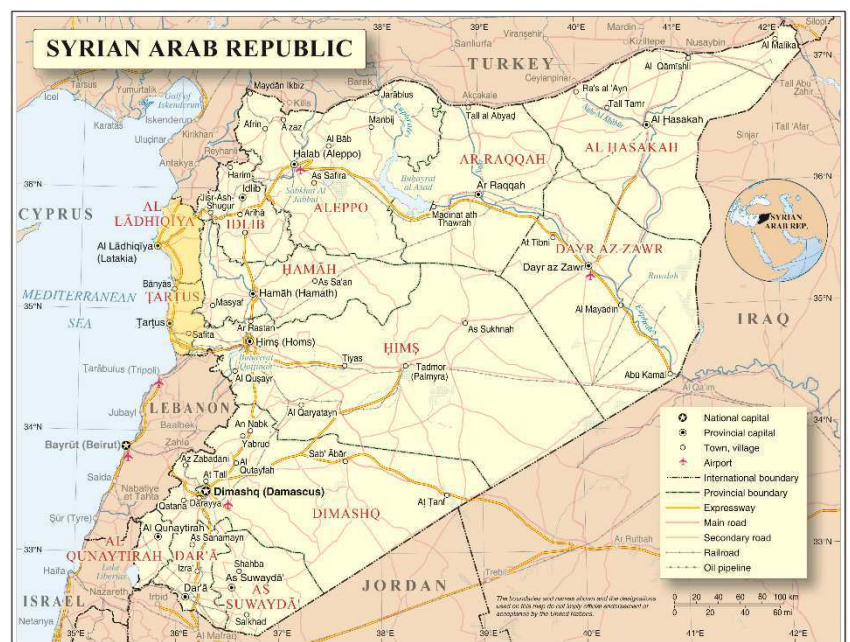


Syria

Security and socio-economic situation in Tartous and Latakia governorates



Ministry of Immigration
and Integration

The Danish
Immigration Service

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

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

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

The report is a synthesis of information gathered from different sources, and it brings together condensed information in a relevant manner for the reader's COI needs. It combines/organises information together thematically to form a coherent whole of the topic in question, instead of listing or quoting information source by source.

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Executive summary

As of September 2021, Tartous and Latakia governorates remained under control of the Government of Syria (GoS) with the exception of north-eastern rural Latakia. This north-eastern strip of the governorate is part of the environs of Idlib, where armed opposition groups were present and hostilities were ongoing. This part of Syria had reportedly seen a military escalation since the beginning of June 2021, with GoS forces having increased their bombing of opposition-held areas. As regards Tartous, anti-GoS armed groups were not present in the governorate.

From 1 December 2020 to 31 August 2021, two security incidents were reported in Tartous governorate. In Latakia governorate, 119 security incidents were recorded throughout this period. The vast majority of these security incidents took place in the rural north-eastern areas of the governorate, especially around the town of Kabani in the Jabal al-Akrad area.

Freedom of movement were affected by a severe fuel crisis in GoS-controlled areas, suspending traffic in Tartous and Latakia governorates, which in turn impacted access to healthcare, education and food and the availability of electricity and water. There was reportedly also an increase in the number of checkpoints in Latakia from 2020 to 2021.

The socio-economic situation in Tartous and Latakia governorates was negatively affected by the continued depreciation of the Syrian pound (SYP) and the country's general economic decline, leading to increased prices on food, water, medicine and fuel. Food insecurity was widespread, and maximum monthly salaries of both public and private sector employees were no longer sufficient to cover a family's monthly expenses.

Healthcare was generally available, and almost all public hospitals in the two governorates were fully functioning and accessible. However, the availability of medicine remained limited, and the COVID-19 pandemic continued to spread across the country.

Public education was available to all Syrian children in GoS-controlled areas. Yet, some families were forced to take their children out of school in order to have them work and bring home additional income.

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Introduction

The aim of this brief report is to provide updated information on the security situation, freedom of movement and the socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous and Latakia.

The report at hand is an update of the information on the situation in Tartous and Latakia in the report [Syria – Security and socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra](#), published by the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) in December 2020.

The reference period for this report is December 2020 to September 2021.

This report is based solely on written sources and is written in compliance with the EASO COI Report Methodology.¹

The report consists of three sections: the first section provides information on the current security situation in Tartous and Latakia governorates; the second section contains updated information on freedom of movement within Tartous and Latakia governorates; and the third section deals with the socio-economic situation in the two governorates.

Ultimately, attention should be paid to the volatile situation in Syria. For this reason, the information in this report may quickly become outdated and should be monitored periodically and brought up to date accordingly. The research and editing of this brief report was finalised on 30 September 2021.

The report can be accessed from the website www.us.dk and is thus available to all stakeholders in the refugee status determination process, as well as to the general public.

¹ EASO, *EASO Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology*, June 2019, [url](#)

Abbreviations

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
COI	Country of Origin Information
DIS	Danish Immigration Service
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
GoS	Government of Syria
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HTS	Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham
LDF	Local Defence Forces
MoH	Ministry of Health
NLF	National Liberation Front
SAA	Syrian Arab Army
SARC	Syrian Arab Red Crescent
SOHR	Syrian Observatory for Human Rights
SYP	Syrian Pound
TIP	Turkestan Islamic Party
ToT	Terms of Trade
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Background

As of March 2021, after 10 years of conflict, most of Syria was under GoS control, including the governorates of Tartous and most of Latakia.² In recent years, frontlines have stabilised and direct military confrontations have declined; however, some factors in Syria remained the same.³ Throughout the government-controlled areas, the authorities continued to engage in arbitrary arrests, torture, forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.⁴ Moreover, hostilities continued in 2021 in some parts of the country, including northern Latakia.⁵

The current socio-economic situation in Syria is affected by the country's economic crisis, exacerbated by the fiscal crisis in neighbouring Lebanon and the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 90% of the Syrian population is estimated to live below the poverty line, and 13.4 million Syrians are in need of humanitarian assistance.⁶

1.1. Tartous and Latakia governorates

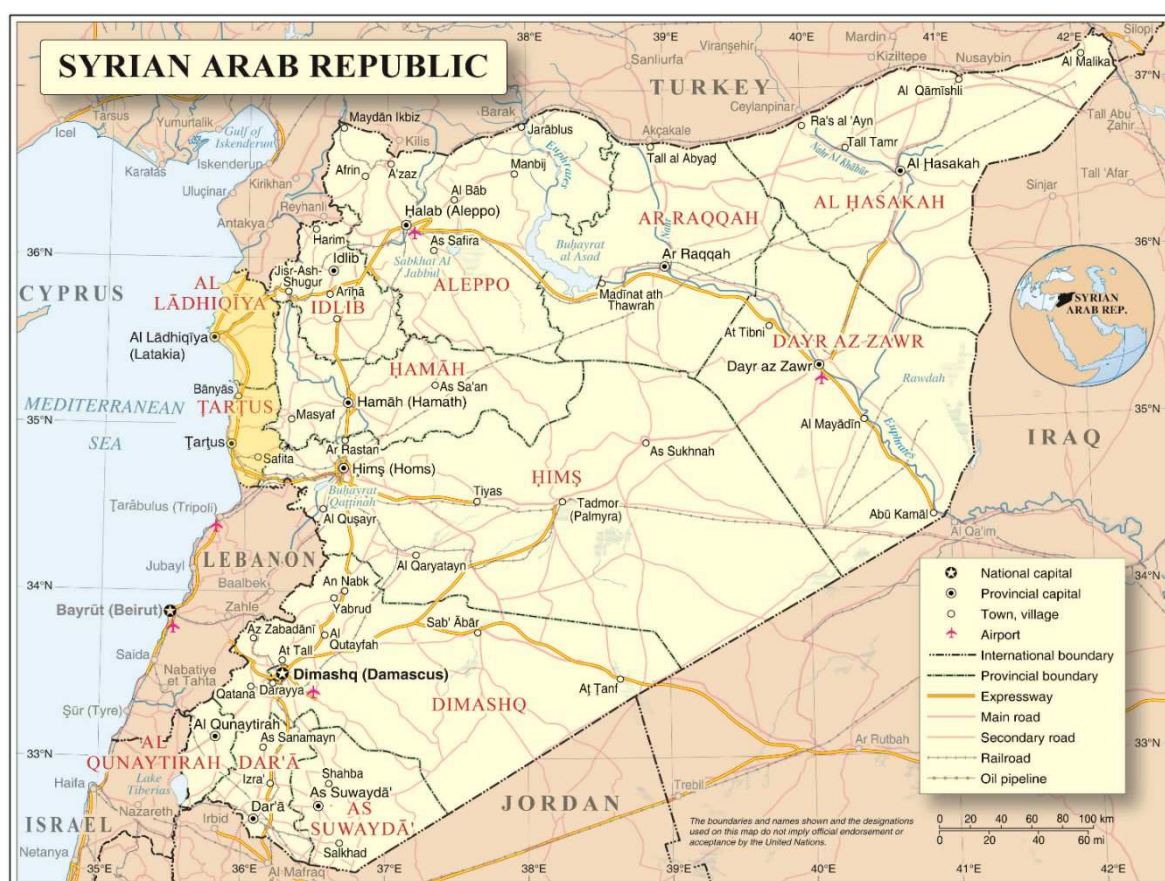


Figure 1: Map of Syria – Latakia and Tartous governorates. Based on a UN map, edited by DIS.

² EASO, *Syria: Security situation*, July 2021, [url](#), p. 34

³ Syria Direct, *Syria's 2020 in a nutshell, and what to expect for 2021?*, 28 December 2020, [url](#)

⁴ USDOS, *2020 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Syria*, 30 March 2021, [url](#); Syria Direct, *Syria's 2020 in a nutshell, and what to expect for 2021?*, 28 December 2020, [url](#)

⁵ UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview – Syrian Arab Republic*, 31 March 2021, [url](#), p. 11

⁶ UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview – Syrian Arab Republic*, 31 March 2021, [url](#), pp. 7, 11; Reuters, *Factbox: The cost of ten years of devastating war in Syria*, 26 May 2021, [url](#)

The governorate of Tartous is situated on the Mediterranean coast on Syria's western border. Tartous borders Latakia governorate to the north, the governorates of Hama and Homs to the east and Lebanon to the south. The governorate is divided into five administrative districts, Baniyas, Sheikh Badr, Dreikish, Safita and Tartous City, which are divided into 27 sub-districts.⁷ In August 2020, Tartous had an estimated population of 930,000.⁸

The governorate of Latakia is located in north-western Syria on the Mediterranean coast. Latakia borders Tartous to the south, Hama to the east, Idlib to the northeast, and to the north, Latakia shares an international border with Turkey. Latakia consists of four administrative districts, Latakia, al-Haffa, al-Qardaha and Jablah, which are divided into 20 sub-districts.⁹ In August 2020, Latakia had an estimated population of 1.2 million. Around 50% of the population are Alawites, 40% are Sunni Muslims, and 10% are Christians.¹⁰

1.2. Conflict background

Tartous governorate has been controlled by the Government of Syria (GoS) throughout the conflict, but has witnessed violent incidents in the earlier years of the Syrian conflict. In 2011 and 2013, there were violent clashes in the Sunni-majority city of Baniyas, which caused more than 200 deaths, according to opposition activists. In 2016, the Islamic State (IS) targeted Tartous city in four separate bomb attacks, which killed close to 100 people.¹¹

Latakia has been a stronghold for the Alawites and the presidential family, and most of the governorate has been under government control throughout the conflict.¹² However, opposition forces have reportedly kept a presence in the governorate during nearly the entire war.¹³ The north-eastern area of Jabal al-Akrad has been an armed rebel stronghold since 2012, and the town of Kabani (also referred to as Kabana or Kabaneh (Arabic: كبنانة)) in the mountain range of Jabal al-Akrad has been controlled by armed opposition groups since August 2016.¹⁴

1.3. Armed actors present in Tartous and Latakia governorates

Syrian Arab Army (SAA) and affiliated armed groups

In 2020, it was reported that SAA units were present in Latakia governorate. For SAA deployments in Latakia governorate as of 3 April 2020, see the EASO-report [Syria – Security situation](#) from May 2020.¹⁵ Pro-

⁷ EASO, *Syria: Security situation*, July 2021, [url](#), p. 131

⁸ DIS, *Syria: Security and socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 5

⁹ EASO, *Syria: Security situation*, July 2021, [url](#), p. 120

¹⁰ DIS, *Syria: Security and socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 5

¹¹ DIS, *Syria: Security and socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 5

¹² EASO, *Syria: Security situation*, May 2020, [url](#), p. 103

¹³ EASO, *Syria: Security situation*, July 2021, [url](#), p. 120-121

¹⁴ DIS, *Syria: Security and socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 7; EASO, *Syria: Security situation*, July 2021, [url](#), p. 120-121

¹⁵ EASO, *Syria: Security situation*, July 2021, [url](#), p. 121

GoS shabiha militias¹⁶ were also present in Latakia governorate, assisting in maintaining security in the governorate.¹⁷ The Syrian president's brother Maher al-Assad, who commands the SAA's 4th armoured division, reportedly controlled the cities of Latakia and Tartous, with branches of the 4th division overseeing the Latakia and Tartous ports.¹⁸ Pro-government Local Defence Forces (LDF)¹⁹ also had a presence in both Latakia and Tartous governorates.²⁰

Anti-GoS armed groups

As of December 2020, anti-GoS armed groups were not present in Tartous governorate.²¹

Anti-GoS armed groups were present in the Kabani mountains in Latakia governorate.²² Ethnic Turkoman and Uyghur militant groups had a presence in these mountains, and the Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP) held positions inside Kabani town.²³ The armed groups operating in the Kabani mountains were reportedly linked with al-Qaeda groups.²⁴

Another anti-GoS armed actor operating in Latakia governorate was Fatah al-Mubin Operations Room, a coalition of armed groups including Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the Turkish-supported National Liberation Front (NLF), and Jaysh al-Izza.²⁵

Foreign actors

Russia and Iran had a military presence in both Tartous and Latakia.²⁶ Russia has a naval base in Tartous harbour,²⁷ and the Russian air force has its own airbase in Latakia in Hmeimim.²⁸

In Latakia governorate, Turkey was also present and had set up a new military post in Jabal al-Akrad in January 2021. Turkey reportedly had two posts in Latakia governorate in the form of roadblocks, Russia three bases and military posts and Iran six posts and bases.²⁹

¹⁶ For additional information on the pro-government shabiha militia and its role in the war in Syria, see: BBC, *Syria unrest: Who are the shabiha?*, 29 May 2012, [url](#)

¹⁷ DIS, *Syria: Security and socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁸ EASO, *Syria: Security situation*, July 2021, [url](#), p. 133

¹⁹ For more information on the LDF, see: Atlantic Council, *Factbox: Iranian influence and presence in Syria*, 5 November, 2019, [url](#)

²⁰ DIS, *Syria: Security and socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 8

²¹ DIS, *Syria: Security and socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 8

²² DIS, *Syria: Security and socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 8

²³ EASO, *Syria: Security situation*, July 2021, [url](#), p. 122

²⁴ DIS, *Syria: Security and socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 8

²⁵ EASO, *Syria: Security situation*, July 2021, [url](#), p. 122

²⁶ EASO, *Syria: Security situation*, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 121-122, 133-135

²⁷ DIS, *Syria: Security and socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 8

²⁸ EASO, *Syria: Security situation*, July 2021, [url](#), p. 121

²⁹ EASO, *Syria: Security situation*, July 2021, [url](#), p. 122; For more information on foreign actors present in the governorates of Latakia and Tartous, see: EASO, *Syria: Security situation*, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 121-122, 133-135

2. Security situation

Throughout the reporting period, the GoS controlled all of Tartous and most of Latakia. An exception were parts of Jabal al-Turkman and Jabal al-Akrad on the north-eastern edge of Latakia governorate, which were controlled by the armed opposition groups Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP).³⁰

2.1. Security incidents in Tartous and Latakia governorates

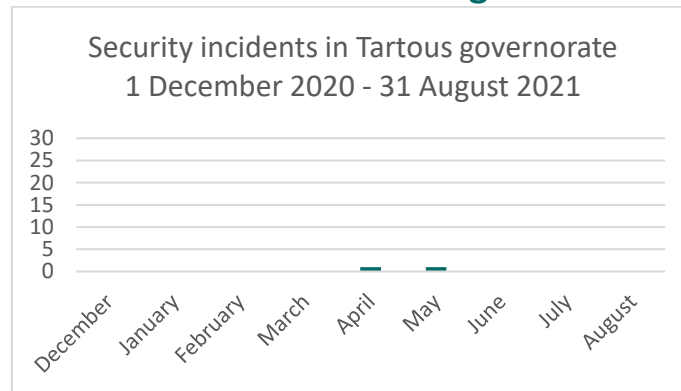


Figure 3: Security incidents in Tartous governorate, 1 December 2020 – 31 July 2021, based on ACLED data.³¹

In Tartous governorate, few security incidents were reported. The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED)³² recorded two security incidents³³ from 1 December 2020 to 31 August 2021, as illustrated in figure 3 above.³⁴

In Latakia governorate, ACLED recorded 119 security incidents from 1 December 2020 to 31 August 2021, as illustrated in figure 4 below.

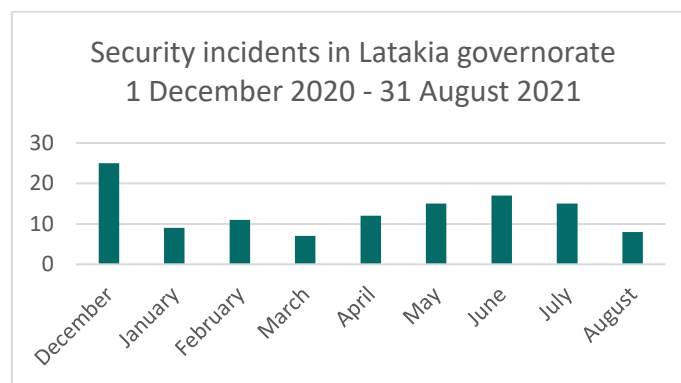


Figure 4: Security incidents in Latakia governorate, 1 December 2020 – 31 July 2021, based on ACLED data.³⁵

³⁰ Netherlands (The), MFA, *Country of origin information report Syria*, June 2021, [url](#), p. 21; Carter Center (The), *Exploring Historical Control in Syria*, n.d., [url](#)

³¹ ACLED, curated data files, Syria (13 September 2021), [url](#)

³² ACLED describes itself as ‘a disaggregated data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping project. ACLED collects the dates, actors, locations, fatalities, and types of all reported political violence and protest events’. ACLED, *About ACLED*, n.d., [url](#)

³³ ACLED uses the term ‘security event’ when registering these security incidents. In accordance with EASO’s use of ACLED data (e.g. see the EASO-report [Syria - Security situation](#), July 2021, p. 50), the term ‘security incident’ is used here and solely includes these three event categories: battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians.

³⁴ ACLED, curated data files, Syria (13 September 2021), [url](#)

³⁵ ACLED, curated data files, Syria (13 September 2021), [url](#)

In December 2020, DIS reported on continuous clashes and shelling in the Kabani mountains in Jabal al-Akrad, Latakia governorate, throughout 2020.³⁶ The ACLED data indicates that this security trend continued, as 65% of the 119 recorded security incidents from 1 December 2020 to 31 August 2021 took place in the Kansaba sub-district where Jabal al-Akrad and the town of Kabani are located.³⁷

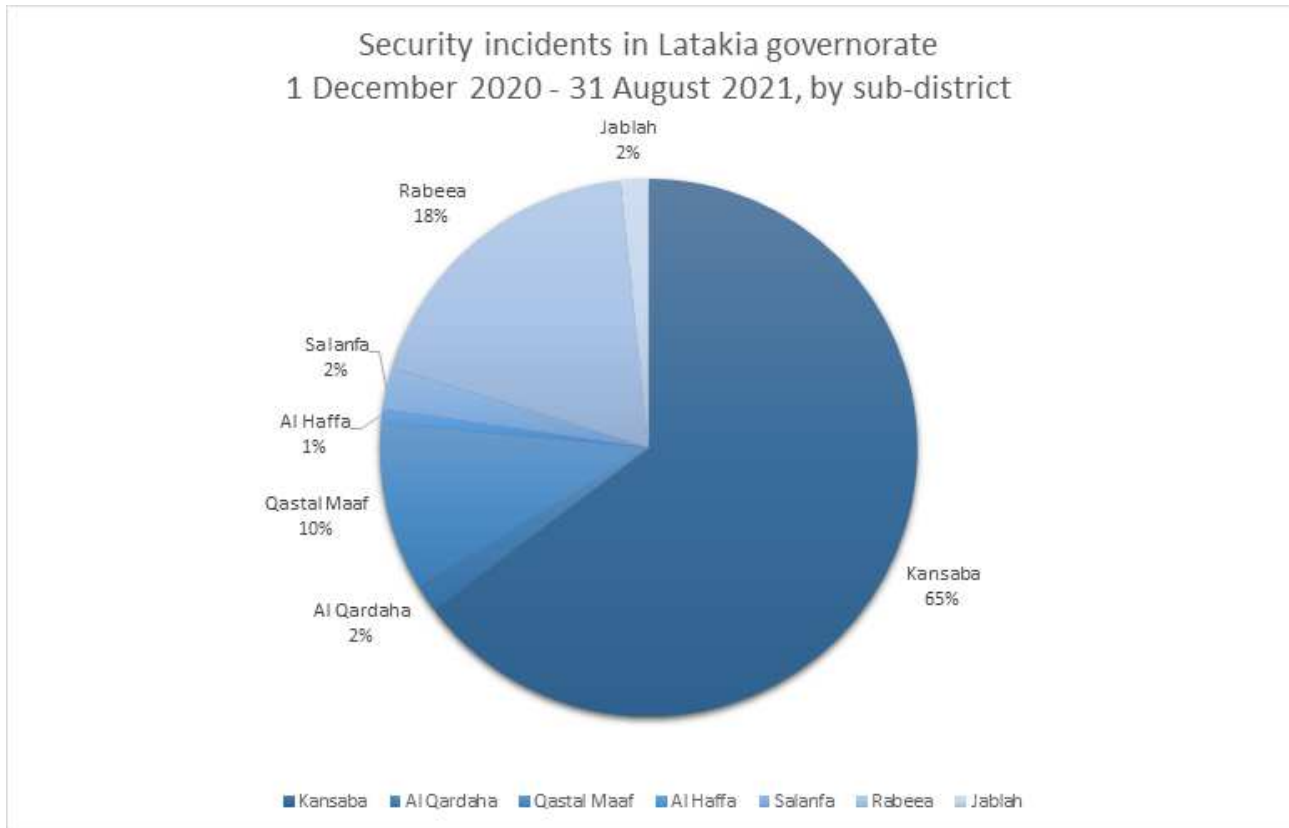


Figure 5: Security incidents in Latakia governorate by sub-district, 1 December 2020 - 31 July 2021, based on ACLED data³⁸

Throughout the reporting period, GoS forces continuously targeted opposition factions in Latakia governorate in a number of ways. There were reports of GoS forces targeting opposition forces with bombardment, artillery shelling, rocket attacks, guided missiles and airstrikes, as well as airstrikes conducted by Russia in support of the GoS. The majority of these attacks took place in the Jabal al-Akrad area.³⁹

³⁶ DIS, *Syria: Security and socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 8

³⁷ ACLED, curated data files, Syria (13 September 2021), [url](#)

³⁸ ACLED, curated data files, Syria (13 September 2021), [url](#)

³⁹ SOHR, *Ceasefire violations | Regime forces shell positions in Idlib, Hama and Latakia, while Turkistan Islamic Party attacks military position in Jabal Shashaboo*, 7 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, *Ceasefire violations | Opposition factions shell regime positions in Sahl Al-Ghab, while regime rocket fire pounds towns in southern Idlib*, 9 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, *Ceasefire violations | Opposition factions shell regime positions in rural Idlib, while regime forces shell positions in Latakia, Hama and Idlib*, 21 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, *After ground shelling on Latakia, Hama and Idlib | Tense calm prevails “de-escalation zone”*, 22 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, *“De-escalation zone” | Rebels and regime forces exchange fire on frontlines of Jabal al-Zawiya and Sahl Al-Ghab, and one regime soldier killed in Latakia mountains*, 25 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, *“De-escalation zone” | Regime soldier killed and others injured in rural Latakia, while bombardment renews on Jabal Al-Zawiyah and Sahl Al-Ghab*, 25 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, *After hours of tense calm | Regime forces shell Idlib and Latakia countryside, while rebels kill regime soldier in southern Idlib*, 6 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, *“De-escalation zone” | Three members of jihadist factions killed in failed infiltration attempt into regime forces’ positions*,

Opposition factions likewise conducted numerous attacks targeting GoS positions in the northern countryside of Latakia with rockets, gunfire, shelling, heavy artillery and mortars.⁴⁰

and regime forces shell frontlines of Latakia, Idlib and Hama, 12 January 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Ceasefire violations | Rebels shell and attack regime positions in Idlib and Latakia countryside, leaving scores dead and wounded*, 8 January 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Civilian and two National Front members killed in ground shelling on rural Latakia and western Idlib*, 24 January 2021, [url](#); Carter Center (The), *Weekly Conflict Summary | 14 December 2020 - 3 January 2021*, 7 January 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *After death and injury of 12 soldiers | Regime forces shell positions in Idlib, Hama and Latakia countryside*, 6 February 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Woman injured in regime bombardment near Latakia frontlines, while intensive bombardment hits Sahl Al-Ghab*, 13 March 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Ceasefire violations | Regime forces shell positions in Aleppo, Idlib and Latakia countryside, killing a rebel*, 16 April 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Ceasefire violations | Opposition factions shell regime positions in northern Latakia, while regime forces renew bombardment on Jabal Al-Zawiyah and Sahl Al-Ghab*, 18 April 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Regime forces clash with rebels in Latakia countryside, and renew shelling Idlib countryside*, 19 April 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Russian jets execute over ten airstrikes on Latakia and Idlib countryside*, 16 May 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Regime forces shell Kabana hills in Latakia, and renew artillery fire on Hama and Idlib*, 24 May 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Regime forces shell Latakia countryside, and renew bombardment on Jabal al-Zawiyah and Sahl al-Ghab*, 22 May 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Rebel dies of wounds in Idlib and, while Russian airstrikes on Latakia countryside leave several civilians injured*, 12 May 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Ceasefire violations | Russian jet strikes positions in Latakia countryside, while regime forces step up bombardment on “de-escalation zone”*, 12 May 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Rocket attack | Guided missile hits HTS vehicle in northern Latakia killing two members*, 3 May 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Regime forces shell frontlines of Saraqeb, while factions target regime positions in Latakia countryside*, 13 June 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Artillery fire | Regime forces shell Sahl al-Ghab and Latakia countryside, while factions targets regime positions in Jurin villages*, 18 June 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Ongoing violation | “al-Fath al-Mubin” factions shell regime positions in Salma city in northern Latakia*, 26 July 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Airstrikes | Russian jets target frontlines north of Latakia, and Russian reconnaissance drones fly over Jabal al-Zawiya*, 12 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Three rebels killed and wounded in Russian airstrike on Latakia countryside, and clashes erupt in southern Idlib*, 20 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, *After stoppage of airstrikes for about two weeks | Russian jets target Kabana hills in Jabal al-Akrad, north of Latakia*, 20 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, *Airstrikes | Russian jets target Kabana hills with vacuum missiles in northern countryside of Latakia province*, 24 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Russian jets pound Kabana hills in northern Latakia, and four Russian jets fly over the area*, 28 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, *For second time this year | Russian jets pound Kabana frontline in Jabal al-Akrad, north of Latakia*, 21 January 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Third round in 2021 | Russian jets strike Kabana area in Jabal Al-Akrad*, 26 February 2021, [url](#); ACLED, *Regional Overview: Middle East 8-21 May 2021*, 26 May 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Regime forces renew shelling positions in Hama, Latakia and Idlib*, 10 July 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Russian jet strikes Kabana hills in northern Latakia, while rockets hit positions in southern Idlib and western Hama*, 24 July 2021, [url](#); Netherlands (The), MFA, *Country of origin information report Syria*, June 2021, [url](#), pp. 19, 23; BBC Monitoring, *Russia launches air strikes in northern Syria near Turkish bases*, 5 September 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *الطائرات الحربية الروسية تستهدف مناطق تضم مخيمات للنازحين ومستودعات للذخيرة تابعة لتحرير الشام في الريف الإدليبي* [Russian war planes target areas that include camps for displaced persons and ammunition depots belonging to Tahrir al-Sham in Idlib countryside], 7 September 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁰ SOHR, *Ceasefire violations | Opposition factions shell regime positions in Sahl Al-Ghab, while regime rocket fire pounds towns in southern Idlib*, 9 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, *Airstrikes | Russian jets target Kabana hills with vacuum missiles in northern countryside of Latakia province*, 24 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Two regime soldiers killed in rural Latakia and Idlib, and exchange of fire continues on frontlines*, 1 December 2020, [url](#); Carter Center (The), *Weekly Conflict Summary | 14 December 2020 - 3 January 2021*, 7 January 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Regime officer killed on frontlines of Latakia countryside, and rebels and regime forces exchange shelling on frontlines of Idlib and Hama*, 7 February 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Ceasefire violations | Opposition factions shell regime positions in Latakia and Aleppo, while regime forces shell south Idlib countryside*, 19 February 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Ceasefire violations | Two regime soldiers killed in Latakia, while regime forces renew shelling positions in Idlib and Hama countryside*, 12 February 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Regime officer killed on frontlines of Latakia countryside, and rebels and regime forces exchange shelling on frontlines of Idlib and Hama*, 7 February 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Woman injured in regime bombardment near Latakia frontlines, while intensive bombardment hits Sahl Al-Ghab*, 13 March 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *“Al-Fath Al-Mubin” factions open fire on four regime soldiers on frontlines of Latakia and Idlib*, 30 March 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Ceasefire violations | Opposition factions shell regime positions in northern Latakia, while regime forces renew bombardment on Jabal Al-Zawiyah and Sahl Al-Ghab*, 18 April 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | *Rebels kill two regime soldiers in northern Latakia countryside*, 14 April 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Ceasefire violations | Artillery fire by opposition factions injures civilians in Jurin, while rockets hit Latakia countryside*, 19 July 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Ongoing violation | “al-Fath al-Mubin” factions shell regime positions in Salma city in northern Latakia*, 26 July 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Along with exchange of fire on Idlib frontlines | Opposition Factions bombard regime positions in countryside of Latakia and Hama*, 27 July 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Ceasefire violations | Regime soldier killed in Latakia countryside, while regime forces renew ground shelling on Sahl al-Ghab villages*, 6 July 2021, [url](#)

There were also reports of violent clashes and exchange of fire between GoS forces and opposition factions on several frontlines in Latakia countryside.⁴¹

Lastly, several sources reported on Israeli airstrikes targeting GoS positions, as well as positions of Iranian forces and proxy forces across the governorate on 5 May 2021.⁴²

DIS has not been able to find additional new information from written sources regarding the security situation in Tartous and Latakia since the last brief report was published in December 2020, apart from the following information on northern Latakia. This area of Latakia differed from the rest of the governorate and Tartous governorate concerning the security situation.

2.1. The security situation in northern Latakia

Rural northern Latakia is part of the environs of Idlib and constitute one of the last remaining areas beyond government control in Syria.⁴³ It is likewise part of the area referred to as north-west Syria, where hostilities are still ongoing.⁴⁴ According to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Idlib governorate and its surrounding areas, including the countryside of Latakia governorate, continued to be ‘the epicentre of armed clashes between pro-government forces and armed opposition groups.’ In the second half of 2020, armed confrontations continued in parts of Latakia governorate. Kabani and its surrounding hills were one of the ‘areas with the highest profile military clashes’ in 2020. Intermittent clashes took place between GoS and opposition forces together with occasional ground bombardment by both sides in this area.⁴⁵

⁴¹ SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | Regime soldier killed and others injured in rural Latakia, while bombardment renews on Jabal Al-Zawiyah and Sahl Al-Ghab, 25 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, Ceasefire violations | Rebels shell and attack regime positions in Idlib and Latakia countryside, leaving scores dead and wounded, 8 January 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | Regime forces shell positions in Hama and Latakia countryside, while exchange of fire leaves casualties in Latakia, 22 January 2021, [url](#); SOHR, Ceasefire violations | Two regime soldiers killed in Latakia, while regime forces renew shelling positions in Idlib and Hama countryside, 12 February 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | 13 regime soldiers killed and wounded in shelling by rebels in Idlib countryside, and clashes erupt on frontlines of Latakia countryside, 9 March 2021, [url](#); SOHR, “De-escalation zone” | Regime forces clash with rebels in Latakia countryside, and renew shelling Idlib countryside, 19 April 2021, [url](#)

⁴² Carter Center (The), Weekly conflict summary | 3-9 May 2021, [url](#); BBC Monitoring, Suspected Israeli strikes reported in Syria’s Latakia, 5 May 2021, [url](#); SOHR, Israeli attacks | nearly 20 people killed and wounded in airstrikes on Latakia and Hama, 5 May 2021, [url](#); Reuters, Syria says Israeli raids target Mediterranean port region of Latakia, 5 May 2021, [url](#); Asharq al-Awsat, Syria Says Israeli Raids Target Mediterranean Port Region of Latakia, 5 May 2021, [url](#); Arab Weekly (The), Israeli raids target Syria’s Latakia, 5 May 2021, [url](#); Haaretz and Associated Press (The), Israel Struck Near Latakia Overnight, Syria TV Reports, 5 May 2021, [url](#); Times of Israel, Damascus: Israeli airstrikes hit targets in northern Syria, killing one, 5 May 2021, [url](#); Al-Jazeera, One killed in Israeli attack on Syria’s Latakia, state media says, 5 May 2021, [url](#); SOHR, Israeli attack | Eight members of IRGC and affiliated militia killed in latest airstrike on Hama and Latakia, 7 May 2021, [url](#)

⁴³ UN Col, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/44/61), 2 July 2020, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁴ Syria Direct, Difficult diplomacy: Russia’s stranglehold on northwest Syria, 7 July 2021, [url](#); Carter Center (The), Quarterly Conflict Summary | January-March 2021, 31 March 2021, [url](#), p. 3; UN OCHA, Recent Developments in Northwest Syria - Situation Report No. 23 - As of 21 December 2020, 21 December 2020, [url](#); UN OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Recent Developments in Northwestern Syria Situation Report No. 24 - As of 26 January 2021, 26 January 2021, [url](#); UN OCHA, Recent Developments in Northwest Syria - Situation Report No. 25 - As of 26 February 2021, 2 March 2021, [url](#); UN OCHA, Recent Developments in Northwest Syria - Situation Report No. 26 - As of 26 March 2021, 30 March 2021, [url](#); UN OCHA, Recent Developments in Northwest Syria and RAATA - Situation Report No. 27 - April - May 2021, 18 June 2021, [url](#); UN OCHA, Recent Developments in Northwest Syria and RAATA - Situation Report No. 29 - July 2021, 13 August 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁵ Netherlands (The), MFA, Country of origin information report Syria, June 2021, [url](#), pp. 19, 22

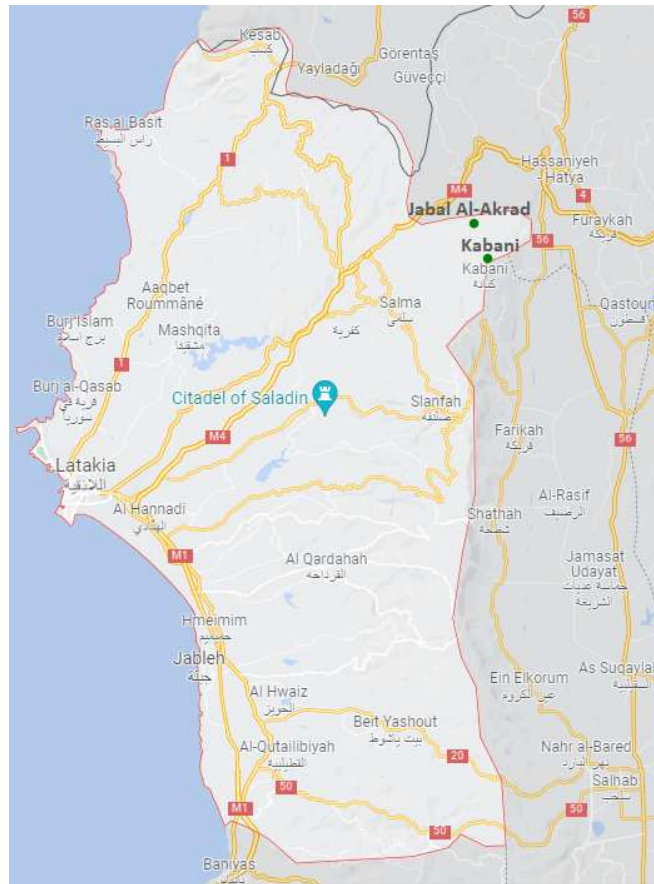


Figure 2: Map of Latakia, based on Google Maps and Liveuamap

On 16 June 2021, the Syrian opposition news outlet Enab Baladi reported that north-western Syria had seen a military escalation since 5 June, and GoS forces had increased its bombing of opposition-held areas.⁴⁶ Syria Direct likewise reported on 7 July 2021 that the GoS and Russia had ‘engaged in a deadly show of force’ against the Idlib area, including north-eastern areas of Latakia, with hundreds of strikes killing and injuring dozens of civilians.⁴⁷ The UN similarly reported on an increase in violence in the Idlib de-escalation area, which also covers north-eastern areas of Latakia,⁴⁸ during June and July 2021, with an increase in ‘mutual shelling and limited clashes across contact lines’. Additionally, aerial bombardments were reported in rural Latakia, Idlib and Hama, striking military sites, including sites of HTS, and damaging civilian infrastructure.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Enab Baladi, *Rationales for the Syrian regime’s military escalation in northwestern Syria*, 16 June 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁷ Syria Direct, *Difficult diplomacy: Russia’s stranglehold on northwest Syria*, 7 July 2021, [url](#)

⁴⁸ In May 2017, an agreement was signed by Russia, Iran and Turkey to end hostilities between forces fighting on behalf of GoS and opposition groups in four de-escalation zones, primarily in opposition-held areas of Syria. One zone covered north-eastern areas of Latakia, Idlib, western areas of Aleppo and northern areas of Hama. Presently, this de-escalation zone remains the last of the four zones not retaken by the GoS. Al-Jazeera, *Syria’s ‘de-escalation zones’ explained*, 4 July 2017, [url](#); EASO, *Syria: Security situation*, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 14, 64

⁴⁹ UNSC, *Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020), 2533 (2020) and 2585 (2021)*, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2021/735, 18 August 2021, [url](#), p. 2

3. Freedom of movement

3.1. Freedom of movement within Tartous and Latakia governorates

Farmers in Latakia reported an increase in the number of checkpoints from June 2020 to June 2021. According to Elizabeth Tsurkov, these checkpoints were manned by 4th Division *trafiq* (armed convoys providing protection to traders) collecting informal taxes and bribes.⁵⁰

A severe fuel crisis in all GoS-controlled areas have affected the transportation situation in Tartous and Latakia, leading to an almost complete suspension of transportation, including public transport, in March and April 2021.⁵¹

In October 2020, an international security organisation informed DIS that neither domestic nor international flights were flying to Latakia Airport.⁵² UN OCHA reported that Latakia Airport was partially open for international flights in November 2020,⁵³ and in February 2021, international commercial flights were ongoing.⁵⁴

3.2. Security on roads connecting Tartous and Latakia governorates to Damascus International Airport

DIS has not been able to find updated information from written sources regarding security on the roads connecting Tartous and Latakia to Damascus International Airport in 2021. Therefore, the following section is based on information from the DIS-report [Syria – Security and Socio-Economic Situation in the Governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra](#) from December 2020, pp. 11-12.

In October 2020, there were checkpoints at all the entrances to the main cities and on all main roads, including the road between Tartous and Latakia and Damascus International Airport. These checkpoints were manned by the SAA or Syrian security services personnel.⁵⁵

When passing a checkpoint, one was required to present ID-card and other documents. Individuals returning to Syria having unresolved security issues with the Syrian authorities were at risk of experiencing increased security measures at checkpoints or at the airport.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Tsurkov, E., *Syrian Regime No Longer Able to Provide for Loyalists*, 4 June 2021, [url](#)

⁵¹ COAR, *New Lows as Syria Beset by Fuel, Fiscal, and COVID Crises*, 12 April 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Fuel hardship in regime-held areas | Transportation suspended almost completely in Latakia and Tartus streets*, 29 March 2021, [url](#); Tsurkov, E., *Syrian Regime No Longer Able to Provide for Loyalists*, 4 June 2021, [url](#)

⁵² DIS, *Syria: Security and socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 11-12

⁵³ UN OCHA, *Syrian Arab Republic: COVID-19. Humanitarian Update No. 21*, 30 November 2020, [url](#), p. 6

⁵⁴ UN OCHA, *Syrian Arab Republic: COVID-19. Humanitarian Update No. 23*, 1 February 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁵⁵ DIS, *Syria: Security and socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 12

⁵⁶ DIS, *Syria: Security and socio-economic situation in the governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 12

4. Socio-economic situation

Most of the information in this section describes the general socio-economic situation in the GoS-controlled territories of Syria, while highlighting local differences where they exist and/or where information is available.⁵⁷

The socio-economic situation in Syria is affected by the country's economic crisis, exacerbated by the fiscal crisis in Lebanon and the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵⁸ The continued depreciation of the Syrian pound (SYP) has had an adverse effect on the general socio-economic situation in Syria. The Syrian pound has depreciated 30% since last year, reaching 3,210/USD in July 2021,⁵⁹ and more than 90% of the Syrian population are estimated to live below the poverty line.⁶⁰

The country's economic crisis has led to popular discontent over lack of fuel and electricity, increased corruption and rising poverty rates in GoS-controlled areas, including in Tartous and Latakia, otherwise considered the loyal base of the Syrian government.⁶¹ According to one media source, at least eight people accused of cybercrime and spreading false news for criticising state corruption on social media were arrested in Latakia in February 2021.⁶² In an attempt to reduce the consequences of the country's financial crisis, the GoS initiated several initiatives to counteract the eroding value of workers' salaries, including raising salaries.⁶³ These increases set the maximum monthly salary of public sector employees at 90,000 SYP (approx. 30 USD in July 2021) and private sector employees at 225,000 SYP (approx. 75 USD), while the estimated monthly expenses of a four-member middle class family exceeded one million SYP (approx. 300 USD) in July 2021.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ For additional information on the general socio-economic situation in Syria and the situation in Tartous and Latakia governorates, see the DIS-reports [Syria – Security and socio-economic situation in the government-controlled areas](#) from October 2020 and the DIS-report [Syria – Security and Socio-Economic Situation in the Governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra](#) from December 2020.

⁵⁸ UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview – Syrian Arab Republic*, 31 March 2021, [url](#), pp. 7, 11; Reuters, *Factbox: The cost of ten years of devastating war in Syria*, 26 May 2021, [url](#)

⁵⁹ WFP, *Syria - Situation Report #8: August 2021*, 23 September 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁶⁰ UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview – Syrian Arab Republic*, 31 March 2021, [url](#), p. 7

⁶¹ SOHR, "Salary is not enough for buying even a chicken" and "we have not had meat for three years" | *Popular discontent grows in Tartus and entire regime-controlled areas over low income and unaffordable prices*, 18 December 2020, [url](#); SOHR, *Severe crises in Syrian coastal cities | Popular discontent grows, as fuel and bread crises worsen*, 12 January 2021, [url](#); Middle East Eye, *Arrests in Syria's Latakia signal discontent among pro-Assad communities*, 4 February 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Fuel hardship in regime-held areas | Transportation suspended almost completely in Latakia and Tartus streets*, 29 March 2021, [url](#); Financial Times, *Economic crisis begins to crack the bedrock of Assad's Alawi support*, 13 April 2021, [url](#)

⁶² Middle East Eye, *Arrests in Syria's Latakia signal discontent among pro-Assad communities*, 4 February 2021, [url](#)

⁶³ Sana, الرئيس الأسد يصدر مرسوماً برفع أجر ساعات التدريس في مدارس التعليم الأساسي والثانوية ومدارس ومراكز التدريب المهني [President al-Assad issues a decree to raise the wages of teaching hours in primary and secondary schools and vocational training schools and centres], 16 March 2021, [url](#); Sana, الرئيس الأسد يصدر مرسوماً بصرف منحة 50 ألف ليرة للعاملين المدنيين والعسكريين و40 ألف ليرة لأصحاب المعاشات التقاعدية [President al-Assad issues a decree disbursing a stipend of 50,000 pounds to civilian and military workers and 40,000 pounds to pension holders], 16 March 2021, [url](#); COAR, *Accountability within Reach? International Community Digs in on Syria*, 22 March 2021, [url](#); WFP, *Syria Country Office – Market Price Watch Bulletin: July 2021 (issue 80)*, 31 July 2021, [url](#), p. 2; Sana, الرئيس الأسد يصدر مرسوماً بزيادة الرواتب والأجور المقطوعة للعاملين المدنيين والعسكريين بنسبة 50 بالمائة [President al-Assad issues a decree to increase salaries and wages for civilian and military workers by 50 percent], 11 July 2021, [url](#); Al-Jazeera, *Syrian government announces steep rise in bread, diesel prices*, 11 July 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *As large shipment of solar panels heading to Latakia harbor | Power crisis in Syrian-regime controlled areas continues until solar panels are sold*, 24 July 2021, [url](#); Sana, الرئيس الأسد يصدر مرسوماً بزيادة المعاشات التقاعدية [President al-Assad issues a decree increasing the pension of military and civilian personnel by 40 percent], 11 July 2021, [url](#)

⁶⁴ SOHR, *As large shipment of solar panels heading to Latakia harbor | Power crisis in Syrian-regime controlled areas continues until solar panels are sold*, 24 July 2021, [url](#)

4.1. Access to food, water, sanitation and electricity

Food

Food insecurity persisted nationwide in the reporting period. According to World Food Programme (WFP), 12.4 million Syrians (60%) were food insecure in July 2021,⁶⁵ an increase from 7.9 million in early 2020.⁶⁶ Between 1.27 and 1.3 million people were considered severely food insecure,⁶⁷ representing a 50% increase from early 2020.⁶⁸

As of February 2021, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) estimated 600,000 children to be chronically malnourished, with 90,000 being acutely malnourished.⁶⁹

As of August 2021, the average price of a food basket in Syria was 173,634 SYP, which represents a year-on-year increase of 107%.⁷⁰ In the same month, the Terms of Trade (ToT)⁷¹ between wheat flour and wage labour indicated a decrease in purchasing power since October 2020.⁷²

In Tartous governorate, the price of a food basket in August 2021 was 170,610 SYP. This represents a year-on-year increase of 100% and an increase of 23% since February 2021.⁷³

In Latakia governorate, the price of a food basket was 177,309 SYP. This represents a year-on-year increase of 100% and an increase of 20% since February 2021.⁷⁴

According to a survey conducted by WFP in August 2021, 44% of surveyed households in Syria reported inadequate food consumption, with 38% and 43% in Tartous and Latakia respectively.⁷⁵

WFP stated in August 2021 that female-headed households reported higher levels of poor or borderline food consumption (49%) compared to all surveyed households (44%).⁷⁶ The conflict in Syria has led to an increase in the number of female-headed households.⁷⁷

The country's continued fuel and electricity shortage has challenged citizens' access to markets. According to a survey conducted by WFP in August 2021, 34% in Latakia and 40% in Tartous reported facing

⁶⁵ WFP, *Syria - Situation Report #8: August 2021*, 23 September 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁶⁶ UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview – Syrian Arab Republic*, 31 March 2021, [url](#), p. 7

⁶⁷ WFP, *Syria - Situation Report #8: August 2021*, 23 September 2021, [url](#), p. 1; UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview – Syrian Arab Republic*, 31 March 2021, [url](#), p. 7

⁶⁸ UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview – Syrian Arab Republic*, 31 March 2021, [url](#), p. 7

⁶⁹ UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview – Syrian Arab Republic*, 31 March 2021, [url](#), p. 6

⁷⁰ WFP, *Syria Country Office – Market Price Watch Bulletin: August 2021 (issue 81)*, 31 August 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁷¹ The ToT are proxy indicators for purchasing power for households depending on income from daily wage labour and/or the sale of livestock (WFP, *Syria Country Office – Market Price Watch Bulletin: August 2021 (issue 81)*, 31 August 2021, [url](#), p. 5)

⁷² WFP, *Syria Country Office – Market Price Watch Bulletin: October 2020 (issue 71)*, October 2021, [url](#), p. 5; WFP, *Syria Country Office – Market Price Watch Bulletin: August 2021 (issue 81)*, 31 August 2021, [url](#), p. 5

⁷³ WFP, *Syria Country Office – Market Price Watch Bulletin: August 2021 (issue 81)*, 31 August 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁷⁴ WFP, *Syria Country Office – Market Price Watch Bulletin: August 2021 (issue 81)*, 31 August 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁷⁵ WFP, *Syrian Arab Republic – mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 58: August 2021*, 21 September 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁷⁶ WFP, *Syrian Arab Republic – mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 58: August 2021*, 21 September 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁷⁷ DIS, *Syria – Security and Socio-Economic Situation in the Governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 19; For additional information on access to services for women, see p. 19 of this report.

challenges accessing markets.⁷⁸ In July 2021, markets represented the primary source of food for 92% of interviewed households across Syria.⁷⁹

Environmental factors have affected access to food in GoS-controlled areas. Below average rainfall has negatively affected wheat production in GoS-held territories in 2021.⁸⁰ Additionally, wildfires across Syria have on estimate destroyed more than 35,000 hectares of agricultural land, including 9,000 hectares in Latakia, Tartous and Homs governorates alone, and are expected to impact food production in the long term.⁸¹

The lack of wheat has affected the availability of bread, which has resulted in price increases.⁸² On 10 July 2021, the government raised the price of subsidised bread with a 100% increase from 100 SYP/bundle to 200 SYP/bundle.⁸³ The government simultaneously decreased subsidised bread allocations.⁸⁴ According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), citizens reported discrimination in the distribution of bread, as well as a deterioration of the quality of bread, with some describing the bread as almost inedible and black with age.⁸⁵

Water and sanitation

According to Center for Operational Analysis and Research (COAR), the lack of electricity and frequent power cuts in GoS-controlled areas of Syria affected water provision in these areas.⁸⁶ Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) additionally reported interruption in water supply in areas controlled by the government in July 2021.⁸⁷

In Tartous, the average retail price for 1.5 litres of drinking water was 1066,67 SYP in August 2021⁸⁸ compared to 275 SYP in October 2020.⁸⁹ In Latakia, the average retail price for 1.5 litres of drinking water was 927,22 SYP⁹⁰ compared to 275 SYP in October 2020.⁹¹

⁷⁸ WFP, *Syria Country Office – Market Price Watch Bulletin: August 2021 (issue 81)*, 31 August 2021, [url](#), p. 4

⁷⁹ WFP, *Syrian Arab Republic – mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 57: July 2021*, 16 August 2021, [url](#), p.4

⁸⁰ COAR, *Out to Sea: Mediterranean Migration, Return, and Syrians Continuing Plight*, 17 May 2021, [url](#); WFP, *Syrian Arab Republic – mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 55: May 2021*, 31 May 2021, [url](#), p. 1; Al-Monitor, *Bread crisis looms in Syria amid low wheat production*, 2 June 2021, [url](#); Reuters, *Syrian drought puts Assad’s ‘year of wheat’ in peril*, 21 June 2021, [url](#)

⁸¹ UNSC, *Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020) and 2533 (2020)*, 11 December 2020, [url](#), pp. 3-4

⁸² COAR, *Out to Sea: Mediterranean Migration, Return, and Syrians Continuing Plight*, 17 May 2021, [url](#); Reuters, *Syrian drought puts Assad’s ‘year of wheat’ in peril*, 21 June 2021, [url](#)

⁸³ WFP, *Syria Country Office – Market Price Watch Bulletin: July 2021 (issue 80)*, 31 July 2021, [url](#), p. 2; WFP, *Situation Report #7: July 2021*, 23 August 2021, [url](#), p. 1; Al-Jazeera, *Syrian government announces steep rise in bread, diesel prices*, 11 July 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *As large shipment of solar panels heading to Latakia harbor | Power crisis in Syrian-regime controlled areas continues until solar panels are sold*, 24 July 2021, [url](#)

⁸⁴ WFP, *Syria Country Office – Market Price Watch Bulletin: July 2021 (issue 80)*, 31 July 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁸⁵ HRW, *Syria: Bread Crisis Exposes Government Failure*, 21 March 2021, [url](#)

⁸⁶ COAR, *Dar’a Siege: Russia Abouts Face, Amps up Pressure*, 5 July 2021, [url](#)

⁸⁷ SOHR, *As large shipment of solar panels heading to Latakia harbor | Power crisis in Syrian-regime controlled areas continues until solar panels are sold*, 24 July 2021, [url](#); For additional information on water and sanitation, see the DIS-report [Syria – Security and Socio-Economic Situation in the Governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra](#) from December 2020.

⁸⁸ WFP, *vam – food security analysis*, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁹ DIS, *Syria – Security and Socio-Economic Situation in the Governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 19

⁹⁰ WFP, *vam – food security analysis*, n.d., [url](#)

⁹¹ DIS, *Syria – Security and Socio-Economic Situation in the Governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 19

Electricity and fuel

According to SOHR, an electricity crisis across the GoS-controlled areas led the GoS to increase electricity rationing to nearly 22 hours without electricity, and in some areas up to 48 hours followed by only one hour of electricity in June 2021.⁹² Moreover, electricity flow was often interrupted during hours when electricity was supposed to be available. Lack of electricity was also prevalent in areas traditionally prioritised by the Syrian government, such as Latakia governorate.⁹³

Syria has been experiencing a fuel crisis since late 2018. According to WFP, the situation got more severe from January 2021 onwards due to several foreign and domestic incidents⁹⁴ that limited the delivery of fuel to the GoS-controlled areas.⁹⁵

The continued shortage of fuel led to three price increases from January 2021 to July 2021, raising the price of petrol (Octane 95) from 1,350 SYP/litre in January⁹⁶ to 3,000 SYP/litre in July 2021⁹⁷. The price of subsidised petrol (Octane 90) increased from 250 SYP/litre in October 2020 to 750 SYP/litre in March 2021.⁹⁸

In October 2020, the rationing on petrol (Octane 90) allowed each household to acquire only 30 litres of fuel every five days, with a limit of maximum 100 litres subsidised petrol and 100 litres non-subsidised petrol every month.⁹⁹ As of May 2021, the government further limited allocations to 25 litres every seven days, with a monthly limit of 75 litres per household.¹⁰⁰ The limited fuel allocations have led people to resort to the black market to acquire fuel.¹⁰¹

The fuel crisis resulted in long lines at gas stations making people wait for hours and sometimes days for fuel.¹⁰² In an attempt to manage the fuel shortage, the government introduced an SMS-system to notify citizens of the time and place to collect their fuel allocations. However, the queues persisted.¹⁰³

⁹² SOHR, *Chronic crises in regime-controlled areas | Electricity hardship... increase in hours of rationing... unaffordable prices of basic products*, 29 June 2021, [url](#)

⁹³ Tsurkov, E., *Syrian Regime No Longer Able to Provide for Loyalists*, 4 June 2021, [url](#); Financial Times, *Economic crisis begins to crack the bedrock of Assad's Alawi support*, 13 April 2021, [url](#)

⁹⁴ These incidents included a drop in supplies from oil fields in SDF-controlled north-east Syria, an attack against an oil refinery in Aleppo and the closure of the Suez Canal, which prevented oil supplies being delivered to Syrian ports (WFP, *Syria Country Office: Market Price Watch Bulletin: April 2021 (issue 77)*, 31 May 2021, [url](#), p.2).

⁹⁵ WFP, *Syria Country Office: Market Price Watch Bulletin: April 2021 (issue 77)*, 31 May 2021, [url](#), p. 2

⁹⁶ WFP, *Syrian Arab Republic – mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 53: March 2021*, 13 April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁹⁷ WFP, *Syrian Arab Republic – mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 57: July 2021*, 16 August 2021, [url](#), p. 1

⁹⁸ WFP, *Syria Country Office: Market Price Watch Bulletin: April 2021 (issue 77)*, 31 May 2021, [url](#), p. 2; COAR, *Accountability within Reach? International Community Digs in on Syria*, 22 March 2021, [url](#)

⁹⁹ DIS, *Syria – Security and Socio-Economic Situation in the Governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 18

¹⁰⁰ WFP, *Syria Country Office: Market Price Watch Bulletin: April 2021 (issue 77)*, 31 May 2021, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁰¹ WFP, *Syria Country Office: Market Price Watch Bulletin: April 2021 (issue 77)*, 31 May 2021, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁰² SOHR, *Severe fuel crisis in regime-held areas | Long lines of cars queue at gas stations, and Syrian pound's value hits new record low*, 12 January 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Fuel hardship in regime-held areas | Transportation suspended almost completely in Latakia and Tartus streets*, 29 March 2021, [url](#); COAR, *New Lows as Syria Beset by Fuel, Fiscal, and COVID Crises*, 12 April 2021, [url](#); SOHR, *Chronic crises in regime-held areas | Syrian civilians struggling with disastrous situation, while no workable solution looms in the horizon*, 18 April 2021, [url](#); UNSC, *Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020) and 2533 (2020)*, 22 April 2021, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁰³ SOHR, *Chronic crises in regime-held areas | Syrian civilians struggling with disastrous situation, while no workable solution looms in the horizon*, 18 April 2021, [url](#); WFP, *Syrian Arab Republic – mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 54: April 2021*, 17 May 2021, [url](#), p. 1; WFP, *Syria Country Office – Market Price Watch Bulletin: April 2021 (issue 77)*, 31 May 2021, [url](#), p. 2

On 4 April 2021, the government announced a reduction in working hours of up to 60% at government ministries in an attempt to reduce the use of fuel and electricity.¹⁰⁴

4.2. Access to healthcare

In Syria, healthcare services are provided by both public and private hospitals and health clinics and NGOs.¹⁰⁵

According to World Health Organization (WHO), as of December 2020, the number of healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses and midwives) per 10,000 inhabitants in public hospitals nationwide was 14.8,¹⁰⁶ an increase of 0.1 since June 2020.¹⁰⁷ As of December 2020, the number of healthcare professionals in public healthcare centres was 8 to 10,000 individuals,¹⁰⁸ which was the same as in June 2020.¹⁰⁹

In December 2020, the availability of medicines in Syria remained limited.¹¹⁰ According to a survey conducted by WFP in August 2021, two out of five interviewed households (41%) reported being unable to afford the necessary medicines. In the same survey, one out of five interviewed households (20%) reported facing obstacles in accessing healthcare services.¹¹¹

In a survey by WFP from March 2021, more female-headed households (21%) reported challenges accessing medical care services compared to interviewed households overall (18%).¹¹²

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to spread across Syria. As of 31 August 2021, there were 27,915 officially confirmed cases of COVID-19 across Syria, including 2,013 fatalities.¹¹³ However, according to a UN-Secretary General report presented to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), infection rates were expected to be much higher.¹¹⁴

In Tartous, the Ministry of Health (MoH) had reported 1,841 cases of COVID-19, as of 10 June 2021.¹¹⁵

As of December 2020, all seven public hospitals in Tartous governorate were fully functioning and accessible,¹¹⁶ and all of the 147 healthcare centres in Tartous were fully functioning.¹¹⁷ However, one of the

¹⁰⁴ WFP, *Syrian Arab Republic – mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 54: April 2021*, 17 May 2021, [url](#), p. 1; COAR, *New Lows as Syria Beset by Fuel, Fiscal, and COVID Crises*, 12 April 2021, [url](#); Tsurkov, E., *Syrian Regime No Longer Able to Provide for Loyalists*, 4 June 2021, [url](#); For additional information on access to electricity and fuel, see the DIS-report [Syria – Security and Socio-Economic Situation in the Governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra](#) from December 2020, p. 18.

¹⁰⁵ DIS, *Syria – Security and Socio-Economic Situation in the Governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 20; For additional information on access to healthcare, see this report, pp. 20-24.

¹⁰⁶ WHO, *HeRAMS Annual Report: January – December 2020: Public Hospitals in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2020, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁰⁷ WHO, *HeRAMS Bi-Annual Report: January – June 2020: Public Hospitals in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2020, [url](#), p. 25

¹⁰⁸ According to WHO's global strategy on health staff for 2030, the minimum density of healthcare staff is 44.5 per 10,000 inhabitants (WHO, *Global strategy on human resources for health: Workforce 2030*, 2016, [url](#), p. 42); WHO, *HeRAMS Annual Report: January – December 2020: Public Health Centres in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2020, [url](#), p. 26

¹⁰⁹ WHO, *HeRAMS Bi-Annual Report: January – June 2020: Public Health Centres in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2020, [url](#), p. 21

¹¹⁰ DIS, *Syria – Security and Socio-Economic Situation in the Governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra*, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 21; For additional information on the availability of medicine, see this report, pp. 21-22.

¹¹¹ WFP, *Syrian Arab Republic – mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 58: August 2021*, 21 September 2021, [url](#), p. 4

¹¹² WFP, *Syrian Arab Republic – mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 53: March 2021*, 13 April 2021, [url](#), p. 5

¹¹³ WFP, *Syrian Arab Republic – mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 58: August 2021*, 21 September 2021, [url](#), p. 1

¹¹⁴ UNSC, *Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020) and 2533 (2020)*. Report of the Secretary General, 22 April 2021, [url](#), p. 4

¹¹⁵ UN OCHA, *Syrian Arab Republic: COVID-19. Humanitarian Update No. 26*, 10 June 2021, [url](#), p. 1

¹¹⁶ WHO, *HeRAMS Annual Report: January – December 2020: Public Hospitals in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2020, [url](#), pp. 10, 14

¹¹⁷ WHO, *HeRAMS Annual Report: January – December 2020: Public Health Centres in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2020, [url](#), p. 9

governorate’s health centres was difficult to access.¹¹⁸ In the same month, there were 38.8 health staff per 10,000 inhabitants in public hospitals¹¹⁹ and 32 health staff in public health centres in the governorate.¹²⁰

In Latakia, as of June 2021, the official number of COVID-19 cases was 3,814 cases.¹²¹

According to a survey conducted by WFP in July 2021, lack of access to hospitals and health care centres was more apparent in Latakia (28%) compared to surveyed households nationwide (21%).¹²²

As of December 2020, six out of seven public hospitals in Latakia were fully functioning, while one was partially functioning.¹²³ All seven hospitals were accessible to both patients and staff.¹²⁴ As of December 2020, 110 of the governorate’s 119 public healthcare centres were fully functioning, while nine were non-functioning.¹²⁵ 113 of Latakia’s public health centres were fully accessible, while six centres were not accessible.¹²⁶ As of December 2020, in public hospitals and health clinics in Latakia, there were 39.3¹²⁷ and 18 health professionals respectively per 10,000 inhabitants.¹²⁸

A DIS-report with detailed information about access to healthcare services, medicines and specialised treatment in Syria covering Latakia and Tartous governorates is forthcoming and is expected to be published on www.us.dk primo 2022.

4.3. Access to schools

In 2020, free public education was generally available to all Syrian children in areas under GoS-control.¹²⁹ However, according to a survey conducted by WFP in August 2021, 11% of households nationwide have been forced to take children of mandatory school age out of school and have them working instead, in order to bring home additional income to the family.¹³⁰ According to UNICEF, as of March 2021, almost 2.45 million children in all of Syria were not enrolled in school.¹³¹

In April 2021, citing a surge in the number of COVID-19-cases, the Syrian government suspended university classes for two weeks and closed down primary schools, ending the school year early in GoS-controlled

¹¹⁸ WHO, *HeRAMS Annual Report: January – December 2020: Public Health Centres in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2020, [url](#), p. 14

¹¹⁹ WHO, *HeRAMS Annual Report: January – December 2020: Public Hospitals in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2020, [url](#), p. 30

¹²⁰ WHO, *HeRAMS Annual Report: January – December 2020: Public Health Centres in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2020, [url](#), p. 26

¹²¹ UN OCHA, *Syrian Arab Republic: COVID-19. Humanitarian Update No. 26*, 10 June 2021, [url](#), p. 1

¹²² WFP, *Syrian Arab Republic – mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 57: July 2021*, 16 August 2021, [url](#), p. 4

¹²³ WHO, *HeRAMS Annual Report: January – December 2020: Public Hospitals in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2020, [url](#), p. 10

¹²⁴ WHO, *HeRAMS Annual Report: January – December 2020: Public Hospitals in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2020, [url](#), p. 14

¹²⁵ WHO, *HeRAMS Annual Report: January – December 2020: Public Health Centres in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2020, [url](#), p. 9

¹²⁶ WHO, *HeRAMS Annual Report: January – December 2020: Public Health Centres in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2020, [url](#), p. 14

¹²⁷ WHO, *HeRAMS Annual Report: January – December 2020: Public Hospitals in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2020, [url](#), p. 30

¹²⁸ WHO, *HeRAMS Annual Report: January – December 2020: Public Health Centres in the Syrian Arab Republic*, 2020, [url](#), p. 26

¹²⁹ U.S. Department of State, *2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Syria*, 30 March 2021, [url](#); For additional information on access to schools, see the DIS-report [Syria – Security and Socio-Economic Situation in the Governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra](#) from December 2020, pp. 25-26.

¹³⁰ WFP, *Syrian Arab Republic – mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 58: August 2021*, 21 September 2021, [url](#), p. 3

¹³¹ UNICEF, *Syria conflict 10 years on: 90 per cent of children need support as violence, economic crisis and COVID-19 pandemic push families to the brink*, 10 March 2021, [url](#)

areas.¹³² According to one media source, however, the reason behind the closure was the severe fuel shortage across GoS-controlled areas limiting students' access to their places of education.¹³³

4.4. Housing and infrastructure

According to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and a report by UN-secretary general's office, the wildfires in Tartous and Latakia in October 2020 caused material damage to residential homes, assets and agricultural lands, as well as loss of power and water supply and limited access to services. The damages from the fires affected at least 27,000 families (an estimated 200,000 people) in the coastal region.¹³⁴

¹³² UNICEF, *Whole of Syria – Humanitarian Situation Report: April 2021*, April 2021, [url](#), p. 3; WFP, *Syrian Arab Republic – mVAM Bulletin Issue no. 54: April 2021*, 17 May 2021, [url](#), p. 1; Al-Fanar Media, *Syria Suspends Classes as Fuel Shortage Paralyzes the Nation*, 6 April 2021, [url](#); AP News, *Syria to close schools and universities over virus surge*, 3 April 2021, [url](#)

¹³³ Al-Fanar Media, *Syria Suspends Classes as Fuel Shortage Paralyzes the Nation*, 6 April 2021, [url](#)

¹³⁴ IFRC, *Final Report – Syria/MENA: Wildfires*, 30 August 2021, [url](#), p. 1; UNSC, *Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018), 2504 (2020) and 2533 (2020). Report of the Secretary General*, 11 December 2020, [url](#), pp. 3-4; For additional information on housing and infrastructure in Tartous and Latakia governorates, see the DIS-report [Syria – Security and Socio-Economic Situation in the Governorates of Tartous, Latakia and Quneitra](#) from December 2020, pp. 26-27.

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Annex I: Terms of Reference

1. General security situation in Tartous and Latakia governorates December 2020-August 2021

Development of the general security situation since December 2020

Armed actors present in Tartous and Latakia governorates

Prevalence of security incidents and the extent and type of casualties

2. Freedom of movement in Tartous and Latakia governorates

Freedom of movement inside Tartous and Latakia governorates

Security situation on the roads connecting Tartous and Latakia governorates to Damascus International Airport

3. Socio-economic situation in Tartous and Latakia governorates

Access to electricity, water, sanitation and food

Access to healthcare

Access to schools

Housing and infrastructure