnants of the National Defence Forces, the former regime's irregular units, were attempting to reorganise in Deir Ez Zor, though many members have been arrested by the interim authorities.
- The Military Council to Free Syria, led by Brigadier General Ghaith Dala, was announced on the morning of the ambush against government security forces on 6 March. Unlike Fatiha, Dala has called for negotiations.<sup>754</sup>

These groups are reportedly attempting to incite sectarian tensions while portraying themselves as protectors of the Alawite community.<sup>755</sup> The factions operating in Syria's coastal areas were regarded as most organised insurgent groups. Their activities are, according to ISW, likely supported by Hezbollah-linked smuggling networks active along the Lebanon-Syria border.<sup>756</sup> In May, GSS forces arrested a member of the Coastal Shield Forces in Latakia city.<sup>757</sup> After recoding a peak in March, insurgent attacks by Assad-aligned Alawite militias against the

<sup>749</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>750</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>751</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 2 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>752</sup> Zelin, A., Syria's Transitional Honeymoon Is Over After Massacres and Disinformation, TWI, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>753</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 28 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>754</sup> Zelin, A., Syria's Transitional Honeymoon Is Over After Massacres and Disinformation, TWI, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>755</sup> ISW, Alawite Insurgency Seek to Use Sectarian Violence to Destabilize the Interim Government in Syria, 3 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>756</sup> ISW, Understanding Syria's Emerging Insurgency, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>757</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 13 May 2025, [url](#)





interim government and Sunni communities have since ‘become increasingly rare’. According to ISW, the decrease is likely due to limited Alawite support, increased pressure from government forces leading to arrests of insurgents and seizure of weapons caches, and poorly executed insurgent operations.<sup>758</sup>

### 5.1.3. ISIL

Since the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, ISIL activity in Syria has sharply declined,<sup>759</sup> largely due to sustained aerial operations by the US-led International Coalition and declining recruitment appeal.<sup>760</sup> According to military sources of the U.S-led coalition, ISIL has shown no notable improvement in its operational capabilities or attack sophistication in Syria during January-March 2025. However, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) warned that the group continued to opportunistically exploit the volatile security landscape following the fall of the Assad regime.<sup>761</sup>

U.S. sources assessed that ISIL activity in March 2025 shifted westward compared to earlier in the first quarter of 2025, with cells continuing to operate from caves and isolated areas in the Badiya desert, particularly in Homs governorate.<sup>762</sup>

Despite a decline in attacks in the previous period, ISIL has steadily increased its attacks on the SDF, reaching a monthly peak in April 2025 with 10 recorded incidents. This uptick coincided with growing concerns over the security of detention facilities housing ISIL fighters in the northeast, as funding for their maintenance and staffing become uncertain. Several attempted prison breaks have recently been thwarted.<sup>763</sup> According to expert on Sunni Arab jihadi groups Aaron Zelin, by mid-May ISIL claimed 33 attacks in 2025.<sup>764</sup> While most ISIL attacks have targeted the SDF<sup>765</sup> and civilians<sup>766</sup> in the northeast, the group has also escalated its rhetoric against authorities in Damascus, although only a limited number of attacks have been directed at GSS or MoD units.<sup>767</sup> ISIL has reportedly sought to exploit dissatisfaction with the Syrian transitional government among HTS Salafi-jihadi hardliners by attacking al-Sharaa and calling on HTS members to defect and join the terrorist organisation.<sup>768</sup>

In May, an ISIL vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) attack on a GSS post in Mayadin, Deir Ez-Zor, killed at least four security personnel and one civilian. Meanwhile, a

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<sup>758</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>759</sup> Lister, C., ISIS is on the ropes in Syria. A successful transition in Damascus could deliver a knockout blow, MEI. 14 April 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Brief: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>760</sup> Etana Syria, Brief: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>761</sup> USDOD, Lead IG Report to the U.S. Congress January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>762</sup> USDOD, Lead IG Report to the U.S. Congress January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>763</sup> Etana Syria, Brief: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>764</sup> Zelin, A., The Islamic State Attacks the New Syrian Government, TWI, 19 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>765</sup> Al Jazeera, ISIL group kills five Kurdish fighters in attack in eastern Syria, 28 April 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Brief: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>766</sup> SOHR, Second attack in a few hours | ISIS cells attack civilian house in rural Deir Ezzor, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>767</sup> Etana Syria, Brief: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #24, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>768</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 27 May 2025, [url](#); Bifulchi, G., Al-Naba 495: Islamic State's Propaganda Against al-Sharaa and the Syrian-Israeli Normalisation Tracks, SpecialEurasia, 18 May 2025, [url](#)



security operation targeting ISIL cells in Aleppo city resulted in the deaths of two ISIL fighters and two GSS members.<sup>769</sup>

SDF arrested 13 ISIL cells in Raqqa, Hasaka and Deir Ez-Zor governorates as of March 2025 while U.S. carried out airstrikes on ISIL targets.<sup>770</sup> In May, it was reported that two alleged ISIL members accused of killing a MoD officer were arrested GSS forces in Idlib and reportedly executed.<sup>771</sup> ISIL activity increased in May, partly due to cells seizing of weapons stocks of the former regime, recruitment of regime remnants. Three large scale anti-ISIL raids were carried out in May by government forces in Deir Ez Zor, Aleppo and Rural Damascus governorates.<sup>772</sup> On 22 June, a suicide bomber with apparent ties to ISIL attacked the Greek Orthodox Church in Dweila neighbourhood of Damascus leaving at least 22 persons killed and 63 wounded.<sup>773</sup>

Around 9 000 male ISIL suspects are detained without due process in northeast Syria, including 5 400 Syrians, 1 600 Iraqis, and some 1 500 from 50 other countries. The vast majority of these detainees continue to be held incommunicado without information on their fate or whereabouts, according to UN experts. In addition, some 42 500 individuals, the majority of whom are children, are arbitrarily held in camps, including family members and ISIL associates. Many have been held without legal process for at least six years.<sup>774</sup> Amnesty International noted that Syrians and Iraqis make up to 80 % of the population in al-Hol camp. As of March 2025, Iraq repatriated over 5 600 individuals from al-Hol camp.<sup>775</sup> In May, the DAANES and the transitional government reached an agreement to create a joint mechanism for the return of Syrian families from the al-Hol camp.<sup>776</sup> In June, several families of Syrians from the camp had reportedly been returned to their areas of origin in northwest Syria<sup>777</sup> and more than 800 Iraqis had been repatriated.<sup>778</sup>

## 5.2. International involvement

### 5.2.1. Türkiye

Türkiye maintained control over northern border areas and deepened its cooperation with the interim government, notably facilitating the transfer of administrative control in Afrin from the

<sup>769</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 19 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>770</sup> Zelin, A., The New Syrian Government's Fight Against the Islamic State, Hezbollah, and Captagon, CTC, March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>771</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>772</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>773</sup> BBC News, Suicide bombing at Damascus church kills 22, Syrian authorities say, 22 June 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, At least 22 killed in Syria church bombing attack, dozens wounded, 22 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>774</sup> OHCHR, UN experts urge end to ISIL-related arbitrary detention in North-East Syria and accountability for international crimes, 7 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>775</sup> AI, Syria: New urgency to end unlawful detention system holding tens of thousands of people following Islamic State defeat, 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>776</sup> AP, Syria's government and Kurds reach agreement on returning families from notorious camp, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>777</sup> OSES, United Nations Deputy Special Envoy for Syria Najat Rochdi - Briefing to the Security Council (17 June 2025), 17 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>778</sup> UN Security Council, Security Council Hears, as UN Iraq Mission Winds Down, of Progress Won, Work Yet Remaining, 10 June 2025, [url](#)



SNA to interim authorities. Türkiye and the interim government reportedly began talks on a joint defence pact, which included Turkish proposals to establish new bases, use Syrian airspace, and lead the training of Syrian military forces.<sup>779</sup>

Türkiye welcomed the March 2025 agreement between Damascus and the SDF and has since largely refrained from military action against the SDF. According to International Crisis Group's assessment, Türkiye seems to have four key demands: the disbandment of the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), the removal of PKK-affiliated cadres from the SDF, containment of Kurdish self-governance in northern Syria, and not having SDF as the sole political representative of the Kurds in dealings with the interim government.<sup>780</sup>

Türkiye has also sought to contain Israel's military action in Syria, particularly to avert incidents that would affect its own military presence in the country. An agreement was reportedly reached in May between the two sides, including the establishment of a hotline to prevent conflicts.<sup>781</sup> In the context of the Israel military campaign against Iran in June, Türkiye president Recep Tayyip Erdogan defended Iran's response as legitimate and described Israel prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu as 'the biggest threat to regional security'.<sup>782</sup>

### 5.2.2. Israel

Israel continued to occupy the UNDOF zone, several adjoining areas inside Syria and the summit of Mount Hermon,<sup>783</sup> and to call for a complete demilitarisation of southern Syria.<sup>784</sup> In the context of the sectarian violence which erupted in late April between the Druze and local Sunni groups in Sweida and Rural Damascus, Israel escalated its military involvement, carrying out airstrikes against the Syrian interim government under the pretext of protecting the Druze minority. This justification was firmly rejected by Syria's Druze community, which condemned the strikes as violations of sovereignty. Israeli airstrikes targeted military sites in Rural Damascus, Dar'a, Latakia, western Hama and in Damascus near the Presidential Palace. Daily military incursions of Israeli forces were reported in Dar'a and Quneitra governorates.<sup>785</sup> Israeli attacks in Syria led to civilian casualties particularly in southern Syria.<sup>786</sup>

### 5.2.3. US-led coalition

In April, U.S. officials confirmed the beginning of a phased withdrawal of approximately 600 troops from northeastern Syria. It includes the planned closure of three bases: Mission Support Site Green Village, Mission Support Site Euphrates, both located in the Middle

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<sup>779</sup> USDOD, Lead IG Report to the U.S. Congress January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>780</sup> International Crisis Group, A Glimmer of Peace in Syria's North East, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>781</sup> Times of Israel (The), Israel, Türkiye said to agree to prevent clashes in Syria, establish hotline, 21 May 2025, [url](#); MEE, Türkiye and Israel set up hotline over Syria tensions, 21 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>782</sup> New Arab (The), From Tehran to Ankara? Fears in Türkiye over Israel's next move, 18 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>783</sup> BBC News, Israel strikes weapons in southern Syria after projectiles fired into Golan, 4 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>784</sup> MEE, Ahmed al-Sharaa confirms Syria and Israel in indirect deconfliction talks, 7 May 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, How Israel's Overreach in Syria May Backfire, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>785</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>786</sup> New Arab (The), Israel kills 11 in shelling and airstrikes on Syria, 3 April 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), Four Syrian Druze killed in Israeli airstrike on Suweida province, 2 May 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch Syria March 2025, n.d., [url](#)



Euphrates River Valley (Deir Ez-Zor governorate), and a smaller base in Hasaka governorate.<sup>787</sup> In late April, U.S. began withdrawing infrastructure and equipment from Al-Shaddadi base in Hasaka governorate.<sup>788</sup> In early June, U.S. officials reported that around 500 U.S. troops had withdrawn from Syria. Additionally, the Mission Support Site Green Village base was closed, the Mission Support Site Euphrates base was handed over to the SDF, and a third base was in the process of being vacated.<sup>789</sup>

#### 5.2.4. Russia

After assuming power, the interim government initially maintained relations with Russia and provided security guarantees for its military bases in Syria. However, since early 2025, it cancelled a contract granting Russia management of the Tartous port. Russia's past support for Assad during the war, combined with the recent lifting of Western sanctions on Syria while Russia remains under heavy international sanctions, has reportedly complicated bilateral cooperation.<sup>790</sup> According to ISW, as of late May, Russia was assessed to have a presence at the Hmeimim air base, the Tartous naval base and at the Qamishli base.<sup>791</sup> Other sources reported that Russia maintained a limited presence near the Hmeimim military base in Latakia governorate.<sup>792</sup>

### 5.3. Recent security trends

Syria's interim government consolidated control over parts of the country including in the cities of Damascus, Aleppo, and Hama<sup>793</sup> and expanded its presence in areas of central, northern<sup>794</sup> and southern Syria.<sup>795</sup> However, insecurity persisted in many areas of the country.<sup>796</sup> In early March, pro-Assad loyalists launched an insurgency against the interim government's security forces primarily in the coastal areas of Tartous and Latakia.<sup>797</sup> The escalation triggered intense hostilities and sectarian violence, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians<sup>798</sup> and the displacement of tens of thousands.<sup>799</sup> Since peaking in March, insurgent attacks by pro-Assad loyalists have significantly declined.<sup>800</sup> In Sweida and Dar'a

<sup>787</sup> USDOD, Lead IG Report to the U.S. Congress January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>788</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>789</sup> Al Arabiya English, US withdraws hundreds of troops from Syria after Pentagon directive, 2 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>790</sup> Smagin, N., As the New Syrian Regime Gains Legitimacy, It Is Pushing Russia Out, Carnegie Politika, 17 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>791</sup> ISW, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria as of May 27, 2025, 28 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>792</sup> EUISS, Geopolitical miscalculations: The case against Russia's presence in Syria, 14 March 2025, [url](#); US CRS, Syria: Transition and U.S. Policy, 11 March 2025, [url](#), p. 23; New York Times (The), Hundreds of Civilians Take Shelter at Russian Air Base in Syria, 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>793</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>794</sup> USDOD, Lead IG Report to the U.S. Congress January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>795</sup> Etana Syria, Brief: The Dissolution of Ahmad al-Awdeh's Groups in Daraa, 16 April 2025, [url](#); ISW and CT, Iran Update, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>796</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch March – April 2025, n.d., [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #25, 26 May 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, A Helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>797</sup> USDOD, Lead IG Report to the U.S. Congress January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>798</sup> Security Council Report, Syria: April 2025 Monthly Forecast, 31 March 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Preliminary Report on the Violations that Took Place in the Wake of the Attacks Carried Out by Non-State Armed Groups Linked to the Assad Regime, Mostly in the Governorates of Latakia, Tartus, and Hama, 11 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 5-10

<sup>799</sup> UNHCR, Regional Flash Update #27 - Syria Situation Crisis, 16 May 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>800</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 27 May 2025, [url](#)



governorates, resistance of local armed groups to government control and integration into state forces,<sup>801</sup> resulted at times in clashes and casualties. In late April and early May, fighting between local Druze armed groups and pro-government forces in Rural Damascus<sup>802</sup> and Sweida resulted in more than 100 fatalities<sup>803</sup> including dozens of civilians.<sup>804</sup>

The interim government's forces have reportedly been overstretched,<sup>805</sup> operating with limited effectiveness and facing challenges from armed groups that, while nominally integrated in their structure, have been operating semi-independently.<sup>806</sup> At times, armed groups affiliated with the interim government reportedly operated outside its control<sup>807</sup> and committed violations against civilians, notably during the violence in the coastal areas in early March<sup>808</sup> and in Druze-majority areas in late April.<sup>809</sup> The interim government's forces have faced challenges in responding to sectarian violence,<sup>810</sup> kidnappings<sup>811</sup> and looting.<sup>812</sup> Revenge killings targeting individuals linked to the former Assad regime's security apparatus and the Alawite community by unidentified actors continued to be reported across multiple governorates.<sup>813</sup> Sectarian-motivated assassinations of Alawites have been particularly notable in Homs governorate.<sup>814</sup> An increase in criminal activity and lawlessness, including of kidnappings<sup>815</sup> and murders<sup>816</sup> has been reported across the areas controlled by the interim government.<sup>817</sup> This situation has been partly attributed to post-Assad security vacuum,<sup>818</sup> deep societal divides and economic hardship caused by the civil war,<sup>819</sup> the interim government's

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<sup>801</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #25, 26 May 2025, [url](#); USDOD, Lead IG Report to the U.S. Congress January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>802</sup> Syria Report (The), Attacks on Druze Residents in Damascus Suburbs and Suweida Include HLP Violations, 20 May 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #24, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>803</sup> International Crisis Group, A Helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #24, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>804</sup> Security Council Report, Syria: June 2025 Monthly Forecast, 1 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>805</sup> International Crisis Group, A Helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>806</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#); Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 28 March 2025, [url](#); ISW and CT, Iran Update, 19 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>807</sup> USDOD, Lead IG Report to the U.S. Congress January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 22-23

<sup>808</sup> SJAC, SJAC's Analysis of Atrocities Committed in Latakia and Tartous, 13 March 2025, [url](#); Zelin, A., Syria's Transitional Honeymoon Is Over After Massacres and Disinformation, TWI, 10 March 2025, [url](#); AI, Syria: Coastal massacres of Alawite civilians must be investigated as war crimes, 3 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>809</sup> International Crisis Group, Fighting in Damascus Exposes Syria's Sectarian Tensions, 2 May 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #24, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>810</sup> SJAC, The Syrian Government Must Investigate the Targeting of Alawite Civilians in Homs, 13 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>811</sup> New York Times (The), As People Are Abducted on Unpatrolled Streets, Syrians Demand Better Protection, 10 March 2025, [url](#); Davis, H., Sectarian Violence Simmers in Homs, New Lines Magazine, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>812</sup> International Crisis Group, A Helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>813</sup> SJAC, Revenge Killings Targeting Assad Regime Affiliates (December 2024 - May 2025), 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>814</sup> SJAC, The Syrian Government Must Investigate the Targeting of Alawite Civilians in Homs, 13 May 2025, [url](#); Davis, H., Sectarian Violence Simmers in Homs, New Lines Magazine, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>815</sup> Davis, H., Sectarian Violence Simmers in Homs, New Lines Magazine, 10 March 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Absence of law deterrence | 50 Alawite women missing since beginning of 2025, 18 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>816</sup> SOHR, Murder crimes | 48 civilians killed in areas controlled by Damascus government since early March, 1 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>817</sup> Haid, H., Where Does Syria's Transition Stand?, Arab Reform Initiative, 24 April 2025, [url](#); Global Protection Cluster, Syria Protection Sector - Snapshot Protection Landscape in Syria, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2; NPA, Unrest continues in Syria's Damascus: A Mayor and His Son Killed Inside Home Amid Fragile Calm, 1 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>818</sup> New York Times (The), As People Are Abducted on Unpatrolled Streets, Syrians Demand Better Protection, 10 March 2025, [url](#); Global Protection Cluster, Syria Protection Sector - Snapshot Protection Landscape in Syria, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>819</sup> International Crisis Group, A Helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

shortcomings in bringing competing armed groups under its control,<sup>820</sup> and the lack of effective transitional justice mechanisms.<sup>821</sup>

Meanwhile, Israel ‘has emerged as the most destabilising external force in post-Assad Syria’ according to International Crisis Group.<sup>822</sup> It continued to occupy the demilitarised zone in the Golan Heights and a ‘buffer zone’ in southern Syria.<sup>823</sup> Israel continued to carry out incursions and attacks in south-west Syria<sup>824</sup> and airstrikes on multiple targets, including in the vicinity of the Presidential palace in Damascus.<sup>825</sup> It has reiterated its position against the deployment of Syrian forces south of Damascus and has actively sought the support of the Druze minority in the area, offering them protection.<sup>826</sup>

In northeast Syria, the integration agreement between the interim government and SDF in early March led to a significant decline in armed confrontations between the SDF and the SNA factions nominally affiliated with the government.<sup>827</sup> However, tensions between SDF and the interim government remain<sup>828</sup> and the integration of military and civilian institutions of the DAANES into the state remained largely unresolved as of late May.<sup>829</sup>

Sporadic ISIL attacks targeting interim government’s forces,<sup>830</sup> the SDF<sup>831</sup> and civilians<sup>832</sup> particularly in Deir Ez Zor governorate, were reported during the reference period. An increase in ISIL activity and anti-ISIL operations by the interim government’s forces was reported in May.<sup>833</sup>

## 5.4. Security incidents

Between November 2024 and May 2025, the highest number of security incidents documented by ACLED occurred in the months of November 2024, December 2024 and January 2025 (see Table 1).<sup>834</sup> For a detailed analysis of the security situation prior to the fall of

<sup>820</sup> Haid, H., Where Does Syria’s Transition Stand?, Arab Reform Initiative, 24 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>821</sup> Global Protection Cluster, Syria Protection Sector - Snapshot Protection Landscape in Syria, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>822</sup> International Crisis Group, A Helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>823</sup> International Crisis Group, A Helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#); Security Council Report, Syria: Briefing and Consultations, 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>824</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #25, 26 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>825</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24, 8 May 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, A Helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>826</sup> France24, Israel launches new Syria strikes amid Druze tensions, 3 May 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, A Helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>827</sup> ACLED, ACLED Regional Overview Middle East: May 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>828</sup> Etana Syria, Brief: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #25, 26 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>829</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 20 May 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, A Helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>830</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 19 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>831</sup> Al Jazeera, ISIL group kills five Kurdish fighters in attack in eastern Syria, 28 April 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Brief: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>832</sup> SOHR, Second attack in a few hours | ISIS cells attack civilian house in rural Deir Ezzor, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>833</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>834</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)



the Assad government see [EUAA COI Report Syria – Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#) and [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

Governorate	Nov. 24	Dec. 24	1-8 Dec 24	9-31 Dec 24	Jan. 25	Feb. 25	Mar. 25	Apr. 25	May 25	Total
Hasaka	45	134	22	112	168	60	50	33	30	520
Aleppo	421	324	129	195	342	250	145	59	57	1598
Raqqa	65	88	6	82	131	107	47	29	30	497
Sweida	17	19	6	13	20	7	8	13	31	115
Damascus	3	24	8	16	9	6	8	8	11	69
Dar'a	40	97	65	32	25	34	52	48	28	324
Deir Ez-Zor	150	140	49	91	138	102	112	99	96	837
Hama	35	170	129	41	57	26	42	31	32	393
Homs	63	89	45	44	77	78	68	62	50	487
Idlib	258	43	29	14	38	22	20	25	17	423
Latakia	29	34	4	30	28	26	111	24	27	279
Quneitra	34	12	10	2	6	4	7	7	8	78
Rural Damascus	15	49	9	40	27	24	32	19	31	197
Tartous	0	20	1	19	11	11	73	7	19	141
<b>Total</b>	<b>1175</b>	<b>1243</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>1077</b>	<b>757</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>5958</b>

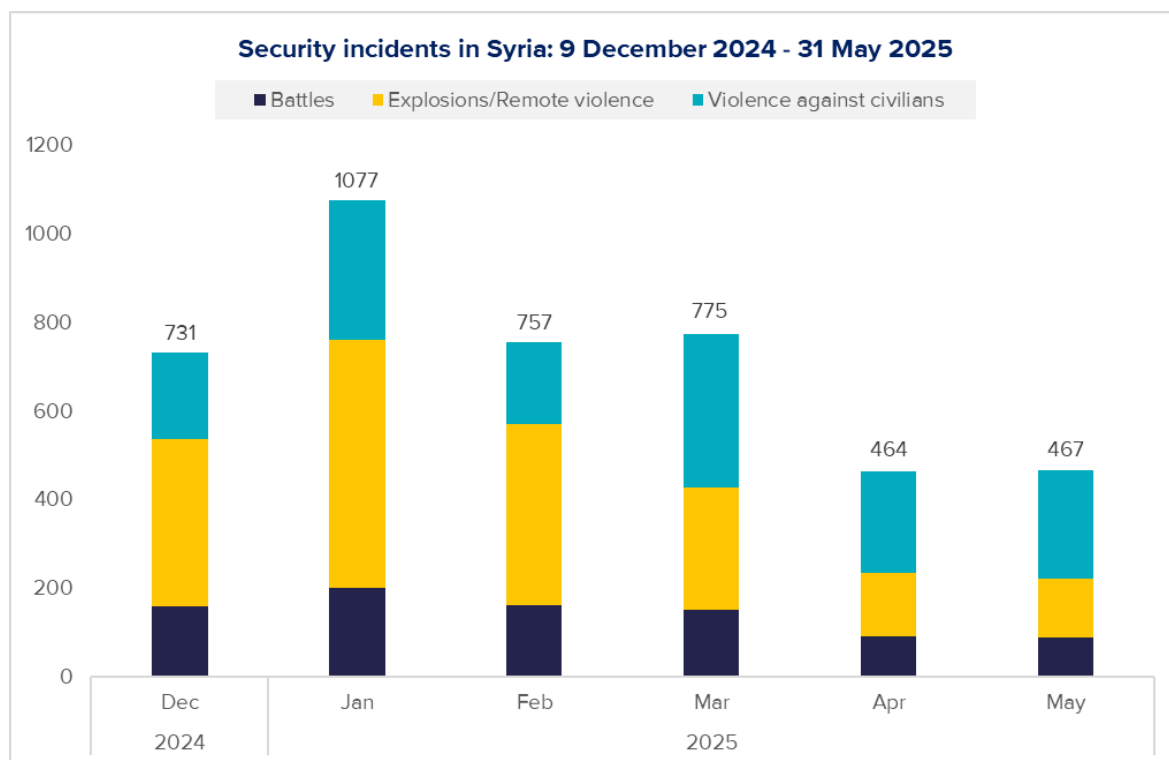
**Table 1. Number of ACLED security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ recorded between November 2024 and May 2025. Breakdown by governorate**

Between the aftermath of the fall of Assad on 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 4 271 security incidents in Syria: 846 of these were coded as battles, 1 907 as explosions/remote violence, and 1 518 as violence against civilians. Most incidents occurred in the months of January (primarily attributed to confrontations between SDF and Türkiye and Turkish-backed armed groups, and to incidents involving landmines and UXOs) and March 2025 (primarily attributed to confrontations between government forces and affiliated armed groups and anti-government militias, and to acts of violence against civilians attributed to government forces and unidentified armed groups) with significantly lower numbers recorded in April and May 2025.<sup>835</sup><sup>836</sup>

<sup>835</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

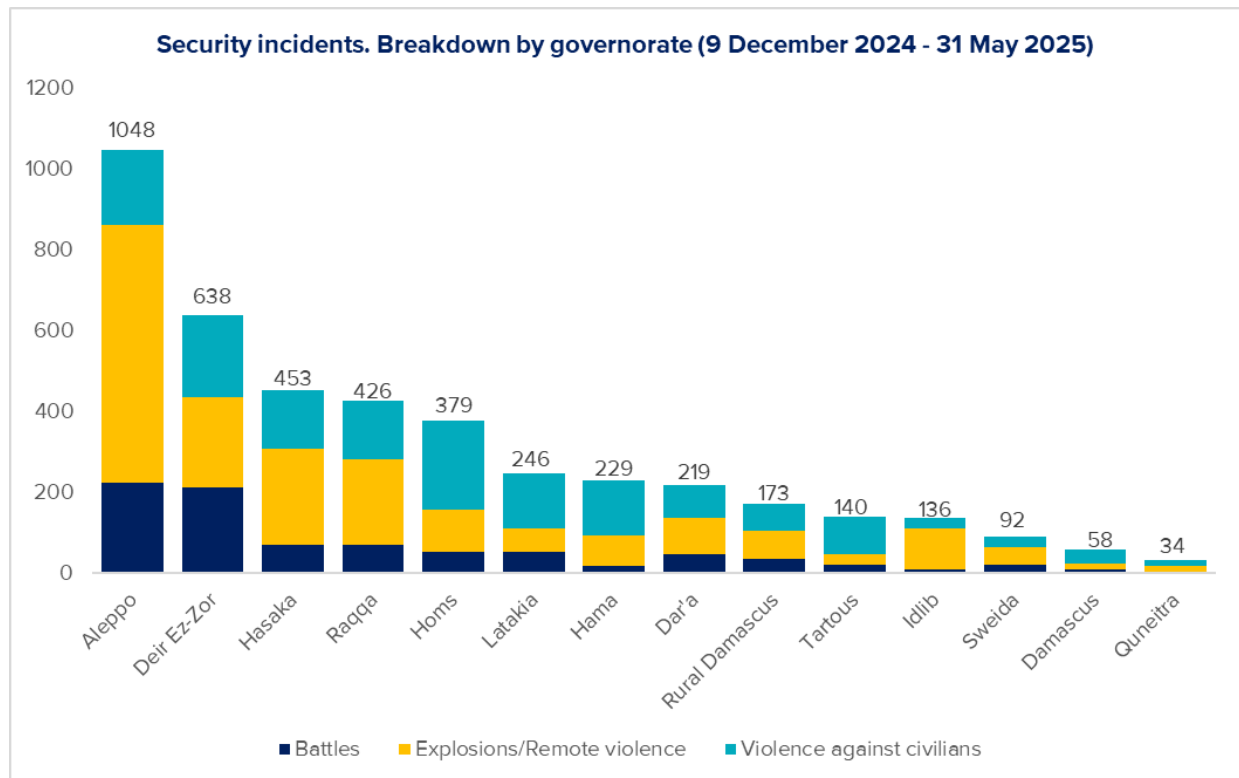
<sup>836</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)





**Figure 1. Evolution of ACLED security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025.**

During this period, ACLED recorded the highest number of security incidents in the governorates of Aleppo (1 048), Deir Ez-Zor (638), Hasaka (453) and Raqqqa (426). The lowest number of security incidents were recorded in the governorates of Quneitra (34), Damascus (58) and Sweida (92).



**Figure 2. ACLED security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ on governorate level between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025.**

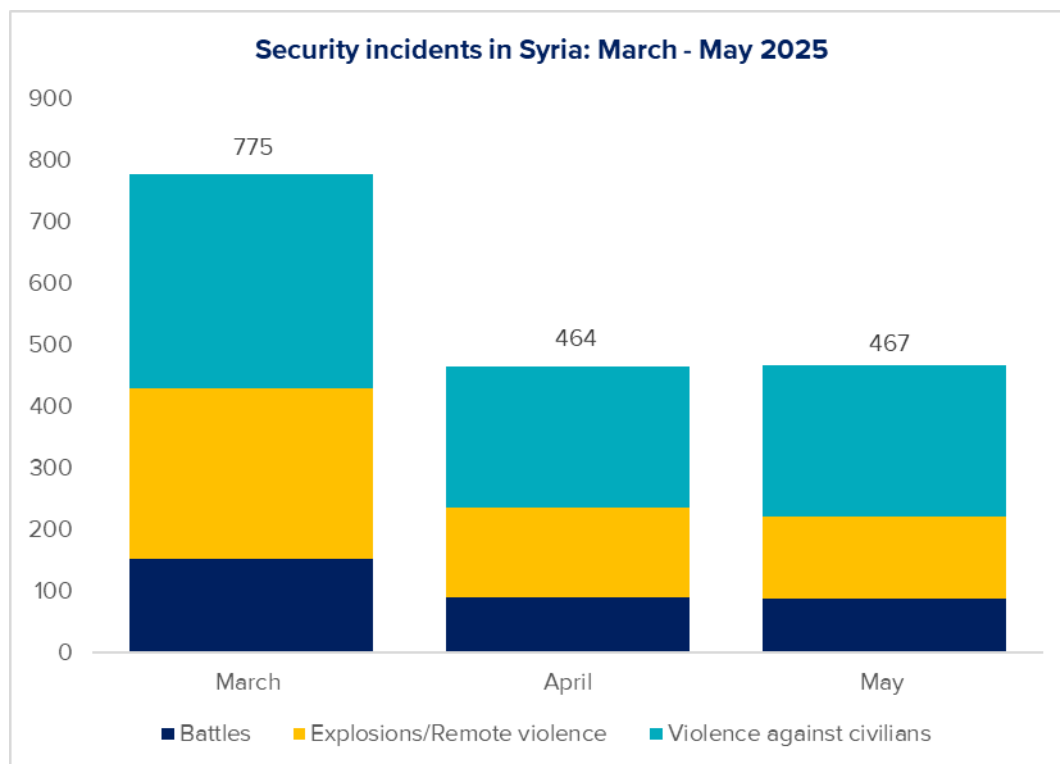
For the reference period of this report (1 March to 31 May 2025) there were 1 706 security incidents recorded by ACLED in Syria: 328 of these were coded as battles, 556 as explosions/remote violence, and 822 as violence against civilians. During this period, incidents categorised as battles primarily involved clashes between SDF and ISIL, SDF and government forces and between SDF and unidentified armed groups. Confrontations between government forces and anti-government militias, particularly in the coastal areas, were also widely reported. Most incidents coded as explosions/remote violence were attributed to landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs), as well as to military forces of Türkiye, Israel and to unidentified armed groups. The main parties involved in incidents coded as violence against civilians were unidentified armed groups (around 45 % of all such incidents), SDF and affiliated groups, and government forces.

The highest number of security incidents were recorded by ACLED in March with 775 incidents. Following this peak, there was a decline of approximately 40 % over the next two months. Most security incidents recorded by ACLED during this period took place in the governorates of Deir Ez-Zor (307), Aleppo (261), Homs (180) and Latakia (162). The lowest security incidents figures were recorded in the governorates of Quneitra (22), Damascus (27), and Sweida (52).<sup>837</sup> Most security incidents recorded in Deir Ez-Zor were attributed to landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs), as well as clashes involving SDF and ISIL, and with unidentified armed groups.

<sup>837</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

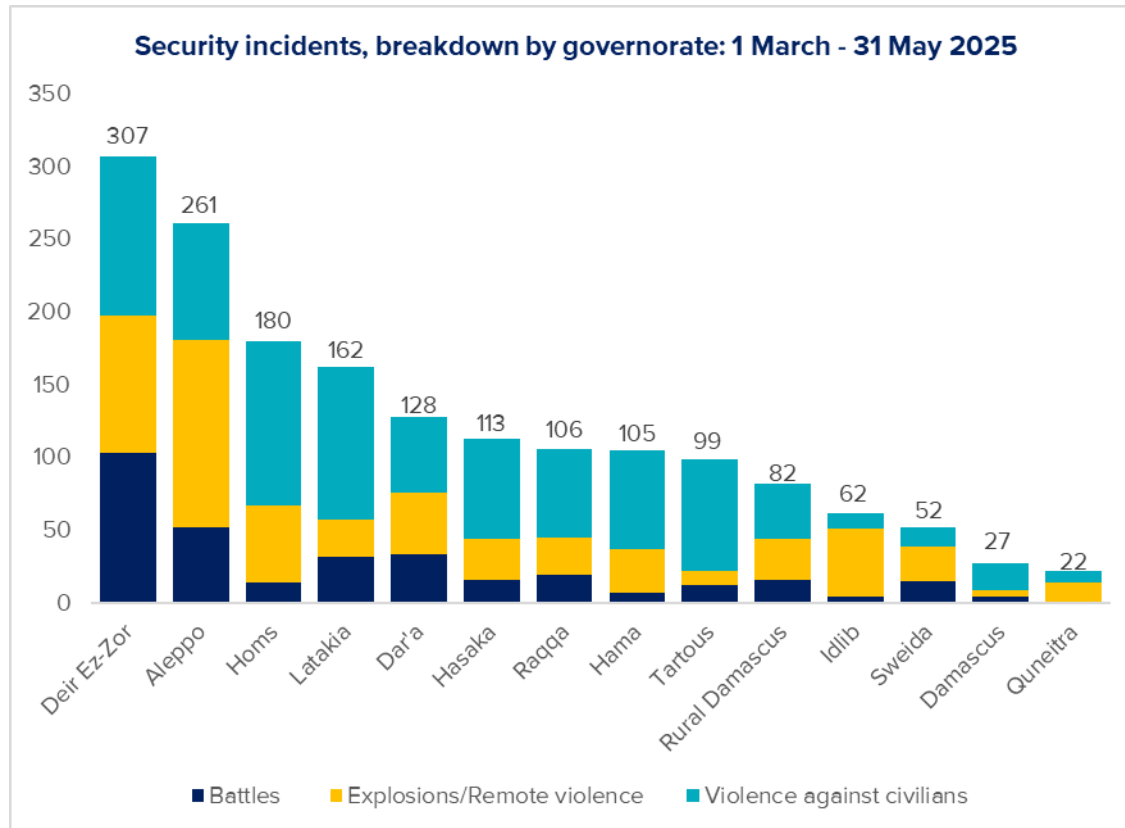


A more detailed analysis of security incidents at the governorate level can be found in the respective chapters of section [5.8](#).



**Figure 3. Evolution of ACLED security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ between 1 March and 31 May 2025.**





**Figure 4. ACLED security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ on governorate level between 1 March and 31 May 2025.**

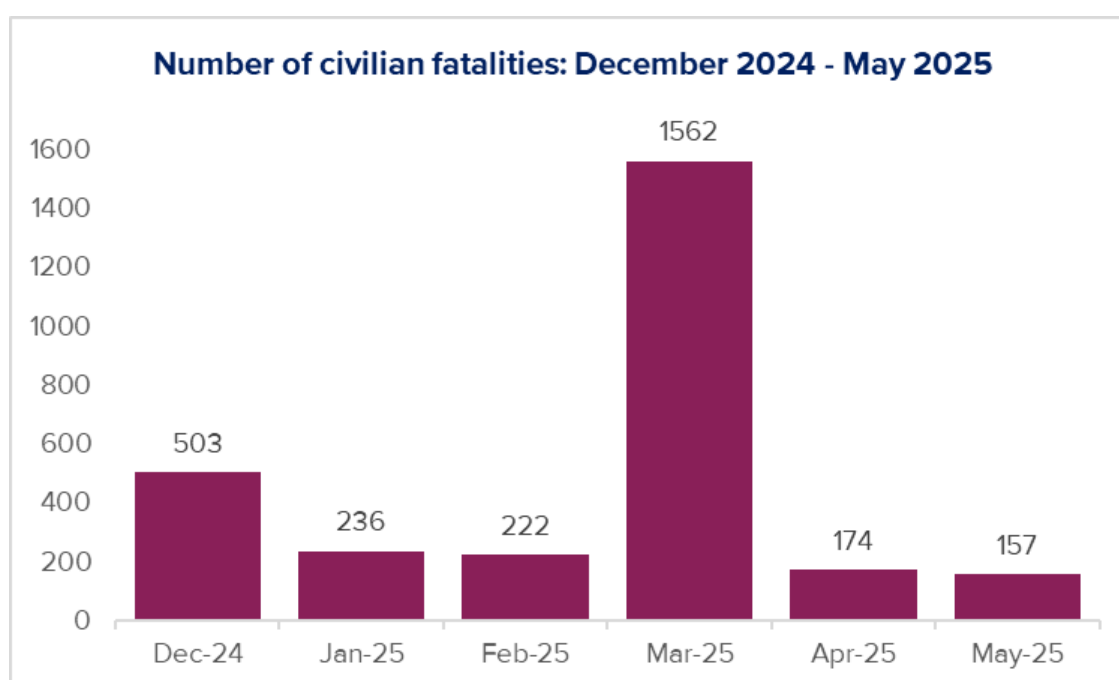
## 5.5. Civilian fatalities

Between December 2024 and May 2025, SNHR documented 2 854 civilian fatalities. The highest numbers were recorded in December 2024 (503) and March 2025 (1 562) while April (174) and May 2025 (157) had the lowest number of documented civilian fatalities. Most civilian fatalities occurred in the governorates of Latakia (631), Aleppo (444), Tartous (363), and Hama (336). Most of the fatalities documented in Latakia, Tartous and Hama occurred in March 2025, whereas Aleppo and Idlib governorates registered the highest number of civilian fatalities in December 2024. The lowest number of civilian fatalities over the reference period was documented in the governorates of Hasaka (9), Damascus (6) and Quneitra (2).<sup>838</sup>

<sup>838</sup> EUAA analysis based on SNHR reports: SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 3-4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 2-3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9; SNHR, 222 Civilian Deaths, Including 17 Children and 37 Women, as well as Nine Deaths due to Torture, Recorded in February 2025 in Syria, 1 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9; SNHR, 236 Civilian Deaths, Including 32 Children and 18 Women, as well as One Woman's Death due to Torture, Documented in Syria in January 2025, 21 Civilians Were Killed by SDF, 1 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 6-7; SNHR, 1,264 Civilian Deaths, Including 242 Children and 118 Women, as well as 86 Deaths due to Torture, Documented in Syria in 2024, 2 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9

With the exception of the months of December 2024 and March 2025, the highest number of civilian fatalities recorded by SNHR during the period between December 2024 and May 2025 was attributed to attacks by unidentified actors, landmines and UXOs.<sup>839</sup> In December 2024, in the context of the armed offensive against the Assad government and the fighting between SDF and the Turkish-backed SNA, the forces of the Assad government (223 civilian fatalities out of a total of 503) and the SDF (108 civilian fatalities out of a total of 503) were responsible for the highest number of civilian fatalities recorded by SNHR.<sup>840</sup> In March 2025, the civilian fatalities resulted from the violence in the coastal areas were mainly attributed to the forces of the interim government and affiliated armed groups (899 civilian fatalities out of a total of 1 562) and pro-Assad militias (446 civilian fatalities out of a total of 1 562).<sup>841</sup>

Further information on the security situation and civilian casualties is available in the governorate chapters.

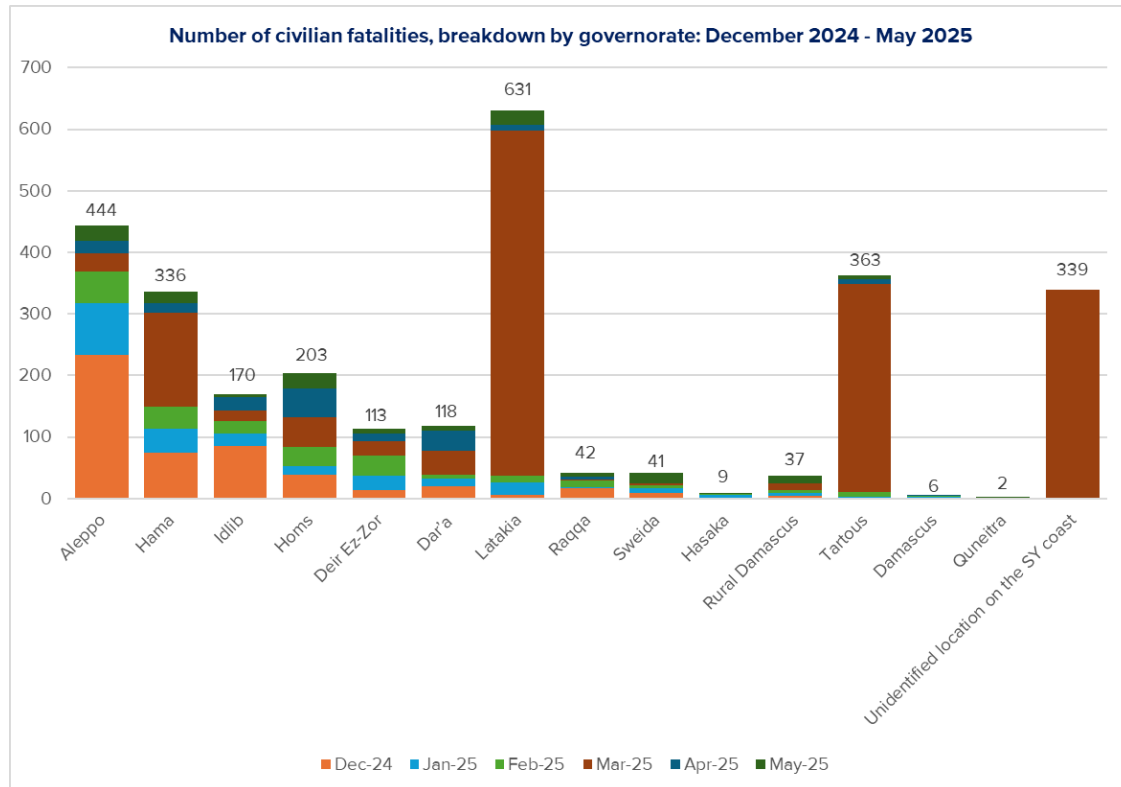


**Figure 5. Number of civilian fatalities recorded by SNHR (December 2024 – May 2025)**

<sup>839</sup> EUAA analysis based on SNHR reports: SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, 222 Civilian Deaths, Including 17 Children and 37 Women, as well as Nine Deaths due to Torture, Recorded in February 2025 in Syria, 1 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9; SNHR, 236 Civilian Deaths, Including 32 Children and 18 Women, as well as One Woman's Death due to Torture, Documented in Syria in January 2025, 21 Civilians Were Killed by SDF, 1 February 2025, [url](#), p. 7; SNHR, 1,264 Civilian Deaths, Including 242 Children and 118 Women, as well as 86 Deaths due to Torture, Documented in Syria in 2024, 2 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9

<sup>840</sup> SNHR, 1,264 Civilian Deaths, Including 242 Children and 118 Women, as well as 86 Deaths due to Torture, Documented in Syria in 2024, 2 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9

<sup>841</sup> SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

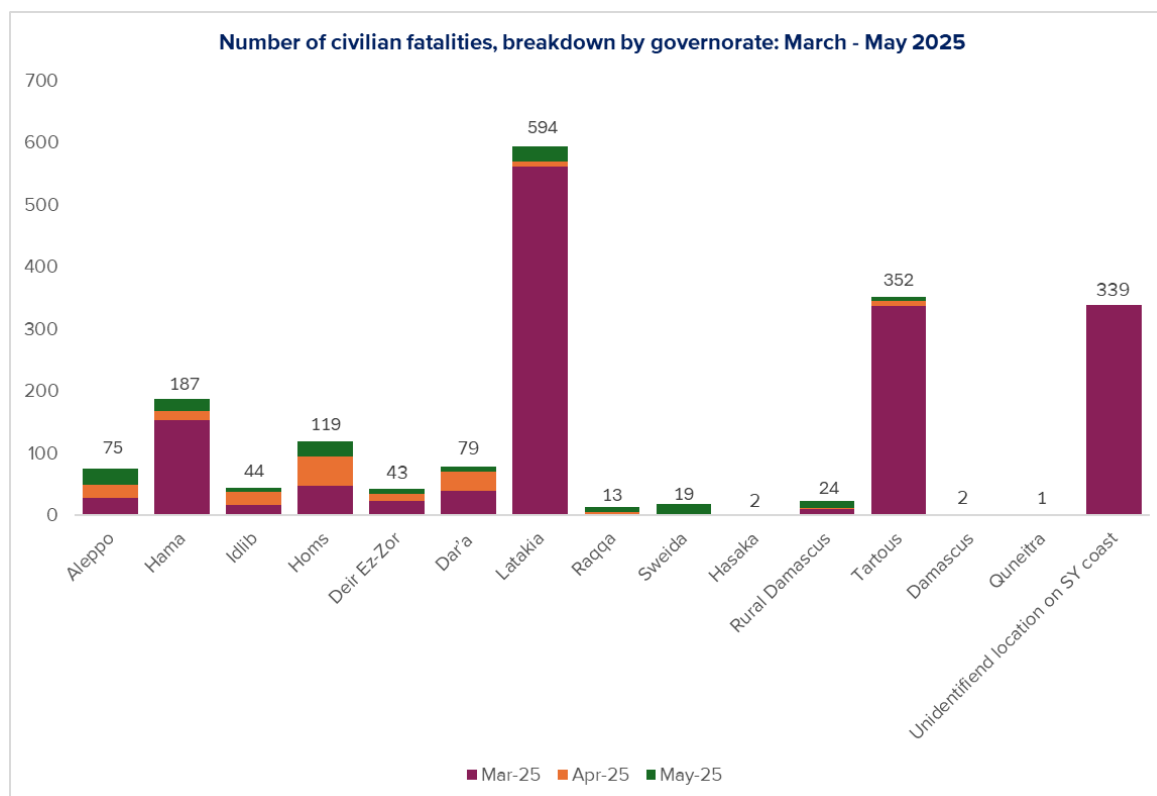


**Figure 6. Number of civilian fatalities recorded by SNHR (December 2024 – May 2025). Breakdown by governorate.**

During the reference period of this report (March – May 2025), SNHR documented 1 893 civilian fatalities. Most of them were recorded in the governorates of Latakia (594), Tartous (352), and Hama (187), and occurred primarily in the context of the violence in the coastal areas which took place in March. The lowest number of civilian fatalities was recorded in the governorates of Quneitra (1 civilian fatalities), Damascus (2 civilian fatalities) and Hasaka (2 civilian fatalities).<sup>842</sup> Further information regarding the civilian fatalities recorded in each governorate is available in section 5.8 of the report.

<sup>842</sup> EUAA analysis based on SNHR reports: SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 3-4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 2-3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9

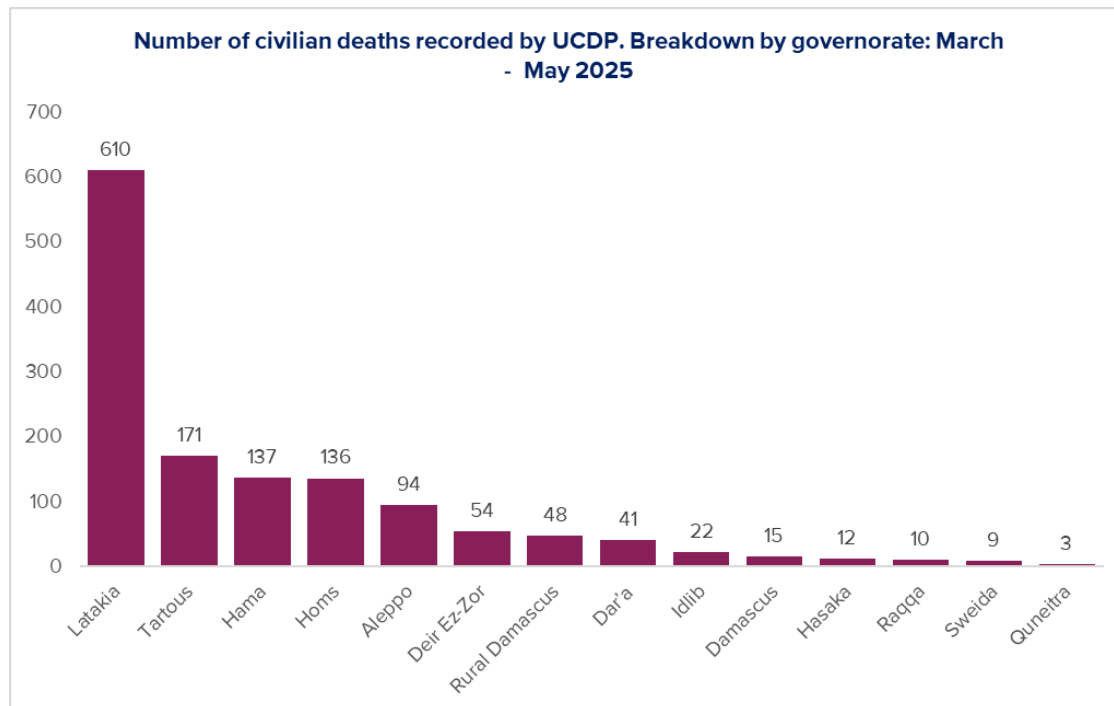




**Figure 7. Number of civilian fatalities recorded by SNHR (March – May 2025). Breakdown by governorate.**

For the same period, UCDP recorded 564 security events leading to 2 098 fatalities in Syria, out of which 1 362 were civilian fatalities. The largest number of civilian fatalities were recorded in Latakia (610), Tartous (171), Hama (137) and Homs (136) governorates. The lowest numbers of security events were recorded in Quneitra (3), Sweida (9), and Raqqa (10) governorates.<sup>843</sup>

<sup>843</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.



**Figure 8: Number of civilian fatalities recorded by UCDP (March – May 2025). Breakdown by governorate.**

## 5.6. Displacement and return

Around 1 343 232 IDPs were estimated by UNHCR to have returned between 27 November 2024 and 12 June 2025, with 533 372 departing from IDP sites since 8 December 2024.<sup>844</sup> Most IDPs returned to Aleppo, Hama, Idlib and Homs governorates. There were still 7.4 million persons estimated to remain in displacement in Syria,<sup>845</sup> 69 % of them living in host communities and the rest in IDP camps.<sup>846</sup>

Hostilities in Latakia, Tartous, Homs and Hama governorates which took place in early March initially led to the displacement of around 51 000 people, including 6 000 who fled to Lebanon. Widespread curfews and movement restrictions were imposed, including the closure of the Homs – Latakia highway, leading to the suspension of humanitarian operations.<sup>847</sup> According to UNICEF, most IDPs have since returned, although around 2 500 were estimated to remain at the Russian Hmeimim airbase in Tartous governorate.<sup>848</sup> According to UNHCR reporting in late May, people continued to flee from the aforementioned governorates to the North and Akkar governorates of Lebanon, reaching around 40 000 in total.<sup>849</sup>

<sup>844</sup> UNHCR, Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview, 16 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>845</sup> UNHCR, Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview, 16 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>846</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Situation Report No. 6 As of 27 May 2025, 2 June 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>847</sup> UNOCHA, Syria Situation Report No.4 as of 26 March 2025, 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>848</sup> UNICEF, Syria Humanitarian Situation Report No. 10, 1 - 30 April 2025, 29 May 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>849</sup> UNHCR, Regional Flash Update #28 - Syria Situation Crisis, 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3



The clashes between pro-government armed groups and Druze armed groups in late April and early May led to the displacement of 15 000 people from Rural Damascus.<sup>850</sup> As of 22 May 2025, UNCHR citing Lebanese authorities reported that 977 Syrians, most of them Druze, crossed into Lebanon since 2 May.<sup>851</sup>

## 5.7. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

A February 2025 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report stated that '50% of the country's infrastructure has been destroyed or rendered dysfunctional' due to the conflict.<sup>852</sup> According to NRC, across Syria there is widespread destruction of essential services and infrastructure including homes, agricultural land, hospitals, sewage systems, and roads, rendering many areas uninhabitable. Accessing basic services is particularly challenging in and around Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Homs, and Dar'a according to surveyed individuals by NRC. Vital water and electrical infrastructure such as the Tishreen Dam (Aleppo governorate) and the Alouk Water Station (Hasaka governorate) remained inoperable as of May 2025 after being impacted by the conflict, while access to electricity is particularly challenging in southern and central Syria.<sup>853</sup>

Unexploded ordnance (UXOs), explosive remnants of war (ERWs), mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are reportedly widespread and affect residential areas, farmland, infrastructure, and key access routes, particularly in Idlib, Deir Ez-Zor, Aleppo, Raqqa, Hasaka, and Rural Damascus governorates.<sup>854</sup> Deir Ez-Zor remains one of the most heavily contaminated areas, accounting for approximately a quarter of all such incidents.<sup>855</sup>

According to UNOCHA, there were over 1 000 civilian casualties, including 414 fatalities and 592 injuries, reported due to UXOs and ERWs between 8 December 2024 and 27 May 2025. Nearly one-third of the casualties were children.<sup>856</sup> The Mines Advisory Group (MAG) stated that the casualties resulted from landmines and UXOs in Syria between December 2024 and May 2025 represent 15 % of those reported globally for the year 2023.<sup>857</sup>

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and partners conducted 1 500 clearance operations since August 2023 and delivered 930 risk education sessions to around 17 000

<sup>850</sup> UNOCHA, At Security Council, OCHA calls for urgent funding for Syria crisis, stressing civilians "cannot endure this crisis alone", 21 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>851</sup> UNHCR, Regional Flash Update #28 - Syria Situation Crisis, 22 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>852</sup> UNDP, The Impact of the Conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>853</sup> NRC, Beyond Return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, 15 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 5-6

<sup>854</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 5 (As of 28 April 2025), 8 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>855</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Situation Report No. 6 As of 27 May 2025, 2 June 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>856</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Situation Report No. 6 As of 27 May 2025, 2 June 2025, [url](#), p. 2

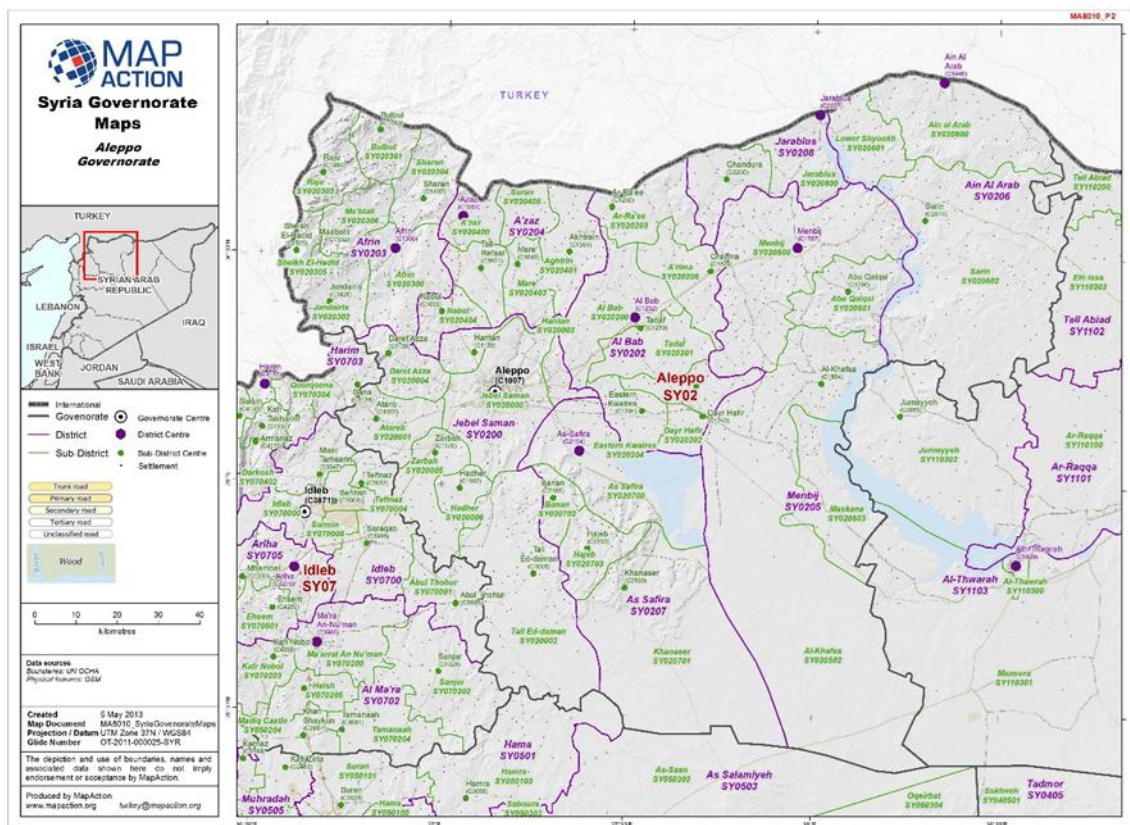
<sup>857</sup> MAG, A new landmine crisis in the Middle East, 27 May 2025, [url](#)



persons.<sup>858</sup> The Mine Action Sector in Syria remains critically underfunded, having received only 13 % of the USD 51 million required for 2024.<sup>859</sup>

## 5.8. Security situation and conflict impact on civilians by governorate

### 5.8.1. Aleppo governorate



Map 3: © MapAction, Aleppo governorate<sup>860</sup>

#### (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Aleppo governorate is divided into eight administrative districts, namely Afrin (or Efrin), Ain Al-Arab (or Kobane), Al-Bab, As-Safira, A'zaz (or Azaz), Jarabulus, Jebel Saman (Mount Simeon district) and Menbij (or Manbij), which are further divided into a total of 40 sub-districts.<sup>861</sup> Its capital is the city of Aleppo.<sup>862</sup> As of March 2025, IOM estimated the governorate's population

<sup>858</sup> UNMAS, Syria, May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>859</sup> UNMAS, Syria, May 2025, [url](#); HI, MA AoR, Protection Cluster Explosive ordnance contamination remains the main safety risk for Syrians – Syria MA AoR Situation Update No.3 (April), 13 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>860</sup> MapAction, Aleppo governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

<sup>861</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 109

<sup>862</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic [Map], August 2022, [url](#)

at 5 184 674, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad<sup>863</sup> and the WHO estimated it at 4 754 560.<sup>864</sup> For further background information on Aleppo governorate, see section 2.2.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

### **(b) Territorial control and main armed actors**

As of late May 2025, the south-western part of Aleppo governorate bordering Idlib governorate was mapped by the ISW and CTP as being under the control of the transitional administration. However, there was one small pocket west of Aleppo city where pro-Assad remnants maintained a presence. In the cities Afrin, A'zaz, Al-Bab and Menbij as well as around the Tishreen dam the transitional administration was reportedly present. The north-western and northern parts of the governorate bordering Türkiye were mapped as being under control of the Turkish-backed SNA,<sup>865</sup> which together with other armed factions has formally come under the control of the MoD.<sup>866</sup> In March 2025, the transitional government claimed that the country's armed factions, including the SNA, had been integrated into the Syrian army. In practice, however, the SNA did not appear to be fully under the command and control of the new Syrian Defence Ministry<sup>867</sup> or to have dissolved.<sup>868</sup> Please see section [1.3.2 \(a\)](#) of this report for further information on the integration process of the SNA into the new Syrian army.

The north-eastern and eastern parts of Aleppo governorate were mapped as being largely under control of the SDF, though some eastern areas around the Khafsah Water Treatment Plant and west of the Jirah Air Base were marked as being contested between the SNA and the SDF.<sup>869</sup> According to the ISW and CTP, these were areas where both the SDF and the SNA conducted offensive and defensive manoeuvres, while neither group fully controlled the areas.<sup>870</sup> One area in the south-eastern part of the governorate was mapped as 'Lost Regime Territory'.<sup>871 872</sup> In March 2025, the GPC reported that the transitional government and SNA groups dominated most of northern Syria, including Aleppo governorate, while the SDF retained parts of the country's northeast.<sup>873</sup>

Following of the signing of the agreement between SDF and the transitional government on 10 March 2025, ISW and CTP reported that Kurdish forces reduced their military presence in

<sup>863</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 2 – March 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>864</sup> WHO, Health Sector Syria - Health Sector Bulletin - March 2025, 2 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>865</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>866</sup> Waters, G., Are Damascus' New Security Reforms a form of Federalism?, Syria Revisited, 18 May 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Syria gives armed groups 10 days to integrate into defense ministry, 18 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>867</sup> International Crisis Group, A Glimmer of Peace in Syria's North East, 28 March 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 21, 2025, 21 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 9-10; Guardian (The), 'The streets are empty, no one dares go outside': Syria's Alawites terrorised by revenge killings, 15 Mach 2025, [url](#)

<sup>868</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 21, 2025, 21 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 9-10

<sup>869</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>870</sup> ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, as of 13 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>871</sup> This term refers to territory that used to be controlled by the former government under President Assad until 27 November 2024 and where, as of writing, the ISW lacked sufficient data to map the presence of other group(s) that presumably have taken over control since November 2024. ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, 2025, [url](#)

<sup>872</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>873</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 1

Aleppo city.<sup>874</sup> In early April 2025, a temporary deal was reached between the transitional government and the SDF, allowing transitional government forces to move into SDF areas of Aleppo city and operate alongside Kurdish forces.<sup>875</sup> A Rudaw article from early April 2025 noted that both sides had agreed that the Asayish, the internal security forces affiliated with the SDF, remained present in the predominantly Kurdish neighbourhoods of Ashrafiyeh and Sheikh Maqsood<sup>876</sup> in Aleppo city.<sup>877</sup> The New Arab reported in mid-April that SDF forces were supposed to withdraw from the two neighbourhoods and head towards north-eastern Syria,<sup>878</sup> and individual reports indicated that former Asayish members had been integrated into the local police forces.<sup>879</sup>

In early April 2025, Agence France-Presse (AFP) reported that, according to a Syrian Defence Ministry official, pro-Turkish Syrian groups had reduced their presence in Afrin district following the March 2025 deal.<sup>880</sup> It was also reported that general security forces had been deployed in Afrin city by early April 2025.<sup>881</sup>

Furthermore, aerial activity of military forces of Türkiye was reported in the reference period,<sup>882</sup> including in the Tishreen Dam area of Menbij district<sup>883</sup> and around the Qara Qozak bridge near the city of Ain Al-Arab.<sup>884</sup>

Non-state armed groups in the governorate whose activities or presence were reported during the reference period include ISIL<sup>885</sup> and Saraya Ansar Al-Sunnah,<sup>886</sup> a Sunni sectarian group that has claimed attacks targeting Alawites<sup>887</sup> and has signalled its ideological alignment with ISIL.<sup>888</sup> Furthermore, the formation of the new 'Special Accountability Task Force' in Aleppo governorate,<sup>889</sup> formed by armed men from former opposition groups who intended to pursue remnants of the Assad government, was reported in the reference period.<sup>890</sup>

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<sup>874</sup> New York Times (The), Kurds' Distrust Runs Deep For New Leaders of Syria, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>875</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: March 2025 – May 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>876</sup> The two neighborhoods have been largely administrated by the SDF since 2015; New Arab (The), In post-Assad Syria, Kurdish-led SDF impose media blackout on Aleppo neighbourhoods, 12 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>877</sup> Rudaw, Efforts underway to restore security in Afrin, release prisoners: Syrian official, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>878</sup> New Arab (The), In post-Assad Syria, Kurdish-led SDF impose media blackout on Aleppo neighbourhoods, 12 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>879</sup> Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes (KW15/2025), 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>880</sup> AFP, Pro-Türkiye Syria groups reduce presence in Kurdish area: official, 8 April 2025

<sup>881</sup> Rudaw, Efforts underway to restore security in Afrin, release prisoners: Syrian official, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>882</sup> New York Times (The), Kurds' Distrust Runs Deep For New Leaders of Syria, 29 April 2025; ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 21, 2025, 21 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9

<sup>883</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 28, 2025, 28 April 2025, [url](#), p. 4; ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 24, 2025, 24 March 2025, [url](#), p. 12; ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 10, 2025, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>884</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 24, 2025, 24 March 2025, [url](#), p. 12; ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 12, 2025, 12 March 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 6, 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>885</sup> Security Council Report, June 2025 Monthly Forecast – Syria, 1 June 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, At least three killed as Syrian forces raid ISIL hideouts in Aleppo, 17 May 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, 27 May 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>886</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 14, 2025, 14 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>887</sup> BBC Monitoring, Briefing: New Syria jihadist group claims ongoing attacks on Alawites, 21 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>888</sup> BBC Monitoring, Briefing: New Syria-based group signals alignment with IS, 19 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>889</sup> Waters, G., Syria Revisited: Rebuilding Security in New Syria: Week 20, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>890</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: April 15-22, 2025, 24 April 2025, [url](#)





### (c) Security trends

The International Crisis Group reported in March 2025 that the transitional administration forces were able to quickly expand their presence in several parts of Syria, particularly in central cities like Aleppo, where they succeeded in restoring confidence and preserving calm.<sup>891</sup>

Unidentified armed men shot and killed civilians in the governorate in the reference period.<sup>892</sup> In March and April 2025, the Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies reported of a rise in targeted assassinations,<sup>893</sup> with a sharp surge in mid-April.<sup>894</sup> Incidents of kidnappings, raids, arrests and security operations against illegal drug traders in Azaz and Bab were also reported,<sup>895</sup> as were armed clashes.<sup>896</sup> The Harmoon Center also reported an increase in criminality and the pursuit of Assad government remnants in the governorate in April.<sup>897</sup>

In early March, the number of Turkish airstrikes around the Tishreen Dam and the Qara Qozak Bridge, as well as armed engagements between the SDF and Turkish-backed forces, decreased following the PKK's ceasefire announcement on 1 March.<sup>898</sup> However, in the second week of March, an escalation in Turkish airstrikes against SDF positions in eastern Aleppo was reported, resulting in 'some of the highest daily death tolls in weeks'.<sup>899</sup> As of mid-March 2025, Türkiye had conducted aerial attacks on SDF positions in several Syrian governorates, including in Aleppo, on an almost daily basis since December 2024.<sup>900</sup> Furthermore, clashes were reported between the SDF and Turkish-backed SNA forces near the Tishreen Dam in Menbij district and near the Qara Qozaq Bridge to the south of Ain Al-Arab city,<sup>901</sup> two locations over which the SNA had attempted to gain control.<sup>902</sup> Clashes between the SDF and the SNA around the Tishreen Dam had been ongoing for months by early April 2025.<sup>903</sup> According to ACLED, confrontations between the SNA and the SDF

<sup>891</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>892</sup> SOHR, Armed attack | Man shot dead in Aleppo countryside, 22 May 2025, [url](#); ANHA, مقتل 5 أشخاص في سوريا خلال يوم [Five persons killed in Syria in one day], 10 May 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Three civilians were killed and another injured after being shot by unknown gunmen in the city of Azaz in the Aleppo countryside on May 7, 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Security chaos | Civilian executed in front of his family in Aleppo, 2 May 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Man named Wael Shamma fatally shot by unidentified gunmen in Aleppo, April 29, 2025, 1 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Security vacuum | Young man shot dead in eastern Aleppo, 27 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>893</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Harmoon Center Monitoring Report for March 2025, 20 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>894</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Harmoon Center Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>895</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Harmoon Center Monitoring Report for March 2025, 20 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>896</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Harmoon Center Monitoring Report for March 2025, 20 April 2025, [url](#); Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Harmoon Center Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>897</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Harmoon Center Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>898</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 3, 2025, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>899</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>900</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 21, 2025, 21 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9

<sup>901</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025, 8 March 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 25, 2025, 25 March 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>902</sup> US, CRS, Syria: Transition and U.S. Policy, 11 March 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>903</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#)



sharply declined after the 10 March agreement was signed by the transitional government and the SDF (see section [5.1.1](#)), coinciding with fewer Turkish airstrikes on SDF areas.<sup>904</sup>

Following the aforementioned agreement in March 2025, Turkish aerial attacks continued, including an attack on Ain Al-Arab in March that killed a family of 11. However, shortly afterwards, Türkiye and its affiliated forces largely suspended attacks on SDF positions.<sup>905</sup> In late March, Etana Syria reported that, although there were ‘signs of cautious support’ from Türkiye for the agreement, the shelling of SDF positions in eastern Aleppo by Turkish-backed forces continued, including in the Tishreen Dam area. Turkish airstrikes on SDF targets<sup>906</sup> and retaliatory SDF attacks on SNA positions near the dam and the Qara Qozag Bridge also continued.<sup>907</sup> Agreements signed between the SDF and the transitional government, including a ceasefire agreement signed on 12 April, aim to create a demilitarised or buffer zone in the Tishreen Dam area.<sup>908</sup> According to UNOCHA, the agreements led to an improved security situation in parts of the governorate, with a reduction in attacks affecting civilians and civilian infrastructure.<sup>909</sup> However, relations between the two parties had ‘rapidly deteriorated’ by late April, as the SDF had stepped back on its promises to withdraw forces and had begun imposing new conditions.<sup>910</sup> Referring to social media sources, ISW and CTP stated that neither Türkiye, nor the SNA nor the transitional government forces had attacked the SDF near the Tishreen Dam since early April.<sup>911</sup>

SNHR reported incidents of abductions of minors by the SDF-affiliated Revolutionary Youth (Al-Shabiba Al-Thawriya) in Aleppo governorate in the reference period.<sup>912</sup>

Sources reported sporadic attacks by the group Saraya Ansar al-Sunnah between March and April 2025 in Aleppo governorate.<sup>913</sup>

#### **(d) Security incidents**

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 1 048 security incidents in Aleppo governorate, the highest number of any governorate (see Figure 9). For the period between 1 March 2025 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 261 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, and violence against civilians) in Aleppo governorate. Of

<sup>904</sup> ACLED, ACLED Regional Overview Middle East: May 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>905</sup> New York Times (The), Kurds' Distrust Runs Deep For New Leaders of Syria, 29 April 2025

<sup>906</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update 22: 24 March 2025, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>907</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #23: 31 March 2025, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>908</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 8, 2025, 8 April 2025, [url](#), p. 6; Etana Syria, BRIEF: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: March 2025 – May 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>909</sup> UNOCHA, At Security Council, UN Deputy Relief Chief urges greater support for Syria as millions remain in crisis, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

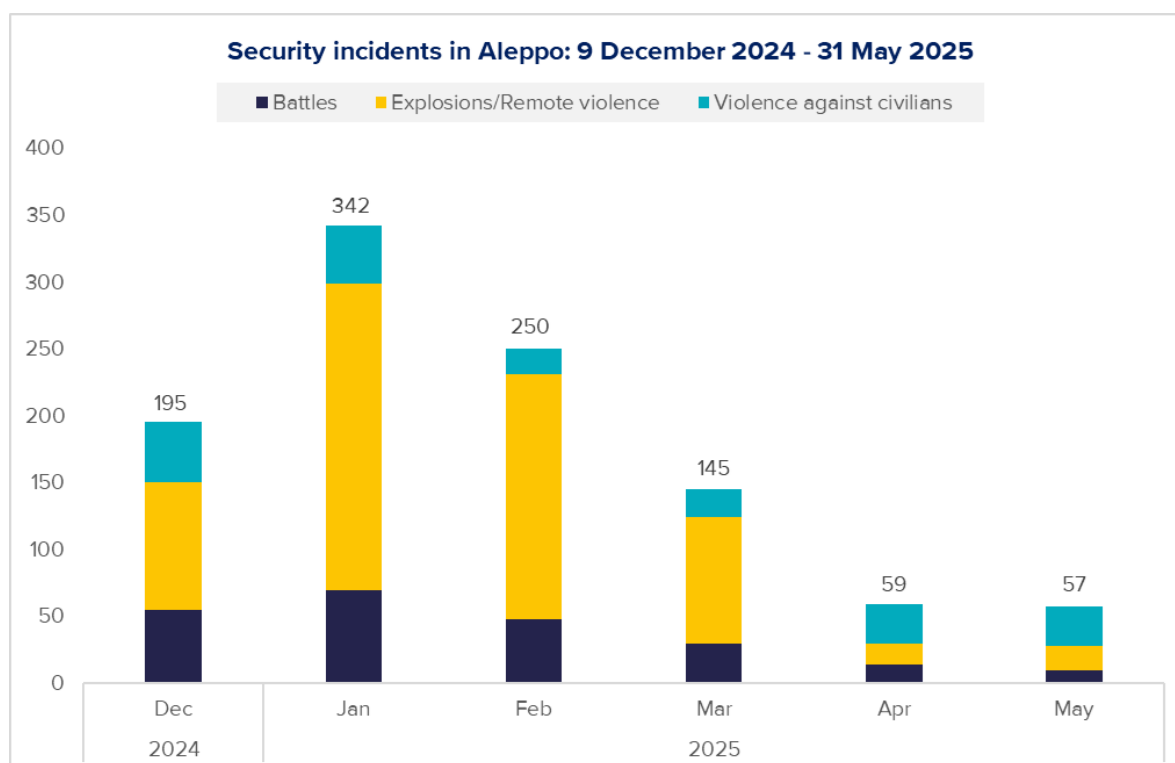
<sup>910</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>911</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 28, 2025, 28 April 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>912</sup> SNHR, The Syrian Democratic Forces kidnapped the child Ahmed Hamoudi for forced recruitment in the Sheikh Maqsoud neighborhood of Aleppo on May 5, 2025, 19 May 2025, [url](#); SNHR, The Syrian Democratic Forces kidnapped the child Asaad Ali for forced conscription in Aleppo on May 7, 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#); SNHR, SDF abducts a girl named Najma Sheikh Mohammad in Aleppo, April 20, 2025, 21 April 2025, [url](#); SNHR, SDF abducts a girl named Sulava Qader in Aleppo, April 10, 2025, 10 April 2025, [url](#); SNHR, SDF abducts a girl named Hanan Abdou in Aleppo, April 5, 2025, 5 April 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Girl named Rusela Mohammad Qawwas abducted by SDF in Aleppo, March 27, 2025, 29 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>913</sup> BBC Monitoring, Briefing: New Syria jihadist group claims ongoing attacks on Alawites, 21 April 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 14, 2025, 14 April 2025, [url](#)

these, 129 were coded as explosions/remote violence, 80 as incidents of violence against civilians, and 52 as battles. The majority of the incidents occurred in March (145 incidents).<sup>914</sup>



**Figure 9: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Aleppo governorate between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, based on ACLED data.**<sup>915</sup>

During the reference period, security incidents were recorded by ACLED in all eight districts of the governorate, with the highest number documented in the district of Ain Al-Arab (101 incidents), followed by Jebel Saman (54 incidents) and Menbij (35 incidents). By comparison, the fewest incidents were recorded in As-Safira district (7 incidents). According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were the main actor involved in around 40 % of all recorded security incidents (coded as either ‘Actor1’ or ‘Actor2’) during the reference period, particularly in incidents coded as violence against civilians, where civilians were shot and killed, and as explosions/remote violence caused by landmines and IEDs. Military forces of Türkiye were involved in around 28 % of all security incidents, also particularly in incidents coded as explosions/remote violence. SDF were involved in around 24 % of all security incidents, mainly in incidents coded as battles (where military forces of Syria were also often an actor) and in incidents coded as explosions/remote violence, while military forces of Syria were involved in 20 % of all security incidents, mainly in incidents coded as battles, and police forces of Syria were involved in 5 % of all security incidents. The Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK) was

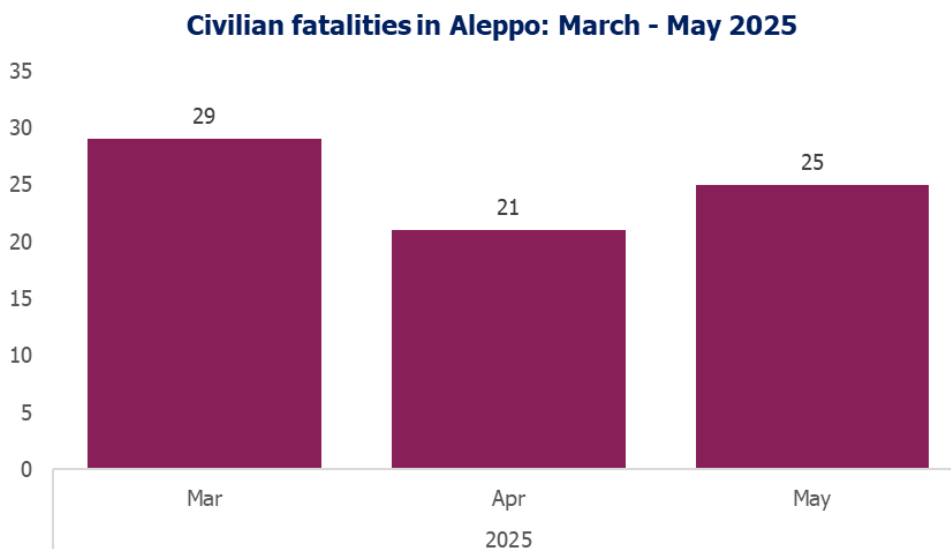
<sup>914</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>915</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

responsible for 3 % of all security incidents (8 incidents), all of which were coded as violence against civilians and were cases of abductions of minors.<sup>916</sup>

#### (e) Civilian casualties

In March 2025, the SNHR recorded 29 civilian fatalities in Aleppo governorate, accounting for around 2 % of the total number (1 562) recorded across all governorates,<sup>917</sup> in April 2025, SNHR recorded 21 civilian fatalities,<sup>918</sup> and in May 2025, 25 civilian fatalities were recorded in the governorate.<sup>919</sup> For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 94 civilian fatalities in Aleppo governorate.<sup>920</sup>



**Figure 10: Civilian fatalities in Aleppo governorate between March and May 2025. Monthly breakdown based on SNHR data.<sup>921</sup>**

#### (f) Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

According to GPC and UNICEF, as of March 2025, fighting around the Tishreen Dam had kept the dam non-functional since December 2024. This affected the access to pumped water and electricity of over 400 000 people in Menbij and Ain Al-Arab districts.<sup>922</sup> In mid-March 2025,

<sup>916</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>917</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-10

<sup>918</sup> SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>919</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>920</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.

<sup>921</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>922</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8; UNICEF, Whole of Syria WASH Cluster: Advocacy note on Water Access Crisis in Kobani/AinArab, Ein Issa and Manbij – Aleppo and Raqqah Governorates, Syria (24 March 2024), 24 March 2025, [url](#), p. 1

UNOCHA reported that most civil and cadastral offices in the governorate remained non-functional as the situation in Aleppo remained volatile, among others due to ERW threats.<sup>923</sup> In late March 2025, a petrol station in the town of Sarrin was reportedly hit by shells fired by Turkish-backed forces.<sup>924</sup>

The Syria Civil Defence was quoted by Enab Baladi as saying that following Idlib, Aleppo was one of the governorates witnessing the highest numbers of incidents relating to remnants of war between 27 November 2024 and 14 March 2025.<sup>925</sup> Detonations of unexploded ordnance caused civilian deaths and injuries in rural northern Aleppo,<sup>926</sup> including in Menbij district,<sup>927</sup> and in rural eastern Aleppo.<sup>928</sup> In March 2025, GPC reported that the majority of unexploded ordnance accidents since December 2024 in several governorates, including in Aleppo, had occurred 'in agricultural settings as people were trying to cultivate land or graze animals'.<sup>929</sup> UNOCHA reported in May 2025 that UXOs, ERWs, mines and IEDs are 'reportedly widespread and affect residential areas, farmland, infrastructure, and key access routes' particularly in a handful of Syrian governorates, including in Aleppo.<sup>930</sup> The same month, the MAG reported that the extensive use of cluster munitions and deployment of air-dropped bombs in Aleppo governorate during the Syrian war often led to 'massive UXO contamination'.<sup>931</sup> In an April 2025 article, NPA reported that according to the MoD western rural Aleppo, including Andan, Hreitan and Kafr Hamra, were heavily contaminated by landmines and UXO and that 'northwestern neighborhoods of Aleppo city and former frontline agricultural zones and roads' were also affected.<sup>932</sup>

#### **(g) Conflict-induced displacement and return**

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, there were 1 545 049 IDPs living in the governorate and 467 198 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024.<sup>933</sup> As of March 2025, intensified hostilities in the vicinity of the Tishreen Dam had resulted in the displacement of 20 000 people.<sup>934</sup> According to GPC, major return areas in Aleppo governorate were characterised by frequent security incidents, infrastructure damage and contamination by explosive ordnance.<sup>935</sup>

<sup>923</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 3 (As of 10 March 2025), 12 March 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>924</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update 22: 24 March 2025, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>925</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria: 80 civilians killed by war remnants in four months, 15 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>926</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance | Child dies affected by his injuries in northern Aleppo countryside, 12 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Civilian dies and five children injured in Aleppo and Qamishli, 8 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Young man dies in landmine explosion in Aleppo countryside and two injured in Al-Raqqa, 4 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Civilian dies in explosion of landmine in northern Aleppo countryside, 22 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>927</sup> SOHR, Death toll update | 10 civilians died and injured in landmine explosion in Aleppo, 23 April 2025, [url](#);

SOHR, Old ordnance | Four civilians killed and injured in Aleppo countryside, 23 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>928</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance | Three civilians, including little girl, injured in eastern Aleppo countryside, 11 May 2025, [url](#);

SOHR, Landmine explosion | Member of "National Army" killed in east Aleppo countryside, 20 April 2025, [url](#);

SOHR, Old ordnance | Two young men killed in east Aleppo countryside, 30 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>929</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>930</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 5 (As of 28 April 2025), 8 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>931</sup> MAG, A new landmine crisis in the Middle East, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>932</sup> NPA, Mines remain widespread in northwestern Syria – Ministry of Defense, 24 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>933</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview [Map], 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>934</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>935</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 3



UNHCR further estimated that a total 197 265 returnees who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate by 15 May 2025, with the vast majority (25 137) returning to Jebel Saman district, followed by Al-Bab (5 683) and Menbij (5 121). Since 8 December 2024, 103 629 individuals had returned to Aleppo governorate from abroad.<sup>936</sup>

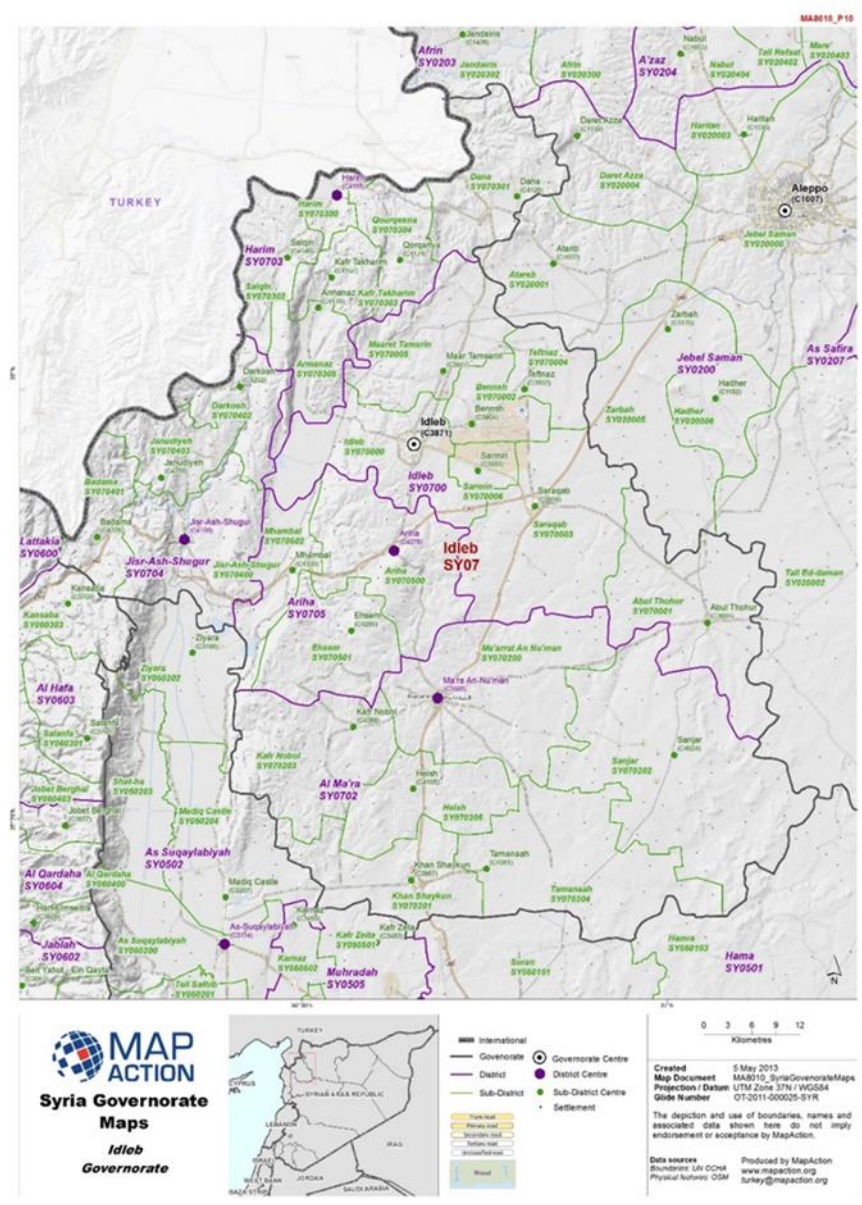
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<sup>936</sup> UNHCR, Syrian returnees' figures by sub-districts - data 15 May 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#)





## 5.8.2. Idlib governorate



Map 4: © MapAction, Idlib governorate<sup>937</sup>

### (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Idlib governorate is divided into five administrative districts (Al Ma'ra, Ariha, Harim, Idlib, and Jisr-Ash-Shugur), which are further divided into a total of 26 sub-districts.<sup>938</sup> The governorate's capital is Idlib city.<sup>939</sup> As of March 2025, the population of Idlib governorate was 2 848 168,

<sup>937</sup> MapAction, Idlib governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

<sup>938</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 108-109

<sup>939</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic [Map], August 2022, [url](#)



including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad, according to IOM estimates.<sup>940</sup> In comparison, the WHO estimated Idlib's population at 3 179 920 as of March 2025.<sup>941</sup> For further background information on Idlib governorate, see section 2.1.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

### **(b) Territorial control and main armed actors**

As of 30 May 2025, a map by the ISW and the CTP showed Idlib governorate as being under control of the HTS-led interim government. A few pockets of territory in the southern and western border regions were shown as having a 'Pro-Regime Insurgent Presence'.<sup>942</sup>

The GPC noted in March 2025 that while a transitional government had been established, the country remained 'fragmented among various armed actors', with Idlib governorate being dominated by HTS and other armed groups formed within the SNA.<sup>943</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat mentioned a battalion of mainly Uyghur fighters headed by a former leader of the Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), that was now integrated into the armed forces under the MoD and was stationed between Idlib and rural Latakia.<sup>944</sup> New Lines Magazine similarly mentioned 'foreign jihadists' having settled in Idlib city.<sup>945</sup> The Al-Ghuraba ('The Foreigners') division, led by a French jihadist, was reportedly based in Harem town in the north of the governorate.<sup>946</sup>

### **(c) Security trends**

In early March 2025, transitional government forces launched targeted security operations and created checkpoints across the governorate to increase security in the region. The Harmoon Center noted that Idlib, compared to other governorates, appeared 'relatively stable', with the new security forces keeping 'firm control', despite occasional external threats.<sup>947</sup> Pro-Assad insurgents presumably killed an HTS commander and two fighters loyal to the interim government in two separate incidents on 22 and 24 March 2025, respectively.<sup>948</sup> At the same time, GSS launched security operations targeting 'regime remnants',<sup>949</sup> including in Khan Sheikhoun town, arresting several individuals loyal to the former government who had refused to disarm,<sup>950</sup> and in Jisr Al-Shughur, where they arrested about 15 individuals accused of collaborating under the former government. In Jisr Al-Shughur pro-Assad forces had killed about 25 people, mostly interim government forces, in a 'coordinated attack' at the beginning of March 2025.<sup>951</sup> Security operations were also reported

<sup>940</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 2 – March 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>941</sup> WHO, Health Sector Syria - Health Sector Bulletin - March 2025, 2 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>942</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>943</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>944</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat, Foreign Fighters in Syria: Problem or Part of the Solution?, 16 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>945</sup> New Lines Magazine, Islamism Is Still Thriving in Idlib, 12 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>946</sup> Enab Baladi, Future prospects for French fighters in Syria, 13 May 2025, [url](#); Daraj, Omar Diaby, The French Jihadist Who Retired in Idlib, 3 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>947</sup> Harmoon Center, Harmoon Center Monitoring Report for March 2025, 20 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>948</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 24, 2025, 24 March 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>949</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #23: 31 March 2025, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>950</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 24, 2025, 24 March 2025, [url](#), p. 7; New Arab (The), Syrian forces crack down on Assad loyalists in Idlib, Lebanon minister to discuss borders issue, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>951</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 24, 2025, 24 March 2025, [url](#), p. 7



from the Jabal al-Zawiya area in southern Idlib governorate,<sup>952</sup> where operations intensified in early April 2025, resulting in the eventual arrest of several pro-Assad fighters. Moreover, following information from intelligence sources, security forces increased the number of checkpoints around Idlib city to block the entry of ‘dangerous elements’. By mid-April, however, security forces had reportedly managed to improve relations with the local population and opened recruitment for local individuals.<sup>953</sup>

In May 2025, the MAG pointed to the high number of landmine and UXO casualties (see below, section [5.8.2\(f\)](#)) with one clinic in Idlib reportedly having treated 500 victims since December 2024.<sup>954</sup>

A former leader of Hurras Al-Din, an armed group affiliated with Al-Qaeda, was reportedly killed in a drone strike by the US-led International Coalition in early March 2025,<sup>955</sup> and in May 2025, the director of the Idlib Security Directorate reported on a security operation against an ISIL cell in the governorate, killing one member of the group and injuring another.<sup>956</sup> For further information on the events in early March 2025, see section 4 of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#).

#### (d) Security incidents

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 136 security incidents in Idlib governorate (see Figure 11). In the period between 1 March and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 62 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) in Idlib governorate. Of these incidents, 4 were coded as battles, 47 as explosions/remote violence, and 11 as violence against civilians.<sup>957</sup>

<sup>952</sup> NPA, Security Operation in Idlib Targets Alleged Assad Collaborators, 1 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>953</sup> Harmoon Center, Harmoon Centre Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 7-8

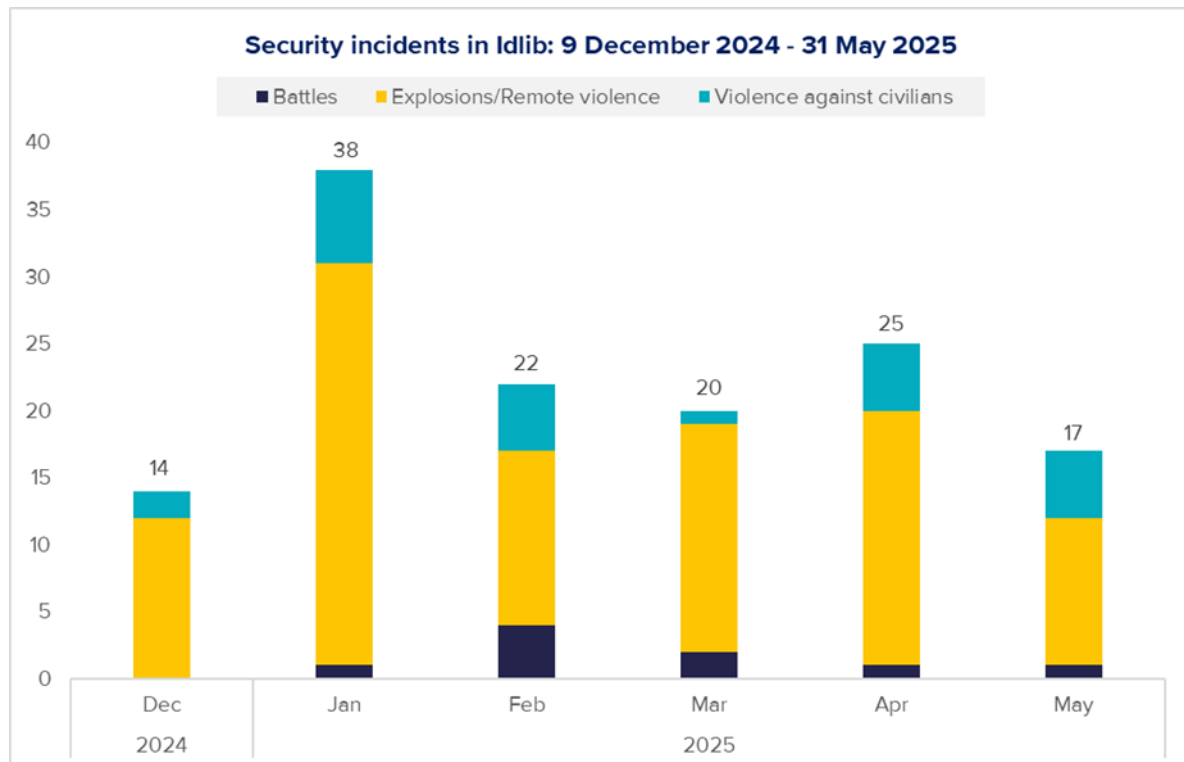
<sup>954</sup> MAG, A new landmine crisis in the Middle East, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>955</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #20: 2 March 2025, 2 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>956</sup> Cradle (The), “إدلب في ضربة يتلقى “داعش” و.. سوريا في روسية قاعدة على هجوماً تتبنى “الفرات بركان”, “Burkan al-Furat” claims responsibility for an attack on a Russian base in Syria, and “ISIS” suffers a blow in Idlib], 23 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>957</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)





**Figure 11: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Idlib governorate between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, based on ACLED data.<sup>958</sup>**

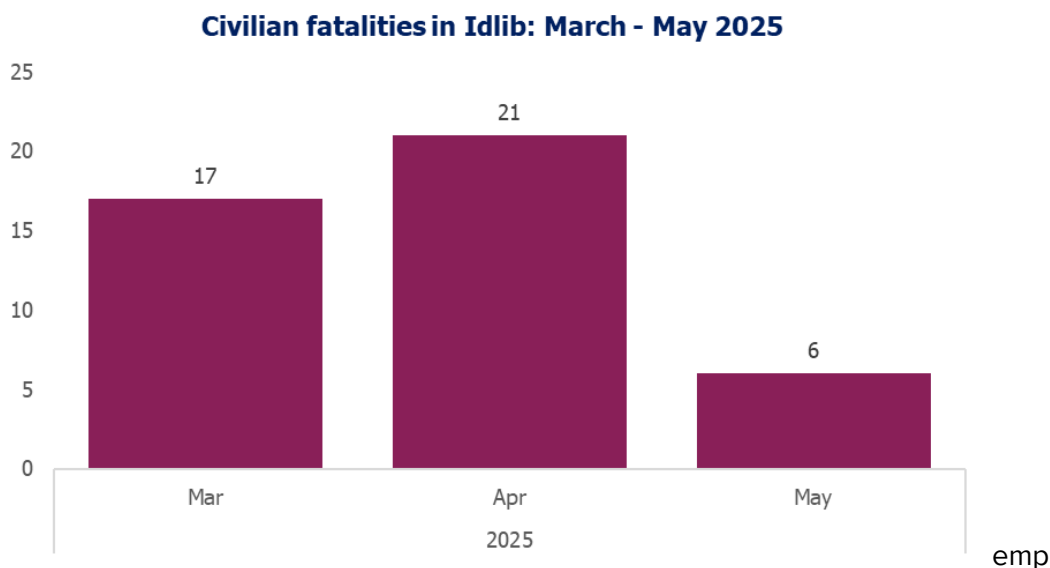
During the reference period, security incidents were recorded in all five districts of the governorate. The highest number of such incidents was recorded in Al Ma’ra (33 security incidents), followed by Idlib district (16 security incidents), while the fewest security incidents were recorded in Ariha and Harim districts (3 and 4 security incidents, respectively). According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were involved as a main actor (coded as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’) in slightly more than 95 % of all security incidents recorded during the reference period, particularly in incidents coded as explosions/remote violence, which, in most cases, referred to the detonation of landmines or other explosive ordnances left behind from previous battles, affecting civilians, as well as in incidents coded as violence against civilians. Military and Police Forces were involved in slightly more than 11 % of security incidents. In the majority, these were incidents coded as battles or explosions/remote violence also involving unidentified armed groups and referred to incidents where police or military forces were attacked by unknown gunmen or affected by the detonation of explosives previously planted by unknown armed groups.<sup>959</sup>

<sup>958</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>959</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

### (e) Civilian casualties

In March 2025, the SNHR recorded 17 civilian fatalities in Idlib governorate.<sup>960</sup> In April 2025, SNHR recorded 21 civilian fatalities in the governorate.<sup>961</sup> In May 2025, the number of civilian fatalities recorded by SNHR decreased to 6.<sup>962</sup> SNHR does not provide more detailed information on these fatalities. For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 22 civilian fatalities in Idlib governorate.<sup>963</sup>



**Figure 12: Civilian fatalities in Idlib governorate between March and May 2025. Monthly breakdown based on SNHR data.**<sup>964</sup>

### (f) Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Parts of rural Idlib were reportedly of particular concern in terms of the presence of remnants of war, such as landmines<sup>965</sup> and ammunition.<sup>966</sup> In one incident reported by TNH, an unexploded rocket was found in a village.<sup>967</sup> Between 1 March 2025 and 31 May 2025, various sources reported on civilians being killed or injured by the explosion of a landmine or remnant

<sup>960</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>961</sup> SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 6-7

<sup>962</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>963</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.

<sup>964</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>965</sup> Al Jazeera, Landmines continue to claim lives in post-Assad Syria, 21 April 2025, [url](#); TNH, Mines: The deadly legacy of Syria's war, 10 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>966</sup> SNHR, Boy named Abdul Hamid al-Azraq killed, his two siblings injured by the explosion of war remnants in S. Idlib, March 18, 2025, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>967</sup> TNH, Mines: The deadly legacy of Syria's war, 10 April 2025, [url](#)

of war.<sup>968</sup> The victims included children,<sup>969</sup> and, for example, civilians herding sheep,<sup>970</sup> collecting firewood,<sup>971</sup> or cleaning a well.<sup>972</sup> The Syrian Civil Defence explained to Enab Baladi that the rural areas of Idlib were among those with the highest number of incidents involving war remnants between 27 November 2024 and 14 March 2025.<sup>973</sup> According to the GPC, the agricultural sector was particularly affected, especially in areas such as rural Idlib and other former frontline areas, where mine clearing actors faced challenges to access them.<sup>974</sup>

Refugees International noted in a report of May 2025 that only 500 families had returned to Mar'at Numman town since December 2024, since the town lacked basic infrastructure such as a water management system, a bakery, or a hospital, which had been destroyed in airstrikes. Water and food had to be delivered to the residents from Idlib City, more than 15 kilometres away.<sup>975</sup> A survey of March 2025 found that among IDPs planning to return to frontline districts in Idlib and Hama governorates (Al Ma'ra and Suqaylabiyah, respectively), 95 % reported that their homes were 'severely damaged or destroyed'.<sup>976</sup>

### **(g) Conflict-induced displacement and return**

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, there were 1 208 927 IDPs living inside IDP sites and 753 696 IDPs residing outside of IDP sites in Idlib governorate, as well as 175 161 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024.<sup>977</sup> UNHCR further estimated that a total of 87 646 returnees who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate by 15 May 2025, with the vast majority of them returning to Idlib district (60 817), followed by Harim district (11 748 individuals). Since 8 December 2024, 66 447 individuals had returned to Idlib governorate from abroad, the majority of them to Idlib city.<sup>978</sup>

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<sup>968</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance! Child killed in Idlib countryside, 27 May 2025, [url](#); SNHR, A Child Identified as Mustafa al-Ashqar was Killed by a Landmine Explosion in the Village of Deir al-Sharqi in Idlib Suburbs on May 10, 2025, 12 May 2025, [url](#); NPA, Landmine blast kills child in Syria's Hama, 22 April 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance! Civilian killed and another injured by landmine explosion in Idlib countryside, 11 April 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Five civilians injured by a landmine of unidentified source in S. Idlib, March 23, 2025, 25 March 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance! Child dies and civilian injured in explosion of w\*a\*r remnants in Idlib, 14 March 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Man named Mohammad al-Zahrani killed by a landmine of unidentified source in S. Idlib, March 8, 2025, 10 March 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Man injured by the explosion of a shell in S. Idlib, March 3, 2025, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>969</sup> SNHR, A Child Identified as Mustafa al-Ashqar was Killed by a Landmine Explosion in the Village of Deir al-Sharqi in Idlib Suburbs on May 10, 2025, 12 May 2025, [url](#); NPA, War Remnants Kill Civilian, Injure Children in Northwest Syria, 6 May 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Boy killed, girl injured by a landmine in Idlib, April 23, 2025, 25 April 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Girl named Sham al-Hmadi killed by a landmine in E. Idlib, April 3, 2025, 4 April 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Boy named Mustafa al-Nader killed by a landmine of unidentified source in S. Idlib, March 17, 2025, 17 March 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Three children killed by a landmine of unidentified source in S. Idlib, March 7, 2025, 9 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>970</sup> SNHR, Boy identified as Mohammad al-Alloush killed by a landmine in Idlib, April 21, 2025, 23 April 2025, [url](#); ANHA, 18 killed in Syria due to security chaos and war remnants, 22 April 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Man injured by a landmine of unidentified source in E. Idlib, March 3, 2025, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>971</sup> Kurdistan 24, Deadly Legacy of War: Landmines and Explosive Ordnance Threaten Civilians in Syria, 3 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>972</sup> NPA, War Remnants Kill Civilian, Injure Children in Northwest Syria, 6 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>973</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria: 80 civilians killed by war remnants in four months, 15 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>974</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 4, 8

<sup>975</sup> Refugees International, Beyond the Fall: Rebuilding Syria After Assad, May 2025, [url](#), p. 13

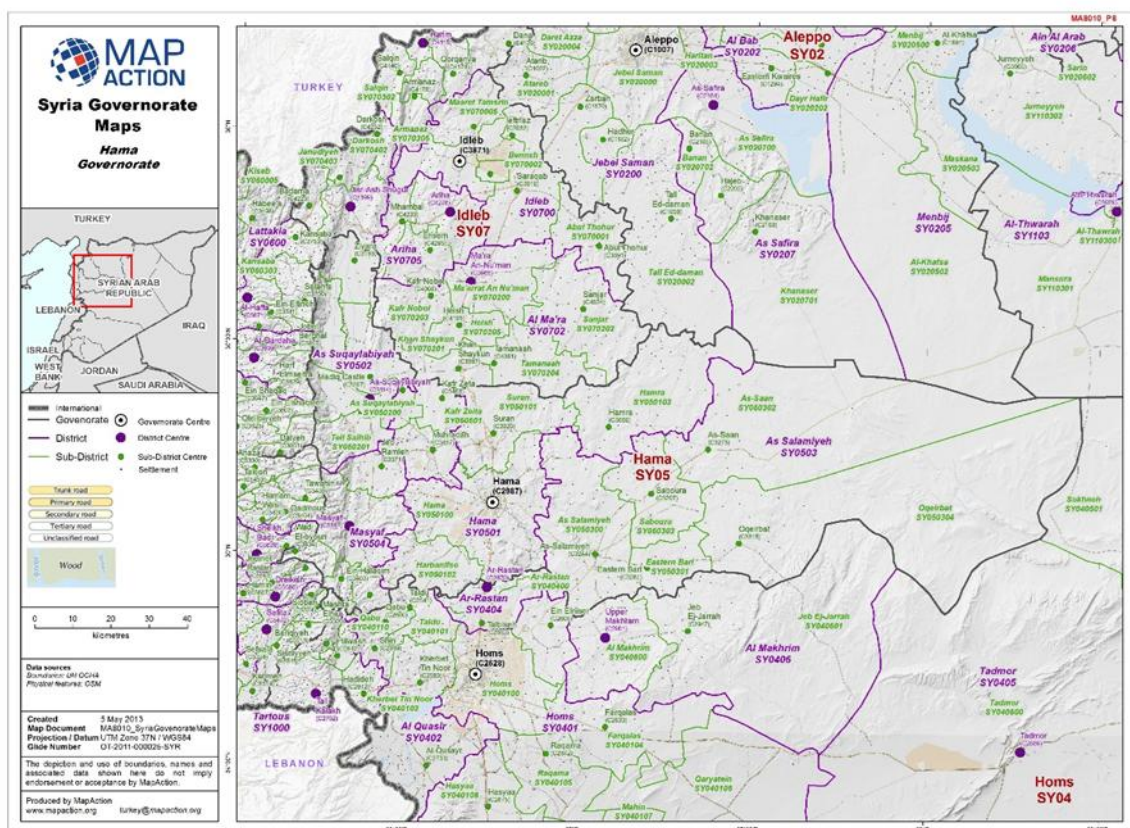
<sup>976</sup> UNHCR et al., Northwest Syria IDP Intention Survey Key Findings, 12 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>977</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview [Map], 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>978</sup> UNHCR, Syrian returnees' figures by sub-districts – data 15 May 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#)



### 5.8.3. Hama governorate



Map 5: © MapAction, Hama governorate<sup>979</sup>

#### (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Hama governorate is divided into five administrative districts, namely As-Salamiyeh, As-Suqaylabiyah, Hama, Masyaf, and Muhradah, which are further divided into a total of 22 sub-districts.<sup>980</sup> The governorate's capital is Hama city.<sup>981</sup> As of March 2025, IOM estimated the governorate's population at 1 718 829, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad.<sup>982</sup> In comparison, the WHO estimated Hama's population at 1 524 494 as of March 2025.<sup>983</sup> For further background information on Hama governorate, see section 2.3.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

<sup>979</sup> MapAction, Hama governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

<sup>980</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 108

<sup>981</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic [Map], August 2022, [url](#)

<sup>982</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 2 – March 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>983</sup> WHO, Health Sector Syria - Health Sector Bulletin - March 2025, 2 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7



## **(b) Territorial control and main armed actors**

As of 30 May 2025, a map by the ISW and CTP showed Hama governorate as being largely under control of the HTS-led transitional administration. A small part along the area bordering Homs governorate in the east was mapped as being ‘Lost Regime Territory’.<sup>984</sup>

Non-state armed groups that were reportedly active in Hama governorate during the reporting period include Saraya Ansar Al Sunnah, a sectarian Sunni militia,<sup>985</sup> that as of April 2025 claimed to have launched a campaign targeting members of the former Assad government.<sup>986</sup> Other pro-Assad armed groups active in Hama governorate included the Syrian Popular Resistance around the Jabal Al-Alawiyin and Masyaf<sup>987</sup>, the so-called Coastal Shield Forces – a splinter group of the Syrian Popular Resistance – headed by Miqdad Fatiha, a former commander of the Republican Guard,<sup>988</sup> and the Military Council for the Liberation of Syria, headed by Ghayth Dallah, a former officer of the SAA’s Fourth Division led by the former president’s brother Maher Al-Assad.<sup>989</sup> Following attacks by the Coastal Shield Forces (also: Coastal Shield Brigade) on military and security positions in the coastal regions in early March 2025, security forces, with the support of military forces, raided several villages in the area, including in Hama governorate, to track individuals involved in the attacks.<sup>990</sup> The Syrian army’s 62<sup>nd</sup> Division was reportedly operating in Hama governorate as of May 2025, led by Abu Amsha,<sup>991</sup> the former commander of the Sultan Suleiman Shah Division (also known as Amshat).<sup>992</sup>

Israel carried out airstrikes targeting military facilities in Hama governorate in April<sup>993</sup> and May 2025.<sup>994</sup>

## **(c) Security trends**

On 6 March 2025, armed groups linked to former president Assad and his government attacked security and military forces in the coastal region (see below, sections [5.8.4 Latakia governorate](#) and [5.8.5 Tartous governorate](#)) and Hama governorate. The security operations launched by government forces in response to these attacks escalated into violence, often of ‘retaliatory and sectarian nature’,<sup>995</sup> mainly targeting Alawi communities. Violence included

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<sup>984</sup> The term ‘Lost Regime Territory’ refers to territory that used to be controlled by the former government under President Assad until 27 November 2024 and where, as of writing, the ISW lacked sufficient data to map the presence of other group(s) that presumably have taken over control since November 2024 [ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, 2025, [url](#)]; ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>985</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 5, 2025, 5 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>986</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 21, 2025, 21 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>987</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 7, 2025, 7 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 2-3

<sup>988</sup> TWI, Syria’s Transitional Honeymoon Is Over After Massacres and Disinformation, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>989</sup> Arab Center Washington DC, Timeline of the Recent Sectarian Strife on Syria’s Coast, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>990</sup> Harpoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Clashes on the Syrian Coast: The Facts and The Fallout, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>991</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 6, 2025, 6 May 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>992</sup> FDD’s Long War Journal, Profiles of commanders in the new Syrian army’s regional divisions, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>993</sup> Arab Weekly (The), Israel strikes Hama and Homs military bases, infrastructure in Syria, 3 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>994</sup> Al Jazeera, More Israeli strikes on Syria reported after Damascus warns of escalation, 2 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>995</sup> SNHR, Preliminary Report on the Violations that Took Place in the Wake of the Attacks Carried Out by Non-State Armed Groups Linked to the Assad Regime, Mostly in the Governorates of Latakia, Tartus, and Hama, 11 March 2025, [url](#), p. 1

extrajudicial killings,<sup>996</sup> random shooting at homes, mass arrests targeting men over the age of 18, and the raiding and burning down of houses in Homs (see below, section 5.8.6) and western rural Hama, including Al-Bustan, Jeb Ramla,<sup>997</sup> and Al-Rasafa villages.<sup>998</sup> In Al-Rasafa, pro-Assad 'regime remnants' had started with attacking a convoy outside the village, using spilt oil on the road to aggravate the steering of vehicles. In this village alone, 63 residents were killed, according to the Christian Science Monitor (CSM).<sup>999</sup> SNHR recorded the killing of 49 persons by armed forces involved in military operations (irregular factions and organisations nominally affiliated with the MoD) in Hama governorate between 6 and 10 March 2025. Victims included 15 children, 10 women and one medical worker.<sup>1000</sup>

The International Crisis Group noted that General Security forces had quickly managed to extend their control over several parts of the country, including the capital Damascus and other central cities like Hama. However, unrest had been simmering in some areas since the fall of the Assad regime, where the transitional administration struggled to maintain control, including in rural Hama. Numerous revenge killings and abductions, predominantly targeting Alawites, and the authorities' general inability to maintain public safety had contributed to a 'sense of state persecution' particularly among that group and further undermined public safety and trust.<sup>1001</sup>

In April 2025, Israel Defence Forces (IDF) carried out airstrikes targeting the military airport in the city of Hama, reportedly destroying the facility and injuring dozens of civilians and military personnel.<sup>1002</sup> According to the Associated Press (AP), the airstrikes targeted an airbase where Türkiye reportedly had 'interests in having a military presence'.<sup>1003</sup> Further IDF airstrikes on Hama city in May 2025 targeted the headquarters of the 47<sup>th</sup> Brigade, a military base formerly linked to the 'Ba'ath regime', according to the Hawar News Agency (ANHA).<sup>1004</sup> For further information on the events in early March 2025, see section 4 of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#).

#### (d) Security incidents

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 229 security incidents in Hama governorate (see Figure 13). For the period between 1 March and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 105 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence

<sup>996</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: Armed Clashes & Sectarian Violence on Syria's Coast, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>997</sup> SNHR, Preliminary Report on the Violations that Took Place in the Wake of the Attacks Carried Out by Non-State Armed Groups Linked to the Assad Regime, Mostly in the Governorates of Latakia, Tartus, and Hama, 11 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 10-11

<sup>998</sup> CSM, In Syria's terrorized Alawite region, competing narratives, mutual suspicions, 28 March 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Preliminary Report on the Violations that Took Place in the Wake of the Attacks Carried Out by Non-State Armed Groups Linked to the Assad Regime, Mostly in the Governorates of Latakia, Tartus, and Hama, 11 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 10-11

<sup>999</sup> CSM, In Syria's terrorized Alawite region, competing narratives, mutual suspicions, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1000</sup> SNHR, Preliminary Report on the Violations that Took Place in the Wake of the Attacks Carried Out by Non-State Armed Groups Linked to the Assad Regime, Mostly in the Governorates of Latakia, Tartus, and Hama, 11 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 5-6

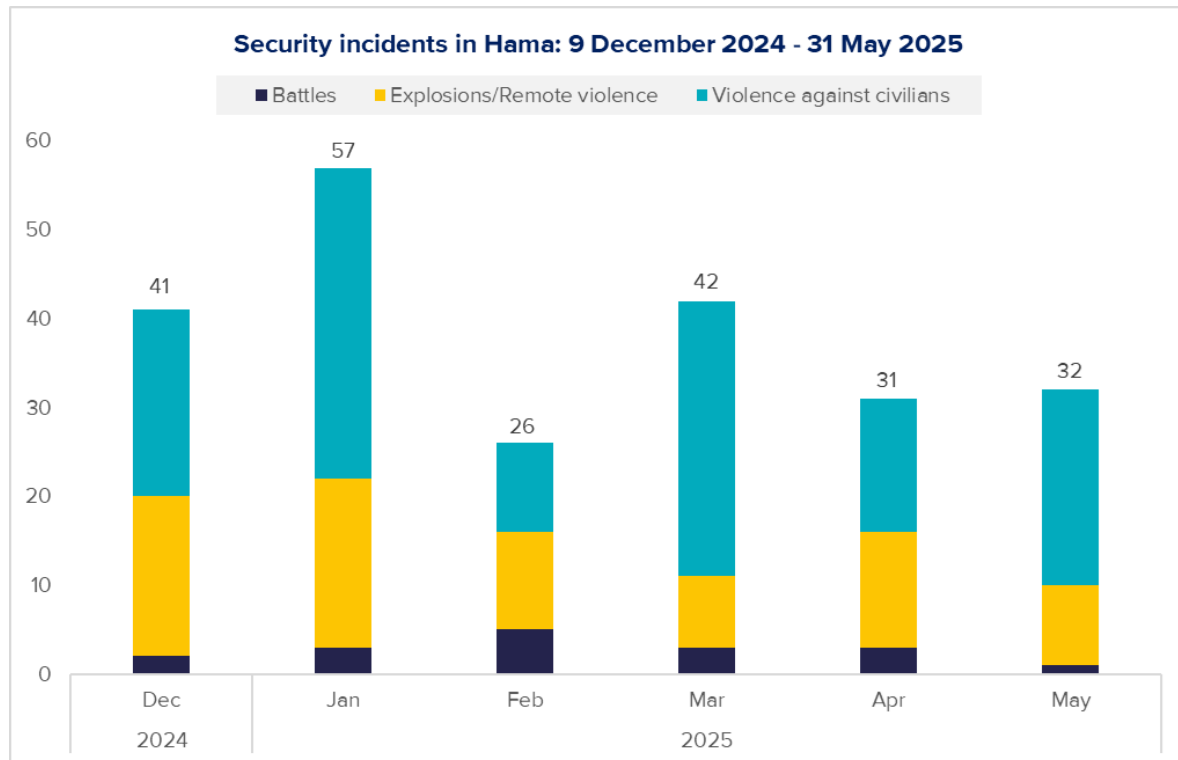
<sup>1001</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1002</sup> Arab Weekly (The), Israel strikes Hama and Homs military bases, infrastructure in Syria, 3 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1003</sup> AP, Israeli strikes kill 9 in southwestern Syria, 4 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1004</sup> ANHA, New Israeli strike targets a military base in Hama, Syria, 3 May 2025, [url](#)

against civilians) in Hama governorate. Of these incidents, 7 were coded as battles, 30 as explosions/remote violence and 68 as violence against civilians.<sup>1005</sup>



**Figure 13: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Hama governorate between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, based on ACLED data.**<sup>1006</sup>

During the reference period, security incidents were recorded in all five districts of the governorate. The highest number of such incidents was recorded in Hama (49 security incidents), followed by As-Suqaylabiyah (19 security incidents) and As-Salamiyeh (17 incidents). The fewest incidents were recorded in Muhradah district (7 security incidents). According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were involved as a main actor (coded as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’) in almost 70 % of all security incidents recorded during the reference period, particularly in incidents coded as ‘violence against civilians’ and ‘explosions/remote violence’, where in most cases civilians were also involved. Military and police forces of Syria were involved in almost 27 % of all recorded incidents, particularly in incidents coded as violence against civilians and battles. Most incidents coded as violence against civilians were recorded in March 2025 and referred to incidents in the context of ‘sweeping operations’ against militias, according to sources used by ACLED.<sup>1007</sup>

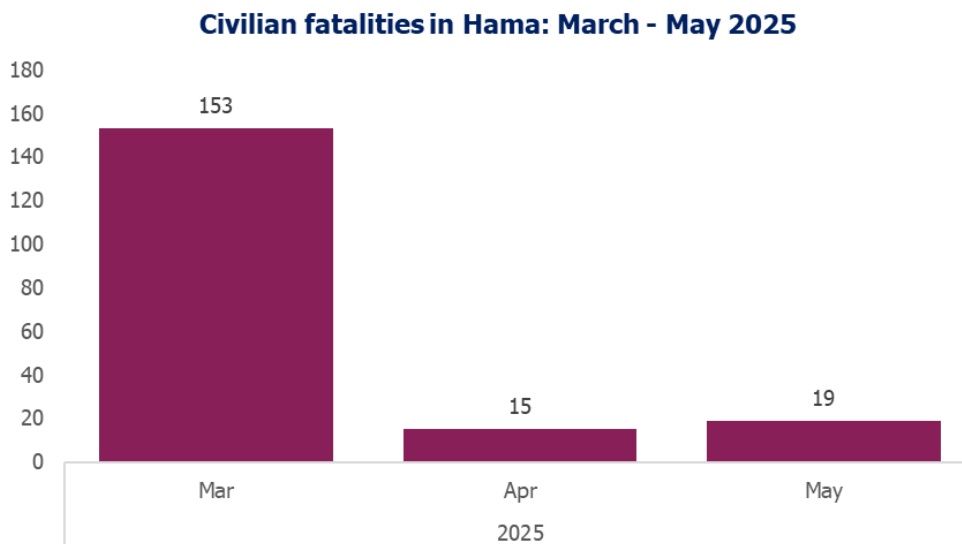
<sup>1005</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1006</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1007</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

### (e) Civilian casualties

In March 2025, the SNHR recorded 153 civilian fatalities in Hama governorate. In 121 of these cases, SNHR recorded ‘armed forces involved in the Syrian Coast security crackdown’ as the perpetrators.<sup>1008</sup> The number of casualties decreased in April 2025, with 15 fatalities recorded across the governorate<sup>1009</sup> In May 2025, the number of civilian fatalities slightly increased to 19.<sup>1010</sup> For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 137 civilian fatalities in Hama governorate.<sup>1011</sup>



**Figure 14: Civilian fatalities in Hama governorate between March and May 2025. Monthly breakdown based on SNHR data.**<sup>1012</sup>

### (f) Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Relief Across Borders noted in April 2025 that in farming communities across Hama governorate ‘routing tasks’ such as agriculture-related work or playing outdoors had become ‘deadly gambles’.<sup>1013</sup> Several sources reported that civilians have been killed or injured by explosive devices left behind from the war, including in rural areas of northern<sup>1014</sup>, eastern<sup>1015</sup> and southern Hama.<sup>1016</sup> The Syrian Civil Defence reportedly observed that Hama was among

<sup>1008</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1009</sup> SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1010</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1011</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.

<sup>1012</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1013</sup> Relief Across Borders, The Hidden Legacy of War – Land Mines Still Claiming Lives in Syria, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1014</sup> NPA, Landmine blast kills child in Syria’s Hama, 22 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1015</sup> SNHR, Boy killed, another injured by a landmine in Hama, April 26, 2025, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1016</sup> SNHR, Four civilians injured by the explosion of a war remnant of unidentified source in Hama, April 4, 2025, 5 April 2025, [url](#)

the areas where most incidents involving war remnants occurred between 27 November 2024 and 14 March 2025.<sup>1017</sup>

The outbreak of violence in early March 2025 caused ‘severe’ damages to infrastructure in the affected regions, including in Hama governorate, according to UNOCHA.<sup>1018</sup> The Syria Report pointed to the destruction of agricultural land and cutting of trees by pro-Assad forces, particularly of trees owned by persons affiliated with former opposition groups, leaving many returning IDPs struggling to rebuild their livelihoods.<sup>1019</sup>

#### **(g) Conflict-induced displacement and return**

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, there were 212 243 IDPs living in Hama governorate, as well as 181 567 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024.<sup>1020</sup> UNHCR further estimated that a total of 616 215 returnees who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate by 15 May 2025, with the vast majority of them (44 971) returning to Hama district, followed by As-Salamiyyeh (9 432). Since 8 December 2024, 37 274 individuals had returned to Hama governorate from abroad.<sup>1021</sup>

UNHCR pointed to reports of land seizures by local authorities of lands used by local families and presumed owners for cultivating olive and pistachio trees. The seizures reportedly affected 12 villages in north-eastern rural Hama, leading to the displacement of an estimated 2 000 (mostly Alawite) families to Hama and Homs.<sup>1022</sup> GPC mentioned reports by families returning from internal displacement or abroad on ‘forced evictions and retributive property seizures’ in several governorates, including Hama.<sup>1023</sup>

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<sup>1017</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria: 80 civilians killed by war remnants in four months, 15 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1018</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 3 (As of 10 March 2025), 12 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1019</sup> Syria Report (The), Farmers in Northwest Syria Struggle to Revive Their Land, 1 April 2025, [url](#)

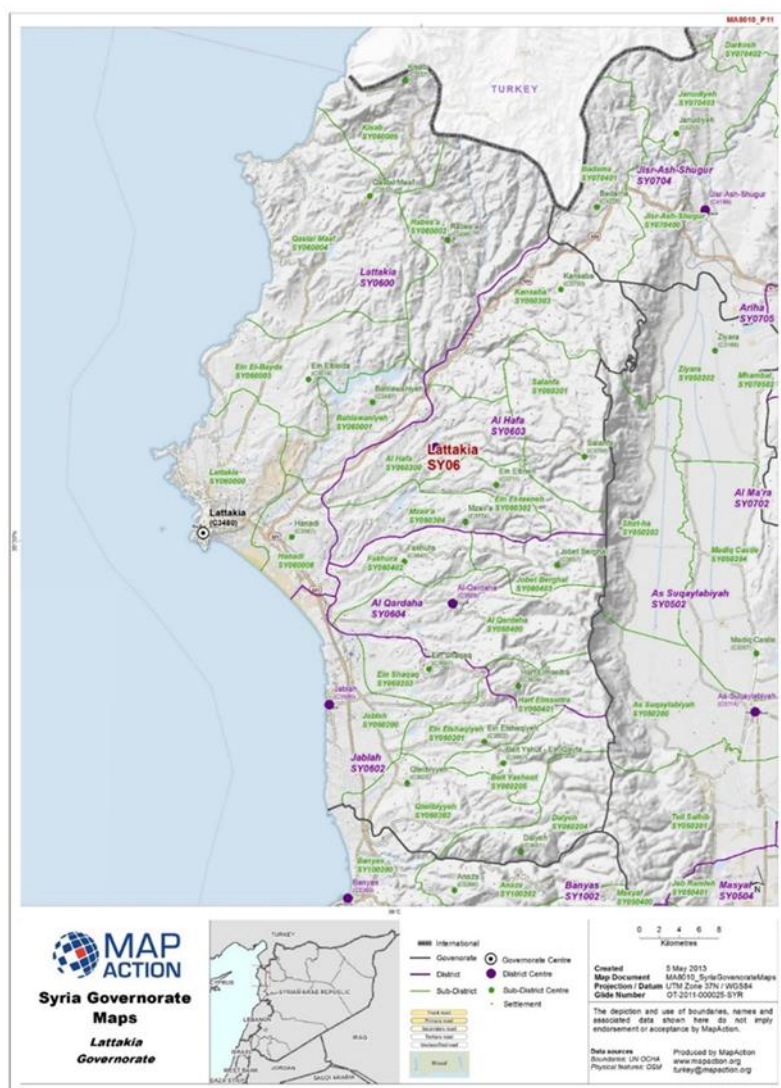
<sup>1020</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview [Map], 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1021</sup> UNHCR, Syrian returnees' figures by sub-districts - data 15 May 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1022</sup> UNHCR, Syria situation crisis: Regional Flash Update #26, 9 May 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1023</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

### 5.8.4. Latakia governorate



Map 6: © MapAction, Latakia governorate<sup>1024</sup>

#### (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Latakia governorate is divided into four administrative districts, namely Latakia, Al-Haffa, Al-Qardaha, and Jablah, which are further divided into a total of 22 sub-districts.<sup>1025</sup> Its capital is the city of Latakia.<sup>1026</sup> As of March 2025, the population of Latakia governorate was 1 455 135 including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad, according to IOM estimates.<sup>1027</sup> By comparison, the WHO estimated the governorate's population at 1 299 538 as of the same

<sup>1024</sup> MapAction, Syria 2013–2015, Latakia Governorate [map], last updated: 29 July 2016, [url](#)

<sup>1025</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 109

<sup>1026</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic [Map], August 2022, [url](#)

<sup>1027</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 2 – March 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8





month.<sup>1028</sup> For further background information on Latakia governorate, see section 2.4.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

### **(b) Territorial control and main armed actors**

As of the end of May 2025, Latakia governorate was mapped by the ISW and CTP as being entirely under the control of the transitional administration, although there were multiple pockets across the governorate where pro-Assad remnants maintained a presence.<sup>1029</sup> Forces of the new Syrian army present in the governorate included the 400th Division (consisting of former HTS units), the Coastal Division (former NLF units), and the newly created 56th Reserve Division.<sup>1030</sup>

Non-state armed groups in the governorate whose activities were reported during the reference period include Saraya Ansar al Sunnah, a Sunni sectarian group that has claimed attacks targeting Alawites.<sup>1031</sup> A number of Assad loyalist insurgent groups operated in the governorate, including the so-called Military Council for the Liberation of Syria,<sup>1032</sup> the Syrian Popular Resistance,<sup>1033</sup> the Liwa' Dara' al-Sahel (Coastal Shield Brigade),<sup>1034</sup> and groups associated with Suheil al-Hassan,<sup>1035</sup> the former commander of the SAA's 25th Special Missions Forces Division.<sup>1036</sup>

During a major uprising of pro-Assad remnants that erupted on 6 March 2025, these groups expanded their operational reach to the cities,<sup>1037</sup> although the transitional administration's forces subsequently secured most urban zones<sup>1038</sup> and gradually pushed these groups out of the cities, as reported in early April.<sup>1039</sup> While ISW and CTP described the Al-Qardaha area as a likely pro-Assad support zone as of April 2024,<sup>1040</sup> by mid-May they stated that it was unclear if this was still the case given the lack of further insurgent attacks in coastal Syria.<sup>1041</sup> Nonetheless, some remnants were reported to remain in the governorate as of late May.<sup>1042</sup>

The general mobilisation initiated across the country in response to the March 2025 uprising<sup>1043</sup> saw the deployment of MOA, General Security, HTS and SNA forces, as well as

<sup>1028</sup> WHO, Health Sector Syria - Health Sector Bulletin - March 2025, 2 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1029</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1030</sup> Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 19 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1031</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 7, 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7; ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 5, 5 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1032</sup> FDD's Long War Journal, Fierce clashes erupt between Assad loyalists and government forces in western Syria, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1033</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 7, 2025, 7 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1034</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Clashes on the Syrian Coast: The Facts and The Fallout, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1035</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: Armed Clashes & Sectarian Violence on Syria's Coast, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1036</sup> Times of Israel (The), Bashar al-Assad's inner circle: Who are they and where are they now?, 13 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1037</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: Armed Clashes & Sectarian Violence on Syria's Coast, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1038</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 7, 2025, 7 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1039</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: Armed Clashes & Sectarian Violence on Syria's Coast, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1040</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 18, 2025, 18 April 2025, [url](#), p. 11; ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 11, 2025, 11 March 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1041</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 16, 2025, 16 May 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1042</sup> New Arab (The), Latakia governor says security improved as authorities pursue Assad loyalists, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1043</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)





non-official fighters to the coastal region,<sup>1044</sup> including Latakia city and Jablah.<sup>1045</sup> While the MOA claimed that up to 500 000 troops had been mobilised, Etana Syria estimated these numbers at around 70 000.<sup>1046</sup> Approximately 150 security checkpoints were subsequently set up by the transitional administration<sup>1047</sup> across western Syria.<sup>1048</sup> For further information on the events of early March 2025, see section 4.1.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#).

Furthermore, there were continuing reports of Israeli aerial operations in the governorate.<sup>1049</sup>

### (c) Security trends

The reference period saw the emergence of new conflict dynamics in the coastal areas, driven by a significant increase in crimes and violence motivated by sectarian differences or perceived links to the former Assad government.<sup>1050</sup>

In a trend continuing since the second half of February, the early days of the reference period witnessed rising numbers of hit-and-run attacks attributed to former Assad military personnel, targeting checkpoints and security patrols in several towns,<sup>1051</sup> including Latakia city.<sup>1052</sup> Then, between 6 and 10 March 2025, the security situation significantly worsened<sup>1053</sup> as an estimated 5 000 well-armed pro-Assad fighters<sup>1054</sup> launched coordinated attacks on military and security forces in the coastal region,<sup>1055</sup> targeting multiple sites in the cities of Latakia, Jablah, Al-Qardaha, as well as in rural areas of the governorate.<sup>1056</sup> Ensuing large-scale security operations against the perpetrators of the attacks were accompanied by killings of a retaliatory and sectarian nature,<sup>1057</sup> including of civilians in Latakia city and Mukhtariya village<sup>1058</sup> as Alawite-majority communities were being targeted.<sup>1059</sup> In mid-April, the SNHR put the total toll of those killed during the hostilities in Latakia and other parts of the coastal region between 6 and 10 March at 1 662. These deaths included at least 231 civilians killed by pro-

<sup>1044</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: Armed Clashes & Sectarian Violence on Syria's Coast, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1045</sup> Al Jazeera, Syria clashes – what happened?, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1046</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: Armed Clashes & Sectarian Violence on Syria's Coast, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1047</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 17, 2025, 17 March 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>1048</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 3, 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1049</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 27, 2025, 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 4; ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 3, 2025, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1050</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 1, 8

<sup>1051</sup> Reuters, Syrian forces search former Assad stronghold after suspected loyalist attacks, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1052</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1053</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1054</sup> New Arab (The), Sectarian slaughter of Alawites on Syria's coast must not be downplayed [Opinion], 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1055</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2; Enab Baladi, Did Syrian state fall into coastal ambush?, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1056</sup> SNHR, Preliminary Report on the Violations that Took Place in the Wake of the Attacks Carried Out by Non-State Armed Groups Linked to the Assad Regime, Mostly in the Governorates of Latakia, Tartus, and Hama, , 11 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 7, 12

<sup>1057</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1058</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1059</sup> Al-Meri, A., The Alawites caught between revenge and a new Syria, TNH, 26 March 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025, 8 March 2025, [url](#)



Assad armed groups and at least 1 217 individuals, among them civilians and disarmed Assad remnants, who were killed during security operations,<sup>1060</sup> mainly at the hands of fighters from two former SNA rebel factions, the Sultan Suleiman Shah brigade and the Hamzat division.<sup>1061</sup> For further information on the events of early March 2025, see section 4.1.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#).

While the large-scale operations against Assad remnants were officially announced to have ended on 10 March 2025<sup>1062</sup> and effectively wound down,<sup>1063</sup> some targeted raids by GSS against Assad loyalist cells continued.<sup>1064</sup> In mid-April, GSS conducted a major search operation with the proclaimed aim of dismantling suspected ‘criminal’ networks in Latakia city.<sup>1065</sup> Targeted raids against Assad remnants were reported into late May 2025.<sup>1066</sup> Sporadic attacks by Assad remnants targeting the security forces also persisted after 10 March,<sup>1067</sup> but the general security situation was reported to have calmed significantly by late March<sup>1068</sup> and early April 2025.<sup>1069</sup> In late May, the governor of Latakia claimed that the situation in Latakia city had considerably improved since March. However, the New Arab reported that some parts of Latakia, particularly in the countryside, were seeing continued violence and instability.<sup>1070</sup>

Continuing accounts were emerging of ‘sectarian attacks, execution-style killings and other violations against civilians’ by factions nominally affiliated with the military and security forces,<sup>1071</sup> including in Latakia city,<sup>1072</sup> in the town of Saqoubin,<sup>1073</sup> and in the vicinity of Masaytara.<sup>1074</sup> The governorate further witnessed multiple killings of civilians by unidentified

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<sup>1060</sup> SNHR, Daily update: toll of extrajudicial killings that took place in the wake of the events in the Syrian Coastal Region between March 6 and March 10, 2025, 16 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1061</sup> Guardian (The), ‘The streets are empty, no one dares go outside’: Syria’s Alawites terrorised by revenge killings, 15 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1062</sup> Al Jazeera, Syria announces end of military operation against al-Assad loyalists, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1063</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #23: 31 March 2025, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1064</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #23: 31 March 2025, 31 March 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, Iran Update April 8, 2025, 8 April 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>1065</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 18, 2025, 18 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 10-11

<sup>1066</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1067</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update 22: 24 March 2025, 24 March 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 9, 2025, 9 April 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 31, 2025, 31 March 2025, [url](#), p. 9; ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 27, 2025, 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>1068</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update 22: 24 March 2025, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1069</sup> SNHR, Daily update: toll of extrajudicial killings that took place in the wake of the events in the Syrian Coastal Region between March 6 and March 10, 2025, 16 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1070</sup> New Arab (The), Latakia governor says security improved as authorities pursue Assad loyalists, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1071</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update 22: 24 March 2025, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1072</sup> SOHR, Including criminal suspect | General Security in Lattakia executes three civilians, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1073</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 7, 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1074</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 3, 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9; SOHR, Ongoing retaliatory actions | Three civilian executed in Baniyas and Latakia countryside, 27 March 2025, [url](#)



gunmen,<sup>1075</sup> kidnappings,<sup>1076</sup> and disappearances.<sup>1077</sup> There were numerous reports of violence in western Syria allegedly perpetrated against the Alawite community,<sup>1078</sup> although not all of these accounts could be verified.<sup>1079</sup> Militants launched an attack on Russia's Hmeimim air base in May 2025, killing two soldiers.<sup>1080</sup>

Israeli airstrikes struck a former SAA military site in Qardaha (early March 2025),<sup>1081</sup> military installations, including weapon depots, in the al Bayda Port and a naval site at Ras Shamra (late March),<sup>1082</sup> and weapons caches in Bizama and Burj al-Islam villages (late May).<sup>1083</sup>

#### **(d) Security incidents**

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 246 security incidents in Latakia governorate (see Figure 15). For the period between 1 March and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 162 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) in Latakia governorate. Of these, 32 were coded as battles, 25 as explosions/remote violence and 105 as incidents of violence against civilians. The number of security incidents across the governorate peaked in March (111 incidents) and subsequently dropped to less than 30 incidents in April and May.<sup>1084</sup>

<sup>1075</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 20-27, 2025, 27 May 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), Latakia governor says security improved as authorities pursue Assad loyalists, 27 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, After being reported missing | Young man found shot dead and tortured in Al-Lattakia countryside, 29 April 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Ongoing executions | Elderly man killed in gunfire by unknown gunmen in rural Jableh, 28 April 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 23, 2025, 23 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7; SOHR, Security vacuum | Two civilians killed in Aleppo and Latakia, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1076</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Ongoing security chaos | Three civilians kidnapped following raid on farm in Latakia countryside, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1077</sup> SOHR, Amid unknown fates | Two women go missing in Homs and Jabblah cities, 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1078</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 21, 2025, 21 March 2025, [url](#), p. 4; Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 20-27, 2025, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1079</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 21, 2025, 21 March 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1080</sup> AP, Militants kill 2 soldiers in attack on Russian air base in Syria, 21 May 2025, [url](#)

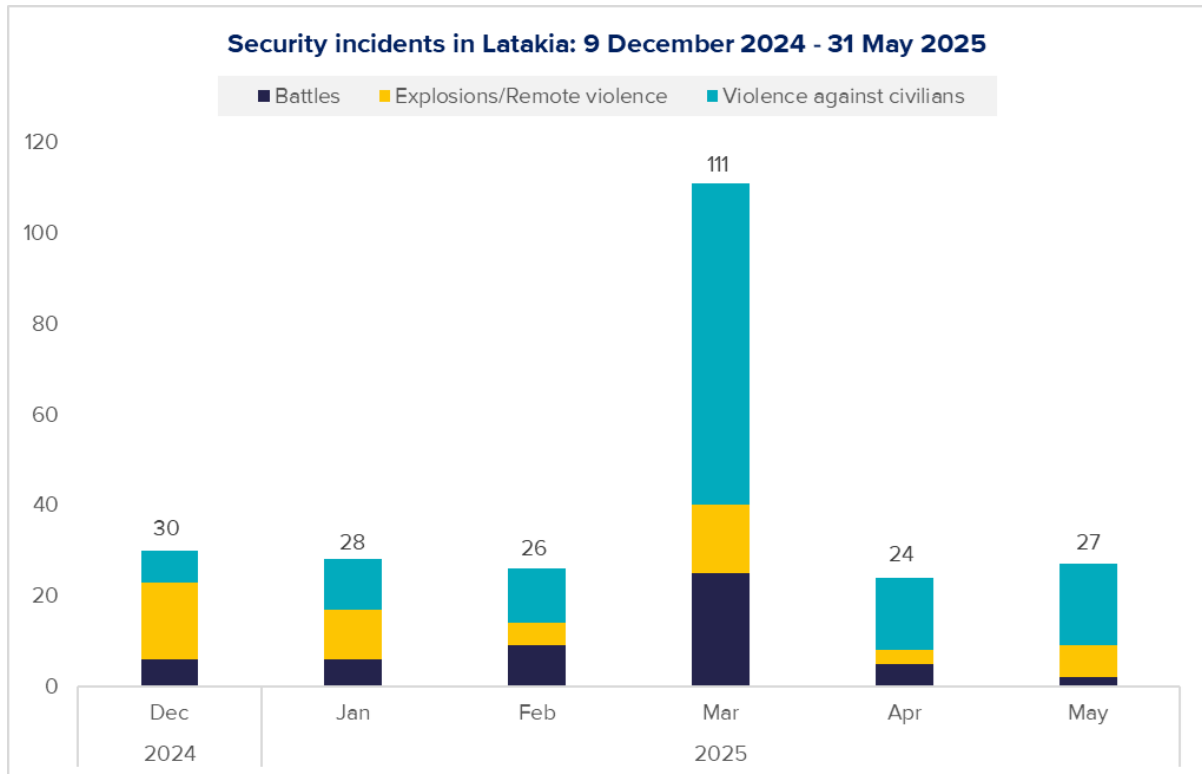
<sup>1081</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 3, 2025, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1082</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 27, 2025, 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1083</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1084</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)





**Figure 15: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Latakia governorate between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, based on ACLED data.<sup>1085</sup>**

During the reference period, security incidents were recorded by ACLED in all four districts of the governorate, with the highest number documented in the district of Latakia (65 incidents). By comparison, the fewest incidents were recorded in Al-Qardaha district (19 incidents). According to ACLED data, military and police forces of Syria were involved as a main actor (coded as either ‘Actor1’ or ‘Actor2’) in around 68 % of all security incidents recorded during the reference period, particularly in incidents coded as battles (where militia opposed to the MOA were often involved as another actor) and violence against civilians. Unidentified armed groups were involved in around 30 % of all security incidents, almost exclusively in incidents where civilians were also an actor. Anti-MOA militia were involved in around 23 % of all security incidents, mostly in battles also involving Syrian military and police forces.<sup>1086</sup>

### (e) Civilian casualties

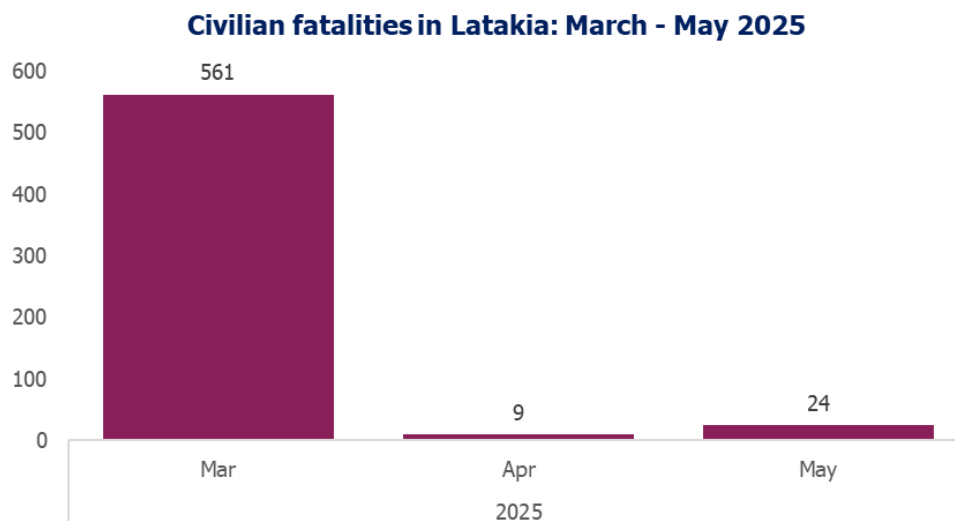
In March 2025, the SNHR recorded 561 civilian fatalities in Latakia governorate and an additional 339 civilian victims who died at unspecified locations in the coastal region. Latakia was the governorate witnessing the highest number of civilian fatalities during that month, accounting for around 36 % of the total number (1 562) recorded across all governorates.<sup>1087</sup>

<sup>1085</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1086</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1087</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

The number of civilian fatalities then significantly decreased to 9 in April and 24 in May.<sup>1088</sup> SNHR attributed responsibility for the majority of the civilian fatalities it recorded over this three-month period to armed forces involved in the security crackdowns in the coastal region (477 deaths, including 474 in March) and non-state armed groups linked to the former Assad government (57 deaths, all in March).<sup>1089</sup> SNHR does not provide more detailed information on these fatalities. For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 610 civilian fatalities in Latakia governorate.<sup>1090</sup>



**Figure 16: Civilian fatalities in Latakia governorate between March and May 2025. Monthly breakdown based on SNHR data.**<sup>1091</sup>

#### (f) Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

The escalation of hostilities in early March 2025 resulted in the burning of homes in Alawite villages<sup>1092</sup> and infrastructure damage<sup>1093</sup> that affected at least one hospital and 26 schools in the governorate.<sup>1094</sup> Widespread power outages led to disruptions in water supplies.<sup>1095</sup> Later

<sup>1088</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1089</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-10

<sup>1090</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.

<sup>1091</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1092</sup> Al-Meri, A., The Alawites caught between revenge and a new Syria, TNH, 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1093</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 3 (As of 10 March 2025), 12 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 1-2

<sup>1094</sup> UNICEF, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 2 (Violence in the Coastal Areas) (As of 2 April 2025), 17 April 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1095</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 3 (As of 10 March 2025), 12 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2



the same month, fires set by individuals affiliated with the MoD spread across wide areas in the Al-Qardaha countryside, including forests, in which civilians had sought refuge from extensive operations directed against them.<sup>1096</sup> Other fires were set by unidentified men to civilian properties in Jablah city<sup>1097</sup> and, purportedly, by Saraya Ansar al Sunnah in forest areas in Al-Qardaha district.<sup>1098</sup> No information could be found on conflict-related infrastructure damage in April and May

The Syria Civil Defence was quoted by Enab Baladi as saying that - following Idlib, Aleppo and Hama - Latakia was one of the governorates witnessing the highest numbers of incidents relating to remnants of war between 27 November 2024 and 14 March 2025.<sup>1099</sup> Detonations of unexploded ordnance caused civilian deaths and injuries in Latakia city (where an incident in mid-March 2025 resulted in at least 16 deaths)<sup>1100</sup> and in the northern<sup>1101</sup> and eastern Latakia countryside.<sup>1102</sup>

#### **(g) Conflict-induced displacement and return**

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, 447 179 IDPs and 25 005 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024 were living in the governorate.<sup>1103</sup> The large-scale hostilities in March 2025 resulted in the displacement of an estimated 51 000 people across the two governorates of Latakia and Tartous, of whom 6 000 fled to Lebanon.<sup>1104</sup>

UNHCR further estimated that, as of 15 May 2025, a total of 18 544 individuals who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate, the vast majority (16 368) having returned to Latakia district. Since 8 December 2024, 13 327 individuals had returned to Latakia from abroad.<sup>1105</sup>

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<sup>1096</sup> SOHR, Threatening civilians' lives | Fires break out in villages in Latakia countryside, 14 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1097</sup> SOHR, Latakia | Masked men set fire to public and private properties in Jableh city, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1098</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 5, 5 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1099</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria: 80 civilians killed by war remnants in four months, 15 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1100</sup> AP, At least 16 people killed after ordnance from Syrian civil war explodes in port city of Latakia, 16 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1101</sup> SNHR, Three civilians killed, fourth injured by a landmine blast in Latakia, April 18, 2025, 19 April 2025, [url](#);

SOHR, Old ordnance | Two young men killed by landmine explosion in Aleppo and Latakia, 22 March 2025, [url](#)

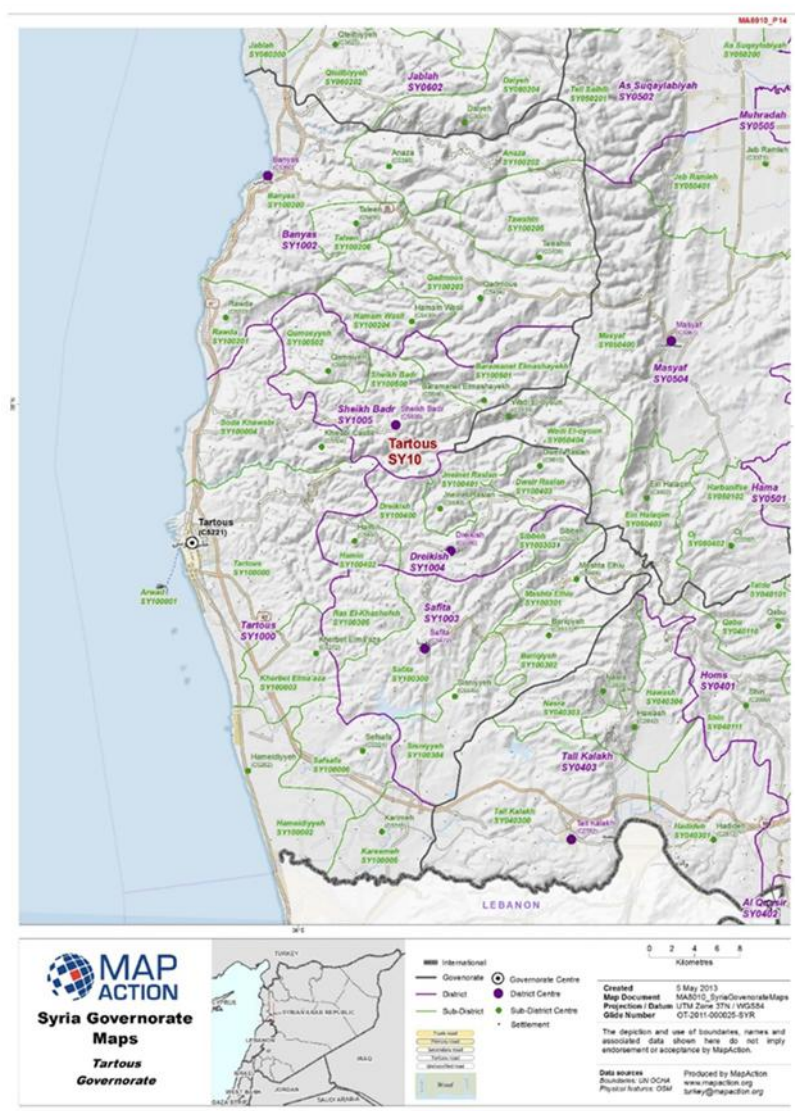
<sup>1102</sup> SOHR, Landmine explosion | Two civilians injured in Latakia countryside, 18 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1103</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview [Map], 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1104</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4 (As of 26 March 2025), 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1105</sup> UNHCR, Syrian returnees' figures by sub-districts - data 15 May 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

### 5.8.5. Tartous governorate



Map 7: © MapAction, Tartous governorate map<sup>1106</sup>

#### (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Tartous governorate is divided into six administrative districts, namely Banyas (Baniyas), Dreikish, Qadmous, Safita, Sheikh Badr and Tartous, which are further divided into a total of 27 sub-districts.<sup>1107</sup> Its capital is the city of Tartous.<sup>1108</sup> As of March 2025, the population of Tartous governorate was 1 216 889, including residents and IDPs, according to IOM estimates.<sup>1109</sup> By comparison, the WHO estimated the governorate's population at 939 918 as

<sup>1106</sup> MapAction, Syria Governorate Maps – Tartous Governorate, last updated on 29 July 2019, [url](#)

<sup>1107</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 110

<sup>1108</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic [Map], August 2022, [url](#)

<sup>1109</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 2 – March 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

of the same month.<sup>1110</sup> For further background information on Tartous governorate, see section 2.5.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

### **(b) Territorial control and main armed actors**

As of the end of May 2025, Tartous governorate was mapped by the ISW and the CTP as being entirely under the control of the transitional administration, although there were multiple pockets across the governorate where pro-Assad remnants maintained a presence.<sup>1111</sup>

Non-state armed groups in the governorate whose activities were reported during the reference period included the Sunni sectarian group Saraya Ansar al Sunnah.<sup>1112</sup> Moreover, a number of pro-Assad insurgent groups operated in the governorate, among them the so-called Military Council for the Liberation of Syria,<sup>1113</sup> the Syrian Popular Resistance,<sup>1114</sup> and the Liwa' Dara' al-Sahel (Coastal Shield Brigade).<sup>1115</sup>

The general mobilisation initiated across the country in response to the March 2025 uprising<sup>1116</sup> saw the deployment of MOA, General Security, HTS and SNA forces, as well as non-official fighters to the coastal region,<sup>1117</sup> including Tartous city and Banyas.<sup>1118</sup> While the MOA claimed that up to 500 000 troops had been mobilised, Etana Syria estimated these numbers at around 70 000.<sup>1119</sup> The transitional administration's forces subsequently secured most urban areas, although some pro-Assad militant cells remained active in the governorate.<sup>1120</sup> Approximately 150 security checkpoints were subsequently set up by the transitional administration<sup>1121</sup> across western Syria.<sup>1122</sup>

Furthermore, there were continuing reports of Israeli aerial operations in the governorate.<sup>1123</sup>

### **(c) Security trends**

The reference period saw the emergence of new conflict dynamics in the coastal areas, driven by a significant increase in crimes and violence motivated by sectarian differences or perceived links to the former Assad government.<sup>1124</sup>

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<sup>1110</sup> WHO, Health Sector Syria - Health Sector Bulletin - March 2025, 2 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1111</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1112</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 7, 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1113</sup> ACLED, Q&A: What happened in the coastal region of Syria last week?, 14 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1114</sup> Syrian Popular Resistance, [Telegram], posted on: 7 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1115</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Clashes on the Syrian Coast: The Facts and The Fallout, 17 March 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 11, 2025, 11 March 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1116</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1117</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: Armed Clashes & Sectarian Violence on Syria's Coast, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1118</sup> Al Jazeera, Syria clashes – what happened?, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1119</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: Armed Clashes & Sectarian Violence on Syria's Coast, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1120</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 7, 2025, 7 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1121</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 17, 2025, 17 March 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>1122</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 3, 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1123</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 3, 2025, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1124</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 1, 8



Between 6 and 10 March 2025, the security situation significantly deteriorated<sup>1125</sup> as an estimated 5 000 well-armed pro-Assad fighters<sup>1126</sup> launched coordinated attacks on military and security forces in the coastal region,<sup>1127</sup> targeting several sites in Tartous, including in Banyas and Qadmous districts.<sup>1128</sup> Ensuing large-scale security operations against the perpetrators of the attacks were accompanied by killings of a retaliatory and sectarian nature,<sup>1129</sup> including of civilians in Banyas town<sup>1130</sup> (one of the places most severely affected by the violence)<sup>1131</sup> as Alawite-majority civilian communities were being targeted.<sup>1132</sup> In mid-April, the SNHR estimated the total toll of those killed during the hostilities in Tartous and elsewhere in the coastal region between 6 and 10 March at 1 662. These deaths included at least 231 civilians killed by pro-Assad armed groups and at least 1 217 individuals, among them civilians and disarmed Assad remnants, who were killed during security operations,<sup>1133</sup> mainly at the hands of fighters of two former SNA rebel factions, the Sultan Suleiman Shah brigade and the Hamzat division.<sup>1134</sup> For further information on the events of early March 2025, see section 4.1.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#).

While the large-scale operations against Assad remnants were officially announced to have ended on 10 March 2025<sup>1135</sup> and effectively wound down, some targeted raids by security forces against Assad loyalist cells continued.<sup>1136</sup> Isolated attacks by Assad remnants targeting the security forces persisted,<sup>1137</sup> but the general security situation was reported to have calmed significantly by late March<sup>1138</sup> and early April 2025.<sup>1139</sup>

Meanwhile, continuing accounts were emerging of ‘sectarian attacks, execution-style killings and other violations against civilians’ by factions nominally affiliated with the military and

<sup>1125</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1126</sup> New Arab (The), Sectarian slaughter of Alawites on Syria's coast must not be downplayed [Opinion], 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1127</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2; Enab Baladi, Did Syrian state fall into coastal ambush?, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1128</sup> SNHR, Preliminary Report on the Violations that Took Place in the Wake of the Attacks Carried Out by Non-State Armed Groups Linked to the Assad Regime, Mostly in the Governorates of Latakia, Tartus, and Hama, 11 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 7, 12

<sup>1129</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1130</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1131</sup> AP, 2 days of clashes and revenge killings in Syria leave more than 1,000 people dead, 9 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1132</sup> Al-Meri, A., The Alawites caught between revenge and a new Syria, TNH, 26 March 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1133</sup> SNHR, Daily update: toll of extrajudicial killings that took place in the wake of the events in the Syrian Coastal Region between March 6 and March 10, 2025, 16 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1134</sup> Guardian (The), ‘The streets are empty, no one dares go outside’: Syria’s Alawites terrorised by revenge killings, 15 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1135</sup> Al Jazeera, Syria announces end of military operation against al-Assad loyalists, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1136</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 20-27, 2025, 27 May 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #23: 31 March 2025, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1137</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update 22: 24 March 2025, 24 March 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 22, 2025, 22 April 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1138</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update 22: 24 March 2025, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1139</sup> SNHR, Daily update: toll of extrajudicial killings that took place in the wake of the events in the Syrian Coastal Region between March 6 and March 10, 2025, 16 April 2025, [url](#)



security forces,<sup>1140</sup> notably in the Al-Dinsa area,<sup>1141</sup> and possibly near a checkpoint in the Safita area.<sup>1142</sup> Moreover, Saraya Ansar al Sunnah claimed the killing of an Alawite man and one of his relatives in Safita town in April 2025,<sup>1143</sup> with further killings of Alawites and clashes between Alawite and Sunni communities reported the following month.<sup>1144</sup>

The governorate further witnessed multiple killings of civilians by unidentified gunmen, including in Tartous city<sup>1145</sup> and its countryside<sup>1146</sup> and in the Banyas countryside,<sup>1147</sup> as well as several kidnappings.<sup>1148</sup>

Airstrikes by Israeli forces hit multiple sites in the vicinity of the port of Tartous in early March<sup>1149</sup> and late May 2025.<sup>1150</sup>

#### **(d) Security incidents**

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 140 security incidents in Tartous governorate (see Figure 17). For the period between 1 March and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 99 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) in Tartous governorate. Of these, 12 were coded as battles, 10 as explosions/remote violence and 77 as incidents of violence against civilians. The number of security incidents across the governorate peaked in March (73 incidents) and subsequently dropped to less than 20 incidents per month in April and May.<sup>1151</sup>

<sup>1140</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update 22: 24 March 2025, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1141</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 2, 2025, 2 April 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SOHR, Ongoing retaliatory actions | Three civilian executed in Baniyas and Latakia countryside, 27 March 2025, [url](#); ANHA, 177 people killed in separate incidents in Syria, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1142</sup> SOHR, Security chaos | Three civilians “field executed” in Tartous countryside, 14 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1143</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 7, 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1144</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 20-27, 2025, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1145</sup> SOHR, Ongoing retaliatory actions | Civilian from Alawite community executed in Tartus, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1146</sup> ANHA, Tartous countryside sees surge in violence: 3 killed, Cleric abducted, 24 May 2025, [url](#); SNHR, The body of Ali Hamada was Found in the Suburbs of Tartous Governorate on May 21, 2025, 23 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Ongoing execution | Bodies of two young men found in Tartus countryside, 3 April 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Armed attack | Two young men killed in Tartus countryside, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

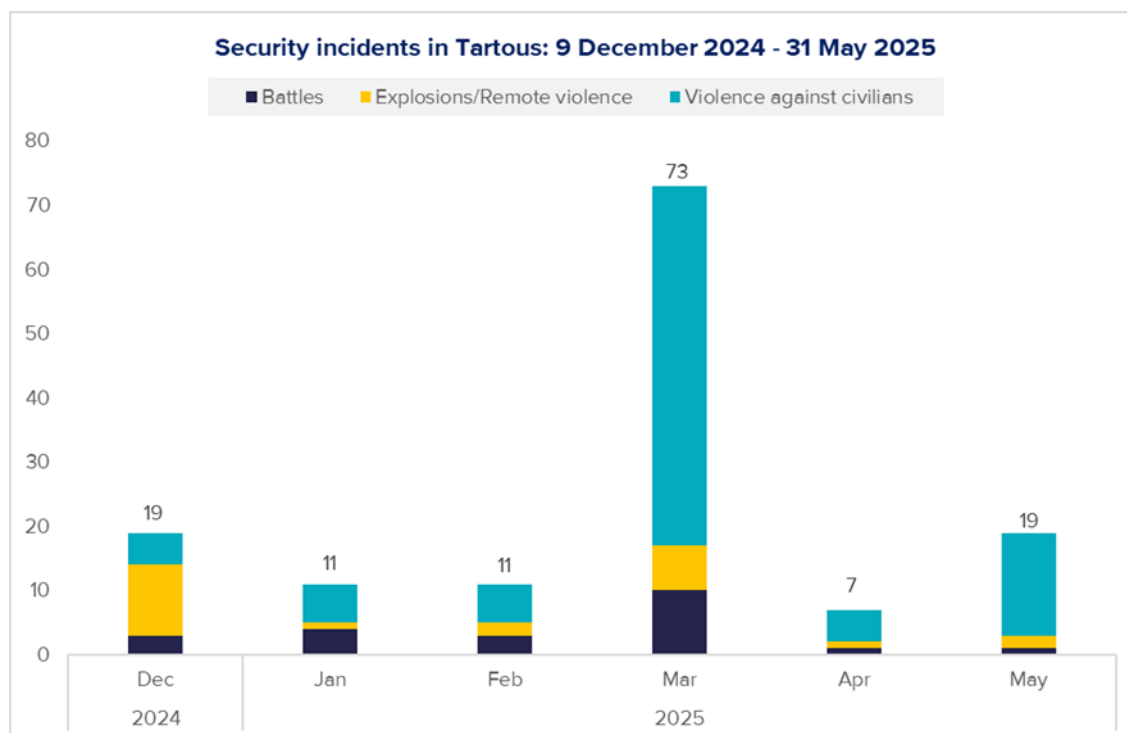
<sup>1147</sup> SOHR, Security chaos | Two civilians shot dead in Baniyas countryside, 4 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1148</sup> ANHA, Tartous countryside sees surge in violence: 3 killed, Cleric abducted, 24 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Security vacuum | Girl kidnapped in Tartus city, 17 April 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Security chaos | Two civilians shot dead in Baniyas countryside, 4 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1149</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 3, 2025, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1150</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1151</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)



**Figure 17: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Tartous governorate between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, based on ACLED data.<sup>1152</sup>**

During the reference period, security incidents were recorded by ACLED in five of the six districts of the governorate (Banyas, Dreikish, Qadmous, Safita, and Tartous), with the highest numbers documented in the districts of Banyas (47 incidents) and Tartous (32). By comparison, the fewest incidents were recorded in Dreikish and Safita districts (three incidents each). According to ACLED data, police and military forces of Syria were involved as a main actor (coded as either ‘Actor1’ or ‘Actor2’) in around 67 % of all security incidents recorded during the reference period, particularly in incidents coded as violence against civilians, but also in battles and explosions/remote violence that also involved militia opposed to the MOA as another actor. These anti-MOA militia were involved in around 19 % of all security incidents, most of which were incidents coded as battles and explosions/remote violence where Syrian police and military forces were also an actor. Unidentified armed groups were involved in around 24 % of all security incidents, nearly all of which were incidents coded as violence against civilians.<sup>1153</sup>

#### (e) Civilian casualties

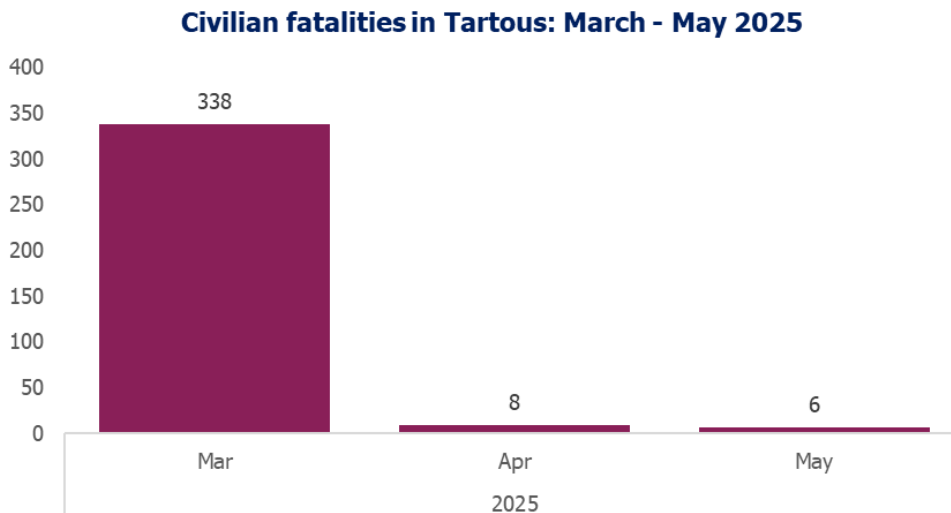
In March 2025, the SNHR recorded 338 civilian fatalities in Tartous governorate and an additional 339 civilian victims who died at unspecified locations in the coastal region. After Latakia, Tartous was the governorate that witnessed the second-highest number of civilian fatalities that month, accounting for around 22 % of the total number (1 562) recorded across

<sup>1152</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1153</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)



all governorates.<sup>1154</sup> The number of civilian fatalities then significantly decreased to 8 in April and 6 in May.<sup>1155</sup> SNHR attributed responsibility for the majority of the civilian fatalities it recorded over this three-month period to armed forces involved in the security crackdowns in the coastal region (291 deaths, all in March) and non-state armed groups linked to the former Assad government (38 deaths, all in March).<sup>1156</sup> SNHR does not provide more detailed information on these fatalities. For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 171 civilian fatalities in Tartous governorate.<sup>1157</sup>



**Figure 18: Civilian fatalities in Tartous governorate between March and May 2025. Monthly breakdown based on SNHR data.**<sup>1158</sup>

#### (f) Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

The escalation of hostilities in early March 2025 resulted in the burning of homes in Alawite villages<sup>1159</sup> and infrastructure damage<sup>1160</sup> that affected at least one hospital and 30 schools in

<sup>1154</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1155</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1156</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-10

<sup>1157</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.

<sup>1158</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1159</sup> Al-Meri, A., The Alawites caught between revenge and a new Syria, TNH, 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1160</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 3 (As of 10 March 2025), 12 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 1-2



the governorate.<sup>1161</sup> Information on incidents linked to explosive remnants of war could not be found within the time constraints of this report.

**(g) Conflict-induced displacement and return**

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, 171 273 IDPs and 4 286 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024 were living in the governorate.<sup>1162</sup> The large-scale hostilities in March 2025 resulted in the displacement of an estimated 51 000 people across the two governorates of Latakia and Tartous, of whom 6 000 fled to Lebanon.<sup>1163</sup>

UNHCR further estimated that as of 15 May 2025, a total of 7 931 individuals who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate, the vast majority having returned to the districts of Tartous (6 054) and Banyas (1 660). Since 8 December 2024, 5 969 individuals had returned to Tartous governorate from abroad.<sup>1164</sup>

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<sup>1161</sup> UNICEF, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 2 (Violence in the Coastal Areas) (As of 2 April 2025), 17 April 2025, [url](#), p. 1

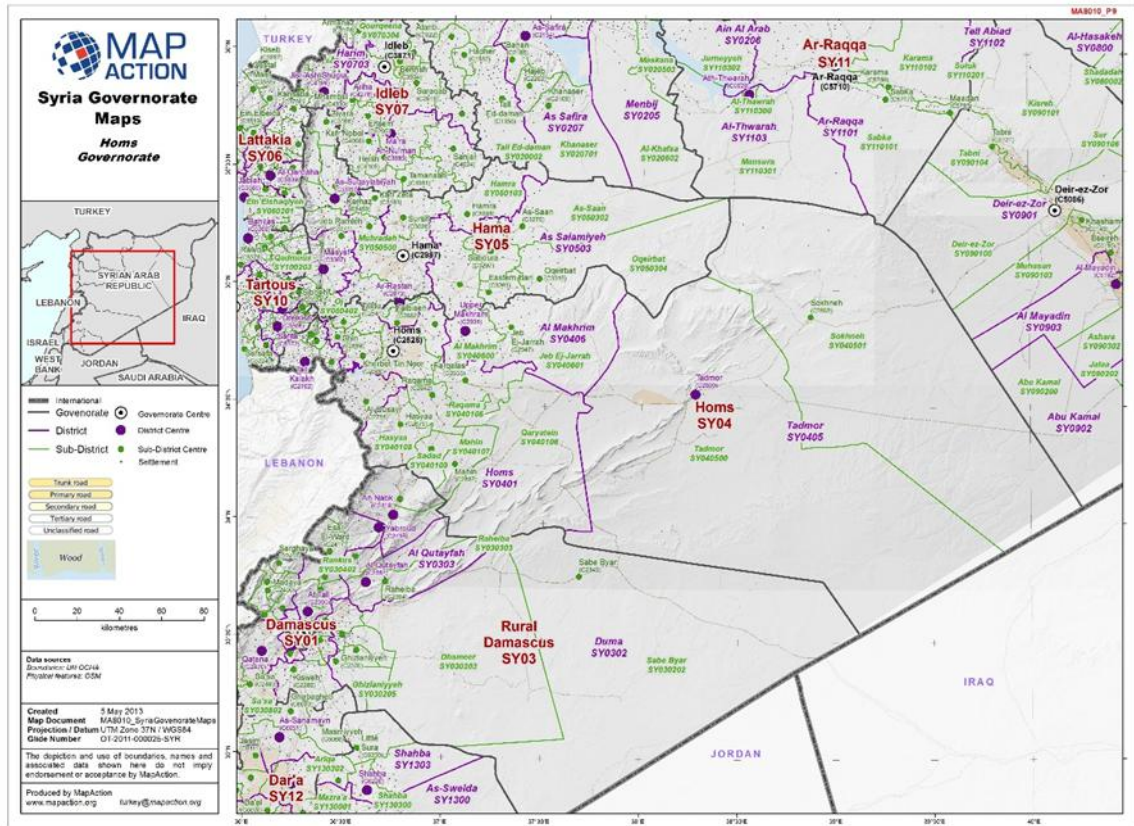
<sup>1162</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview [Map], 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1163</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4 (As of 26 March 2025), 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1164</sup> UNHCR, Syrian returnees' figures by sub-districts - data 15 May 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#)



### 5.8.6. Homs governorate



**Map 8:** © MapAction, Homs governorate map.<sup>1165</sup>

#### (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Homs governorate is divided into six administrative districts, namely Al-Makhrim, Al-Qusayr, Ar-Rastan, Homs, Tadmor, and Tall Kalakh, which are further divided into a total of 23 sub-districts.<sup>1166</sup> The governorate's capital is Homs city,<sup>1167</sup> a religiously diverse city, with a Sunni majority and large Alawite, Christian and Shia minority communities.<sup>1168</sup> As of March 2025, the population of Homs governorate was 1 438 401, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad, according to IOM estimates.<sup>1169</sup> In comparison, the WHO estimated the population at 1 505 561 as of March 2025.<sup>1170</sup> For further background information on Homs governorate, see section 2.6.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

<sup>1165</sup> MapAction, Homs Governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

<sup>1166</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 108

<sup>1167</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic [Map], August 2022, [url](#)

<sup>1168</sup> New Arab (The), Lawlessness festers in Homs as Syria struggles to rebuild, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1169</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 2 – March 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1170</sup> WHO, Health Sector Syria - Health Sector Bulletin - March 2025, 2 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7



## (b) Territorial control and main armed actors

As of 30 May 2025, a map by the ISW and CTP showed the western part of Homs governorate as well as a corridor linking that part of the governorate with the city of Deir Ez-Zor as being controlled by the HTS-led transitional administration. Adjacent to the so-called Al Tanf Deconfliction Zone along the border with Iraq and Jordan was an area shown as being controlled by unidentified opposition groups. That area extended until the above-mentioned Homs-Deir Ez-Zor corridor which is running across the centre of the governorate. In the vicinity of Homs city, ISW and CTP indicated the presence of pro-Assad insurgents.<sup>1171</sup>

ACLED noted that hostilities between pro-Assad non-state armed groups and security forces in the coastal region in early March 2025 also expanded to locations in Homs governorate,<sup>1172</sup> leading to widespread security operations and raids by the transitional administration's armed forces in rural Homs.<sup>1173</sup>

Saraya Ansar Al Sunnah, a militant Sunni group claimed responsibility for several targeted killings of Alawites and 'regime remnants' in Homs governorate during the reporting period.<sup>1174</sup> Israeli forces launched several airstrikes on – mostly military – targets in Homs governorate in March<sup>1175</sup> and April 2025.<sup>1176</sup>

## (c) Security trends

Following the escalation of violence in the coastal region in early March 2025, as mentioned above, security forces and supporting armed groups launched security operations and raids in areas affected by the violence. The SNHR reported on incidents in rural Homs, where houses were raided and burnt down by security forces.<sup>1177</sup>

The International Crisis Group observed that, while the GSS had been able to quickly gain control over Damascus and other central cities and maintain public safety in these areas, they appeared to face more challenges in other areas such as Homs city and countryside. There, a series of revenge killings and kidnappings, often targeting Alawites, contributed to a general feeling of danger and undermined particularly the latter group's trust in the new authorities.<sup>1178</sup> Similarly, SJAC pointed to a 'pattern of violence' that had 'ebbed and flowed' since January

<sup>1171</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7. The Al-Tanf Deconfliction Zone is a 55km zone controlled by the Free Syrian Army and US forces based in Al Tanf Garrison. ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1172</sup> ACLED, Q&A: What happened in the coastal region of Syria last week?, 14 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1173</sup> SNHR, Preliminary Report on the Violations that Took Place in the Wake of the Attacks Carried Out by Non-State Armed Groups Linked to the Assad Regime, Mostly in the Governorates of Latakia, Tartus, and Hama, 11 March 2025, [url](#), p. 11

<sup>1174</sup> BBC Monitoring, Briefing: New Syria jihadist group claims ongoing attacks on Alawites, 21 April 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 9, 2025, 9 May 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1175</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025, 8 March 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: March 2025 – May 2025, n.d., [url](#); Shafaq, Israel strikes Syrian airbases in Homs, 25 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1176</sup> Arab Weekly (The), Israel strikes Hama and Homs military bases, infrastructure in Syria, 3 April 2025, [url](#); Agenzia Nova, New Israeli airstrikes in Syria: military infrastructures hit in Hama, Homs and Damascus, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1177</sup> SNHR, Preliminary Report on the Violations that Took Place in the Wake of the Attacks Carried Out by Non-State Armed Groups Linked to the Assad Regime, Mostly in the Governorates of Latakia, Tartus, and Hama, 11 March 2025, [url](#), p. 11

<sup>1178</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)



2025 – the apparently targeted killing of Alawite civilians. The source noted that, according to reports these killings seemed to be motivated by the presumed identification of this group with the Assad regime and appeared to be particularly prevalent in and around Homs city, potentially because of past acts of violence committed by the former regime against the Sunni population in that area.<sup>1179</sup>

Other sources also reported on persisting tensions between Alawites and other communities,<sup>1180</sup> incidents of ‘reprisal discrimination’,<sup>1181</sup> and an increase in kidnappings and killings in Homs city,<sup>1182</sup> often targeting religious minorities,<sup>1183</sup> such as the Al-Murshidi religious community,<sup>1184</sup> and, predominantly, Alawites,<sup>1185</sup> and/or persons affiliated with the former Assad government.<sup>1186</sup> As of March 2025, the civil society organisation ‘Civil Peace Group’ reportedly documented 86 cases of kidnappings and disappearances in Homs since 9 December 2024, with 23 of those individuals being executed and the fate of the others unknown.<sup>1187</sup> Killings were often perpetrated by unidentified gunmen on motorcycles,<sup>1188</sup> leading the GSS to announce in early May a ban on the use of motorcycles in Homs city after 7 pm.<sup>1189</sup> In April, the SNHR pointed to ‘a surge in violent and unlawful killings’ in Homs city, where at least 20 people were killed in the period 23 to 28 April 2025. Most of the killings occurred in predominantly Alawite neighbourhoods and most of the victims had been shot dead.<sup>1190</sup> Security forces reportedly established checkpoints across the city as well as at the Al-Zahra and Al-Nahda neighbourhoods, fencing these areas off from the rest of the city.<sup>1191</sup> At the end of May 2025, the ISW and CTP observed a ‘decline in sectarian violence’ in Homs and other major cities since mid-May 2025 and suggested that this might be related to security measures implemented by the transitional authorities including the nightly ban on motorcycles and the deployment of GSS forces.<sup>1192</sup>

<sup>1179</sup> SJAC, The Syrian Government Must Investigate the Targeting of Alawite Civilians in Homs, 13 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1180</sup> Forestier, M., Rebuilding the Syrian Nation: Impression from the Ground, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 23 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1181</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1182</sup> New Lines Magazine, Sectarian Violence Simmers in Homs, 10 March 2025, [url](#); GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1183</sup> New Lines Magazine, Sectarian Violence Simmers in Homs, 10 March 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), Damascus may be relatively safe but cities like Homs are emerging as a microcosm of post-Assad lawlessness, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1184</sup> CSW, Three members of religious minority community shot and killed in Homs, 23 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1185</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: March 2025 – May 2025, n.d., [url](#); Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, The Syrian Government Must Investigate the Targeting of Alawite Civilians in Homs, 13 May 2025, [url](#); Syria Direct, Extrajudicial killings of Alawites plague Homs city, 9 May 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 5, 2025, 5 May 2025, [url](#), p. 10; Arab News, At least 10 people dead in Syria as gunmen target civilians in Tartus and Homs, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1186</sup> NPA, Former pro-regime militia leader assassinated in Syria’s Homs, 10 May 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 2, 2025, 2 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 7-8; ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 23, 2025, 23 April 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>1187</sup> New Arab (The), Damascus may be relatively safe but cities like Homs are emerging as a microcosm of post-Assad lawlessness, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1188</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, The Syrian Government Must Investigate the Targeting of Alawite Civilians in Homs, 13 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1189</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 6, 2025, 6 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>1190</sup> SNHR, No Fewer than 20 Civilians Extrajudicial Killed in Homs City Between April 23-28, 2025, 30 April 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1191</sup> New Arab (The), Lawlessness festers in Homs as Syria struggles to rebuild, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1192</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update 28 May, 2025, 28 May 2025, [url](#), p. 11



Saraya Ansar al Sunnah Sunni militia claimed several attacks and killings of Alawites and/or former members of the Assad-government.<sup>1193</sup>

Israeli forces conducted several airstrikes against targets in Homs governorate: in March 2025, airstrikes included the Mukhayber Bridge in the Hosh Al-Sayyid Ali area near the border with Lebanon,<sup>1194</sup> military installations in Shinshar and Jdeidet Al-Sharqiyeh,<sup>1195</sup> the Al-Shairat Military Airport,<sup>1196</sup> and the Tadmur base in Palmyra.<sup>1197</sup> Moreover, airstrikes were launched against the Tiyas (or T4) airbase in March<sup>1198</sup> and April 2025,<sup>1199</sup> where Türkiye was reportedly planning to install air defence systems,<sup>1200</sup> and possibly already had transferred some equipment.<sup>1201</sup>

Several sources reported on the seizure of smuggled arms,<sup>1202</sup> and the raiding of arms depots used by insurgents.<sup>1203</sup> In May 2025, Etana Syria noted that GSS arrested several individuals suspected of having links to ISIL cells in Homs governorate.<sup>1204</sup>

#### (d) Security incidents

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 379 security incidents in Homs governorate (see Figure 19). In the period between 1 March and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 180 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) in Homs governorate. Of these incidents, 14 were coded as battles, 53 as explosions/remote violence, and 113 as violence against civilians.<sup>1205</sup>

<sup>1193</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 9, 2025, 9 May 2025, [url](#), p. 8; ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 8, 2025, 8 April 2025, [url](#), p. 4; ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 7, 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1194</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #23: 31 March 2025, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1195</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update 22: 24 March 2025, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1196</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1197</sup> New Arab (The), Israel strikes two military bases in central Syria, 22 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1198</sup> Shafaq, Israel strikes Syrian airbases in Homs, 25 March 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 25, 2025, 25 March 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1199</sup> Arab Weekly (The), Israel strikes Hama and Homs military bases, infrastructure in Syria, 3 April 2025, [url](#); Agenzia Nova, New Israeli airstrikes in Syria: military infrastructures hit in Hama, Homs and Damascus, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1200</sup> Agenzia Nova, New Israeli airstrikes in Syria: military infrastructures hit in Hama, Homs and Damascus, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1201</sup> BBC News, Israeli strikes in Syria a challenge to Türkiye, 4 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1202</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 6, 2025, 6 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6; ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 21, 2025, 21 March 2025, [url](#), p. 10; SOHR, Heading to Hezbollah militiamen | Internal Security Forces seize truck carrying weapons in western Homs countryside, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

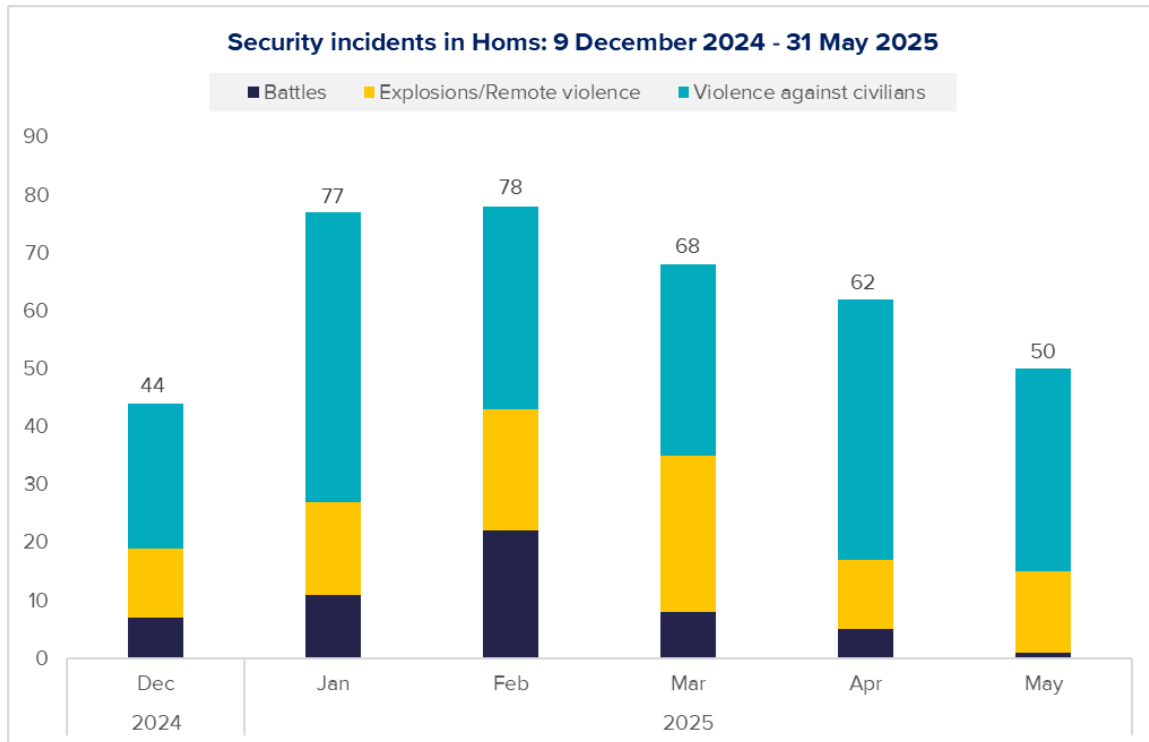
<sup>1203</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 31, 2025, 31 March 2025, [url](#), p. 11; MEMO, Syria seizes weapons warehouse in Homs, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1204</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1205</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)







**Figure 19: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Homs governorate between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, based on ACLED data.<sup>1206</sup>**

During the reference period, security incidents were recorded in all six districts of Homs governorate. The highest number of such incidents was recorded in Homs district (102 security incidents), followed by Tadmor (30) and Al-Qusayr (27 incidents). The fewest incidents were recorded in Al-Makhrim and Ar-Rastan districts (3 security incidents each). According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were involved as a main actor (coded as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’) in slightly more than 73 % of all security incidents recorded during the reference period, particularly in incidents coded as ‘violence against civilians’ and ‘explosions/remote violence’, where in most cases civilians were also involved.

‘Forces of Syria’, including military and police forces, were involved in around 29 % of all security incidents, particularly in incidents coded as ‘violence against civilians’ and ‘explosions/remote violence’, where Israeli forces were often involved as another actor (conducting airstrikes on Syrian positions).<sup>1207</sup>

#### (e) Civilian casualties

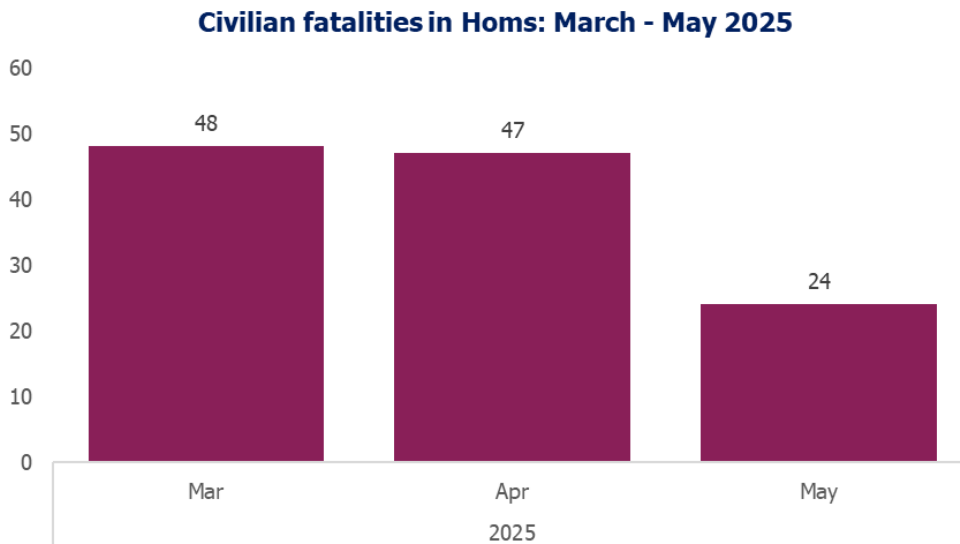
SNHR documented the killing of 48 civilians across Homs governorate in March 2025.<sup>1208</sup> A similar number of civilian fatalities was recorded in April 2025 (47), most of them killed by

<sup>1206</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1207</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1208</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

unidentified parties.<sup>1209</sup> In May 2025, SNHR recorded the killing of 24 civilians, again, most of them killed by unidentified parties.<sup>1210</sup> SNHR does not provide more detailed information on these fatalities. For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 136 civilian fatalities in Homs governorate.<sup>1211</sup>



**Figure 20: Civilian fatalities in Homs governorate between March and May 2025. Monthly breakdown based on SNHR data.<sup>1212</sup>**

#### **(f) Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war**

Several sources have reported that civilians have been killed or injured by landmines and other ERW near Palmyra<sup>1213</sup> and in areas of eastern rural Homs.<sup>1214</sup> Enab Baladi noted that, according to the Syrian Civil Defence, Homs was one of the areas where most incidents involving war remnants occurred between 27 November 2024 and 14 March 2025.<sup>1215</sup>

Civilian property was reportedly damaged in an IED attack by Saraya Ansar al Sunnah Sunni fighters on an Alawite neighbourhood in Homs city on 10 April 2025.<sup>1216</sup> The Ein Al-Tannour

<sup>1209</sup> SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1210</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1211</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.

<sup>1212</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1213</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance I Four civilians including two children injured in Homs, 9 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1214</sup> SNHR, Woman killed, five others injured by a landmine in Homs, April 22, 2025, 26 April 2025, [url](#); Welat TV, Two civilians killed by landmine explosions in Hama and Homs, 10 March 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Three men killed by a landmine of unidentified source in E. Homs, March 9, 2025, 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1215</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria: 80 civilians killed by war remnants in four months, 15 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1216</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 11, 2025, 11 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

Water Station in Al-Qsair city in western Homs was damaged by a missile attack, presumably by Hezbollah on 17 March 2025.<sup>1217</sup>

**(g) Conflict-induced displacement and return**

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, there were 283 779 IDPs living in Homs governorate, as well as 159 516 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024.<sup>1218</sup> UNHCR further estimated that a total of 86 533 returnees who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate by 15 May 2025, with the majority of them (64 598) returning to Homs district, followed by Al-Qusayr (10 911 individuals). Since 8 December 2024, 65 843 individuals had returned to Homs governorate from abroad, predominantly to Homs city.<sup>1219</sup>

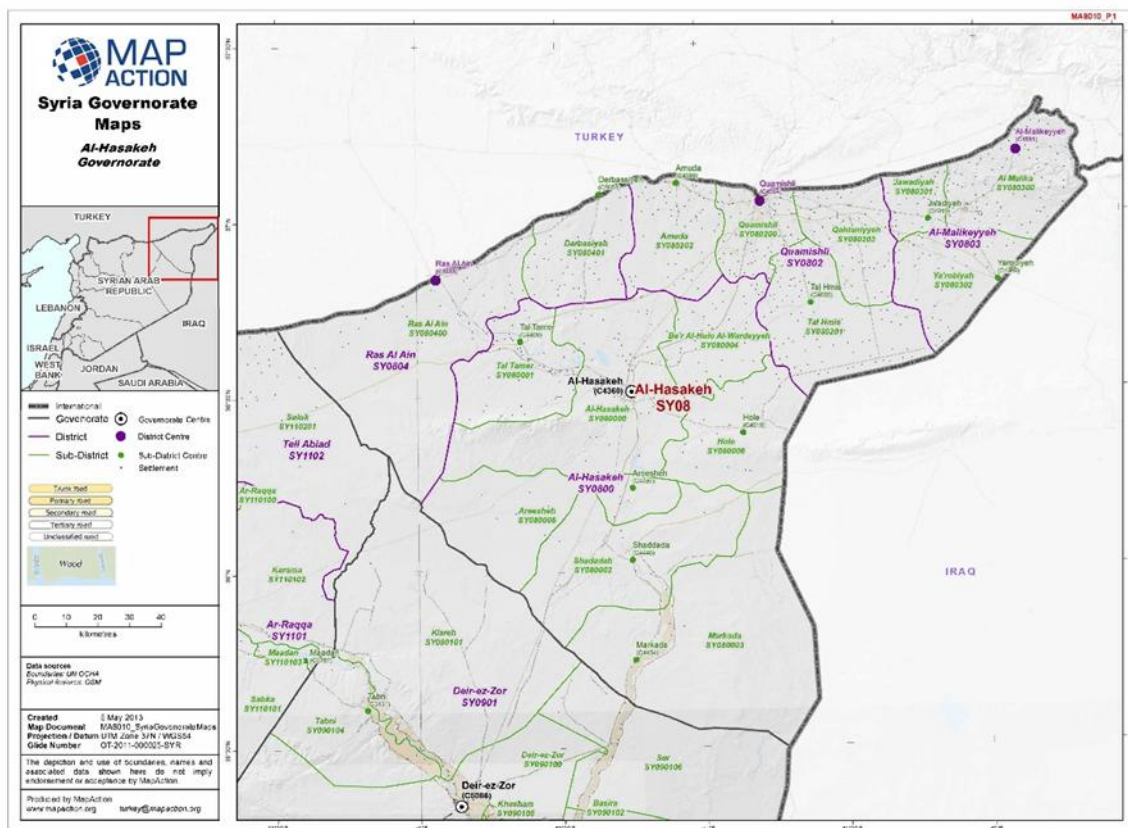
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<sup>1217</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 13

<sup>1218</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview [Map], 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1219</sup> UNHCR, Syrian returnees' figures by sub-districts - data 15 May 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

### 5.8.7. Hasaka governorate



Map 9: © MapAction, Hasaka governorate.<sup>1220</sup>

#### (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Hasaka governorate is divided into four administrative districts, namely Al-Hasaka (or Al-Hasakeh), Al-Malikeyyeh, Qamishli and Ras Al-Ain, which are further divided into a total of 16 sub-districts.<sup>1221</sup> Its capital is the city of Hasaka.<sup>1222</sup> As of March 2025, IOM estimated the governorate's population at 1 329 876, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad,<sup>1223</sup> and the WHO estimated it at 1 447 069 as of March 2025.<sup>1224</sup> For further background information on Hasaka governorate, see section 2.7.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

#### (b) Territorial control and main armed actors

As of late May 2025, Hasaka governorate was mapped by the ISW and CTP as being almost entirely under the control of the SDF. However, there was one area in the north-west of the governorate, bordering Türkiye, where the SNA, which together with other armed factions has

<sup>1220</sup> MapAction, Al-Hasakeh governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

<sup>1221</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 109

<sup>1222</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic [Map], August 2022, [url](#)

<sup>1223</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 2 – March 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1224</sup> WHO, Health Sector Syria - Health Sector Bulletin - March 2025, 2 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

formally come under the control of the MoD<sup>1225</sup> (see section [1.3.2 \(a\)](#) of this report for information on the integration process of the SNA into the new Syrian army), appeared to be in control<sup>1226</sup> and where several Turkish military posts were present.<sup>1227</sup> In March 2025, the GPC reported that the transitional government and SNA groups dominated most of northern Syria, while the SDF retained parts of the country's northeast.<sup>1228</sup> On 10 March 2025, the SDF and the transitional government signed an agreement regarding the integration of the SDF forces into the new Syrian army (see section [5.1.1](#)).<sup>1229</sup> However, as of early June the integration of SDF into the Syrian state military was still unresolved.<sup>1230</sup> Depending on the source consulted, the US military, also maintained from four<sup>1231</sup> to seven bases in the governorate in the reference period.<sup>1232</sup> Sources reported that US forces moved military vehicles and troops from other governorates towards Hasaka governorate in April 2025.<sup>1233</sup> Furthermore, in late April, the U.S. began withdrawing infrastructure and equipment from Al-Shaddadi base in Hasaka governorate.<sup>1234</sup> According to an Enab Baladi article, in late April, US military vehicles and equipment were moved from Hasaka governorate towards Iraq.<sup>1235</sup>

The existence of ISIL cells was reported during the reference period in the governorate,<sup>1236</sup> including in SDF-held prison camps in the governorate, such as Al-Hol,<sup>1237</sup> where thousands of families of ISIL fighters live.<sup>1238</sup> Other non-state armed groups whose emergence was reported in the reference period in the governorate include the Free Hasaka Force and the Ahrar Al-Jazeera Brigade. Such emerging localised groups reportedly appeared to aim to undermine the SDF in Hasaka governorate.<sup>1239</sup>

With reference to Syrian media, ISW and CTP reported in mid-April 2025 that Russian forces remained stationed at three Syrian military bases, including 'a likely small contingent' which remained at a base in Qamishli.<sup>1240</sup> For further information on territorial control and main armed actors in the period between November 2024 and February 2025, see section 4. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#).

<sup>1225</sup> Waters, G., Are Damascus' New Security Reforms a form of Federalism?, Syria Revisited, 18 May 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Syria gives armed groups 10 days to integrate into defense ministry, 18 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1226</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1227</sup> Mc Keever, A., This Week in Northern Syria: Türkiye 's military footprint in the 'Peace Spring' region, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1228</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1229</sup> Van Wilgenburg, W., Facilitating the New SDF Agreement Is Key to Stabilizing Syria, TWI, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1230</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 2 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1231</sup> US CRS, Syria: Transition and U.S. Policy [Figure 1], 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1232</sup> Mc Keever, A., This Week in Northern Syria: The US military footprint in northeastern Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1233</sup> Shafaq News, Reorganization underway: US-led coalition moves equipment in Eastern Syria, 28 April 2025, [url](#); Jordan News, U.S. Forces Withdraw from Two Bases in Eastern Syria, 3 May 2025, [url](#); ARK, U.S. Forces Withdraw from Three Bases in Deir Ez-zour, Redeploy to Kurdish Areas in Hasaka, 21 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1234</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1235</sup> Enab Baladi, أمريكا تسحب أليات من الحسكة إلى العراق [The US withdraws vehicles from Hasaka to Iraq], 23 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1236</sup> Rudaw, Kurdish forces arrest 16 ISIS militants in Roj camp, 7 April 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, SDF captures accused ISIS smuggler in Hasaka province, 28 March 2025, [url](#); Zelin, A., The New Syrian Government's Fight Against the Islamic State, Hezbollah, and Captagon, CTC Sentinel, March 2025, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>1237</sup> ANHA, Commander Sama Hasaka: Al-Hol Camp is ISIS base and it's international responsibility, 22 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1238</sup> International Crisis Group, The New Syria: Halting a Dangerous Drift, 28 March 2025, [url](#), footnote 69

<sup>1239</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 15, 2025, 15 April 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1240</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 17, 2025, 17 April 2025, [url](#)

### (c) Security trends

Sources reported SDF arrest campaigns in Hasaka governorate against civilians in the reference period.<sup>1241</sup> While the reason for arrest campaigns in the first days of March 2025<sup>1242</sup> and in mid-May 2025 reportedly remained unclear,<sup>1243</sup> another arrest campaign in mid-March took place amid escalating tensions in eastern Syria after the signing of the March 2025 agreement. This campaign reportedly targeted individuals who showed support for the transitional government.<sup>1244</sup>

SOHR<sup>1245</sup> reported incidents of civilians being shot and killed by unidentified armed men in the reference period.<sup>1246</sup>

Sources further reported that Türkiye and the Turkish-backed SNA resumed attacks on SDF positions in north-eastern Syria despite the above-mentioned March 2025 ceasefire agreement, including in Hasaka governorate.<sup>1247</sup> As of mid-March 2025, Türkiye had conducted aerial attacks on SDF positions in several Syrian governorates, including in Hasaka, on an almost daily basis since December 2024.<sup>1248</sup> In a March 2025 report, GPC noted that active conflict risk in north-eastern Syria, including in Hasaka governorate, continued 'more than elsewhere' in the country due to clashes between the SDF and the HTS/SNA.<sup>1249</sup> Please see section [1.3.2 \(a\)](#) of this report for information on the integration process of the SNA into the new Syrian army.

Sources reported that Hasaka governorate was affected by ISIL insurgent activity in the reference period,<sup>1250</sup> including attacks on SDF targets in April 2025.<sup>1251</sup> In early April 2025, SDF had warned of a possible ISIL resurgence in the camps Al-Hol and Roj holding family members

<sup>1241</sup> EREM News, "قصد" تثن حملة اعتقالات واسعة في الرقة والحسكة [The SDF launches large-scale detention campaign in Raqqa and in Hasaka], 3 March 2025, [url](#); Syria TV, "قصد" يهدد الاتفاق مع دمشق [Arrests in the East: Conflict among SDF branches compromises agreement with Damascus], 19 March 2025, [url](#); Syria TV, "قصد" لأسباب مجهولة.. "قصد" تعتقل 15 شخصاً في الشدادي وريفها جنوبي الحسكة [For unknown reasons: SDF detains 15 individuals in Al-Shaddadi and its surroundings south of Hasaka], 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1242</sup> EREM News, "قصد" تثن حملة اعتقالات واسعة في الرقة والحسكة [The SDF launches large-scale detention campaign in Raqqa and in Hasaka], 3 March 2025, [url](#); Syria TV, "قصد" يهدد الاتفاق مع دمشق [Arrests in the East: Conflict among SDF branches compromises agreement with Damascus], 19 March 2025, [url](#); Syria TV, "قصد" لأسباب مجهولة.. "قصد" تعتقل 15 شخصاً في الشدادي وريفها جنوبي الحسكة [For unknown reasons: SDF detains 15 individuals in Al-Shaddadi and its surroundings south of Hasaka], 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1243</sup> Syria TV, "قصد" لأسباب مجهولة.. "قصد" تعتقل 15 شخصاً في الشدادي وريفها جنوبي الحسكة [For unknown reasons: SDF detains 15 individuals in Al-Shaddadi and its surroundings south of Hasaka], 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1244</sup> Syria TV, "قصد" يهدد الاتفاق مع دمشق [Arrests in the East: Conflict among SDF branches compromises agreement with Damascus], 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1245</sup> Please note that no corroborating sources could be found.

<sup>1246</sup> SOHR, Following robbery attempt | Person killed by thieves inside his house in Al-Hasakah City, 25 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Security vacuum | Civilian shot dead in Al-Hasakah, 22 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Al-Hasakah | Two armed attacks leave several people injured and security forces arrest two gunmen following clashes, 4 April 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Armed attack | Civilian injured in gunfire by unidentified gunmen in southern Al-Hasakah, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1247</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 17, 2025, 17 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8; Etana Syria, Syria Update 22: 24 March 2025, 24 March 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 12, 2025, 12 March 2025, [url](#); ANHA, Turkish occupation bombs livestock facility in Tal Tamr, 12 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1248</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 21, 2025, 21 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9

<sup>1249</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1250</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1251</sup> Erem News, "داعش" ينهض ويهاجم "قصد" في الحسكة ودير الزور [Syria: ISIL resurges and attacks SDF in Hasaka and Deir Ez-Zor], 22 April 2025, [url](#); RIC, Sleeper Cell Report April 2025 – Two security campaigns launched in NES camps, 7 May 2025, [url](#)



of ISIL fighters.<sup>1252</sup> According to an article by Hawar News, intelligence information confirmed ISIL movements and sleeper cell activity inside Al-Hol camp and in its surroundings.<sup>1253</sup> In response to ISIL activity, the SDF, supported by US-led International Coalition forces, carried out raids against ISIL cells and detentions of alleged ISIL members in the reference period in north-eastern Syria, including in Hasaka governorate.<sup>1254</sup> During a raid on the camp Roj in early April, 16 ISIL members, who were tasked with recruitment and smuggling of families from the camp, were reportedly arrested.<sup>1255</sup> For further information on security trends in the period between November 2024 and February 2025, see section 4. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#).

#### **(d) Security incidents**

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 453 security incidents in Hasaka governorate (see Figure 21). For the period between 1 March 2025 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 113 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) in Hasaka governorate. Of these, 69 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians, 28 as explosions/remote violence and 16 as battles. Most of these incidents occurred in March 2025.<sup>1256</sup>

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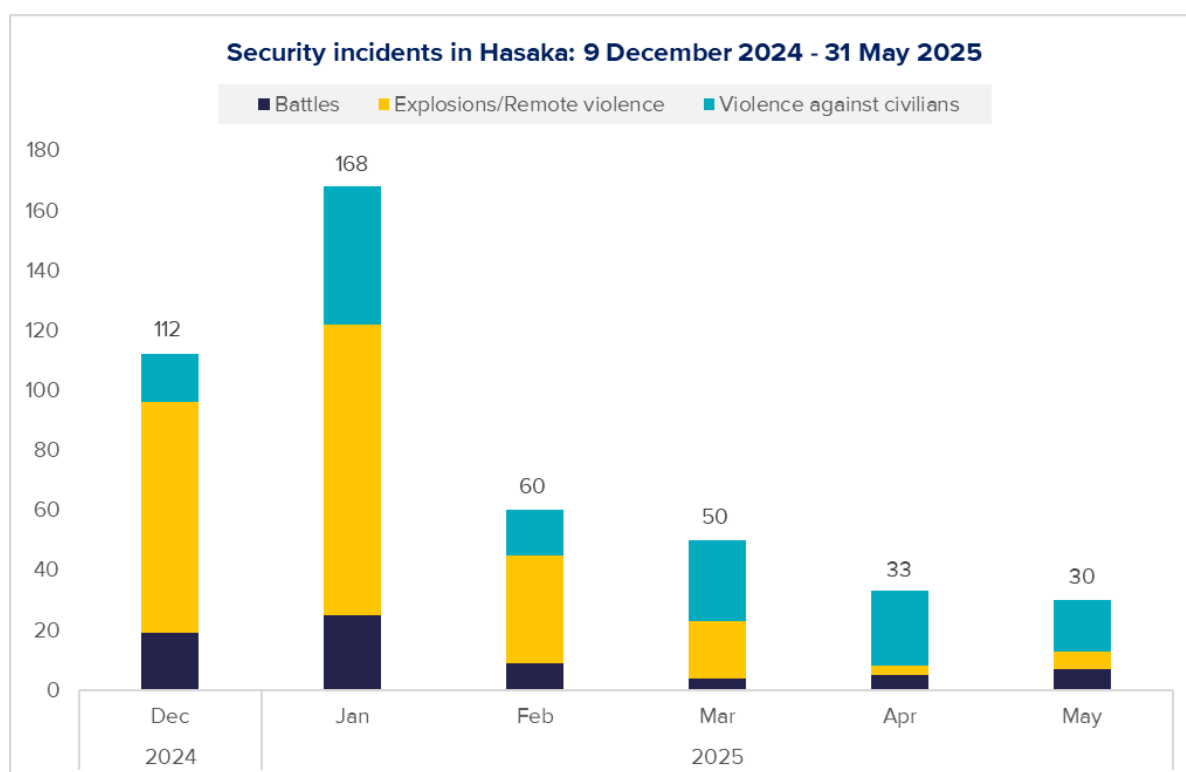
<sup>1252</sup> Rudaw, Kurdish forces arrest 16 ISIS militants in Roj camp, 7 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1253</sup> ANHA, Commander Sama Hasaka: Al-Hol Camp is ISIS base and it's international responsibility, 22 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1254</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #23: 31 March 2025, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1255</sup> Rudaw, Kurdish forces arrest 16 ISIS militants in Roj camp, 7 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1256</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)



**Figure 21: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Hasaka governorate between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, based on ACLED data.**<sup>1257</sup>

During the reference period, security incidents were recorded by ACLED in all four districts of the governorate, with the highest number documented in the district of Al-Hasaka (71 incidents), followed by Qamishli (19 incidents). By comparison, the fewest incidents were recorded in Ras Al-Ain district (8 incidents). According to ACLED data, the SDF were the main actor involved in around 55 % of all recorded security incidents (coded as either ‘Actor1’ or ‘Actor2’) during the reference period, particularly in incidents coded as violence against civilians involving detentions of civilians. Unidentified armed groups were involved in 18 % of all security incidents, particularly in incidents coded as explosions/remote violence caused by landmines or IEDs affecting civilians, or as violence against civilians involving shootings leading to casualties. Military Forces of Türkiye were involved in around 13 % of all security incidents, particularly in incidents coded as explosions/remote violence involving shelling, artillery strikes or missile attacks. The majority of these incidents occurred on 17 March 2025. Military forces of Syria were involved in 7 % of all security incidents coded either as explosions/remote violence or as battles, while ISIL was involved in around four percent of all security incidents, all of which (five incidents) were coded as battles involving the SDF.<sup>1258</sup>

<sup>1257</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1258</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

### (e) Civilian casualties

In March 2025, the SNHR recorded no civilian fatalities in Hasaka governorate.<sup>1259</sup> In April<sup>1260</sup> and May 2025, SNHR recorded one civilian fatality in each month.<sup>1261</sup> For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 12 civilian fatalities in Hasaka governorate.<sup>1262</sup>

### (f) Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

After being impacted by conflict, the Alouk Water Station, located east of Ras Al-Ain city and the only source of drinking water for Hasaka city and its surroundings, which had been out of function since June 2023,<sup>1263</sup> reportedly remained out of function as of May 2025.<sup>1264</sup>

According to a March 2025 GPC report, IDPs returning to north-eastern Syrian governorates, including Hasaka, faced extensive explosive ordnance contamination.<sup>1265</sup> UNOCHA reported in May 2025 that UXOs, ERWs, mines and IEDs are 'reportedly widespread and affect residential areas, farmland, infrastructure, and key access routes' particularly in a handful of Syrian governorates, including in Hasaka.<sup>1266</sup> Detonations of unexploded ordnance caused civilian deaths and injuries in north-eastern Hasaka,<sup>1267</sup> in northern Hasaka,<sup>1268</sup> in central Hasaka<sup>1269</sup> and in southern rural Hasaka.<sup>1270</sup> GPC noted that the majority of unexploded ordnance accidents since December 2024 in several governorates, including in Hasaka, had occurred 'in agricultural settings as people were trying to cultivate land or graze animals'.<sup>1271</sup>

### (g) Conflict-induced displacement and return

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, there were 352 763 IDPs living in the governorate and 1 795 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024.<sup>1272</sup>

UNHCR further estimated that a total 7 093 returnees who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate by 15 May 2025, with the vast majority

<sup>1259</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-10

<sup>1260</sup> SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1261</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1262</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.

<sup>1263</sup> NPA, Water crisis deepens in Hasakah amid heat, political deadlock, 3 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1264</sup> NRC, Beyond Return: Ensuring sustainable recovery & (re)-integration in Syria, 15 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 5-6

<sup>1265</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1266</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 5 (As of 28 April 2025), 8 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1267</sup> SOHR, استشهد 3 مدنيين بينهم طفل في ريف الحسكة وريف دير الزور [Three civilians, including a child, killed by remnants of war in rural Hasaka and Deir ez-Zor], 18 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1268</sup> Welat, Landmine Explosion Kills Child, Injures Two Others in Hasaka, 18 May 2025, [url](#); ANHA, 2 injured children in Tal Tamr are stable, parents urged to raise awareness, 17 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1269</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance | Child dies and another injured in explosion of war remnants in Al-Hasakah, 9 April 2025, [url](#)

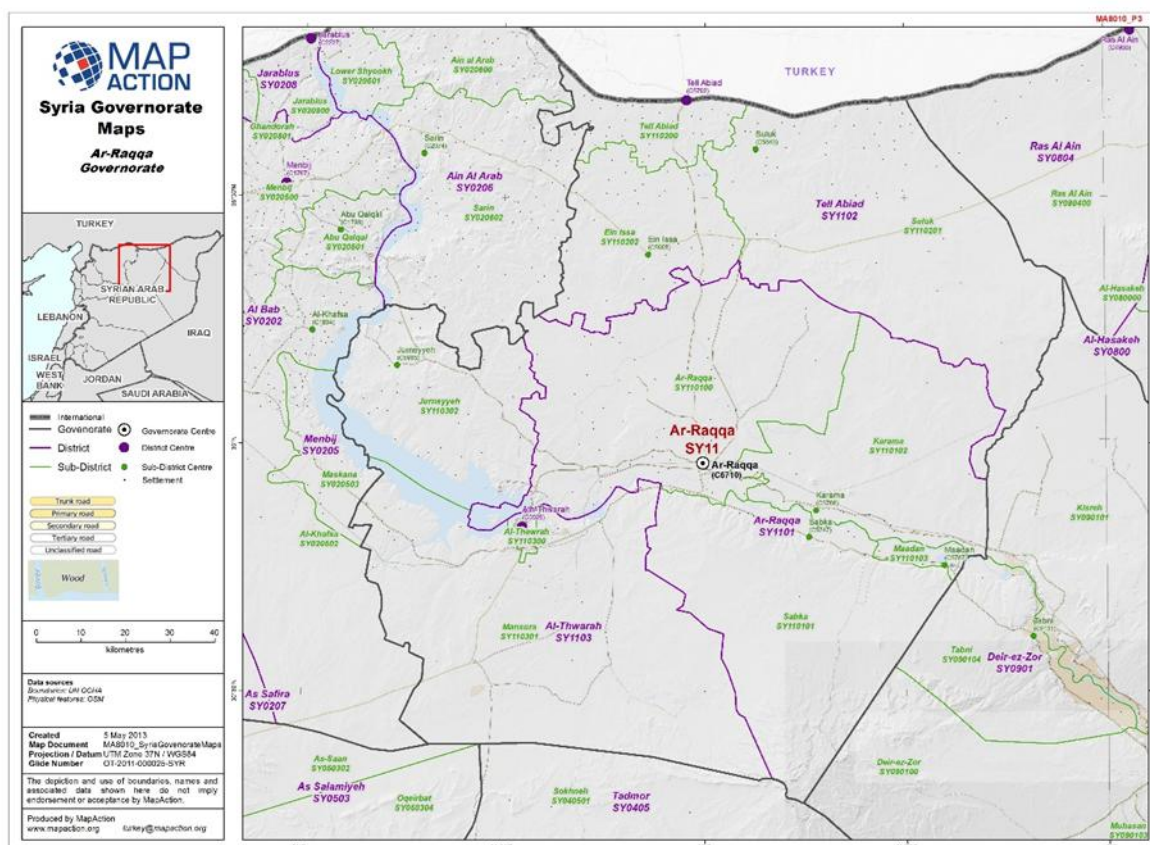
<sup>1270</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance | Young man seriously injured in southern Al-Hasakah countryside, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1271</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1272</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview [Map], 12 June 2025, [url](#)

(5 160) returning to Hasaka district, followed by Qamishli (1 520). Since 8 December 2024, 5 206 individuals had returned to Hasaka governorate from abroad.<sup>1273</sup>

### 5.8.8. Raqqa governorate



Map 10: © MapAction, Raqqa governorate<sup>1274</sup>

#### (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Raqqa (or Ar-Raqqa) governorate is divided into three administrative districts, namely Raqqa (or Ar-Raqqa), Al-Thawra (or Ath-Thawrah) and Tell Abiad (or Tall Abyad), which are further divided into a total of ten sub-districts.<sup>1275</sup> Its capital is the city of Raqqa.<sup>1276</sup> As of March 2025, IOM estimated the governorate's population at 843 596, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad.<sup>1277</sup> In comparison, the WHO estimated Raqqa's population at 933 444 as of March 2025.<sup>1278</sup> For further background information on Raqqa governorate, see section 2.8.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

<sup>1273</sup> UNHCR, Syrian returnees' figures by sub-districts - data 15 May 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1274</sup> MapAction, Ar Raqqa Governorate [map], 29 July 2016, [url](#)

<sup>1275</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 107

<sup>1276</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic [Map], August 2022, [url](#)

<sup>1277</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 2 – March 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1278</sup> WHO, Health Sector Syria - Health Sector Bulletin - March 2025, 2 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

## **(b) Territorial control and main armed actors**

As of late May 2025, the ISW and CTP mapped the central part of Raqqa governorate bordering Aleppo governorate to the west and Deir Ez-Zor governorate to the east, as being under the control of the SDF. While a small strip of land in the north-west of the governorate also appeared to be under SDF control, most of the northern part of the governorate,<sup>1279</sup> where several Turkish military posts were also present,<sup>1280</sup> and a small area extending into Aleppo governorate at the western border below Lake Assad were mapped as being under the control of the Turkish-backed SNA,<sup>1281</sup> which together with other armed factions has formally come under the control of the MoD<sup>1282</sup> (see section [1.3.2\(a\)](#) of this report for information on the integration process of the SNA into the new Syrian army). The southern parts of Raqqa governorate were mapped as being largely under the control of the transitional government, though one area in the centre below Al-Thawra city extending from the Al-Thawra oil field to the Dubaysan oil field appeared to be contested between the SDF and the transitional government.<sup>1283</sup> According to the ISW and CTP, these were areas where both sides conducted offensive and defensive manoeuvres, while neither group fully controlled the areas.<sup>1284</sup> A smaller area near the eastern border and the Euphrates River also appeared to be under the transitional government's control. Two areas, one in the south-west and one in the south-east were marked as 'Lost Regime Territory'<sup>1285, 1286</sup>. On 10 March 2025, the SDF and the transitional government signed an agreement regarding the integration of the SDF forces into the new Syrian army (see section [5.1.1](#)).<sup>1287</sup> However, as of early June the integration of SDF into the Syrian state military was still unresolved.<sup>1288</sup> With reference to the Telegram channel of anti-SDF medium Al-Sharqiyya, ISW and CTP also reported in mid-April 2025 that the SDF had begun withdrawing its forces from Al-Thawra (or Al-Tabqa) city towards Raqqa city.<sup>1289</sup>

The existence of ISIL cells in the governorate was reported during the reference period.<sup>1290</sup>

In late April 2025, Shafaq News reported that the US-led International Coalition was expected to maintain a base in Raqqa governorate.<sup>1291</sup>

<sup>1279</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1280</sup> Mc Keever, A., This Week in Northern Syria: Türkiye 's military footprint in the 'Peace Spring' region, 12 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1281</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1282</sup> Waters, G., Are Damascus' New Security Reforms a form of Federalism?, Syria Revisited, 18 May 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Syria gives armed groups 10 days to integrate into defense ministry, 18 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1283</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1284</sup> ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, as of 13 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1285</sup> This term refers to territory that used to be controlled by the former government under President Assad until 27 November 2024 and where, as of writing, the ISW lacked sufficient data to map the presence of other group(s) that presumably have taken over control since November 2024. ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1286</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1287</sup> Van Wilgenburg, W., Facilitating the New SDF Agreement Is Key to Stabilizing Syria, TWI, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1288</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 2 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1289</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 18, 2025, 18 April 2025, [url](#), p. 12

<sup>1290</sup> RIC, Sleeper Cell Report April 2025 – Two security campaigns launched in NES camps, 7 May 2025, [url](#); Zelin, A., The New Syrian Government's Fight Against the Islamic State, Hezbollah, and Captagon, CTC Sentinel, March 2025, [url](#), p. 32; GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1291</sup> Shafaq News, Reorganization underway: US-led coalition moves equipment in Eastern Syria, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

### (c) Security trends

In March 2025, GPC reported that security challenges in north-eastern Syria persisted, including in Raqqa governorate, where clashes had resulted in civilian casualties and displacement.<sup>1292</sup> The report also stated that the risk of active conflict in north-eastern Syria, including in Raqqa governorate, was higher than elsewhere in the country due to ongoing clashes between the SDF and the HTS/SNA. The persistence of ISIL cells in the region, including Raqqa, further exacerbated this vulnerability.<sup>1293</sup> The same month, ISW and CTP reported attacks by Türkiye and the Turkish-backed SNA on SDF positions in Raqqa governorate,<sup>1294</sup> including along the Highway 4.<sup>1295</sup> As of mid-March 2025, Türkiye had conducted aerial attacks on SDF positions in several Syrian governorates, including in Raqqa, on an almost daily basis since December 2024.<sup>1296</sup> Between late February and 7 March 2025, an escalation in Turkish airstrikes against SDF positions in Raqqa and eastern Aleppo governorates reportedly 'resulted in some of the highest daily death tolls in weeks'.<sup>1297</sup> According to ACLED, confrontations between the SNA and the SDF sharply declined after the 10 March agreement was signed by the transitional government and the SDF (see section 5.1.1), coinciding with fewer Turkish airstrikes on SDF areas.<sup>1298</sup> According to SDF commander-in-chief Mazloum Abdi as of late May 2025, the SDF had observed a 'ceasefire with Türkiye for two and half months'.<sup>1299</sup>

Sources reported of raids and detention campaigns carried out by the SDF in Raqqa governorate during the reference period.<sup>1300</sup> In early March 2025, the SDF had reportedly conducted raids on civilians and made arrests in the governorate without providing reasons.<sup>1301</sup> In mid-March 2025, Syria TV reported that the SDF had launched a large-scale arrest campaign in several north-eastern Syrian governorates, including Raqqa, targeting individuals who had expressed support for the transitional government.<sup>1302</sup> In mid-May 2025, the same source reported that the SDF had carried out intense military operations in Raqqa city and its countryside, including a detention campaign.<sup>1303</sup> In May, individuals whose family members had defected from the SDF were reportedly targeted in detention campaigns, in an attempt to

<sup>1292</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1293</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 2-3

<sup>1294</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 10, 2025, 10 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8; ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 6, 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1295</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 17, 2025, 17 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8; ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 5, 2025, 5 March 2025, [url](#), p. 5; ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 3, 2025, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1296</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 21, 2025, 21 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9

<sup>1297</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1298</sup> ACLED, ACLED Regional Overview Middle East: May 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1299</sup> Rudaw, SDF chief says has 'direct' contact with Türkiye, 30 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1300</sup> Syria TV, حملات اعتقال جديدة لقسد شرقي سوريا تطول مدنيين وأطفالاً ومسؤولين محليين [New SDF detention campaigns in eastern Syria against civilians, children and local officials], 26 April 2025, [url](#); Syria TV, [SDF launches new detention campaign, arresting dozens east of Raqqa], 26 March 2025, [url](#); EREM News, "قسد" تشن حملة اعتقالات واسعة, [The SDF launches large-scale detention campaign in Raqqa and in Hasaka], 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1301</sup> EREM News, "قسد" تشن حملة اعتقالات واسعة في الرقة والحسكة [The SDF launches large-scale detention campaign in Raqqa and in Hasaka], 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1302</sup> Syria TV, صراع الأجندة داخل "قسد" يهدد الاتفاق مع دمشق [Arrests in the East: Conflict among SDF branches compromises agreement with Damascus], 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1303</sup> Syria TV, تحركات مريبة لـ"قسد" في الرقة.. إغلاق طرق واستقدام تعزيزات واعتقالات [Suspicious SDF movements in Raqqa: road closures, reinforcements and detentions], 20 May 2025, [url](#)



put pressure on defectors.<sup>1304</sup> SNHR reported that at least 47 persons were detained by the SDF in Deir Ez-Zor and Raqqa governorates in the second half of May 2025, including individuals who were critical of SDF policies and relatives of SDF defectors.<sup>1305</sup>

During the reference period, there were reports of raids against ISIL cells in Raqqa, carried out by the SDF<sup>1306</sup> with the support of US and Global Coalition forces.<sup>1307</sup> In April, an ISIL cell that had reportedly been planning to help ISIL-affiliated prisoners escape from a Raqqa prison was uncovered during a raid.<sup>1308</sup> For further information on security trends in the period between November 2024 and February 2025, see section 4. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#).

#### (d) Security incidents

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 426 security incidents in Raqqa governorate (see Figure 22). For the period between 1 March 2025 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 106 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) in Raqqa governorate. Of these, 61 were coded as incidents of

<sup>1304</sup> Syria TV, "الضغط عليهم" .. اعتقالات في الرقة تطول أقارب منشقين عن صفوف قسد [To pressure them: arrests in Raqqa target relatives of SDF defectors], 19 May 2025, [url](#)

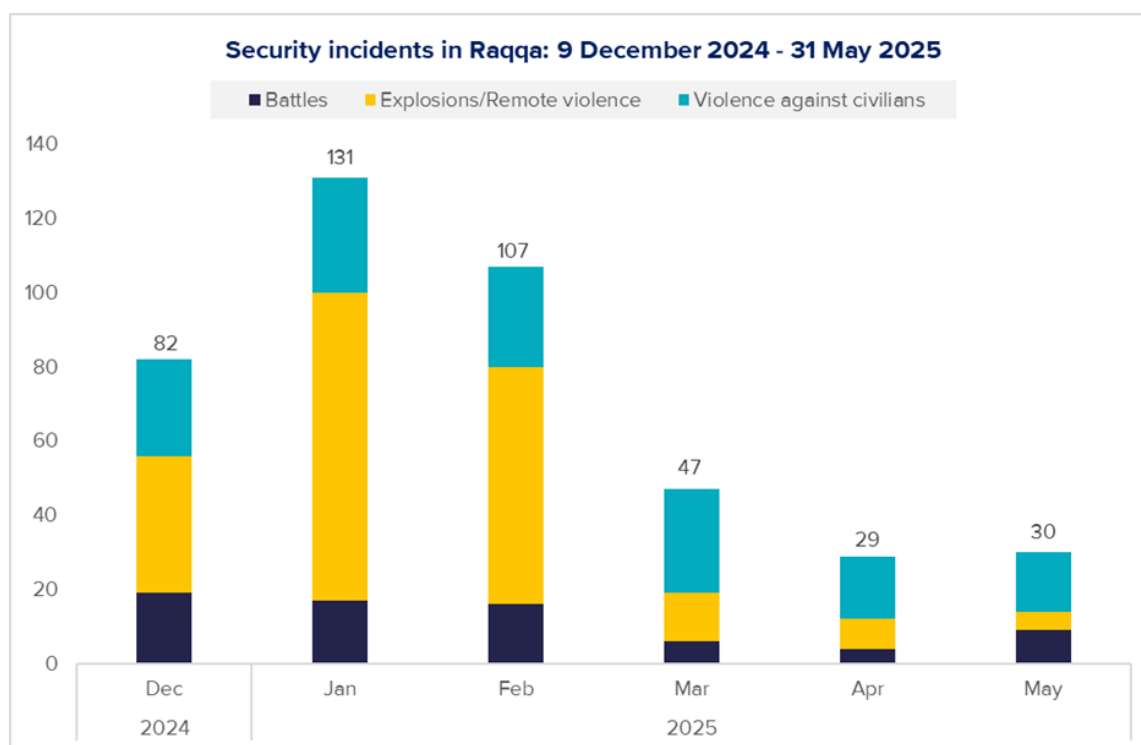
<sup>1305</sup> SNHR, Condemning the Syrian Democratic Forces Detention of Dozens of Civilians in the Governorates of Deir Ez-Zour and Raqqa Since the Middle of May 2025, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1306</sup> RIC, Sleeper Cell Report April 2025 – Two security campaigns launched in NES camps, 7 May 2025, [url](#); Syria TV, قسد تشن حملة اعتقال جديدة في مدينة الرقة [SDF starts new detention campaign in Raqqa city], 15 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1307</sup> Zelin, A., The New Syrian Government's Fight Against the Islamic State, Hezbollah, and Captagon, CTC Sentinel, March 2025, [url](#), p. 32; Etana Syria, Syria Update #23: 31 March 2025, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1308</sup> RIC, Sleeper Cell Report April 2025 – Two security campaigns launched in NES camps, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

violence against civilians, 26 as explosions/remote violence and 19 as battles. 47 of the overall incidents occurred in March.<sup>1309</sup>



**Figure 22: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Raqqa governorate between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, based on ACLED data.**<sup>1310</sup>

During the reference period, security incidents were recorded by ACLED in all three districts of the governorate, with the highest number documented in the district of Raqqa (63 incidents), followed by Tell Abiad (26 incidents). The fewest incidents were recorded in Al-Thawra district (17 incidents). According to ACLED data, the SDF were the main actor involved in around 62 % of all recorded security incidents (coded as either ‘Actor1’ or ‘Actor2’) during the reference period, particularly in incidents coded as violence against civilians involving detentions. The majority of these incidents occurred in March. Unidentified armed groups were involved in around 16 % of all security incidents, particularly incidents coded as explosions/remote violence caused by landmines and IEDs, which affected civilians. ISIL was involved in around 8 % of all security incidents, all of which were coded as battles involving the SDF or affiliated forces. Transitional government forces and military forces of Türkiye were also sporadically involved in security incidents in Raqqa governorate.<sup>1311</sup>

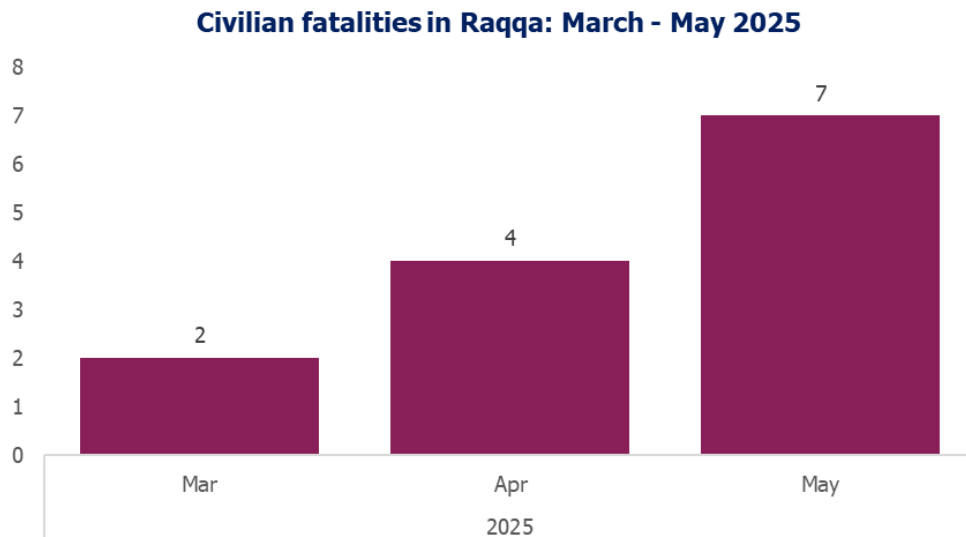
<sup>1309</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1310</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1311</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

### (e) Civilian casualties

In March 2025, the SNHR recorded two civilian fatalities in Raqqa governorate,<sup>1312</sup> in April 2025, SNHR recorded four civilian fatalities,<sup>1313</sup> and in May 2025, seven civilian fatalities were recorded in the governorate.<sup>1314</sup> For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 10 civilian fatalities in Raqqa governorate.<sup>1315</sup>



**Figure 23: Civilian fatalities in Raqqa governorate between March and May 2025. Monthly breakdown based on SNHR data.**<sup>1316</sup>

### (f) Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

According to UNICEF, as of March 2025, fighting around the Tishreen Dam in Aleppo governorate had rendered the dam inoperable since December 2024. This had ‘severely’ impacted the water access of thousands of families in the region, including those in the city Ein Issa in Raqqa’s Tell Abiad district.<sup>1317</sup> In May 2025, The New Arab reported that the SDF was carrying out ‘extensive tunnelling operations’ in Raqqa governorate, and that part of a street collapsed, when a truck drove over it due to a tunnel underneath.<sup>1318</sup>

<sup>1312</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1313</sup> SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1314</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1315</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.

<sup>1316</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1317</sup> UNICEF, Whole of Syria WASH Cluster: Advocacy note on Water Access Crisis in Kobani/AinArab, Ein Issa and Manbij – Aleppo and Raqqa Governorates, Syria (24 March 2024), 24 March 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1318</sup> New Arab (The), SDF tunnel network in Raqqa could swallow homes and roads, residents fear, 20 May 2025, [url](#)



The above-mentioned March 2025 GPC report stated that IDPs returning to north-eastern Syrian governorates, including Raqqa, faced extensive explosive ordnance contamination.<sup>1319</sup> The report also stated that the majority of unexploded ordnance incidents since December 2024 in several governorates, including in Raqqa, had occurred ‘in agricultural settings as people were trying to cultivate land or graze animals’.<sup>1320</sup> UNOCHA reported in May 2025 that UXOs, ERWs, mines and IEDs are ‘reportedly widespread and affect residential areas, farmland, infrastructure, and key access routes’ particularly in a handful of Syrian governorates, including in Raqqa.<sup>1321</sup> Unexploded ordnance detonating in various parts of the governorate has caused civilian deaths and injuries, including in central,<sup>1322</sup> northern,<sup>1323</sup> eastern,<sup>1324</sup> southern<sup>1325</sup> and western rural Raqqa governorate.<sup>1326</sup>

### (g) Conflict-induced displacement and return

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, there were 225 167 IDPs living in the governorate and 4 616 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024.<sup>1327</sup> In March 2025, the GPC reported that more than 20 000 people had been displaced by clashes near the Tishreen Dam in Aleppo governorate (see section [5.8.1\(c\)](#)). Many of these people were accommodated in emergency collective shelters in Raqqa.<sup>1328</sup>

UNHCR further estimated that a total 92 301 returnees who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate by 15 May 2025, with the vast majority (62 838) returning to Raqqa district, followed by Al-Thawra (28 554). Since 8 December 2024, 16 565 individuals had returned to Al-Raqqa governorate from abroad.<sup>1329</sup>

<sup>1319</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1320</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1321</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 5 (As of 28 April 2025), 8 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1322</sup> SNHR, Two children killed, four others injured, by explosive remnant of war in Raqqa, April 20, 2025, 20 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1323</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance | Civilian killed in Al-Raqqa countryside, 19 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Affected by her injury | Woman dies following landmine explosion in Al-Raqqa countryside, 9 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Civilian injured in northern of Al-Raqqa in areas of “National Army”, 10 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1324</sup> Syria TV, مقتل طفلين وإصابة شخصين بانفجارات جديدة لمخلفات الحرب في سوريا [Two children killed and two others injured in new ERW explosions in Syria], 15 March 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Person killed and another injured in landmine explosion in Al-Raqqa, 11 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1325</sup> Syria TV, مقتل أربعة مدنيين بينهم طفلان بانفجارات جديدة لمخلفات الحرب في الرقة [Four civilians, including two children killed in new ERW explosions in Raqqa], 10 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Civilian killed, while shepherding in southern Al-Raqqa countryside, 10 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1326</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance | Civilian loses his foot in Hama and another sustain injuries in Al-Raqqa, 3 April 2025, [url](#)

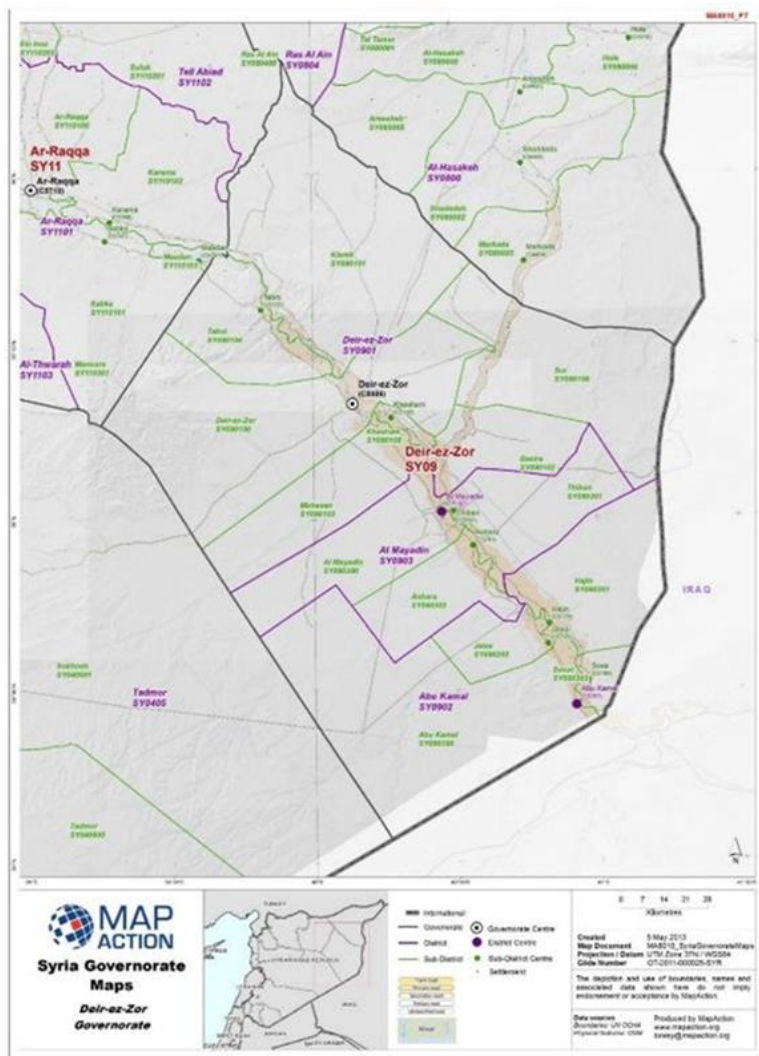
<sup>1327</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview [Map], 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1328</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1329</sup> UNHCR, Syrian returnees' figures by sub-districts - data 15 May 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#)



### 5.8.9. Deir Ez-Zor governorate



Map 11: © MapAction, Deir Ez-Zor governorate map<sup>1330</sup>

#### (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Deir Ez-Zor governorate is divided into three administrative districts, namely Abu Kamal (or Al-Bukamal), Al-Mayadin and Deir Ez-Zor, which are further divided into a total of 14 sub-districts.<sup>1331</sup> Its capital is the city of Deir Ez-Zor.<sup>1332</sup> As of March 2025, IOM estimated the governorate's population at 1 408 656, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad.<sup>1333</sup> In comparison, the WHO estimated Deir Ez-Zor's population at 1 234 199 as of

<sup>1330</sup> MapAction, Deir-ez-Zor Governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

<sup>1331</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 107-108

<sup>1332</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic [Map], August 2022, [url](#)

<sup>1333</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 2 – March 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

March 2025.<sup>1334</sup> For further background information on Deir Ez-Zor governorate, see section 2.9.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

### **(b) Territorial control and main armed actors**

As of late May 2025, the northern and north-eastern parts of Deir Ez-Zor governorate, which border Raqqa governorate to the west and Hasaka governorate to the north and north-east, were mapped by the ISW and CTP as being under the control of the SDF. The area around the Euphrates River, which runs through the middle of the governorate from the western border with Raqqa to the south-eastern border with neighbouring Iraq, was mapped as being under the control of the transitional government. However, in three small areas in the east of this strip of land, including in Al-Mayadin and Abu Kamal, pro-Assad remnants maintained a presence. Some areas to the east of the river, including Bushayrah and another area near the Tanak/Omar oil fields, were mapped as being contested between the transitional government and the SDF.<sup>1335</sup> According to the ISW and CTP, these were areas where both parties conducted offensive and defensive manoeuvres, while neither fully controlled the areas.<sup>1336</sup> Another strip of land, stretching from Deir Ez-Zor city in the centre of the governorate to its western border with Homs, was also mapped as being under the transitional government's control. The remaining areas of the governorate located in the desert zone in the south and the west of the governorate were mapped as 'Lost Regime Territory'.<sup>1337</sup> On 10 March 2025, the SDF and the transitional government signed an agreement regarding the integration of the SDF forces into the new Syrian army<sup>1339</sup> (see section 5.1.1). However, as of early June the integration of SDF into the Syrian state military was still unresolved.<sup>1340</sup>

The US-led International Coalition was active in Deir Ez-Zor governorate during the reference period.<sup>1341</sup> While the International Coalition Forces reportedly sent reinforcements to Deir Ez-Zor governorate in March 2025,<sup>1342</sup> they began retreating towards Hasaka governorate<sup>1343</sup> and reducing their presence<sup>1344</sup> from mid-April on.<sup>1345</sup> Syria TV reported that the SDF sent reinforcements in May to fill the gap caused by the withdrawal of International Coalition Forces, noting that the originally planned complete withdrawal of US forces had reportedly been postponed following intelligence reports of Iranian-affiliated armed group movements

<sup>1334</sup> WHO, Health Sector Syria – Health Sector Bulletin – March 2025, 2 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1335</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1336</sup> ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, as of 13 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1337</sup> This term refers to territory that used to be controlled by the former government under President Assad until 27 November 2024 and where, as of writing, the ISW lacked sufficient data to map the presence of other group(s) that presumably have taken over control since November 2024. ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1338</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1339</sup> Van Wilgenburg, W., Facilitating the New SDF Agreement Is Key to Stabilizing Syria, TWI, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1340</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 2 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1341</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #20: 2 March 2025, 2 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1342</sup> NPA, U.S.-led Global Coalition conducts military drills in Deir ez-Zor, 22 March 2025, [url](#); NPA, Global Coalition sends military reinforcements to bases in Deir ez-Zor, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1343</sup> Jordan News, U.S. Forces Withdraw from Two Bases in Eastern Syria, 3 May 2025, [url](#); Syria TV, "قسد" تعزز "قسد" مواقعها في حقلي العمر وكونيكو عقب انسحابات لقوات التحالف الدولي [SDF sends reinforcements to its positions in the oil fields Al-Omar and Conoco after withdrawal of International Coalition Forces], 15 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1344</sup> Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes (KW18/2025), 28 April 2025, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>1345</sup> Syria TV, "خاص: واشنطن تعمل على إنهاء وجودها العسكري في دير الزور" [Exclusive: Washington works to end its military presence in Deir Ez-Zor], 15 May 2025, [url](#)



near the Iraqi border.<sup>1346</sup> In early June, U.S. officials reported that around 500 U.S. troops had withdrawn from Syria. Additionally, the governorate's Mission Support Site Green Village base was closed, the Mission Support Site Euphrates base was handed over to the SDF, and a third base was in the process of being vacated.<sup>1347</sup>

The existence of ISIL cells was also reported during the reference period.<sup>1348</sup>

### (c) Security trends

As of March 2025, security challenges in north-eastern Syria, including in Deir Ez-Zor governorate, persisted. Clashes in this area had resulted in civilian casualties and displacement.<sup>1349</sup> The presence of ISIL cells further exacerbated this vulnerability.<sup>1350</sup> In the assessment of a Syrian journalist interviewed by the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) in May, Deir Ez-Zor is the only governorate where the security situation in the city 'is largely similar' to that of the surrounding countryside.<sup>1351</sup>

The SDF carried out raids and detention campaigns in Deir Ez-Zor governorate during the reference period, including against individuals who had expressed support for the transitional government,<sup>1352</sup> as well as SDF defectors<sup>1353</sup> and others for unknown reasons.<sup>1354</sup> SNHR reported that at least 47 persons were detained by the SDF in Deir Ez-Zor and Raqqqa governorates in the second half of May 2025, including individuals who were critical of SDF policies and relatives of SDF defectors.<sup>1355</sup> The SDF had reportedly scaled up raids and arrest campaigns at the time.<sup>1356</sup> After a car bomb attack, attributed to ISIL, on a police station in Al-Mayadin in mid-May 2025,<sup>1357</sup> killing three government security forces and one civilian,<sup>1358</sup> a curfew was imposed in Al-Mayadin<sup>1359</sup> and several other cities in eastern rural Deir Ez-Zor and

<sup>1346</sup> Syria TV, [Washington works to end its military presence in Deir Ez-Zor](#), 15 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1347</sup> Al Arabiya English, [US withdraws hundreds of troops from Syria after Pentagon directive](#), 2 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1348</sup> RIC, [Sleeper Cell Report April 2025 – Two security campaigns launched in NES camps](#), 7 May 2025, [url](#); Erem News, [Syria: ISIL resurges and attacks SDF in Hasaka and Deir Ez-Zor](#), 22 April 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, [The New Syria: Halting a Dangerous Drift](#), 28 March 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, [Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025](#), 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1349</sup> GPC, [Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025](#), 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1350</sup> GPC, [Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025](#), 3 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 2-3

<sup>1351</sup> Denmark, DIS, [Syria - Security situation](#), June 2025, [url](#), p. 50

<sup>1352</sup> Syria TV, [Arrests in the East: Conflict among SDF branches compromises agreement with Damascus](#), 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1353</sup> Syria TV, [SDF campaigns continue unabated: arrests and raids target defectors in rural Deir Ez-Zor](#) [حملات قسد لا تتوقف.. اعتقالات ومهامات تطول منشقين بريف دير الزور], 10 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1354</sup> Syria TV, [SDF start new arrest campaign in eastern Syria targeting minors and defectors](#), 30 April 2025, [url](#); Syria TV, [SDF carries out raids and arrest campaigns in rural eastern Deir Ez-Zor](#) [قسد تنفذ حملة مدامات واعتقالات في ريف دير الزور الشرقي], 13 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1355</sup> SNHR, [Condemning the Syrian Democratic Forces Detention of Dozens of Civilians in the Governorates of Deir Ez-Zor and Raqqqa Since the Middle of May 2025](#), 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1356</sup> Syria TV, [SDF scales up arrests in Deir Ez-Zor, detaining 45 people without clear charges](#), 17 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1357</sup> Zelin, A., [The Islamic State Attacks the New Syrian Government](#), TWI, 19 May 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, [Iran Update](#), May 19, 2025, 19 May 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1358</sup> Le Monde, [The persistent threat of the Islamic State group in Syria](#), 26 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1359</sup> NPA, [Syria's security forces arrest 6 people following car bomb in Deir ez-Zor](#), 19 May 2025, [url](#); Syria TV, [قتلى وجرحى بانفجار سيارة ملغمة استهدف شرطة مدينة الميادين](#) [Fatalities and injuries after car bomb attack on police station in Al-Mayadin city], 18 May 2025, [url](#)

continued to carry out raids and arrest campaigns in the governorate.<sup>1360</sup> In an NPA article, the attack in Al-Mayadin was described as ‘one of the most serious attacks in recent weeks’.<sup>1361</sup> The SDF also carried out raids against ISIL members in the reference period.<sup>1362</sup>

In the wake of the violent March 2025 events, particularly affecting the coastal region (see sections [5.8.4\(c\)](#) and [5.8.5\(c\)](#)), GSS carried out arrest operations targeting remnants of the Assad government,<sup>1363</sup> including in Abu Kamal, Deir Ez-Zor city and Al-Mayadin.<sup>1364</sup> Raids against former members of armed organisations with ties to Iran were also reported.<sup>1365</sup>

According to a Syrian journalist interviewed in May 2025 by DIS, the threat posed by ISIL persists and is reportedly growing, with the group targeting security and civilians in the governorate.<sup>1366</sup> ISIL attacks on civilians,<sup>1367</sup> SDF targets<sup>1368</sup> and on transitional government forces were reported during the reference period.<sup>1369</sup> As of mid-April 2025, 46 of overall 56 ISIL attacks in SDF-governed areas in 2025 had reportedly taken place in Deir Ez-Zor governorate.<sup>1370</sup> In early May 2025, a high-ranking ISIL leader was captured in eastern rural Deir Ez-Zor.<sup>1371</sup>

Sources also reported attacks by unidentified armed men on security forces and civilians in the reference period, resulting in civilian casualties.<sup>1372</sup>

#### (d) Security incidents

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 638 security incidents in Deir Ez-Zor governorate (see Figure 24). For the period between 1 March 2025 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 307 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, and violence against civilians) in Deir Ez-Zor governorate, marking the highest number of such incidents among all Syrian governorates during this period. Of these, 109 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians, 103 as battles, and 95 as explosions/remote violence.<sup>1373</sup>

<sup>1360</sup> Syria TV, [\[SDF imposes curfew in rural Deir Ez-Zor and promises to hold violators accountable\]](#), 26 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1361</sup> NPA, Syria's security forces arrest 6 people following car bomb in Deir ez-Zor, 19 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1362</sup> NPA, SDF conducts sweep operations amid rising ISIS activity in Deir ez-Zor, 10 May 2025, [url](#); RIC, Sleeper Cell Report April 2025 – Two security campaigns launched in NES camps, 7 May 2025, [url](#); Zelin, A., The New Syrian Government's Fight Against the Islamic State, Hezbollah, and Captagon, CTC Sentinel, March 2025, [url](#).

<sup>1363</sup> NPA, General Security arrest 4 leaders linked to Assad regime in Deir ez-Zor, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1364</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #23: 31 March 2025, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1365</sup> NPA, Security forces arrest 3 former Iran-backed militants in Deir ez-Zor, 13 May 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 5, 2025, 5 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 9-10; NPA, Security forces raid former Iranian-backed militants in Deir ez-Zor, 9 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1366</sup> Denmark, DIS, Syria - Security situation, June 2025, [url](#), p. 50

<sup>1367</sup> RIC, Sleeper Cell Report April 2025 – Two security campaigns launched in NES camps, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1368</sup> Kurdistan 24, [\[ISIL cells attack newly established military position in rural Deir Ez-Zor\]](#), 26 May 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: March 2025 – May 2025, n.d., [url](#)

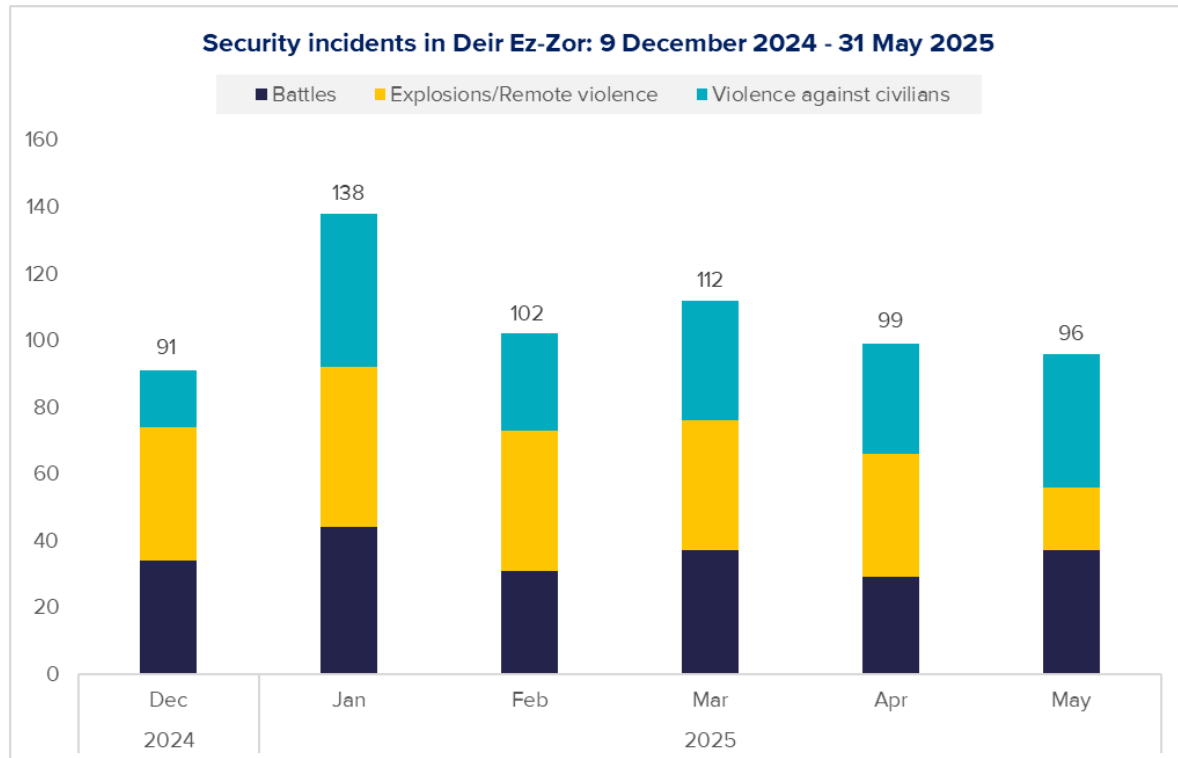
<sup>1369</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1370</sup> SOHR, ISIS attack | Four members of SDF killed and injured in eastern Deir Ezzor countryside, 13 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1371</sup> ANF News, ISIS terrorist leader captured in Deir ez-Zor's eastern countryside, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1372</sup> NPA, Unknown Attackers Kill Two Syrian Soldiers, Civilian in Eastern Deir ez-Zor, 2 May 2025, [url](#); NPA, Unidentified gunmen kill 2 men in Deir ez-Zor, 15 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1373</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)



**Figure 24: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Deir Ez-Zor governorate between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, based on ACLED data.<sup>1374</sup>**

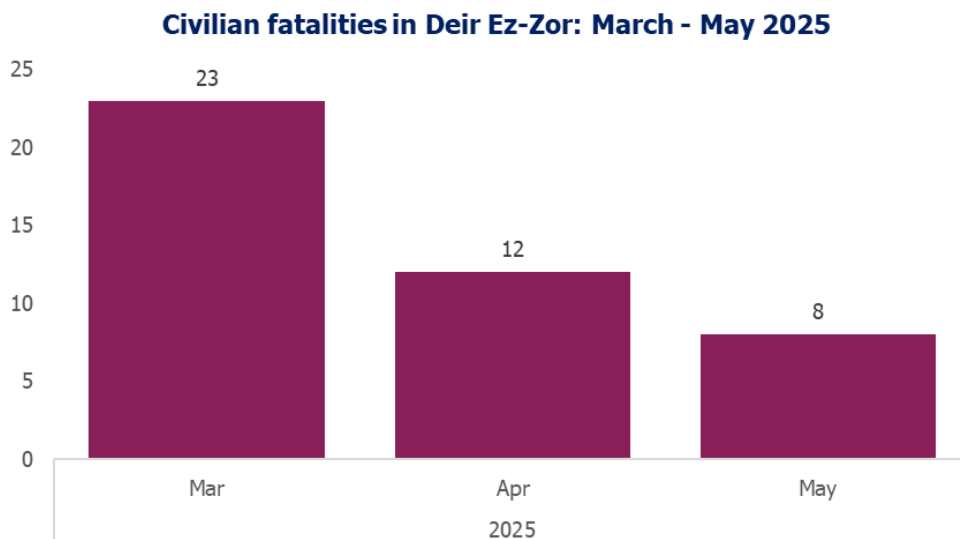
During the reference period, security incidents were recorded by ACLED in all three districts of the governorate, with the highest number documented in the district of Deir Ez-Zor (156 incidents), followed by Al-Mayadin (96 incidents) and Abu Kamal (55 incidents). According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were the main actors involved in around 48 % of all recorded security incidents (coded as either ‘Actor1’ or ‘Actor2’) during the reference period, particularly in incidents coded as explosions/remote violence caused by landmines and IEDs, which affected civilians. The SDF was involved in around 42 % of all security incidents, particularly in incidents coded as violence against civilians and battles (where ISIL or unidentified armed groups were often involved as an actor). ISIL was involved in around 17 % of all security incidents, mainly in incidents coded as battles where the SDF were also an actor. Various militias, including tribal militias, were involved in around 9 % all security incidents.<sup>1375</sup>

<sup>1374</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1375</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

### (e) Civilian casualties

In March 2025, the SNHR recorded 23 civilian fatalities in Deir Ez-Zor governorate,<sup>1376</sup> in April 2025, SNHR recorded 12 civilian fatalities,<sup>1377</sup> and in May 2025, eight civilian fatalities were recorded in the governorate.<sup>1378</sup> For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 54 civilian fatalities in Deir Ez-Zor governorate.<sup>1379</sup>



**Figure 25: Civilian fatalities in Deir-Ez-Zor governorate between March and May 2025. Monthly breakdown based on SNHR data.**<sup>1380</sup>

### (f) Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Information on conflict-related infrastructure damage during the reference period could not be found within the time constraints of this report.

The Syria Civil Defence was quoted by Enab Baladi as saying that Deir Ez-Zor governorate was the last of seven governorates witnessing the highest numbers of incidents relating to remnants of war between 27 November 2024 and 14 March 2025.<sup>1381</sup> UNOCHA reported in May 2025 that UXOs, ERWs, mines and IEDs are ‘reportedly widespread and affect residential areas, farmland, infrastructure, and key access routes’ particularly in a handful of Syrian governorates, including in Deir Ez-Zor.<sup>1382</sup> According to UNOCHA, Deir Ez-Zor remained one of

<sup>1376</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1377</sup> SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1378</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1379</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.

<sup>1380</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1381</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria: 80 civilians killed by war remnants in four months, 15 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1382</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 5 (As of 28 April 2025), 8 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

the most heavily contaminated areas, accounting for approximately a quarter of all related incidents.<sup>1383</sup> IDPs returning to north-eastern Syrian governorates, including Deir Ez-Zor, reportedly faced extensive explosive ordnance contamination.<sup>1384</sup> Mines planted by the Assad government and other actors in Deir Ez-Zor reportedly continued 'to pose a direct threat to the lives of civilians' and 'hinder the return of displaced people to their homes'.<sup>1385</sup> According to the GPC, the majority of unexploded ordnance incidents since December 2024 in several governorates, including in Deir Ez-Zor, had occurred 'in agricultural settings as people were trying to cultivate land or graze animals'.<sup>1386</sup> Unexploded ordnance detonating in various parts of the governorate has caused civilian deaths and injuries, including in western,<sup>1387</sup> eastern<sup>1388</sup> and south-eastern Deir Ez-Zor.<sup>1389</sup> In mid-March 2025, NPA reported that in the neighbourhood Harabesh in Deir Ez-Zor, landmines planted by the Assad government and by Iranian militias continued to cause civilian casualties, particularly affecting shepherds.<sup>1390</sup>

#### **(g) Conflict-induced displacement and return**

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, there were 192 946 IDPs living in the governorate and 46 557 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024.<sup>1391</sup>

UNHCR further estimated that a total 40 105 returnees who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate by 15 May 2025, with the vast majority (24 951) returning to Deir Ez-Zor district, followed by Al-Mayadin (12 061). Since 8 December 2024, 14 131 individuals had returned to Deir Ez-Zor governorate from abroad.<sup>1392</sup>

<sup>1383</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Situation Report No. 6 As of 27 May 2025, 2 June 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1384</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1385</sup> Enab Baladi, Mines threaten civilian lives in Deir Ezzor, 27 May 2025, [url](#).

<sup>1386</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1387</sup> NPA, War remnant blast kills child in Deir ez-Zor, 21 May 2025, [url](#); NPA, Two landmine blasts kill child, injure girl in Deir ez-Zor, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1388</sup> Syria TV, مقتل شاب وإصابة آخر بانفجار لغم من مخلفات الحرب شرقي دير الزور [Young man killed and another injured in landmine explosion east of Deir Ez-Zor], 27 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1389</sup> NPA, Three killed in Deir ez-Zor due to war remnants in 24 hours, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

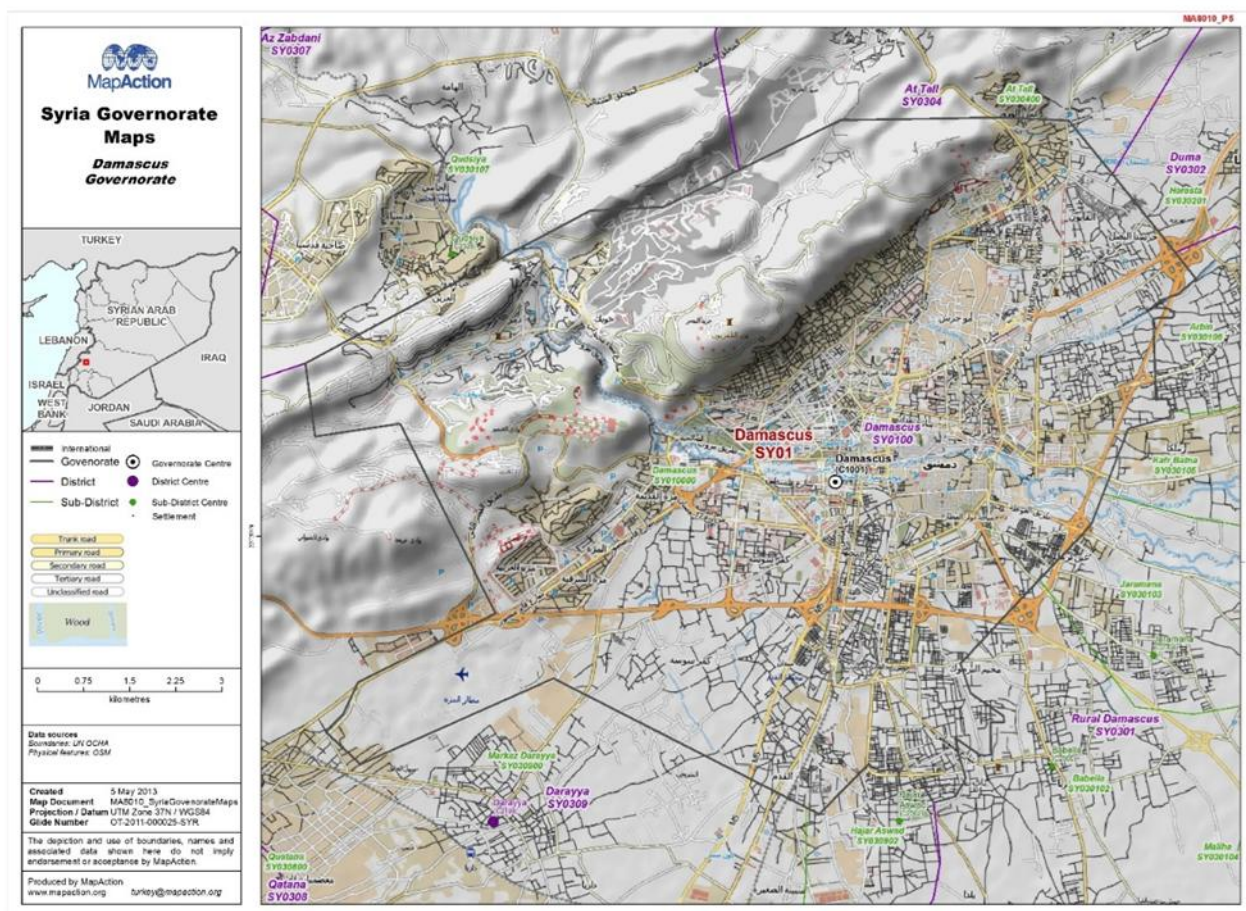
<sup>1390</sup> NPA, Deadly landmines in Deir ez-Zor pose persistent threat to civilians, 15 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1391</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview [Map], 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1392</sup> UNHCR, Syrian returnees' figures by sub-districts - data 15 May 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#)



### 5.8.10. Damascus governorate



**Map 12: © MapAction, Damascus governorate<sup>1393</sup>**

#### (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Damascus governorate, including Syria's capital city, is located in the country's south-west and is completely surrounded by Rural Damascus (Rif Dimashq) governorate.<sup>1394</sup> The governorate is divided in two parts, Damascus city (which is divided into 15 sub-districts) and Yarmouk,<sup>1395</sup> the Palestinian refugee camp south of Damascus city.<sup>1396</sup> As of March 2025, IOM estimated the governorate's population at 1 881 146, including residents, IDPs and IDP returnees as well as arrivals from abroad.<sup>1397</sup> In comparison, the WHO estimated Damascus' population at 1 812 584 as of March 2025.<sup>1398</sup> For further background information on Damascus governorate, see section 2.10.1 of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

<sup>1393</sup> UNOCHA, Syria sub-districts maps [maps], n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1394</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic [Map], August 2022, [url](#)

<sup>1395</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic, Governorates profile (June 2014), 6 August 2014, [url](#), pp. 2-3

<sup>1396</sup> Enab Baladi, Yarmouk Camp: Residents return to a devastated area lacking services, 17 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1397</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 2 – March 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1398</sup> WHO, Health Sector Syria – Health Sector Bulletin – March 2025, 2 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7



### **(b) Territorial control and main armed actors**

As of the end of May 2025, a map by the ISW and the CTP showed Damascus governorate as being controlled by the HTS-led interim government.<sup>1399</sup> In early May 2025, leading Druze sheiks reportedly agreed with the interim government to cede control of the Damascus-Sweida road to the state.<sup>1400</sup>

Israeli forces launched airstrikes on targets in Damascus city during the reference period.<sup>1401</sup>

### **(c) Security trends**

The International Crisis Group noted in March 2025 that the newly created GSS forces managed to quickly establish control over Damascus and some other parts of the country. In these areas, the new administration successfully restored trust and maintained public order,<sup>1402</sup> thereby contributing to a nascent sense of security that reportedly motivated up to one million of displaced Syrians to return to their homes.<sup>1403</sup> In a report of April 2025 assessing conditions of return, IOM similarly noted that at the time of assessment, Damascus governorate was one of the governorates achieving ‘partially conducive’ conditions (scoring 3.2 on a 0-5 scale) for returning IDPs to return and reintegrate.<sup>1404</sup> In terms of safety and security (including freedom of movement, perceptions of safety, atmosphere of public life, mine and explosive risks and reported security incidents), conditions in Damascus were identified as ‘mostly conducive’ (scoring 4.3/5 based on 42 assessed communities).<sup>1405</sup> According to two sources interviewed by DIS in May, Damascus remains the most stable area in Syria, with a generally secure environment, a reduction in checkpoint arrests and a noticeable decline in security incidents.<sup>1406</sup> SJAC assessed that there is a good level of security in Damascus and that security forces have a strong presence in the city.<sup>1407</sup>

<sup>1399</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1400</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 5, 2025, 5 May 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1401</sup> SNHR, Statement of Condemnation: The Attack by the Israeli Occupation near the Presidential Palace in Damascus Represents a Dangerous Escalation and a Blatant Violation of the Sovereignty of Syria, 6 May 2025, [url](#); AA, Israeli fighter jets conduct airstrikes on Syrian cities of Damascus, Hama, 3 April 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Israeli airstrike targets building in Damascus, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1402</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1403</sup> International Crisis Group, The New Syria: Halting a Dangerous Drift, 28 March 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1404</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic — Communities of Return Index — Round 1 (15 March - 05 April 2025), 13 May 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1405</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic — Communities of Return Index — Round 1 (15 March - 05 April 2025), 13 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 6, 15 (Annex A)

<sup>1406</sup> Denmark, DIS, Syria - Security situation, June 2025, [url](#), pp. 49, 54

<sup>1407</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025



The Harmoon Center pointed to an increase in security incidents in April such as kidnappings or armed attacks in and around Damascus governorate.<sup>1408</sup> SOHR similarly reported on incidents of kidnapping civilians in the capital.<sup>1409</sup> Security forces reportedly responded with the establishment of checkpoints, raids and other targeted interventions.<sup>1410</sup> In May 2025, Etana Syria reported on a series of attacks on nightclubs in Damascus by armed men or Islamist groups, targeting venues with a mixed clientele<sup>1411</sup> and serving alcohol.<sup>1412</sup> In one incident, a woman was killed,<sup>1413</sup> and business reportedly declined in the aftermath of these incidents as customers stayed away for fear of attacks or a government crackdown on establishments serving alcohol.<sup>1414</sup>

On 22 June, a suicide bomber with apparent ties to ISIL attacked the Greek Orthodox Church in Dweila neighbourhood located on the outskirts of Damascus, leaving at least 22 persons killed and 63 wounded.<sup>1415</sup>

Sources reported on Israeli airstrikes during the reporting period: airstrikes on Damascus city on 13 March 2025 reportedly targeted facilities in the Marshrou Dummar area linked to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) movement, according to some sources.<sup>1416</sup> According to the SNHR, four civilians were injured in the attack.<sup>1417</sup> Renewed airstrikes on Damascus city in early April targeted alleged military infrastructure sites near the scientific research centre in Barzeh neighbourhood,<sup>1418</sup> while an attack in early May 2025 on the area near the presidential palace was, according to an Israeli statement, aimed at deterring threats against the Syrian Druze community and preventing the Syrian transitional government to send forces to Syria's southern areas.<sup>1419</sup> For further information on the events in early March 2025, see section 4 of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#).

<sup>1408</sup> Harmoon Center, Harmon Centre Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>1409</sup> SOHR, Security chaos | Several young men kidnapped in Damascus and Al-Qirdaha, 7 June 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Amid growing concerns about their fate | Seven persons kidnapped in Damascus, 1 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1410</sup> Harmoon Center, Harmon Centre Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>1411</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1412</sup> Africanews, Bar owners fear attacks in Damascus, 23 May 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), Attack on Damascus nightclub kills woman, Druze shrine burnt in southern Syria, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1413</sup> AFP, Woman killed as gunmen attack Damascus nightclub: monitor, witness, 5 May 2025

<sup>1414</sup> Rudaw, Damascus bars struggle amid fear of attacks, crackdown, 31 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1415</sup> BBC News, Suicide bombing at Damascus church kills 22, Syrian authorities say, 22 June 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, At least 22 killed in Syria church bombing attack, dozens wounded, 22 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1416</sup> NPA, Israel Targets Islamic Jihad Facility in Syria's Damascus, 13 March 2025, [url](#); Reuters, Israel conducts airstrike on edge of Syrian capital, three reported hurt, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1417</sup> SNHR, Four civilians, including two women, injured in an Israeli occupation airstrike on Mashrou Dummar in Damascus, March 13, 2025, 15 March 2025, [url](#)

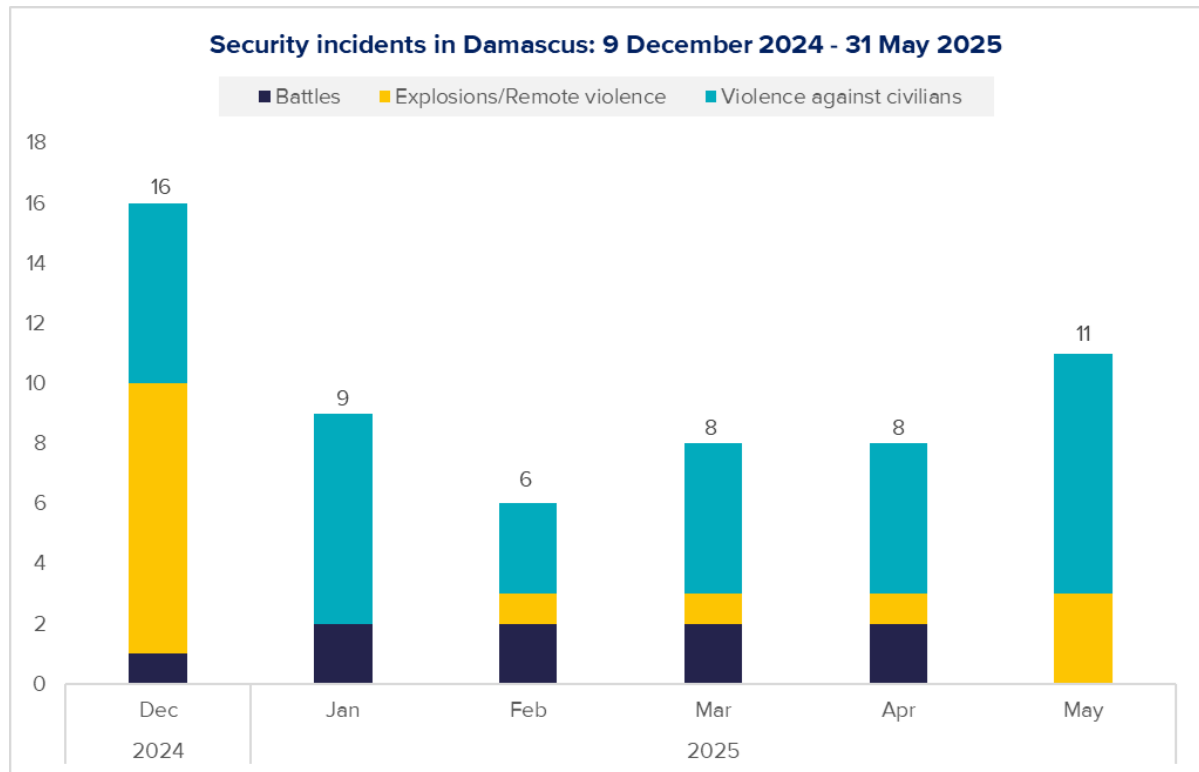
<sup>1418</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 3, 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 6; Reuters, Israel steps up Syria strikes, says Türkiye aims for 'protectorate', 3 April 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Israel launches air attacks on Syria's Damascus and Hama, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1419</sup> SNHR, Statement of Condemnation: The Attack by the Israeli Occupation near the Presidential Palace in Damascus Represents a Dangerous Escalation and a Blatant Violation of the Sovereignty of Syria, 6 May 2025, [url](#); Guardian (The), Syria calls Israeli air strikes on Damascus a 'dangerous escalation', 2 May 2025, [url](#); AP, Israeli military strikes near Syria's presidential palace after warning over sectarian attacks, 2 May 2025, [url](#)



#### (d) Security incidents

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 58 security incidents in Damascus governorate (see Figure 26). For the period between 1 March and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 27 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) in Damascus governorate. Of these 27 incidents, 4 were coded as battles, 5 as explosions/remote violence and 18 as incidents of violence against civilians.<sup>1420</sup>



**Figure 26: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Damascus governorate between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, based on ACLED data.<sup>1421</sup>**

According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were involved as main actor (coded as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’) in around 67 % of all security incidents recorded during the reference period (in 18 of the 27 recorded incidents), particularly in incidents coded as violence against civilians. Police forces were involved in slightly more than 22 % of all security incidents, predominantly in incidents coded as battles, where unidentified armed groups or anti-military operations command militia were also an actor. Israeli forces were involved in around 15 % of all recorded security incidents, all of them coded as explosions/remote violence and specified as air drone strikes.<sup>1422</sup>

<sup>1420</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1421</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1422</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)



### (e) Civilian casualties

SNHR recorded no civilian fatalities in Damascus governorate in March<sup>1423</sup> and May 2025.<sup>1424</sup> In April 2025, SNHR recorded 2 civilian fatalities, with perpetrators unknown in both cases.<sup>1425</sup> SNHR does not provide further information on these fatalities. For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 15 civilian fatalities in Damascus governorate.<sup>1426</sup>

### (f) Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

As of April 2025, TNH noted that only a few streets of Jobar district had been declared safe while large parts of the area remain contaminated by landmines and other remnants of war.<sup>1427</sup> NPA reported on the removal and controlled detonation of an unexploded missile that had been found in the basement of Jobar's grand mosque in March 2025.<sup>1428</sup> Damascus was one of the areas where most of incidents involving war remnants occurred between 27 November 2024 and 14 March 2025, according to the Syria Civil Defence quoted by Enab Baladi.<sup>1429</sup>

The International Crisis Group noted that 'entire neighbourhoods' of Damascus city and other cities had been destroyed and that, according to an education ministry official, 30-50 % of school buildings remained unusable.<sup>1430</sup> Enab Baladi pointed to remaining remnants of war in Yarmouk camp, as well as to the lack of electricity, water or services.<sup>1431</sup>

### (g) Conflict-induced displacement and return

Reuters reported on forced evictions predominantly of Alawite families in Damascus. According to two government officials quoted by Reuters, many of the affected families were former state employees living in government houses and were no longer entitled to stay as they were no longer working for state institutions. Others, however, were evicted from their private homes because of their Alawite identity, according to Reuters.<sup>1432</sup> SOHR similarly mentioned threats of being forcibly evicted to Alawite families in a settlement near the Al-Mazzah military airbase.<sup>1433</sup>

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 15 May 2025, there were 589 271 IDPs living in Damascus governorate, as well as 5 935 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024.<sup>1434</sup> UNHCR further

<sup>1423</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1424</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1425</sup> SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1426</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.

<sup>1427</sup> TNH, A cautious return to a Damascus neighbourhood marred by Syria's war, 10 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1428</sup> NPA, Unexploded Missile from Syrian Conflict Detonated in Damascus, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1429</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria: 80 civilians killed by war remnants in four months, 15 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1430</sup> International Crisis Group, The New Syria: Halting a Dangerous Drift, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1431</sup> Enab Baladi, Yarmouk Camp: Residents return to a devastated area lacking services, 17 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1432</sup> Reuters, Minutes to leave: Syria's Alawites evicted from private homes at gunpoint, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

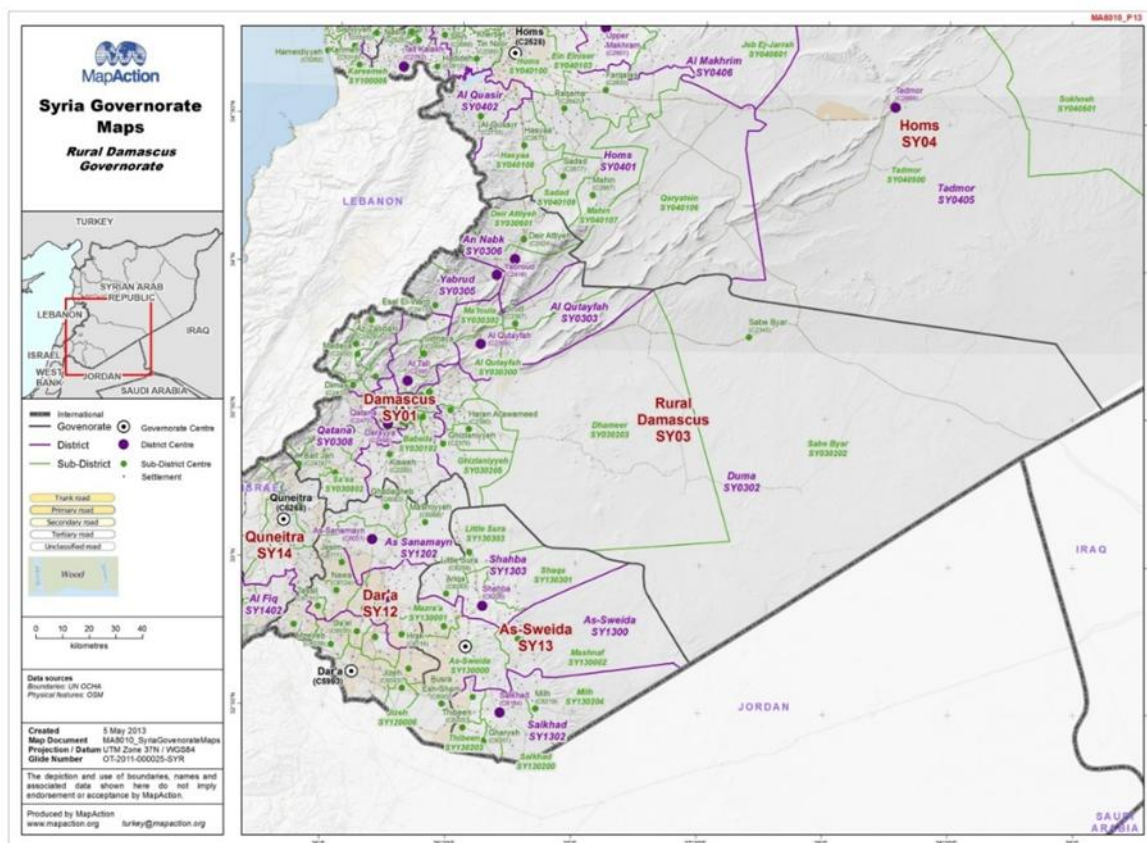
<sup>1433</sup> SOHR, Providing no alternative housing | Factions threaten to forcibly evacuate residents of Al-Zahriyat housing in Damascus, 4 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1434</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview [Map], 15 May 2025, [url](#)



estimated that a total of 83 510 returnees who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate by 15 May 2025. No further information on the distribution of returnees at sub-district level was provided by the source. Since 8 December 2024, 63 652 individuals had returned to Damascus governorate from abroad.<sup>1435</sup>

### 5.8.11. Rural Damascus governorate



Map 13. MapAction, Rural Damascus governorate<sup>1436</sup>

#### (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Rural Damascus (or Rif Dimasq) governorate is divided into nine administrative districts, namely Al-Qutayfah, Al-Nabk, Al-Tall, Al-Zabdani, Darayya, Duma, Qatana, Rural Damascus and Yabroud, which are further divided into a total of 36 sub-districts.<sup>1437</sup> Its capital is the city of Damascus, which is a governorate in its own right.<sup>1438</sup> As of March 2025, IOM estimated the governorate's population at 5 120 422, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad<sup>1439</sup> and the WHO estimated it at 3 395 491.<sup>1440</sup> For further background information on

<sup>1435</sup> UNHCR, Syrian returnees' figures by sub-districts – data 15 May 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1436</sup> Mapaction, Syria 2013-2015, Rural Damascus Governorate [map], last updated:29 July 2016, [url](#)

<sup>1437</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 109-110

<sup>1438</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic [Map], August 2022, [url](#)

<sup>1439</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 2 – March 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1440</sup> WHO, Health Sector Syria - Health Sector Bulletin - March 2025, 2 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

Rural Damascus governorate, see section 2.11.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

### **(b) Territorial control and main armed actors**

As of late May 2025, the northern and north-western part of Rural Damascus governorate bordering Homs's governorate to the north, Dar'a governorate to the south and Lebanon to the west was mapped by the ISW and CTP as being under the control of the transitional administration. However, there were several pockets around Damascus city where pro-Assad remnants maintained a presence, including near the cities Harasta and Al-Misraba, as well as Najha and near Damascus University. The southern and eastern parts of the governorate bordering Sweida governorate to the south, and Homs governorate and Jordan to the east were mapped as 'Lost Regime Territory'.<sup>1441 1442</sup>

Non-state armed groups in the governorate whose activities or presence were reported during the reference period include Druze militias such as the Men of Dignity Movement,<sup>1443</sup> including in the cities Jaramana<sup>1444</sup> and Sahnaya.<sup>1445</sup> Other non-state armed groups present or active in the reference period were remnants of the Lebanese Hezbollah<sup>1446</sup> and the Syrian Popular Resistance,<sup>1447</sup> an armed group opposing the transitional government.<sup>1448</sup> ISW and CTP in late April also mention activities of a 'Salafijihadi group ideologically close to the Islamic State [...] and hostile to the transitional government' in Sahnaya.<sup>1449</sup>

Furthermore, aerial activity of military forces of Israel was reported in the reference period,<sup>1450</sup> including in the city Sahnaya.<sup>1451</sup> For further information on territorial control and main armed actors in the period between November 2024 and February 2025, see section 4. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Country Focus \(March 2025\)](#).

<sup>1441</sup> This term refers to territory that used to be controlled by the former government under President Assad until 27 November 2024 and where, as of writing, the ISW lacked sufficient data to map the presence of other group(s) that presumably have taken over control since November 2024. ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1442</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1443</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 26, 2025, 26 March 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1444</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 5, 2025, 5 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; FDD's Long War Journal, Clashes erupt between Druze militias and pro-government forces in Syria, 30 April 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 3, 2025, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1445</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: March 2025 – May 2025, n.d., [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 26, 2025, 26 March 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1446</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 27, 2025, 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>1447</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 17, 2025, 17 March 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>1448</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update December 31, 2024, 31 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1449</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 30, 2025, 30 April 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1450</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: March 2025 – May 2025, n.d., [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#); SNHR, SNHR Condemns the Intensified Attacks and Wide Ground Incursions by Israeli Occupation Forces into Syrian Territory [Blog], 5 April 2025, [url](#); GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1451</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 30, 2025, 30 April 2025, [url](#), p. 5



### (a) Security trends

In early March 2025, clashes erupted between members of the Jaramana Shield Brigade,<sup>1452</sup> a local Druze militia, and security forces in Jaramana city, killing at least one officer.<sup>1453</sup> Another outbreak of violence in Jaramana at the end of April 2025 between Sunni and Druze armed men<sup>1454</sup> reportedly resulted in at least 30 fatalities, including security forces who were attacked when intervening to end the fighting, according to the Syrian Ministry of Interior.<sup>1455</sup> Fighting started with an attack by an unidentified armed group on a GSS checkpoint at the entrance of Jaramana city on 29 April 2025,<sup>1456</sup> and was reportedly sparked by an audio clip circulating on social media that allegedly featured a Druze cleric making Islamophobic remarks. In a video clip, the cleric later rejected any connection to the audio recording.<sup>1457</sup> Fighting ended the same day after an agreement was reached between government and Jaramana community representatives.<sup>1458</sup> However, new clashes erupted the following day in Ashrafiyah Sahnaya, a town south-west of Damascus<sup>1459</sup> with a Druze majority.<sup>1460</sup> According to Etana Syria, members of the Liwa' al-Zubair (the Zubair Brigade), a group of fighters based in Rural Damascus and with historical links to Deir Ez-Zor, attacked Druze groups, who in some cases received support from Druze fighters arriving from Sweida.<sup>1461</sup> More than 100 people, including both civilians and militia members, were reportedly killed in these clashes.<sup>1462</sup> An agreement was eventually negotiated between the transitional government and community and religious leaders aimed to de-escalate the situation, although implementation was reportedly challenging, according to an analysis by the Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies.<sup>1463</sup>

The same source pointed to an increase in security incidents such as kidnappings and armed attacks in and around Damascus governorate in April 2025, thus revealing existing security challenges especially in the governorate's outskirts. Security forces reportedly responded with the establishment of checkpoints, raids and other targeted interventions.<sup>1464</sup>

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<sup>1452</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 3, 2025, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1453</sup> Syrian Observer (The), Calm Restored After Clashes in Jaramana: A Local Conflict with Regional Implications, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1454</sup> Al Jazeera, More than 10 dead in clashes near Syrian capital Damascus, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1455</sup> Al Jazeera, What is behind the violence in Syria?, 1 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1456</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Sectarian Tensions and Israeli Intervention: Interpreting the Violence in Jaramana, Ashrafiyyat Sahnaya, and as-Sweidaa, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1457</sup> Guardian (The), Deadly Syria clashes continue for second day outside Damascus, 30 April 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, More than 10 dead in clashes near Syrian capital Damascus, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1458</sup> AP, At least 10 dead in Syria after sectarian clashes in Druze suburb of Damascus, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1459</sup> Guardian (The), Deadly Syria clashes continue for second day outside Damascus, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1460</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat, Fake Audio Sparks Deadly Sectarian Clashes Near Damascus, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1461</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: Armed clashes erupt in Jaramana & Sahnaya, 1 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1462</sup> International Crisis Group, A Helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #24, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1463</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Sectarian Tensions and Israeli Intervention: Interpreting the Violence in Jaramana, Ashrafiyyat Sahnaya, and as-Sweidaa, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1464</sup> Harmoon Center, Harmon Centre Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 6



Israeli forces launched airstrikes on targets in Rural Damascus during the reporting period,<sup>1465</sup> including on security forces in Sahnaya on 30 April 2025, claiming to prevent attacks on the Druze community.<sup>1466</sup>

In May 2025, government officials announced the arrest of several ISIL suspects operating in Western Ghouta,<sup>1467</sup> as well as the seizure of arms, including ammunition, explosives and air defence systems.<sup>1468</sup>

According to a Syrian journalist interviewed by DIS in May, acts of revenge persist against individuals suspected of ties to the former government, particularly in al-Tal. These incidents are reportedly carried out by former opposition fighters who were previously relocated to northern Syria by the Assad regime and have since returned.<sup>1469</sup> During the reference period, SNHR reported on incidents involving civilian casualties, including the killing of two men and injuring of a third by unknown gunmen who fired at their car,<sup>1470</sup> and the abduction of a physician on his way home from work.<sup>1471</sup> Moreover, sources reported on the discovery of bodies of civilians killed by unknown perpetrators.<sup>1472</sup> An arson and bomb attack on a church in Boudan city in April 2025 by unknown perpetrators caused only limited material damage; no one was injured in the attack.<sup>1473</sup>

## **(b) Security incidents**

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 173 security incidents in Rural Damascus governorate (see Figure 27). For the period between 1 March 2025 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 82 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) in Rural Damascus governorate. Of these, 38 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians, 28 as explosions/remote violence and 16 as battles.<sup>1474</sup>

<sup>1465</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#); +963, Israeli Army Announces Deployment in Southern Syria, 4 May 2025, [url](#); SNHR, SNHR Condemns the Intensified Attacks and Wide Ground Incursions by Israeli Occupation Forces into Syrian Territory [Blog], 5 April 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1466</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: March 2025 – May 2025, n.d., [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 30, 2025, 30 April 2025, [url](#), p. 5; Rudaw, Syria unrest triggers international reaction, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1467</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat, ISIS Attempts to Revive Operations in Syria, 31 May 2025, [url](#); SANA, Internal security forces arrest a number of Daesh terrorist cells, Damascus countryside, 26 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1468</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 27, 2025, 27 May 2025, [url](#), p. 1; Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 13-20, 2025, 20 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1469</sup> Denmark, DIS, Syria - Security situation, June 2025, [url](#), p. 51

<sup>1470</sup> SNHR, Two sibling engineers killed, third man injured, by unidentified gunmen in Rural Damascus, April 25, 2025, 28 April 2025, [url](#)

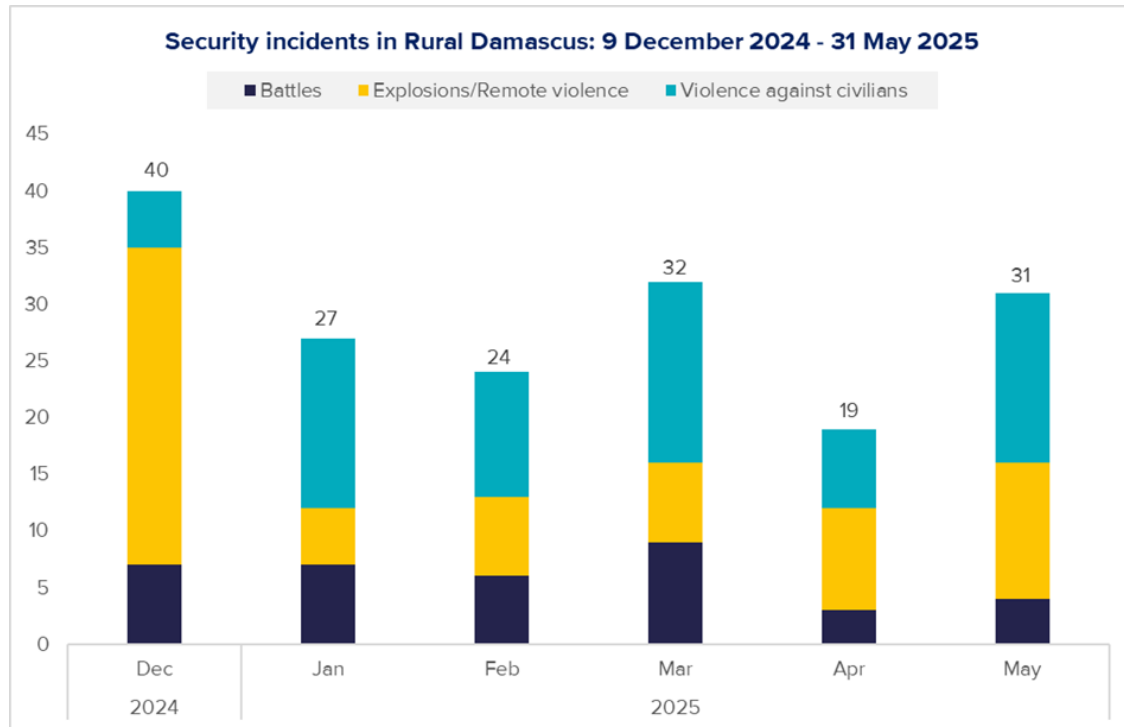
<sup>1471</sup> SNHR, Dr. Hassan Issa was abducted by unknown gunmen near the village of Ma'araba in Rif Dimashq Governorate on May 13, 2025, 23 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1472</sup> SOHR, Known for ties to Iran-backed activities | Body of Palestinian man found in Rif Dimashq, 31 May 2025, [url](#); SNHR, The bodies of Musa Yaqoub and Ali Hamada were found in the Zabadani area of Rif Dimashq Governorate on May 12, 2025, 19 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, New murder crime | Uncertainty surrounds death of two young men in Qudsaya district in Rif Dimashq, 13 March 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Multiple dead bodies found in S. Rural Damascus, March 7, 2025, 9 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1473</sup> SNHR, Unidentified individuals desecrate George Church in Rural Damascus, April 6, 2025, 8 April 2025, [url](#); Alawite MediaLab [X, former Twitter], posted on: 6 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1474</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)





**Figure 27: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Rural Damascus governorate between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, based on ACLED data.**<sup>1475</sup>

During the reference period, security incidents were recorded by ACLED in eight districts of the governorate, with the highest number documented in the district of Rural Damascus (32 incidents), followed by Duma (16 incidents). The fewest incidents were recorded in Al-Nabk and Al-Qutayfah district (1 incident each). According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were the main actor involved in around 50 % of all recorded security incidents (coded as either ‘Actor1’ or ‘Actor2’) during the reference period, particularly in incidents coded as violence against civilians. Many of these incidents involved the explosion of remnants of war left behind from the conflict and planted by unknown perpetrators. Military forces of the transitional government were involved in around 23 % of all security incidents, most of which were coded as explosions/remote violence involving aerial attacks by Israeli forces on transitional government military positions. Police forces of the transitional government were involved in around 18 % of security incidents in Rural Damascus governorate, particularly incidents coded as battles. Military forces of Israel were involved in around 17 % of all security incidents, all of which were coded as explosions/remote violence involving air or drone strikes.<sup>1476</sup>

<sup>1475</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1476</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)



### (c) Civilian casualties

In March 2025, the SNHR recorded 11 civilian fatalities in Rural Damascus governorate,<sup>1477</sup> in April 2025, it recorded one civilian fatality,<sup>1478</sup> and in May 2025, 12 civilian fatalities were recorded in the governorate. With regard to the violent events in Rural Damascus (including Jaramana, Ashrafiah Sahnaya and Sahnaya) and Sweida governorates in the period from 29 April to 4 May 2025, the SNHR noted in its report for May 2025 that the death of at least 111 individuals had been recorded, including civilians, security forces and local armed fighters. Only the civilian casualties were reflected in the monthly report, while the group's investigations into the remaining killings were ongoing and a separate report on the events was being prepared.<sup>1479</sup> For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 48 civilian fatalities in Rural Damascus governorate.<sup>1480</sup>

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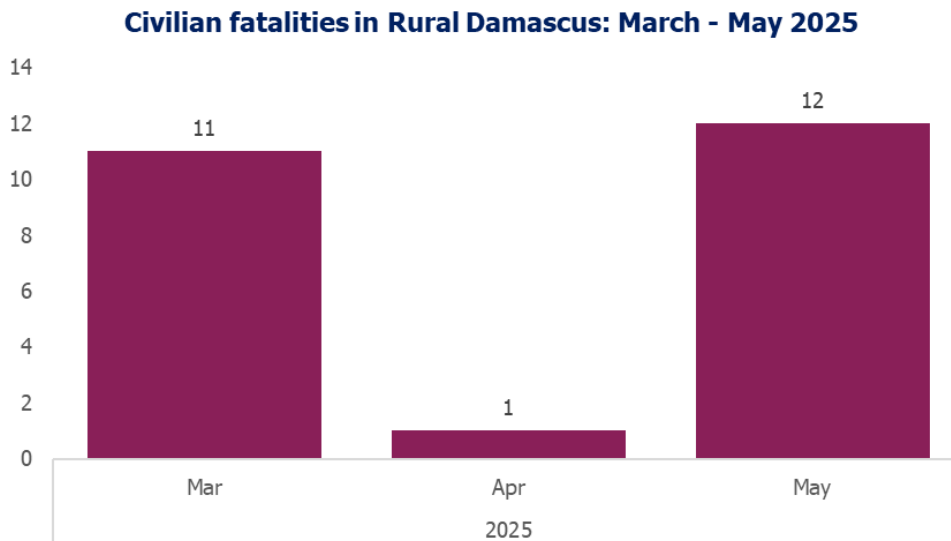
<sup>1477</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1478</sup> SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1479</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1480</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.





**Figure 28: Civilian fatalities in Rural Damascus governorate between March and May 2025.<sup>1481</sup> Monthly breakdown based on SNHR data.<sup>1482</sup>**

**(d) Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war**

MSF described large-scale destruction in Daraya, a suburb of Damascus, with parts of the town ‘flattened’, its hospital ‘heavily damaged’ and only one functioning health centre in town, which was able to expand its services due to MSF’s support.<sup>1483</sup> The MAG indicated that some neighbourhoods in Damascus suburbs like Harasta, Irbin and Jouba, were reduced to rubble and almost certainly heavily contaminated with unexploded ordnances, and therefore remained habitable.<sup>1484</sup>

The GPC pointed to electricity shortages in Rural Damascus,<sup>1485</sup> and Enab Baladi quoted a resident of Misraba town saying that electricity was available only for 2 to 3 hours per day, with some areas facing blackouts of 2 to 3 days due to old and worn-out cables.<sup>1486</sup> The same source quoted an official pointing out the war-related destruction of drinking water networks across the governorate and the challenges in maintaining and repairing them with about 1 500 of 4 000 water pumps out of services.<sup>1487</sup> Residents faced irregular water supplies and relied on buying water from water trucks or in shops.<sup>1488</sup> A returnee in Harasta town similarly

<sup>1481</sup> Please note that civilian casualties resulting from the large-scale security escalation between late April and early May 2025 in Rural Damascus governorate, in cities such as Jaramana, Ashrafiyah Sahnaya and Sahnaya, were included in the figures for May by SNHR, while investigations were still ongoing by the time the May report was published; SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>1482</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1483</sup> MSF, Syria: MSF opens emergency room in Damascus suburb, 3 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1484</sup> MAG, A new landmine crisis in the Middle East, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1485</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1486</sup> Enab Baladi, Syrians await: Will interim government fulfill promises on electricity?, 14 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1487</sup> Enab Baladi, Rif Dimashq: Delays in water network maintenance burden residents, reveal funding weakness, 10 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1488</sup> Enab Baladi, Rural Damascus: Emergency plan to face upcoming water crisis, 16 May 2025, [url](#)



mentioned destroyed homes, lack of water and electricity as well as overcrowded schools as challenges.<sup>1489</sup>

The Syrian Civil Defence reportedly stated that Rural Damascus was among the areas where most incidents involving war remnants occurred.<sup>1490</sup> The GPC noted that the majority of accidents involving UXOs since December 2024 took place in the agricultural sector, especially in areas where mine clearance experts had 'limited access', such as Rural Damascus.<sup>1491</sup> A 13 year old boy was reportedly injured in a landmine explosion while he was herding sheep in an area east of Al-Dumayr city in May 2025.<sup>1492</sup>

#### **(e) Conflict-induced displacement and return**

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, there were 977 532 IDPs living in the governorate and 109 779 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024.<sup>1493</sup> According to the UNOCHA, 15 000 individuals were displaced from Rural Damascus governorate between 30 April and 6 May 2025 due to the violent incidents in areas with a Druze majority.<sup>1494</sup>

UNHCR further estimated that a total 100 705 returnees who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate by 15 May 2025, with the vast majority (34 625) returning to Al-Nabk district, followed by Duma (12 850). Since 8 December 2024, 60 135 individuals had returned to Rural Damascus governorate from abroad.<sup>1495</sup>

<sup>1489</sup> NRC, Syria: Better conditions, infrastructure investments could pave the way for millions to return, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1490</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria: 80 civilians killed by war remnants in four months, 15 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1491</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1492</sup> Syria Civil Defence – The White Helmets [Facebook], posted on: 11 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1493</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview [Map], 12 June 2025, [url](#)

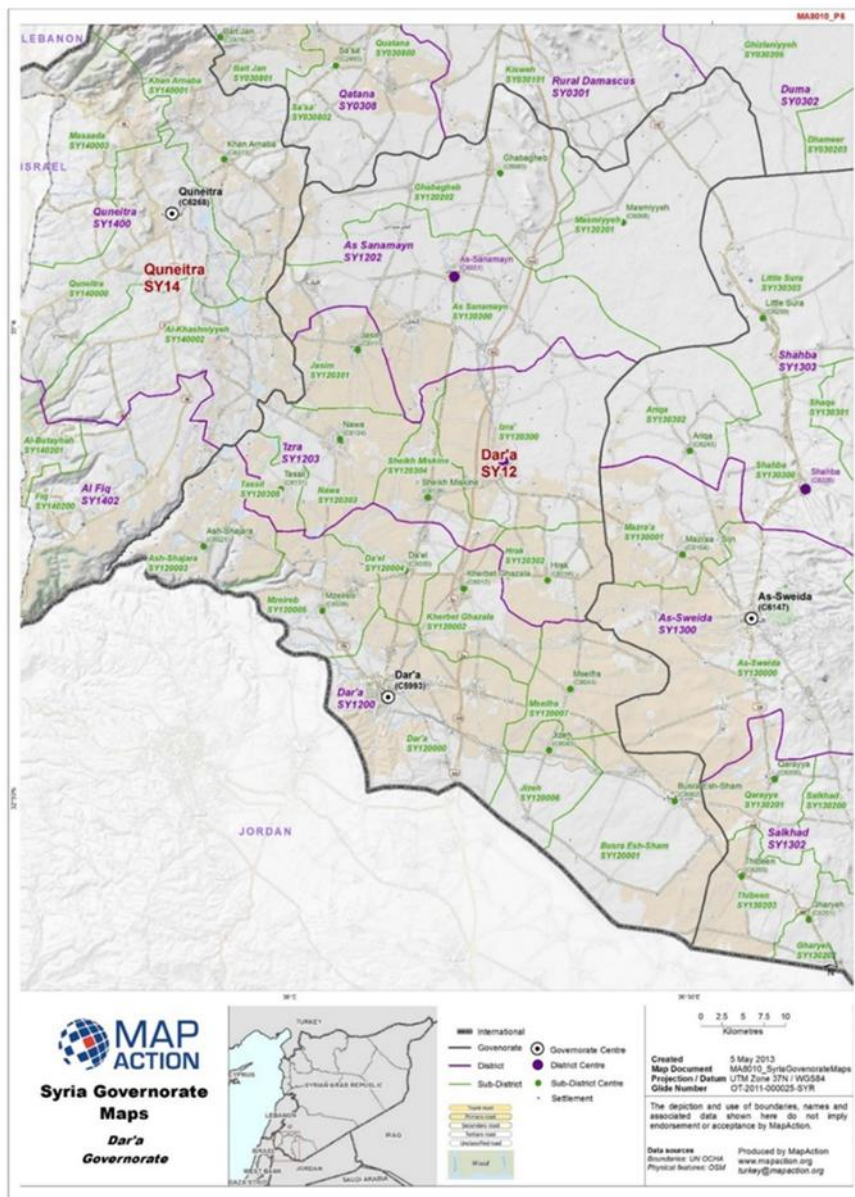
<sup>1494</sup> UNOCHA, At Security Council, OCHA calls for urgent funding for Syria crisis, stressing civilians "cannot endure this crisis alone", 21 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1495</sup> UNHCR, Syrian returnees' figures by sub-districts - data 15 May 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#)





### 5.8.12. Dar'a governorate



Map 14: © MapAction, Dar'a governorate<sup>1496</sup>

#### (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Dar'a governorate is divided into three administrative districts, namely Dar'a, Izra' and As-Sanamayn, which are further divided into a total of 17 sub-districts.<sup>1497</sup> Its capital is the city of Dar'a.<sup>1498</sup> As of March 2025, the population of Dar'a governorate was 1 268 536, including

<sup>1496</sup> MapAction, Dar'a governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

<sup>1497</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 107

<sup>1498</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic [Map], August 2022, [url](#)

residents, IDPs, IDP returnees, and returnees from abroad, according to IOM estimates.<sup>1499</sup> By comparison, the WHO estimated the governorate's population at 1 081 657 as of the same month.<sup>1500</sup> For further background information on Dar'a governorate, see section 2.12.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

### (b) Territorial control and main armed actors

As of the end of May 2025, Dar'a governorate was mapped by the ISW and the CTP as being almost entirely under the control of the transitional administration. Some sections along the governorate's eastern edges were being controlled by unidentified opposition groups whose realm of control extended into western Sweida. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) held a small stretch of territory in the southwest bordering the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights<sup>1501</sup> and Israeli forces operated across villages in the Yarmouk Basin (western rural Dar'a).<sup>1502</sup> Meanwhile, there were isolated pockets of presence of Assad remnants, including around As-Sanamayn town,<sup>1503</sup> where an armed faction formerly linked to the Assad-era Military Intelligence Directorate<sup>1504</sup> operated under the command of Mohsen Al-Hamid as of early March 2025.<sup>1505</sup> The group was subsequently dismantled, although its leader escaped.<sup>1506</sup>

The Dar'a Division of the new Syrian army is led by former Ahrar al-Sham rebel commander Ahmad Binian al Hariri,<sup>1507</sup> who heads the 40<sup>th</sup> Division,<sup>1508</sup> a newly formed force<sup>1509</sup> initially known as the Southern Division.<sup>1510</sup> The MoD's forces include former members of the so-called central committees, bodies created in 2018 to administer previously opposition-held areas during Assad's rule<sup>1511</sup> that have since merged with the new ministry.<sup>1512</sup> The MoD started registration and recruitment of Dar'a locals into the 40<sup>th</sup> Division in March 2025<sup>1513</sup> in an effort to enhance control in the south, a region where the transitional administration's grip has remained weak.<sup>1514</sup>

<sup>1499</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 2 – March 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1500</sup> WHO, Health Sector Syria - Health Sector Bulletin - March 2025, 2 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1501</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 7

<sup>1502</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Israeli military operations paralyze life for residents of Yarmouk Basin, 24 March 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Comprising armoured vehicles and machineries | Group of Israeli forces advance into western Daraa, 22 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1503</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7; ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 1, 2025 [Map], 1 May 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1504</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat, 3 Members of Syrian Security Forces Killed in Clashes with Regime Remnants in Daraa, 6 March 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Following clashes left seven casualties, including civilians | Internal Security Forces launch security campaign in Daraa's Al-Sanamayn, 5 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1505</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025, 8 March 2025, [url](#); Asharq Al-Awsat, 3 Members of Syrian Security Forces Killed in Clashes with Regime Remnants in Daraa, 6 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1506</sup> Enab Baladi, Assassinations: A continuing phenomenon in Daraa, 13 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1507</sup> FDD's Long War Journal, Profiles of commanders in the new Syrian army's regional divisions, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1508</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat, Syrian Defense Ministry Begins Reshaping Military Affairs in Daraa, 22 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1509</sup> Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 19 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1510</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 11, 2025, 11 March 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1511</sup> Syria Direct, Why the delay in merging Daraa's factions into a new Syrian army?, 21 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1512</sup> SOHR, Security violations | Former Central Committee members assault civilians including women in Daraa, 26 April 2025, [url](#); Syria Direct, Why the delay in merging Daraa's factions into a new Syrian army?, 21 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1513</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 22, 2025, 22 April 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>1514</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 17, 2025, 17 March 2025, [url](#), p. 9

Up until mid-April 2025,<sup>1515</sup> the Eighth Brigade, a Dar'a-based armed faction under the leadership of Ahmed Al-Awda<sup>1516</sup> (also transliterated Ahmad Al-Awdeh),<sup>1517</sup> operated around its stronghold in Busra al-Sham town.<sup>1518</sup> The Eighth Brigade, the governorate's most prominent armed faction, was known for refusing to merge into the MoD forces<sup>1519</sup> and maintaining a 'degree of autonomy' in controlling parts of eastern Dar'a<sup>1520</sup> (for more information on the Eighth Brigade, see section 2.12.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#)).

However, on 13 April 2025, following clashes with a rival group affiliated with the transitional administration<sup>1521</sup> and large-scale deployment of security forces towards Busra al-Sham,<sup>1522</sup> the Eighth Brigade announced its dissolution.<sup>1523</sup> By 15 April, the transitional administration had taken over the Eighth Brigade's former positions in Busra al-Sham.<sup>1524</sup> With all armed factions in the governorate now dissolved,<sup>1525</sup> GSS permanently stationed 400 fighters in Busra al-Sham and took control of the region.<sup>1526</sup> However, supporters of Ahmed Al-Awda continued to be active in the area.<sup>1527</sup>

### (c) Security trends

Following a temporary decrease in assassinations and targeted attacks after the fall of Assad's rule,<sup>1528</sup> the governorate witnessed a renewed escalation of assassinations<sup>1529</sup> that according to social expert Ahmad al-Awadat were motivated by revenge and score-settling between parties that had been involved in years of conflict,<sup>1530</sup> alongside reports of some civilians being killed over sectarian affiliations.<sup>1531</sup>

In early March 2025, clashes broke out in As-Sanamayn city between GSS forces and the armed group commanded by Mohsen al-Hamid after the latter refused to disarm.<sup>1532</sup> At least

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<sup>1515</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: The Dissolution of Ahmad al-Awdeh's Groups in Daraa, 16 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1516</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 11, 2025, 11 April 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1517</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: The Dissolution of Ahmad al-Awdeh's Groups in Daraa, 16 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1518</sup> Enab Baladi, Eighth Brigade in Daraa dissolves itself, 13 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1519</sup> PSI, Daraa Beyond the Eighth Brigade: Strategic Shifts and Potential Implications, 15 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1520</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 11, 2025, 11 April 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1521</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: The Dissolution of Ahmad al-Awdeh's Groups in Daraa, 16 April 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 11, 2025, 11 April 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1522</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: The Dissolution of Ahmad al-Awdeh's Groups in Daraa, 16 April 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Daraa: Agreement ends tension in Busra al-Sham, 12 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1523</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: The Dissolution of Ahmad al-Awdeh's Groups in Daraa, 16 April 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Eighth Brigade in Daraa dissolves itself, 13 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1524</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 15, 2025, 15 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1525</sup> Enab Baladi, Assassinations: A continuing phenomenon in Daraa, 13 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1526</sup> Etana Syria, BRIEF: The Dissolution of Ahmad al-Awdeh's Groups in Daraa, 16 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1527</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 18, 2025, 18 April 2025, [url](#), p. 11

<sup>1528</sup> Enab Baladi, Assassinations: A continuing phenomenon in Daraa, 13 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1529</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Harmoon Centre Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Collecting unlicensed weapons | General security forces launch security campaign in Daraa countryside, 19 April 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Assassinations: A continuing phenomenon in Daraa, 13 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1530</sup> Enab Baladi, Assassinations: A continuing phenomenon in Daraa, 13 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1531</sup> SOHR, Mostly killed over sectarian affiliation | 144 civilians assassinated and executed in different areas across Syria in March, 6 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1532</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025, 8 March 2025, [url](#)



three civilians were killed while members of the Al-Hamid group resorted to indiscriminate gunfire<sup>1533</sup> as General Security stormed the city, dismantling the group.<sup>1534</sup>

As of mid-April 2025, Enab Baladi observed that despite the assumption of security control by the Mol's GSS forces, the security apparatus remained unable to significantly shift realities on the ground given the wide spread of weapons among the population and the lack of actual dissolution of armed groups.<sup>1535</sup> On 17 April 2025, following the announced dissolution of the Eighth Brigade, clashes were reported in Busra al-Sham between local residents and supporters of the group's leader Ahmed Al-Awda.<sup>1536</sup> Arrest campaigns were conducted several towns and villages in a marked escalation in security operations.<sup>1537</sup>

The reference period saw multiple attacks on GSS members by unidentified armed men,<sup>1538</sup> including while being off-duty.<sup>1539</sup> On the other hand, killings of former local militia members<sup>1540</sup> and individuals previously affiliated with the political<sup>1541</sup> and security apparatus of the former Assad government were reported in various parts of the governorate.<sup>1542</sup> At the same time, numerous attacks by unidentified gunmen caused casualties among individuals with no reported affiliation to any military party.<sup>1543</sup> Several casualties arose from armed disputes between tribal groups<sup>1544</sup> and families.<sup>1545</sup>

<sup>1533</sup> SOHR, Following clashes left seven casualties, including civilians | Internal Security Forces launch security campaign in Daraa's Al-Sanamayn, 5 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1534</sup> Enab Baladi, Assassinations: A continuing phenomenon in Daraa, 13 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1535</sup> Enab Baladi, Assassinations: A continuing phenomenon in Daraa, 13 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1536</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 18, 2025, 18 April 2025, [url](#), p. 11

<sup>1537</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Harmoon Centre Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1538</sup> SOHR, Armed attack | Member of general security forces killed in Daraa city, 4 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Armed attack | Two members of general security forces killed in Daraa countryside, 15 April 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 16, 2025, 16 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7; SOHR, New attack | Gunmen attack military post of General Security forces in northern Daraa, leaving member injured, 1 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1539</sup> SOHR, Armed attack | Member of general security forces killed in Daraa city, 4 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1540</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1541</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 21, 2025, 21 March 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>1542</sup> See, for example: Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 20-27, 2025, 27 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Accused of "committing violations against civilians" | Officer of former regime army executed in northern Daraa, 3 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Security chaos | Three former members of Military Intelligence Department killed by gunmen in Daraa, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1543</sup> See, for example: Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 20-27, 2025, 27 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Security vacuum | Civilian shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Daraa countryside, 21 April 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Horrible crime | Six people killed in attack by unidentified armed gunmen in Daraa, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1544</sup> SOHR, New murder | Young man killed in armed clashes between two tribes in Daraa, 25 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1545</sup> Enab Baladi, Daraa: Tribal dispute escalates into factional conflict in Jassim, 18 April 2024, [url](#); SOHR, Family disputes | Young man injured in armed clashes between two families in Daraa, 16 March 2025, [url](#)



The reference period further witnessed several Israeli airstrikes<sup>1546</sup> that caused multiple casualties,<sup>1547</sup> including in Dar'a city,<sup>1548</sup> as well as regular Israeli ground incursions.<sup>1549</sup> Following an attempt by local armed men to stop advancing Israeli ground forces,<sup>1550</sup> the IDF escalated operations in late March, launching an incursion into Koya town in the Yarmouk Basin.<sup>1551</sup> This operation involved Israeli artillery and drone strikes as well as armed clashes,<sup>1552</sup> with sources reporting between four<sup>1553</sup> and six deaths among local residents.<sup>1554</sup> Another Israeli incursion into the Nawa town area in early April left nine people dead.<sup>1555</sup>

#### **(d) Security incidents**

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 219 security incidents in Dar'a governorate (see Figure 29). For the period between 1 March and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 128 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) in Dar'a governorate. Of these, 33 were coded as battles, 43 as explosions/remote violence and 52 as incidents of violence against civilians. The number of security incidents across the governorate was highest in March (52) and April (48) and dropped to 28 in May.<sup>1556</sup>

<sup>1546</sup> Rudaw, Syria says one person killed in Israeli airstrike, 3 May 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Two people killed in Israeli air strike on Deraa in southern Syria, 17 March 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Death toll update | Four people including a military combatant killed under Israeli airstrikes on Daraa, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1547</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Harmoon Centre Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Death toll update | Four people including a military combatant killed under Israeli airstrikes on Daraa, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1548</sup> SOHR, Death toll update | Four people including a military combatant killed under Israeli airstrikes on Daraa, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1549</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#); BBC News, Israeli strikes in Syria a challenge to Türkiye , 4 April 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1550</sup> BBC News, Israeli strikes in Syria a challenge to Türkiye , 4 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1551</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #23: 31 March 2025, 31 March 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Koya: A border village paying the price for rejecting Israeli presence, 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1552</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #23: 31 March 2025, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1553</sup> BBC News, Israeli strikes in Syria a challenge to Türkiye , 4 April 2025, [url](#)

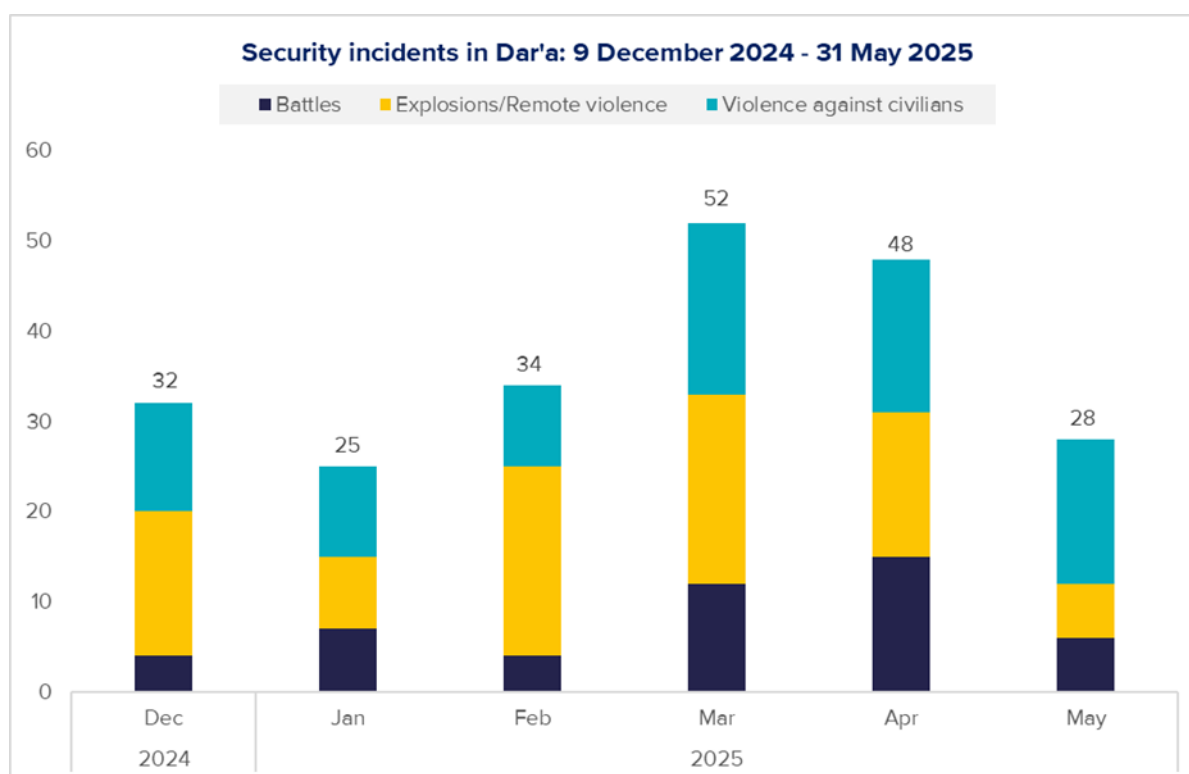
<sup>1554</sup> Enab Baladi, Koya: A border village paying the price for rejecting Israeli presence, 26 March 2025, [url](#);

International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: March 2025 – May 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1555</sup> SNHR, SNHR Condemns the Intensified Attacks and Wide Ground Incursions by Israeli Occupation Forces into Syrian Territory [Blog], 5 April 2025, [url](#); BBC News, Syria condemns 'unjustified' Israeli strikes as tensions rise over Türkiye , 3 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1556</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)





**Figure 29: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Dar’a governorate between March and May 2025, based on ACLED data.**<sup>1557</sup>

During the reference period, security incidents were recorded by ACLED in all three districts of the governorate, with the highest number documented in the district of Dar’a (53 incidents). According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were involved as a main actor (coded as either ‘Actor1’ or ‘Actor2’) in around 65 % of all security incidents recorded during the reference period, particularly in incidents coded as violence against civilians. Military and police forces of Syria were involved in around 30 % of all security incidents, including in battles with unidentified armed groups. Israeli forces were involved in around 18 % of all security incidents, mainly in incidents where military forces of Syria were also an actor.<sup>1558</sup>

#### (e) Civilian casualties

In March 2025, the SNHR recorded 39 civilian fatalities in Dar’a governorate caused by parties to the conflict or controlling forces in the governorate.<sup>1559</sup> In April 2025, SNHR recorded 32 civilian fatalities,<sup>1560</sup> and in May 2025, 8 civilian fatalities were recorded in the governorate.<sup>1561</sup> SNHR attributed responsibility for the majority of the civilian fatalities it recorded over this

<sup>1557</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1558</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

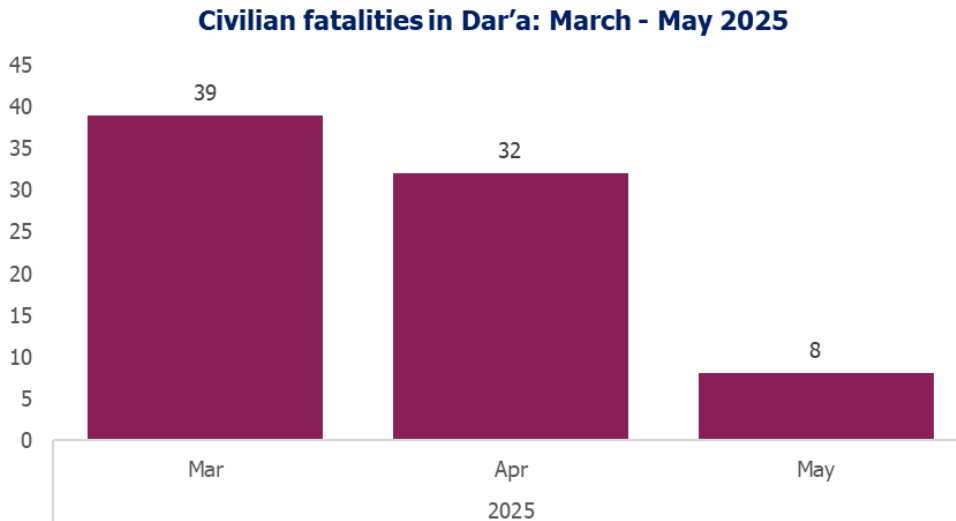
<sup>1559</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1560</sup> SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1561</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4



three-month period to unspecified/unidentified parties (67 deaths, including 37 in March) and Israeli forces (9 deaths, all in April).<sup>1562</sup> SNHR does not provide more detailed information on these fatalities. For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 41 civilian fatalities in Dar'a governorate.<sup>1563</sup>



**Figure 30: Civilian fatalities in Dar'a governorate between March and May 2025. Monthly breakdown based on SNHR data.**<sup>1564</sup>

#### (f) Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

A high degree of contamination with unexploded remnants of war was observed on premises of unsecured military bases and in certain rural areas, causing deaths and injuries among civilians.<sup>1565</sup> Numerous such incidents were reported across the governorate, including in western,<sup>1566</sup> northern,<sup>1567</sup> and eastern rural Dar'a<sup>1568</sup> and in the city of Busra al-Sham.<sup>1569</sup> In March 2025, GPC reported that the majority of unexploded ordnance accidents since

<sup>1562</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-10

<sup>1563</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.

<sup>1564</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1565</sup> HRW, Syria: Landmines, Explosive Remnants Harming Civilians, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1566</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance | Civilian dies in explosion of war remnants in Daraa countryside, 29 April 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Bringing total death toll to four | Civilian dies of wounds following explosion of unexploded shell in western Daraa, 15 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1567</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance | Civilian killed in northern Daraa countryside, 30 March 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Civilian injured by a landmine of unidentified source in N. Daraa, March 8, 2025, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1568</sup> SNHR, Three children killed by a landmine of unidentified source in E. Daraa, March 18, 2025, 20 March 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Daraa | Landmine explosion kills child in eastern countryside, 13 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1569</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance | 12 civilians including a woman killed and injured in explosion of war remnants in Hama and Daraa, 9 March 2025, [url](#)



December 2024 in several governorates, including in Dar'a, had occurred 'in agricultural settings as people were trying to cultivate land or graze animals'.<sup>1570</sup>

Information on conflict-related infrastructure damage during the reference period could not be found within the time constraints of this report.

#### **(g) Conflict-induced displacement and return**

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, 66 480 IDPs and 24 122 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024, were living in the governorate.<sup>1571</sup> The violence around Koya town in late March 2025 prompted at least 3 000 local residents to flee for other areas within western Dar'a in what was reported as the largest displacement incident seen in months in southern Syria. Most of these displaced returned the following day.<sup>1572</sup>

UNHCR further estimated that, as of 15 May 2025, a total of 71 498 individuals who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate, the vast majority having returned to Dar'a (42 422) and Izra' (22 915) districts. Since 8 December 2024, 43 822 individuals had returned to Dar'a governorate from abroad.<sup>1573</sup>

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<sup>1570</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

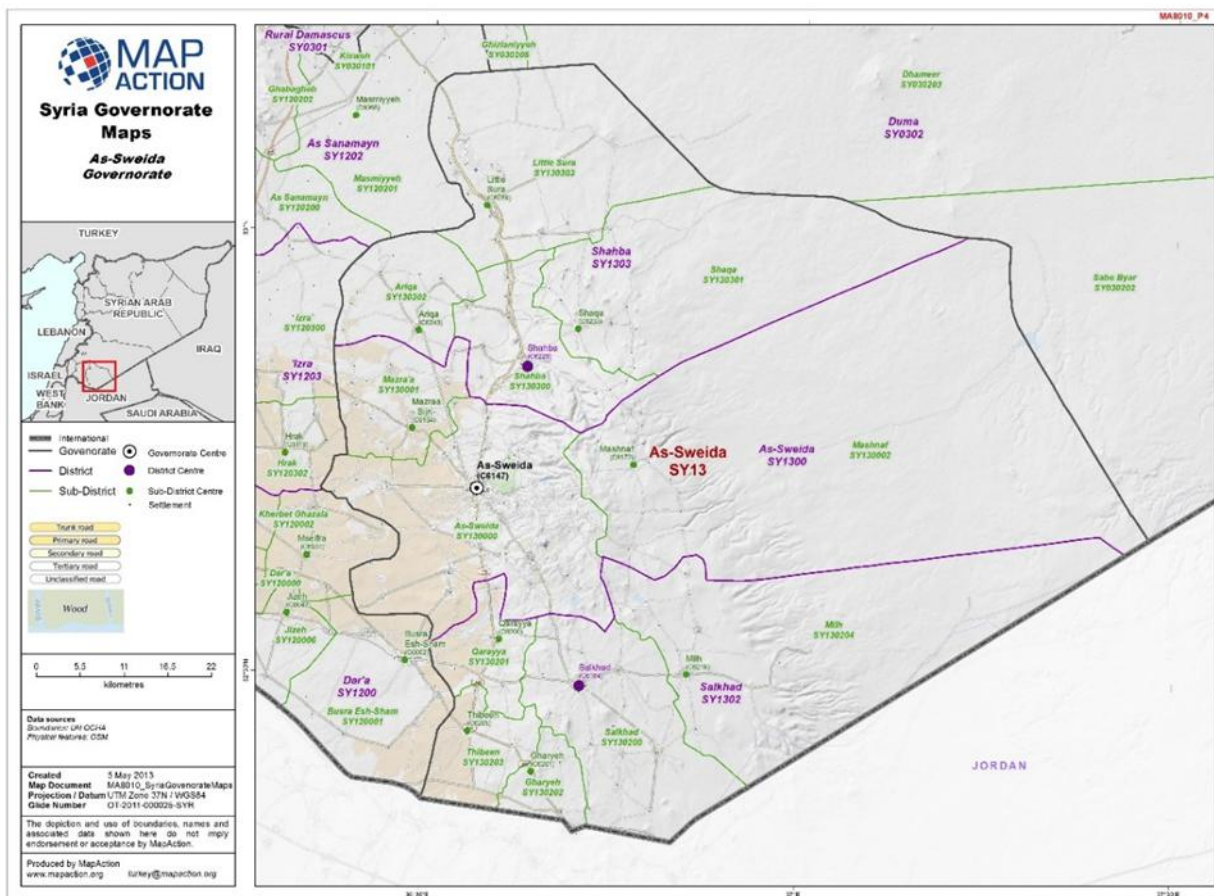
<sup>1571</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview [Map], 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1572</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #23: 31 March 2025, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1573</sup> UNHCR, Syrian returnees' figures by sub-districts - data 15 May 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#)



### 5.8.13. Sweida governorate



Map 15: © MapAction, Sweida governorate<sup>1574</sup>

#### (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Sweida governorate is divided into three administrative districts, namely Sweida, Shahba, and Salkhad, which are further divided into a total of 12 sub-districts.<sup>1575</sup> Its capital is the city of Sweida.<sup>1576</sup> As of March 2025, the population of Sweida governorate was 482 982, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad, according to IOM estimates.<sup>1577</sup> By comparison, WHO estimated Sweida's population at 446 048 as of the same month.<sup>1578</sup> For further background information on Sweida governorate, see section 2.14.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

<sup>1574</sup> MapAction, Sweida Governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

<sup>1575</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 107

<sup>1576</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic [Map], August 2022, [url](#)

<sup>1577</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 2 – March 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1578</sup> WHO, Health Sector Syria - Health Sector Bulletin - March 2025, 2 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7



## (b) Territorial control and main armed actors

As of the end of May 2025, ISW and CTP showed that unidentified opposition groups were in control of large swaths of territory in the west of Sweida governorate, including Sweida city. Most of the governorate's western and north-western edges were under the control of the transitional administration.<sup>1579</sup> In early May 2025, northern Sweida's Al-Surah town witnessed the deployment of new forces by the transitional administration in an attempt to push back armed groups acting outside its control.<sup>1580</sup> Meanwhile, ISW and CTP mapped as 'Lost Regime Territory'<sup>1581</sup> the remaining areas of the governorate located in the desert zone further east.<sup>1582</sup>

The situation in Sweida has been described as 'highly complex',<sup>1583</sup> with around 160 armed groups operating in the governorate,<sup>1584</sup> some of them organised in four distinct operations rooms.<sup>1585</sup> The Men of Dignity (Rijal al-Karama) movement was the governorate's most sizeable armed faction.<sup>1586</sup> In late February 2025, an armed coalition called the Sweida Military Council was formed by several Druze fighters that apparently included former SAA officers who shifted their support towards the Druze community during the 2023 anti-Assad protests in Sweida.<sup>1587</sup> Some have alleged that the council was pursuing separatist motives, although this was denied by the council's leader.<sup>1588</sup>

There was a lack of full integration of Sweida's factions into the transitional administration's structures,<sup>1589</sup> with division among Sweida's armed factions on whether to integrate with the transitional administration in Damascus.<sup>1590</sup> While some groups were aligned with it (e.g., Men of Dignity and Ahrar Jabal al-Arab), a less accommodating stance was taken by several armed groups allied with Sheikh Hikmat al-Hijri,<sup>1591</sup> the spiritual leader of the Syrian Druze community.<sup>1592</sup> In March 2025, the transitional Mol and some Druze factions agreed to create locally-led security forces operating under government control,<sup>1593</sup> followed by an agreement

<sup>1579</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 7

<sup>1580</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat, Syrian Government Intensifies Security Measures in Druze Areas Near Damascus, 2 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1581</sup> This term refers to territory that used to be controlled by the former Assad government until 27 November 2024 and where, as of writing, the ISW and CTP, lacked sufficient data to map the presence of group(s) that have presumably taken over control since November 2024. ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1582</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 7

<sup>1583</sup> New Arab (The), Syria's Druze: Key players caught between local and regional power struggles, 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1584</sup> New Arab (The), Syria's Druze: Key players caught between local and regional power struggles, 11 March 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, EXPLAINER: Political & Military Dynamics in Suwayda Province, 2 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1585</sup> Etana Syria, EXPLAINER: Political & Military Dynamics in Suwayda Province, 2 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1586</sup> BBC Monitoring, Briefing: Syria's Druze leaders divided over approach to new government, 10 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1587</sup> FDD's Long War Journal, Suwayda Military Council: A new Druze coalition emerges in Syria, 24 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1588</sup> New Arab (The), Suweida Military Council - what does it want and who is behind it?, 28 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1589</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 8, 2025, 8 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1590</sup> Syria Direct, Is Suwayda heading for a showdown with Damascus?, 15 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1591</sup> Syria Direct, Is Suwayda heading for a showdown with Damascus?, 15 March 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), Syria's Defending the Druze: Israel's pretext to divide the new Syria, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1592</sup> Syria Direct, Is Suwayda heading for a showdown with Damascus?, 15 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1593</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 6, 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#)



among prominent Druze leaders in May to reactivate Mol operations in Sweida.<sup>1594</sup> A deployment of General Security forces was reported in early May 2025.<sup>1595</sup>

### (c) Security trends

According to analysis by the Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, the overall security situation remained fragile, characterised by sporadic escalations in violence and fighting with the security forces. The source stated that, as of late April 2025, the intensity of these tensions remained low but carried sectarian overtones, with reports of regionally motivated killings and abductions.<sup>1596</sup>

Amongst others, the reference period saw armed disputes among residents reportedly causing several civilian casualties in Sweida's western countryside<sup>1597</sup> and in Sweida city,<sup>1598</sup> while a rocket-propelled grenade attack by unidentified men on the house of the Ahrar Jabal al-Arab faction's leader caused two minor injuries.<sup>1599</sup> Light clashes between Bedouin (some of them covertly supported by the transitional administration) and Druze groups continued to flare up sporadically.<sup>1600</sup>

As clashes erupting between armed Sunni and Druze in the suburbs south of Damascus in late April 2025 spread to Sweida,<sup>1601</sup> a series of violent incidents in late April/early May 2025 caused both civilian and non-civilian casualties.<sup>1602</sup> On 4 May 2025, coinciding with the start of the transitional administration's implementation of the agreement to activate Mol operations, mutual shelling and clashes were reported in Al-Tha'la village in the western Sweida countryside. This followed an attack on the village by armed factions from eastern rural Dar'a<sup>1603</sup> who were reportedly affiliated with GSS forces.<sup>1604</sup> Ensuing clashes in the same part of Sweida between two local armed factions resulted in the deaths of two GSS members.<sup>1605</sup> Meanwhile, an armed group attacked the offices of Sweida's governor Mustafa Bakour in late May 2025,<sup>1606</sup> briefly taking him and some of his staff hostage.<sup>1607</sup>

<sup>1594</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat, Druze Group 'Rijal al-Karama' Rejects Disarmament, Calls for Weapons Regulation in Sweida, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1595</sup> Enab Baladi, As-Suwayda: Four killed while attempting to confront Israeli aircraft, 2 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1596</sup> Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Harmoon Centre Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1597</sup> SOHR, Security chaos | Five civilians killed and injured in Al-Suwaydaa and armed clashes erupt in Daraa, 2 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1598</sup> ANHA, Armed dispute leaves 1 dead, 3 injured in As-Suwayda, 29 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1599</sup> Enab Baladi, As-Suwayda: Unknown assailants target house of Suleiman Abdul Baqi, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1600</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1601</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: March 2025 – May 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1602</sup> SOHR, Death toll update | The number of fatalities in ambush on Al-Suwaydaa-Damascus highway increases to 45, 7 May 2025, [url](#); SNHR, A Civilian Identified as Majeed Hamza Died of Wounds Sustained in Mortar Shelling on the Town of Rasas in Suwayda suburbs – May 2, 2025, 5 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Fighter dies of wounds | Forces affiliated with General Security shell villages in Al-Suwaydaa, 4 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1603</sup> Enab Baladi, Clashes return to As-Suwayda... Agreement with Damascus continues, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1604</sup> SOHR, Fighter dies of wounds | Forces affiliated with General Security shell villages in Al-Suwaydaa, 4 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1605</sup> Syria Direct, As tensions run high, will Suwayda's security agreement hold?, 7 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1606</sup> Enab Baladi, Governor of As-Suwayda Mustafa Bakour resigns following recent attack, 24 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1607</sup> Reuters, Armed group in Syria's Suwayda takes governor hostage for prisoner's release, 21 May 2025, [url](#)



An Israeli airstrike targeting a farm belonging to a local faction member in the Kanaker area in early May 2025 left four people dead.<sup>1608</sup>

Later the same month, ISIL claimed two separate IED attacks in the governorate's desert zone,<sup>1609</sup> targeting vehicles of the MoD in what was described as the first ISIL-claimed attacks against the new transitional administration.<sup>1610</sup> Another IED planted by unidentified militants injured six civilians as it hit an ambulance vehicle.<sup>1611</sup>

#### **(d) Security incidents**

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 92 security incidents in Sweida governorate (see Figure 31). For the period between 1 March and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 52 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) in Sweida governorate. Of these, 15 were coded as battles, 24 as explosions/remote violence and 13 as incidents of violence against civilians. The number of security incidents across the governorate reached a peak in May (31 incidents).<sup>1612</sup>

<sup>1608</sup> Enab Baladi, As-Suwayda: Four killed while attempting to confront Israeli aircraft, 2 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1609</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: March 2025 – May 2025, n.d., [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, [url](#)

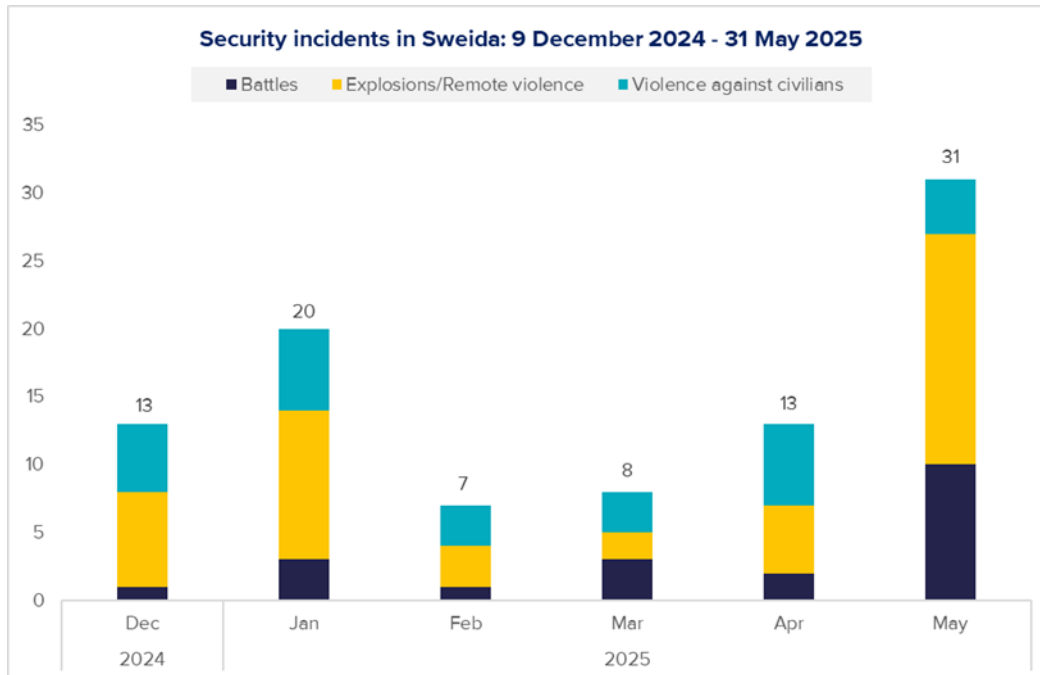
<sup>1610</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1611</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 20-27, 2025, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1612</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)







**Figure 31: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Sweida governorate between March and May 2025, based on ACLED data.<sup>1613</sup>**

During the reference period, security incidents were recorded by ACLED in all three districts of the governorate, with the highest number documented in the district of Sweida (37 incidents). By comparison, the fewest incidents were recorded in Salkhad district (two incidents). According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were involved as a main actor (coded as either ‘Actor1’ or ‘Actor2’) in around 54 % of all security incidents recorded in the governorate during the reference period, particularly in incidents coded as violence against civilians. Around 13 % of all security incidents (seven incidents) involved pro-government militia, mostly in incidents that also saw involvement of Druze militia. Around 4 % of all security incidents (two incidents) were coded as explosions/remote violence involving Israeli military forces.<sup>1614</sup>

#### (e) Civilian casualties

In March 2025, the SNHR recorded 2 civilian fatalities in Sweida governorate caused by parties to the conflict or controlling forces in Sweida governorate.<sup>1615</sup> In April 2025, SNHR recorded 1 civilian fatality<sup>1616</sup> and, in May 2025, 16 civilian fatalities were recorded in the governorate.<sup>1617</sup> SNHR attributed responsibility for the civilian fatalities it recorded over this

<sup>1613</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

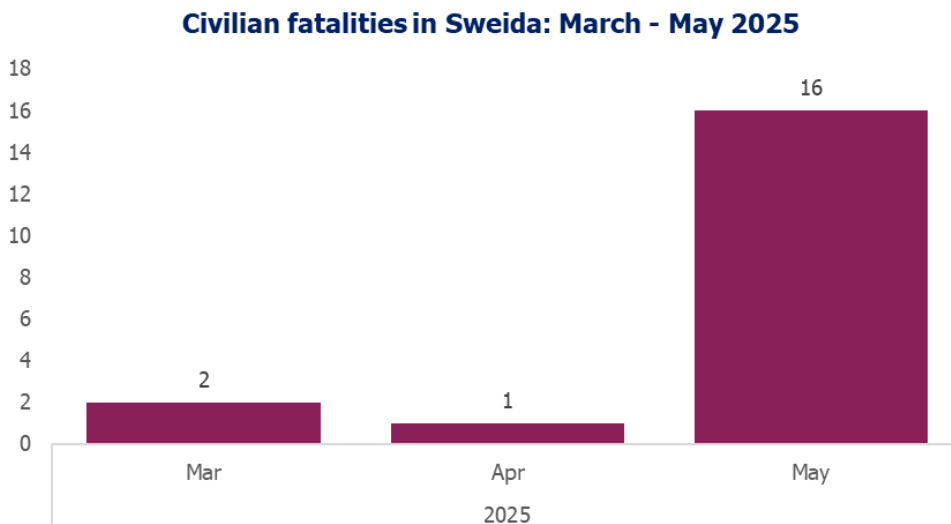
<sup>1614</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1615</sup> SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1616</sup> SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1617</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4

three-month period to unspecified parties (15 deaths, including 12 in May) and Israeli forces (4 deaths, all in May).<sup>1618</sup> SNHR does not provide more detailed information on these fatalities. For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 9 civilian fatalities in Sweida governorate.<sup>1619</sup>



**Figure 32: Civilian fatalities in Sweida governorate between March and May 2025. Monthly breakdown based on SNHR data.**<sup>1620</sup>

#### (f) Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

An explosive remnant of war killed or injured civilians in the Al-Tha'la area in the western Sweida countryside<sup>1621</sup> and in the governorate's desert areas.<sup>1622</sup> In March 2025, GPC reported that the majority of unexploded ordnance accidents since December 2024 in several governorates, including Sweida, had occurred 'in agricultural settings as people were trying to cultivate land or graze animals'.<sup>1623</sup>

Information on conflict-related infrastructure damage during the reference period could not be found within the time constraints of this report.

<sup>1618</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-10

<sup>1619</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.

<sup>1620</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1621</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance | Civilian dies and four others injured in landmine explosion in Al-Suwaydaa, 2 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1622</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 20-27, 2025, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1623</sup> GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

**(g) Conflict-induced displacement and return**

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, 70 499 IDPs and 792 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024 were living in the governorate.<sup>1624</sup>

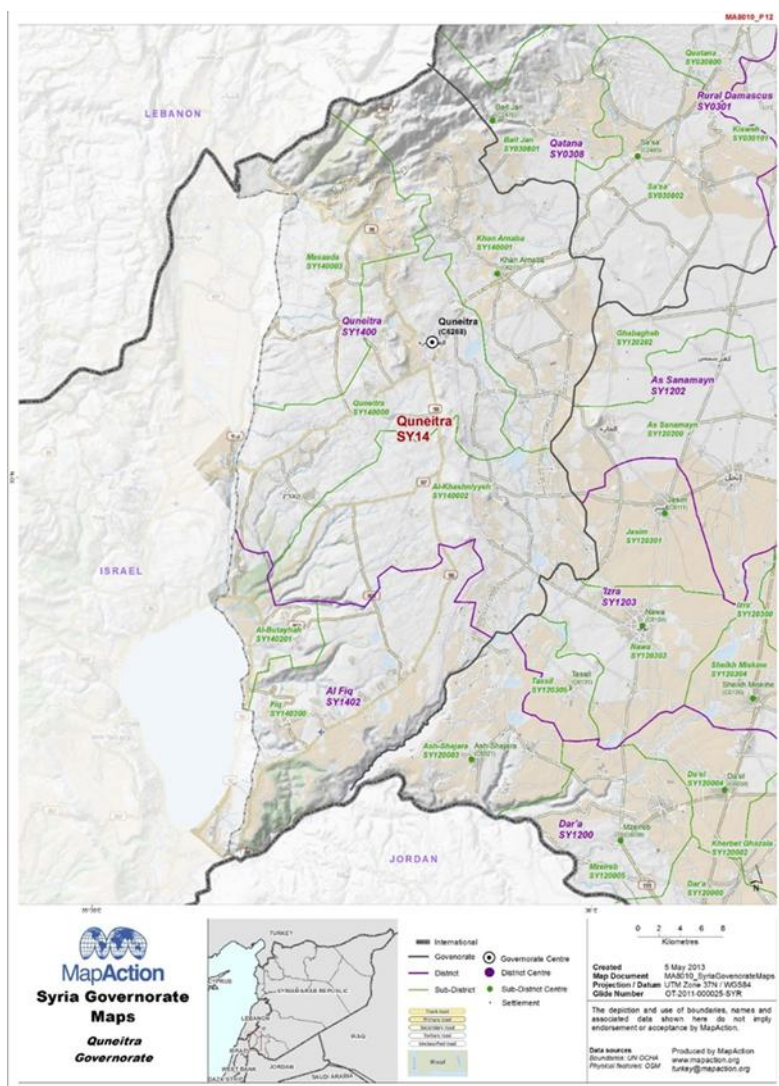
UNHCR further estimated that, as of 15 May 2025, a total of 2 963 individuals who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate, the vast majority (2 896) having returned to Sweida district. Since 8 December 2024, 2 246 individuals had returned to Sweida governorate from abroad.<sup>1625</sup>

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<sup>1624</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview [Map], 12 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1625</sup> UNHCR, Syrian returnees' figures by sub-districts - data 15 May 2025, 15 May 2025, [url](#)

### 5.8.14. Quneitra governorate



Map 16: © MapAction, Quneitra governorate<sup>1626</sup>

#### (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Quneitra governorate is divided into two administrative districts, namely Quneitra and Al-Fiq, which are further divided into a total of six sub-districts.<sup>1627</sup> Its capital is the city of Quneitra.<sup>1628</sup> As of March 2025, the population of Quneitra governorate was 111 706, including residents, IDPs, IDP returnees, and returnees from abroad, according to IOM estimates.<sup>1629</sup> By comparison, the WHO estimated the governorate's population at 149 374.<sup>1630</sup> For further

<sup>1626</sup> MapAction, Syria Governorate Maps – Quneitra Governorate, last updated 29 July 2016, [url](#)

<sup>1627</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 109

<sup>1628</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic [Map], August 2022, [url](#)

<sup>1629</sup> IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 2 – March 2025, 7 April 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1630</sup> WHO, Health Sector Syria - Health Sector Bulletin - March 2025, 2 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

background information on Quneitra governorate, see section 2.13.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

### **(b) Territorial control and main armed actors**

The Israeli-controlled Golan Heights encompassed roughly the western two-thirds of the governorate. As of the end of May 2025, ISW and CTP showed that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) controlled several stretches of adjoining territory to the east of this zone, including the area around Quneitra city.<sup>1631</sup> In March 2025, Israeli forces entered Tel al-Ahmar al-Gharbi<sup>1632</sup> and occupied the area.<sup>1633</sup> Most of the remaining territory in eastern Quneitra was under the control of the transitional administration.<sup>1634</sup>

### **(c) Security trends**

Israeli forces targeted several military sites and units across the governorate with aerial<sup>1635</sup> and mortar strikes.<sup>1636</sup> There were regular Israeli ground incursions into southwestern Syria,<sup>1637</sup> including in Tell al-Mal (situated 16 km from the 1974 disengagement zone),<sup>1638</sup> Ruwayhina,<sup>1639</sup> Ba'er al-Ajam,<sup>1640</sup> Al-Hamidiya,<sup>1641</sup> al-Samdaniya,<sup>1642</sup> and al-Mashara (central Quneitra),<sup>1643</sup> in the Saidah area (southern Quneitra)<sup>1644</sup> and at the Mantara Dam, with Israeli forces creating military outposts<sup>1645</sup> and checkpoints,<sup>1646</sup> conducting patrols,<sup>1647</sup> searching homes,<sup>1648</sup> and

<sup>1631</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1632</sup> New Arab (The), Israeli incursions spark tensions in Syria's Daraa and Quneitra, 9 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1633</sup> New Arab (The), Israel advances into Syria's Quneitra after army chief tour of occupied territory, 21 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1634</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1635</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 19, 2025, 19 March 2025, [url](#); SOHR, New attacks | Israeli fighter jets target 90th Brigade and destroy military equipment in Al-Quneitra, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1636</sup> SOHR, Amid advancement into south Syria | Aerial and ground attacks by Israeli forces target positions in Latakia and Al-Quneitra, 27 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1637</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #25: 26 May 2025, 26 May 2025, [url](#); BBC News, Israeli strikes in Syria a challenge to Türkiye, 4 April 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1638</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 4, 2025, 4 March 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>1639</sup> SOHR, Amid escalating military movements | Israeli forces advance into village in middle countryside of Al-Quneitra, 9 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1640</sup> SOHR, Ongoing violations | Israeli forces infiltrate a village in middle Al-Quneitra countryside, 8 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1641</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 20-27, 2025, 27 May 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Ongoing Israeli violations | Israeli forces place warning signs threaten Syrians near western Al-Quneitra, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1642</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 20-27, 2025, 27 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1643</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: March 2025 – May 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1644</sup> SOHR, Second incident today | Israeli forces advance into southern Al-Quneitra countryside, 8 May 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 11, 2025, 11 March 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>1645</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 1, 2025, 1 April 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>1646</sup> SOHR, Ongoing violations | Israeli forces bombard Tel Ahmar area and establish checkpoint in Al-Quneitra countryside, 31 March 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 10, 2025, 10 March 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1647</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 4, 2025, 4 March 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>1648</sup> SOHR, Ongoing Israeli violations | Forces storm homes and school in Al-Qahtaniyah Village in Al-Quneitra, 22 April 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), Israel advances into Syria's Quneitra after army chief tour of occupied territory, 21 April 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 12, 2025, 12 March 2025, [url](#)



questioning<sup>1649</sup> and arresting individuals.<sup>1650</sup> As UNOCHA noted, Israeli operations involved the targeting of civilians and posed ‘significant risks to civilian lives’.<sup>1651</sup>

Meanwhile, an attempted suicide attack targeted an IDF checkpoint in Al-Rafeed,<sup>1652</sup> while unidentified assailants killed an MOA member east of Jaba village in the Quneitra countryside.<sup>1653</sup>

#### **(d) Security incidents**

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 34 security incidents in Quneitra governorate (see Figure 33). For the period between 1 March and 31 May 2025, it recorded 22 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) in Quneitra governorate. Of these, one incident was coded as battle, 13 as explosions/remote violence and eight as incidents of violence against civilians.<sup>1654</sup>

<sup>1649</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 10, 2025, 10 March 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1650</sup> SOHR, Ongoing Israeli violations | Israeli forces assault Syrian family and arrest father in Al-Quneitra countryside, 26 April 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Israeli occupation forces conduct three incursions in Quneitra governorate over three days, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1651</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4 (As of 26 March 2025), 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

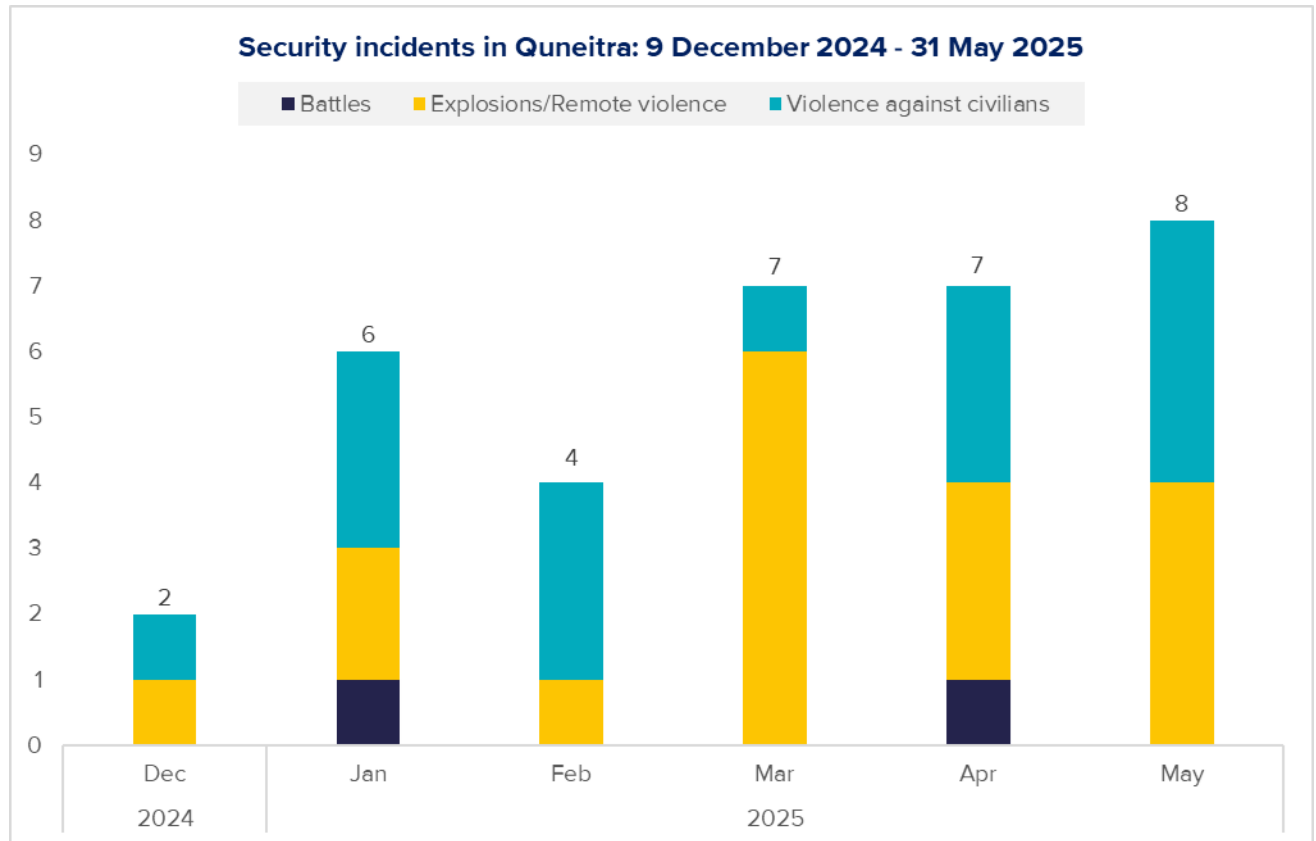
<sup>1652</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 15, 2025, 15 April 2025, [url](#), p. 13

<sup>1653</sup> SOHR, Having been lured by unknown individuals | Member of Military Operations Administration assassinated in Al-Quneitra countryside, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1654</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)







**Figure 33: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Quneitra governorate between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, based on ACLED data.<sup>1655</sup>**

All security incidents recorded during the reference period occurred in Quneitra district, while none was recorded in Al-Fiq district. According to ACLED data, military forces of Israel were involved as a main actor (coded as either ‘Actor1’ or ‘Actor2’) in around 73 % (16 incidents) of all security incidents recorded in the governorate during the reference period. Eight of these 16 incidents were coded as either explosions/remote violence (of which three also involved the military forces of Syria), while the remaining eight were coded as violence against civilians. Unidentified armed groups were involved in around 27 % of all security incidents (six incidents).<sup>1656</sup>

<sup>1655</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1656</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, [url](#)



### **(e) Civilian casualties**

The SNHR recorded that one civilian fatality had been caused by parties to the conflict or controlling forces in Quneitra governorate during the reference period.<sup>1657</sup> For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 3 civilian fatalities in Quneitra governorate.<sup>1658</sup>

### **(f) Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war**

Israeli operations in the governorate involved the killing of livestock, the destruction of farms, and significant risks to agricultural lands.<sup>1659</sup> One civilian was killed in the detonation of a war remnant in Khan Arnabeh town.<sup>1660</sup> Information on conflict-related infrastructure damage during the reference period could not be found within the time constraints of this report.

### **(g) Conflict-induced displacement and return**

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, 2 924 IDPs and 794 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024 were living in the governorate.<sup>1661</sup>

UNHCR further estimated that as of 15 May 2025, a total of 4 657 individuals who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate, the vast majority (4 636) having returned to Quneitra district. Since 8 December 2024, 2 880 individuals had returned to Quneitra governorate from abroad.<sup>1662</sup>

<sup>1657</sup> SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>1658</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.

<sup>1659</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4 (As of 26 March 2025), 27 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1660</sup> SOHR, Landmine explosion | Civilian killed in Al-Quneitra countryside, 5 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1661</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview [Map], 12 June 2025, [url](#)

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## Annex 2: Terms of Reference

The research **focuses on the period between March – May 2025**. Limited relevant information covering **June 2025** is reflected.

### ☐ **State structure and governance**

- Separation of powers
- Judiciary
- Security institutions
- Major reforms affecting civilians

### ☐ **Treatment of certain profiles and groups of the population**

- Individuals perceived to have supported the former government
- Individuals opposing or perceived to be opposing the new government
- Individuals opposing or perceived to be opposing non-state armed actors
- Selected ethno-religious minorities
  - Kurds
  - Alawites
  - Druze
  - Christians
  - Ismailis
  - Dom
  - Palestinians
- LGBTIQ persons
- Women
- Children

### ☐ **Returnees from abroad**

- Administrative requirements
- Return trends
- Treatment upon return

### ☐ **Socio-economic situation with a focus on Damascus city**

Socio-economic situation and indicators are to be covered at country-level and in Damascus city.

- Economic situation at country-level
- Humanitarian situation and assistance
- Employment
- Poverty
- Food security
- Housing, water, and sanitation
- Health care





- Education
- **Mobility and admittance**
  - Freedom of movement at country level and in Damascus city
  - Information on accessibility from Damascus airport to city
  - Administrative requirements for settling in Damascus
- **Security situation**
  - Overview of current conflicts
  - Armed actors
  - International involvement
  - Security situation and conflict impact on civilians by governorate





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