

Syria: Security Situation

Syria: Security situation

Country of Origin Information Report

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Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Contents	4
Disclaimer.....	9
Glossary and abbreviations.....	10
Introduction.....	12
Methodology.....	12
Defining the terms of reference.....	12
Collecting information.....	12
Quality control.....	12
Sources.....	13
Sources on security incidents.....	13
Sources on civilian casualties	15
Maps	16
1. General-level description of the security situation.....	17
1.1. Overview of current conflicts.....	17
1.2. Armed actors.....	22
1.2.1. Syrian transitional government security forces.....	22
1.2.2. Syrian Democratic Forces.....	26
1.2.3. Assad-aligned militias.....	29
1.2.4. Druze armed groups controlling Sweida	30
1.2.5. ISIL	31
1.2.6. Other relevant armed actors	33
1.3. International involvement	34
1.3.1. US-led coalition	34
1.3.2. Israel.....	35
1.3.3. Türkiye.....	36
1.3.4. Russia.....	36
1.4. Recent security trends.....	37
1.4.1. Security incidents	41
1.4.2. Civilian casualties	44



1.4.3. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war	48
1.4.4. Displacement and return	50
2. Security situation and conflict impact on civilians by governorate	53
2.1. Aleppo governorate	53
2.1.1. Administrative division and population estimates	53
2.1.2. Territorial control and main armed actors	54
2.1.3. Security trends	55
2.1.4. Security incidents	56
2.1.5. Civilian casualties	58
2.1.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war	59
2.1.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return	61
2.2. Idlib governorate	62
2.2.1. Administrative division and population estimates	62
2.2.2. Territorial control and main armed actors	63
2.2.3. Security trends	64
2.2.4. Security incidents	65
2.2.5. Civilian casualties	66
2.2.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war	67
2.2.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return	67
2.3. Hama governorate	69
2.3.1. Administrative division and population estimates	69
2.3.2. Territorial control and main armed actors	70
2.3.3. Security trends	71
2.3.4. Security incidents	71
2.3.5. Civilian casualties	72
2.3.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war	74
2.3.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return	74
2.4. Latakia governorate	76
2.4.1. Administrative division and population estimates	76
2.4.2. Territorial control and main armed actors	77



2.4.3. Security trends	77
2.4.4. Security incidents	79
2.4.5. Civilian casualties	80
2.4.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war	81
2.4.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return	82
2.5. Tartous governorate	83
2.5.1. Administrative division and population estimates.....	83
2.5.2. Territorial control and main armed actors	84
2.5.3. Security trends	85
2.5.4. Security incidents	85
2.5.5. Civilian casualties	87
2.5.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war	88
2.5.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return	88
2.6. Homs governorate	89
2.6.1. Administrative division and population estimates.....	89
2.6.2. Territorial control and main armed actors	90
2.6.3. Security trends	90
2.6.4. Security incidents	92
2.6.5. Civilian casualties	93
2.6.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war	94
2.6.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return	96
2.7. Hasaka governorate.....	97
2.7.1. Administrative division and population estimates	97
2.7.2. Territorial control and main armed actors.....	97
2.7.3. Security trends.....	99
2.7.4. Security incidents	100
2.7.5. Civilian casualties	102
2.7.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war	102
2.7.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return.....	103
2.8. Raqqa governorate	105



2.8.1. Administrative division and population estimates.....	105
2.8.2. Territorial control and main armed actors	105
2.8.3. Security trends	106
2.8.4. Security incidents	108
2.8.5. Civilian casualties	109
2.8.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war	110
2.8.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return	111
2.9. Deir Ez-Zor governorate	113
2.9.1. Administrative division and population estimates.....	113
2.9.2. Territorial control and main armed actors	114
2.9.3. Security trends	115
2.9.4. Security incidents	117
2.9.5. Civilian casualties	119
2.9.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war	120
2.9.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return	121
2.10. Damascus governorate	122
2.10.1. Administrative division and population estimates	122
2.10.2. Territorial control and main armed actors.....	123
2.10.3. Security trends.....	123
2.10.4. Security incidents.....	124
2.10.5. Civilian casualties	125
2.10.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war	126
2.10.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return.....	127
2.11. Rural Damascus governorate	128
2.11.1. Administrative division and population estimates	128
2.11.2. Territorial control and main armed actors.....	129
2.11.3. Security trends.....	129
2.11.4. Security incidents.....	130
2.11.5. Civilian casualties.....	131



2.11.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war.....	132
2.11.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return.....	133
2.12. Dar'a governorate.....	134
2.12.1. Administrative division and population estimates.....	134
2.12.2. Territorial control and main armed actors.....	135
2.12.3. Security trends.....	137
2.12.4. Security incidents.....	139
2.12.5. Civilian casualties.....	140
2.12.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war	141
2.12.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return.....	142
2.13. Sweida governorate.....	143
2.13.1. Administrative division and population estimates.....	143
2.13.2. Territorial control and main armed actors.....	144
2.13.3. Security trends.....	146
2.13.4. Security incidents.....	148
2.13.5. Civilian casualties.....	150
2.13.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war	151
2.13.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return.....	152
2.14. Quneitra governorate.....	154
2.14.1. Administrative division and population estimates.....	154
2.14.2. Territorial control and main armed actors.....	155
2.14.3. Security trends.....	156
2.14.4. Security incidents.....	157
2.14.5. Civilian casualties.....	159
2.14.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war	159
2.14.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return.....	160
Annex 1: Bibliography	161
Public sources.....	161
Annex 2: Terms of Reference	230





Disclaimer

This report was written according to the [EUAA COI Report Methodology \(2023\)](#). It 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 19 June 2026. 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
DAANES	Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria
EO	Explosive ordnance
ERW	Explosive remnants of war
GSS	General Security Service
HTS	Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham
ISC	Internal Security Command
IDF	Israeli Defense Forces
IDP	Internally displaced person
IED	Improvised explosive devices
IRGC	Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant; also known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Islamic State (IS), or Daesh
MoD	Ministry of Defence
Mol	Ministry of Interior
NGF	National Guard Forces
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SMC	Sweida Military Council
SNA	Syrian National Army
UAV	Unmanned aerial vehicles
UNDOF	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
VBIED	Vehicle-borne improvised explosive device



Term	Definition
UXO	Unexploded ordnance
YPG	Kurdish People's Protection Units
YPJ	Women'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 October 2025 – May 2026.

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)¹ and the EUAA COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide (2023).²

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 29 May 2026. Some limited additional information was added during the finalisation of this report in response to feedback received during the quality control process until 19 June 2026.

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

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

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



implemented in the final draft of this report, which was finalised on 19 June 2026. EUAA also performed the final quality review and editing of the text.

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. See [Annex 1: Bibliography](#) for further details.

Sources on security incidents

For data on violent incidents, 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, coding each incident with the time and place, type of violent incident, the parties involved and an estimate on the number of fatalities. It also provides relevant breakdowns per region, actor, type of incident, and period. The information is collected in a database that is accessible via registration, 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.³

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.
- **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.

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



- **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.⁴

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 Regulation](#)), 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: Actor 1 is the '[o]ne of two main actors involved in the event (does not necessarily indicate the aggressor)' and Actor 2 is the '[o]ne of two main actors involved in the event (does not necessarily indicate the target or victim)',⁵ while '[i]n most cases, an event requires two actors, noted in columns 'Actor 1' and 'Actor 2'. However, the 'Explosions/Remote violence', 'Riots', 'Protests', and 'Strategic developments' event types can include one-sided events'.⁶ 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 'Actor 1' or as 'Actor 2'. This approach aims to illustrate the general level of involvement of the respective actors in the conflict without distinguishing between Actor 1 and Actor 2, 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:

- 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.
- ACLED's database only provides figures of direct deaths or fatalities per event,⁷ not of injured persons and casualties; indirect deaths resulting from security events, which in the relevant literature range in average between 3 and 9 more deaths per fatality, are also not taken into consideration.⁸
- The coding of events as 'battles', 'explosions', or 'violence against civilians' is independent from their actual impact on civilians. While acts of 'violence against

⁴ ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), pp. 9-22

⁵ ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), p. 6

⁶ ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), p. 23

⁷ ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), p. 38

⁸ Geneva Declaration Secretariat, Global burden of armed violence, 2008, [url](#), pp. 31-42



civilians' are always co-coded as 'civilian targeting',⁹ 'explosions' may be or may not, depending on whether civilians were the main or only target;¹⁰ 'battles' instead, never are.¹¹

- Geographical precision is variable: the provincial capital will represent the region if no further precisions are available and may be over-represented.¹²

Security incidents numbers and associated graphs/maps at country and governorate level are based on an ACLED dataset that is accessible via registration.¹³ 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.¹⁴ SNHR provided EUAA with a dataset covering the reference period from October 2025 to May 2026. SNHR data used for the period from 9 December 2024 to the end of September 2025 was based on the following two EUAA publications: [Syria – Country Focus](#) from July 2025 and [Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments \[Q33-2025\]](#) from October 2025. Please note that SNHR may have revised the numbers retroactively.

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.

⁹ ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), p. 18

¹⁰ ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), pp. 16, 23

¹¹ ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), p. 12

¹² ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), p. 37

¹³ ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹⁴ For detailed information on SNHR's methodology see [url](#); SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p.



Maps



Map 1: Syrian Arab Republic, © United Nations¹⁵

¹⁵ UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic, Map No. 4204 Rev. 4, August 2022, [url](#)



1. General description of the security situation

1.1. Overview of current conflicts

On 27 November 2024, anti-Assad opposition forces led by the former armed group Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham (HTS) launched an offensive¹⁶ in Idlib governorate¹⁷ that within days took control of Aleppo,¹⁸ Hama and Homs,¹⁹ and finally, on 8 December 2024, Damascus city.²⁰ After former President Bashar Al-Assad fled to Russia,²¹ HTS established a transitional government²² led by HTS leader Ahmad Al-Sharaa, who was appointed transitional president of Syria on 29 January 2025.²³ The period since the fall of Al-Assad witnessed instances of international armed conflict related to Israel's expanded military operations and presence in Syria²⁴, as well as a continuation of non-international armed conflicts that involved Assadist remnants, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the former Syrian National Army (SNA), the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Sweida-based Druze militias, as well as activities of criminal networks.²⁵ Further security challenges were related to retaliatory, communal²⁶ and sectarian violence, including killings and kidnappings by local armed groups or unknown individuals.²⁷

Clashes involving Assadist remnants on the coast and in the centre: instability culminated in early March 2025 when Assad loyalists mounted a series of attacks against transitional security forces in the coastal governorates of Tartous and Latakia.²⁸ Widespread clashes

¹⁶ Asharq Al-Awsat, Syria's Sharaa in Aleppo a Year After Fall of Second City, 29 November 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), Syria government-SDF clash on first anniversary of rebel offensive that toppled Assad, 27 November 2025, [url](#)

¹⁷ HRW, World Report – Syria, 16 January 2025, [url](#), p. 449

¹⁸ BBC, Russian strikes hit Aleppo as rebels take control, 30 November 2024, [url](#)

¹⁹ AP, Syrian government falls in stunning end to 50-year rule of Assad family, 8 December 2024, [url](#)

²⁰ Asharq Al-Awsat, Syria's Sharaa in Aleppo a Year After Fall of Second City, 29 November 2025, [url](#); France24, Assad era minister turns himself in to new Syria authorities: statement, 4 February 2025, [url](#)

²¹ BBC, Assad is in Moscow after fleeing Syria and will be given asylum, Russian state media report, 7 December 2024, [url](#)

²² Al Jazeera, Syria's Ahmed al-Sharaa named president for transitional period, 29 January 2025, [url](#)

²³ Guardian (The), Rebel leader Ahmed al-Sharaa made transitional president of Syria, 29 January 2025, [url](#); BBC, Ahmed al-Sharaa named Syria's transitional president, 31 January 2025, [url](#)

²⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), paras. 82, 111

²⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 80

²⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 80; SNHR, The Fifteenth Annual Report on Human Rights Situation in Syria 2025, 26 March 2026, [url](#), p. 8

²⁷ SNHR, The Fifteenth Annual Report on Human Rights Situation in Syria 2025, 26 March 2026, [url](#), p. 8

²⁸ 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. 7; USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 22



ensued, with security operations entailing sectarian and retaliatory attacks.²⁹ According to the UN, members of the government forces and private individuals aligned with them killed more than 1 400 people, most of them Alawi civilians, across Latakia, Tartous, Homs and Hama. Violence continued in these areas throughout the rest of 2025, albeit with lesser intensity,³⁰ with a spike in attacks by Assadist remnants on the coast in August 2025.³¹

Fighting between the SDF and the transitional government/former rebels in the northeast:

In the northeast, the Turkish-backed³² SNA launched an offensive in Aleppo governorate following the capture of Aleppo city by HTS-led forces in late November 2024,³³ targeting SDF-controlled areas.³⁴ As a result, the SDF lost territory west of the Euphrates, including Tall Rifaat and Manbij towns.³⁵ In late December 2024, repeated clashes erupted between the SNA and SDF over control of the strategic Tishreen Dam area (Manbij countryside),³⁶ while Turkish aerial strikes hit SDF targets and civilians.³⁷ Despite a March 2025 agreement between the transitional government and the SDF that provided for the integration of the SDF into the state's structures by year's end, fighting continued along the northeastern frontlines throughout 2025.³⁸ Meanwhile, the SDF also faced attacks by ISIL and a long-running struggle with tribal armed groups in Deir Ez-Zor.³⁹ A temporary lull in clashes between the SNA and SDF in spring 2025⁴⁰ was followed by renewed escalations in fighting, now between the transitional government forces and the SDF, in August⁴¹ and September.⁴²

In early October 2025, new clashes erupted between government and SDF forces in the Kurdish-majority neighbourhoods of Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyeh of Aleppo city.⁴³ Then, shortly after the deadline for the integration of the SDF expired in December 2025,⁴⁴ government military forces took over Aleppo's Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyeh

²⁹ 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. 10-12

³⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 20, 37

³¹ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, August 15, 2025, 15 August 2025, [url](#), p. 6

³² HRW, Syria: Türkiye-backed Armed Groups Detain, Extort Civilians, 14 May 2025, [url](#)

³³ Iddon, P., Why fighting is raging in north Syria between the Turkish-backed SNA and Kurdish-led SDF, The New Arab, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

³⁴ Levy, I., Supporting the SDF in Post-Assad Syria, TWI, 13 December 2024, [url](#), pp. 1, 3

³⁵ Iddon, P., Why fighting is raging in north Syria between the Turkish-backed SNA and Kurdish-led SDF, The New Arab, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

³⁶ New Arab (The), Clashes erupt near Syria's Tishrin Dam as Turkish-backed SNA and Kurdish-led SDF battle for control, 26 December 2024, [url](#)

³⁷ Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 3 February 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 28 January 2025, [url](#)

³⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 21

³⁹ Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 3 February 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁰ USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve And Other U.S. Government activities related to Iraq & Syria, April 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025, 29 July 2025, [url](#), p. 25

⁴¹ Security Council Report, Syria: Briefing and Consultations, 20 August 2025, [url](#)

⁴² Enab Baladi, Syrian Defense Ministry: Dead and injured in SDF shelling east of Aleppo, 11 September 2025, [url](#);

ISW and CTP, Iran Update, September 11, 2025, 11 September 2025, [url](#)

⁴³ Etana Syria, Brief: Ceasefire pauses SDF-Damascus fighting, 14 October 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 21



neighbourhoods amid intense clashes⁴⁵ (6 – 10 January 2026).⁴⁶ Subsequently, they captured broad swathes of SDF-held territory⁴⁷ further east, including Deir Hafer town⁴⁸ and, with the aid of militias⁴⁹ from local Arab tribes,⁵⁰ took control of the cities of Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zor⁵¹ and their respective governorates.⁵² They then advanced further towards Hasaka⁵³ while surrounding the SDF forces in the town of Ain Al-Arab (Kobane).⁵⁴ Both parties accused one another of having committed extrajudicial killings during these hostilities.⁵⁵ A series of ceasefire agreements concluded between President Al-Sharaa and SDF leader General Mazloum Abdi between 18-30 January 2026 largely brought the clashes to a halt.⁵⁶

Attacks by ISIL and other insurgents: Attacks attributed to ISIL continued, with the UN Sanctions Monitoring team member reported that Member States identified at least 129 such incidents between June and November 2025 alone, most of them attacks involving improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs), ambushes and assassinations, mainly occurring in Deir Ez-Zor and targeting the SDF.⁵⁷ Several attacks were carried out after ISIL spokesperson Abu Hudhayfa Al-Ansari on 21 February 2026 made a call to action against the transitional government.⁵⁸ Other incidents, including a deadly December 2025 bombing of a mosque in Homs city⁵⁹ and at least two assassination attempts against President Al-Sharaa, were claimed by the group Saraya Ansar Al-Sunnah.⁶⁰ At the same time, transitional government⁶¹ and US forces continued to target ISIL sites.⁶²

Israeli operations in southern Syria: As the Al-Assad regime collapsed, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) moved into the UN-demilitarised buffer zone in the Golan Heights⁶³ and further

⁴⁵ New York Times (The), Syrian Military Takes Aleppo Neighborhoods After Clashes With Kurds, 11 January 2026; Security Council Report, February 2026 Monthly Forecast – Syria, 1 February 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁶ Etana Syria, Brief: Clashes erupt in Aleppo province, 15 January 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 21

⁴⁸ BBC, Syrian army moves east of Aleppo after Kurdish forces withdraw, 17 January 2026, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Photos: Syrian army enters Deir Hafer after SDF withdrawal, 17 January 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁹ CNN, Syria's military has seized swaths of Kurdish-held territory. Here's what we know., 19 January 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁰ ISW and CTP, Syrian Government Offensive Forces Syrian Kurdish Group to Capitulate, 18 January 2026, [url](#)

⁵¹ Al Jazeera, Syrian forces make gains against SDF: What it means for country's Kurds, 21 January 2026, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Syrian Government Offensive Forces Syrian Kurdish Group to Capitulate, 18 January 2026, [url](#)

⁵² Enab Baladi, The Syrian army completes its takeover of Raqqa and Deir Ezzor, 19 January 2026, [url](#); HRW, Syria: Civilian Protection Lacking in Northeast Escalation, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

⁵³ HRW, Syria: Civilian Protection Lacking in Northeast Escalation, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁴ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 22, 2026, 22 January 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁵ HRW, Syria: Civilian Protection Lacking in Northeast Escalation, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 21

⁵⁷ UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 54

⁵⁸ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 25, 2026, 25 February 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁹ BBC, Blast at Syrian mosque during Friday prayers leaves at least eight dead, 26 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁰ UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 53

⁶¹ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, November 25, 2025, 25 November 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, November 10, 2025, 10 November 2025, [url](#)

⁶² ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 17, 2026, 17 February 2026, [url](#)

⁶³ Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights, 21 April 2026, [url](#), p. 350; Al Jazeera, Satellite images show Israel building military bases in Syria buffer zone, 3 February 2025, [url](#); Washington Post (The), Israel



into areas in Quneitra and Dar'a.⁶⁴ Between December 2024 and the end of 2025, the UN noted 900 reported Israeli ground incursions in Quneitra.⁶⁵ The IDF further carried out large numbers of airstrikes on former regime military sites in December 2024⁶⁶ and strikes continued to be reported at least into late 2025.⁶⁷ Ground operations caused multiple civilian casualties⁶⁸ and continued in 2026, involving regular patrols and raids.⁶⁹ In the one-year period after the fall of Al-Assad, the Syrian non-profit media organisation Enab Baladi documented 830 Israeli air raids and 15 instances of artillery bombardment, resulting in the destruction of military airbases and aircraft, air defences, radars, signalling stations, arms and ammunition depots, scientific research centres and warships.⁷⁰

Conflicts involving Druze factions in Sweida: Longstanding competition between Druze and Bedouins (some of whom Druze leaders have accused of siding with Damascus) over money,⁷¹ pastures, water and control of borderlands was exacerbated after the fall of the Al-Assad government as the new transitional government sought to expand its control across a unified Syria that includes Sweida. Some Druze leaders refused to disarm or fully accept the deployment of central government forces in the governorate.⁷² Tensions between Druze and Bedouins escalated into heavy clashes in Sweida city⁷³ and villages to its north and west in mid-July 2025.⁷⁴ To contain the violence,⁷⁵ the transitional government deployed forces in the area, which prompted Israel to respond by launching airstrikes on the government forces, citing obligations to protect Druze civilians. Reported 'mass killings, looting and forced displacement' of local Bedouins by Druze militias⁷⁶ prompted mass reinforcements from Bedouin tribes across the country.⁷⁷ Major clashes eventually subsided after ceasefire agreements were concluded on 18/19 July 2025.⁷⁸ According to the UN, these hostilities resulted in at least 1 700 deaths, the majority of them among the Druze community, but also among Bedouins and the government forces.⁷⁹ The killings were attributed to government

is building outposts in Syria, raising local fears of occupation, 2 February 2025, [url](#); ACLED, Syria: Israeli airstrikes reach an all-time high after Assad regime falls, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁴ Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 28 January 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 82

⁶⁶ ACLED, Syria: Israeli airstrikes reach an all-time high after Assad regime falls, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

⁶⁷ BBC, Thirteen killed in deadliest Israeli raid for months in southern Syria, 28 November 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸ BBC, Thirteen killed in deadliest Israeli raid for months in southern Syria, 28 November 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Israeli ground incursions continue in southern Syria Amid Escalating Violations against Civilians, 8 July 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁹ Enab Baladi, Israeli Army Wounds Shepherd in Rural Daraa, 1 June 2026, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Israeli Army Detains Two, Continues Quneitra Incursions, 20 May 2026, [url](#)

Etana Syria, Brief: Israeli operations continue in south-west Syria, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁰ Enab Baladi, Israel destabilizes southern Syria through incursions and land grabs, 7 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷¹ Montag, S. and Hammoud, H., Despite Calls for Calm, the Violence in Sweida Shows No Sign of Ending, New Lines Magazine, 18 July 2025, [url](#)

⁷² UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria; Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 12-13

⁷³ International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: December 2024 – April 2026, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁴ UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 26-27

⁷⁵ Hassan, H., How Foreign Agendas Hijacked a Local Crisis in Syria, New Lines Magazine, 24 July 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁶ International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: December 2024 – April 2026, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁷ Hassan, H., How Foreign Agendas Hijacked a Local Crisis in Syria, New Lines Magazine, 24 July 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁸ Security Council Report, August 2025 Monthly Forecast – Syria, 30 July 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁹ UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 48



military forces, Druze armed factions, tribal fighters,⁸⁰ and Israeli airstrikes.⁸¹ A subsequent roadmap to stabilise the governorate and integrate its institutions into the state structures, drawn up by the transitional government, the USA and Jordan in the absence of Druze leaders, saw limited implementation.⁸² Some fighting between government forces and Druze militiamen, albeit at a significantly lower scale than in July 2025,⁸³ erupted in November 2025⁸⁴ and January,⁸⁵ March⁸⁶ and May 2025.⁸⁷ At the time of writing, most of Sweida governorate remains under the control of local Druze authorities.⁸⁸

⁸⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 38

⁸¹ UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 48

⁸² International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), p. 28

⁸³ UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 52

⁸⁴ International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), p. 28

⁸⁵ Enab Baladi, Clashes Renewed Between Interior Ministry Forces, National Guard in Suwayda, 18 January 2026, [url](#)

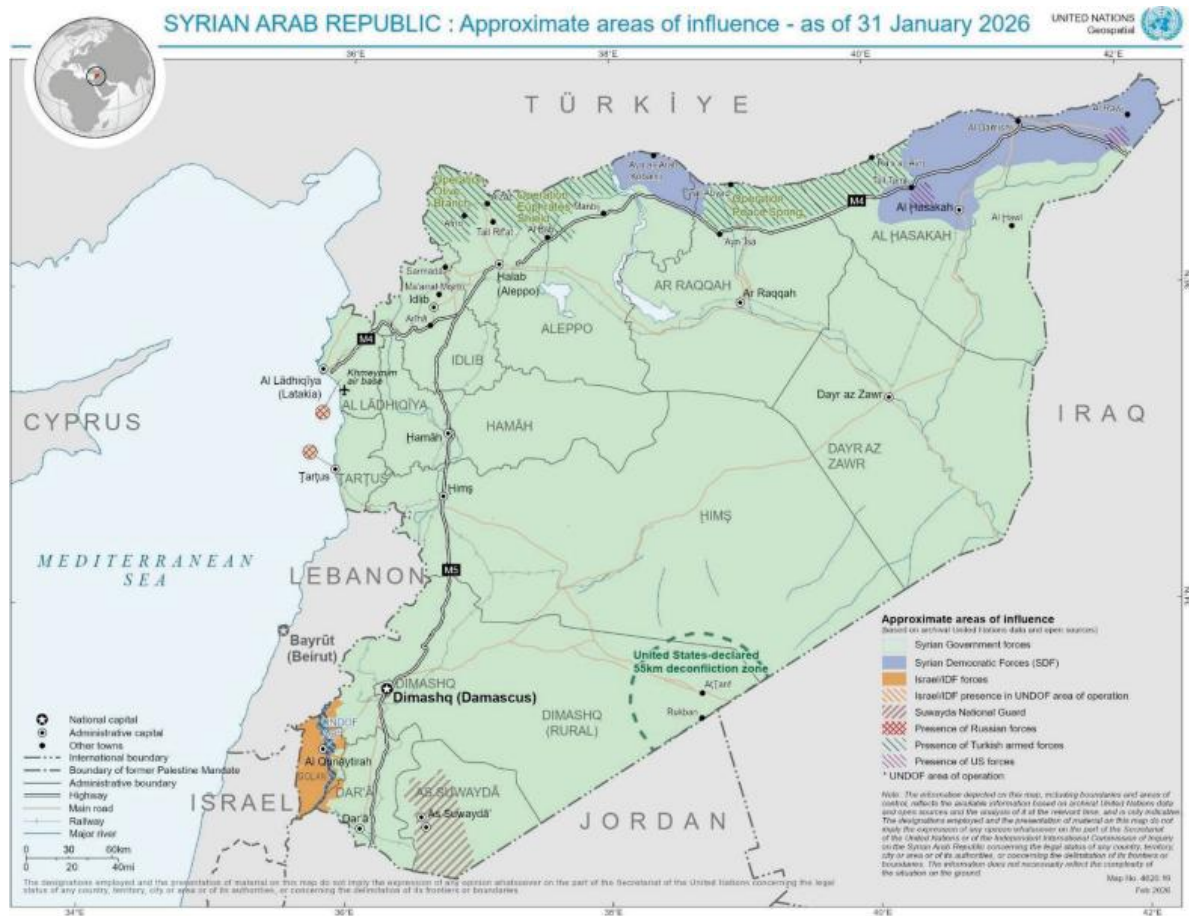
⁸⁶ Etana Syria, Brief: Clashes in western Suwayda, 28 March 2026, [url](#); BBC, Israel strikes Syria after Druze clashes, 20 March 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁷ Enab Baladi, Suwayda: Injuries in Clash between “Interior Ministry” and Local Factions, 4 May 2026, [url](#); New Arab (The), Clashes erupt in Suweida between Syrian forces and Druze militia, 4 May 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁸ Enab Baladi, “Legal Committee” rejects roadmap for solution in Suwayda, 17 September 2025, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/61-62), 12 March 2026, [url](#), para 7



1.2. Armed actors



Map 2. © United Nations, Syrian Arab Republic: Approximate areas of influence – as of 31 January 2026⁸⁹

1.2.1. Syrian transitional government security forces

On 29 January 2025, the HTS-led then Military Operations Command (MOC) dissolved the former Al-Assad regime's armed forces and security agencies.⁹⁰ The armed insurgent factions were likewise formally dissolved⁹¹ as HTS and dozens of other former opposition groups including the SNA pledged to integrate into a new army under the transitional government's Ministry of Defence (MoD).⁹² Al-Sharaa⁹³ and the former HTS took the helm of the new military apparatus⁹⁴ which consisted of previous rebel militias 'reflagged' as divisions, brigades, or battalions. As of September 2025, the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical

⁸⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/61/62), 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex III, p. 45

⁹⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 15, 17

⁹¹ Syria in Transition, What's left of the SNA, December 2025, [url](#)

⁹² UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 17

⁹³ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), p. 24

⁹⁴ Syria in Transition, What's left of the SNA, December 2025, [url](#)



Threats Project (CTP) assessed that the new army consisted of 20 active divisions. Divisions are grouped by operational region. Many of the divisions are either dominated by a single reflagged former armed faction or are comprised of multiple re-flagged factions. Armed factions were incorporated largely intact as units, preserving their internal command structures and composition. Former HTS commanders held the largest share of command positions in the active new divisions (about one-third), followed by former commanders of the group Ahrar Al-Sham.⁹⁵

Territorial control by transitional government forces changed significantly over the reference period of this report. In November 2025, ISW and CTP mapped control of the transitional government as encompassing most of the country's territory, while the SDF-governed areas in the northeast (Hasaka, much of Raqqa, and parts of Deir Ez-Zor governorates) and large parts of Sweida governorate remained outside of government control.⁹⁶ By mid-February 2026, however, the transitional government was assessed to control nearly the entire country, including most of Aleppo governorate, all of Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zor governorates, and much of Hasaka.⁹⁷ Only large parts of Sweida,⁹⁸ Ain Al-Arab (Kobane) in Aleppo, some areas of Hasaka, and Israeli-held territories in the south remained outside the government's realm of control.⁹⁹

The transitional government has actively sought to incorporate the armed contingents of non-Sunni communities that had neither fought alongside the former opposition nor explicitly operated as part of the former Assad regime's forces, mainly the Kurdish SDF and southern Druze militias.¹⁰⁰ Such efforts led to the conclusion of an agreement on 10 March 2025 that provided for the integration of the SDF into the new state's institutions by the end of 2025.¹⁰¹ The deal further mandated a full cessation of hostilities and required the SDF to relinquish control of border posts, airport infrastructure, and key oil and gas fields.¹⁰² However, at year's end, this agreement remained unimplemented,¹⁰³ while there was no progress in the

⁹⁵ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 27-29, 43-52

⁹⁶ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁷ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); Aftandilian, G., The Shrinking Space for Kurdish Autonomy in Syria, Arab Center Washington DC, 26 February 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁸ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 23

⁹⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 23

¹⁰⁰ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁰¹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 21

¹⁰² BBC, Kurdish-led SDF agrees to integrate with Syrian government forces, 11 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰³ Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights, 21 April 2026, [url](#), p. 346



integration of Druze factions.¹⁰⁴ As of late 2025, former rebels continued to form the bulk of the new Syrian army.¹⁰⁵

Following military confrontations with the SDF that began in Aleppo on 6 January 2026 and eventually led to the government's capture of Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zor, both sides reached a first ceasefire agreement on 18 January.¹⁰⁶ Apart from a cessation of hostilities, this 14-point agreement stipulated the integration of SDF personnel into MoD and Ministry of Interior (Moi) structures as individuals¹⁰⁷ rather than as a whole unit, as the SDF had demanded in previous negotiations.¹⁰⁸ After this ceasefire was repeatedly violated, both parties agreed on a new four-day ceasefire.¹⁰⁹ This was followed by a new agreement on 30 January providing for a comprehensive ceasefire that entailed the withdrawal of troops from contact lines and the entry of Moi forces into the cities of Hasaka and Qamishli to reinforce stability and start integrating SDF forces.¹¹⁰ This new agreement was viewed as more conciliatory towards Kurdish positions as it defined protocols to integrate entire SDF units (a military division composed of three SDF brigades in Hasaka governorate and a Kobane-specific brigade) into state structures.¹¹¹ In early May, it was announced that four SDF brigades had officially been integrated.¹¹²

In a notable new development, the transitional government joined the US-led Global Coalition against ISIL in November 2025.¹¹³ Meanwhile, it continued to face challenges with regard to establishing a unified military structure,¹¹⁴ and Al-Sharaa had only 'relatively limited' control over certain units such as the former Hamza Division, Suleiman Shah Division, Sultan Murad Division, and Ahrar al Sharqiya,¹¹⁵ all previously affiliated with the former SNA.¹¹⁶ Such groups were implicated in the coastal mass-killings in March 2025, as well as in further extrajudicial killings and looting.¹¹⁷ According to the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), between October 2025 and March 2026, government-linked forces were involved in the killings of 16 civilians.¹¹⁸ By late 2025, the government had begun taking some measures seen to be aimed

¹⁰⁴ UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 52-53; UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 20

¹⁰⁵ International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), p. 2; ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), p. 11

¹⁰⁶ HRW, Syria: Civilian Protection Lacking in Northeast Escalation, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷ Etana Syria, Brief: Raqqa, Deir Ezzor fall to interim authorities, 21 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸ Rodgers, W.M., What recent developments in Syria mean for the Kurds, Chatham House, 10 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹ HRW, Syria: Civilian Protection Lacking in Northeast Escalation, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁰ Enab Baladi, Despite government deal, YPJ refuses to lay down arms, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

¹¹¹ Rodgers, W.M., What recent developments in Syria mean for the Kurds, Chatham House, 10 February 2026, [url](#)

¹¹² Enab Baladi, Hamo: Four SDF Brigades Join Defense Ministry, 2 May 2026, [url](#)

¹¹³ Al Jazeera, Syria signs up to US-led coalition against ISIL, 11 November 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁴ UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 52; Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), p. 14

¹¹⁵ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), p. 28

¹¹⁶ Syria in Transition, What's left of the SNA, December 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 28, 30

¹¹⁸ SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p.



at mitigating these issues, including stricter army recruitment, redeploying undisciplined units to places where they could inflict less harm,¹¹⁹ and ‘quietly’ arresting perpetrators of violence.¹²⁰ Internal security responsibilities were transferred from the MoD to the Mol.¹²¹ A comprehensive evaluation process was announced for military officers¹²² and a set of rules was issued for members of the military to protect confidentiality of information as part of an overall effort to transform the army from a faction-based structure to a more disciplined and institutionalised organisation.¹²³

In the sphere of law enforcement, in May 2025 the government established the Internal Security Command (ISC)¹²⁴ as an institution under the Mol.¹²⁵ Due to their historically close ties to the former HTS leadership in Idlib, Mol units were estimated to operate under more structured ministry command than those operating under the MoD.¹²⁶ The Mol initially appointed ISC commanders for 12 governorates, with notably no postings for Hasaka and Raqqqa,¹²⁷ which at the time were still largely located outside the transitional government’s realm of control.¹²⁸ But in a new development in late January 2026, the Mol appointed an ISC commander for Hasaka.¹²⁹ ISC units were involved in anti-ISIL operations alongside the General Intelligence Directorate¹³⁰ as well as in raids and arrests of persons with alleged ties to the former regime.¹³¹ Amnesty International pointed to arrests of Alawite community members without warrants, including low-ranking former Assad government officials. Some arrestees were held in undisclosed locations over weeks or months before their families were given permission to see them.¹³² In late 2025, the Mol issued a ‘Code of Conduct for Personnel’ aimed at enhancing integrity, discipline and performance across the security sector,¹³³ while stricter recruitment practices were introduced for the ISC.¹³⁴

9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 2; SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹¹⁹ International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), p. ii

¹²⁰ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), p. 30

¹²¹ Lister, C., Data Update (December 30, 2025-January 6, 2026), Syria Weekly, 8 January 2026, [url](#)

¹²² Enab Baladi, What are the roles of Syria’s Defense Ministry advisory board?, 30 March 2026, [url](#)

¹²³ Enab Baladi, Syrian Defense Ministry Issues Strict Rules on Military Visibility, 18 April 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁴ SANA, Interior Ministry has created a new structure that relies on good governance and institutional work, ensuring the rule of law and security, 24 May 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 18

¹²⁶ Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁷ Rudaw, Syrian authorities appoint security chiefs in 12 provinces, Rojava chiefly excluded, 25 May 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁸ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria May 30, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST [Map], 30 May 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁹ Shafaq News, Syria names new Hasakah Security Chief after SDF deal, 30 January 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁰ SANA, Syrian Intelligence Dismantles ISIS Cell in Damascus Countryside, 30 December 2025, [url](#); SANA, Syrian security forces dismantle ISIS cells in Idlib countryside, 1 December 2025, [url](#); Syria TV, US-Syrian joint operation in Damascus suburbs: Barrack says, ‘Syria is back on our side’, The Syrian Observer, 20 October 2025, [url](#)

¹³¹ SNHR, At least 1,108 Cases of Arbitrary Arrest and Detention Recorded in 2025, of which 52 were Recorded in December, 3 January 2026, [url](#), p. 10

¹³² Amnesty International, The State of the World’s Human Rights, 21 April 2026, [url](#), p. 348

¹³³ Enab Baladi, Syrian Interior Ministry issues “code of conduct” for its personnel, 21 November 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁴ International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), p. ii



1.2.2. Syrian Democratic Forces

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), commanded by Mazloun Abdi,¹³⁵ had an estimated strength of around 100 000 fighters as of early and mid-2025.¹³⁶ By late January 2026, its strength was estimated at between 50 000 and 80 000 fighters.¹³⁷ Territorial control by the SDF changed significantly over the reference period as large parts of SDF-controlled territory were captured by the transitional government forces in early 2026.¹³⁸

A previous agreement reached between the SDF and the transitional government on 10 March 2025,¹³⁹ providing for the full integration of the SDF into state institutions,¹⁴⁰ was followed up by several steps of de-escalation and reintegration in April and May 2025.¹⁴¹ However, SDF units continued to be involved in recurrent incidents in Aleppo city's Ashrafiyah and Sheikh Maqsoud neighbourhoods (notably in a spike in clashes in October 2025)¹⁴² and in hostilities with the former SNA and Turkish forces around Ain Al-Arab (Kobane), Manbij, and along the Euphrates axis.¹⁴³

In November 2025, ISW and CTP mapped control of the SDF as still encompassing large swathes in the northern and northeastern Syria, including eastern Aleppo, around half of Raqqqa, Deir Ez-Zor east of the Euphrates, and nearly all of Hasaka.¹⁴⁴ In a major shift in conflict dynamics during the reference period, a government military operation, launched soon after the March 2025 agreement expired in December 2025, led to the capture of swathes of previously SDF-held territory.¹⁴⁵ By 18 January 2026, the SDF had lost around 80 % of the territory it had held at the beginning of the month.¹⁴⁶ As of February 2026, parts of eastern Aleppo, the previously SDF-held territories in Raqqqa and Deir Ez-Zor, and much of Hasaka were under transitional government control.¹⁴⁷ Particularly in Deir Ez-Zor, a governorate which has long witnessed tensions between Arab tribes and the SDF, Arab tribal fighters played a pivotal role in the SDF's territorial collapse.¹⁴⁸ These included Arab defectors from the SDF's

¹³⁵ Security Council Report, May 2026 Monthly Forecast – Syria, 1 May 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁶ GS, Comprehensive Military Comparison of Armed Forces in Syria, 14 July 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Damascus – SDF negotiations await the “deal”, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁷ Al Jazeera, Syrian forces make gains against SDF: What it means for country's Kurds, 21 January 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 21, Annex I, p. 39

¹³⁹ Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights, 21 April 2026, [url](#), p. 346

¹⁴⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 21

¹⁴¹ BBC Monitoring, Hundreds of Syrian SDF fighters leave Aleppo after deal, 10 April 2025, [url](#); Al-Ahmed, S., The Damascus-SDF agreement two months on: Fragile progress or delayed collapse?, MEI, 9 May 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴² UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I, pp. 40-41; Etana Syria, Brief: Ceasefire pauses SDF-Damascus fighting, 14 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴³ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 90

¹⁴⁴ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 21

¹⁴⁶ Aftandilian, G., The Shrinking Space for Kurdish Autonomy in Syria, Arab Center Washington DC, 26 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁴⁸ Etana Syria, Brief: Raqqqa, Deir Ezzor fall to interim authorities, 21 January 2026, [url](#)



ranks such as the Al-Sanadid militia of the prominent Shammar tribe.¹⁴⁹ Thus, as of the end of January 2026, the SDF's territorial control was reduced to the border town of Ain Al-Arab (Kobane) and its surrounding countryside,¹⁵⁰ and areas in the Kurdish heartlands¹⁵¹ around the cities of Hasaka, Qamishli¹⁵² and Al-Malikiya¹⁵³ (Derik).¹⁵⁴ As of late March 2026, by and large, this remained the territorial status quo, although SDF military units retreated from Ain Al-Arab (Kobane) following negotiations with the transitional government in February.¹⁵⁵ For further details on the government operation that led to these territorial changes, see section [1.2.1. Syrian transitional government security forces](#) above.

A series of ceasefire agreements were announced between 18 and 30 January, largely halting the clashes.¹⁵⁶ The United States, which had previously relied on the SDF as its main partner in Syria, did not intervene militarily as they shifted towards backing the transitional government.¹⁵⁷ While in a first 'hastily' concluded ceasefire deal on 18 January, the SDF agreed to an integration protocol that obliged it to fully abandon¹⁵⁸ its demand to join as a bloc retaining its internal structures,¹⁵⁹ the 30 January permanent ceasefire agreement included elements of compromise with the Kurdish position. While granting the SDF less than what it had demanded,¹⁶⁰ the new integration protocol involved the integration of the SDF into the government army as four newly established brigades consisting of SDF fighters.¹⁶¹ These included three brigades – the Hasaka Brigade, Qamishli Brigade, and Al-Malikiya Brigade¹⁶² – set to form a new government army division in the northeast,¹⁶³ as well as an Ain Al-Arab (Kobane)-specific brigade due to operate as part of an existing Aleppo division of the army.¹⁶⁴ Simultaneously, the ceasefire agreement provided for the withdrawal of military units of both

¹⁴⁹ IISS, Ceasefire in Syria: a challenging outlook, 18 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex II, p. 45; ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); Etana Syria, ANALYSIS: Progress & Challenges in SDF Integration, 28 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵¹ Rodgers, W.M., What recent developments in Syria mean for the Kurds, Chatham House, 10 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵² UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex II, p. 45; ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); Etana Syria, ANALYSIS: Progress & Challenges in SDF Integration, 28 March 2026, [url](#); Aftandilian, G., The Shrinking Space for Kurdish Autonomy in Syria, Arab Center Washington DC, 26 February 2026, [url](#); Rodgers, W.M., What recent developments in Syria mean for the Kurds, Chatham House, 10 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵³ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex II, pp. 44-45; ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); Etana Syria, ANALYSIS: Progress & Challenges in SDF Integration, 28 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴ SOHR, Al-Hasakah | The administration of Roj camp hands over four women and nine children of Australian nationality to Australian delegation, 25 April 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵ Etana Syria, ANALYSIS: Progress & Challenges in SDF Integration, 28 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 21

¹⁵⁷ AP, A US shift marked Kurdish-led forces' fall from power in Syria, 21 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸ Rodgers, W.M., What recent developments in Syria mean for the Kurds, Chatham House, 10 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵⁹ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 30, 2026, 30 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰ Rodgers, W.M., What recent developments in Syria mean for the Kurds, Chatham House, 10 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁶¹ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 30, 2026, 30 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁶² Etana Syria, ANALYSIS: Progress & Challenges in SDF Integration, 28 March 2026, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 17, 2026, 17 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁶³ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 30, 2026, 30 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴ Rodgers, W.M., What recent developments in Syria mean for the Kurds, Chatham House, 10 February 2026, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 30, 2026, 30 January 2026, [url](#)



the government and the SDF from their frontlines in Hasaka governorate and for backfilling these positions with internal security units.¹⁶⁵ The agreement also provided for the entry of the MoI's ISC into the cities of Hasaka and Qamishli for a 'specific period' with the declared aim of securing these areas and assuming control over civilian and governance institutions.¹⁶⁶ At the same time, Kurdish internal security forces (Asayish)¹⁶⁷ were to make preparations to join the ranks of the Syrian security forces¹⁶⁸ as they were set to operate as small government units in Hasaka and Ain Al-Arab (Kobane).¹⁶⁹ Meanwhile, Kurdish demands for integration of the SDF-affiliated¹⁷⁰ Women's Protection Units (YPJ) into the new military structures have so far not been recognised by the government¹⁷¹ on grounds that the army lacks a female component, although YPJ members were allowed to join law enforcement units under the MoI.¹⁷²

As of April 2026, negotiations continued on a more technical level, with core debates revolving around future command structures, the rank of SDF officers within the army, and the future status of the Asayish. The transitional government continued to pressure for a centralised integration of SDF units, while the SDF sought to retain some of its autonomous command architecture.¹⁷³ In early May, Syrian authorities announced that the four brigades had officially been integrated.¹⁷⁴

On 20 January 2026, control of the Al-Hol camp, housing detainees with alleged family ties to ISIL fighters, was transferred from the SDF to the transitional government¹⁷⁵ under 'chaotic circumstances' that prompted many residents to leave the camp and UNHCR to announce its closure on 23 February.¹⁷⁶ According to the authorities, at least 120 detainees escaped in the process. Meanwhile, Roj camp, another facility holding alleged ISIL family members, remained under SDF control¹⁷⁷ and apparently operational, although as of May 2026 there were government plans to close it down.¹⁷⁸

According to SNHR, between October 2025 and March 2026, SDF members were involved in the killing of 71 civilians. No information was provided regarding the victims' profiles or the

¹⁶⁵ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 17, 2026, 17 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 30, 2026, 30 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷ Etana Syria, ANALYSIS: Opportunities & challenges in integrating north-east Syria, 12 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 30, 2026, 30 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹ IISS, Ceasefire in Syria: a challenging outlook, 18 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰ Enab Baladi, Despite government deal, YPJ refuses to lay down arms, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁷¹ Shafaq News, Kurdish women's force demands integration into Syria's new army, 1 June 2026, [url](#); SOHR, For second consecutive day | Residents stage protest in Al-Hasakah, demanding YPJ integration into the Syrian army, 13 May 2026, [url](#); Kurdish Peace Institute, YPJ Integration: What are the Obstacles, 26 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁷² Shafaq News, Kurdish women's force demands integration into Syria's new army, 1 June 2026, [url](#)

¹⁷³ Etana Syria, Brief: Recent developments in north-east Syria, 13 April 2026, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴ Enab Baladi, Hamo: Four SDF Brigades Join Defense Ministry, 2 May 2026, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵ HRW, Syria: Civilian Protection Lacking in Northeast Escalation, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 98

¹⁷⁷ HRW, Syria: Civilian Protection Lacking in Northeast Escalation, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸ Arab News, Why Britain still wrestles with repatriating Daesh-linked families from detention camps in Syria, 18 May 2026, [url](#)

circumstances surrounding the incidents.¹⁷⁹ Amid the January 2026 clashes, the SDF and the government traded accusations of extrajudicial killings.¹⁸⁰

1.2.3. Assad-aligned militias

Since the collapse of the Assad regime, previously senior members of the regime's military and security apparatus formed new groups and networks to fight the transitional government.¹⁸¹ By February 2025, their operations against government troops showed a growing degree of coordination.¹⁸² Groups formed in the months after the former regime's downfall included the Coastal Shield Brigade,¹⁸³ led by former Republican Guards commander Miqdad Fatiha,¹⁸⁴ and several outfits that emerged amid the escalation of violence in coastal Syria in March 2025.¹⁸⁵ Groups active during the reference period include the Coastal Shield Brigade¹⁸⁶ and a new group called Men of Light—Saraya Al-Jawad that emerged in August 2025.¹⁸⁷ Men of Light—Saraya Al-Jawad is associated with Suhail Al Hassan,¹⁸⁸ a former regime commander who amongst others led the former SAA's 25th Special Tasks Division/'Tiger Forces'.¹⁸⁹ On the ground, the group was led by Bashar Abdullah Abu Raqiya before he was killed in an ISC security operation in February 2026.¹⁹⁰ During the reference period, ISW and CTP mapped that Assad-aligned militias did not control any territory in Syria.¹⁹¹ While several exiled high-ranking former regime officials were planning to build an armed insurgency from abroad to retake territory in the coastal areas, the degree to which these former officials posed a threat to the government was unclear.¹⁹² Inside Syria, after March 2025, the Coastal Shield Brigade shifted its focus towards targeting Alawite civilians it suspected of collaborating with the transitional government.¹⁹³

¹⁷⁹ SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 2; SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁸⁰ HRW, Syria: Civilian Protection Lacking in Northeast Escalation, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁸¹ Zelin, A., Syria's Transitional Honeymoon Is Over After Massacres and Disinformation, TWI, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸² International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁸³ International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), p. 18; Zelin, A., Syria's Transitional Honeymoon Is Over After Massacres and Disinformation, TWI, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴ Zelin, A., Syria's Transitional Honeymoon Is Over After Massacres and Disinformation, TWI, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ Arab Center Washington DC, Timeline of the Recent Sectarian Strife on Syria's Coast, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 30, 2025, 30 December 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷ Media Line (The), Is New Syrian Faction Saraya al-Jawad Local, Proxy or Propaganda? Experts Weigh In, 9 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸ Enab Baladi, Leader of "Saraya al-Jawad" killed in clashes with Internal Security, 24 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹ New Arab (The), Syria regime appoints notorious Suheil Hassan as head of special forces, 10 April 2024, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰ Enab Baladi, Leader of "Saraya al-Jawad" killed in clashes with Internal Security, 24 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁹¹ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹² New York Times (The), Ousted and in Exile, Generals Secretly Plot Insurgency in Syria, 24 December 2025

¹⁹³ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 30, 2025, 30 December 2025, [url](#)

1.2.4. Druze armed groups controlling Sweida

Dozens of Druze militia groups are active in Sweida governorate.¹⁹⁴ These armed factions were grouped into four main coalitions,¹⁹⁵ the most prominent being the Men of Dignity and the Sweida Military Council (SMC). While some Druze factions have supported coordination with the government, others have called for resistance against the central authorities.¹⁹⁶

Druze armed factions seized control of the governorate in late 2023¹⁹⁷ and territorial control did not change over the reference period.¹⁹⁸ While Druze factions joined the offensive that led to the downfall of the Assad regime in December 2024,¹⁹⁹ some Druze leaders soon rejected the transitional government's plans to deploy troops in Sweida and to disarm²⁰⁰ and integrate the local factions into the new security institutions.²⁰¹ Notably, Sheikh Hikmat Al-Hijri, one of the three highest Druze spiritual authorities in Sweida,²⁰² and known for his pro-Israel stance,²⁰³ rejected talks with the new central government.²⁰⁴ Attempts by the government to engage with more moderate Druze figures further alienated these hardliners while simultaneously fuelling rivalries among Druze factions.²⁰⁵ Besides Druze armed factions, there are Bedouin and other tribal forces in the governorate and in neighbouring areas. These groups, bound together by blood lineage and shared sets of values, maintain various complex alliances and show different levels of organisation and coordination.²⁰⁶ Some Sunni tribes have been accused by Druze leaders of siding with the transitional government.²⁰⁷ In July 2025, a lingering conflict between Druze and Bedouin communities escalated into heavy

¹⁹⁴ NPR, Druze militias are suspicious of Syria's new leaders — and are ready to go to battle, 12 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Sweida, last updated 27 March 2026, [url](#); NPR, Druze militias are suspicious of Syria's new leaders — and are ready to go to battle, 12 April 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Sweida, last updated 27 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁹⁷ International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 13-14

¹⁹⁸ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁹ International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 13-14

²⁰⁰ UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria; Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 13

²⁰¹ International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), p. 15

²⁰² UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria; Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 13

²⁰³ New Arab (The), Rival of Druze leader Hikmat al-Hiri gunned down in Syria's Suweida, 15 April 2026, [url](#)

²⁰⁴ UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria; Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 13

²⁰⁵ International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), p. 15

²⁰⁶ UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria; Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 3 (footnote 6), 24, 27

²⁰⁷ Montag, S. and Hammoud, H., Despite Calls for Calm, the Violence in Sweida Shows No Sign of Ending, New Lines Magazine, 18 July 2025, [url](#)



clashes that prompted military interventions by transitional government and Israeli forces.²⁰⁸ For further information on the events of July 2025, see section [1.1. Overview of current conflicts](#) and section [2.13. Sweida governorate](#).

In August 2025, between around 30²⁰⁹ and 40 Druze factions formed a new military body, the National Guard Forces (NGF),²¹⁰ with the aim of consolidating military and security efforts in Sweida, pledging allegiance to Al-Hijri.²¹¹ Amongst others, this military body includes the Men of Dignity²¹² and reportedly also the SMC.²¹³ The NGF was accused of cracking down on dissent²¹⁴ and arresting rivals. Two Druze clerics were reported to have died in late 2025 after being detained by the NGF.²¹⁵ Furthermore, alleged NGF members attacked political activists and arrested protesters they accused of siding with the transitional government.²¹⁶

1.2.5. ISIL

ISIL continued to exploit local instability, sectarian rifts and weak state control to regroup and conduct attacks. As of late 2025, the group's overall strength was estimated at 3 000 fighters across the Syrian and Iraqi region, most of them based in Syria.²¹⁷ Using the chaos that ensued the collapse of the Al-Assad regime, ISIL operatives moved into cities across Syria,²¹⁸ exploiting security vacuums to regroup and mount attacks.²¹⁹ As of late 2025, the group maintained sleeper cells in various urban zones including Damascus and networks encompassing all governorates.²²⁰ The UN Sanctions Monitoring Team indicated that, according to Member States, ISIL had infiltrated government security forces, especially at mid-level and lower ranks, and created a special battalion for complex and high-profile attacks. The group has acquired new weaponry such as anti-tank missiles, anti-aircraft systems and mortars after the fall of the Assad regime.²²¹ Attacks attributed to the group in 2025 involved

²⁰⁸ International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 25-27

²⁰⁹ UNHCR, Flash update on the situation in As-Sweida #7, 9 September 2025, [url](#), p. 1

²¹⁰ Enab Baladi, In Suwayda, the Druze "National Guard" Incorporates Men of Dignity as Sheikh al-Hijri Calls for Separation from Syria, 25 August 2025, [url](#)

²¹¹ UNHCR, Flash update on the situation in As-Sweida #7, 9 September 2025, [url](#), p. 1

²¹² Enab Baladi, In Suwayda, the Druze "National Guard" Incorporates Men of Dignity as Sheikh al-Hijri Calls for Separation from Syria, 25 August 2025, [url](#)

²¹³ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), pp. 24-25; Aaron Y. Zelin, [X], posted on: 27 August 2025, [url](#)

²¹⁴ Enab Baladi, Suwayda's "National Guard" releases more than 20 detainees arrested for supporting government, 27 March 2026, [url](#)

²¹⁵ New Arab (The), Second Druze cleric dies after detention in Suweida, local reports say, 3 December 2025, [url](#);

New Arab (The), Sheikh Raed al-Mutni 'dies in detention' amid intra-Druze Suweida tensions, 2 December 2025, [url](#)

²¹⁶ Enab Baladi, Suwayda's "National Guard" releases more than 20 detainees arrested for supporting government, 27 March 2026, [url](#)

²¹⁷ UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 50

²¹⁸ Al Jazeera, Analysis: ISIL attacks could undermine US-Syria security collaboration, 27 December 2025, [url](#)

²¹⁹ USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve And Other U.S. Government activities related to Iraq & Syria, July 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025, 17 February 2026, [url](#), p. 13

²²⁰ UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 54

²²¹ UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 55-56



IEDs, VBIEDs, ambushes and targeted killings. While Deir Ez-Zor remained ISIL's main theatre of operations,²²² such attacks were also reported in Raqqa,²²³ Idlib,²²⁴ Aleppo²²⁵ and Palmyra city,²²⁶ while the group apparently also re-emerged in the south.²²⁷

Since late November 2025, ISIL has expanded its previous focus on the SDF to target government military forces²²⁸ with greater frequency.²²⁹ On 21 February 2026 ISIL spokesperson Abu Hudhayfa al-Ansari declared a 'new phase of operations',²³⁰ calling for confronting the transitional government which he referred to as being 'secular'. Following this statement, the group's operations spiked temporarily.²³¹ Between mid-February and mid-May 2026, SOHR recorded that ISIL attacks in government-controlled areas killed 31 members of the government forces,²³² although the pace of attacks by the group has significantly decreased since late March/early April 2026.²³³ Meanwhile, there continued to be some instances of the group targeting Shia Muslims.²³⁴

According to the UN, in 2025, the transitional government arrested at least 278 suspected ISIL members, foiled 45 planned attacks, and dismantled 23 cells, seizing weapons and explosives.²³⁵ Between 8 December 2024 and January 2026, the transitional government reported that it arrested 620 ISIL members, most of whom were held in dilapidated facilities in need of renovation, and pending judicial reforms and related proceedings.²³⁶ The transitional government attributed the 2025 attacks on Mar Elias church in Damascus and the Ali Bin Abi Talib Mosque in Homs to ISIL, stating that those responsible have been arrested.²³⁷ Arrests of

²²² UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 54

²²³ Enab Baladi, Islamic State Claims Two Attacks in Syria in Two Days, 18 April 2026, [url](#); Akil, S., Fallout Risks: What the Regional War Means for Syria, TIMEP, 20 March 2026, [url](#); ISW and CTP, ISIS Attacks in Northeastern Syria since February 18, February 24, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET, 24 February 2026, [url](#)

²²⁴ Kurdistan24, ISIS Claims Deadly Attack on Syrian Security Patrol in Idlib Province, 15 December 2025, [url](#)

²²⁵ Enab Baladi, Islamic State claims attack in Aleppo as assaults escalate, 7 March 2026, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Likely ISIS-Affiliated Attack in Aleppo City on December 31, 2025, 2 January 2026, [url](#)

²²⁶ International Crisis Group, Palmyra Attack Exposes Syria's Security Sector Vulnerabilities, 15 December 2025, [url](#)

²²⁷ Etana Syria, Brief: Rising instability in south-west Syria, 8 October 2025, [url](#)

²²⁸ UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 54

²²⁹ Zelin, A., Where ISIS is still active today, NPR, 19 December 2025, [url](#)

²³⁰ Reuters, Islamic State claims two attacks on Syrian army, announces 'new phase' of operations, 21 February 2026, [url](#)

²³¹ Enab Baladi, Islamic State claims attack in Aleppo as assaults escalate, 7 March 2026, [url](#)

²³² SOHR, ISIS claims responsibility for attack on bus of 64th Division in western Al-Hasakah, 12 May 2026, [url](#)

²³³ MEI, The Collapse of ISIS in Syria, 8 June 2026, [url](#); Asharq Al-Awsat, ISIS Shifts Priorities, Seeks to Raise Cost of Rule in Syria, 22 April 2026, [url](#)

²³⁴ New Arab (The), Islamic State claims responsibility for assassination of Shia cleric in Syria, 8 May 2026, [url](#); AP, Syrian intelligence agency says it thwarted a planned Islamic State attack on a Shiite shrine, 11 January 2025, [url](#)

²³⁵ UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 50

²³⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/61-62), 12 March 2026, [url](#), para 25

²³⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/61-62), 12 March 2026, [url](#), para 100



ISIL suspects continued to be reported, the authorities stating that investigations pertaining to detainees are ongoing under legal procedures before any judicial action is taken.²³⁸

There were large-scale operations by the US-led Global Coalition against ISIL,²³⁹ especially in response to a 13 December 2025 deadly attack on US forces.²⁴⁰ By mid-February 2026, the US Central Command (CENTCOM) stated that its forces had struck over 100 ISIL targets and arrested or killed 50 ISIL fighters since December 2025.²⁴¹ Counter-terrorism operations were conducted jointly with the SDF and, from August 2025, with some participation of transitional government forces.²⁴²

1.2.6. Other relevant armed actors

Saraya Ansar Al-Sunnah, a group that emerged in spring 2025 and has operated across northern Syria (Idlib, Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Latakia and Tartous) and Rural Damascus,²⁴³ has been assessed by the UN to be a front group for ISIL. It consisted of between 5 and 12 decentralised cells as of late 2025. Within its ranks were ISIL members, former fighters of Hurras Al-Din (see further below in this subsection), and other militant factions. The group's operational focus lies on targeting minority groups.²⁴⁴ It claimed major deadly bombing targeting the Mar Elias Church in Damascus (June 2025)²⁴⁵ and the Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib Mosque in Homs city (December 2025)²⁴⁶ and carried out two assassination attempts against interim president Al-Sharaa (in Aleppo and Dar'a) at unspecified points in time in 2025.²⁴⁷

Although the al-Qaeda loyalist group Hurras Al-Din formally announced its dissolution in January 2025,²⁴⁸ it was assessed as of late 2025 that the group continued to exist as al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate. It was estimated to have up to 1 000 fighters and to maintain links with the al-Qaeda leadership and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).²⁴⁹ Moreover, there

²³⁸ SANA, Syrian security forces arrest 12 ISIS members in eastern Syria, 15 March 2026, [url](#)

²³⁹ USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve And Other U.S. Government activities related to Iraq & Syria, July 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025, 17 February 2026, [url](#), p. 13; US, CENTCOM, U.S., Syrian Forces Locate and Destroy ISIS Weapons Caches in Southern Syria, 30 November 2025, [url](#)

²⁴⁰ USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve And Other U.S. Government activities related to Iraq & Syria, July 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025, 17 February 2026, [url](#), p. 13

²⁴¹ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 12, 2026, 12 February 2026, [url](#)

²⁴² UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 22

²⁴³ Garofalo, D., Saraya Ansar al-Sunnah's Micro-insurgency in Syria, The Jamestown Foundation, 15 January 2026, [url](#)

²⁴⁴ UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 53

²⁴⁵ STJ, "I Carried My Mother's Remains, Her Limbs Scattered on the Ground": The Bombing of Mar Elias Church in Dweilaa and the Limited Official Response, August 2025, [url](#), p. 3; Zelin, A., The Damascus Church Attack: Who Is Saraya Ansar al-Sunnah?, TWI, 25 June 2025, [url](#)

²⁴⁶ BBC, Blast at Syrian mosque during Friday prayers leaves at least eight dead, 26 December 2025, [url](#)

²⁴⁷ UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 53

²⁴⁸ Al-Tamimi, A.J., Hurras al-Din: The Rise, Fall, and Dissolution of al-Qa'ida's Loyalist Group in Syria, May 2025, [url](#), p. 18

²⁴⁹ UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 62



were an estimated 5 000 foreign fighters under arms in Syria, including Uzbek militants²⁵⁰ and around 4 000 Uyghur fighters.²⁵¹ Most notably, the country's northwest saw a presence of Uzbek fighters, of the Uyghur-dominated²⁵² Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), and Firqat Al-Ghuraba,²⁵³ a French-speaking jihadist group consisting of around 50 combatants. Both Firqat Al-Ghuraba²⁵⁴ and Uzbek fighters were involved in clashes with government forces in Idlib during the reference period.²⁵⁵ Meanwhile, Uyghur fighters were reported to have contributed to the former opposition's offensive that toppled the Assad regime.²⁵⁶

1.3. International involvement

1.3.1. US-led coalition

Following a large wave of US strikes on the ISIL sites in the central desert in the aftermath of the downfall of the Assad regime,²⁵⁷ offensives by the US-led Global Coalition continued over the year 2025²⁵⁸ and at least into February 2026,²⁵⁹ in collaboration with the transitional government²⁶⁰ and the SDF.²⁶¹ Notably, large-scale strikes were launched as part of Operation Hawkeye Strike, announced by the US on 19 December 2025 in response to an ISIL attack on 13 December in Palmyra that had resulted in three US fatalities.²⁶²

Meanwhile, after having been stationed in Syria since 2015,²⁶³ the US government started to withdraw troops in April 2025,²⁶⁴ handing over or closing down multiple bases.²⁶⁵ On 16 April 2026, the US announced that it had completed the withdrawal of its forces from Syria and

²⁵⁰ MEO, Thousands of foreign fighters pose crucial test for Syria's new leadership, 8 June 2026, [url](#)

²⁵¹ Enab Baladi, NPR: 20,000 Uyghurs Live in Syria, 19 May 2026, [url](#)

²⁵² MEO, Thousands of foreign fighters pose crucial test for Syria's new leadership, 8 June 2026, [url](#)

²⁵³ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 22

²⁵⁴ Shtuni, A., From Insurgency to Statecraft: Al-Sharaa and Syria's Foreign Fighters Test, 19 February 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5

²⁵⁵ MEO, Thousands of foreign fighters pose crucial test for Syria's new leadership, 8 June 2026, [url](#)

²⁵⁶ NPR, The foreign fighters who helped topple Assad — and why China worries about them, 19 May 2026, [url](#)

²⁵⁷ MEI, ISIS is on the ropes in Syria. A successful transition in Damascus could deliver a knockout blow, 14 April 2025, [url](#)

²⁵⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 22

²⁵⁹ US, CENTCOM, U.S. Forces Continue Strikes on ISIS Targets in Syria, 14 February 2026, [url](#); US, CENTCOM, U.S., Partner Forces Strike ISIS Targets in Syria, 10 January 2026, [url](#); BBC, US carries out 'massive' strike against IS in Syria, 20 December 2025, [url](#); US, CENTCOM, U.S., Syrian Forces Locate and Destroy ISIS Weapons Caches in Southern Syria, 30 November 2025, [url](#); US, CENTCOM, CENTCOM Degrades ISIS in Syria, 12 November 2025, [url](#)

²⁶⁰ US, CENTCOM, CENTCOM Degrades ISIS in Syria, 12 November 2025, [url](#)

²⁶¹ USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve And Other U.S. Government activities related to Iraq & Syria, July 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025, 17 February 2026, [url](#), p. 11

²⁶² US, CENTCOM, U.S., Partner Forces Strike ISIS Targets in Syria, 10 January 2026, [url](#)

²⁶³ BBC, US carries out 'massive' strike against IS in Syria, 20 December 2025, [url](#)

²⁶⁴ USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve and other U.S. Government Activities related to Iraq & Syria, January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 14

²⁶⁵ Enab Baladi, Syrian Army Takes Over al-Shaddadi Base After Coalition Handover, 15 February 2026, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 12, 2026, 12 February 2026, [url](#); Al Arabiya English, US withdraws hundreds of troops from Syria after Pentagon directive, 3 June 2025, [url](#)



handed over its last remaining military base²⁶⁶ (Qasrak air base in Hasaka). The transitional government has taken over control of all bases where US forces had been stationed.²⁶⁷

At the same time, longstanding US support for the SDF as a partner in fighting ISIL shifted during the reference period towards backing the transitional government.²⁶⁸ The US envoy to Syria, Thomas Barrack, declared on 20 January 2026 that the ‘original purpose of the SDF as the primary anti-ISIL force on the ground has largely ended’²⁶⁹ and called on Kurds in the country to integrate into the new Syrian state.²⁷⁰

1.3.2. Israel

Since the collapse of the Assad regime in December 2024, Israel advanced deep into the UN-monitored demilitarised zone between the occupied Syrian Golan Heights and the Syrian-controlled parts of Quneitra, setting up nine military posts stretching from Mount Hermon through Quneitra city to western parts of Dar’a.²⁷¹ The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) carried out airstrikes in various parts of Syria as well as ground operations in areas bordering the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, including parts of Quneitra, Dar’a and Rural Damascus.²⁷² Between December 2024 and September 2025, ACLED recorded 277 Israeli aerial strikes, targeting weapons depots, missile installations, and air defences,²⁷³ while between January and early September 2025, SOHR recorded 97 Israeli operations, including 86 airstrikes and 11 ground raids.²⁷⁴ In July 2025, the IDF notably carried out 33 airstrikes framed as protecting Sweida’s Druze community. Meanwhile, ISW and CTP mapped no changes to territorial control by Israeli forces during the reference period.²⁷⁵

As of early 2026, the Israeli operations adopted a multi-layered approach combining direct ground contact, continuous surveillance, some use of force, and structured management of civilian movement.²⁷⁶ An IDF ground incursion in Beit Jinn (Rural Damascus) in late November 2025 resulted in clashes with armed residents that left at least 11 civilians dead and caused extensive damage and destruction to property.²⁷⁷ IDF troops further opened fire at civilians protesting against the IDF in Quneitra in December 2025, resulting in three civilians being

²⁶⁶ Jusoor for Studies, U.S. Withdrawal Shifts Damascus-SDF Calculus, 22 April 2026, [url](#); CSIS, The United States Withdraws from Syria, 20 April 2026, [url](#); MEE, US military fully withdraws from Syria after 10 years, 16 April 2026, [url](#)

²⁶⁷ Al Jazeera, Syria takes control of all bases where US forces were deployed, 16 April 2026, [url](#)

²⁶⁸ Rodgers, W.M., What recent developments in Syria mean for the Kurds, Chatham House, 10 February 2026, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Syrian forces make gains against SDF: What it means for country’s Kurds, 21 January 2026, [url](#)

²⁶⁹ Etana Syria, Brief: Raqqa, Deir Ezzor fall to interim authorities, 21 January 2026, [url](#)

²⁷⁰ Rodgers, W.M., What recent developments in Syria mean for the Kurds, Chatham House, 10 February 2026, [url](#)

²⁷¹ HRW, Syria: Israel Forcibly Displaces Villagers in Occupied South, 17 September 2025, [url](#)

²⁷² UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I, p. 35

²⁷³ ACLED, Middle East Overview: September 2025, 5 September 2025, [url](#)

²⁷⁴ SOHR, Military escalation | Israeli planes attack military positions in Homs and Latakia, 8 September 2025, [url](#)

²⁷⁵ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#)

²⁷⁶ SARI Global, Southern Syria Under Pressure: Israeli Operations, Civilian Dynamics, and Emerging Risk Trajectories, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 2

²⁷⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I, p. 38



injured, after similar incidents had been reported in December 2024.²⁷⁸ Moreover, the Israeli army reportedly arrested 197 men between late December and May 2026,²⁷⁹ including across northern²⁸⁰ and southern rural Quneitra²⁸¹ and western rural Dar'a,²⁸² with March 2026 marking a large escalation that led to dozens of civilians being detained.²⁸³ Those reportedly arrested by the IDF during the reference period included shepherds,²⁸⁴ minors,²⁸⁵ and journalists.²⁸⁶ Some Syrians arrested since December 2024 were reported to have been transferred to prisons in Israel.²⁸⁷ IDF raids on villages inside Syrian territory reportedly targeted individuals suspected of links to terrorist organisations. In some cases, the IDF stated that those arrested were members of, or had links to, Hamas or Hezbollah.²⁸⁸

1.3.3. Türkiye

Türkiye's military presence in Syria was established in 2016.²⁸⁹ Sources varyingly estimated that there were some 10 000²⁹⁰ or 20 000 Turkish troops in Syria,²⁹¹ based in the country's north, including around Afrin, Ras Al-Ain and Tell Abyad.²⁹² The Turkish parliament in October 2025 approved a three-year extension of military deployments in the country.²⁹³ In February 2026, the Turkish government acknowledged its active military support for the Syrian transitional government's offensive against the SDF (deemed a 'terrorist'-linked organisation by Turkish officials) and emphasised that Turkish forces would not withdraw from Syria in the foreseeable future, invoking national security concerns.²⁹⁴

1.3.4. Russia

Russia significantly reduced its military footprint in Syria after the collapse of the Assad regime²⁹⁵ but continued to maintain troops at the Hmeimim air base and the Tartous naval

²⁷⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I, p. 37

²⁷⁹ France 24, Witnesses accuse the Israeli army of arbitrary arrests in Syria, 27 May 2026, [url](#)

²⁸⁰ Enab Baladi, Israeli Forces Detain Farmer in Quneitra Incursion, 22 April 2026, [url](#)

²⁸¹ Enab Baladi, Israeli arrest operations escalate in Quneitra, 13 March 2026, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Israeli army arrests six young men in southwestern Syria, 29 December 2025, [url](#)

²⁸² Enab Baladi, Israeli army arrests two young men in rural Daraa, 24 December 2025, [url](#)

²⁸³ MEE, Smart borders, military gates and land seizures: How Israel is encroaching in southern Syria, 5 May 2026, [url](#)

²⁸⁴ Enab Baladi, Israeli army arrests six young men in southwestern Syria, 29 December 2025, [url](#);

²⁸⁵ International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch March 2026, n.d., [url](#)

²⁸⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), paras 119-120

²⁸⁷ New Arab (The), What happened to the dozens of Syrians detained and forcibly disappeared by Israeli forces?, 13 February 2026, [url](#)

²⁸⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para 120

²⁸⁹ CATS, Visualising Turkey's Foreign Policy Activism (Update) [Map], 10 December 2025, [url](#)

²⁹⁰ STJ, Northern Syria: Communication to UN Special Procedures Regarding Ongoing Violations of Property Rights in the Operation Peace Spring Area, 5 August 2025, [url](#)

²⁹¹ CATS, Visualising Turkey's Foreign Policy Activism (Update) [Map], 10 December 2025, [url](#)

²⁹² STJ, Northern Syria: Communication to UN Special Procedures Regarding Ongoing Violations of Property Rights in the Operation Peace Spring Area, 5 August 2025, [url](#)

²⁹³ New Arab (The), No exit in sight: Why Turkey is keeping troops in Syria and Iraq, 16 February 2026, [url](#)

²⁹⁴ Nordic Monitor, Turkey admits military support of Syria's new Islamist rulers while refusing to pull troops from Iraq, Syria, 2 March 2026, [url](#)

²⁹⁵ New Arab (The), Exclusive: Russia reinforces Qamishli airport base amid Syrian govt advances against SDF, 23 January 2026, [url](#)

base.²⁹⁶ At Qamishli airport, where Russian forces had been stationed since 2019,²⁹⁷ Russia reinforced its military presence towards the end of 2025²⁹⁸ but then fully withdrew its troops in late January 2026.²⁹⁹

1.4. Recent security trends

In the aftermath of the collapse of the Bashar Al-Assad regime, the overall security situation across several of the country's regions was described as fragile³⁰⁰ as the transitional government struggled to establish security in areas outside Damascus³⁰¹ and to respond effectively to sectarian violence,³⁰² kidnappings³⁰³ and looting.³⁰⁴ The year 2025 saw two large waves of killings, erupting in coastal and western central Syria in March (involving intense attacks by state-affiliated actors against Alawites), and in Sweida in July (involving clashes between Druze and Bedouins³⁰⁵ and armed interventions by Syrian government and Israeli forces).³⁰⁶ The UN estimated the number of fatalities arising from these two instances of mass violence at more than 1 400 (events of March 2025)³⁰⁷ and at least 1 700 (events of July 2025), respectively.³⁰⁸ While Assadist groups continued to operate in the coastal areas,³⁰⁹ they only claimed limited attacks during the rest of 2025.³¹⁰ In Sweida, large-scale clashes declined after

²⁹⁶ WSJ, Russia Resupplies Its Syria Air Base, Hanging On to a Strategic Foothold, 1 June 2026; UNN, The Russian Federation maintains troops, aviation, and ships in Syria despite claims of a reduced presence, 29 April 2026, [url](#); Le Monde diplomatique, Syria's new leaders keep Russia in play, December 2025, [url](#)

²⁹⁷ New Arab (The), Russia withdrawing troops from airport in northeast Syria, sources say, 26 January 2026, [url](#)

²⁹⁸ RUSI, Russia's Enduring Grip on Syria, 11 November 2025, [url](#)

²⁹⁹ Al Jazeera, Al-Sharaa meets Putin as Russia seeks to secure military bases in Syria, 28 January 2026, [url](#); New Arab (The), Russia withdrawing troops from airport in northeast Syria, sources say, 26 January 2026, [url](#)

³⁰⁰ UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities (January to December 2025), 24 July 2025, [url](#), p. 20

³⁰¹ International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 4-5

³⁰² SJAC, The Syrian Government Must Investigate the Targeting of Alawite Civilians in Homs, 13 May 2025, [url](#)

³⁰³ New York Times (The), As People Are Abducted on Unpatrolled Streets, Syrians Demand Better Protection, 10 March 2025; Davis, H., Sectarian Violence Simmers in Homs, New Lines Magazine, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

³⁰⁴ International Crisis Group, A Helping Hand for Post-Assad Syria, 22 May 2025, [url](#)

³⁰⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 36-37

³⁰⁶ UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 32-36

³⁰⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 37

³⁰⁸ UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 48

³⁰⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 20

³¹⁰ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 30, 2025, 30 December 2025, [url](#)

July 2025³¹¹ but sporadic clashes between Druze fighters and internal security forces continued³¹² into May 2026³¹³ despite a ceasefire being in effect.³¹⁴

Compared to the fragility³¹⁵ and instability seen in the aftermath of the fall of Al-Assad,³¹⁶ sources reporting during the current reference period (1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026) pointed to signs of stabilisation.³¹⁷ According to the UN Secretary-General's deputy special envoy for Syria, Claudio Cordone, March 2026 saw the lowest levels of direct conflict-related violence in 15 years.³¹⁸ Nonetheless, significant challenges remained.³¹⁹ There was a spike in Assadist insurgent activity in late February 2026 in Latakia,³²⁰ while communal tensions remained at heightened levels in areas such as Homs³²¹ and Hama.³²² ISIL was present in some parts of Syria, while numerous weapons were still in the hands of unidentified assailants. Crimes such as robberies³²³ and murders continued.³²⁴ Minorities continued to face security threats,³²⁵ including abductions, disappearance and violent and sexual abuse targeting Alawite women.³²⁶ However, the reference period did not witness any waves of large-scale killings comparable to those of March or July 2025.³²⁷ Julien Barnes-Dacey, director of the

³¹¹ Etana Syria, Brief: Uneasy calm in Suwayda, 27 October 2025, [url](#)

³¹² UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 52

³¹³ SOHR, Military escalation | Violent clashes erupt between "National Guards" and government forces in Al-Suwaydaa, 9 May 2026, [url](#); New Arab (The), Clashes erupt in Suweida between Syrian forces and Druze militia, 4 May 2026, [url](#); Etana Syria, Brief: Recent developments in south-west Syria, 8 April 2026, [url](#); Belgium, CGRS-CEDOCA, Syrië: Veiligheidssituatie (ACLED), 31 March 2026, [url](#), p. 29; Enab Baladi, Four killed in clashes between Syrian Interior Ministry forces and Suwayda factions, 23 December 2025, [url](#)

³¹⁴ SOHR, Ceasefire violations | Five civilians injured in indiscriminate bombardment on Al-Suwaydaa city, 4 May 2026, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 52; Enab Baladi, Four killed in clashes between Syrian Interior Ministry forces and Suwayda factions, 23 December 2025, [url](#)

³¹⁵ UN News, 'Syria simply cannot withstand another wave of instability,' Security Council hears, 17 June 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Syria Update #25: 26 May 2025, 26 May 2025, [url](#)

³¹⁶ UN News, 'Syria simply cannot withstand another wave of instability,' Security Council hears, 17 June 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), p. 4

³¹⁷ SOHR, Amid subsiding violence in SDF-controlled areas | Six murder crimes documented in April, 30 April 2026, [url](#); Arab Weekly (The), On second year of transition, Syria advances cautiously towards stability, 18 February 2026, [url](#); MEI, Syria is stabilizing, but US help remains vital, 13 February 2026, [url](#)

³¹⁸ UN Office of the Special Envoy for Syria, Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Claudio Cordone - Briefing to the Security Council, 22 April 2026, [url](#)

³¹⁹ Al Jazeera, As Syria marks 15 years since anti-Assad uprising, security issues remain, 15 March 2026, [url](#); Arab Weekly (The), On second year of transition, Syria advances cautiously towards stability, 18 February 2026, [url](#); MEI, Syria's Path Toward Stabilization — and How the US Can Help, 17 February 2026, [url](#)

³²⁰ Al Jazeera, Syria faces twin battles as Assad loyalists and ISIL attack in west, east, 25 February 2026, [url](#)

³²¹ Al Jazeera, As Syria marks 15 years since anti-Assad uprising, security issues remain, 15 March 2026, [url](#); Barnes-Dacey, J., A year after Assad: The search for Syria's future [Commentary], ECFR, 4 March 2026, [url](#)

³²² Etana Syria, Brief: Sectarian unrest in Al-Suqaylabiyeh, 7 April 2026, [url](#)

³²³ Al Jazeera, As Syria marks 15 years since anti-Assad uprising, security issues remain, 15 March 2026, [url](#)

³²⁴ SOHR, Amid subsiding violence in SDF-controlled areas | Six murder crimes documented in April, 30 April 2026, [url](#)

³²⁵ Barnes-Dacey, J., A year after Assad: The search for Syria's future [Commentary], ECFR, 4 March 2026, [url](#); Etana Syria, Brief: Sectarian unrest in Al-Suqaylabiyeh, 7 April 2026, [url](#)

³²⁶ New York Times (The), In Syria, Kidnappings of Women and Girls Fuel a Minority Group's Fears, 3 April 2026; MEE, Syrian government understating kidnappings of Alawite women: Report, 4 April 2026, [url](#)

³²⁷ SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p.



MENA programme at the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), noted that the transitional government's 'professional responses to security incidents have prevented new cycles of escalation' and that communal relations too appeared 'to be slowly improving on the ground'.³²⁸

In the northeast, open hostilities between government and SDF forces/Kurdish residents were reported in early October 2025 in Aleppo city's Kurdish-majority districts of Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah.³²⁹ These were followed by major clashes between the government and the SDF in January 2026 that resulted between around 250 and more than 300 fatalities across Aleppo, Raqqa, Deir Ez-Zor and Hasaka,³³⁰ most of them combatants.³³¹ However, these clashes did not descend into a prolonged armed conflict³³² or uncontrolled violence as seen on the coast in March 2025. According to Barnes-Dacey, this reflected a more carefully led government military campaign and enhanced mechanisms of control within state forces.³³³ Following this temporary spike in violence in January, levels soon reverted to a downward trend.³³⁴

Meanwhile, Sweida was 'sealed off' from the rest of Syria as residents rallied to support Druze religious leader Hikmat al-Hijri³³⁵ and his calls for full independence from Damascus.³³⁶ The governorate remained locked in stalemate, with neither side able or willing to bring about a fundamental shift in the military situation on the ground.³³⁷ In one of the most intense escalations since the July 2025 ceasefire agreement, clashes erupted after ISC forces and affiliated tribal militias ambushed National Guard members on 19 March 2026, leading to a buildup of forces from both sides, while Israel conducted airstrikes targeting Syrian military infrastructure.³³⁸

ISIL activity significantly declined in the wake of the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024,³³⁹ largely due to intense aerial operations by the US-led Global Coalition against ISIL and reduced recruitment appeal.³⁴⁰ However, the group continued a low-level insurgency over

8; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 2; SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 2

³²⁸ Barnes-Dacey, J., A year after Assad: The search for Syria's future [Commentary], ECFR, 4 March 2026, [url](#)

³²⁹ Etana Syria, Brief: Ceasefire pauses SDF-Damascus fighting, 14 October 2025, [url](#)

³³⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#); MEI, Syria is stabilizing, but US help remains vital, 13 February 2026, [url](#)

³³¹ MEI, Syria is stabilizing, but US help remains vital, 13 February 2026, [url](#)

³³² Arab Weekly (The), On second year of transition, Syria advances cautiously towards stability, 18 February 2026, [url](#)

³³³ Barnes-Dacey, J., A year after Assad: The search for Syria's future [Commentary], ECFR, 4 March 2026, [url](#)

³³⁴ Arab Weekly (The), On second year of transition, Syria advances cautiously towards stability, 18 February 2026, [url](#)

³³⁵ Guardian (The), A year after fall of Assad, a divided Syria struggles to escape cycle of violence, 8 December 2025, [url](#)

³³⁶ Enab Baladi, Al-Hijri insists on independence with Israeli guarantees, 13 January 2026, [url](#); New Arab (The), Protection or partition? The future of Suweida and Syria's Druze, 22 January 2026, [url](#)

³³⁷ Etana Syria, Brief: Recent developments in Suwayda, 17 April 2026, [url](#)

³³⁸ Etana Syria, Brief: Clashes in western Suwayda, 28 March 2026, [url](#)

³³⁹ MEI, ISIS is on the ropes in Syria. A successful transition in Damascus could deliver a knockout blow, 14 April 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Brief: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#)

³⁴⁰ Etana Syria, Brief: SDF Agreement Stalls as ISIS Regroups, 30 April 2025, [url](#)



the following months,³⁴¹ mostly targeting the SDF over the second half of 2025.³⁴² In the reference period, ISIL re-emerged as a force of destabilisation.³⁴³ Since late November 2025 the group has expanded its focus to targeting the government military forces³⁴⁴ at an increased pace after the government joined the Global Coalition against ISIL.³⁴⁵ ISIL's activities intensified after ISIL spokesperson Abu Hudhayfa Al-Ansari on 21 February 2026 called for confronting the transitional government³⁴⁶ in what he declared a 'new phase of operations'.³⁴⁷ Its pace of attacks subsequently eased in early March but then intensified again³⁴⁸ before seeing a significant decline since late March/early April 2026.³⁴⁹

As of April 2026, security issues in eastern Syria (Deir Ez-Zor, Raqqa and Hasaka) were mainly linked to ISIL activity.³⁵⁰ The group Saraya Ansar Al-Sunnah, which had claimed a deadly attack on a church in Damascus in June 2025,³⁵¹ again targeted civilians as it attacked a mosque in Homs City in December 2025, killing at least eight people.³⁵² Meanwhile, counterterrorism operations by the US-led Global Coalition against ISIL intensified in October³⁵³ and notably during Operation Hawkeye Strike, launched in December 2025, under which strikes continued at least into February 2026.³⁵⁴ Government-led operations further led to the arrest of hundreds of ISIL suspects and the dismantling of dozens of cells since mid-2025.³⁵⁵

The situation in southern Syria remained volatile in the face of Israel's military intervention in the region.³⁵⁶ Over the year 2025, Israel conducted 15 artillery attacks and 830 air raids, according to Enab Baladi.³⁵⁷ These air strikes targeted sites in Damascus City, Rural

³⁴¹ TWI, The Islamic State Attacks the New Syrian Government, 19 May 2025, [url](#)

³⁴² UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 54

³⁴³ Asharq Al-Awsat, ISIS Shifts Priorities, Seeks to Raise Cost of Rule in Syria, 22 April 2026, [url](#)

³⁴⁴ UN Security Council Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 54

³⁴⁵ Zelin, A., Where ISIS is still active today, NPR, 19 December 2025, [url](#)

³⁴⁶ Enab Baladi, Islamic State claims attack in Aleppo as assaults escalate, 7 March 2026, [url](#)

³⁴⁷ Reuters, Islamic State claims two attacks on Syrian army, announces 'new phase' of operations, 21 February 2026, [url](#)

³⁴⁸ Asharq Al-Awsat, ISIS Shifts Priorities, Seeks to Raise Cost of Rule in Syria, 22 April 2026, [url](#)

³⁴⁹ MEI, The Collapse of ISIS in Syria, 8 June 2026, [url](#); Asharq Al-Awsat, ISIS Shifts Priorities, Seeks to Raise Cost of Rule in Syria, 22 April 2026, [url](#)

³⁵⁰ Health Cluster and WHO, Syria: Health Sector Bulletin - April 2026, 2 May 2026, [url](#), p. 2

³⁵¹ Le Monde, Syria: Little-known jihadist group claims Damascus church attack, 24 June 2025, [url](#)

³⁵² UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 100

³⁵³ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 22, 100

³⁵⁴ US, CENTCOM, U.S. Forces Continue Strikes on ISIS Targets in Syria, 14 February 2026, [url](#); US, CENTCOM, U.S., Partner Forces Strike ISIS Targets in Syria, 10 January 2026, [url](#)

³⁵⁵ SANA, Syrian security forces arrest 12 ISIS members in eastern Syria, 15 March 2026, [url](#); AA, Syria arrests 'ISIS terrorist cell' in Damascus countryside, 13 January 2026, [url](#); SANA, Syria arrests ISIS military leader in joint security operation, 9 January 2026, [url](#); UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 50

³⁵⁶ Helmi, K., After Assad, a New Uncertainty in Syria's South, TIMEP, 26 March 2026, [url](#); Kurdistan24, Israel Strikes Military Targets in Southern Syria Amid Calls for Demilitarization, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

³⁵⁷ Enab Baladi, Israel destabilizes southern Syria through incursions and land grabs, 7 December 2025, [url](#)



Damascus, Latakia, Hama, Homs, Daraa, and Sweida.³⁵⁸ The pace of Israeli patrols and operations increased in December 2025 when the IDF launched daily ground incursions and surveillance flights across Quneitra and Dar'a, while intermittently shelling areas along the border strip.³⁵⁹ The first months of 2026 saw significant numbers of security incidents arising in the context of IDF activities,³⁶⁰ especially in March 2026, when the IDF conducted more than 321 military operations, including 121 aerial actions.³⁶¹ In a new development linked to the 2026 Iran war and Hezbollah's attacks on Israel, Hezbollah forces reportedly fired artillery shells at positions of the new Syrian army in March 2026. Such instability along the border with Lebanon was deemed a threat to cities like Damascus, Tartous, and Homs.³⁶²

1.4.1. Security incidents

During the reference period of this report (1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026), ACLED recorded 2 884 security incidents across the country. The highest number of security incidents over this period was recorded in January 2026, with 683 incidents that mainly occurred in Aleppo, Deir Ez-Zor, Hasaka and Sweida.³⁶³ The January 2026 peak represents a 77 % increase over the 385 incidents recorded in the previous month³⁶⁴ and coincides with the transitional government's military campaign that led to its takeover of large swathes of formerly SDF-held territory.³⁶⁵ Following the January 2026 peak, incidents declined by more than half to 283 in February 2026. In March, their number temporarily increased to 330 before falling again to 242 in April and further down to 206 in May 2026. An analysis of ACLED data for the entire period from the fall of Bashar Al-Assad on 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026 shows peaks of over 600 monthly security incidents in December 2024 (733 incidents) and each of the three first months of 2025 (1 118 incidents in January, 782 in February and 841 in March) and finally again in January 2026. From April to December 2025 and again from February to May 2026, monthly numbers of security incidents largely remained below 500. With the exception of the January 2026 peak, a near-steady decline in incidents could be observed from August 2025 through May 2026.³⁶⁶

³⁵⁸ SNHR, The Fifteenth Annual Report on Human Rights Situation in Syria 2025, 26 March 2026, [url](#), p. 13

³⁵⁹ Etana Syria, Brief: Israeli operations continue in south-west Syria, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

³⁶⁰ SARI Global, Southern Syria Under Pressure: Israeli Operations, Civilian Dynamics, and Emerging Risk Trajectories, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 2

³⁶¹ MEE, Smart borders, military gates and land seizures: How Israel is encroaching in southern Syria, 5 May 2026, [url](#)

³⁶² CSIS, The War with Iran Threatens Syria's Recovery [Commentary], 12 March 2026, [url](#)

³⁶³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

³⁶⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

³⁶⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 21; MEI, Syria is stabilizing, but US help remains vital, 13 February 2026, [url](#)

³⁶⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)



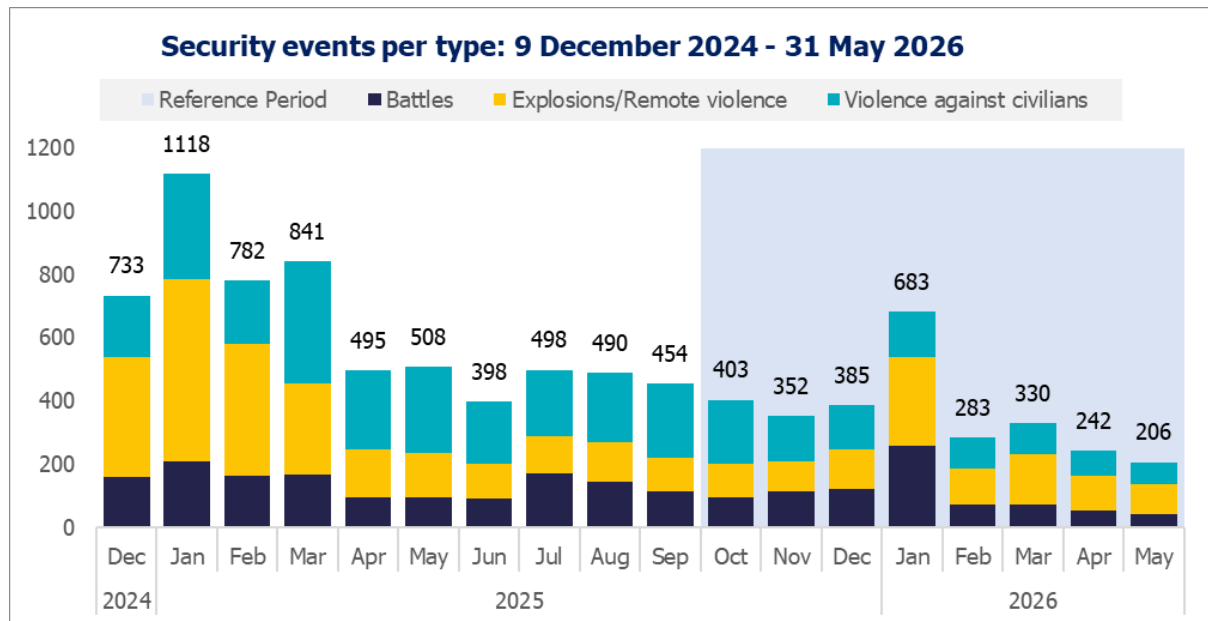


Figure 1: Evolution of the security incidents since the fall of the Assad government, based on ACLED data³⁶⁷

Regarding the distribution of incident types during the current reference period, of the 2 884 overall incidents recorded, 822 were coded as battles and 1 081 as explosions/remote violence. About one-third of the incidents (981) were categorised as violence against civilians. During this period, instances of both battles and explosions/remote violence more than doubled between December 2025 and January 2026 (from 120 to 257 and 126 to 281, respectively), while incidents of violence against civilians only increased marginally (from 139 to 145). After January 2026, both battles and instances of violence against civilians largely followed a continuous downward trend, diminishing to around 70 or less in May 2026, respectively. Only explosions/remote violence saw a tangible short-term rise in March 2026 following a decline in February. An analysis of the entire period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026 shows that all three incident types saw peaks in the first quarter of 2025, reflecting the overall incident patterns. Battles saw another peak in July and August 2025³⁶⁸ that coincided with the wave of violence in Sweida involving government military forces, Druze armed factions and tribal militia.³⁶⁹ Since August/September 2025, all three types of incidents saw a largely diminishing trend through May 2026, with the exception of the above-mentioned temporary rise in battles and instances of explosions/remote violence in January 2026.³⁷⁰

Governorate-wise, the highest security incident figures in the current reference period were recorded in Aleppo (513), Deir Ez-Zor (482), Hasaka (336), and Sweida (318). By contrast, the lowest numbers were seen in Tartous (23), Damascus (32), Latakia (55) and Idlib (71). By and large, this could also be observed in the overall period between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2026, although here, Latakia ranked outside the group of four governorates with the

³⁶⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

³⁶⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

³⁶⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 38

³⁷⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

lowest incident numbers³⁷¹ due to the wave of sectarian violence that struck coastal Syria in March 2025.³⁷²

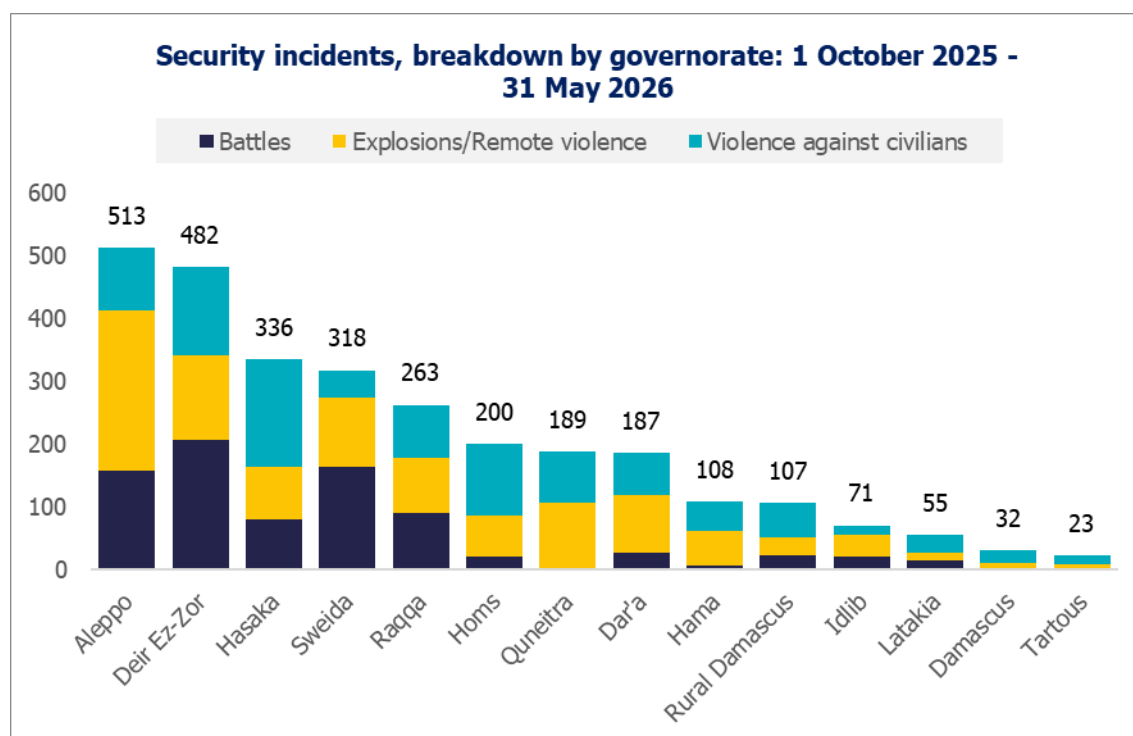


Figure 2: Total number of security incidents at governorate level during the reference period of the report, based on ACLED data³⁷³

The main actors, coded as appearing as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’, who were implicated in security incidents during the current reference period were unidentified armed groups (1 110), military and police forces of Syria (902), the SDF (797) and ISIL (213). These actors were involved in around 38 %, 31 %, 28 % and 7 %, respectively, of all 2 884 incidents recorded during the current reference period. These four actors were also the main parties involved in security incidents during the entire period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026. However, during this overall period, a higher number of incidents were attributed to the SDF than to the military and police forces of Syria.³⁷⁴

As for the 981 incidents coded as violence against civilians during the reference period, the main parties involved as either ‘Actor 1’ or ‘Actor 2’ were unidentified armed groups (involved in approximately 45 % of all incidents of this type), the SDF (around 24 %), the military and police forces of Syria (around 9 %) and ISIL (about 3 %). These four actors were also the main parties implicated in incidents of violence against civilians over the period from 9 December 2024 to 30 September 2025. Deadly incidents of violence against civilians during the current

³⁷¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

³⁷² UN Human Rights Council, Violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), A/HRC/59/CRP.4, 11 August 2025, [url](#), para. 1

³⁷³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

³⁷⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

reference period included attacks by unknown gunmen targeting Alawites, individuals with perceived links to the former Assad regime and individuals of unspecified profile, as well as killings of civilians, including detainees, by SDF members.³⁷⁵

Further analysis of security incidents at the governorate level can be found in the respective sub-sections of section [2. Security situation and conflict impact on civilians by governorate](#).

1.4.2. Civilian casualties

In the current reference period (1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026), SNHR documented 586 conflict-related civilian fatalities across Syria. The highest numbers of civilian fatalities were recorded in January 2026, which saw a 28 % increase to 111 fatalities from 80, and February 2026 (96 fatalities). By contrast, the lowest numbers of civilian fatalities were seen towards the end of the reference period (55 in April and 44 in May 2026).³⁷⁶ During the overall period from December 2024 to May 2026, SNHR recorded a total of 4 201 civilian fatalities, with significant peaks recorded in March 2025 and July 2025.³⁷⁷ This distribution of civilian fatalities reflected the large-scale sectarian killings on the coast in March 2025 and the heavy clashes in Sweida involving Druze and Bedouins in July 2025.³⁷⁸ By comparison, the UN Commission of Inquiry (UNCOI) estimated that over 3 500 people of unspecified profile had been killed between December 2024 and January 2026, mostly during large-scale waves of violence in March and July 2025.³⁷⁹ Civilian casualties since December 2024 further resulted from Israeli military operations and in the context of fighting between the SDF and the former SNA in the north and northeast.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

³⁷⁶ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

³⁷⁷ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 3; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99; 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

³⁷⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 37-38; International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 18-22, 25-27

³⁷⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), p. 27

³⁸⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 82, 88-89, 91-92

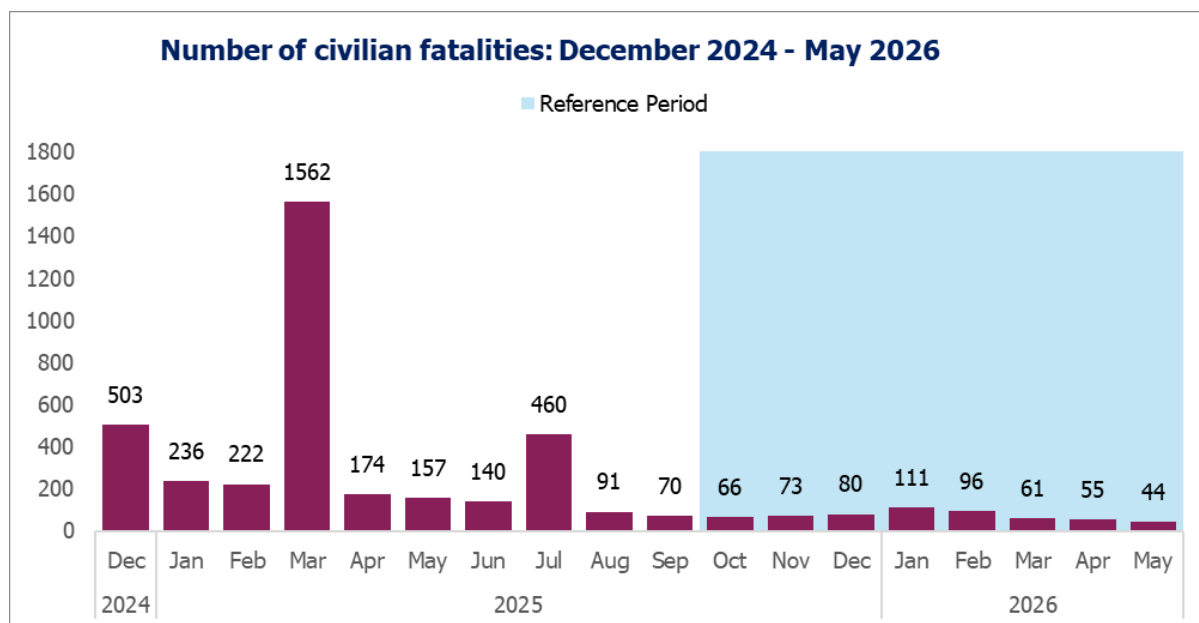


Figure 3: Evolution of civilian fatalities countrywide per month, based on SNHR data³⁸¹

Governorate-wise, the highest numbers of civilian fatalities in the current reference period were recorded in Aleppo (106), Homs (90), Hama (85) and Idlib (67), while the lowest were seen in Quneitra (1), Damascus (4), Hasaka (5), Tartous (5) and Latakia (13). Between the fourth quarter of 2025 and the first quarter of 2026, civilian fatalities notably increased in Aleppo (from 27 to 75) and Raqqa (from 4 to 38), while numbers sharply declined in Rural Damascus (from 31 to 7) and Hama (39 to 26).³⁸² Meanwhile, looking at the entire period from December 2024 to May 2026, it was the coastal governorates of Latakia and Tartous, as well as Sweida, Aleppo and Hama, that saw the highest numbers of civilian deaths, while the fewest were recorded in Quneitra, Hasaka, Damascus and Rural Damascus.³⁸³

³⁸¹ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 3; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99; 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

³⁸² SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

³⁸³ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99

Governorate	Oct 2025	Nov 2025	Dec 2025	Jan 2026	Feb 2026	Mar 2026	Apr 2026	May 2026	Total
Hasaka	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	5
Aleppo	13	5	9	30	27	18	1	3	106
Raqqa	0	1	3	26	9	3	7	1	50
Sweida	8	5	9	5	10	1	1	3	42
Damascus	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	4
Dar'a	7	6	6	4	5	1	2	3	34
Deir Ez-Zor	5	3	7	3	9	8	3	2	40
Hama	10	15	14	9	9	8	12	8	85
Homs	10	12	8	16	13	10	15	6	90
Idlib	6	10	5	12	6	7	8	13	67
Latakia	1	2	2	0	3	2	2	1	13
Quneitra	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Rural Damascus	4	11	16	3	2	2	4	2	44
Tartous	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	5
Total	66	73	80	111	96	61	55	44	586

Figure 4: Number of civilian fatalities per government and month between October 2025 and May 2026, based on SNHR data³⁸⁴

³⁸⁴ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 3; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99; 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

Governorate	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	Mar 2025	Apr 2025	May 2025	Jun 2025	Jul 2025	Aug 2025	Sep 2025	Total
Hasaka	1	5	1	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	12
Aleppo	234	83	52	29	21	25	6	5	3	7	465
Raqqa	16	3	10	2	4	7	4	1	1	5	53
Sweida	9	8	5	2	1	16	7	372 385	0	0	420
Damascus	1	1	2	0	2	0	25	10	3	0	44
Dar'a	20	12	7	39	32	8	21	3	8	18	168
Deir Ez-Zor	14	23	33	23	12	8	4	5	9	1	132
Hama	74	39	36	153	15	19	25	21	19	22	423
Homs	39	13	32	48	47	24	22	18	27	8	278
Idlib	85	20	21	17	21	6	4	13	11	5	203
Latakia	6	20	11	561	9	24	11	5	4	1	652
Quneitra	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Rural Damascus	4	5	4	11	1	12	9	5	1	1	53
Tartous	0	3	8	338	8	6	2	2	2	2	371
Total	503	236	222	1562 386	174	157	140	460	91	70	3615

Figure 5: Number of civilian fatalities per government and month between December 2024 and September 2025, based on SNHR data³⁸⁷

During the current reference period up until the end of March 2026 for which specific data on involvement armed actors in civilian deaths is available, the highest numbers of civilian

³⁸⁵ See section [2.13.5. Civilian casualties](#) for further information on the Sweida numbers.

³⁸⁶ SNHR noted that 339 victims died in unidentified locations. 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

³⁸⁷ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 3; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99; 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

fatalities were attributed to unidentified actors (339 civilian fatalities) and the SDF (71). The government forces were attributed 16 civilian fatalities, while another 14 were attributed to Israeli forces. Looking at the overall period from December 2024 to March 2026, unidentified actors were likewise attributed the largest number of civilian fatalities. However, government and government-aligned actors ranked second (due to their implication in numerous killings of civilians in March 2025), followed by Assadist remnants (also linked to significant numbers of civilian deaths in December 2024 and March 2025), and the SDF, whose deadly attacks on civilians peaked in December 2024/January 2025 and then again in early 2026.³⁸⁸

Further analysis of SNHR data on civilian casualties at the governorate level can be found in the respective sub-sections of section [2. Security situation and conflict impact on civilians by governorate](#).

1.4.3. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

As a result of more than fourteen years of conflict, 52 % of the country's housing stock remained partially or completely damaged as of late 2025.³⁸⁹ In the period since the fall of the Al-Assad regime, conflict-related incidents continued to inflict significant damage to civilian infrastructure,³⁹⁰ including to residential buildings, medical and educational facilities, religious places of worship, agricultural lands and infrastructure, livestock, and water-related infrastructure.³⁹¹ Both the hostilities in Latakia, Tartous, Homs and Hama in March 2025 and in Sweida in July 2025 led to the looting and destruction of houses and property.³⁹² The March

³⁸⁸ EUAA analysis based on SNHR reports: SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), pp. 8-9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), pp. 2-3; SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 2-3; SNHR, The Death of 70 Civilians Including Seven Children and Three Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in September 2025 in Syria, 1 October 2025, [url](#), pp. 2-3; SNHR, The Death of 91 Civilians Including 18 Children and Five Women, and Four Deaths due to Torture Recorded August 2025 in Syria, 1 September 2025, [url](#), p. 2; SNHR, The Death of 89 Civilians Including 13 Children and 10 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded July 2025 in Syria, 1 August 2025, [url](#), p. 2; SNHR, The Death of 2818 Civilian Including 201 Children and 194 Women, and 17 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the First Half of 2025, 3 July 2025, [url](#), p. 6; 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](#), p. 9

³⁸⁹ UNHCR et al., Syria Nationwide Housing Damage Assessment (October-November-December 2025), 23 January 2026, [url](#), p. 7

³⁹⁰ STJ, Syria: Forced Displacement and Looting of Property in Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyeh during the Aleppo Escalation (January 2026), 2 April 2026, [url](#); UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: 2026 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, April 2026, [url](#), p. 13

³⁹¹ UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: 2026 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, April 2026, [url](#), p. 13

³⁹² UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 39



2025 violence led to homes and shops being burnt³⁹³ and looted, leaving entire residential areas and villages decimated.³⁹⁴ In the context of combing operations led by transitional government forces, homes of Alawites³⁹⁵ and Shiites, as well as shops and other sources of income were looted, damaged or destroyed. In July 2025, multiple homes and businesses were set on fire in Sweida City, while most homes, businesses and Druze religious sites were looted and burnt across at least 35 Druze-majority villages in the governorate after their capture by government forces or armed tribesmen, according to the UNCOI. In several areas, Druze fighters in turn pillaged businesses, livestock and vehicles of Bedouins and destroyed their houses.³⁹⁶ The military escalation in the Ashrafiyah and Sheikh Maqsoud neighbourhoods of Aleppo City in early January 2026 involved wide-spread looting of homes and shops, as well as destruction to private property after their residents/owners had fled.³⁹⁷

Israeli military operations also caused damage and destruction to civilian property,³⁹⁸ affecting 23 structures in three villages in Quneitra between December 2024 and May/June 2025.³⁹⁹ Further clashes resulting from an IDF ground incursion in Beit Jinn (Rural Damascus) in late November 2025 caused extensive damage and destruction to property.⁴⁰⁰ In January 2026, it was further reported that Israeli aircraft had sprayed pesticides over farmland in Quneitra for several days, allegedly to prevent the growth of vegetation used for cattle grazing.⁴⁰¹

Landmines and explosive remnants of war remained a significant threat to civilians across Syria,⁴⁰² especially in rural and agricultural areas.⁴⁰³ While the exact extent of contamination was unknown,⁴⁰⁴ it was reported to be highest in Latakia, Hama, Homs, Sweida, Deir Ez-Zor, and Raqqa.⁴⁰⁵ Between December 2024 and December 2025, around 900 explosive ordnance-linked incidents were recorded.⁴⁰⁶ Several sources estimated the number of deaths caused by such incidents since December 2024 at 607 as of the end of 2025⁴⁰⁷ (with an

³⁹³ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I, p. 32, HRW, “Are you Alawi?” Identity-Based Killings During Syria’s Transition, 23 September 2025, [url](#), p. 18

³⁹⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I, p. 32

³⁹⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I, p. 32; Shafaq News, Syrian Observatory: Three Alawites killed, homes burned in Latakia raids, 6 June 2025, [url](#)

³⁹⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I, pp. 32-33

³⁹⁷ STJ, Syria: Forced Displacement and Looting of Property in Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah during the Aleppo Escalation (January 2026), 2 April 2026, [url](#)

³⁹⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 82

³⁹⁹ Amnesty International, Syria: Israel’s deliberate destruction of civilian homes in Quneitra must be investigated as war crimes, 14 May 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I, p. 38

⁴⁰¹ Etana Syria, Brief: Israeli operations continue in south-west Syria, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁰² IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁴⁰³ SNHR, The Fifteenth Annual Report on Human Rights Situation in Syria 2025, 26 March 2026, [url](#), p. 8

⁴⁰⁴ Handicap International, Landmines in Syrie [Landmines in Syria], last updated 16 March 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁰⁵ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁴⁰⁶ UNMAS, Syria, last updated 10 June 2026, [url](#); Mine Action AoR, Syria, 2025 – A Year in Review, Situation Update No.6, 8 December 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁰⁷ UNMAS, Syria, last updated 10 June 2026, [url](#)



additional 1 061 injured)⁴⁰⁸ and at least 700 as of March/early April 2026⁴⁰⁹ (1 193 injuries).⁴¹⁰ Meanwhile, SNHR recorded that at least 317 civilians had been killed by landmines between the fall of the Al-Assad regime in December 2024 and April 2026.⁴¹¹ Deir Ez-Zor, Aleppo, and Idlib accounted for the highest numbers of incidents⁴¹² and deaths from landmines and explosive remnants.⁴¹³ Other areas highly affected by contamination included Homs, Hama,⁴¹⁴ Dar'a,⁴¹⁵ Raqqa and Hasaka.⁴¹⁶ Unexploded ordnance posed a significant hazard to movements of IDPs⁴¹⁷ and returning refugees, with former frontline zones deemed as areas most at risk.⁴¹⁸ Children have been disproportionately affected by explosive remnants of war,⁴¹⁹ accounting for 30 % of deaths and 40 % of injuries between December 2024 and February 2026,⁴²⁰ although such reported figures were likely to be below the actual numbers.⁴²¹ Mine action organisations in 2025 surveyed more than 2.9 billion square metres of land, significantly extending the area assessed for contamination levels, and destroyed over 27 000 pieces of explosive ordnance found on farmland, along former frontlines, in civilian facilities, and along roads.⁴²² Despite these efforts, the country lacked comprehensive mine clearance programmes⁴²³ and, as of early 2026, many contaminated areas remained where no demining operations were underway.⁴²⁴

1.4.4. Displacement and return

IOM's first population movements assessment after the power transition in December 2024 showed that, as of February 2025, 27 % of Syria's population (around 7 million out of a total population of approximately 26.05 million) were IDPs.⁴²⁵ In subsequent months, the share of

⁴⁰⁸ UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: 2026 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (April 2026), 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 10

⁴⁰⁹ HALO Trust (The), Surviving the war, dying in peace, 23 March 2026, [url](#); UNICEF, Children in Syria remain at deadly risk from explosive remnants of war, 4 April 2026, [url](#)

⁴¹⁰ UNICEF, Children in Syria remain at deadly risk from explosive remnants of war, 4 April 2026, [url](#)

⁴¹¹ SNHR, On the International Day for Mine Awareness: Documenting the deaths of at least 3,799 civilians from landmines and cluster munitions in Syria, March 2011 – April 2026, 4 April 2026, [url](#), p. 8

⁴¹² UNMAS, Syria, last updated 10 June 2026, [url](#); Mine Action AoR, Syria, 2025 – A Year in Review, Situation Update No.6, 8 December 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁴¹³ UNMAS, Syria, last updated 10 June 2026, [url](#); SNHR, On the International Day for Mine Awareness: Documenting the deaths of at least 3,799 civilians from landmines and cluster munitions in Syria, March 2011 – April 2026, 4 April 2026, [url](#), p. 8

⁴¹⁴ UNICEF, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Situation Report No. 16, October 2025, 28 November 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁴¹⁵ Etana Syria, Brief: Israeli operations continue in south-west Syria, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

⁴¹⁶ Enab Baladi, Explosive remnants of war continue to threaten children in northeast Syria, 28 March 2026, [url](#)

⁴¹⁷ SARD, UXO Challenge in Syria and Awareness Campaign, 5 March 2026, [url](#); Mine Action AoR, Syria, 2025 – A Year in Review, Situation Update No.6, 8 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁴¹⁸ SARD, UXO Challenge in Syria and Awareness Campaign, 5 March 2026, [url](#)

⁴¹⁹ UNICEF, Children in Syria remain at deadly risk from explosive remnants of war, 4 April 2026, [url](#); HALO Trust (The), Surviving the war, dying in peace, 23 March 2026, [url](#); SARD, UXO Challenge in Syria and Awareness Campaign, 5 March 2026, [url](#)

⁴²⁰ UNICEF, Children in Syria remain at deadly risk from explosive remnants of war, 4 April 2026, [url](#)

⁴²¹ UNICEF, Children in Syria remain at deadly risk from explosive remnants of war, 4 April 2026, [url](#); HALO Trust (The), Surviving the war, dying in peace, 23 March 2026, [url](#)

⁴²² Mine Action AoR, Syria, 2025 – A Year in Review, Situation Update No.6, 8 December 2025, [url](#), p. 5

⁴²³ SNHR, The Fifteenth Annual Report on Human Rights Situation in Syria 2025, 26 March 2026, [url](#), p. 8

⁴²⁴ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 8

⁴²⁵ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 7



IDPs gradually decreased⁴²⁶ and was estimated at 22 % at the beginning of the current reference period (October 2025)⁴²⁷ and at 21 % in April 2026 (around 5.86 million out of a total population of approximately 27.90 million).⁴²⁸ Conversely, the population share of IDP returnees, estimated at 4 % of the country's population in February 2025 (around 1.04 million out of a total population of approximately 26.05 million),⁴²⁹ gradually increased to reach 7 % in July 2025⁴³⁰ and remained at this level through April 2026 (around 1.95 million out of a total population of 27.90 million).⁴³¹

At the same time, safe returns to areas of origin were impeded by lack of clearance of landmines and unexploded ordnance,⁴³² while several instances of new displacements occurred since December 2024 as retaliatory violence, often sectarian in nature, in governorates such as Latakia, Tartous, Homs, Hama and Sweida left entire families and villages displaced. For instance, in the context of the intense hostilities in Sweida in July 2025, almost all Bedouins were forcibly displaced from the governorate, with Druze armed militia preventing their return as of early 2026.⁴³³ In the current reference period, clashes in Aleppo City's Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah neighbourhoods in late December 2025,⁴³⁴ and especially their escalation in January 2026 prompted large-scale displacement.⁴³⁵ According to UNOCHA, an estimated 148 000 residents were displaced between 6 and 10 January and predominantly relocated to Afrin district.⁴³⁶

As of 21 May 2026, UNHCR estimated that, since December 2024, approximately 1.91 million individuals had returned from internal displacement⁴³⁷ and around 1.65 million had returned from abroad.⁴³⁸ Many of the returnees from abroad headed to Damascus, Rural Damascus,

⁴²⁶ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 3 – April 2025, 10 May 2025, [url](#), p. 8;

IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 6 – July 2025, 18 August 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁴²⁷ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 9 – October 2025, 10 November 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁴²⁸ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁴²⁹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 7

⁴³⁰ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 3 – April 2025, 10 May 2025, [url](#), p. 8

IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 5 – June 2025, 7 July 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁴³¹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁴³² IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 8; SARD, UXO Challenge in Syria and Awareness Campaign, 5 March 2026, [url](#)

⁴³³ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 39, 62-63

⁴³⁴ Enab Baladi, Displacement from Sheikh Maqsoud and al-Ashrafiya neighborhoods in Aleppo, 23 December 2025, [url](#)

⁴³⁵ STJ, Syria: Forced Displacement and Looting of Property in Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyah during the Aleppo Escalation (January 2026), 2 April 2026, [url](#)

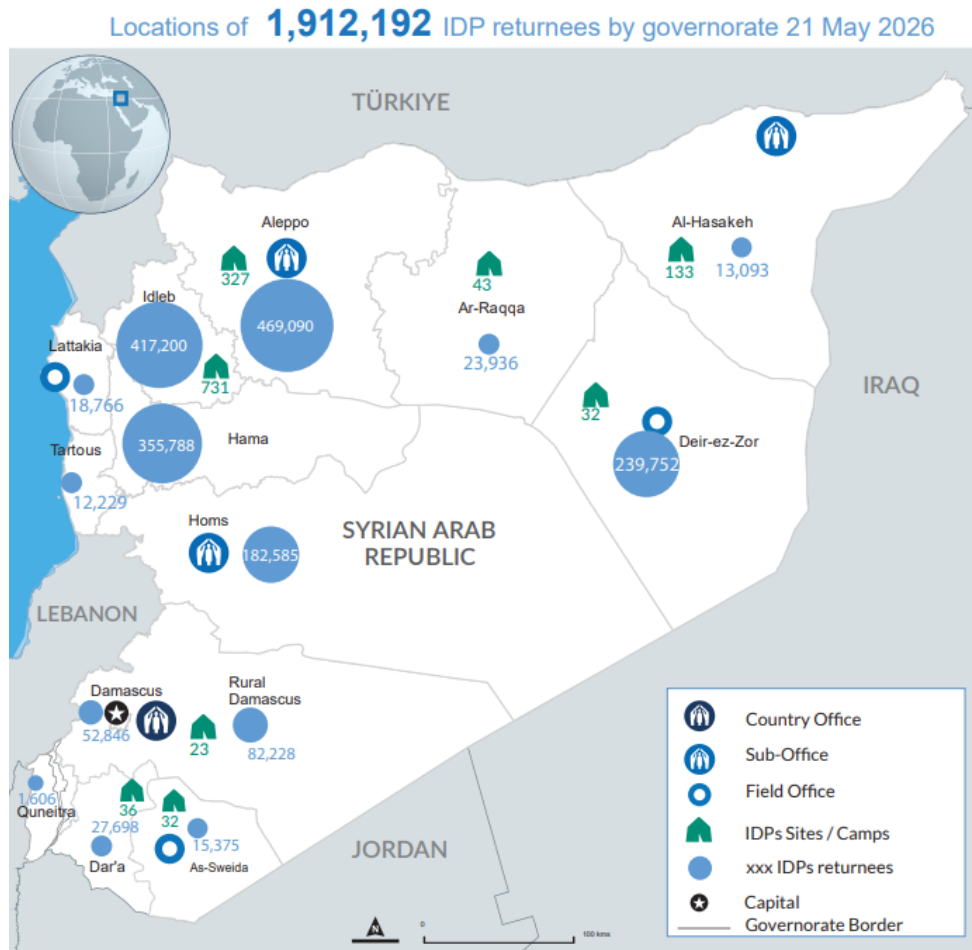
⁴³⁶ UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No.3 - Clashes in Aleppo (as of 10 January 2026), 10 January 2026, [url](#), p. 2

⁴³⁷ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

⁴³⁸ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)



Dar'a and Aleppo governorates, citing recent political developments, improved security, and family reunification as reasons for return.⁴³⁹



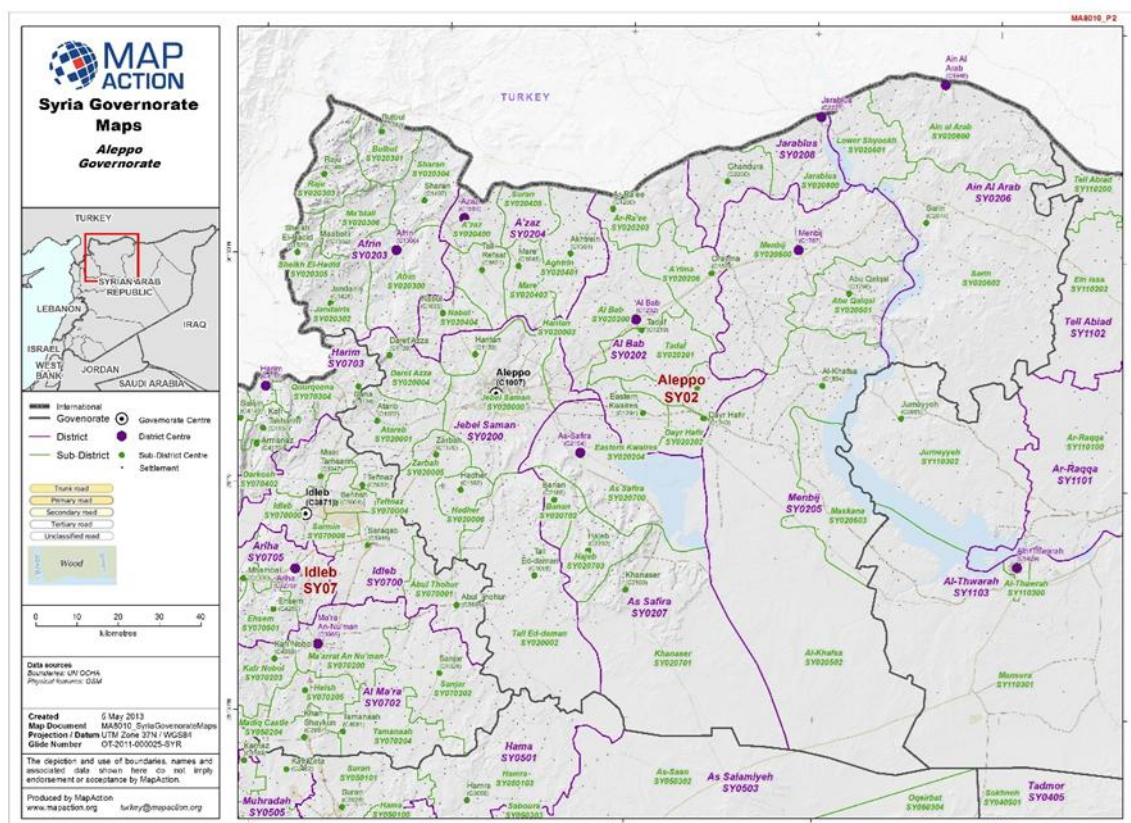
Map 3. © UNHCR, Locations of 1 912,192 IDP returnees by governorate 21 May 2026⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁹ UNHCR, Syria situation: Regional flash update #70, 27 March 2026, [url](#), pp. 2-3

⁴⁴⁰ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

2. Security situation and conflict impact on civilians by governorate

2.1. Aleppo governorate



Map 4: © MapAction, Aleppo governorate⁴⁴¹

2.1.1. 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.⁴⁴² Its capital is the city of Aleppo.⁴⁴³ As of April 2026, IOM estimated the governorate's population at 5 702 889, including residents, IDPs and returnees from abroad.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴¹ MapAction, Aleppo governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁴² UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 106

⁴⁴³ UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic, Map No. 4204 Rev. 4, August 2022, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁴ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

2.1.2. Territorial control and main armed actors

Territorial control in Aleppo governorate changed during the reporting period. In November 2025, ISW and CTP mapped control of the governorate as divided between the Syrian transitional government in the centre and south, the SNA in the north, and the SDF in the northeast.⁴⁴⁵ By mid-February 2026, however, the transitional government was assessed to control the vast majority of the governorate. The main exception was the north-eastern corner, where the SDF retained control,⁴⁴⁶ although the area concerned had visibly decreased in size since November 2025.⁴⁴⁷ The 60th, 72nd, 76th and 80th Divisions of the Syrian army were the principal formations present in Aleppo governorate.⁴⁴⁸

In January 2026, a military operation was launched in the Kurdish-controlled neighbourhoods of Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyeh in the city of Aleppo.⁴⁴⁹ Between 6 and 10 January 2026, government forces established control over the whole of Aleppo City.⁴⁵⁰ Following the withdrawal of Kurdish forces from the city, the army of the transitional government went on to capture dozens of towns in eastern Aleppo governorate, including the towns of Deir Hafer and Maskana and their surrounding areas.⁴⁵¹ On 18 January, a ceasefire and ‘full integration’ agreement was signed between the Syrian government and the SDF.⁴⁵² A further agreement, announced on 30 January, brought hostilities to a halt.⁴⁵³ By 31 January 2026, government forces controlled most of the governorate, with Ain al-Arab remaining outside their authority at the time.⁴⁵⁴ Under the agreement, the two parties decided to establish a military division comprising three SDF brigades, as well as a local brigade from Ain al-Arab affiliated with an army division from Aleppo.⁴⁵⁵ At the end of February, it was reported that the integrating of the Ain al-Arab Internal Security Forces (Asayish) into the MoI had commenced.⁴⁵⁶ In March 2026, the de facto Kurdish control of Ain al-Arab and the surrounding countryside continued, although SDF forces departed from the city in February after talks with the transitional government.⁴⁵⁷ In May, Samir Oso, the Syrian defense minister for eastern region affairs,

⁴⁴⁵ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁶ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); Aftandilian, G., The Shrinking Space for Kurdish Autonomy in Syria, Arab Center Washington DC, 26 February 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁷ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁴⁸ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 49-51

⁴⁴⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 21

⁴⁵⁰ MEI, Syria is stabilizing, but US help remains vital, 13 February 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁵¹ Al Jazeera, Syrian army takes control of east Aleppo towns as Kurdish fighters withdraw, 17 January 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁵² SANA, Terms of the Ceasefire and Integration Agreement between Syria and SDF, 18 January 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁵³ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 21

⁴⁵⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 23

⁴⁵⁵ Reuters, Syrian government, Kurds agree integration deal, US hails 'historic milestone', 30 January 2026, [url](#); Aftandilian, G., The Shrinking Space for Kurdish Autonomy in Syria, Arab Center Washington DC, 26 February 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁶ Kurdistan24, Syria Begins Integrating Kobani's Asayish Forces into Interior Ministry as Siege and Humanitarian Crisis Persist, 27 February 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁷ Etana Syria, Progress & Challenges in SDF Integration, 28 March 2026, [url](#)

stated that the integration of the SDF remained ‘in its early stages’, although four new brigades –one of them in Ain al-Arab– had been formed.⁴⁵⁸

As for the role of the Syrian National Army (SNA) in the governorate, former SNA factions were reported to remain influential in the security landscape, particularly in Afrin in western Aleppo governorate,⁴⁵⁹ with arbitrary arrests⁴⁶⁰ and kidnappings of civilians by these forces reported during the reference period.⁴⁶¹ The 80th Division, which is present in Afrin, is led by a former Nour al-Din al-Zinki leader and includes fighters from former SNA groups, comprising elements of the Renaissance and Liberation Movement (RLM).⁴⁶²

2.1.3. Security trends

The main security trend in Aleppo governorate during the reference period was the rollback of remaining SDF-held positions and the expansion of transitional-government authority⁴⁶³ in Aleppo City⁴⁶⁴ and in the SDF-held belt east of Aleppo toward Deir Hafer and Maskana.⁴⁶⁵ Clashes resumed near Tishreen Dam and in Aleppo City in October 2025,⁴⁶⁶ before escalating sharply in early January 2026.⁴⁶⁷ By 10 January 2026, government forces had taken full control of Aleppo City following fighting in the predominantly Kurdish neighbourhoods of Sheikh Maqoud and Ashrafiyeh.⁴⁶⁸ During the January battles, allegations of abuses by both parties were reported,⁴⁶⁹ including attacks on civilians, sniper fire,⁴⁷⁰ degrading treatment, arbitrary deprivation of liberty,⁴⁷¹ desecration of bodies, the use of unguided munitions in

⁴⁵⁸ Enab Baladi, Hamo: Four SDF Brigades Join Defense Ministry, 2 May 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁵⁹ Syria in Transition, What’s left of the SNA, December 2025, [url](#); Vacher P., Turkey’s Lingering Influence in Syria’s New Army, New Lines Magazine, 2 February 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁰ SOHR, Arbitrary arrest | Two brothers arrested by “National Army” factions in Aleppo countryside, 12 December 2025, [url](#); RIC, North and East Syria Post-Assad: Challenges and Opportunities, December 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁶¹ SOHR, Security chaos | “Al-Amshat” Faction kidnaps young man in Al-Siryā Al-Jadida in Aleppo, 7 October 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Torture victim | Civilian from Afrin was killed after being kidnapped by Turkish-backed factions, 6 December 2025, [url](#); RIC, North and East Syria Post-Assad: Challenges and Opportunities, December 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁶² Syria in Transition, What’s left of the SNA, December 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁶³ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); Aftandilian, G., The Shrinking Space for Kurdish Autonomy in Syria, Arab Center Washington DC, 26 February 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁴ MEI, Syria is stabilizing, but US help remains vital, 13 February 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁵ Al Jazeera, Syrian army takes control of east Aleppo towns as Kurdish fighters withdraw, 17 January 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁶ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I, pp. 40-41; Etana Syria, Brief: Ceasefire pauses SDF-Damascus fighting, 14 October 2025, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁸ MEI, How Damascus and the SDF came to blows in Aleppo — and what might come next, 13 January 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁶⁹ MEI, Integration or conflict in northeastern Syria? Ten key points to consider, 29 January 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁰ Arab Weekly (The), Syria government, Kurdish forces clash in Aleppo as Ankara calls on SDF to disarm, 7 January 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁷¹ STJ, Syria: Arrests and Abuse of Kurds During Aleppo Escalation (January 2026), April 2026, [url](#), p. 3

civilian areas, and extrajudicial executions.⁴⁷² After 10 January, hostilities decreased markedly, although sporadic drone attacks in Aleppo and its surroundings reportedly continued.⁴⁷³

In Manbij district, the main shift concerned its eastern part, around the towns of Deir Hafer and Maskana.⁴⁷⁴ Al Jazeera reported that the government opened evacuation corridors to allow civilians to leave the Deir Hafer and Maskana area before the offensive.⁴⁷⁵ As part of efforts to take control of Ain al-Arab, the city and its surrounding countryside came under prolonged siege or encirclement and experienced severe humanitarian pressure.⁴⁷⁶

Compared to the period straight after the fall of Bashar al-Assad, the configuration of actors has changed: while late 2024 and early 2025 had been marked by heavy fighting between Türkiye/SNA and the SDF, particularly around Tishreen Dam,⁴⁷⁷ including documented civilian casualties,⁴⁷⁸ the reference period was characterised primarily by confrontations involving government forces and the SDF.⁴⁷⁹ Incidents involving unidentified armed actors continued to be reported in the governorate,⁴⁸⁰ targeting both civilians⁴⁸¹ and members of the new security apparatus.⁴⁸² ISIL attacks were likewise reported against security personnel.⁴⁸³

2.1.4. Security incidents

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, ACLED recorded 513 security incidents in Aleppo governorate. Of these, 255 were coded as explosions/remote violence, 157 as battles, and 101 as incidents of violence against civilians. The majority of the incidents occurred in January 2026 (238 incidents). An analysis of ACLED data for the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad, from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, indicates two peaks in security incidents in the governorate: January 2025, with 353 incidents, and January 2026 with 238 incidents. More than half of the incidents of the first peak were due to a military escalation between the

⁴⁷² MEI, Integration or conflict in northeastern Syria? Ten key points to consider, 29 January 2026, [url](#); OHCHR, UN Syria Commission of Inquiry welcomes new ceasefire and calls for continuing efforts to protect civilians and prevent violations in northeast Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁷³ UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 4 - Clashes in Aleppo (as of 12 January 2026), 12 January 2026, [url](#), p. 2

⁴⁷⁴ Al Jazeera, Syrian army takes control of east Aleppo towns as Kurdish fighters withdraw, 17 January 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁵ Al Jazeera, Syrian army tells civilians to evacuate new front with SDF east of Aleppo, 15 January 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁶ DW, Syria: Life-saving aid reaches Kurdish city of Kobane, 25 January 2026, [url](#); ANHA, Health situation deteriorated in Kobani due to siege, 11 March 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁷⁷ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, March 21, 2025, 21 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁴⁷⁸ STJ, War Crimes: Turkish/SNA Attacks on Tishrin Dam Killed Civilians, Endangered the Vital Resource, 18 May 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁴⁷⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁸¹ SOHR, New murder crime | Civilian shot dead in Aleppo city, 7 October 2025, [url](#); SOHR, With over ten bullets | Civilian assassinated in his office in Aleppo city, 17 December 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Wearing military uniforms | Unidentified gunmen open fire on taxi in Afrin countryside, killing three, 29 January 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Security chaos | One Shiite killed and others injured in attack on taxi in Aleppo, 16 March 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁸² SOHR, Assassination | Defence Ministry member shot dead in Aleppo, 27 December 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Security chaos | Member of General Security Service assassinated in Akhtar, 14 January 2026, [url](#); SOHR, New assassination | Member of Ministry of Interior shot dead on Aleppo-Ai-Bab highway, 26 February 2026, [url](#); NPA, Two government soldiers killed in attack in Aleppo countryside, 6 March 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁸³ Enab Baladi, Islamic State claims attack targeting road security personnel in Idlib, 15 December 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Islamic State claims attack in Aleppo as assaults escalate, 7 March 2026, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Islamic State Claims Two Attacks in Syria in Two Days, 18 April 2026, [url](#)

Turkish and Türkiye-backed forces and the SDF.⁴⁸⁴ In comparison, the second peak occurred during the takeover of SDF-controlled areas in Aleppo by the Syrian transitional government.⁴⁸⁵ Between April and December 2025, the monthly number of recorded security incidents remained below 100 and between February and May 2026, the monthly number of incidents remained below 40.⁴⁸⁶

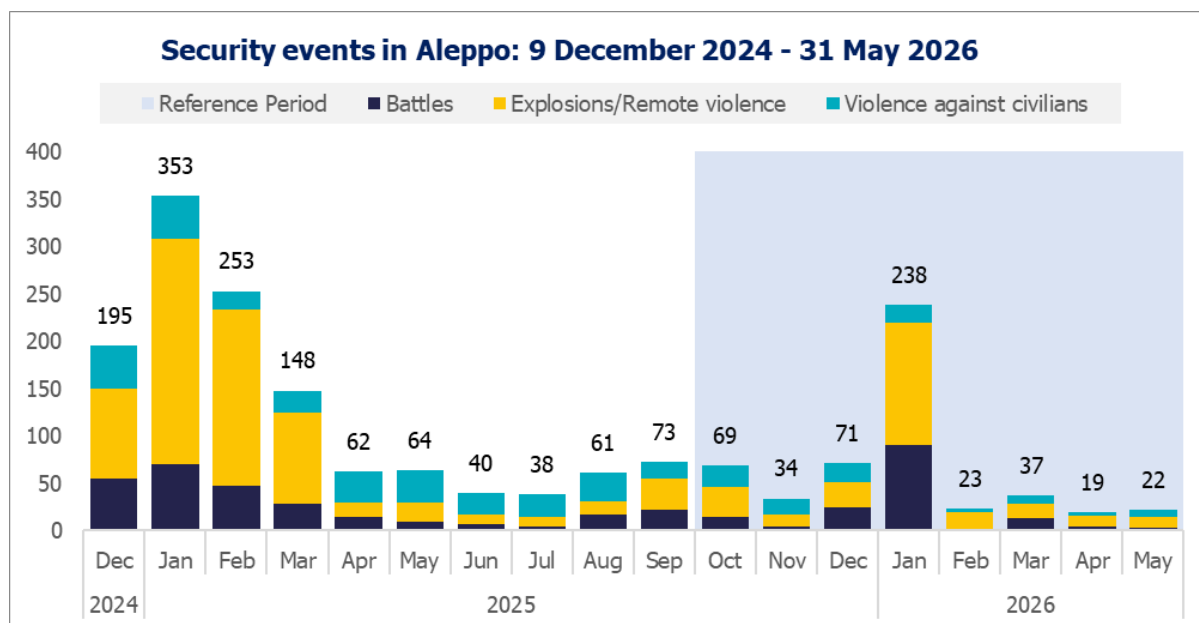


Figure 6: Evolution of security events in Aleppo per type, based on ACLED data⁴⁸⁷

During the reference period, ACLED recorded security incidents in all eight districts of Aleppo governorate. The highest number was documented in Ain Al-Arab (154 incidents), followed by Jebel Saman district, which includes Aleppo City (150 incidents), and Menbij (90 incidents). These were also the three districts with the highest number of incidents recorded in the governorate since the fall of Bashar al-Assad. By contrast, the lowest number of incidents was recorded in Jarablus district, with six incidents.

According to ACLED data, the military forces of Syria and the SDF were the main actors involved in security incidents during the reference period, with the SDF appearing in around 50 % of all recorded incidents, either coded as Actor 1 or Actor 2, and the Syrian military forces in around 45 %. Unidentified armed groups were additionally linked to approximately 28 % of incidents. A comparison between the current reference period and the overall security situation since 9 December 2024 suggests that the military forces of Türkiye no longer featured as a major actor in security incidents in the governorate. 19 of all recorded security

⁴⁸⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, [url](#), para. 21; MEI, Syria is stabilizing, but US help remains vital, 13 February 2026, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Syrian army takes control of east Aleppo towns as Kurdish fighters withdraw, 17 January 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

incidents during the reference period were linked to ISIL; all but three of these were coded as battles.

101 security incidents during the reporting period were coded as ‘violence against civilians’, 43 of which involved unidentified armed groups. 24 incidents involved the SDF and their internal security forces (Asayish), 17 the military forces of Syria and 7 the police forces of Syria.⁴⁸⁸

2.1.5. Civilian casualties

In October 2025, the SNHR recorded 13 civilian fatalities in Aleppo governorate attributed to the controlling forces or other parties to the conflict (two attributed to the SDF, one to the government forces and ten to other parties), the highest of all governorates, accounting for around 20 % of the total number (66) recorded in Syria.⁴⁸⁹ In November 2025, SNHR recorded 5 civilian fatalities (all of which were attributed to other parties),⁴⁹⁰ and 9 in December (four attributed to the SDF, one to government forces and four to other parties).⁴⁹¹ For the period between beginning of January and end of March 2026, SNHR recorded 75 civilian fatalities in Aleppo governorate⁴⁹² (30 in January, 27 in February and 18 in March),⁴⁹³ with 32 attributed to the SDF, five to government forces, two to ISIL and 36 to other parties. In the first quarter of 2026, the governorate was once again the one with the most fatalities, accounting for 28 % of the total number (268).⁴⁹⁴ In April, SNHR recorded one fatality and three in May, attributed to ‘other parties’ and remnants of the Assad government.⁴⁹⁵ An analysis of the period since the fall of Bashar al-Assad suggests a stark decrease of the civilian death toll in the governorate between December 2024 and August 2025, followed by a slow but steady increase of the number of civilian fatalities between August 2025 and end of March 2026.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁸⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁸⁹ SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁴⁹⁰ SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁴⁹¹ SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9

⁴⁹² SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5

⁴⁹³ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

⁴⁹⁴ SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5

⁴⁹⁵ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

⁴⁹⁶ SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3;

SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 108

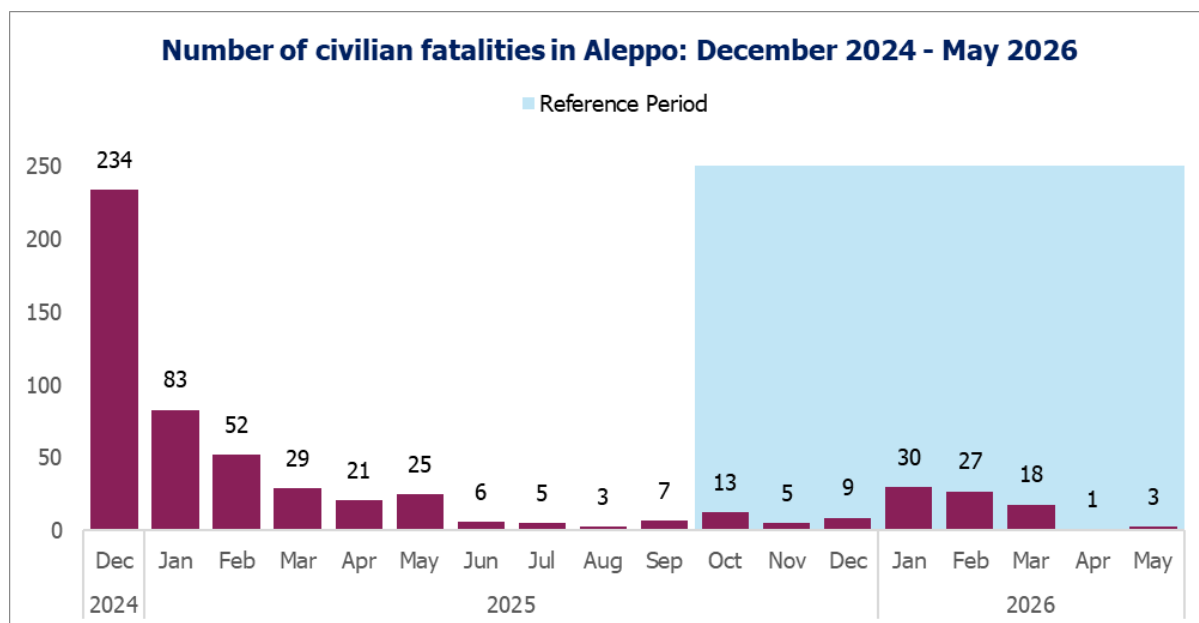


Figure 7: Evolution of civilian fatalities in Aleppo per month, based on SNHR data⁴⁹⁷

2.1.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

At the end of March 2026, Syria's Ministry of Local Administration and Environment in cooperation with the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat), published an assessment of damage in Aleppo governorate from the previous years of conflict. According to the publication, within the health sector, three of the governorate's hospitals had been completely destroyed or severely damaged. Among clinics, 31 had been completely destroyed or severely damaged and a further 39 moderately damaged. In the education sector, more than 440 schools had been either completely destroyed or severely damaged, while more than 1 000 had sustained moderate or light damage. The publication further indicated that nearly 50 000 residential units had been either completely destroyed or severely damaged, and almost 150 000 had been moderately or lightly damaged.⁴⁹⁸

UNOCHA reported that the January 2026 fighting between the Syrian army and the SDF in the neighbourhoods of Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyeh rendered four hospitals inoperative.⁴⁹⁹ A number of primary health centres and a minimum of three schools were damaged. Destruction to infrastructure networks and residential buildings, 21 % of which had already been damaged prior to the escalation, increased further. Sewage and water networks

⁴⁹⁷ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 108

⁴⁹⁸ Ministry of Local Administration and Environment, *الوزارة الإدارية المحلية والبيئة تنشر التقرير الختامي لتقييم أضرار محافظة حلب*, [Ministry of Local Administration and Environment published report, Final assessment of damages in Aleppo Governorate], 30 March 2026, [url](#)

⁴⁹⁹ UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 1 - Escalation of violence in Aleppo (as of 07 January 2026), 7 January 2026, [url](#), p. 2; UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 3 - Clashes in Aleppo (as of 10 January 2026), 10 January 2026, [url](#), p. 2

were also reported to have sustained severe damaged.⁵⁰⁰ In mid-January, UNICEF similarly confirmed damage to water infrastructure in the two neighbourhoods and assessed that at least 21 schools required rehabilitation.⁵⁰¹

At the end of January, war-related damage to the Tishreen Dam continued to cause power cuts in the city of Ain al-Arab,⁵⁰² while at the beginning of February, the dam had been reconnected to the Syrian electricity grid for the first time after a year-long shutdown.⁵⁰³ In March, it was reported that factions affiliated with the transitional government had destroyed civilian property in villages in the Ain al-Arab countryside, including houses, and had damaged local infrastructure.⁵⁰⁴

According to several international organisations and NGOs, Aleppo remained among the Syrian governorates most affected by contamination from explosive remnants of war (ERW) and by related incidents.⁵⁰⁵ The risk was reported to be particularly acute in rural parts of the governorate.⁵⁰⁶ In November 2025, an estimated one third of farmland in the rural areas of Aleppo and Idlib was contaminated to varying degrees, making these areas among the most dangerous in Syria because of the risk of accidental explosions.⁵⁰⁷ During the reporting period, SOHR reported several incidents in Aleppo governorate in which civilians were killed or injured by explosions caused by war remnants.⁵⁰⁸ According to the National Mine Action Centre, between the fall of Bashar al-Assad on 8 December 2024 and mid-January 2026, 151 such incidents were recorded in Aleppo, resulting in 104 deaths and 175 injuries. This represented the third highest number of recorded incidents in Syria after Deir Ez-Zor and Idlib governorates.⁵⁰⁹ SNHR reported that Aleppo recorded the second highest number of landmine victims between 8 December 2024 and April 2026, with 60 victims, accounting for 18.93 % of the total.⁵¹⁰ At the end of January 2026, the Ministry of Emergency and Disaster Management warned residents, inter alia, not to enter or return to the areas surrounding the

⁵⁰⁰ UNDP, Flash Update, Restoration of Basic Services and Job Creation through Cash-for-Work in conflict-hit areas of Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyeh in Aleppo City, 12 January 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5

⁵⁰¹ UNICEF, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Flash Update #2, Escalation of Violence in Aleppo Governorate and impacts in North-East Syria, 15 January 2026, [url](#), p. 1

⁵⁰² National (The), 'What ceasefire?': Kobani residents face siege and shortages as flimsy Syria truce holds, 28 January 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁰³ D24, Reconnecting Tishreen Dam to the Syrian electricity grid after a year of shutdown, 2 February 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁴ SOHR, After having looted civilian properties in tens of villages | Turkish-backed factions dismantle Lafarge plant in Kobani countryside, 4 March 2026, [url](#); ANHA, Interim Govt factions loot, destroy civilian property in Kobani countryside, 11 March 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁵ UNHCR, Syria Protection and Reintegration Insights. January – March 2026, 28 April 2026, [url](#), p. 14; UNMAS, Syria, last updated 10 June 2026, [url](#); SARD, UXO Challenge in Syria and Awareness Campaign, 5 March 2026, [url](#); Handicap International, Landmines in Syrien [Landmines in Syria], last updated 16 March 2026, [url](#); Mine Action AoR, Syria, 2025 – A Year in Review, Situation Update No.6, 8 December 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁵⁰⁶ Health Cluster and WHO, Syria: Health Sector Bulletin - January 2026, 1 April 2026, [url](#), p. 2; Mine Action AoR, Syria, Situation Update No. 5, 15 October 2025, [url](#), p. 4

⁵⁰⁷ New Arab (The), 'Every step is a confrontation with death': On the frontlines with Syrian women clearing landmines to reclaim their homeland, 18 November 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁸ SOHR, Old ordnance | Civilian killed and other injured in explosion of war remnants in Aleppo, 11 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Two new victims of explosion of landmines monitored in Aleppo, 27 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Two young men killed in eastern Aleppo countryside, 31 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Young man killed in landmine explosion in Aleppo, 7 April 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁰⁹ New Arab (The), Every step could be their last as Syrian children navigate mine-contaminated land, 7 April 2026, [url](#)

⁵¹⁰ SNHR, On the International Day for Mine Awareness: Documenting the deaths of at least 3,799 civilians from landmines and cluster munitions in Syria, March 2011 – April 2026, 4 April 2026, [url](#), p. 8



Tishreen Dam in the Aleppo countryside until these areas had been fully secured by the ministry's specialised teams.⁵¹¹

2.1.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's population movements assessments in Syria, which started as of February 2025, show that there was a decrease in Aleppo's IDP population between February 2025 (around 1.4 million out of a total population of approximately 4.84 million, 29 %)⁵¹² and April 2026 (around 970 000 out of a total population of approximately 5.7 million, 17 %).⁵¹³

According to UNOCHA, clashes between Syrian government forces and the SDF in the Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyeh neighbourhoods of Aleppo displaced an estimated 148 000 people between 6 and 10 January 2026.⁵¹⁴ Approximately 29 000 had returned to their homes by 12 January.⁵¹⁵ By March 2026, IOM reported that an estimated 79 % of those displaced from Aleppo governorate during the most recent conflict in North-East Syria had returned to their areas of origin compared with the peak level of displacement recorded on 9 January, when 138 053 individuals were reported as displaced. The majority of those remaining in displacement (a total of 28 691) were residing in Afrin (13 278) and Ain al-Arab (10 397).⁵¹⁶ At the same time, UNOCHA estimated the prospects for return to Afrin district to be constrained by unclear procedures, insecurity, and widespread property destruction or secondary occupation.⁵¹⁷

UNHCR further estimated that, as of end of May 2026, 469 090 individuals had returned to locations in Aleppo governorate from internal displacement since December 2024⁵¹⁸ and that 233 317 had returned to the governorate from abroad within the same period.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹¹ Enab Baladi, Explosive remnants of war threaten civilians after SDF withdrawal, Emergency Ministry warns, 28 January 2026, [url](#)

⁵¹² IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁵¹³ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁵¹⁴ UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 3 - Clashes in Aleppo (as of 10 January 2026), 10 January 2026, [url](#), p. 2

⁵¹⁵ UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 4, Clashes in Aleppo, 12 January 2026, [url](#), p. 2

⁵¹⁶ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Emergency Mobility Tracking Situation Report Aleppo/ North East Syria (NES) Conflict – Round 15, 11 March 2026, [url](#), p. 1

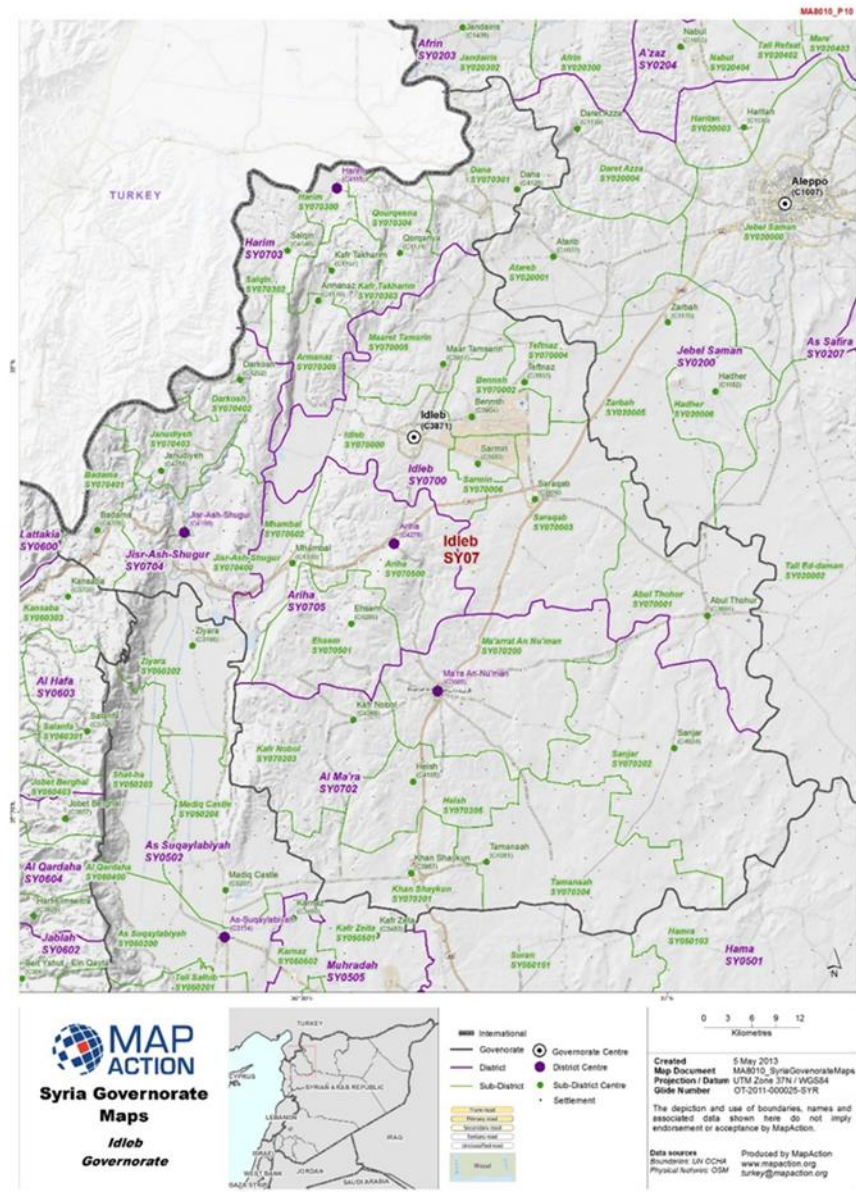
⁵¹⁷ UNOCHA, Syria: Humanitarian Response in Aleppo and the North East, Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4, 4 March 2026, [url](#), p. 2

⁵¹⁸ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard, 21 May 2026, [url](#)

⁵¹⁹ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard, 21 May 2026, [url](#)



2.2. Idlib governorate



Map 5: © MapAction, Idlib governorate⁵²⁰

2.2.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Idlib governorate consists of five districts: Al Ma'ra, Ariha, Harim, Jisr al-Shughur, and Idlib. These districts are further divided into a total of 26 sub-districts.⁵²¹ Estimates of Idlib's

⁵²⁰ MapAction, Idlib governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

⁵²¹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 108-109; IOM, DTM Syria Dashboard, Population Groups Baseline, n.d., [url](#). Set filters to Idlib governorate.

population range from 2.66 million⁵²² to 3.19 million. According to UNOCHA, the governorate hosts a large share of the country's displaced people.⁵²³ The capital of Idlib governorate is the city of Idlib,⁵²⁴ with approximately 255 000 inhabitants.⁵²⁵

2.2.2. Territorial control and main armed actors

HTS initially became the dominant force in Idlib governorate in 2017⁵²⁶ and governed it through its political and administrative arm, the Syrian Salvation Government.⁵²⁷ HTS remained dominant in Idlib⁵²⁸ until it was dissolved in January 2025.⁵²⁹ Former members of the Salvation Government, as well as HTS members, were assigned important posts in the transitional government announced in March 2025.⁵³⁰

As of mid-December 2024, a map produced by ISW and CTP showed Idlib governorate as being controlled by HTS-led opposition forces.⁵³¹ By 16 February 2026, the governorate was shown as being controlled by the Syrian Transitional Government.⁵³² As of November 2025, the 64th and 98th divisions of the new Syrian Army were based in Idlib.⁵³³

During the reporting period, veteran foreign jihadi fighters continued to be present in Idlib.⁵³⁴ A group of about 50 jihadist foreign fighters known as Firqat al-Ghuraba and led by French national Omar Diaby, alias Omar Omsen, was living in a camp in Harim district,⁵³⁵ with their families.⁵³⁶ Reportedly, the camps of French foreign fighters had established a parallel policing system operating outside Syrian state authority, including trials and the issuing of sentences.⁵³⁷ The presence of Uzbek foreign fighters, which were described by an interior ministry official as operating in 'mafia-like' ways,⁵³⁸ was also reported.⁵³⁹

⁵²² IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁵²³ UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Overview Issue No. 3 | December 2025 - A Year in Review, 3 February 2026, [url](#), p. 8

⁵²⁴ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Idlib, last updated 22 October 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, The Eleventh Hour for Idlib, Syria's Last Rebel Bastion, 6 February 2020, [url](#), p. 1

⁵²⁵ IOM, DTM Syria Dashboard, Population Groups Baseline, n.d., [url](#). Set filters to Idlib sub-district.

⁵²⁶ Vision of Humanity, What happens next when a terrorist group overthrows a government?, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

⁵²⁷ BBC, From Syrian jihadist leader to rebel politician: How Abu Mohammed al-Jolani reinvented himself, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

⁵²⁸ BISI, The Domestic Situation in Post-Assad Syria: A New Era Under HTS Leadership, 27 January 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Reported Control of Terrain in Syria as of January 5, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST, 5 January 2025, [url](#)

⁵²⁹ Al Jazeera, US revokes 'terrorist' designation for Syrian president's former group HTS, 7 July 2025, [url](#)

⁵³⁰ International Crisis Group, What Lies in Store for Syria as a New Government Takes Power?, 25 April 2025, [url](#)

⁵³¹ ISW and CTP, Reported Control of Terrain in Syria as of December 19, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 20 December 2024, [url](#)

⁵³² ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#)

⁵³³ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 48-49

⁵³⁴ Reuters, Syrian forces detain Uzbek fighters in security sweep, 6 May 2026, [url](#);

⁵³⁵ Shtuni, A., From Insurgency to Statecraft: Al-Sharaa and Syria's Foreign Fighters Test, 19 February 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5

⁵³⁶ Independent, What to know about the French militants who clashed with Syrian forces in Idlib, 23 October 2025, [url](#)

⁵³⁷ FDD, Syrian Government Launches Operation to Apprehend Wanted French Jihadist Fugitives, 22 October 2025, [url](#)

⁵³⁸ International Crisis Group, The Struggle to Pacify Syria's Foreign Legions, 13 May 2026, [url](#)

⁵³⁹ National (The), Syria arrests armed Uzbek fighters after stand-off in Idlib, 6 May 2026, [url](#);

The Emirates Policy Center (EPC) reported on 30 December 2025 that, although Türkiye's focus was shifting away from Idlib to the Kurdish conflict in Aleppo, the country maintained more than 20 000 military and security personnel in the northwest of Syria. Türkiye run bases and observation points in southern Idlib as well as major sites such as Al-Mastumah camp and the Taftanaz Airport in the northern part of the governorate.⁵⁴⁰ Deadly ISIL activity was recorded at the end of 2025⁵⁴¹ and a security campaign against ISIL cells was launched on 8 November 2025 by the Mol in Idlib and other governorates.⁵⁴²

2.2.3. Security trends

Following almost daily hostilities during the civil war, Idlib started to experience a 'period of calm'⁵⁴³ and relative stability as of March 2025.⁵⁴⁴ Nevertheless, during the reference period of this report, armed clashes erupted between Firqat al-Ghuraba and forces of the Syrian Transitional Government on 21 and 22 October 2025.⁵⁴⁵ On 23 October, Uzbek foreign fighters arrived in support of Firqat al-Ghuraba,⁵⁴⁶ resulting in a 'multi-faction battle'.⁵⁴⁷ A ceasefire was negotiated between the militants and government forces,⁵⁴⁸ which reportedly allowed Mol forces to enter the camp.⁵⁴⁹ Other confrontations involving Uzbek militants occurred at the beginning of May 2026.⁵⁵⁰ Syrian authorities arrested 16 Uzbek fighters in Idlib⁵⁵¹ after a raid on a robbery suspect's home⁵⁵² triggered an armed stand-off at a Criminal Security headquarters.⁵⁵³ According to sources, the integration of foreign fighters into the new Syrian security forces 'entails risks',⁵⁵⁴ and there are growing tensions regarding loyalties and autonomy.⁵⁵⁵

Idlib city as well as Idlib countryside experienced an escalation of ISIL operations in late 2025.⁵⁵⁶ On 1 December 2025, the Mol reported of two operations in the north of the governorate and in the west of Idlib city which targeted cells affiliated with ISIL.⁵⁵⁷ On 16 December, Syrian forces dismantled another ISIL cell, which was associated with a series of

⁵⁴⁰ EPC, The Turkish Role in Rebuilding Syria's Military and Security Capabilities, 30 December 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁴¹ Enab Baladi, Islamic State claims attack targeting road security personnel in Idlib, 15 December 2025, [url](#); Lister, C., Data Update (November 25-December 2), Syria Weekly, 5 December 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁴² Enab Baladi, Syrian Interior Ministry announces targeting Islamic State cells in Idlib, 1 December 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁴³ UN, Emerging from War, Syrians Embark on a Path to Stability and Development, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁴ Harmoon Center, Harmoon Center Monitoring Report for March 2025, 20 April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

⁵⁴⁵ Shtuni, A., From Insurgency to Statecraft: Al-Sharaa and Syria's Foreign Fighters Test, 19 February 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5

⁵⁴⁶ BISI, Syrian Forces Besiege Jihadist Camp: Government Raid Signals Future Challenges, 4 November 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁷ SARI Global, Syrian Government Raid on Foreign Fighters in al-Fardan, 22 October 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁸ BISI, Syrian Forces Besiege Jihadist Camp: Government Raid Signals Future Challenges, 4 November 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁴⁹ New Arab (The), Syria reaches truce with French-led militant group in Idlib, 24 October 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁰ Reuters, Syrian forces detain Uzbek fighters in security sweep, 6 May 2026, [url](#); National (The), Syria arrests armed Uzbek fighters after stand-off in Idlib, 6 May 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁵¹ National (The), Syria arrests armed Uzbek fighters after stand-off in Idlib, 6 May 2026, [url](#); International Crisis Group, The Struggle to Pacify Syria's Foreign Legions, 13 May 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁵² National (The), Syria arrests armed Uzbek fighters after stand-off in Idlib, 6 May 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁵³ National (The), Syria arrests armed Uzbek fighters after stand-off in Idlib, 6 May 2026, [url](#); International Crisis Group, The Struggle to Pacify Syria's Foreign Legions, 13 May 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁴ International Crisis Group, The Struggle to Pacify Syria's Foreign Legions, 13 May 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁵ Shtuni, A., From Insurgency to Statecraft: Al-Sharaa and Syria's Foreign Fighters Test, 19 February 2026, [url](#), p. 5

⁵⁵⁶ SOHR, Amid noticeable escalation of ISIS cells' operations | Leaflets promising the return of "Islamic state" distributed in Idlib, 17 December 2025, [url](#); Shtuni, A., From Insurgency to Statecraft: Al-Sharaa and Syria's Foreign Fighters Test, 19 February 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁵⁵⁷ Enab Baladi, Syrian Interior Ministry announces targeting Islamic State cells in Idlib, 1 December 2025, [url](#)



attacks targeting security and military patrols in northwestern Syria⁵⁵⁸ since November 2025.⁵⁵⁹ Furthermore, many of the roughly 6 000 foreigners with links to ISIL who were previously held in al-Hol camp reportedly travelled to Idlib and Aleppo after control of the camp was taken over by the Syrian government from SDF forces in January 2026, sparking security concerns.⁵⁶⁰ In March 2026, two ISIL attacks were reported in Idlib.⁵⁶¹

After several years in the role of a 'protective power' for the Idlib governorate – preventing Assad's forces from retaking the area from the HTS –⁵⁶² Türkiye's focus shifted away from Idlib, which had come to hold less strategic significance, towards northern Aleppo and the Kurdish conflict.⁵⁶³

2.2.4. Security incidents

For the period between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, 71 security incidents were recorded by ACLED in Idlib governorate, of which 34 were coded as explosions/remote violence, 21 as battles, and 16 as incidents of violence against civilians. ISIL was involved in 4 of the 21 battles recorded by ACLED for the reporting period. For the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May, a total of 263 security incidents were recorded for Idlib governorate. The trend in security events peaked in January 2025 with 39 incidents; these were largely caused by landmines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Starting from February 2025, the monthly number of recorded security incidents show a downwards trend. Explosions/remote violence were the most significant security threat in Idlib governorate since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad until 30 September 2025 (71 % of all security incidents) and this pattern continued throughout the eight-month reporting period from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026, although to a lesser extent (48 %).

⁵⁵⁸ Media Line (The), Syrian Forces Say They Broke Up Islamic State Cell Behind Attacks in Idlib, Aleppo, 17 December 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁵⁹ ISW and CTP, ISIS Activity in Idlib and Aleppo, December 16, 2025 [Map], 16 December 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁰ Al Jazeera, Exodus of ISIL-linked detainees from Syria camp sparks security concerns, 17 February 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁶¹ SOHR, Worrying escalation | 15 civilians and combatants killed in 22 attacks carries out by ISIS in different areas across Syria in March, 1 April 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁶² SWP, The Fall of the Assad Regime: Regional and International Power Shifts, February 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁵⁶³ EPC, The Turkish Role in Rebuilding Syria's Military and Security Capabilities, 30 December 2025, [url](#)



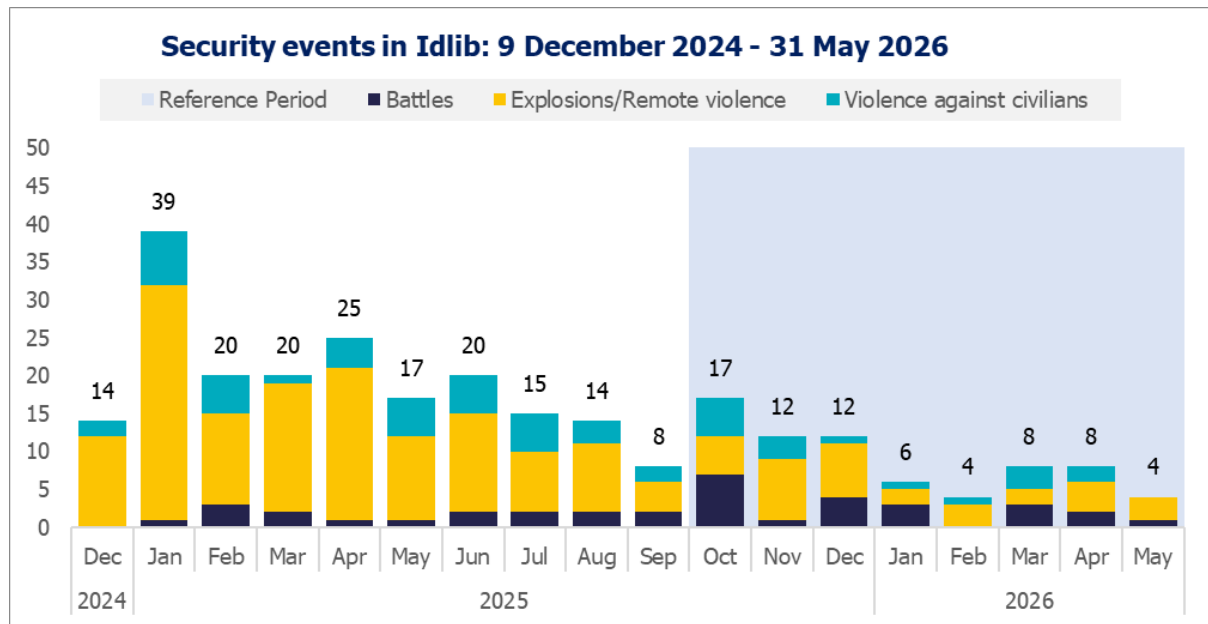


Figure 8: Evolution of security events in Idlib per type, based on ACLED data⁵⁶⁴

During the reference period for this report, security incidents were recorded by ACLED in all five districts of Idlib governorate, with the highest numbers being documented in the districts of Al Mara and Idlib (24 incidents each). According to ACLED data, main actors involved in security incidents (coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2') were unidentified armed groups, which were involved in 82 % of incidents.⁵⁶⁵

2.2.5. Civilian casualties

SNHR recorded 6 civilian fatalities in Idlib governorate in October 2025, 10 in November and five in December, 12 in January 2026, 6 in February, 7 in March, 8 in April and 13 in May 2026.⁵⁶⁶ Between October 2025 and 31 May 2026, most recorded civilian fatalities in the governorate were attributed to actors that SNHR could not identify, except for three civilians killed by remnants of the Assad regime in November 2025 and February 2026.⁵⁶⁷ An analysis of the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad shows a high peak in December 2024 with 85 civilian fatalities,⁵⁶⁸ followed by around 20 per month between January and April 2025 and between 4 and 13 in the remaining months of 2025.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁶⁶ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

⁵⁶⁷ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁵⁶⁸ 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](#), p. 9

⁵⁶⁹ Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 115

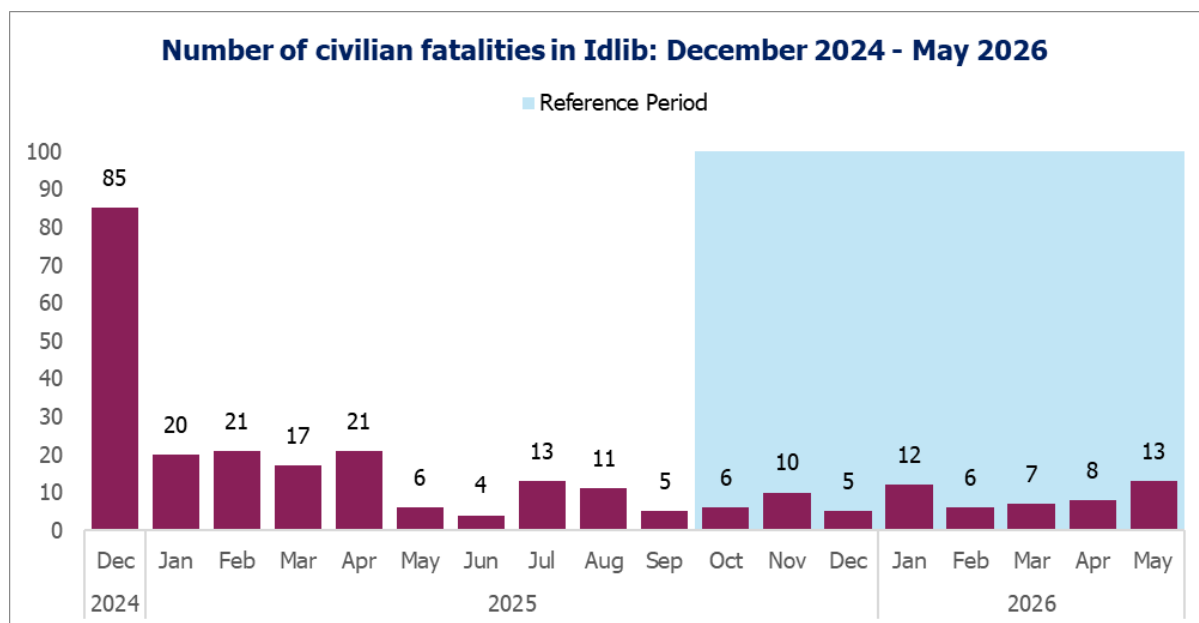


Figure 9: Evolution of civilian fatalities in Idlib per month, based on SNHR data⁵⁷⁰

2.2.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

350 schools in rural Idlib, which were destroyed during the nearly 14-year civil war, were reportedly out of service, with only 10 % having undergone rehabilitation.⁵⁷¹ According to MSF, health infrastructure in Idlib remained damaged and there was still a shortage of functioning facilities.⁵⁷² The extensive contamination with explosive ordnance continued to restrict freedom of movement and safe access to farmland.⁵⁷³ During the period between the fall of Bashar Al-Assad and April 2026, SNHR documented 61 people killed by landmine explosions in Idlib governorate. Additionally, three people were documented to have been killed by remnants of cluster munitions.⁵⁷⁴ SNHR reported several war remnant and landmine incidents resulting in fatalities and injuries in April and May 2026.⁵⁷⁵

2.2.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

According to IOM's population movements assessments in Syria, which started two months after the December 2024 power shift, 61 % of Idlib governorate's population (around 1 769 000 out of a total population of approximately 2.90 million) were IDPs as of February

⁵⁷⁰ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 115

⁵⁷¹ AP, Syrian students return to schools stripped bare by conflict, 31 October 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁷² MSF, What does Syria look like a year since the fall of Assad?, 11 December 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁷³ UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Overview Issue No. 3 | December 2025 - A Year in Review, 3 February 2026, [url](#), p. 8

⁵⁷⁴ SNHR, On the International Day for Mine Awareness: Documenting the deaths of at least 3,799 civilians from landmines and cluster munitions in Syria, March 2011 – April 2026, 4 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 8-9

⁵⁷⁵ SOHR, Old ordnance | Man killed and child injured in Hama and Idlib countryside, 28 April 2026, [url](#); SNHR, Boy killed, girl injured by a landmine in Idlib, April 23, 2025, 25 April 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Young man killed and his father injured in southern Idlib countryside, 13 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, After children tragedy | Mine car explodes leaving two killed and ten injured among engineering teams, 4 April 2026, [url](#)

2025.⁵⁷⁶ Since then, according to data from subsequent population movements assessment rounds, the share of IDPs of the total population has steadily decreased,⁵⁷⁷ reaching 33 % (around 878 955 out of a total of 2.66 million) as of April 2026.⁵⁷⁸ Idlib remained the primary area in Syria from which IDPs returned in March⁵⁷⁹ and April 2026,⁵⁸⁰ driven by higher rental expenses in displacement sites and worsening living conditions caused by heavy rainfall.⁵⁸¹

At the same time, IOM reported that Idlib governorate provided the most favorable conditions for a sustainable return within the country as of January 2026. Indicators used for this IOM-assessment included, among others, security, access to livelihoods, housing, and access to documentation.⁵⁸² This is reflected in the numbers of IDP returnees to Idlib, which rose from around 145 000 (5 % of the total population) in February 2025⁵⁸³ to around 559 000 (21 % of the total population) as of April 2026. An additional 5 % (around 133 000) of Idlib's population were documented as returnees from abroad.⁵⁸⁴ However, UNHCR estimated that, as of 21 May 2026, around 417 000 individuals had returned to Idlib governorate from internal displacement since December 2024⁵⁸⁵ and approximately 240 000 had returned from abroad within the same period.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁷⁶ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 7

⁵⁷⁷ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 4 – May 2025, 11 June 2025, [url](#), p. 8; IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 7 – August 2025, 12 September 2025, [url](#), p. 8; IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 10 – November 2025, 19 December 2025, [url](#), p. 7; IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 13 – February 2026, 16 March 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁵⁷⁸ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁵⁷⁹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 14 – March 2026, 16 April 2026, [url](#), p. 5

⁵⁸⁰ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 5

⁵⁸¹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 14 – March 2026, 16 April 2026, [url](#), p. 5

⁵⁸² IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 3, 23

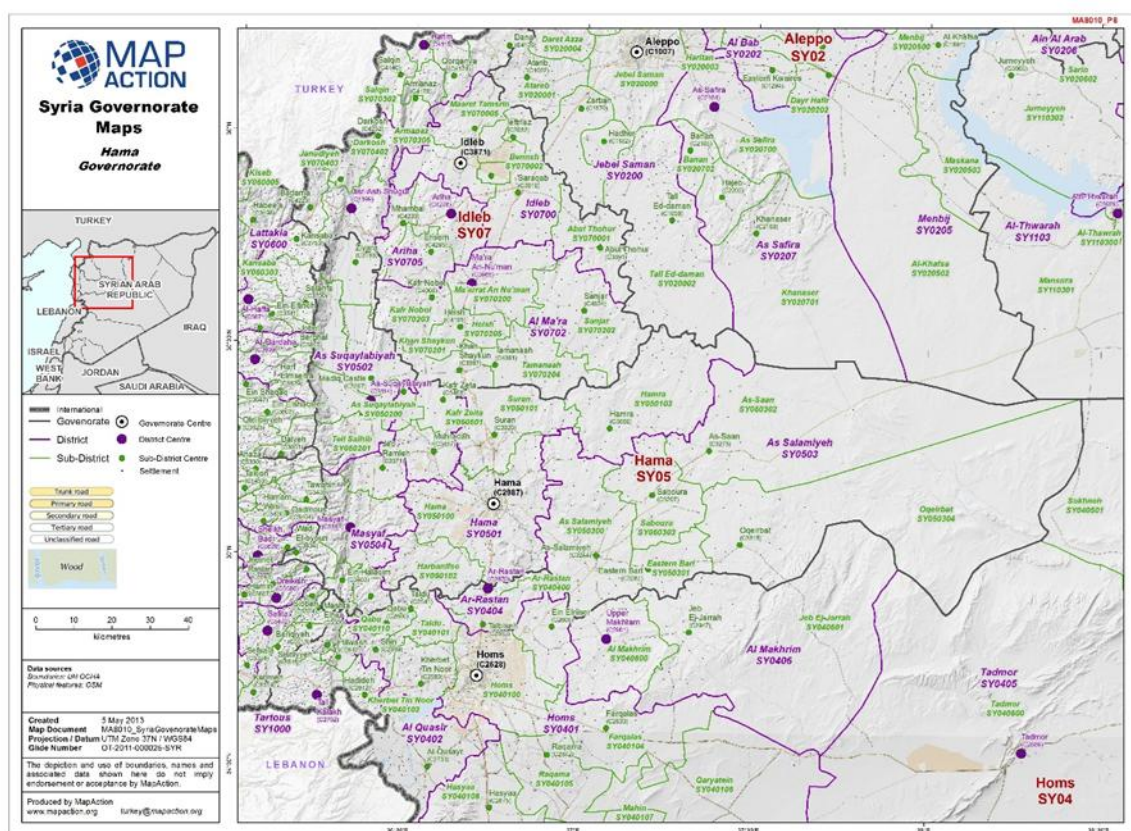
⁵⁸³ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 7

⁵⁸⁴ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁵⁸⁵ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁶ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

2.3. Hama governorate



Map 6: © MapAction, Hama governorate⁵⁸⁷

2.3.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Hama governorate consists of five districts: As-Salamiyeh, As-Suqaylabiyah, Hama, Masyaf and Muhradah. These districts are further divided into a total of 22 sub-districts.⁵⁸⁸ As of April 2026, IOM estimated the population of Hama governorate at about 2 million, including residents, IDPs and returnees from abroad.⁵⁸⁹ The capital of the governorate is the city of Hama,⁵⁹⁰ located on the banks of the river Orontes,⁵⁹¹ with approximately 656 000 inhabitants.⁵⁹²

⁵⁸⁷ MapAction, Hama governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

⁵⁸⁸ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 108-109; IOM, DTM Syria Dashboard, Population Groups Baseline, n.d., [url](#), set filters to Hama governorate.

⁵⁸⁹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁵⁹⁰ UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic, Map No. 4204 Rev. 4, August 2022, [url](#)

⁵⁹¹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Hama, last updated 25 January 2026, [url](#)

⁵⁹² IOM, DTM Syria Dashboard, Population Groups Baseline, n.d., [url](#). Set filters to Hama sub-district.

2.3.2. Territorial control and main armed actors

Hama governorate used to be a stronghold of former President Bashar Al-Assad's forces during the civil war.⁵⁹³ On 5 December 2024 Hama city was captured by HTS⁵⁹⁴ and as of mid-December 2024 virtually the entire governorate was shown as controlled by HTS-led opposition forces on a map produced by ISW and CTP.⁵⁹⁵ In spring 2025 ISW and CTP depicted pockets of 'pro-regime insurgent presence' in the western part of the governorate.⁵⁹⁶ As of 31 January 2026, the governorate is shown as fully under control of Syrian government forces.⁵⁹⁷ The following units of the new Syrian Army were based in Hama governorate as of November 2025: the 54th Division, the 62nd Division, the 74th Special Forces Division and the 82nd Special Forces Division.⁵⁹⁸ The 62nd Division is the reflagged civil war faction Suleiman Shah Division, a former SNA group,⁵⁹⁹ which had been sanctioned because of atrocities against civilians.⁶⁰⁰ Members of the 62nd Division participated in the March 2025 sectarian violence against Alawites.⁶⁰¹

Multiple reports describe acts of violence carried out by unidentified armed groups.⁶⁰² ISIL activity was also reported in Hama governorate by SOHR: armed men reportedly linked to ISIL set up a temporary checkpoint in the northern Hama countryside in December 2025 but had left before security forces arrived.⁶⁰³ One ISIL member was reported killed and another one injured during an ambush presumably staged by other ISIL west of Hama city in April 2026.⁶⁰⁴

⁵⁹³ Media Line (The), Syrian Insurgents Take Hama, Paving Way for Potential Advance on Homs, 5 December 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁴ BBC, Syrian rebels capture second major city after military withdraws, 5 December 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁵ ISW and CTP, Reported Control of Terrain in Syria as of December 19, 2024 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 20 December 2024, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁶ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Western Syria March 19, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST [Map], 19 March 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Western Syria, July 28, 2025 at 2:00 PM EST [Map], 28 July 2025, [url](#)

⁵⁹⁷ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62 [Map], 12 March 2026, [url](#), p. 45

⁵⁹⁸ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 46-47

⁵⁹⁹ Syria in Transition, What's left of the SNA, December 2025, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), A/HRC/59/CRP.4, 11 August 2025, [url](#), para. 83

⁶⁰⁰ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), p. 28

⁶⁰¹ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), p. 46; Reuters, Syrian forces massacred 1,500 Alawites. The chain of command led to Damascus., 1 July 2025, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), A/HRC/59/CRP.4, 11 August 2025, [url](#), para. 70, 83, 88

⁶⁰² SOHR, Sectarian-driven crime | Alawite young man killed in Hama countryside, 6 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Ongoing security chaos | Civilian killed by unidentified gunmen while traveling towards Hama, 27 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Security chaos | Elder man shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Hamah, 10 February 2026, [url](#); SANA, Two killed, three wounded in shooting in Hama province, 20 December 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Amid conflicting accusations | Person shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Hama, 30 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁰³ SOHR, Security concerns after monitoring checkpoints bearing the hallmarks of "ISIS" in Hama countryside, 18 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁴ SOHR, Ambush by ISIS | Member killed and another injured in western Hama countryside, 13 April 2026, [url](#)



2.3.3. Security trends

Hama was affected by the March 2025 violence targeting mostly Alawi communities in Coastal and Western Central Syria,⁶⁰⁵ during which civilians were killed among others in western rural Hama.⁶⁰⁶ Security incidents with a sectarian background targeting Alawi⁶⁰⁷ and Christian⁶⁰⁸ communities in their predominantly inhabited areas⁶⁰⁹ continued to be reported through the reference period, including targeted killings of civilians.⁶¹⁰ In one prominent case that occurred at the end of March 2026, a mob of at least 100 Sunni men passed a Mol security checkpoint⁶¹¹ and set fire to and attacked properties belonging to Christians in the Orthodox town of Suqaylabiyah. This was preceded by a dispute between local Christians and two Sunni men,⁶¹² visiting from a neighbouring Sunni town.⁶¹³ The violence was ended by state forces, who were eventually able to expel the crowd from the city.⁶¹⁴ Referring to this incident, sources questioned the capability⁶¹⁵ and willingness of state forces to intervene effectively in sectarian violations.⁶¹⁶ Furthermore, several homicides with a retaliatory background occurred.⁶¹⁷ SOHR also documented 'repeated incidents' of theft, robbery and looting in rural western Hama governorate,⁶¹⁸ as well as casualties in connection with the proliferation of weapons among civilians.⁶¹⁹

2.3.4. Security incidents

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, 108 security incidents were recorded by ACLED in Hama governorate, around half of which (55) were coded as explosions/remote violence, 45

⁶⁰⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), A/HRC/59/CRP.4, 11 August 2025, [url](#), para. 1

⁶⁰⁶ SNHR, 803 Individuals Extrajudicially Killed Between March 6-10, 2025, 11 March 2025, [url](#) pp. 5-6, 11; Etana Syria, Brief: Armed Clashes & Sectarian Violence on Syria's Coast, 8 April 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁷ SOHR, Sectarian-base strife | Armed attack targets civilian in Hama countryside, 7 May 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Sectarian-driven crime | While working on farmland | Two young men killed over sectarian background in western Hama, 3 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Ongoing security chaos | Alawite young man executed and another injured in Hama, 30 December 2025, [url](#); STJ, Syria/Hama: Armed Intimidation and Sectarian Discourse, Marking the First Anniversary of the Assad Regime's Fall, 4 February 2026, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), p. 23

⁶⁰⁸ New Arab (The), How attacks on a Christian town test Syria's postwar cohesion, 2 April 2026, [url](#); STJ, Syria/Hama: Armed Intimidation and Sectarian Discourse, Marking the First Anniversary of the Assad Regime's Fall, 4 February 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁰⁹ STJ, Syria/Hama: Armed Intimidation and Sectarian Discourse, Marking the First Anniversary of the Assad Regime's Fall, 4 February 2026, [url](#)

⁶¹⁰ SOHR, Demanding the control of weapons and the protection of civilians | People go out in protest in Hama, 13 February 2026, [url](#)

⁶¹¹ Waters, G., Suqaylabiyah's Unrest: What Happened and Why it Matters, Syria Revisited, 3 April 2026, [url](#)

⁶¹² Etana Syria, Brief: Sectarian unrest in Al- Suqaylabiyeh, 7 April 2026, [url](#)

⁶¹³ Waters, G., Suqaylabiyah's Unrest: What Happened and Why it Matters, Syria Revisited, 3 April 2026, [url](#)

⁶¹⁴ Etana Syria, Brief: Sectarian unrest in Al- Suqaylabiyeh, 7 April 2026, [url](#)

⁶¹⁵ Waters, G., Suqaylabiyah's Unrest: What Happened and Why it Matters, 3 April 2026, [url](#); Etana Syria, Brief: Sectarian unrest in Al- Suqaylabiyeh, 7 April 2026, [url](#)

⁶¹⁶ SOHR, Following attack on the predominantly Christian Al-Suqaylabiyah city | Accusations of negligence target Internal Security Forces, 30 March 2026, [url](#)

⁶¹⁷ SOHR, Sectarian-driven crime | Alawite young man killed in Hama countryside, 6 April 2026, [url](#)

⁶¹⁸ SOHR, Amid urgent calls to restore security | Armed robberies and looting operations escalate in villages across Sahil Al-Ghab in western Hama countryside, 31 January 2026, [url](#)

⁶¹⁹ SOHR, Proliferation of weapons | Child dies in Hama countryside, 27 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, By mistake | Young man killed with gunshot fired by mistake from his brother's rifle in Hama countryside, 24 February 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Widespread of weapons | Young man shot dead with stray bullet in Hama, 4 February 2026, [url](#)



as incidents of violence against civilians, and 8 as battles. Analysing the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, 60 % of incidents (287 out of 482) were coded as violence against civilians. Security incidents peaked in both January (57 incidents) and March 2025 (51 incidents),⁶²⁰ coinciding with the wave of sectarian violence in March.⁶²¹ From April until October 2025, incidents averaged around 30, and starting from November 2025 onwards they fell below 20 for the remainder of the reporting period. The most significant security threat in Hama governorate between 9 December 2024 and 30 September 2025 was violence against civilians (65 % of all security incidents), most of which was sub-categorised as attacks by unidentified armed groups.⁶²²

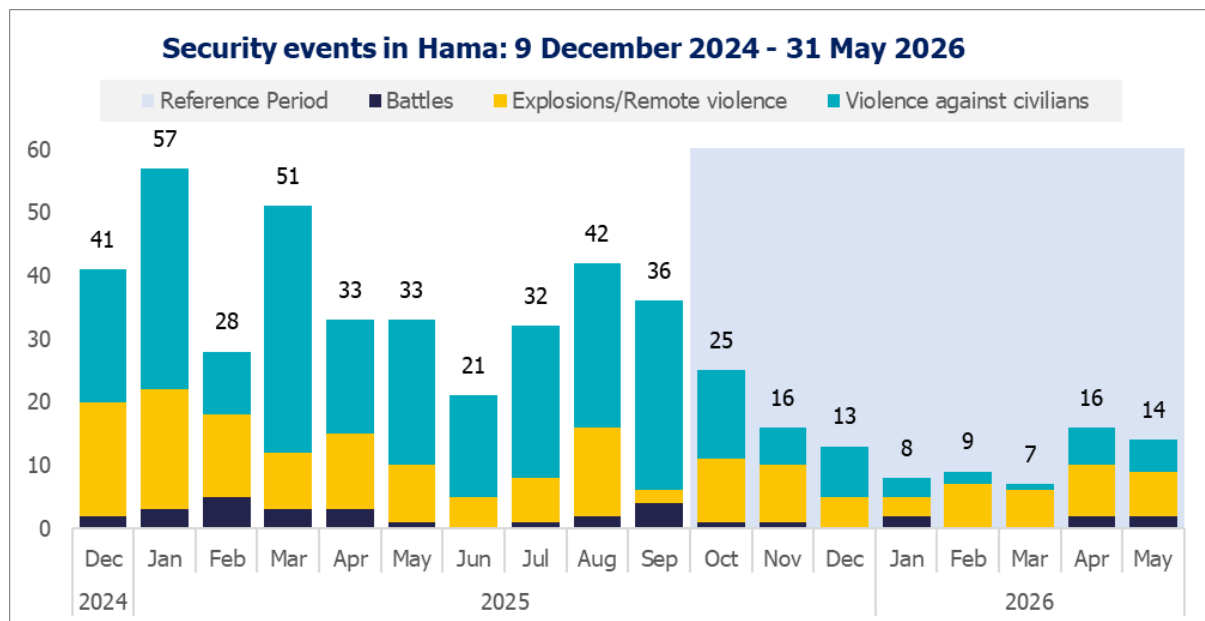


Figure 10: Evolution of security events in Hama per type, based on ACLED data⁶²³

According to ACLED data, security incidents occurred in all five districts of Hama governorate during the reference period. The highest number was documented in Hama district (36 incidents), followed by As-Suqaylabiyah (28 incidents). Main actors involved in security incidents (coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2') were unidentified armed groups (89 incidents out of 108).⁶²⁴

2.3.5. Civilian casualties

According to SNHR, the civilian death toll in Hama governorate was 10 in October 2025, 15 in November, 14 in December, 9 in January as well as February 2026, 8 in March, 12 in April and

⁶²⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁶²¹ UN Human Rights Council, Violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), A/HRC/59/CRP.4, 11 August 2025, [url](#), para. 1

⁶²² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁶²³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁶²⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

8 in May 2026.⁶²⁵ During this period most civilian fatalities were attributed to unidentified actors.⁶²⁶ In November and December 2025 one fatality in each month was attributed to remnants of the Assad regime.⁶²⁷ In April 2026, regime remnants were also mentioned as actors, but the number of victims was not specified.⁶²⁸ An analysis of civilian fatality data from Hama since December 2024 shows a slight downward trend, with the notable exception of March 2025, when escalating violence in the Syrian coastal region resulted in more than 150 recorded deaths in Hama.⁶²⁹

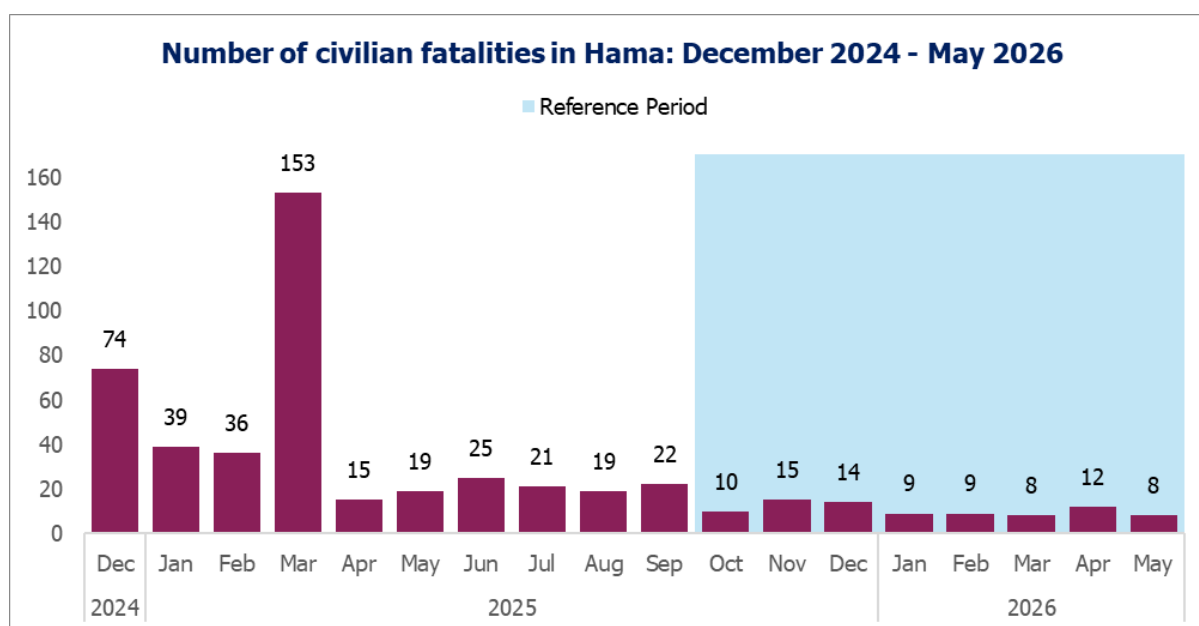


Figure 11: Evolution of civilian fatalities in Hama per month, based on SNHR data⁶³⁰

⁶²⁵ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

⁶²⁶ SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 121

⁶²⁷ SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁶²⁸ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

⁶²⁹ SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 121

⁶³⁰ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 121

2.3.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Landmines and UXO continued to be a serious threat in Hama governorate,⁶³¹ and Hama city was one of the most heavily contaminated cities with ERWs.⁶³² As of January 2026, 55 % of key informants in an IOM assessment monitoring return movements and conditions for reintegration⁶³³ reported the presence of mines and unexploded ordnance in Hama governorate.⁶³⁴ During the period between 8 December 2024 and April 2026, SNHR documented 45 civilians killed by landmines in the governorate. In addition, 6 civilians were killed by remnants of cluster munitions.⁶³⁵ Several further landmine explosions caused civilian deaths in Hama between April and May 2026.⁶³⁶

2.3.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's first population movements assessment after the Damascus power shift showed that, as of February 2025, 7 % of Hama governorate's population (around 119 300 out of a total population of approximately 1.70 million), were IDPs.⁶³⁷ Subsequent population movement assessments indicated a stable IDP share of 7 %, ⁶³⁸ and, from July 2025 onwards, 6 %, ⁶³⁹ continuing through April 2026, when a total of around 120 200 IDPs (out of a total population of approximately 2 million) was recorded.⁶⁴⁰

In contrast, the population share of IDP returnees increased constantly since February 2025 and through the reporting period, starting at 9 % (around 153 400 out of a total of approximately 1.70 million) as of February 2025, and increasing to 16 % (around 309 900 out of a total population of approximately 1.9 million) as of October 2025 further to 18 % (around

⁶³¹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 7; CIR, The ongoing death: How Russian-made mines are killing Syrians and destroying their forgotten lands, 19 March 2026, [url](#)

⁶³² Handicap International, Landmines in Syrie [Landmines in Syria], last updated 16 March 2026, [url](#)

⁶³³ Data was collected between 1 January and 4 February 2026, including through a network of 11 343 key informants in all Syrian governorates. IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 20

⁶³⁴ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁶³⁵ SNHR, On the International Day for Mine Awareness: Documenting the deaths of at least 3,799 civilians from landmines and cluster munitions in Syria, March 2011 – April 2026, 4 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 8-9

⁶³⁶ SOHR, Old ordnance | Young man killed and his wife loses her feet in Hama countryside, 21 May 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Child Killed in Hama desert, 16 May 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Young man dies in landmine explosion while working in Hama, 9 May 2026, [url](#); SNHR, Three children were killed by a landmine explosion in the Tal Salma area of Hama Governorate on April 13, 2026., 14 April 2026, [url](#); SNHR, Ammar Taqala was killed by a landmine explosion, a remnant of the conflict, in the Badia region of Hama Governorate on April 27, 2026., 29 April 2026, [url](#)

⁶³⁷ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 7

⁶³⁸ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 3 – April 2025, 10 May 2025, [url](#), p. 8; IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 5 – June 2025, 7 July 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁶³⁹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 6 – July 2025, 18 August 2025, [url](#), p. 8; IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 9 – October 2025, 10 November 2025, [url](#), p. 8; IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 12 – January 2026, 12 February 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁶⁴⁰ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7



360 000 out of a total population of approximately 2 million) as of April 2026.⁶⁴¹ UNHCR estimated that, as of 21 May 2026, around 356 000 individuals had returned to Hama governorate from internal displacement since December 2024⁶⁴² and approximately 166 000 had returned from abroad within the same period.⁶⁴³ According to IOMs 'Communities of Return Index', overall return conditions were assessed to be 'partially conducive' in all five of Hama governorate's districts in the period between 1 January and 4 February 2026.⁶⁴⁴ Assessing returnee communities across Syria between 1 January and 4 February 2026, IOM found that waste management services were particularly poor in Hama, where 66 % of assessed communities reported having none.⁶⁴⁵ Based on durable solutions criteria, Hama governorate was assessed as 'mostly conducive' with regard to safety and security. Hama scored worst in terms of access to livelihoods, which was assessed as 'partially conducive'.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴¹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 7; IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 9 – October 2025, 10 November 2025, [url](#), p. 8; IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁶⁴² UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁴³ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

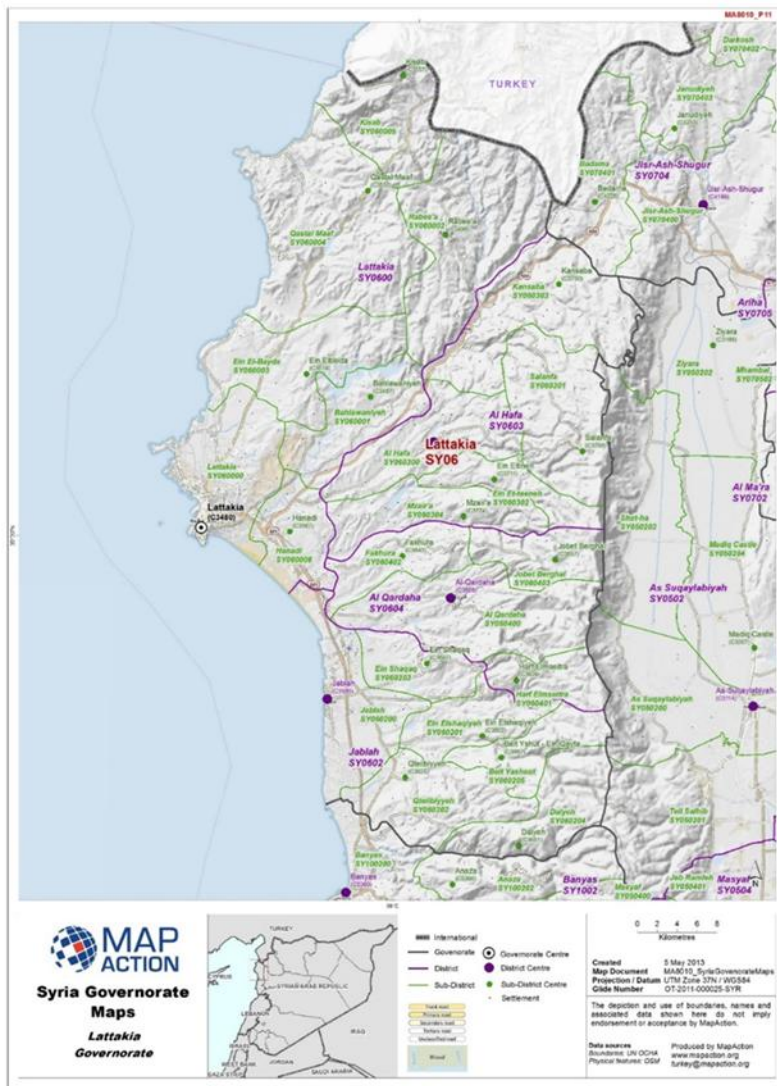
⁶⁴⁴ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 22

⁶⁴⁵ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 9, 20; Data for IOM's 'Communities of Return Index' was collected between 1 January and 4 February 2026 in more than 3 000 locations across Syria. IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 20

⁶⁴⁶ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 21



2.4. Latakia governorate



Map 7: © MapAction, Latakia governorate⁶⁴⁷

2.4.1. 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.⁶⁴⁸ Its capital is the city of Latakia.⁶⁴⁹ As of April 2026, IOM estimated the governorate's population at 1 451 763 including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁷ MapAction, Syria 2013-2015, Latakia Governorate [map], last updated: 29 July 2016, [url](#)

⁶⁴⁸ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 109

⁶⁴⁹ UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic, Map No. 4204 Rev. 4, August 2022, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁰ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7



2.4.2. Territorial control and main armed actors

Territorial control in Latakia governorate remained entirely under the control of the transitional government during the reporting period.⁶⁵¹ For spring 2025, multiple pockets with pro-regime insurgent presence across the governorate were mapped by ISW and CTP.⁶⁵²

Forces of the new Syrian army present in the governorate comprised the 50th Coastal Division, which included former members of the National Liberation Front; the 56th Division, consisting of former HTS fighters; and the 84th Division.⁶⁵³ In May 2026, the International Crisis Group stated that the Turkistan Islamic Party, consisting mainly of Uyghur fighters, had been transformed into three brigades of the 84th Division.⁶⁵⁴

Non-state armed groups in the governorate that were active during the reporting period included a number of Assad-loyalist insurgent groups. The militia Men of Light–Saraya Al-Jawad) was formed in August 2025 in the Syrian coastal region.⁶⁵⁵ The Alawite militia is linked to the former Assad regime, and is reportedly loyal to Suheil al-Hassan, a former brigadier general of an elite unit in the regime's army.⁶⁵⁶ According to the Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper, citing the Mol, members of the militia took part in the attacks in the coastal region in March 2025.⁶⁵⁷ Furthermore, the Coastal Shield Brigade, led by the former Assad regime officer Miqdad Fatiha, remained active.⁶⁵⁸ Reports indicated that the Coastal Shield Brigade shifted its focus towards targeting Alawite civilians perceived as collaborating with the transitional government, rather than directing attacks against government security forces. Both insurgent groups, Coastal Shield Brigade and Men of Light–Saraya al-Jawad, operated limited attacks on government forces during the reporting period.⁶⁵⁹ In the reporting period at least three persons affiliated with the Coastal Shield Brigade were arrested.⁶⁶⁰

2.4.3. Security trends

After the insurgency in March 2025 in the coastal region the rate of events dropped rapidly.⁶⁶¹ In August 2025 the coastal region recorded a spike in attacks by Assadist remnants.⁶⁶²

⁶⁵¹ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain Western Syria September 30, 2025 [Map], 30 September 2025, [url](#);

ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026 [url](#)

⁶⁵² ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Western Syria, November 25, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 25 November 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁵³ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 47-48

⁶⁵⁴ International Crisis Group, The Struggle to Pacify Syria's Foreign Legions, 13 May 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁵ Enab Baladi, Leader of "Saraya al-Jawad" killed in clashes with Internal Security, 24 February 2026, [url](#); New Arab (The), Is an Assadist insurgency emerging on the Syrian coast?, 1 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁶ Al Jazeera, Syria faces twin battles as Assad loyalists and ISIL attack in west, east, 25 February 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁷ Asharq Al-Awsat, Syrian Interior Ministry Airs Confessions of 'Saraya al-Jawad' Members, 10 March 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁸ Al Jazeera, التشكيلات المسلحة المناوئة للحكومة في الساحل السوري [Anti-government armed groups in the Syrian coastal region], 3 January 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁵⁹ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 30, 2025, 30 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁰ Arab News, Syrian authorities arrest 3 suspects linked to Coastal Shield Brigade over 'terrorist threats', 12 January 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁶¹ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 3, 2026, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁶² ISW and CTP, Iran Update, August 15, 2025, 15 August 2025, [url](#), p. 6



Throughout the rest of 2025, the governorate witnessed a low-intensity conflict, marked by sporadic violence involving non-state armed groups.⁶⁶³

On 23 October 2025, the Internal Security Forces in cooperation with the Counter-Terrorism Branch arrested a cell which had reportedly support from Rami Makhoul, a cousin of former president Bashar al-Assad.⁶⁶⁴ On 24 November 2025, the Internal Security Forces killed two members of a cell, which espoused ISIL ideology, and arrested the rest of the cell in Al-Badrusiya in northern Latakia countryside.⁶⁶⁵ According to ISW, the Mol characterised the cell as part of the group Saraya Ansar Al-Sunnah.⁶⁶⁶ For further information on the armed group Saraya Ansar Al-Sunnah, see section [1.2.6. Other relevant armed actors](#).

Furthermore, in November and December 2025, clashes broke out during protests in Latakia city. On 25 November, Alawite protesters gathered to demand a decentralised political system. According to Reuters, Syrian Security Forces used gunfire to disrupt rival protesters.⁶⁶⁷ A month later, on 28 December 2025, demonstrations called by Sheikh Ghazal Ghazal, the Supreme Alawite Islamic Council in Syria and the diaspora, took place in Latakia and further coastal locations, in reaction to the 26 December 2025 bombing of an Alawite mosque in Homs.⁶⁶⁸ Reportedly, pro-government counter-protestors and government forces as well as unspecific anti-government fighters became involved as the protests descended into turmoil.⁶⁶⁹ The Coastal Shield Brigade and Saraya Al-Jawad reportedly took part in the violent clashes.⁶⁷⁰ Four persons were killed and 108 were wounded by pro-Assad insurgents.⁶⁷¹ In response, the MoD deployed military units to Latakia.⁶⁷² The situation in Latakia remained tense, as several attacks in Alawite neighbourhoods took place.⁶⁷³

On 24 December 2025, the army conducted a security operation against an Alawite anti-government militia in Babdh, Jablah district. Three anti-government insurgents and one civilian were killed.⁶⁷⁴ In February 2026, the group Saraya Al-Jawad was reportedly involved in clashes with internal security forces. Bashar Abdullah Abu Raqiya, the leader of the militia, two of the militia's commanders and one member of the internal security forces were killed.⁶⁷⁵ In early May 2026, the Mol announced that a jointly conducted security operation with the General Intelligence Service in Latakia and four other governorates had dismantled a Hezbollah-affiliated cell.⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁶³ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 20, 37

⁶⁶⁴ Enab Baladi, Syria's Interior Ministry says it broke up cells in Latakia tied to three Assad associates, 26 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁵ SANA, ISF arrest members of a dangerous ISIS-affiliated cell in Latakia, 24 November 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁶ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, November 25, 2025, 25 November 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁷ Reuters, Syrian security forces use gunfire to disperse rival protests in Alawite heartland, 25 November 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁸ France24, Deadly clashes break out in Syria after Alawite mosque bombing, 28 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁶⁹ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 29, 2025, 29 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁰ Lister, C., Syria Weekly Conflict & Security: December 9-30, 2025, Syria Weekly, 30 December 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 29, 2025, 29 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷¹ AA, Death toll from attacks by ousted Assad loyalists in Latakia rises to 4, 108 wounded, 29 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷² ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 29, 2025, 29 December 2025, [url](#); Asharq Al-Awsat, Syrian Army Enters Latakia, Tartus after Attacks by Regime Remnants, 29 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷³ FDD, Sectarian Fires Return to Syria's Coast, 31 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁴ Lister, C., Syria Weekly Conflict & Security: December 9-30, 2025, Syria Weekly 30 December 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁵ Enab Baladi, Leader of "Saraya al-Jawad" killed in clashes with Internal Security, 24 February 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁶ Al Majalla, Iran steps up Syria destabilisation efforts, 7 May 2026, [url](#)

The governorate further witnessed multiple killings of civilians by unidentified gunmen.⁶⁷⁷ Media and human rights sources documented several incidents of kidnapping, enforced disappearance, and gender-based violence targeting Alawite women in the coastal region.⁶⁷⁸

2.4.4. Security incidents

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, ACLED recorded 55 security incidents in Latakia governorate. Of these, 13 were coded as explosions/remote violence, 15 as battles, and 27 as incidents of violence against civilians. The highest number of the incidents occurred in October 2025 (11 incidents). An analysis of ACLED data for the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad, from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, indicates one peak in security incidents in the governorate in March 2025, with 128 incidents,⁶⁷⁹ coinciding with the wave of sectarian violence in that month.⁶⁸⁰ Between April and August 2025, the monthly number of incidents was below 30. In the period from September 2025 until May 2026, the number of monthly incidents further decreased and varied between 3 and 11.⁶⁸¹

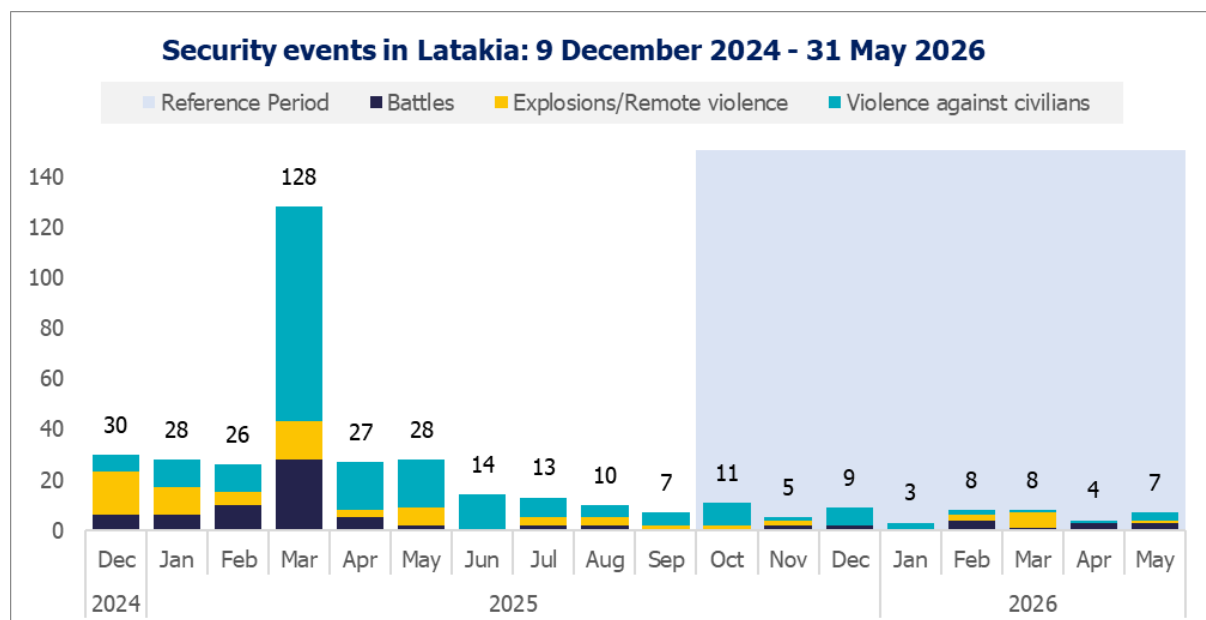


Figure 12: Evolution of security events in Latakia per type, based on ACLED data⁶⁸²

⁶⁷⁷ SOHR, Separate incidents | Two Alawite young men killed in Homs and Latakia, 18 February 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Ongoing security chaos | Alawite boy killed in Latakia, 26 January 2026, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly Conflict & Security: December 9-30, 2025, Syria Weekly, 30 December 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Security chaos | Merchant from Idlib shot dead by gunmen in Latakia, 16 October 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁸ BBC, I would scream in my sleep: Women from Syria's Alawite minority tell of kidnap and rape, 18 February 2026, [url](#); AP, A year after Assad's fall in Syria, Alawite women face kidnappings and rape, 10 December 2025, [url](#); Amnesty International, Syria: Authorities must investigate abductions of Alawite women and girls, 28 July 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁷⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), A/HRC/59/CRP.4, 11 August 2025, [url](#), para. 1

⁶⁸¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁸² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

During the reference period, ACLED recorded security incidents in all four districts of Latakia governorate. The highest number was documented in Latakia (27 incidents), followed by Jablah (15 incidents). Al-Qardaha recorded 7 incidents and Al-Haffa 6 incidents. Latakia and Jablah were also the districts with the highest number of incidents recorded in the governorate since the fall of Bashar al-Assad.⁶⁸³

According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were the main actors involved in security incidents during the reference period, appearing in around 75 % of all recorded incidents, either coded as Actor 1 or Actor 2. Military and police forces were linked to approximately 38 % of the incidents (either coded as Actor 1 or Actor 2).⁶⁸⁴ A comparison between the current reference period and the overall security situation since 9 December 2024 suggests that actors such as military forces and military forces of Israel became less relevant or irrelevant in security incidents in the governorate. Unidentified armed groups became the predominant actor in the governorate.⁶⁸⁵

27 security incidents during the reporting period were coded as ‘violence against civilians’ including 17 lethal cases, most of them involving unidentified armed groups.⁶⁸⁶

2.4.5. Civilian casualties

In October 2025, the SNHR recorded 1 civilian fatalities in Latakia governorate, 2 in November, 2 in December, none in January 2026, 3 in February, 2 in March, 2 in April and 1 in May 2026.⁶⁸⁷ Between October 2025 and May 2026, all recorded civilian fatalities in the governorate were attributed to actors that SNHR could not identify.⁶⁸⁸ An analysis of the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad indicates that the number of monthly civilian fatalities remained between 6 and 20 from December 2024 to February 2025, followed by a peak in March 2025 with 561 civilian fatalities. Between April and June 2025, the numbers of civilian fatalities varied between 9 and 24. In the remaining months of 2025, the number of fatalities was at or below 5.⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁸⁷ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

⁶⁸⁸ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁶⁸⁹ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 129

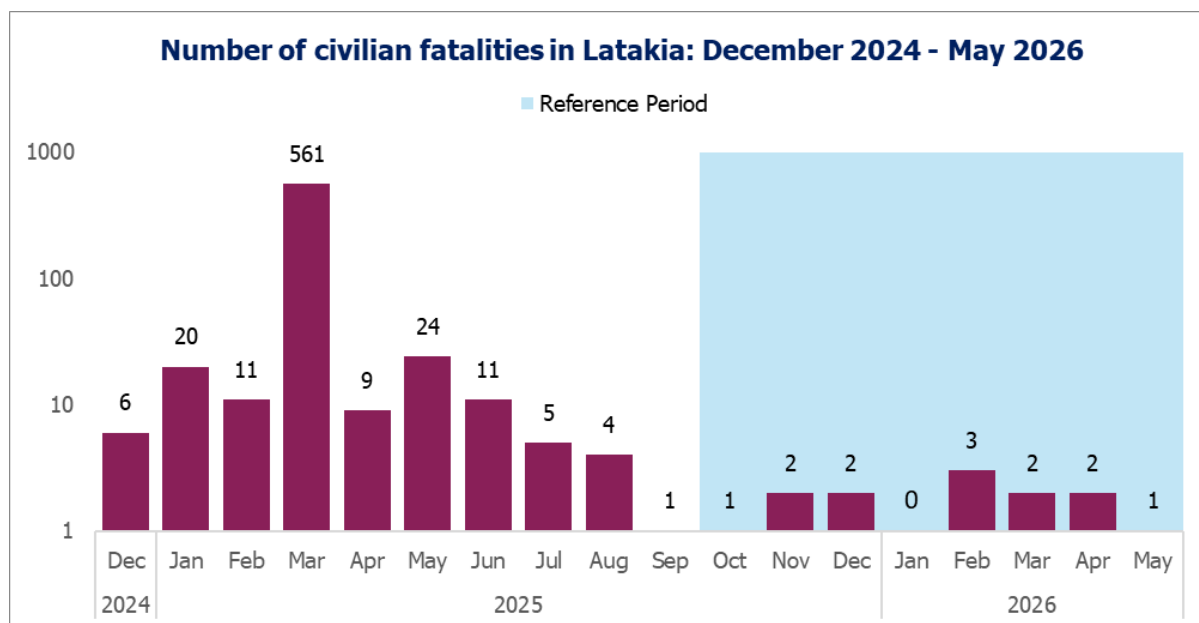


Figure 13: Evolution of civilian fatalities in Latakia per month, based on SNHR data⁶⁹⁰

2.4.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Latakia countryside was affected by widespread use of cluster munitions⁶⁹¹ and was among the areas most heavily contaminated with landmines in Syria.⁶⁹² Media reported several incidents with explosive remnants of war. On 17 February 2026 an explosion during a mine-clearing operation in Latakia countryside killed three people. Landmines were widespread in Latakia's mountains in the northeast of the governorate, particularly in the Jabal Al-Akrad and Jabal Al-Turkman areas.⁶⁹³ SOHR reported about two injured people during a landmine removing operation in Telat Nehshaba in northern Latakia in March 2026.⁶⁹⁴

Although maps of landmines generated by the Assad regime are accessible, the regime used its own coordinate system to protect the information, which complicates the localisation clearance of landmines. The SIRAJ research identified nine minefields covering around three square kilometres south of Kabana village and southeast of the villages of Aiko, Bouz Al-Kharba, and Basharfa in the Latakia countryside.⁶⁹⁵

⁶⁹⁰ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 129

⁶⁹¹ SNHR, Deadly Legacy: The Explosive Remnants of War in Syria, 25 February 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁹² SIRAJ, Secret maps left behind by Assad's army reveal the locations of minefields in the Latakia countryside, 7 April 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁹³ New Arab (The), Syria's Latakia villages struggle against unexploded mines and other war remnants, 19 March 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁴ SOHR, Old ordnance | Two members injured in Latakia countryside and member killed in explosion of landmine in Al-Raqqa, 10 March 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁹⁵ SIRAJ, Secret maps left behind by Assad's army reveal the locations of minefields in the Latakia countryside, 7 April 2026, [url](#)

As of January 2026, 62 % of key informants in an IOM assessment monitoring return movements and conditions for reintegration⁶⁹⁶ reported the presence of mines or unexploded ordnance. 77 % reported that no demining activities were ongoing.⁶⁹⁷

Furthermore, during the violent clashes in March 2025, property was damaged and destroyed in 15 locations in Tartous, Latakia, and Hama. Entire villages and residential areas were destroyed, including Sanobar, Ain Al Arous, Al Mukhtaria and Jableh in Latakia governorate.⁶⁹⁸

2.4.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's population movements assessments in Syria, which started in February 2025, show that there was a decrease in Latakia's IDP population between February 2025 (around 198 950 out of a total population of approximately 1.42 million, 14 %)⁶⁹⁹ and April 2026 (around 145 180 out of a total population of approximately 1.45 million, 10 %).⁷⁰⁰

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 21 May 2026, 18 766 individuals had returned to locations in Latakia governorate from internal displacement since December 2024⁷⁰¹ and 32 765 had returned to the governorate from abroad within the same period.⁷⁰²

⁶⁹⁶ Data was collected between 1 January and 4 February 2026, including through a network 11 343 key informants in all 14 governorates. IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 20

⁶⁹⁷ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁶⁹⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I, p. 32

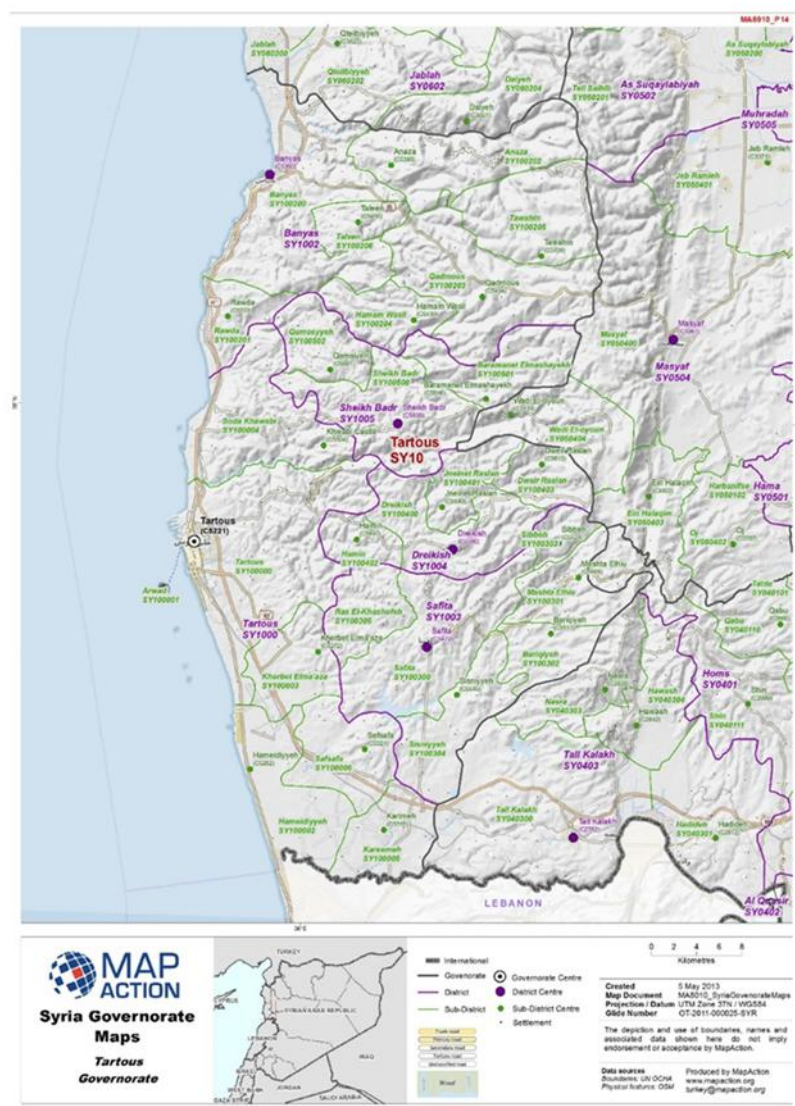
⁶⁹⁹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁷⁰⁰ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁷⁰¹ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard, 21 May 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁰² UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard, 21 May 2026, [url](#)

2.5. Tartous governorate



Map 8: © MapAction, Tartous governorate map

2.5.1. 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.⁷⁰³ Its capital is the city of Tartous.⁷⁰⁴ As of April 2026, the population of

⁷⁰³ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 110

⁷⁰⁴ UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic, Map No. 4204 Rev. 4, August 2022, [url](#)

Tartous governorate was at 1 261 868 including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad, according to IOM estimates.⁷⁰⁵

2.5.2. Territorial control and main armed actors

Territorial control in Tartous governorate remained entirely under the control of the transitional government during the reporting period.⁷⁰⁶ For spring 2025, multiple pockets with pro-regime insurgent presence across the governorate were mapped by ISW and CTP.⁷⁰⁷

Forces of the new Syrian army present in the governorate comprised the 50th Coastal Division, which included former members of the National Liberation Front; the 56th Division, consisting of former HTS fighters; and the 84th Division.⁷⁰⁸ In May 2026, the International Crisis Group stated that the Turkistan Islamic Party, consisting mainly of Uyghur fighters, had been transformed into three brigades of the 84th Division.⁷⁰⁹

Non-state armed groups in the governorate that were active during the reporting period include a number of Assad loyalist insurgent groups. The militia Men of Light–Saraya Al-Jawad was formed in August 2025 in the Syrian coastal region.⁷¹⁰ The Alawite militia is linked to the former Assad regime, as it is reportedly loyal to Suheil Al-Hassan, an army officer under the former regime.⁷¹¹ According to the Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper, citing Syria's MoI, members of the militia took part in the attacks in the coastal region in March 2025.⁷¹² The militia remained active in Tartous.⁷¹³ Furthermore, the Coastal Shield Brigade, led by the former Assad regime officer Miqdad Fatiha, remained active in Tartous during the reporting period.⁷¹⁴ Reports indicated that, after March 2025, the Coastal Shield Brigade shifted its focus towards targeting Alawite civilians perceived as collaborating with the transitional government, rather than directing attacks against government security forces. Both insurgent groups, Coastal Shield Brigade and Men of Light–Saraya Al-Jawad, operated limited attacks on government forces during the reporting period.⁷¹⁵

⁷⁰⁵ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁷⁰⁶ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain Western Syria September 30, 2025 [Map], 30 September 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026 [url](#)

⁷⁰⁷ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Western Syria, November 25, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 25 November 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁰⁸ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 47-48

⁷⁰⁹ International Crisis Group, The Struggle to Pacify Syria's Foreign Legions, 13 May 2026, [url](#)

⁷¹⁰ Enab Baladi, Leader of "Saraya al-Jawad" killed in clashes with Internal Security, 24 February 2026, [url](#); New Arab (The), Is an Assadist insurgency emerging on the Syrian coast?, 1 October 2025, [url](#)

⁷¹¹ Al Jazeera, Syria faces twin battles as Assad loyalists and ISIL attack in west, east, 25 February 2026, [url](#)

⁷¹² Asharq Al-Awsat, Syrian Interior Ministry Airls Confessions of 'Saraya al-Jawad' Members, 10 March 2026, [url](#)

⁷¹³ Asharq Al-Awsat, Syrian Interior Ministry Airls Confessions of 'Saraya al-Jawad' Members, 10 March 2026 [url](#); Al Jazeera, التشكيلات المسلحة المناوئة للحكومة في الساحل السوري [Anti-government armed groups in the Syrian coastal region], 3 January 2026, [url](#)

⁷¹⁴ Al Jazeera, التشكيلات المسلحة المناوئة للحكومة في الساحل السوري [Anti-government armed groups in the Syrian coastal region], 3 January 2026, [url](#)

⁷¹⁵ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 30, 2025, 30 December 2025, [url](#)



2.5.3. Security trends

After the insurgency in March 2025 in the coastal region, the rate of events dropped rapidly.⁷¹⁶ In August 2025 the coastal region recorded a spike in attacks by Assadist remnants.⁷¹⁷ Throughout the rest of 2025, the governorate witnessed a low-intensity conflict, marked by sporadic violence involving non-state armed groups.⁷¹⁸ Sources reported of several security operations conducted against cells affiliated with the former Assad regime, some of which were accused of planning attacks on state security infrastructure. Several cell members were arrested during the reporting period.⁷¹⁹

On 28 December 2025, demonstrations called by Sheikh Ghazal Ghazal, the Supreme Alawite Islamic Council in Syria and the diaspora, took place in Tartous and further coastal locations, in reaction to the 26 December 2025 bombing of an Alawite mosque in Homs.⁷²⁰ Violent clashes between Alawite protesters and pro-government counterprotesters broke out.⁷²¹ Anti-government attackers wounded two members of the security forces with a grenade in Baniyas. In response, the MoD deployed military units to Tartous.⁷²²

Several other anti-government insurgent incidents and security operations against anti-government insurgents were reported in the governorate in December 2025 and January 2026.⁷²³ Media and human rights sources documented several incidents of kidnapping, enforced disappearance, and gender-based violence targeting Alawite women in the coastal region, including Tartous.⁷²⁴ Between February and July 2025, Amnesty International received reports of at least 36 kidnappings of Alawite women and girls across Latakia, Tartous, Homs, and Hama governorates by unidentified individuals.⁷²⁵

In early May 2026, the MoI announced that a jointly conducted security operation with the General Intelligence Service in Tartous and four other governorates had dismantled a Hezbollah-affiliated cell.⁷²⁶

2.5.4. Security incidents

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, ACLED recorded 23 security incidents in Tartous governorate. Of these, 8 were coded as explosions/remote violence, 2 as battles, and 13 as incidents of violence against civilians. The highest number of the incidents was documented in October 2025 (9 incidents). An analysis of ACLED data for the period since the fall of Bashar

⁷¹⁶ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 3, 2026, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

⁷¹⁷ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, August 15, 2025, 15 August 2025, [url](#), p. 6

⁷¹⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 20, 37

⁷¹⁹ Enab Baladi, Syria's Interior Ministry Announces Arrest of "Terrorist Cell" in Tartous, 8 March 2026, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Baniyas: IED Explosion Targets Police Car, 27 October 2025, [url](#)

⁷²⁰ France24, Deadly clashes break out in Syria after Alawite mosque bombing, 28 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷²¹ Al Jazeera, Deadly protests and clashes in Syria – what happened and what's next?, 29 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷²² ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 29, 2025, 29 December 2025, [url](#); Asharq Al-Awsat, Syrian Army Enters Latakia, Tartus after Attacks by Regime Remnants, 29 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷²³ Lister, C., Syria Weekly Conflict & Security: December 9-30, 2025, Syria Weekly, 30 December 2025, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly: January 6-13, 2026, Syria Weekly, 13 January 2026, [url](#)

⁷²⁴ AP, A year after Assad's fall in Syria, Alawite women face kidnappings and rape, 10 December 2025, [url](#)

Amnesty International, Syria: Authorities must investigate abductions of Alawite women and girls, 28 July 2025, [url](#)

⁷²⁵ Amnesty International, Syria: Authorities must investigate abductions of Alawite women and girls, 28 July 2025, [url](#)

⁷²⁶ Al Majalla, Iran steps up Syria destabilisation efforts, 7 May 2026, [url](#)



Al-Assad, from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, indicates one peak in security incidents in the governorate in March 2025, with 85 incidents,⁷²⁷ coinciding with the wave of sectarian violence in that month.⁷²⁸ Besides May 2025 with 20 security incidents, the monthly number of incidents between April 2025 and October 2025 was below 10. In the period from November 2025 until May 2026 the number of monthly incidents further decreased and varied between 1 and 5.⁷²⁹

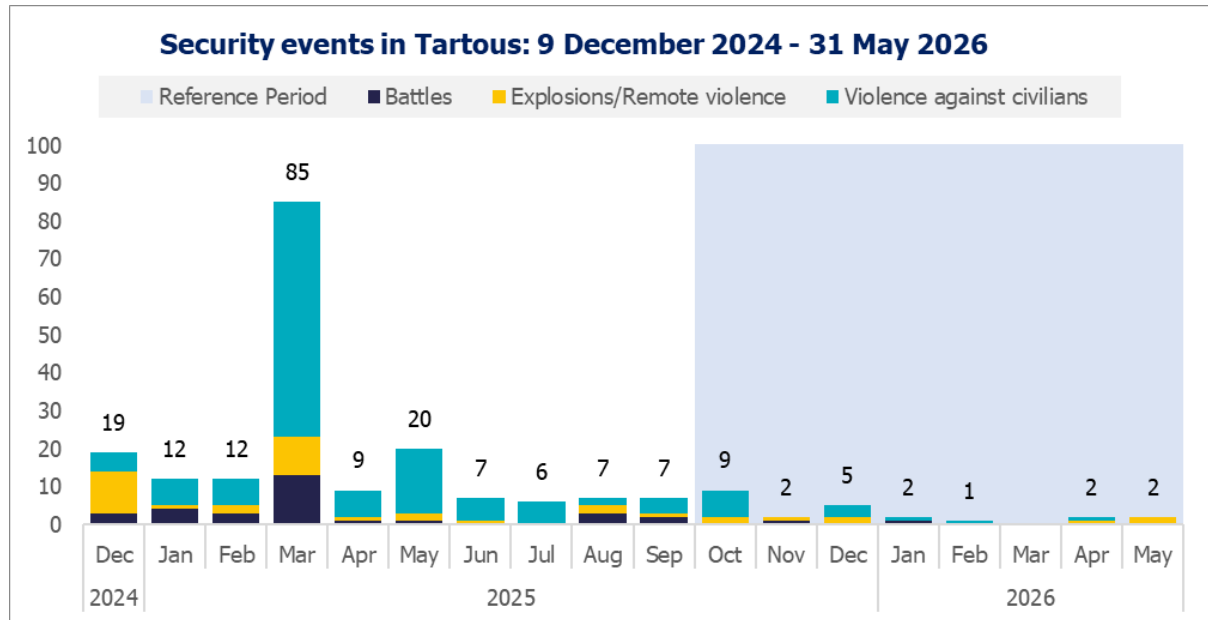


Figure 14: Evolution of security events in Tartous per type, based on ACLED data⁷³⁰

During the reference period, ACLED recorded security incidents in two of the six districts of Tartous governorate, in Tartous (13 incidents) and Banyas (10 incidents). Tartous and Banyas were also the districts with the highest number of incidents recorded in the governorate since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad.

According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were the main actors involved in security incidents during the reference period, appearing in around 70 % of all recorded incidents, either coded as Actor 1 or Actor 2. Military and police forces were linked to approximately 35 % of the incidents (either coded as Actor 1 or Actor 2).⁷³¹ A comparison between the current reference period and the overall security situation since 9 December 2024 suggests that actors such as military forces and military forces of Israel became less

⁷²⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁷²⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), A/HRC/59/CRP.4, 11 August 2025, [url](#), para. 1

⁷²⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁷³⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁷³¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)



relevant or irrelevant in security incidents in the governorate. Unidentified armed groups became the predominant actor in the governorate.⁷³²

13 security incidents during the reporting period were coded as ‘violence against civilians’, including 8 lethal cases, most of them involving unidentified armed groups.⁷³³

2.5.5. Civilian casualties

In October 2025, the SNHR recorded 2 civilian fatalities in Tartous governorate, 1 in November, none in December 2025 and January 2026, 2 in February, and none in March, April and May 2026.⁷³⁴ Between October 2025 and May 2026, three of the five recorded civilian fatalities in the governorate were attributed to actors that SNHR could not identify, and two civilians were killed by Syrian government forces in October 2025.⁷³⁵ An analysis of the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad indicates that the number of monthly civilian fatalities remained at around 5 from January to February 2025, followed by a peak in March 2025 with 338 civilian fatalities. In April and May 2025, the number of civilian fatalities was below 10, followed by 2 fatalities per month between June and October 2025.⁷³⁶

⁷³² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁷³³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁷³⁴ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

⁷³⁵ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁷³⁶ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 136



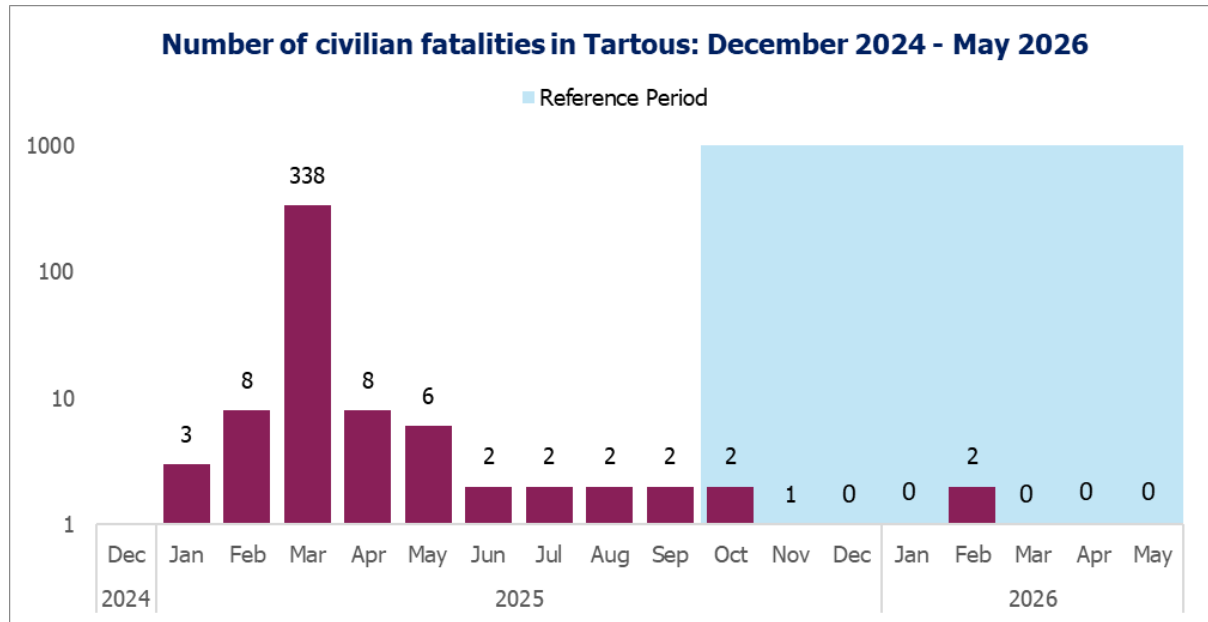


Figure 15: Evolution of civilian fatalities in Tartous per month, based on SNHR data⁷³⁷

2.5.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Since the fall of the Assad regime, the main infrastructure damage occurred as a result of the insurgency on the coast in March 2025. At least one hospital and 30 schools were damaged as a result of the clashes.⁷³⁸ Furthermore, property was damaged and destroyed in 15 locations in Tartous, Latakia, and Hama in March 2025. The Qusoor neighbourhood of Baniyas in Tartous was one of several locations in the coastal region where entire villages and residential areas were destroyed.⁷³⁹

No information could be found on incidents linked to explosive remnants of war during the reporting period.

2.5.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's population movements assessments in Syria, which started as of February 2025, show that there was a decrease in Tartous's IDP population between February 2025 (around 69 900 out of a total population of approximately 1.16 million, 6 %)⁷⁴⁰ and April 2026 (around 50 470 out of a total population of approximately 1.26 million, 4 %).⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁷ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 136

⁷³⁸ UNICEF, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 2 (Violence in the Coastal Areas) (As of 2 April 2025), 17 April 2025, [url](#), p. 1

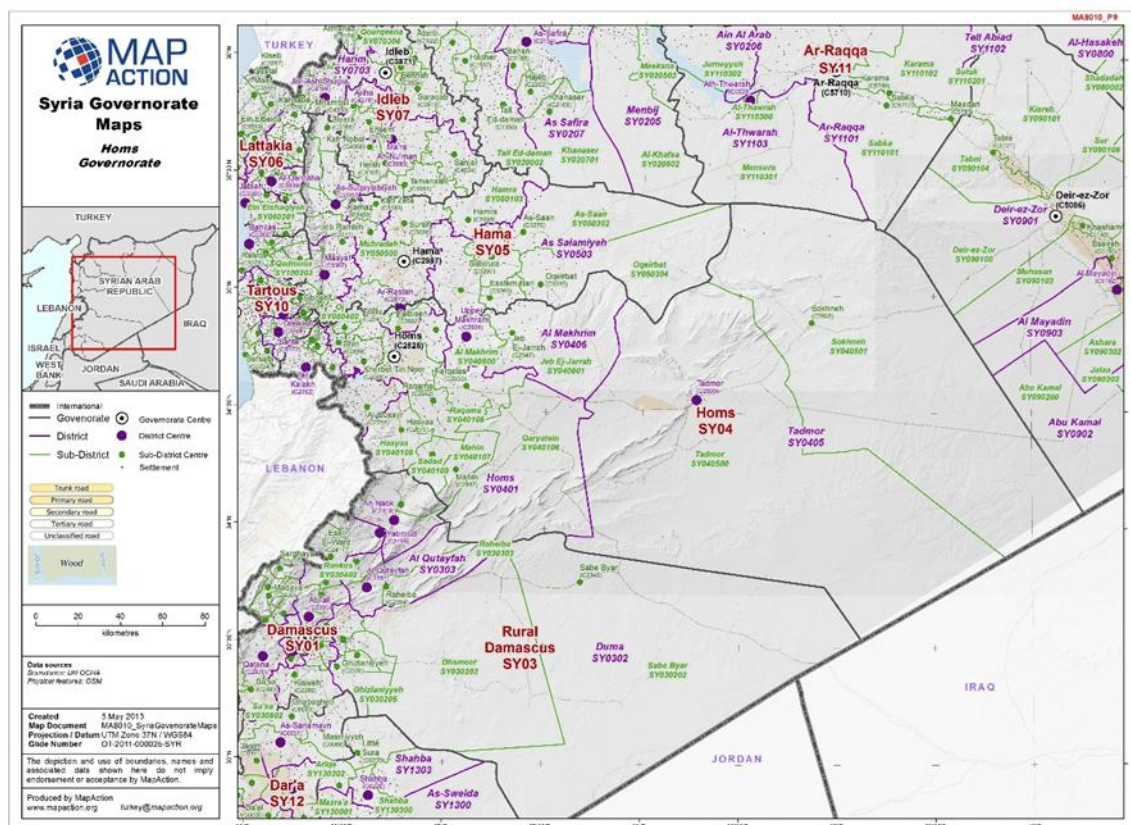
⁷³⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I, p. 32

⁷⁴⁰ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁷⁴¹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 21 May 2026, 12 229 individuals had returned to locations in Tartous governorate from internal displacement since December 2024⁷⁴² and 10 089 had returned to the governorate from abroad within the same period.⁷⁴³

2.6. Homs governorate



Map 9: © MapAction, Homs governorate map⁷⁴⁴

2.6.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Homs governorate is divided into six administrative districts, namely Homs, Al Makhrim, Al-Qusayr, Ar-Rastan, Tadmor (Palmyra) and Tall Kalakh, which are further divided into a total of 23 sub-districts.⁷⁴⁵ Its capital is the city of Homs.⁷⁴⁶ As of April 2026, IOM estimated the governorate's population at 1 582 630, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad.⁷⁴⁷

⁷⁴² UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard, 21 May 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁴³ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard, 21 May 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁴⁴ MapAction, Homs Governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

⁷⁴⁵ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 108

⁷⁴⁶ UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic, Map No. 4204 Rev. 4, August 2022, [url](#)

⁷⁴⁷ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

2.6.2. Territorial control and main armed actors

Territorial control in Homs governorate changed during the reference period. In November 2025, ISW and CTP assessed that the western part of the governorate as well as a corridor linking that area with Deir Ez-Zor were controlled by the Syrian Transitional Government, while the south-east and centre were controlled by unidentified opposition groups, except for the Al-Tanf Deconfliction Zone – an area in the south-east along the borders to Iraq and Jordan. The remainder of the governorate was mapped as ‘Lost Regime Territory’.⁷⁴⁸ By mid-February 2026, ISW and CTP assessed that the Syrian Transitional Government had expanded its control and taken over Al-Tanf as well as the areas previously controlled by unidentified opposition groups. Areas in the north and east along the border to Deir Ez-Zor and Raqqa governorates as well as a stretch of land in the governorate’s centre-west between the areas controlled by Syrian Transitional Government remained mapped as ‘Lost Regime Territory’.⁷⁴⁹ In mid-February 2026, the Syrian army took control over the US-run Al-Tanf military base.⁷⁵⁰ US forces and the Global Coalition Against ISIL had established the base within the Deconfliction Zone in 2016.⁷⁵¹ ISW and CTP assessed the 52nd Special Forces Division (formerly the 103rd Division) as the Syrian army’s unit active in Homs governorate.⁷⁵²

According to Etana Syria, Palmyra was a key location in an area where ISIL managed to maintain ‘significant influence and operational capacity’.⁷⁵³

2.6.3. Security trends

The main security trend in Homs governorate during the reference period were targeted killings, often by unknown gunmen, predominantly targeting Alawite civilians.⁷⁵⁴ Incidents of civilian killings were recorded mainly in Homs city,⁷⁵⁵ such as the killing of four Alawite hospital personnel in January 2026,⁷⁵⁶ but also across the governorate.⁷⁵⁷ In the context of such attacks, security personnel was often perceived as absent or, if present, not intervening sufficiently to contain the attacks,⁷⁵⁸ or as otherwise failing.⁷⁵⁹ The killing of a Bedouin couple from the Sunni Bani Khalid tribe in the town of Zaidal in November 2025, allegedly for

⁷⁴⁸ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁴⁹ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁰ SANA, Syria takes control of al-Tanf base from U.S. forces, 12 February 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁵¹ NPA, Syrian Army takes over al-Tanf base in South, 12 February 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁵² ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), p. 44

⁷⁵³ Etana Syria, Brief: Palmyra attack raises concerns of ISIS infiltration, 21 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁴ STJ, Drive-by Killings: A Recurrent Pattern of Direct Killings Using Motorcycles Against Civilians in Syria, 26 February 2026, [url](#), pp. 3-4

⁷⁵⁵ Belgium, CGRS-CEDOCA, Syrië: Veiligheidssituatie (ACLED), 31 March 2026, [url](#), p. 27; Enab Baladi, Homs, Syria: “Mobile Killings” Claim 30 Civilian Lives in Two Months, 1 March 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁶ STJ, Drive-by Killings: A Recurrent Pattern of Direct Killings Using Motorcycles Against Civilians in Syria, 26 February 2026, [url](#), p. 4

⁷⁵⁷ Enab Baladi, Homs, Security forces move to contain fallout from sectarian-motivated crime, 24 November 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁵⁸ STJ, Zaidal/Homs Crime: Disinformation and Sectarian Incitement Behind Violence Against Civilians, 3 February 2026, [url](#), p. 13

⁷⁵⁹ Al-Hal, Iman Jarrous: Third Targeted Killing in Homs Within a Week, The Syrian Observer, 26 February 2026, [url](#); New Arab (The), Homs: A stability test that Syria's new authorities are failing, 4 December 2025, [url](#)



sectarian motives, led to an outbreak of violence, with Bedouin tribes reportedly attacking Alawite-majority neighbourhoods in Homs city, causing material damage and assaults on civilians,⁷⁶⁰ before security forces intervened and contained the situation.⁷⁶¹ According to some accounts, 2 people were killed and 18 injured in the attacks.⁷⁶² While the killing later turned out to have a criminal background, the response was ‘undeniably sectarian’, with a ‘sectarian pattern of targeting’ and ‘systematised attacks’ on Alawite neighbourhoods.⁷⁶³ In the context of these attacks, sources pointed to the uncontrolled presence of arms among tribal groups,⁷⁶⁴ and described the situation since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad’s government as an ongoing ‘security chaos’,⁷⁶⁵ or – given the lack of transitional justice institutions – as law being replaced by chaos and revenge.⁷⁶⁶ STJ similarly noted that the lack of results from investigations and the failure to hold perpetrators accountable contributed to the prevailing impunity.⁷⁶⁷ At least 8 people were killed and 22 injured in an IED attack in an Alawite mosque in Homs city.⁷⁶⁸ Saraya Ansar Al Sunna, a non-state armed group, reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack. According to Syrian authorities, those responsible for the attack had been detained and identified as ISIL members.⁷⁶⁹

Another trend observed in Homs governorate during the reference period was the seizure of property in neighbourhoods or of individuals presumed loyal to the former Assad government,⁷⁷⁰ as well as forced evictions of former army personnel,⁷⁷¹ and members of the Shia and Alawite minorities.⁷⁷²

US and US-led airstrikes on presumed ISIL positions were reported in December 2025⁷⁷³ and early 2026,⁷⁷⁴ following a deadly attack on US forces by a suspected ISIL-affiliated gunman in Palmyra in mid-December 2025.⁷⁷⁵

⁷⁶⁰ Enab Baladi, Homs, Security forces move to contain fallout from sectarian-motivated crime, 24 November 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁶¹ New Arab (The), Syria extends curfew in Homs after murder, sectarian violence, 24 November 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁶² Al Monitor, Curfew extended in Syria’s Homs following Bedouin-Alawite clashes: What to know, 24 November 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁶³ New Arab (The), Homs: A stability test that Syria's new authorities are failing, 4 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁴ New Arab (The), Homs: A stability test that Syria's new authorities are failing, 4 December 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Aftermath of Homs killings may mark turning point for Syria’s government, 26 November 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁵ New Arab (The), Homs: A stability test that Syria's new authorities are failing, 4 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁶ Shahin, K., In Homs, Revenge Is the Only Law Left Standing, New Lines Magazine, 25 November 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁶⁷ STJ, Drive-by Killings: A Recurrent Pattern of Direct Killings Using Motorcycles Against Civilians in Syria, 26 February 2026, [url](#), p. 3

⁷⁶⁸ International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: December 2024 – April 2026, n.d., [url](#)

⁷⁶⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 100

⁷⁷⁰ Al-Jumhuriya, Home Seizures in Homs, 12 March 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁷¹ Shahin, K., In Homs, Revenge Is the Only Law Left Standing, New Lines Magazine, 25 November 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁷² Syria Report (The), Displacement and Property Seizure Continue to Affect Shia Residents in Homs, 3 March 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁷³ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 22, 2025, 22 December 2025, [url](#); Ibrahim Hamidi, [X], posted on: 19 December 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁴ SOHR, Ongoing attacks on former ISIS positions | Series of airstrikes target positions in Syrian Desert, 9 February 2026, [url](#); BBC, UK and France bomb underground IS arms bunker in Syria, 4 January 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁵ FDD’s Long War Journal, US launches widespread airstrikes against Islamic State in Syria after deadly Palmyra attack, 19 December 2025, [url](#)



2.6.4. Security incidents

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, ACLED recorded 200 security incidents in Homs governorate. Of these, 113 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians, 65 as explosions/remote violence, and 22 as battles. The number of incidents per month during this period ranged from 10 to 29, exceeding this figure only twice, in December 2025 and February 2026, with 33 incidents in each case.

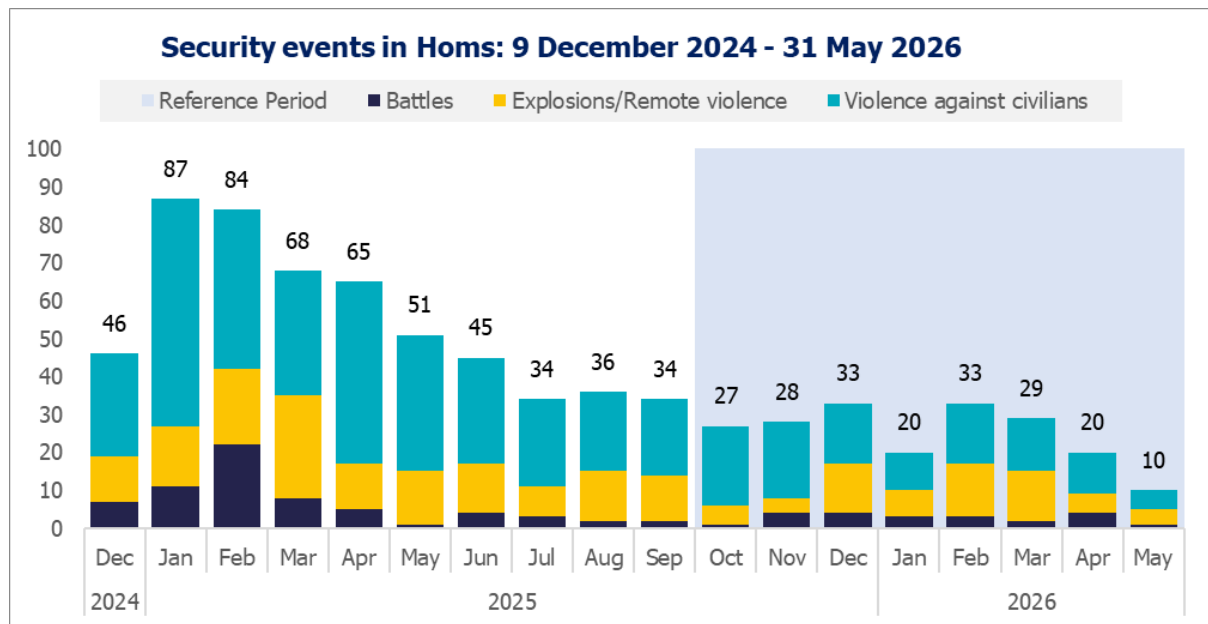


Figure 16: Evolution of security events in Homs per type, based on ACLED data⁷⁷⁶

An analysis of ACLED data for the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad, from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, indicates a peak in security incidents in January and February 2025, with 87 and 84 incidents, predominantly incidents of violence against civilians by unidentified armed groups as well as incidents of explosions or remote violence. Between July 2025 and May 2026, the monthly number of recorded security incidents remained between 10 and 40.⁷⁷⁷

During the reference period, ACLED recorded security incidents in all six districts of Homs governorate. The highest number was documented in Homs district (110 incidents), followed by Tadmor (53 incidents) and Tall Kalakh (14 incidents). Homs and Tadmor were also the two districts with the highest number of incidents recorded in the governorate since the fall of Bashar al-Assad. By contrast, the lowest number of incidents recorded during the reference period was recorded in Al Makhrim and Ar Rastan, with five incidents in each district.

According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups and the Global Coalition Against ISIL were the main actors involved in security incidents during the reference period, either coded as Actor 1 or Actor 2. Unidentified Armed Groups were recorded in 160 of the 200 security

⁷⁷⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)



incidents, mainly targeting civilians, while the Global Coalition Against ISIL was recorded in 15 incidents.

Compared with the overall security situation since 9 December 2024, the number security of incidents where Syrian military and police forces were recorded as Actor 1 or Actor 2 has decreased (from 207 to 31 security incidents), and no incidents involving military forces of Israel were recorded during the reference period. Of all incidents recorded during the reference period, 11 were linked to ISIL (recorded as Actor 1 or Actor 2), including battles (3), violence against civilians (2), explosions/remote violence (6).

113 security incidents during the reference period were coded as 'violence against civilians'. 85 % of these incidents involved unidentified armed groups responsible for killings, often targeting civilians perceived as Alawites or as affiliated with the previous government.⁷⁷⁸

2.6.5. Civilian casualties

In October 2025, SNHR recorded 10 civilian fatalities in Homs governorate, 12 in November, 8 in December 2025, 16 in January 2026, 13 in February, 10 in March, 15 in April and 6 as of 31 May 2026.⁷⁷⁹ Between October 2025 and 10 May 2026, most of the civilian fatalities recorded in the governorate were killed by parties SNHR was unable to identify,⁷⁸⁰ except for one civilian killed by Syrian government forces⁷⁸¹ in March 2026. Moreover, of the 15 civilian fatalities recorded in April 2026, an unknown number was killed by Syrian government forces and remnants of the government of Bashar Al-Assad.⁷⁸²

An analysis of the period since the fall of the previous government suggests a decline of the civilian toll in the governorate between March and December 2025, before slightly increasing again in early 2026.⁷⁸³

⁷⁷⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁷⁹ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

⁷⁸⁰ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁷⁸¹ SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), p. 4

⁷⁸² SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

⁷⁸³ SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 143; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24



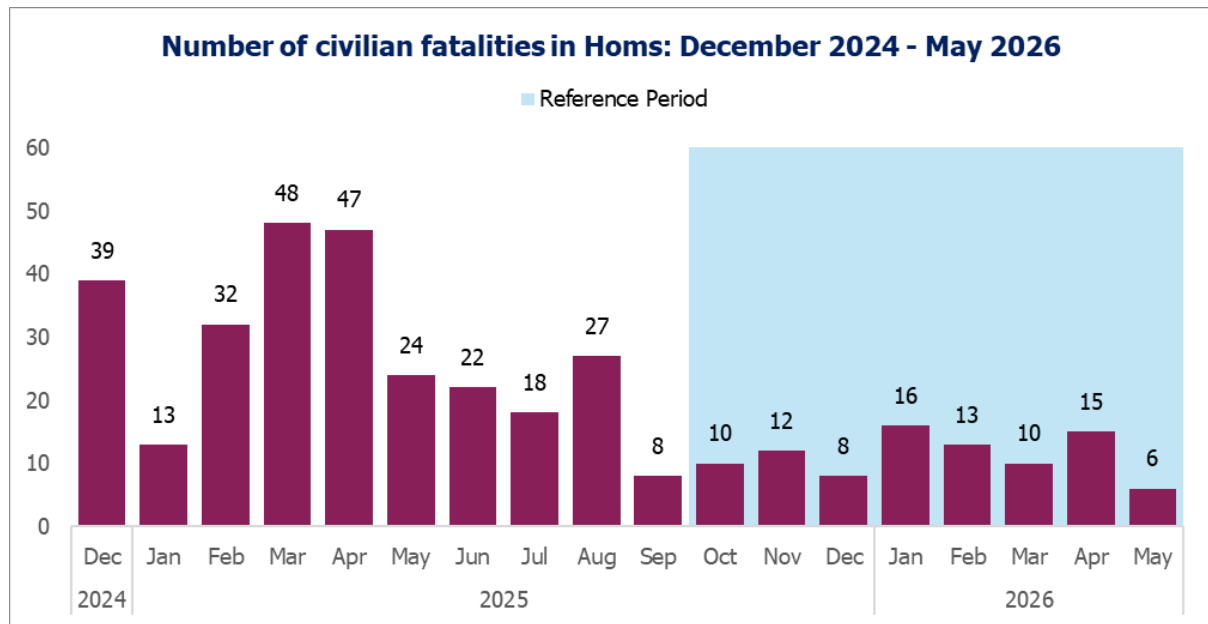


Figure 17: Evolution of civilian fatalities in Homs per month, based on SNHR data⁷⁸⁴

2.6.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

According to a joint assessment by UNHCR, REACH and the Shelter Cluster conducted in the last quarter of 2025, Homs governorate recorded the highest proportion of communities (16 %) where more than 50 % of the housing stock was completely destroyed, closely followed by Hama (15 %).⁷⁸⁵ Homs governorate reportedly estimated that around 35 000 houses had been destroyed, while returnees faced difficulties in finding adequate housing and ‘prohibitively high’ rents in neighbourhoods that had remained intact.⁷⁸⁶ In early 2026, Syria’s national news agency SANA reported on a rubble-clearing campaign by the Homs City Council in cooperation with UNDP, covering 13 damaged neighbourhoods across the city,⁷⁸⁷ some of which, such as the area around the Khalediya Primary Healthcare Center (PHCC), remained ‘strewn with rubble and damaged buildings’, according to MSF.⁷⁸⁸

In early May 2026, the Syrian Ministry of Local Administration and Environment in cooperation with UN-Habitat published an assessment of conflict-related damages to various sectors of Homs’ public infrastructure. According to the report, 5.2 % of houses in Homs governorate were completely destroyed, while 7 % were severely, 9 % moderately and 10.1 % lightly damaged. Moreover, 63 schools were completely destroyed, 83 severely, 150 moderately and 231 lightly damaged. The report also assessed the state of Homs’ 239 bakeries, finding 35

⁷⁸⁴ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 143

⁷⁸⁵ UNHCR et al., Syria Nationwide Housing Damage Assessment (October-November-December 2025), 23 January 2026, [url](#), p. 8

⁷⁸⁶ Al-Jumhuriya, Home Seizures in Homs, 12 March 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁷ SANA, Homs City Council launches rubble-clearing campaign in damaged neighborhoods, 2 February 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁸⁸ MSF, Shifting healthcare needs in Syria, 24 March 2026, [url](#)

completely destroyed, 4 severely, 8 moderately and 15 lightly damaged.⁷⁸⁹ A second report, published a few days earlier in late April 2026, noted that 32.4 % of the governorate's hospitals were out of actual service. Four hospitals were completely destroyed, while eight were severely, eight moderately and three lightly damaged. Moreover, 43 clinics were either completely destroyed or severely damaged, 21 recorded moderate and 20 minor damages. In terms of places of worship, 48 mosques were completely destroyed, 78 were severely damaged, 62 moderately and 59 lightly damaged. The report also noted that two of the governorate's churches were completely destroyed, while one was severely damaged and two others recorded moderate damages.⁷⁹⁰

According to a government official quoted by the New Arab, landmine and explosive ordnance (EO) contamination was concentrated in former conflict zones and frontlines such as Homs countryside.⁷⁹¹ As of October 2025, IOM described the situation in the governorate as 'critical', noting that, while contamination was widespread, demining efforts were 'minimal' and reported only from 15 % of the affected communities;⁷⁹² one example is Palmyra where, according to an army commander, several areas and key facilities were cleared of more than 4 000 landmines.⁷⁹³ According to UNHCR, Homs governorate was among the five governorates where most casualties from incidents involving EO were recorded in the period from December 2024 to the end of November 2025.⁷⁹⁴ The governorate also remained 'heavily affected' by lethal EO incidents in the first quarter of 2026.⁷⁹⁵ SNHR recorded 29 civilian fatalities due to landmine explosions across the governorate in the period from 8 December 2024 to early April 2026.⁷⁹⁶ During the reference period, several sources reported on incidents involving civilians being killed or injured in the explosion of war remnants,⁷⁹⁷ such as the explosion of a war remnant in an abandoned military barracks in the Al-Abbasiyah neighbourhood of Homs city in March 2026 that injured 31 civilians and damaged properties in the surrounding area.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁸⁹ Syria, Ministry of Local Administration and Environment, [وزارة الإدارة المحلية والبيئة تستكمل نتائج تقييم أضرار قطاعات السكن والتعليم والأفران في محافظة حمص](#) [The Ministry of Local Administration and Environment Completes the Results of the Damage Assessment for the Housing, Education, and Bakery Sectors in Homs Governorate], 2 May 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁰ Syria, Ministry of Local Administration and Environment, [وزارة الإدارة المحلية والبيئة تصدر نتائج تقييم أضرار قطاعات الصحة ودور العبادة في محافظة حمص](#) [The Ministry of Local Administration and Environment Issues the Results of the Damage Assessment for the Health and Places of Worship Sectors in Homs Governorate], 27 April 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁹¹ New Arab (The), Every step could be their last as Syrian children navigate mine-contaminated land, 7 April 2026, [url](#)

⁷⁹² IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, October 2025 – Round 3, 15 December 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁷⁹³ SANA, Over 4,000 Landmines Cleared in Palmyra, Says Defense Official, 23 October 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁴ UNHCR, Coming Home: One Year into Syria's Transition, 11 December 2025, [url](#), p. 14

⁷⁹⁵ UNHCR, Syria Protection and Reintegration Insights. January – March 2026, 28 April 2026, [url](#), p. 14

⁷⁹⁶ SNHR, On the International Day for Mine Awareness: Documenting the deaths of at least 3,799 civilians from landmines and cluster munitions in Syria, March 2011 – April 2026, 4 April 2026, [url](#), p. 8

⁷⁹⁷ SNHR, The child Ismail Fleij was killed by a cluster bomb explosion, a remnant of the conflict, in the Al-Sukhnah desert in the Homs countryside on April 27, 2026., 28 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Explosion of old landmine | Bodies of two civilians found after having been missed for ten days in Homs, 29 March 2026, [url](#); SANA, One killed, another injured in landmine blast near Palmyra, 17 February 2026, [url](#); SANA, Three Syrian Soldiers Injured While Clearing Mines in Homs and Hama Countryside, 30 December 2025, [url](#); SNHR, Three civilians injured by a landmine explosion in the Al-Abbasiya area, south of Palmyra, Homs countryside, on November 7, 2025, 10 November 2025, [url](#)

⁷⁹⁸ Enab Baladi, War remnants explosion injures 31 civilians in Homs, 14 March 2026, [url](#)

2.6.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

According to IOM's population movement assessment, the IDP population in Homs governorate only slightly decreased between February 2025 (about 129 000 or 9 % of a total population of approximately 1.43 million)⁷⁹⁹ and April 2026 (about 126 610 or 8 % of a total population of approximately 1.58 million).⁸⁰⁰

UNHCR estimated that as of 21 May 2026, 182 585 individuals had returned to locations in Homs governorate from internal displacement since December 2024.⁸⁰¹ Within the same period, 206 650 individuals had returned to the governorate from abroad.⁸⁰² By the end of April 2026, UNHCR noted that the majority of those returning were Syrians, mostly families, with Homs governorate among the top four provinces of intended returns.⁸⁰³ Similarly, in March 2026, Homs governorate was one of the three governorates receiving the highest shares of arrivals from abroad.⁸⁰⁴

⁷⁹⁹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁸⁰⁰ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

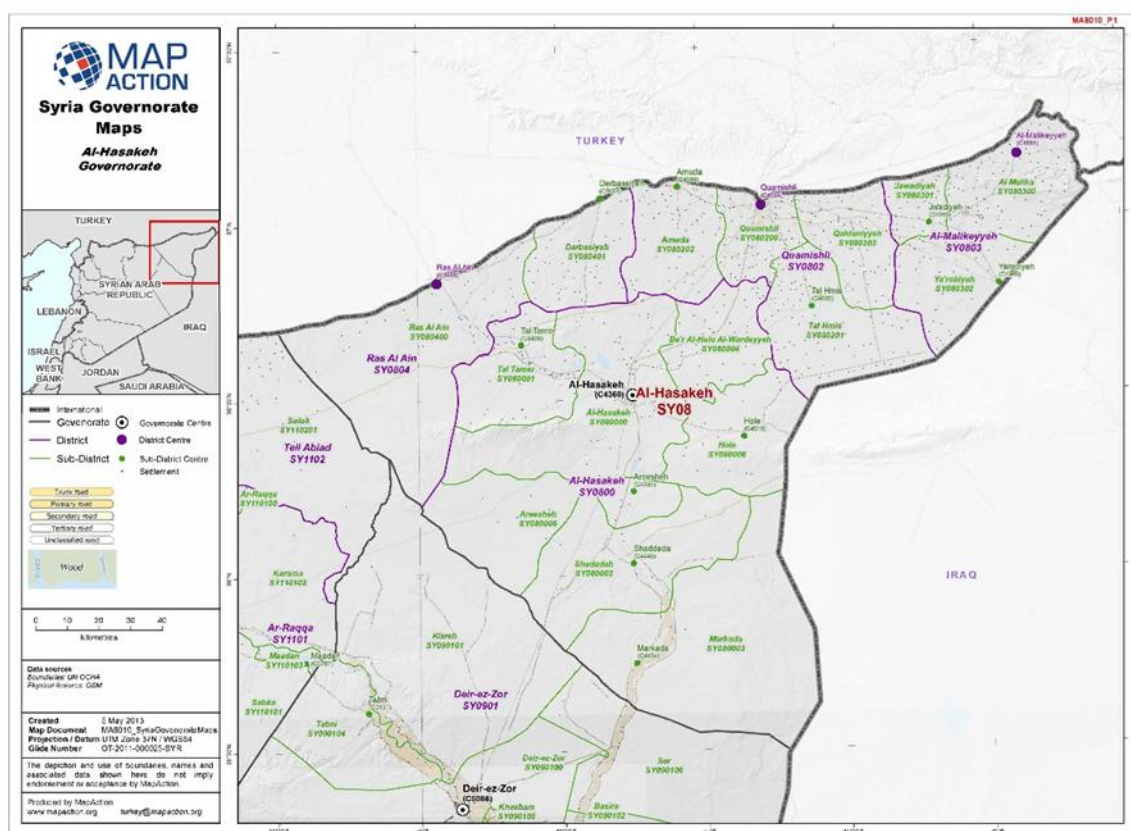
⁸⁰¹ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁰² UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁰³ UNHCR, Middle East Situation as of 29 April 2026, 30 April 2026, [url](#), p. 4

⁸⁰⁴ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 14 – March 2026, 16 April 2026, [url](#), p. 6

2.7. Hasaka governorate



Map 10: © MapAction, Hasaka governorate.⁸⁰⁵

2.7.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Hasaka governorate is divided into four administrative districts, namely Al-Hasaka (or Al-Hasakeh), Malikiya, Qamishli and Ras Al-Ain, which are further divided into a total of 16 sub-districts.⁸⁰⁶ Its capital is the city of Hasaka.⁸⁰⁷ As of April 2026, IOM estimated the governorate's population at 1 413 698, including residents, IDPs and returnees from abroad.⁸⁰⁸

2.7.2. Territorial control and main armed actors

Territorial control in Hasaka governorate changed during the reporting period. In November 2025, ISW and CTP mapped the governorate as being mainly controlled by the SDF, with territory in the north-west under control of the SNA.⁸⁰⁹ By mid-February 2026, however, the Syrian Transitional Government had taken over control of a vast area of the governorate, with

⁸⁰⁵ MapAction, Al-Hasakeh governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 106-107

⁸⁰⁷ UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic, Map No. 4204 Rev. 4, August 2022, [url](#)

⁸⁰⁸ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁸⁰⁹ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#)

the SDF merely retaining control in parts of the north and the north-eastern corner of Hasaka,⁸¹⁰ around the cities of Qamishli and Hasaka.⁸¹¹ In April 2026, the Syrian Transitional Government assumed control of all military sites in the governorate where US forces had been stationed.⁸¹² ISW identified the 86th Division of the Syrian army as present in Hasaka governorate.⁸¹³

As part of a broader military confrontation aimed at extending control over north-eastern Syria, the Syrian army advanced towards Hasaka governorate on 17 January 2026.⁸¹⁴ On 18 January, the Syrian government and the SDF signed a ceasefire and 'full integration' agreement. The agreement provided, among other measures, for all civilian institutions in Hasaka governorate to be incorporated into Syrian state institutions.⁸¹⁵ On 30 January, the two parties announced a further agreement bringing hostilities to a halt. Under its terms, MoI security units were deployed to Hasaka and Qamishli, while local Asayish forces were started to be integrated into state structures.⁸¹⁶ The agreement also envisaged the establishment of a new military division of the Syrian army, incorporating former SDF brigades, to operate across the north-east.⁸¹⁷ In addition, the 30 January agreement stipulated that government forces would refrain from entering Kurdish-majority areas. Instead, limited contingents of security forces reporting to the MoI would take control of state institutions in the cities Hasaka and Qamishli, including civil registry offices, passport departments and the airport.⁸¹⁸ Government forces entered Hasaka city on 2 February 2026⁸¹⁹ and Qamishli on 3 February 2026.⁸²⁰ In February, the transitional government began incorporating various institutions of the former Autonomous Administration and appointed Nouredin Ahmad Issa, a former Asayish official, as governor of Hasaka.⁸²¹ By the end of April, the integration process was still ongoing. During this period, the transitional government had assumed control of the Semalka border crossing with Iraq,⁸²² while the SDF removed checkpoints within the governorate and handed over prisons to the transitional government.⁸²³ Discussions between the two sides continued with a view to resolving outstanding issues.⁸²⁴ Beginning of May the assistant to the Syrian defense minister for eastern region affairs, Samir Oso, announced that four SDF brigades have been integrated

⁸¹⁰ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#)

⁸¹¹ Aftandilian, G., The Shrinking Space for Kurdish Autonomy in Syria, Arab Center Washington DC, 26 February 2026, [url](#)

⁸¹² Al Jazeera, Syria takes control of all bases where US forces were deployed, 16 April 2026, [url](#)

⁸¹³ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), p. 52

⁸¹⁴ HRW, Syria: Civilian Protection Lacking in Northeast Escalation, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸¹⁵ SANA, Terms of the Ceasefire and Integration Agreement between Syria and SDF, 18 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸¹⁶ Middle East Council on Global Affairs, How Damascus Reclaimed Syria's Northeast, and What Integration Now Means, 4 February 2026, [url](#)

⁸¹⁷ Reuters, Syrian government, Kurds agree integration deal, US hails 'historic milestone', 30 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸¹⁸ AP, Syria's interior ministry forces enter key city under deal with Kurdish-led SDF, 2 February 2026, [url](#)

⁸¹⁹ Al Jazeera, Syrian forces deploy in Hasakah under ceasefire agreement with SDF, 2 February 2026, [url](#)

⁸²⁰ Reuters, Syrian security deploy in key Kurdish city under US-backed deal, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

⁸²¹ Etana Syria, Analysis: Progress & Challenges in SDF integration, 28 March 2026, [url](#)

⁸²² Shafaq News, Syria begins joint administration of Semalka crossing with Kurdistan Region, 15 April 2026, [url](#)

⁸²³ New Arab (The), SDF begins removing checkpoints in Hasakah, handing over prisons to Syrian government, 20 April 2026, [url](#)

⁸²⁴ Rudaw, Senior Kurdish official says integration process with Damascus moving 'slowly', 20 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Integration file stalled | Dispute emerges between Ministry of Justice and AANES over running judicial affairs in Al-Qamishli, 20 April 2026, [url](#)

into the Syrian Defense Ministry, but that the integration process remained in its early stages.⁸²⁵

As for the role of the Syrian National Army (SNA), although the SNA was formally dissolved at the January 2025 'Victory Conference', former SNA factions were reportedly still significant actors in northern Syria's security environment.⁸²⁶

2.7.3. Security trends

During the reference period, the main security development in Hasaka governorate was the SDF's loss of territorial control and the expansion of transitional government authority.⁸²⁷ This shift in control was accompanied by clashes, especially in the areas of Al-Shaddadeh,⁸²⁸ and Tell Tamer.⁸²⁹ During the January battles, there were reported allegations of abuses by both parties in north-eastern Syria.⁸³⁰ One consequence of the fighting and change in territorial control was the release of hundreds of ISIL fighters from Al-Shaddadeh prison,⁸³¹ as well as the transfer of control of the Al-Hol camp from the SDF to the transitional government and confirmed 'mass escapes' from Al-Hol camp, Syria's largest camp for relatives of suspected ISIL fighters.⁸³² In February 2026, UNHCR announced the closure of the camp.⁸³⁴

By March, IOM described the situation in Hasaka as relatively stable, with no major clashes reported,⁸³⁵ although tensions continued to be noted in Ras Al-Ain.⁸³⁶ In April, it was reported that a security vacuum in Markada subdistrict south of Hasaka city resulted in a surge of thefts.⁸³⁷ Meanwhile, urban areas, including Hasaka city and Qamishli, witnessed renewed and

⁸²⁵ Enab Baladi, Hamo: Four SDF Brigades Join Defense Ministry, 2 May 2026, [url](#)

⁸²⁶ Syria in Transition, What's left of the SNA, December 2025, [url](#); Vacher P., Turkey's Lingering Influence in Syria's New Army, New Lines Magazine, 2 February 2026, [url](#); Van Wilgenburg W., The SDF's Approach to Integration Talks in Syria and the Risk of Expanded Conflict, 15 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸²⁷ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); Aftandilian, G., The Shrinking Space for Kurdish Autonomy in Syria, Arab Center Washington DC, 26 February 2026, [url](#)

⁸²⁸ Etana Syria, Brief: Raqqa, Deir Ezzor fall to interim authorities, 21 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸²⁹ Enab Baladi, Clashes Erupt on Tell Tamer Front, First Direct Fighting Reported Between Syrian Government Forces and "SDF", 30 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸³⁰ MEI, Integration or conflict in northeastern Syria? Ten key points to consider, 29 January 2026, [url](#); Synergy Hevesti, From Aleppo to Al-Hasakah: Civilians Caught Between Bombardment, Disappearances, and Attacks on Dignity and Identity, 24 February 2026, [url](#), p. 11; Lister, C., Syria Weekly: January 20-27, 2026, 27 January 2026, Syria Weekly, [url](#)

⁸³¹ Schmidinger T., Kurdish Autonomy in Northern and Eastern Syria Is Under Threat, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 23 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸³² HRW, Syria: Civilian Protection Lacking in Northeast Escalation, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸³³ Al Jazeera, Syria confirms 'mass escape' from camp housing relatives of ISIL fighters, 26 February 2026, [url](#); France24, Chaos as jihadist relatives left Syrian camp, witnesses say, 26 February 2026, [url](#)

⁸³⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 98

⁸³⁵ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Emergency Mobility Tracking Situation Report Aleppo/ North East Syria (NES) Conflict – Round 14, 4 March 2026, [url](#), p. 1

⁸³⁶ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Emergency Mobility Tracking Situation Report Aleppo/ North East Syria (NES) Conflict – Round 14, 4 March 2026, [url](#), p. 1; IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Emergency Mobility Tracking Situation Report Aleppo/ North East Syria (NES) Conflict – Round 15, 11 March 2026, [url](#), p. 1

⁸³⁷ Enab Baladi, Syria: al-Hasakah Security Vacuum Drives Theft Surge in Markada, 24 April 2026, [url](#)

increased security deployments in the streets, stricter inspections, and the spread of temporary SDF checkpoints.⁸³⁸

In March and April 2026, drones were reportedly shot down over Hasaka governorate in connection with the US-Israel-Iran conflict.⁸³⁹

Compared with the preceding reporting period, the configuration of actors involved in hostilities in the governorate changed. While late 2024 and early 2025 were marked by fighting between Türkiye/SNA and the SDF,⁸⁴⁰ the reference period was characterised by confrontations involving government forces and the SDF.⁸⁴¹ Incidents affecting civilians, attributed to unidentified armed groups as well as the SDF, were recorded throughout the period since December 2024.⁸⁴² The number of ISIL attacks, specifically those targeting security personnel of the then-autonomous region,⁸⁴³ gradually decreased after December 2024.⁸⁴⁴

2.7.4. Security incidents

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, ACLED recorded 336 security incidents in Hasaka governorate. Of these, 172 were coded as violence against civilians, 83 as explosions/remote violence, and 81 as battles. The majority of the incidents occurred in January 2026 (138 incidents). An analysis of ACLED data for the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad, from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, indicates two peaks in security incidents in the governorate: January 2025, with 169 incidents, and January 2026.⁸⁴⁵ The first peak coincided with attacks by Turkish forces and their affiliated factions in Hasaka.⁸⁴⁶ In comparison, the second peak occurred during the takeover of SDF-controlled areas in Hasaka by Syrian transitional government forces.⁸⁴⁷ Between April and December 2025, as well as since March 2026, the monthly number of recorded security incidents remained at or below 42 per month.⁸⁴⁸

⁸³⁸ Enab Balasi, Security Alert in al-Hasakah, Tight Measures and Arrests, 23 April 2026, [url](#); Enab Baladi, SDF Launches Month-Long Campaign in al-Hasakah, 3 June 2026, [url](#)

⁸³⁹ SOHR, Believed to be Iranian | Coalition's air defence systems shoots drone in Al-Hasakah countryside, 20 March 2026, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Al-Hasakah: Coalition Shoots Down Drones, Iranian Missile Intercepted Near al-Qamishli, 3 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Al-Hasakah | Coalition shoots down drone attempting to attack Qasrek base, 4 April 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁰ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, March 21, 2025, 21 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁸⁴¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁴² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁴³ Al Jazeera, ISIL group kills five Kurdish fighters in attack in eastern Syria, 28 April 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Five Kurdish security forces killed by ISIS in northeast Syria: War monitor, 15 July 2025, [url](#); SOHR, ISIS new attack | Gunfire on SDF military post in southern Al-Hasakah, 12 September 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁶ SOHR, Ongoing escalation | Turkish forces and their proxies attack villages in Al-Hasakah countryside, 13 January 2025, [url](#); NPA, Turkish drone strikes hit Syria's Hasakah amid escalating attacks, 19 January 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁷ HRW, Syria: Civilian Protection Lacking in Northeast Escalation, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁴⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

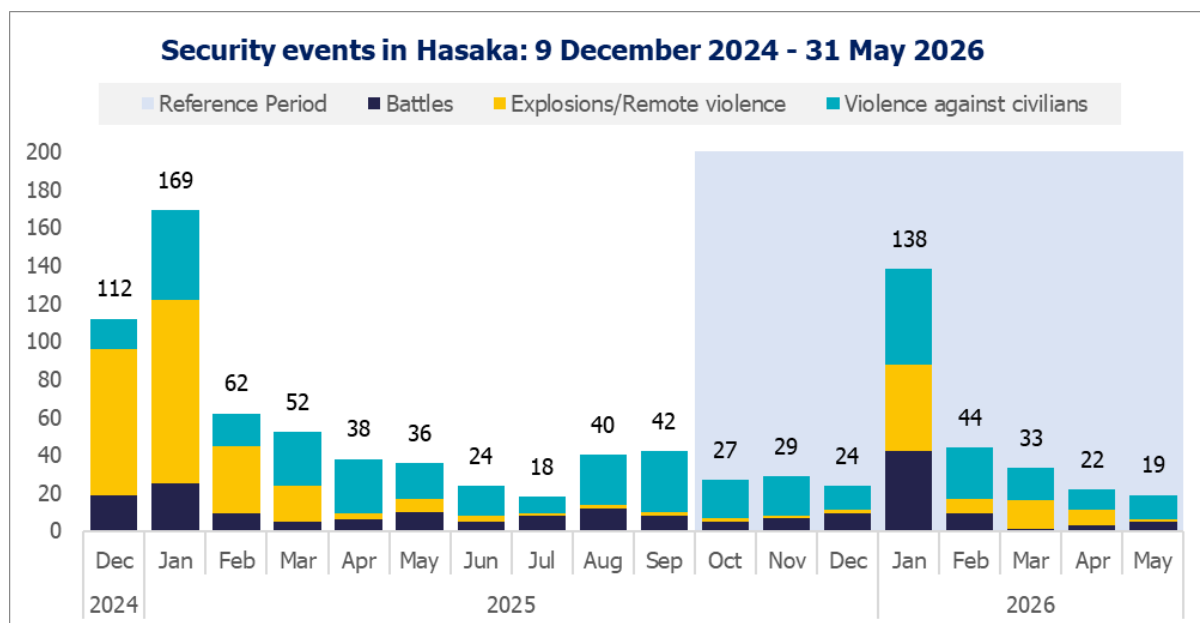


Figure 18: Evolution of security events in Hasaka per type, based on ACLED data⁸⁴⁹

During the reference period, ACLED recorded security incidents in all four districts of Hasaka governorate. The highest number was documented in Hasaka district (198 incidents), followed by Malikiya (59 incidents) and Qamishli (50 incidents). Hasaka district was also the district with the highest number of overall incidents recorded in the governorate since the fall of Bashar al-Assad, followed by Ras Al-Ain, with 145 incidents. By contrast, during the reporting period, Ras Al-Ain was the district with the lowest number of recorded incidents (29).⁸⁵⁰

According to ACLED data, the SDF were the main actor involved in security incidents during the reference period. They appeared in 215 recorded incidents, either as Actor 1 or Actor 2. This was followed by the military forces of Syria, which were coded as Actor 1 or Actor 2 in 59 incidents. Taken together, these actors were involved in more than 80 % of the security incidents during the reference period. The nature of their involvement differed. Syrian military forces were primarily associated with battles, accounting for 34 incidents, and explosions or remote violence, accounting for 23 incidents. By contrast, more than half of the incidents involving the SDF, 120 out of 215, were coded as 'violence against civilians'. Unidentified armed groups were further involved in 55 incidents. Other actors were also recorded, though less frequently. ISIL in 14, the PKK in 12, and the military forces of Türkiye and its Gendarmerie also in 12 incidents. A comparison between the current reference period and the overall security situation since 9 December 2024 indicates that the military forces of Türkiye no longer featured as a major actor in security incidents in the governorate.⁸⁵¹

During the reporting period, 172 security incidents were coded as 'violence against civilians', the majority of which related to the detention of civilians for a variety of reasons (from conscription to charges of supporting the Syrian government). Middle to end of January 2026

⁸⁴⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁵⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁵¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

showed a different pattern, with the majority of coded incidents involving the killing of civilians. More than 75 % of all incidents of violence against civilians involved the SDF, Asayish and YPG. Unidentified armed groups were involved in 19 incidents, the PKK in 8 and the Gendarmerie of the military forces of Türkiye in 7 incidents.⁸⁵²

2.7.5. Civilian casualties

The SNHR recorded no civilian fatalities in Hasaka governorate attributed to the controlling forces or other parties to the conflict in October,⁸⁵³ November⁸⁵⁴ or December 2025.⁸⁵⁵ In January 2026, the SNHR recorded two civilian fatalities in the governorate, attributed to the SDF and to other parties. No civilian fatalities were recorded in February and one in March, attributed to the SDF. In April, SNHR again recorded no civilian fatality in Hasaka. Two civilian fatalities were recorded in May, attributed to other parties.⁸⁵⁶ An analysis of the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad indicates a consistently low number of civilian fatalities in the governorate, ranging between 0 and 5 per month.⁸⁵⁷

2.7.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

According to UNDP, by the end of January 2026 the new north–south division between areas controlled by the transitional government and the SDF had disrupted supply routes, causing severe fuel shortages and electricity outages. The cut-off of the Tishrin power line reportedly halted electricity supplies to Qamishli and Hasaka cities and interrupted water pumping.⁸⁵⁸ UNDP further noted that earlier damage, including to gas turbines and electricity substations, remained unrepaired. Some health centres in southern areas had been looted and ceased operation, while 61 schools had been destroyed before the recent conflict.⁸⁵⁹ Following the transitional government's takeover of southern Hasaka, a wide tunnel network dug by the SDF was discovered. The tunnels reportedly affected soil stability and altered groundwater routes, negatively affecting crops.⁸⁶⁰ In northern Hasaka countryside, the Al-Darbasiyah power substation, previously damaged by Turkish shelling, continued to have power outages. Repeated Turkish shelling in northern and eastern Syria in the years before have led to infrastructure damage, affecting civilian life.⁸⁶¹ In April 2026, committees were formed to

⁸⁵² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁵³ SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁸⁵⁴ SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁸⁵⁵ SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9

⁸⁵⁶ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

⁸⁵⁷ EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24

⁸⁵⁸ UNDP, UNDP Flash Update, Ar-Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, Al-Hasakah, 20-26 January 2026, 26 January 2026, [url](#), p. 2

⁸⁵⁹ UNDP, UNDP Flash Update, Ar-Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, Al-Hasakah, 20-26 January 2026, 26 January 2026, [url](#), p. 4

⁸⁶⁰ Enab Baladi, SDF Tunnels, A Heavy Legacy Beneath al-Hasakah's Soil, 31 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁶¹ SOHR, International Committee of Red Cross assesses damage to Al-Darbasiyah power substation in Al-Hasakah countryside in preparation for repairs, 26 February 2026, [url](#)

assess the level of destruction around Tel Tamer and Zirkan towns,⁸⁶² an area that served as a frontline between Turkish forces and allied groups and the SDF from 2019 until the end of 2025. Many villages have been depopulated, landmines planted, and homes looted. Residents remained unable to return due to widespread destruction and the presence of unexploded ordnance.⁸⁶³

SNHR reported in April 2026 that Hasaka governorate was among the areas with the lowest number of landmine victims in Syria since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad on 8 December 2024. Three civilian deaths were recorded in the governorate, representing 0.95 % of the national total.⁸⁶⁴ Mine Action reported three explosive ordnance-related incidents in Hasaka governorate between 15 August and 15 October 2025, resulting in one person killed and two people injured.⁸⁶⁵ During the same period, clearance teams identified ten new hazardous areas and carried out nine explosive ordnance disposal spot tasks across ten sub-districts in Hasaka and Raqqqa governorates, removing and destroying 22 explosive items.⁸⁶⁶ During the reference period for this report, SOHR reported several incidents in which civilians were killed or injured by war remnants in Hasaka governorate.⁸⁶⁷ At the end of January 2026, the Ministry of Emergency and Disaster Management warned residents not to enter or return to areas inter alia in Hasaka countryside until specialised ministry teams had fully secured them from landmines, remnants of war and IEDs.⁸⁶⁸ The governorate's desert areas, particularly around Mount Abdelaziz and Markada in the southern Hasaka countryside, were reported to be especially dangerous. Mines were reportedly scattered randomly in these areas, posing particular risks to local residents collecting truffles.⁸⁶⁹

2.7.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's population movements assessments in Syria show that there was an increase in Hasaka's overall IDP population between February 2025 (around 340 000 out of a total

⁸⁶² SOHR, Paving way for safe return of displaced | Committees assess situations in Tel Tamr and Zirkan, 23 April 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁶³ ANHA, Documentation massive destruction in Tel Tamr, Zerghan villages, 23 April 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁴ SNHR, On the International Day for Mine Awareness: Documenting the deaths of at least 3,799 civilians from landmines and cluster munitions in Syria, March 2011 – April 2026, 4 April 2026, [url](#), p. 8

⁸⁶⁵ Mine Action AoR, Syria, Situation Update No. 5, 15 October 2025, [url](#), p. 4

⁸⁶⁶ Mine Action AoR, Syria, Situation Update No. 5, 15 October 2025, [url](#), p. 6

⁸⁶⁷ SOHR, Old ordinance | Young man killed and child injured in explosion of war remnants in Al-Hasakah, 24 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Civilian injured in Al-Hasakah | Number of injured people rises to five in explosions of war remnants in Al-Hasakah and Al-Raqqqa, 28 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordinance | Four civilians injured in explosion of war remnants in Al-Hasakah and Manbij, 6 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordinance | Civilian injured in explosion of landmine of war remnants in Al-Hasakah, 3 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordinance | Two young men injured in landmine explosion in Al-Hasakah, 23 February 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordinance | Civilian killed in Al-Hasakah countryside, 15 February 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordinance | Mother and three of her children killed and little girl injured in Al-Hasakah countryside, 11 February 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordinance | Three civilians killed in Al-Hasakah countryside, 4 February 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁸ Enab Baladi, Explosive remnants of war threaten civilians after SDF withdrawal, Emergency Ministry warns, 28 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁶⁹ Enab Baladi, Truffle Season in al-Hasakah, A Bountiful Harvest Threatened by Landmines, 31 March 2026, [url](#)

population of approximately 1.26 million, 27 %⁸⁷⁰ and April 2026 (around 382 000 out of a total population of approximately 1.4 million, 27 %).⁸⁷¹

By March 2026, IOM reported that displacement in Hasaka governorate had gradually decreased following its peak during the most recent conflict in north-eastern Syria. On 29 January, 146 511 persons displaced by the January conflict had been recorded in the governorate. Since then, return movements had been observed, with an estimated 47 % of those displaced having returned to areas where security conditions had relatively improved. As of 11 March 2026, the majority of those remaining in displacement in Hasaka governorate as a result of the 2026 conflict (total of 77 073) were residing in Qamishli (46 796) and Malikiya (13 310).⁸⁷² In the Ras Al-Ain area, SOHR reported that some displaced persons, including fighters from factions that had previously controlled the area, refused to leave agricultural land and homes belonging to indigenous residents, including Kurds, Syriacs and Yazidis displaced since 2019, thereby obstructing their return under the 29 January agreement between the transitional government and the SDF.⁸⁷³

UNHCR further estimated that, as of end of May 2026, 13 093 individuals had returned to locations in Hasaka governorate from internal displacement since December 2024⁸⁷⁴ and that 15 410 had returned to the governorate from abroad within the same period.⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁷⁰ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁸⁷¹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

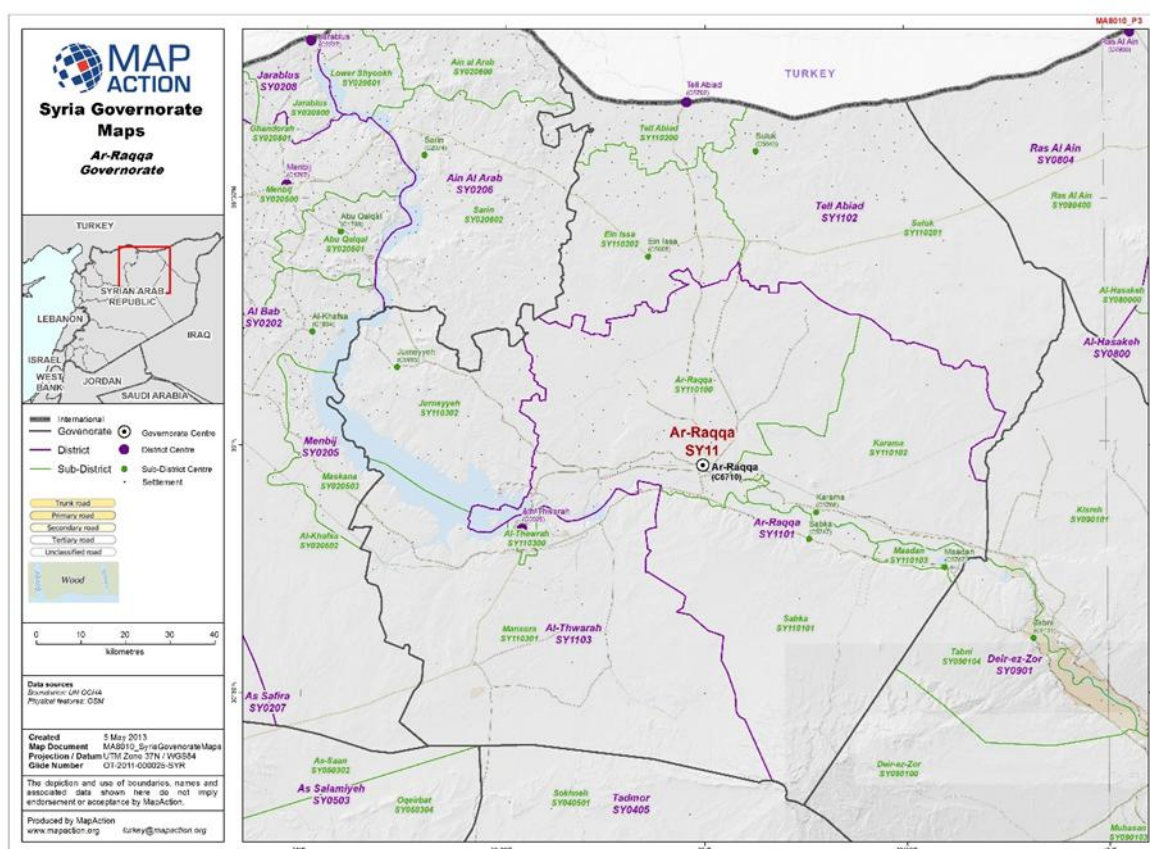
⁸⁷² IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Emergency Mobility Tracking Situation Report Aleppo/ North East Syria (NES) Conflict – Round 15, 11 March 2026, [url](#), p. 1

⁸⁷³ SOHR, Obstacles to return agreement in Ras Al-Ain | Displaced persons refuse to vacate land before harvest season, 13 April 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁴ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard, 21 May 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁵ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard, 21 May 2026, [url](#)

2.8. Raqqa governorate



Map 11: © MapAction, Raqqa governorate⁸⁷⁶

2.8.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Raqqa (or Ar-Raqqah) governorate is divided into three administrative districts, namely Raqqa (or Ar-Raqqah), Al-Thawra (or Ath-Thawrah) and Tell Abiad (or Tall Abyad), which are further divided into a total of ten sub-districts.⁸⁷⁷ Its capital is the city of Raqqa.⁸⁷⁸ As of April 2026, IOM estimated the governorate's population at 806 631, including residents, IDPs and returnees from abroad.⁸⁷⁹

2.8.2. Territorial control and main armed actors

Territorial control in Raqqa governorate changed during the reporting period. In November 2025, ISW and CTP mapped the governorate as divided between the Syrian Transitional Government in the south, the SDF in the centre, and the SNA in the north.⁸⁸⁰ By mid-February

⁸⁷⁶ MapAction, Ar Raqqa Governorate [map], 29 July 2016, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁷ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 107

⁸⁷⁸ UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic, Map No. 4204 Rev. 4, August 2022, [url](#)

⁸⁷⁹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁸⁸⁰ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#)

2026, however, the Syrian Transitional Government had taken over control of the entire governorate, with the exception of a very small area in the north-western corner, controlled by the SDF.⁸⁸¹ ISW identified the 60th, 66th and 86th Division of the Syrian army as the principal formations present in Raqqa governorate.⁸⁸²

As part of a broader military confrontation aimed at extending control over north-eastern Syria, the Syrian army took control of Raqqa governorate on 17 January 2026.⁸⁸³ The swift takeover was reportedly possible because local armed actors and tribes supported the offensive against the SDF.⁸⁸⁴ On 18 January, the Syrian government and the SDF signed a ceasefire and 'full integration' agreement. The agreement provided, among other measures, for all civilian and military institutions in Raqqa governorate to be incorporated into Syrian state institutions.⁸⁸⁵ On 30 January, the two parties announced a further agreement bringing previously continuing hostilities to a halt, as part of which the SDF relinquished control of Raqqa without conditions.⁸⁸⁶ As for the role of the Syrian National Army (SNA), although the SNA was formally dissolved at the January 2025 'Victory Conference', former SNA factions were reportedly still significant actors in northern Syria's security environment.⁸⁸⁷

2.8.3. Security trends

During the reference period, the main security development in Raqqa governorate was the SDF's loss of territorial control and the takeover of the governorate by the transitional government authority.⁸⁸⁸ This shift in control was accompanied by clashes, especially in the areas of Tabqa⁸⁸⁹ and Raqqa city.⁸⁹⁰ During the fighting in January 2026, allegations of abuses committed by both parties emerged in north-eastern Syria.⁸⁹¹ Civilians were reportedly killed while fleeing on the road between Raqqa and Hasaka.⁸⁹²

⁸⁸¹ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁸² ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 49-52

⁸⁸³ HRW, Syria: Civilian Protection Lacking in Northeast Escalation, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁴ New Arab (The), How Syria's tribes turned the tide against the SDF, 28 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁵ SANA, Terms of the Ceasefire and Integration Agreement between Syria and SDF, 18 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁶ Middle East Council on Global Affairs, How Damascus Reclaimed Syria's Northeast, and What Integration Now Means, 4 February 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁷ Syria in Transition, What's left of the SNA, December 2025, [url](#); Vacher P., Turkey's Lingering Influence in Syria's New Army, New Lines Magazine, 2 February 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁸ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); Aftandilian, G., The Shrinking Space for Kurdish Autonomy in Syria, Arab Center Washington DC, 26 February 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁸⁹ MEE, SDF reports 'intense clashes' as Syrian army advances in Aleppo and Raqqa, 17 January 2026, [url](#); UN News, Prison breaks and renewed clashes raise alarm in northeast Syria, 20 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁰ BBC, Clashes reported after Syria and Kurdish-led forces agree ceasefire, 18 January 2026, [url](#); SOHR, 12 killed and injured | Civilians fleeing from Al-Raqqa towards Al-Hasakah targeted by gunshots, 18 January 2026, [url](#); UN News, Prison breaks and renewed clashes raise alarm in northeast Syria, 20 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁹¹ MEI, Integration or conflict in northeastern Syria? Ten key points to consider, 29 January 2026, [url](#); Synergy Hevdesti, From Aleppo to Al-Hasakah: Civilians Caught Between Bombardment, Disappearances, and Attacks on Dignity and Identity, 24 February 2026, [url](#), p. 11; Lister, C., Syria Weekly: January 20-27, 2026, Syria Weekly, 27 January 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁹² SOHR, 12 killed and injured | Civilians fleeing from Al-Raqqa towards Al-Hasakah targeted by gunshots, 18 January 2026, [url](#); SNHR, Documentation of the Killing of At Least 22 Civilians, Mostly by Snipers, at the Hands of the SDF in Raqqa Governorate on January 18, 23 January 2026, [url](#); Synergy Hevdesti, From Aleppo to Al-Hasakah: Civilians Caught Between Bombardment, Disappearances, and Attacks on Dignity and Identity, 24 February 2026, [url](#), p. 7

Following the takeover by the transitional government authorities, ISIL attacks targeting security forces in the governorate were recorded.⁸⁹³

From March 2026 onwards, SOHR and local sources documented mistreatment of Kurdish residents of Raqqa governorate, including threatening and intimidating behaviour,⁸⁹⁴ obstruction of Kurdish students' continued education,⁸⁹⁵ property confiscation,⁸⁹⁶ torture in detention,⁸⁹⁷ arbitrary arrests⁸⁹⁸ and a series of arrests of persons accused of affiliation with the SDF.⁸⁹⁹ No wider reporting of the described incidents could be found as part of the research.

Compared with the preceding reporting period, the configuration of actors involved in hostilities in the governorate changed. While late 2024 and early 2025 were marked by attacks of Türkiye/SNA against the SDF,⁹⁰⁰ the reference period was characterised by confrontations involving government forces and the SDF.⁹⁰¹ Incidents affecting civilians that were attributed mainly to the SDF were recorded from December 2024 until mid-January 2026. From mid-January 2026 onwards, attacks against civilians mainly involved the security forces of the transitional government or unidentified armed groups.⁹⁰²

⁸⁹³ Shafaq News, ISIS claims attacks in Syria's Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor, 18 April 2026, [url](#); Asharq Al-Awsat, ISIS Intensifies Lone Wolf Attacks in Syria, 27 February 2026, [url](#); Rudaw, Suspected ISIS attack kills four members of security forces in Syria's Raqqa, 23 February 2026, [url](#); SOHR, ISIS resurgence ISIS claims responsibility for two attacks in Al-Raqqa, 21 February 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁴ SOHR, Al-Raqqa | Tension grows in Ain Issa countryside and clashes and threats target Kurdish residents, 25 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Systematic threats and escalation in Al-Raqqa spur Kurdish families to flee, 26 March 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁵ SOHR, Amid insults and restrictions | Kurdish students deprived of their academic files in Al-Raqqa, 23 April 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁶ SOHR, Escalating violations in Al-Raqqa | Confiscation of Kurdish residents' property and theft of their vehicles forces renewed displacement, 23 April 2026, [url](#); Kurd Online, تعليمات بإخلاء وهدم منازل تعود لعائلات كردية في الرقة تثير مخاوف من تغييرات ديموغرافية وانتهاكات لحقوق الملكية [Instructions to evacuate and demolish homes belonging to Kurdish families in Raqqa raise concerns about demographic changes and property rights violations.], 18 April 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁷ SOHR, 48 hours after being arrested | Kurdish civilian killed under brutal torturing in prisons of Syrian Interim Government in Al-Raqqa, 1 May 2026, [url](#); Kurd Online, مقتل إسماعيل الكردي تحت التعذيب في الرقة بعد يوم من اعتقاله يسقط الضوء على تصاعد الانتهاكات بحق الأكراد [The killing of Ismail al-Kurdi under torture in Raqqa, a day after his arrest, highlights the escalating violations against Kurds], 1 May 2026, [url](#); ANHA, Kurdish citizen killed under torture in Raqqa, 2 May 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁸ SOHR, Arbitrary arrest of two Kurdish young men in Al-Raqqa raises concerns of escalating abuses, 17 April 2026, [url](#); Kurd Online, رايٽس مونيتور: اعتقال مواطنين كرديين في الرقة وسط غموض حول مصيرهما وتصاعد المخاوف من انتهاكات بحق السكان [Rights Monitor: Two Kurdish citizens arrested in Raqqa amid uncertainty about their fate and escalating fears of abuses against the Kurdish population], 20 April 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁹⁹ SOHR, For "belonging to SDF" | Two Kurdish young men arrested in Al-Raqqa, 1 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Accused of "dealing with SDF" | Six Kurdish young men arrested in Al-Raqqa, 16 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, For "dealing with SDF" | Two Kurdish people including a lawyer arrested in Al-Raqqa City, 3 May 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Accused of "pledging allegiance to SDF" | Three Kurdish civilians arrested in Al-Raqqa, 4 May 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Blatant violations | Turkish-backed groups arrest ten civilians and seize farmlands in predominantly-Kurdish village in Al-Raqqa, 7 May 2026, [url](#); Kurd Online, اعتقال فريد كردو في الرقة ضمن حملة متصاعدة تستهدف المدنيين الكرد وسط مخاوف من انتهاكات منهجية [Farid Kurdo was arrested in Raqqa as part of an escalating campaign targeting Kurdish civilians, amid fears of systematic abuses.], 6 May 2026, [url](#); ANHA, Ten civilians from Sheikhan tribe kidnapped in Raqqa countryside, 7 May 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁰ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, March 21, 2025, 21 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁹⁰¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁰² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

2.8.4. Security incidents

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, ACLED recorded 263 security incidents in Raqqa governorate. Of these, 90 were coded as battles, 89 as explosions/remote violence and 84 as violence against civilians. The majority of the incidents occurred in January 2026 (80 incidents). An analysis of ACLED data for the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad, from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, indicates two peaks in security incidents in the governorate: January 2025, with 134 incidents, and January 2026.⁹⁰³ The first peak coincided with attacks by Turkish forces and their affiliated factions in Raqqa.⁹⁰⁴ In comparison, the second peak occurred during the takeover of SDF-controlled areas in Raqqa by the Syrian interim government.⁹⁰⁵ Between March and December 2025, as well as since February 2026, the monthly number of recorded security incidents remained at or below 51 per month.⁹⁰⁶

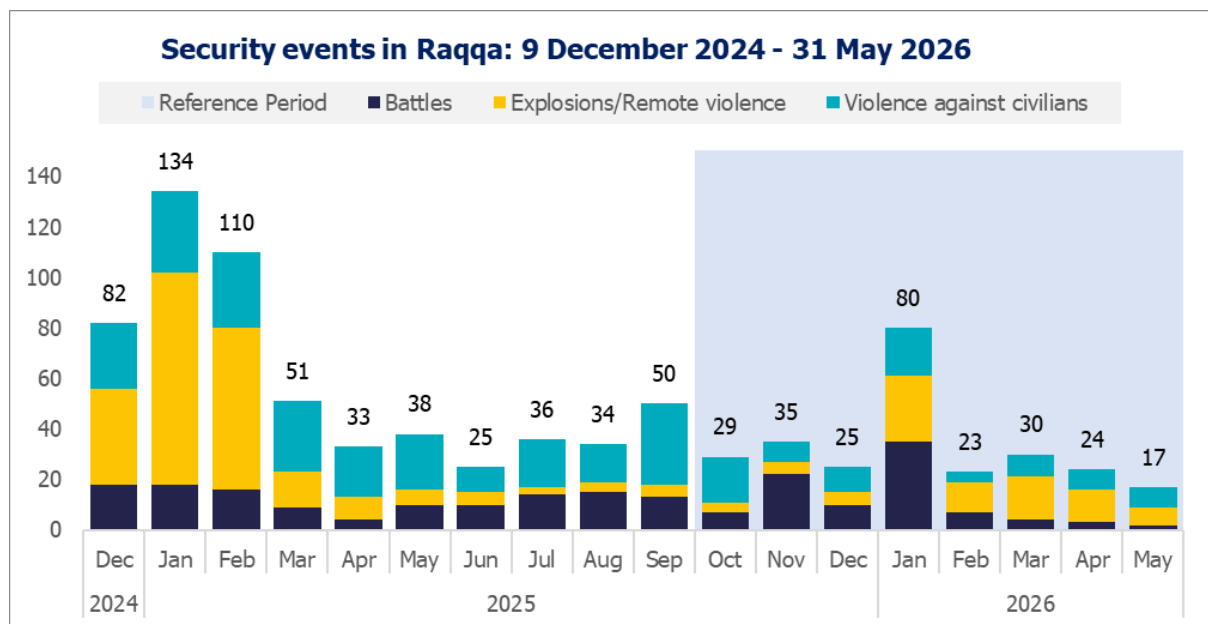


Figure 19: Evolution of security events in Raqqa per type, based on ACLED data⁹⁰⁷

During the reference period, ACLED recorded security incidents in all three districts of Raqqa governorate. The highest number was documented in Raqqa district (129 incidents), followed by Tell Abiad (87 incidents) and Al-Thawra (47 incidents). The same pattern was documented across the overall period since the fall of Bashar al-Assad, with Raqqa district recording the highest number of incidents, followed by Tell Abiad and Al-Thawra.⁹⁰⁸

⁹⁰³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁴ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 29, 2025, 29 January 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 15, 2025, 15 February 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁵ HRW, Syria: Civilian Protection Lacking in Northeast Escalation, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁰⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)



According to ACLED data, the SDF were the main actor involved in security incidents during the reference period. They appeared in 126 recorded incidents, either as Actor 1 or Actor 2. This was followed by unidentified armed groups, which were coded as Actor 1 or Actor 2 in 83 incidents, and the military forces of Syria, which were responsible for 71 incidents. Furthermore, ISIL was recorded in 34 incidents as Actor 1 or Actor 2, the majority of which were coded as battles. Further actors involved in the government included the Syrian police force, the Asayish, Syrian smugglers and the Global Coalition Against Daesh. A comparison between the current reference period and the overall security situation since 9 December 2024 indicates that the Turkish military forces no longer featured as a major actor in security incidents in the governorate.⁹⁰⁹

During the reporting period, 84 security incidents were coded as ‘violence against civilians’. 41 of these involved the SDF, with unidentified armed groups in 21 and the Syrian military together with the police forces of Syria in 11 incidents. The Gendarmerie of the military forces of Türkiye was involved in 5 incidents of violence against civilians.⁹¹⁰

2.8.5. Civilian casualties

In October 2025, SNHR recorded no civilian fatalities of extrajudicial killings in Raqqa governorate attributed to the controlling forces or other parties to conflict.⁹¹¹ In November 2025, the SNHR recorded one civilian fatality (attributed to ‘other parties’),⁹¹² followed by three in December (all attributed to the SDF).⁹¹³ During the first quarter of 2026, the SNHR recorded 38 civilian fatalities in Raqqa governorate⁹¹⁴ (26 in January, 9 in February and 3 in March),⁹¹⁵ of which 23 were attributed to the SDF⁹¹⁶ (all in January 2026)⁹¹⁷ and 15 to other parties. This represented the third highest number of civilian fatalities recorded nationwide during that period.⁹¹⁸ In April, SNHR recorded seven civilian fatalities in Raqqa and one in May, all of whom were attributed to ‘other parties’.⁹¹⁹ An analysis of the period since the fall of Bashar al-Assad

⁹⁰⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁹¹⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁹¹¹ SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁹¹² SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁹¹³ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

⁹¹⁴ SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), p. 4

⁹¹⁵ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

⁹¹⁶ SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), p. 4

⁹¹⁷ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

⁹¹⁸ SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), p. 4

⁹¹⁹ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026



indicates that the number of civilian fatalities fluctuated on a monthly basis, ranging between 0 and 16, except for the 26 fatalities recorded in January 2026.⁹²⁰

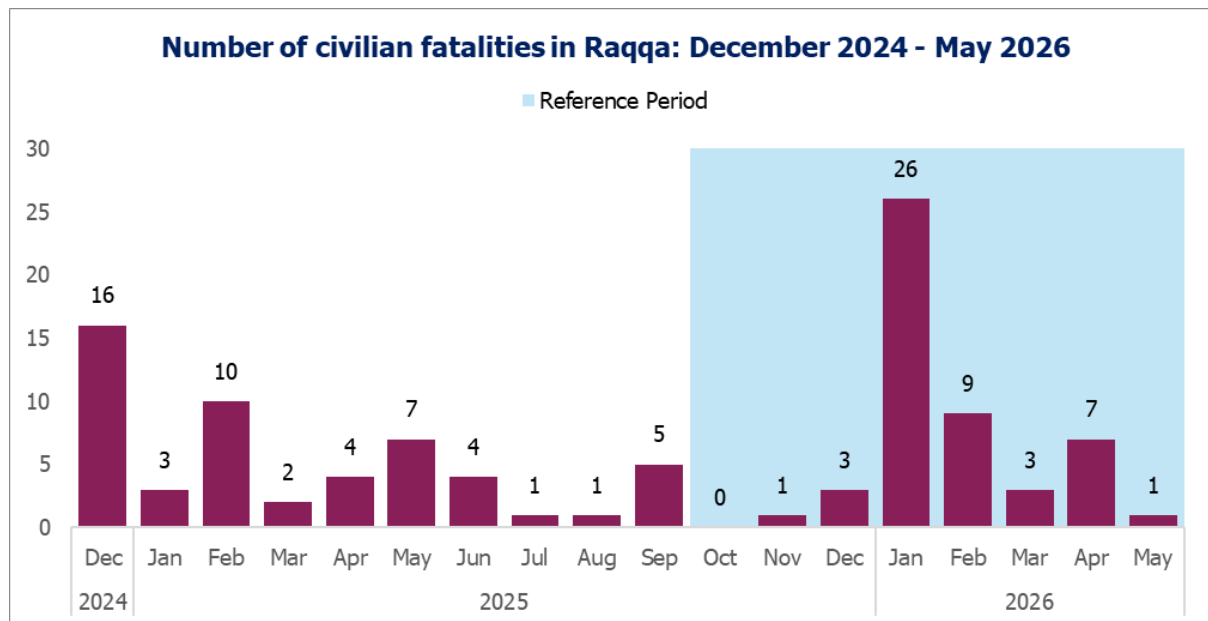


Figure 20: Evolution of civilian fatalities in Raqqa per month, based on SNHR data⁹²¹

2.8.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

UNDP reported that, in the context of the hostilities between forces of the transitional government and SDF, two main bridges, Al-Mansour and Al-Rashid, were severely damaged, while several schools were also impacted. Damage was further recorded to the main drinking-water pipeline supplying Raqqa city. In addition, several electricity transmission centres and networks were partially damaged, including in Al-Amin and Al-Firdous neighbourhoods. Solid waste management services were also further affected.⁹²²

SNHR reported in April 2026 that since the fall of Bashar al-Assad on 8 December 2024, 17 civilians had been killed in landmine explosions in Raqqa governorate, accounting for 5.36 % of the national total.⁹²³ Mine Action documented three explosive ordnance-related

⁹²⁰ SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3;

SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24;

EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 156

⁹²¹ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 156

⁹²² UNDP, UNDP Flash Update, Ar-Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, Al-Hasakah, 20-26 January 2026, 26 January 2026, [url](#), p. 3

⁹²³ SNHR, On the International Day for Mine Awareness: Documenting the deaths of at least 3,799 civilians from landmines and cluster munitions in Syria, March 2011 – April 2026, 4 April 2026, [url](#), p. 8

incidents in Raqqa governorate between 15 August and 15 October 2025, resulting in two casualties.⁹²⁴ During the same period, several organisations continued clearance activities in the governorate.⁹²⁵ At the end of January 2026, the Ministry of Emergency and Disaster Management warned residents not to enter or return to the areas in the northern Raqqa countryside until specialised ministry teams had fully secured them from landmines, remnants of war and IEDs.⁹²⁶ During the reference period for this report, SOHR recorded more than 20 incidents in which civilians were killed or injured by war remnants in Raqqa governorate.⁹²⁷

2.8.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's population movements assessments for Syria indicate that Raqqa governorate's IDP population decreased between February 2025 and March 2026.⁹²⁸ In February 2025, around 196 000 IDPs were recorded in the governorate, representing approximately 22 % of an estimated total population of 891 000.⁹²⁹ By April 2026, this figure had fallen to around 145 000 IDPs, or approximately 18 % of an estimated total population of 807 000.⁹³⁰

During the escalation of conflict in north-east Syria in January 2026, Raqqa witnessed the displacement of tens of thousands of people towards Hasaka governorate.⁹³¹ However, the

⁹²⁴ Mine Action AoR, Syria, Situation Update No. 5, 15 October 2025, [url](#), p. 4

⁹²⁵ Mine Action AoR, Syria, Situation Update No. 5, 15 October 2025, [url](#), pp. 5-7

⁹²⁶ Enab Baladi, Explosive remnants of war threaten civilians after SDF withdrawal, Emergency Ministry warns, 28 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹²⁷ SOHR, Old ordnance | Young man killed in Al-Raqqah desert, 29 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Woman and her husband injured seriously in northern Al-Raqqah countryside, 24 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Young man injured in landmine explosion in Al-Raqqah countryside, 22 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | One killed and another injured in two separate incidents in Al-Raqqah and Aleppo, 15 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Injuries and amputated limbs in explosions of landmines in Al-Raqqah and Deir Ezzor, 14 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Young man injured, while herding sheep in Al-Raqqah countryside, 9 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, New tragedy | Two children die in explosion of landmine of war remnants in Al-Raqqah, 6 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Civilian injured in Al-Hasakah | Number of injured people rises to five in explosions of war remnants in Al-Hasakah and Al-Raqqah, 28 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Explosion of old landmine leaves two young men injured in Al-Raqqah desert, 28 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Child and young man injured in explosion of landmines in Daraa and Al-Raqqah, 27 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Child loses his leg in explosion of landmine in Al-Raqqah, 18 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Civilian killed and another injured near Ain Issa camp in Al-Raqqah countryside, 16 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Two children injured in northern Al-Raqqah countryside, 6 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Two boys injured while herding sheep in northern Al-Raqqah, 1 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Three people injured in Al-Raqqah and Hama countryside, 28 February 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Two children get their legs amputated in a shell explosion in Al-Raqqah, 27 February 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Two people injured in explosion of landmine in Al-Raqqah, 20 February 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Child and young man injured in Al-Raqqah and Hama countryside, 12 February 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Leg of young man amputated in explosion of landmine of war remnants in Al-Raqqah, 31 January 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Child injured in explosion of landmine of war remnants in Al-Raqqah, 6 December 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Young man injured by landmine explosion in Al-Raqqah countryside, 27 October 2025, [url](#)

⁹²⁸ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8; IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 14 – March 2026, 16 April 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁹²⁹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁹³⁰ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

⁹³¹ Health Cluster and WHO, Syria: Health Sector Bulletin - January 2026, 1 April 2026, [url](#), p. 2



governorate did not itself become a major destination for IDPs during this period. In relation to the most recent conflict, IOM recorded only 26 IDPs as having settled in Raqqa.⁹³²

UNHCR further estimated that, as of end of May 2026, 23 936 individuals had returned to locations in Raqqa governorate from internal displacement since December 2024⁹³³ and that 22 987 had returned to the governorate from abroad within the same period.⁹³⁴

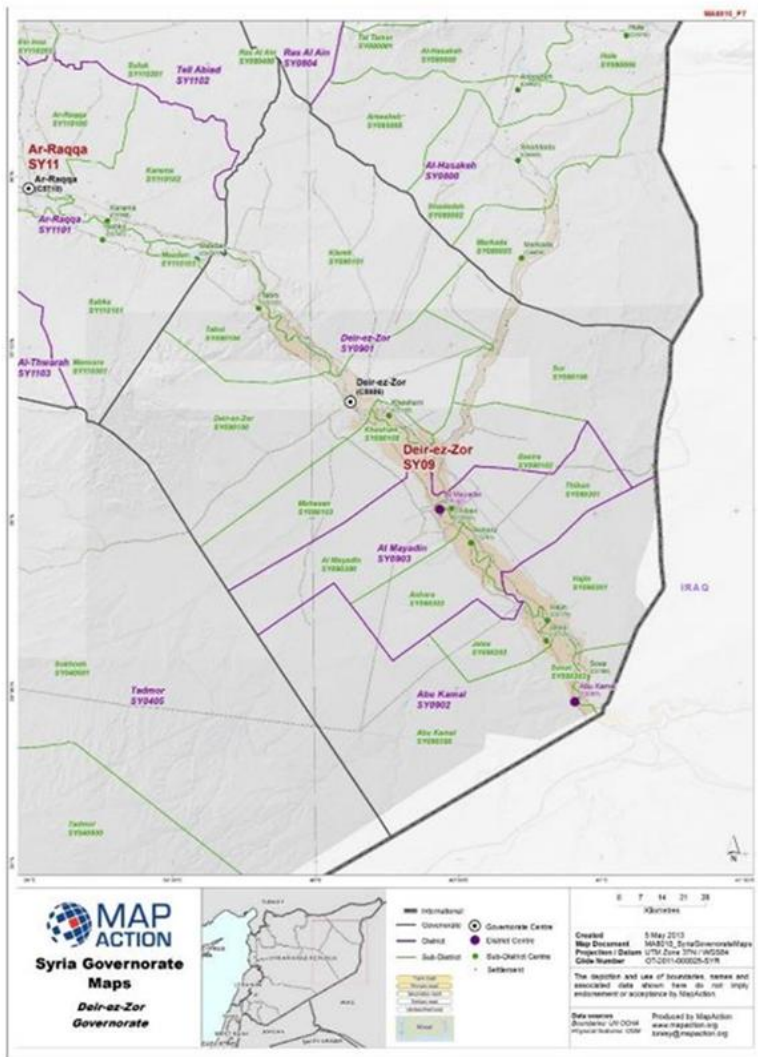
⁹³² IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Emergency Mobility Tracking Situation Report Aleppo/ North East Syria (NES) Conflict – Round 15, 11 March 2026, [url](#), p. 1

⁹³³ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard, 21 May 2026, [url](#)

⁹³⁴ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard, 21 May 2026, [url](#)



2.9. Deir Ez-Zor governorate



Map 12: © MapAction, Deir Ez-Zor governorate map⁹³⁵

2.9.1. 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.⁹³⁶ Its capital is the city of Deir Ez-Zor.⁹³⁷ As of April 2026, IOM estimated the governorate's population at 1 407 218, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad.⁹³⁸

⁹³⁵ MapAction, Deir-ez-Zor Governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

⁹³⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 107-108

⁹³⁷ UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic, Map No. 4204 Rev. 4, August 2022, [url](#)

⁹³⁸ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

2.9.2. Territorial control and main armed actors

Territorial control in Deir Ez-Zor governorate changed during the reporting period. As of November 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 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. 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.⁹³⁹ Three small areas along the Euphrates, including in Al-Mayadin, As Salhiyah and Abu Kamal, were marked as having pro-Assad remnants in spring 2025.⁹⁴⁰ 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'.⁹⁴¹ By mid-February 2026, the Syrian Transitional Government had secured the governorate's former SDF territories, leaving no pro-Assad pockets behind.⁹⁴² The 66th and 86th Divisions of the Syrian army were the principal formations present in Deir Ez-Zor governorate.⁹⁴³ A part of the 86th Division, the former Liberation and Construction Movement (LCM), controlled the frontlines with the SDF in the governorate.⁹⁴⁴

On 17 January 2026, pro-government forces, including tribal militias launched an offensive against remaining SDF checkpoints and positions in the governorate.⁹⁴⁵ Arab tribes officially withdrew their support for the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES) and recognised the transitional government in Damascus, with important tribes⁹⁴⁶ in the governorate defecting from SDF,⁹⁴⁷ and switching sides.⁹⁴⁸ Following the loss of Deir Ez-Zor, analysts reportedly viewed the YPG/YPJ as the only remaining core components of the SDF.⁹⁴⁹ On 18 January 2026, the SDF agreed to the administrative and military handover of Deir Ez-Zor to the transitional government and the integration of former SDF military and security personnel into the transitional government's ministries. By 20 January 2026, Deir Ez-Zor was considered essentially secured by pro-government forces.⁹⁵⁰ DAANES governance in Deir Ez-Zor had relied on an alliance with local Arab tribes, whose cooperation with the Kurds

⁹³⁹ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁰ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain around Deir ez Zor November 3, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 3 November 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁴¹ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁴² ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); Aftandilian, G., The Shrinking Space for Kurdish Autonomy in Syria, Arab Center Washington DC, 26 February 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁴³ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), p. 52

⁹⁴⁴ Syria in Transition, What's left of the SNA, December 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁵ Etana Syria, Brief: Raqqa, Deir Ezzor fall to interim authorities, 21 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁶ Schmidinger, T., Kurdish Autonomy in Northern and Eastern Syria Is Under Threat, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 23 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁷ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 20, 2026, 20 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁸ International Crisis Group, Preventing Further Escalation in Syria's North East, 20 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁴⁹ ISPI, Syria: Al-Sharaa's Offensive Against the SDF Reshapes the Balance of Power, 22 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁰ Etana Syria, Brief: Raqqa, Deir Ezzor fall to interim authorities, 21 January 2026, [url](#)

was driven less by political conviction than by opportunistic motives. After the Assad regime collapsed, the basis for this alliance had disappeared.⁹⁵¹

Deir Ez-Zor governorate remained a main theatre of ISIL operations⁹⁵² and counterterrorism efforts⁹⁵³ during the reporting period.

2.9.3. Security trends

The main security trend in Deir Ez-Zor governorate during the reference period was the loss of territorial control by SDF and the expansion of transitional government authority in January 2026.⁹⁵⁴ In the course of the offensive by pro-government forces in January 2026,⁹⁵⁵ clashes with SDF forces were reported for example in Al-Suwar,⁹⁵⁶ Abu Hammam, Abu Hardoub, Dhiban and Al-Jardhi. In Al-Shuhail and Dhiban SDF military posts were seized by tribal fighters and SDF defectors even before pro-government forces reached the area.⁹⁵⁷ Tribal forces captured several settlements and oil fields, including the Omar Oil Field and the Kuniko Gas Field.⁹⁵⁸

Already in early October 2025, a ceasefire between SDF and the transitional government had been announced.⁹⁵⁹ However, SDF and government forces clashed in Al-Maariya (south of Deir Ez-Zor city) shortly thereafter.⁹⁶⁰ During October 2025, incidents involving SDF and government forces along their frontlines in the governorate were reported.⁹⁶¹

In the period since the fall of Assad, the Arab tribes in Deir Ez-Zor intermittently had fought the SDF, for example, the Al-Shaytat clan and the Bakara Tribe mobilised against SDF forces in September and October 2025 respectively.⁹⁶²

⁹⁵¹ Schmidinger, T., Kurdish Autonomy in Northern and Eastern Syria Is Under Threat, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 23 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁵² UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 54; UN Security Council, Report of the Security Council mission to Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, 3–7 December 2025 [S/2026/257], 31 March 2026, [url](#), para 3; USDOD, Lead IG Report to the U.S. Congress January 1, 2026 – March 31, 2026, 27 May 2026, [url](#), p. 10

⁹⁵³ UN (United Nations) Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para 22; USDOD, Lead IG Report to the U.S. Congress January 1, 2026 – March 31, 2026, 27 May 2026, [url](#), p. 23

⁹⁵⁴ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); Aftandilian, G., The Shrinking Space for Kurdish Autonomy in Syria, Arab Center Washington DC, 26 February 2026, [url](#); MEI, Syria is stabilizing, but US help remains vital, 13 February 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁵ Etana Syria, Brief: Raqqa, Deir Ezzor fall to interim authorities, 21 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁶ SOHR, Deir Ezzor | Three tribal fighters killed in attack on SDF headquarters in Al-Suwar town in northern countryside, 18 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁷ Etana Syria, Brief: Raqqa, Deir Ezzor fall to interim authorities, 21 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁸ AA, Syrian tribes largely liberate part of Deir ez-Zor occupied by YPG/SDF terrorists, 18 January 2026, [url](#); DW, Syrian army extends control in north, seizes oil fields, 18 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁵⁹ Asharq Al-Awsat, Syrian Government Declares Ceasefire After Clashes with Kurdish Fighters , 7 October 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁰ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, October 10, 2025, 10 October 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁶¹ SOHR, Drone attack | Member of "SDF" killed and more than ten injured including civilians in Deir Ezzor, 9 October 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Renewed clashes between Syrian army and SDF in Deir Ezzor, 26 October 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, October 27, 2025, 27 October 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁶² ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 15, 2026, 15 January 2026, [url](#)

Clashes between different tribes were also reported during the reference period,⁹⁶³ as were attacks by unidentified gunmen, targeting transitional government forces⁹⁶⁴ and civilians.⁹⁶⁵ In March 2026, clashes between groups of local gunmen over the control of oil wells were reported.⁹⁶⁶

Another trend observed in Deir Ez-Zor governorate were ISIL attacks, which were reported throughout the reference period.⁹⁶⁷ Between February 2026 and 17 May 2026, SOHR recorded 26 ISIL attacks in government-controlled areas of the governorate. These incidents resulted in 10 deaths, including two civilians, and accounted for the majority of ISIL attacks countrywide during this period.⁹⁶⁸ In January 2026, the SDF's rapid withdrawal⁹⁶⁹ had prevented an organised transfer of counter-ISIL operations,⁹⁷⁰ but the transitional government sought to address the overall security gap⁹⁷¹ by trying to quickly establish police recruitment centres.⁹⁷² End of February 2026, ISIL announced a 'new phase of operations' against the transitional government.⁹⁷³ The group intensified its lone wolf attacks against security forces,⁹⁷⁴ killing a member of the security forces in Mayadin city in February 2026,⁹⁷⁵ while an alleged ISIL attack on a security forces checkpoint in March 2026 caused no casualties.⁹⁷⁶ As for the situation in the year 2025, SOHR documented 209 attacks by ISIL in Deir Ez-Zor governorate, resulting in 75 deaths, including 14 civilians.⁹⁷⁷ Most ISIL attacks occurring countrywide between June and November 2025 were reported in Deir Ez-Zor, with nearly

⁹⁶³ SOHR, Tribal disputes | Armed clashes erupt in eastern Deir Ezzor countryside, 11 May 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Security chaos | Person injured in tribal infighting in Deir Ezzor, 13 January 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Tribal infighting | Clashes erupt between two tribes in eastern Deir Ezzor countryside, 1 January 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Deir Ezzor | Six people killed and injured in tribal infighting, 17 November 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁴ SOHR, Terrorist attack | Armed attack leaves security member injured in Deir Ezzor, 8 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Believed to be of ISIS cells | Unidentified gunmen shoot dead member of Ministry of Defence in eastern Deir Ezzor, 6 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Armed attack | Member of 66th Division seriously injured in Deir Ezzor countryside, 17 March 2026, [url](#); NPA, Two attacks target government forces in Deir ez-Zor, 11 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Believed to be of ISIS cells | Unidentified gunmen attack checkpoint of internal security forces in eastern Deir Ezzor, 5 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Deir Ezzor | Adjacent attacks launched against security and military positions in Al-Bokamal, 24 February 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁵ SOHR, Security chaos | Civilian executed by unidentified gunmen in Deir Ezzor City, 17 December 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Claimed to be members of counter-narcotics service | Unidentified persons attack civilian in Deir Ezzor, 23 October 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁶ SOHR, Amid escalating security chaos | Fierce clashes erupt in Deir Ezzor countryside following rivalry over oil wells, 5 March 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁷ SOHR, ISIS operations in April | Civilian among four persons killed and others injured in seven attacks in different Syria provinces, 1 May 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Worrying escalation | 15 civilians and combatants killed in 22 attacks carried out by ISIS in different areas across Syria in March, 1 April 2026, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 27, 2026, 27 February 2026, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 25, 2026, 25 February 2026, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Islamic State Claims Attack on Government Forces in Deir Ezzor, 20 February 2026, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 17, 2025, 17 December 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, November 3, 2025, 3 November 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁸ SOHR, Affected by his injuries | Officer of Defence Ministry dies following attack by ISIS in Deir Ezzor desert, 17 May 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁶⁹ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 19, 2026, 19 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁷⁰ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 12, 2026, 12 February 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁷¹ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 27, 2026, 27 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁷² Waters, G., The U.S.'s New anti-ISIS Partner in the Northeast, Syria Revisited, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁷³ Reuters, Islamic State claims two attacks on Syrian army, announces 'new phase' of operations, 21 February 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁷⁴ Asharq Al-Awsat, ISIS Intensifies Lone Wolf Attacks in Syria, 27 February 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁷⁵ Reuters, Islamic State claims two attacks on Syrian army, announces 'new phase' of operations, 21 February 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁷⁶ SOHR, Believed to be of ISIS cells | Unidentified gunmen attack checkpoint of internal security forces in eastern Deir Ezzor, 5 March 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁷⁷ SOHR, ISIS attack | Civilian killed in eastern Deir Ezzor, 30 December 2025, [url](#)

70 % of the total ISIL attacks targeting SDF forces.⁹⁷⁸ Joint US-SDF counter-terrorism efforts against ISIL continued in the governorate with a surge of operations reported in October 2025.⁹⁷⁹ ISIL was, for example, targeted by US strikes in late December 2025.⁹⁸⁰

2.9.4. Security incidents

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, ACLED recorded 482 security incidents in Deir Ez-Zor governorate. Of these, 207 were coded as battles, 135 as explosions/remote violence, and 140 as incidents of violence against civilians. The majority of the incidents occurred in January 2026 (103 incidents). An analysis of ACLED data for the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad, from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, indicates two peaks in security incidents in the governorate: January 2025, with 152 incidents, and January 2026. About half of the incidents of the first peak (80) involved violence against civilians by SDF forces (38, mainly security operations by SDF involving the detention of civilians) or explosions/remote violence by unidentified armed groups involving civilians (41, often involving the explosion of ERWs). 12 incidents involved battles between tribal or communal forces against SDF forces. In comparison, about half of the incidents (103) of the second peak —during the offensive by pro-government forces against SDF⁹⁸¹—in January 2026 involved battles between tribal (24) or Syrian military forces (23) against SDF forces. In the period between June 2025 and May 2026 — with the exception of August 2025 (107) and January 2026 (103) — the monthly number of recorded security incidents remained below 100. Between February and May 2025, the number of recorded security incidents exceeded 100, while from 9 December 2024 to the end of the month, ACLED recorded 90 incidents.⁹⁸²

⁹⁷⁸ UN Security Council, Thirty-seventh report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, S/2026/44, 4 February 2026, [url](#), para. 54

⁹⁷⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 22

⁹⁸⁰ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 30, 2025, 30 December 2025, [url](#); DW, Syria: US launches airstrikes on IS targets after attack, 20 December 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁸¹ Etana Syria, Brief: Raqqa, Deir Ezzor fall to interim authorities, 21 January 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁸² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

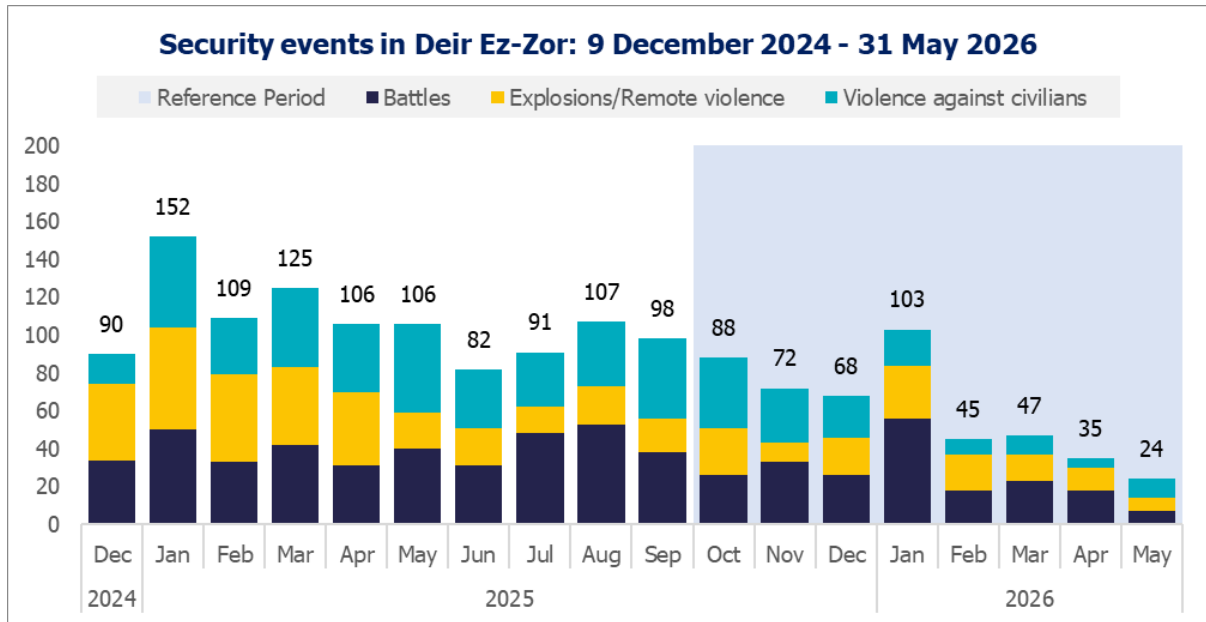


Figure 21: Evolution of security events in Deir Ez-Zor per type, based on ACLED data⁹⁸³

During the reference period, ACLED recorded security incidents in all three districts of Deir Ez-Zor governorate. The highest number was documented in Deir Ez-Zor district (228 incidents), followed by Abu Kamal (131 incidents) and Al-Mayadin (123 incidents). Deir Ez-Zor district was also the district with the highest number (786) of overall incidents recorded in the governorate since the fall of Bashar al-Assad, followed by Al-Mayadin, with 444 incidents.⁹⁸⁴

According to ACLED data, the SDF were the main actor involved in security incidents during the reference period. They appeared in 205 of the 482 incidents recorded in total, either as Actor 1 or Actor 2. This was followed by unidentified armed groups which were coded as Actor 1 or Actor 2 in 195 incidents and ISIL in 115 incidents. A comparison with the overall security situation since 9 December 2024 shows a similar picture regarding the main actors, with SDF (677 incidents of the 1 548 incidents recorded in total), unidentified armed groups (652 incidents), and ISIL (304 incidents) coded either as Actor 1 or Actor 2. Civilians were involved in incidents with unidentified groups (119), the SDF (50), and ISIL (21) in the reference period, with an overall involvement in 210 incidents (44 % of the 482 incidents recorded in total). This broadly reflected the pattern seen in the period since the fall of Bashar al-Assad, when civilians were involved in incidents with unidentified groups (421), the SDF (265), and ISIL (46), with an overall involvement in 778 incidents (50 % of the 1 548 incidents recorded in total).⁹⁸⁵

⁹⁸³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁸⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁸⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

2.9.5. Civilian casualties

In October 2025, the SNHR recorded 5 civilian fatalities in Deir Ez-Zor governorate, 3 in November, 7 in December, 3 in January 2026, 9 in February, 8 in March, 3 in April and 2 in the following month, as of 31 May 2026.⁹⁸⁶ Between October 2025 and 31 May 2026, all recorded civilian fatalities in the governorate were attributed to actors that SNHR could not identify, except for five civilians killed by SDF forces in November and December 2025, and one civilian killed by Assad remnants in May 2026.⁹⁸⁷ An analysis of the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad indicates that the number of monthly civilian fatalities remained between around 10 and 30 from December 2024 to April 2025 and below 10 in the remaining months of 2025.⁹⁸⁸

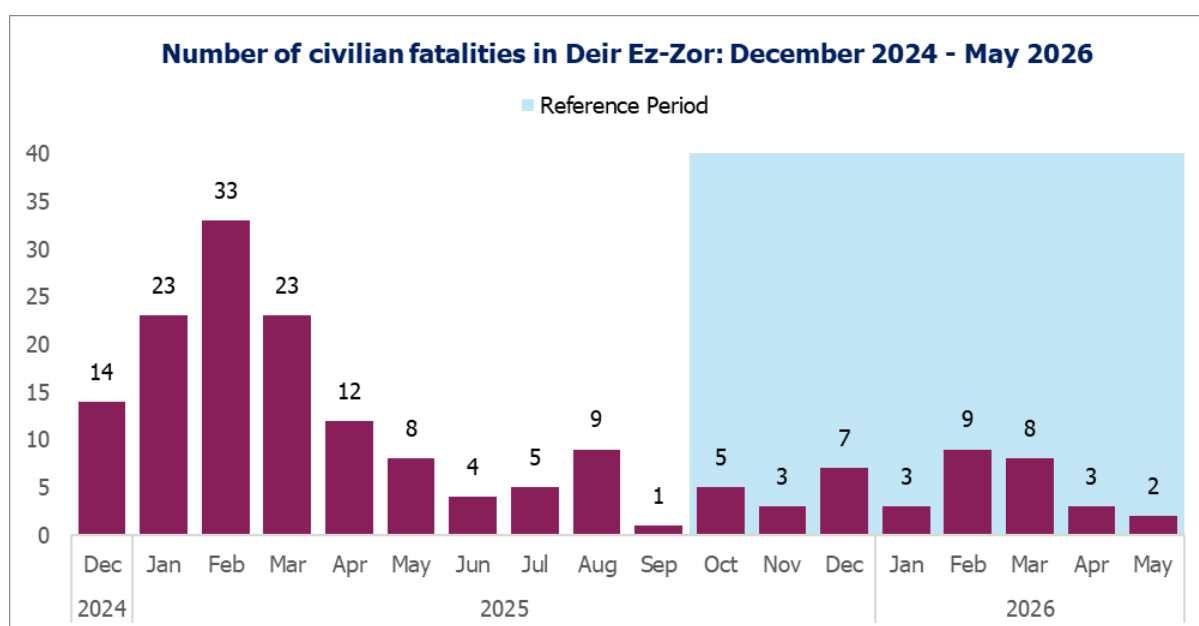


Figure 22: Evolution of civilian fatalities in Deir Ez-Zor per month, based on SNHR data⁹⁸⁹

⁹⁸⁶ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

⁹⁸⁷ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3

⁹⁸⁸ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 163

⁹⁸⁹ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 163

2.9.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

According to a map in a joint assessment by UNHCR, REACH and the Shelter Cluster conducted in the last quarter of 2025, the most frequently reported cause of housing damage in the subdistricts of Deir Ez-Zor governorate was conflict.⁹⁹⁰ 10% of the assessed communities in Deir Ez-Zor governorate stated that over half of the damaged homes required full reconstruction.⁹⁹¹ According to UNDP, as of end of January 2026, all main bridges over the Euphrates required repair.⁹⁹² Oil infrastructure was reportedly damaged during the reference period.⁹⁹³ The electricity system was damaged, resulting in frequent power outages. Damage affected irrigation supply lines, and around 25 communities had no access to the public electricity grid, as of end of January 2026. Major irrigation systems and mills needed rehabilitation. Health services were restricted because some primary health care centres were partially damaged and there were shortages of medical staff, although services were slowly restarting, as of end of January 2026.⁹⁹⁴ As of March 2026, some public health facilities in rural locations were either closed or operating with limited capacity.⁹⁹⁵ As of end of January 2026, education was severely affected, amongst others by widespread damage to schools.⁹⁹⁶

According to several international organisations and NGOs, Deir Ez-Zor remained among the Syrian governorates most affected by contamination from explosive remnants of war (ERW) and by related incidents.⁹⁹⁷ ERW and UXO contamination continued to create serious risks along urban outskirts, agricultural land, and debris-covered areas.⁹⁹⁸ As of January 2026, 51 % of key informants in an IOM assessment monitoring return movements and conditions for reintegration⁹⁹⁹ reported the presence of mines or unexploded ordnance. The same share reported that no demining activities were ongoing.¹⁰⁰⁰ In the first quarter of 2026, Deir Ez-Zor remained among the governorates most affected by explosive ordnance incidents.¹⁰⁰¹ Several

⁹⁹⁰ UNHCR et al., Syria Nationwide Housing Damage Assessment (October-November-December 2025) [Map], 23 January 2026, [url](#), p. 6; Mayadin and Kisreh subdistricts were marked as ‘no consensus’ on the most frequently reported cause.

⁹⁹¹ UNHCR et al., Syria Nationwide Housing Damage Assessment (October-November-December 2025) [Map], 23 January 2026, [url](#), p. 14

⁹⁹² UNDP, UNDP Flash Update, Ar-Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, Al-Hasakah, 20-26 January 2026, 26 January 2026, [url](#), p. 3

⁹⁹³ SOHR, Deir Ezzor | Two people injured in fire caused by unidentified people in oil well, 17 May 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Deir Ezzor | General Security detonates oil refineries in eastern countryside, 11 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, After breaking terms of decision | General Security targets oil refineries in Al-Jarzy Town in Deir Ezzor, 15 February 2026, [url](#)

⁹⁹⁴ UNDP, UNDP Flash Update, Ar-Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, Al-Hasakah, 20-26 January 2026, 26 January 2026, [url](#), pp. 3-4

⁹⁹⁵ Médecins du Monde Türkiye, Multisectoral Needs Assessment Report - Deir Ezzor Governorate, Northeast Syria (March 2026), 14 April 2026, [url](#), p. 4

⁹⁹⁶ UNDP, UNDP Flash Update, Ar-Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, Al-Hasakah, 20-26 January 2026, 26 January 2026, [url](#), p. 4

⁹⁹⁷ UNMAS, Syria, last updated 10 June 2026, [url](#); Handicap International, Landmines in Syrien [Landmines in Syria], last updated 16 March 2026, [url](#); Mine Action AoR, Syria, 2025 – A Year in Review, Situation Update No.6, 8 December 2025, [url](#), p. 2

⁹⁹⁸ UNDP, UNDP Flash Update, Ar-Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor, Al-Hasakah, 20-26 January 2026, 26 January 2026, [url](#), p. 4

⁹⁹⁹ Data was collected between 1 January and 4 February 2026, including through a network 11 343 key informants in all 14 governorates. IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 20

¹⁰⁰⁰ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁰⁰¹ UNHCR, Syria Protection and Reintegration Insights. January – March 2026, 28 April 2026, [url](#), p. 14

UXO incidents were reported, for example between March and May 2026.¹⁰⁰² According to the National Mine Action Centre, cited by the New Arab, between the fall of Bashar Al-Assad on 8 December 2024 and mid-January 2026, 189 such incidents were recorded in Deir ez-Zor, resulting in 135 deaths and 208 injuries. This represented the highest number of recorded incidents in Syria.¹⁰⁰³ SNHR likewise reported that Deir Ez-Zor recorded the highest number of landmine victims between 8 December 2024 and April 2026, with 74 victims, accounting for 23.34 % of the total.¹⁰⁰⁴

2.9.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's population movements assessments in Syria, which started as of February 2025, show that there was a decrease in Deir Ez-Zor's IDP population between February 2025 (around 68 500 out of a total population of approximately 1.37 million, 5 %)¹⁰⁰⁵ and April 2026 (around 28 000 out of a total population of approximately 1.4 million, 2 %).¹⁰⁰⁶ In March 2026, Médecins du Monde Türkiye conducted a multisectoral needs assessment in Deir Ez-Zor governorate covering 200 households, including 12 IDP households. The main barriers for return cited by the IDP respondents included destruction of homes and security concerns.¹⁰⁰⁷ UNHCR estimated that, as of 21 May 2026, 239 752 individuals had returned to locations in Deir Ez-Zor governorate from internal displacement since December 2024¹⁰⁰⁸ and 44 636 had returned to the governorate from abroad within the same period.¹⁰⁰⁹

¹⁰⁰² SOHR, Old ordnance | Engineer Killed and others Injured in Al-Mayadeen, 16 May 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Child dies in landmine explosion in Deir Ezzor City, 13 May 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Injuries and amputated limbs in explosions of landmines in Al-Raqqa and Deir Ezzor, 14 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Truffle collectors injured in landmine explosion in Al-Shamitita desert in Deir Ezzor, 5 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Three civilians killed in Hama and Deir Ezzor, 3 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Two civilians killed in landmine explosion in Deir Ezzor, 25 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Five people killed and injured in explosion of landmine in Deir Ezzor, 14 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰³ New Arab (The), Every step could be their last as Syrian children navigate mine-contaminated land, 7 April 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰⁴ SNHR, On the International Day for Mine Awareness: Documenting the deaths of at least 3,799 civilians from landmines and cluster munitions in Syria, March 2011 – April 2026, 4 April 2026, [url](#), p.8

¹⁰⁰⁵ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁰⁰⁶ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁰⁰⁷ Médecins du Monde Türkiye, Multisectoral Needs Assessment Report - Deir Ezzor Governorate, Northeast Syria (March 2026), 14 April 2026, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁰⁰⁸ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰⁹ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

MapAction

Syria Governorate Maps

Damascus Governorate

TURKEY
LEBANON
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
IRAQ
ISRAEL
WEST BANK
JORDAN
SAUDI ARABIA

- International
- Governorate
- District
- Sub-District
- Settlement
- Thick road
- Primary road
- Secondary road
- Tertiary road
- Unclassified road
- Wood

0 0.75 1.5 2.25 3 Kilometres

Data sources:
Coordinates: UTM OCHA
Physical features: GDM

Created: 5 May 2013
Map Document: MASHD-SyriaGovernorateMaps
Projection / Datum: UTM Zone 37N / WGS84
Globe Number: OT-2011-000023-SYR

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2.10.1. Administrative division and population estimates

¹⁰¹⁰ UNOCHA, Syria sub-districts maps [maps], n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰¹² Encyclopaedia Britannica, Damascus, last updated 12 June 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁴ Syria, Syria Embassy, Provincial System of The Syrian Arab Republic, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁵ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Syria – Local government, last updated 15 June 2026, [url](#)

Muhajerin, the Old City, Qaboun, Rukn Al-Din (Rukn Eddine), Salhiyeh (Salhiya), Saroujah, and Yarmouk.¹⁰¹⁶ The Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk¹⁰¹⁷ is still served by UNRWA.¹⁰¹⁸

According to IOM, the total population of Damascus governorate as of April 2026 was 1 900 254, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad.¹⁰¹⁹

2.10.2. Territorial control and main armed actors

Since the city's 'liberation'¹⁰²⁰ by HTS-led forces¹⁰²¹ and the fall of Bashar Al-Assad in December 2024,¹⁰²² Damascus remained under the control of the Syrian Transitional Government under President Ahmed Al-Sharaa.¹⁰²³ Army divisions operating in Damascus governorate as of November 2025 were the Republican Guard, presumably assigned to protect the government, and the Damascus Division, assigned to protect Damascus and the capital region, both under HTS commanders. The 70th Division was assigned to the suburbs.¹⁰²⁴

2.10.3. Security trends

After the fall of Assad, incidents of violence targeting Alawites¹⁰²⁵ and Assad regime loyalists were reported - including targeted killings in the reporting period.¹⁰²⁶ According to SNHR, 169 people accused of having committed violations during the Assad era were detained by Syrian government forces in 2025, of whom 11 were detained in the month of October,¹⁰²⁷ 16 in November,¹⁰²⁸ and 7 in December.¹⁰²⁹ Two more were arrested in the first quarter of 2026.¹⁰³⁰

¹⁰¹⁶ UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic, Governorates profile (June 2014), 6 August 2014, [url](#), pp. 2-3

¹⁰¹⁷ Wohlan, M. et al., Weltzeit - Die Kriegsverbrechen in Yarmouk [World Time – The War Crimes in Yarmouk] [Podcast], Deutschlandfunk, 16 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁸ UNRWA, Italy and UNRWA launch €2 million project to restore schools and services in Yarmouk, Syria, 14 April 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰¹⁹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁰²⁰ Al-Abdeh, M., Damascus re-born: The Syrian capital is embracing its newfound identity, April 2025, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁰²¹ Shtuni, A., From Insurgency to Statecraft: Al-Sharaa and Syria's Foreign Fighters Test, 19 February 2026, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰²² Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁰²³ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9; ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); ACAPS, Humanitarian Access Overview - Spotlight on fragmented contexts: Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Yemen, December 2025, [url](#), p. 14

¹⁰²⁴ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 19, 25-26, 44-45

¹⁰²⁵ Koefoed Khairbek, R., Witness Statement on the Persecution of Alawite Civilians in Syria since 8 December 2024, USCIRF, 13 November 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁰²⁶ Belgium, CGRS-CEDOCA, Syrië: Veiligheidssituatie (ACLED), 31 March 2026, [url](#), p. 36

¹⁰²⁷ SNHR, At least 197 Cases of Arbitrary Arrest and Detention Recorded in October 2025, 2 November 2025, [url](#), p. 9

¹⁰²⁸ SNHR, At least 141 Cases of Arbitrary Arrest and Detention Recorded in November 2025, 2 December 2025, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁰²⁹ SNHR, At least 1,108 Cases of Arbitrary Arrest and Detention Recorded in 2025, of which 52 were Recorded in December, 3 January 2026, [url](#), p. 11

¹⁰³⁰ SNHR, No less than 210 Cases of Arbitrary Arrests and Detentions in the First Quarter of 2026, 5 April 2026, [url](#), p. 8

Israeli attacks on Damascus reportedly increased during the Gaza conflict¹⁰³¹ as well as after the fall of Assad.¹⁰³² During 2025, Israeli airstrikes hit several sites in Damascus.¹⁰³³ At least 77 Israeli attacks were recorded in Damascus governorate, and at least 20 in Damascus city.¹⁰³⁴

The most fatal security incident in Damascus after the fall of Assad was an alleged ISIL suicide attack at the Greek Orthodox Saint Elias Church in Duweila neighbourhood in June 2025, killing at least 25 and injuring about 60.¹⁰³⁵ During the reporting period, no such major incident was reported, although a risk of outbreaks of violence persisted along the route between Damascus and Sweida,¹⁰³⁶ where occasional security incidents were reported in the last quarter of 2025,¹⁰³⁷ and an alleged Hezbollah bomb attack on a Church in Damascus' historic Christian neighbourhood Bab Touma was thwarted in April 2026.¹⁰³⁸ In May 2026, a car bomb attack reportedly killed at least one soldier and injured about 20 people outside a Syrian Defence Ministry building in Damascus' Bab Sharqi district.¹⁰³⁹

2.10.4. Security incidents

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, ACLED recorded 32 security incidents in Damascus governorate, of which 21 incidents were coded as violence against civilians, 8 as explosions or remote violence, and 3 as battles. By comparison, since the fall of Assad (between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2026), ACLED recorded 131 security incidents. Of these, 86 were coded as violence against civilians, 29 as explosions or remote violence, and 16 as battles. The highest numbers of security incidents were recorded in December 2024 with 16, in May 2025 with 11, in July with 17, and in August with 10 incidents. During the reporting period, the highest number of security incidents was recorded in October and December 2025, with 6 incidents each.

¹⁰³¹ Meininghaus, E. and Yildirim-Schlusing, C., Effects of the Israel-Gaza War on Syria: Multiple New Fronts, LSE Middle East Centre [Blog], 11 September 2024, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Israel-Gaza war spillover risk: Mapping recent strikes in Middle East, 25 January 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰³² Al Jazeera, Mapping Israel's expanding air attacks across Syria, 4 June 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰³³ SNHR, The Fifteenth Annual Report on Human Rights Situation in Syria 2025, 26 March 2026, [url](#), p. 13

¹⁰³⁴ Al Jazeera, Israel attacked Syria more than 600 times over the past year, 9 December 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁵ SNHR, Statement on the Bombing of Mar Elias Church in Damascus: The Need to Protect the Crime Scene - SNHR Condemns the Suicide Attack that Targeted the Church Causing a Massacre that Claimed the Lives of 25 Civilians and Injured 63 Others in a Preliminary Toll, 23 June 2025, [url](#), p. 1; SNHR, The Death of 2818 Civilian Including 201 Children and 194 Women, and 17 Death due to Torture Recorded in the First Half of 2025, 3 July 2025, [url](#), pp. 6, 13; Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), p. 39

¹⁰³⁶ INSO, Safety and Access Review: Q4 2025, 2026, [url](#), p. 37

¹⁰³⁷ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response in Southern Syria – Humanitarian Situation Report No. 3, 13 November 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁰³⁸ Shafaq News, Syria accuses Hezbollah in foiled Damascus bombing, 11 April 2026, [url](#); Levant24, Syrian Security Stops Alleged Hezbollah Terror Attack in Damascus, 12 April 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰³⁹ Reuters, Syrian soldier killed, 18 people wounded by car bomb in Damascus, 19 May 2026, [url](#); Al Jazeera, At least one killed, 21 wounded in car bomb explosion in Syria's Damascus, 19 May 2026, [url](#)

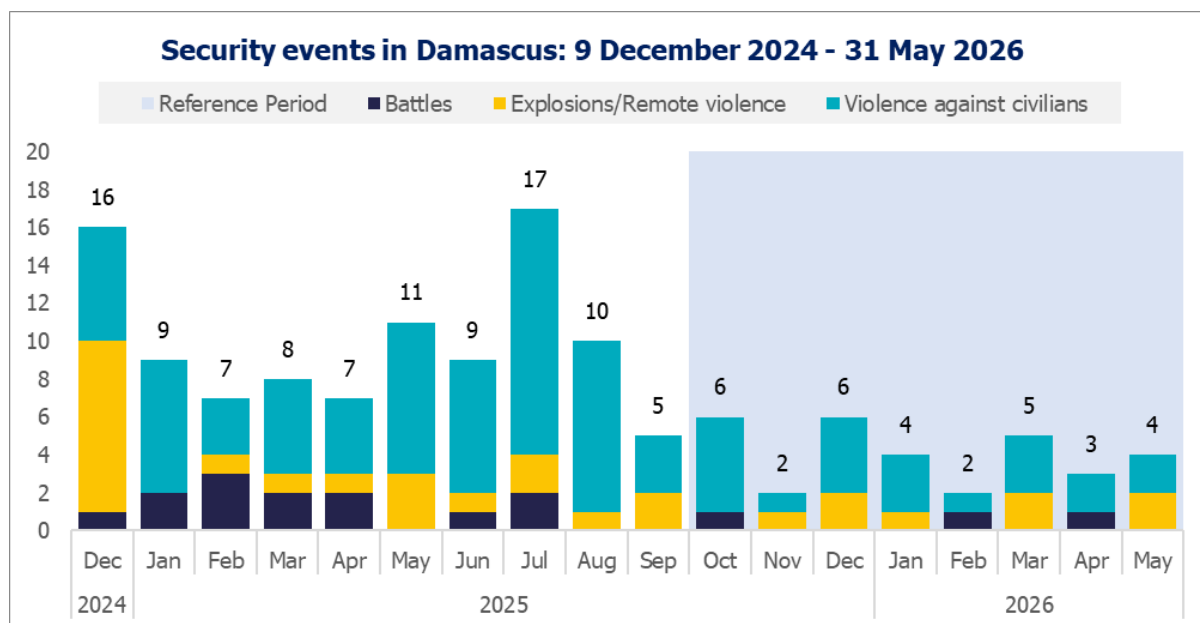


Figure 23: Evolution of security events in Damascus per type, based on ACLED data¹⁰⁴⁰

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, unidentified armed groups, either coded as Actor 1 or Actor 2, were the main actor of violence, involved in 25 incidents mainly targeting civilians.¹⁰⁴¹

2.10.5. Civilian casualties

In the period from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026, SNHR recorded four civilian fatalities in Damascus governorate.¹⁰⁴² Of these, two were recorded in November 2025,¹⁰⁴³ one in January, and one in February 2026. Between October 2025 and May 2026, all recorded civilian fatalities in the governorate were attributed to actors that SNHR could not identify.¹⁰⁴⁴ With a share of less than 1 % of the total countrywide number of fatalities (268), Damascus was one of the governorates with the fewest fatalities in the first quarter of 2026.¹⁰⁴⁵ An analysis of the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad confirms that Damascus was among the governorates with the lowest number (around 0-3) of monthly civilian fatalities, interrupted by a significant peak (25) in June and higher numbers (10) in July 2025.¹⁰⁴⁶

¹⁰⁴⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴² SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

¹⁰⁴³ SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁰⁴⁴ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

¹⁰⁴⁵ SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 3-4

¹⁰⁴⁶ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 169

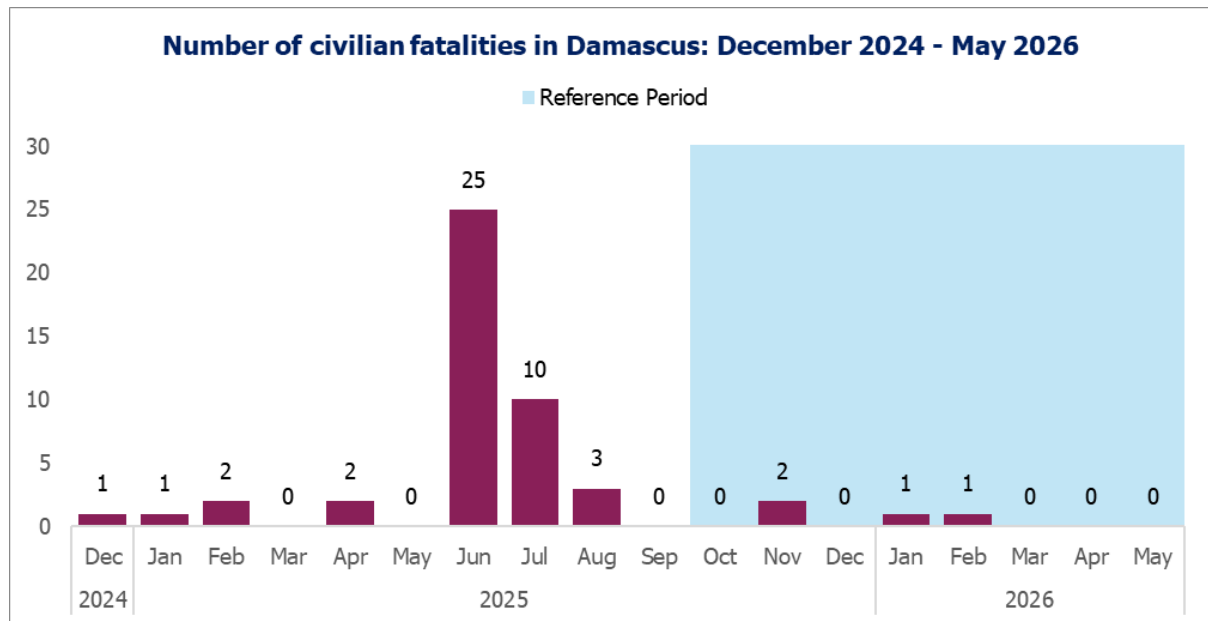


Figure 24: Evolution of civilian fatalities in Damascus per month, based on SNHR data¹⁰⁴⁷

2.10.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Yarmouk,¹⁰⁴⁸ and, as reported in April 2026, Jowbar, Qaboun and Tishreen in eastern Damascus were heavily destroyed in the war under Assad.¹⁰⁴⁹ As of January 2026, according to The New York Times, clearing and rebuilding had barely begun since the transitional government took power.¹⁰⁵⁰

Military infrastructure in Damascus suffered from Israeli attacks. After most strategic military assets in Damascus and western Syria were destroyed in December 2024,¹⁰⁵¹ the ministry of Defence was heavily damaged in a series of Israeli airstrikes in July 2025.¹⁰⁵²

As of January 2026, 89 % of key informants in an IOM assessment monitoring return movements and conditions for reintegration¹⁰⁵³ reported that no demining activities were ongoing in locations where mines were present.¹⁰⁵⁴ In January 2026, NMAC launched large-scale operations to clear Jowbar from ERW such as landmines and UXO.¹⁰⁵⁵ By March 2026, the HALO Trust reported clearing operations of landmines in rural and surveying of explosive

¹⁰⁴⁷ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 169

¹⁰⁴⁸ Qantara, "Debris isn't waste", 29 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴⁹ Syria Direct, Reconstruction plan for eastern Damascus neighborhoods alarms residents, 20 April 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁰ New York Times (The), Syria, in Ruins, 19 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵¹ BBC, Israel seizing on Syria chaos to strike military assets, 11 December 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵² Al Jazeera, Aftermath of deadly Israeli air attacks in Damascus, 17 July 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵³ Data was collected between 1 January and 4 February 2026, including through a network 11 343 key informants in all 14 governorates. IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 20

¹⁰⁵⁴ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁰⁵⁵ Levant24, Major Mine Clearance Launched in Damascus Neighborhood, 27 January 2026, [url](#)

hazards in urban areas of Damascus and six other governorates.¹⁰⁵⁶ ‘Large quantities of unexploded ordnance’ had been left behind in Qaboun. In March 2026, following clearance operations that had been ongoing for a year, the neighbourhood was declared ‘safe’.¹⁰⁵⁷ As of April 2026, no civilian deaths caused by landmines in Damascus had been documented since December 2024.¹⁰⁵⁸

2.10.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM’s population movements assessments in Syria, which started as of February 2025, show that Damascus’ IDP population hardly changed between February 2025 (around 589 000 out of a total population of approximately 1.96 million, 30 %)¹⁰⁵⁹ and April 2026 (around 589 000 out of a total population of approximately 1.9 million, 31 %).¹⁰⁶⁰

The fall of Assad has encouraged voluntary returns of Syrians from Türkiye.¹⁰⁶¹ As of March 2026, about 38 000 Syrians in Egypt had prepared their return to Syria since December 2024. 41 % (about 15 000) had origins in Damascus.¹⁰⁶² In February¹⁰⁶³ and March 2026,¹⁰⁶⁴ return activities even to the heavily destroyed district of Yarmouk, and, in April 2026, to the Qaboun and Tishreen neighbourhoods, were reported - though not to Jowbar.¹⁰⁶⁵

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 21 May 2026, around 288 000 people had returned from abroad¹⁰⁶⁶ and around 53 000 IDPs¹⁰⁶⁷ had returned to Damascus governorate since December 2024. Since the end of February 2026, cross-border movements into Syria from Lebanon intensified. Between 2 March and 12 April 2026, 1 001 to 5 000 returnees intended to resettle in Damascus.¹⁰⁶⁸

¹⁰⁵⁶ HALO Trust (The), HALO weapons specialist advises UN Security Council on safe access for chemical weapons inspectors, 10 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁷ Zaman Alwsl, Army engineering units declare Damascus’ Qaboun safe after clearing war remnants, 26 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵⁸ SNHR, On the International Day for Mine Awareness: Documenting the deaths of at least 3,799 civilians from landmines and cluster munitions in Syria, March 2011 – April 2026, 4 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 7-8

¹⁰⁵⁹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

¹⁰⁶⁰ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁰⁶¹ UNHCR, Voluntary Repatriation of Syrian Refugees in Türkiye: UNHCR in Türkiye - April 2026, 14 April 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶² UNHCR, Regional Flash Update #69 - Syria Situation, 20 March 2026, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁰⁶³ DW, Back to Yarmouk: A Syrian family rebuilds and seeks justice [Video], 9 February 2026, [url](#); DW, Return to Syria: Rebuilding and seeking justice in Yarmouk [Video], 7 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁴ Wohlan, M. et al., Weltzeit - Die Kriegsverbrechen in Yarmouk [World Time – The War Crimes in Yarmouk] [Podcast], Deutschlandfunk, 16 March 2026, [url](#)

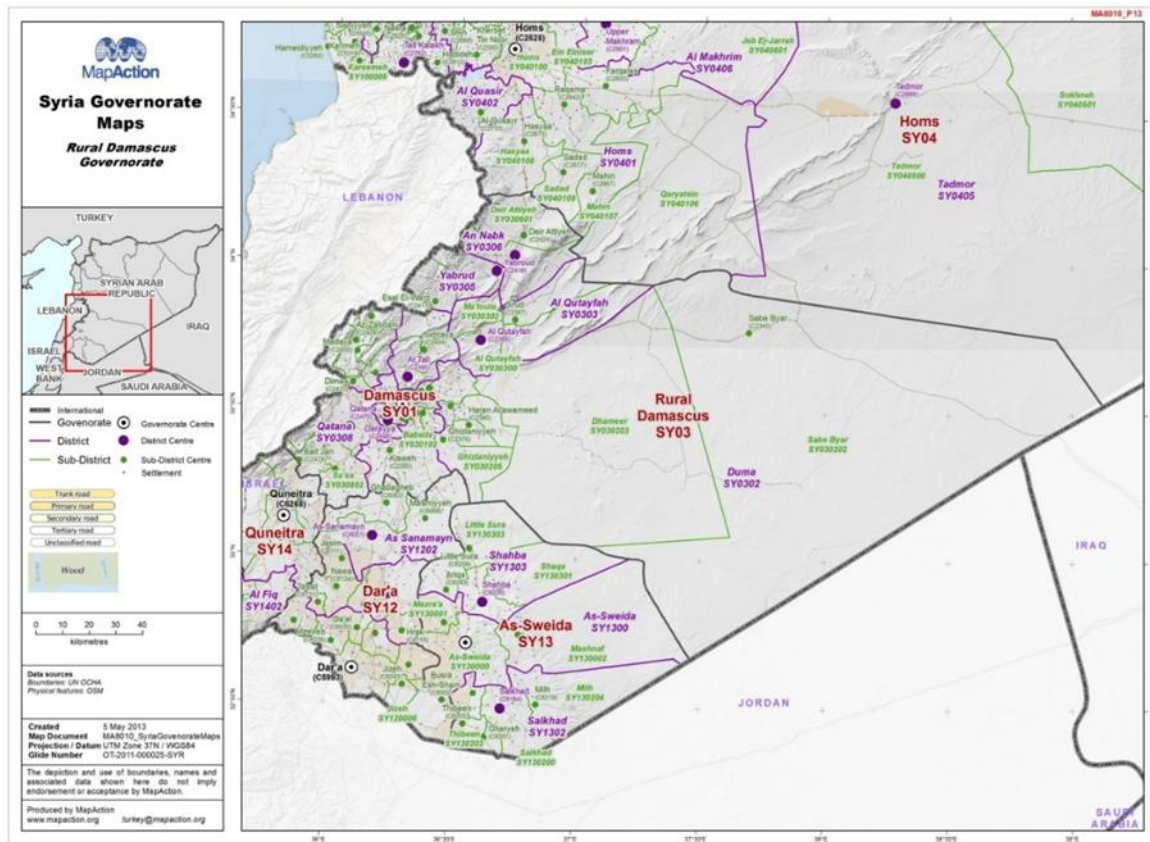
¹⁰⁶⁵ Syria Direct, Reconstruction plan for eastern Damascus neighborhoods alarms residents, 20 April 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁶ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁷ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶⁸ UNHCR, Syria: Flash Update #2 - Middle East Situation (13 April 2026) [Map], 14 Apr 2026, [url](#)

2.11. Rural Damascus governorate



Map 14. MapAction, Rural Damascus governorate¹⁰⁶⁹

2.11.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Rural Damascus governorate (or Rif Dimashq)¹⁰⁷⁰ is divided into the 9 districts of Al-Nabk, Al-Qutayfa, Al-Tall, Al-Zabdani, Darayya, Duma (Douma), Rural Damascus (Markaz Rif Dimashq), Qatana, Yabroud, which are further divided into a total of 36 sub-districts.¹⁰⁷¹ It shares borders with Lebanon and Jordan, and adjoins to Sweida, Dar'a, Quneitra and Homs governorates as well as Damascus governorate, which it encircles.¹⁰⁷²

According to IOM, the total population of Rural Damascus governorate as of April 2026 was 5 744 566 including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad.¹⁰⁷³

¹⁰⁶⁹ Mapaction, Syria 2013-2015, Rural Damascus Governorate [map], last updated:29 July 2016, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁰ Syria, Syria Embassy, Provincial System of The Syrian Arab Republic, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁷¹ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 109-110

¹⁰⁷² Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), p. 41

¹⁰⁷³ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7



2.11.2. Territorial control and main armed actors

Rural Damascus governorate is primarily under the control of the transitional government.¹⁰⁷⁴ As of November 2025, the 44th Special Forces Division was active in the governorate's west, the 52nd Special Forces Division (formerly the 103rd Division) along the Syrian-Lebanese border region – both HTS-led, and the 70th Division, formed of Jaysh Al-Islam and the Syrian Free Army (Maghawhir Al-Thawra), in the eastern parts of the governorate and into the Badia desert.¹⁰⁷⁵

Israeli forces occupied southern parts of the governorate¹⁰⁷⁶ and attacked residents.¹⁰⁷⁷ Furthermore, they had instructions 'to defend local Druze neighbourhoods'.¹⁰⁷⁸ IDF intercepted presumably Iranian missiles in the airspace of Rural Damascus.¹⁰⁷⁹

ISIL cells reportedly existed in Al-Dhumayr¹⁰⁸⁰ (Duma district) and Muaddamiyah (Darayya district).¹⁰⁸¹

2.11.3. Security trends

In the fourth quarter of 2025, operations against ISIL members were carried out¹⁰⁸² and weapons depots destroyed.¹⁰⁸³ ISIL reportedly claimed responsibility for the assassination of a prominent Shia cleric, who was killed on 1 May 2026¹⁰⁸⁴ in a bomb attack targeting his vehicle in the Sayyida Zainab district south of Damascus.¹⁰⁸⁵ In 2025, Israeli forces conducted several airstrikes in Rural Damascus.¹⁰⁸⁶ In November, in a raid and airstrikes on the town of Beit Jinn, about 13 people¹⁰⁸⁷ were reportedly killed and 25 injured.¹⁰⁸⁸ 14 extrajudicial killings were

¹⁰⁷⁴ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁵ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), pp. 28, 43-45

¹⁰⁷⁶ ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria [Map], 27 February 2026, [url](#); Al Jazeera, كيف تحول توغل إسرائيلي في بيت جن السورية إلى مواجهة مباشرة؟, [How did an Israeli incursion into Beit Jinn, Syria, turn into a direct confrontation?], 28 November 2025, [url](#); ACAPS, Humanitarian Access Overview - Spotlight on fragmented contexts: Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Yemen, December 2025, [url](#), p. 14; MEE, Israel establishes 'sterile defence zone' inside Syrian territory as it continues air strikes, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁷ SNHR, The Fifteenth Annual Report on Human Rights Situation in Syria 2025, 26 March 2026, [url](#), p. 12; Shtuni, A., From Insurgency to Statecraft: Al-Sharaa and Syria's Foreign Fighters Test, 19 February 2026, [url](#), p. 7; Al Jazeera, Syria calls Israeli incursion, strikes that killed 13 a 'war crime', 28 November 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷⁸ Hazran, Y., The Syrian Druze: Between the Hammer of Integration and the Anvil of Separation, 2 September 2025, [url](#), p. 14

¹⁰⁷⁹ SOHR, Believed to be Iranian: Missile remnants fall in Rif Dimashq, 23 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁰ Al-Ahmad, S. and Franjeh, S., Will Syria join the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS?, MEI, 27 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸¹ Hürriyet Daily News, Syria says ISIL leader captured in Damascus countryside, 25 December 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸² Hürriyet Daily News, Syria says ISIL leader captured in Damascus countryside, 25 December 2025, [url](#); Al-Ahmad, S. and Franjeh, S., Will Syria join the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS?, MEI, 27 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸³ US, CENTCOM, U.S., Syrian Forces Locate and Destroy ISIS Weapons Caches in Southern Syria, 30 November 2025, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly: October 28 - November 11, Syria Weekly, 11 November 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁴ National (The), Grenade attack kills Syrian cleric near Sayyida Zaynab shrine in Damascus, 1 May 2026, [url](#); AP, Shiite cleric killed in grenade attack near Syrian capital of Damascus, 1 May 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁵ New Arab (The), Islamic State claims responsibility for assassination of Shia cleric in Syria, 8 May 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁶ SNHR, The Fifteenth Annual Report on Human Rights Situation in Syria 2025, 26 March 2026, [url](#), p. 13

¹⁰⁸⁷ International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2025, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁸⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para 129; Security Council Report, December 2025 Monthly Forecast: Syria, 30 November 2025, [url](#)



reportedly conducted by Israel in December.¹⁰⁸⁹ Also in December 2025, 12 people accused of having committed violations during the Assad era were detained by Syrian government forces.¹⁰⁹⁰ In January 2026, several people, among them at least one individual allegedly linked to the former Assad regime, were detained.¹⁰⁹¹ In March 2026, the impact of the Israel-Iran war through fallen debris from Iranian missiles and UAV intercepted by Israel was reported.¹⁰⁹² Unidentified armed men were responsible for the killing of (predominantly) Druze and Alawites throughout the reporting period.¹⁰⁹³

2.11.4. Security incidents

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, ACLED recorded 107 security incidents in Rural Damascus governorate, of which 55 were coded as violence against civilians, 29 as explosions or remote violence, and 23 as battles. Since the fall of Assad (between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2026), ACLED recorded 387 security incidents. Of these, 183 were coded as violence against civilians, 126 as explosions or remote violence, and 78 as battles. Most security incidents were recorded in December 2024 (40 incidents), March (33 incidents), and May 2025 (34 incidents). Since then, the number of incidents generally decreased. During the current reporting period, most security incidents were recorded in October 2025 with 24 incidents. Unidentified armed groups, either coded as Actor 1 or Actor 2, were the main actor of violence, involved in 74 incidents between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026 mainly targeting civilians. About 28 % of security incidents happened in Rural Damascus district.¹⁰⁹⁴

¹⁰⁸⁹ SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), pp. 8-9

¹⁰⁹⁰ SNHR, At least 1,108 Cases of Arbitrary Arrest and Detention Recorded in 2025, of which 52 were Recorded in December, 3 January 2026, [url](#), p. 11

¹⁰⁹¹ Etana Syria, Brief: Israeli operations continue in south-west Syria, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹² SOHR, Believed to be Iranian: Missile remnants fall in Rif Dimashq, 23 March 2026, [url](#); Etana Syria, Brief: Impact of regional conflict on south Syria, 10 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹³ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), pp. 95, 104; Lister, C., Syria Weekly: November 11-18, 2025, Syria Weekly, 18 November 2025, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly: October 28 - November 11, Syria Weekly, 11 November 2025, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly: October 21-28, Syria Weekly, 28 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹⁴ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

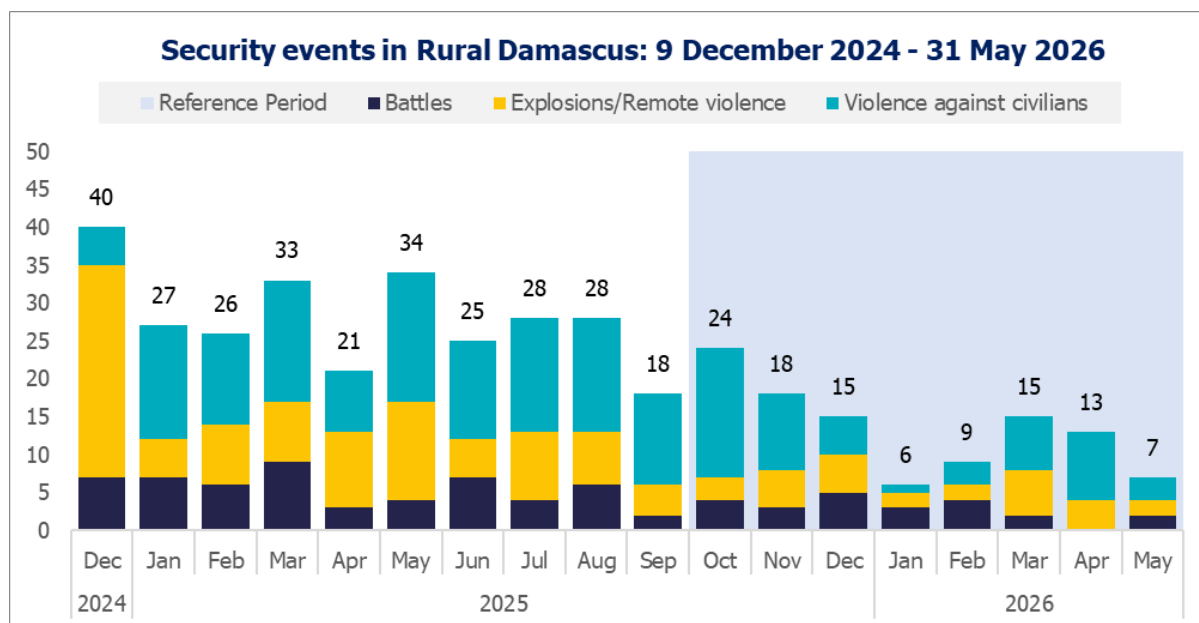


Figure 25: Evolution of security events in Rural Damascus per type, based on ACLED data¹⁰⁹⁵

2.11.5. Civilian casualties

In October 2025, the SNHR recorded 4 civilian fatalities in Rural Damascus governorate, 11 in November, 16 in December (the highest number of all governorates recorded in that month), 3 in January 2026, 2 in February, 2 in March, 4 in April, and 2 in May 2026.¹⁰⁹⁶ Between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, most recorded civilian fatalities in the governorate were attributed to actors that SNHR could not identify, apart from around 14 civilians killed by Israeli forces in December 2025, 3 civilians killed by remnants of the Assad regime in January, and 1 civilian killed by ISIL in May 2026.¹⁰⁹⁷ An analysis of the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad shows that Rural Damascus was among the governorates with a low monthly civilian death toll (about 0-4), with highs (about 10-16) in March, May, June, November, and December 2025.¹⁰⁹⁸

¹⁰⁹⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹⁶ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

¹⁰⁹⁷ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁰⁹⁸ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 175-176

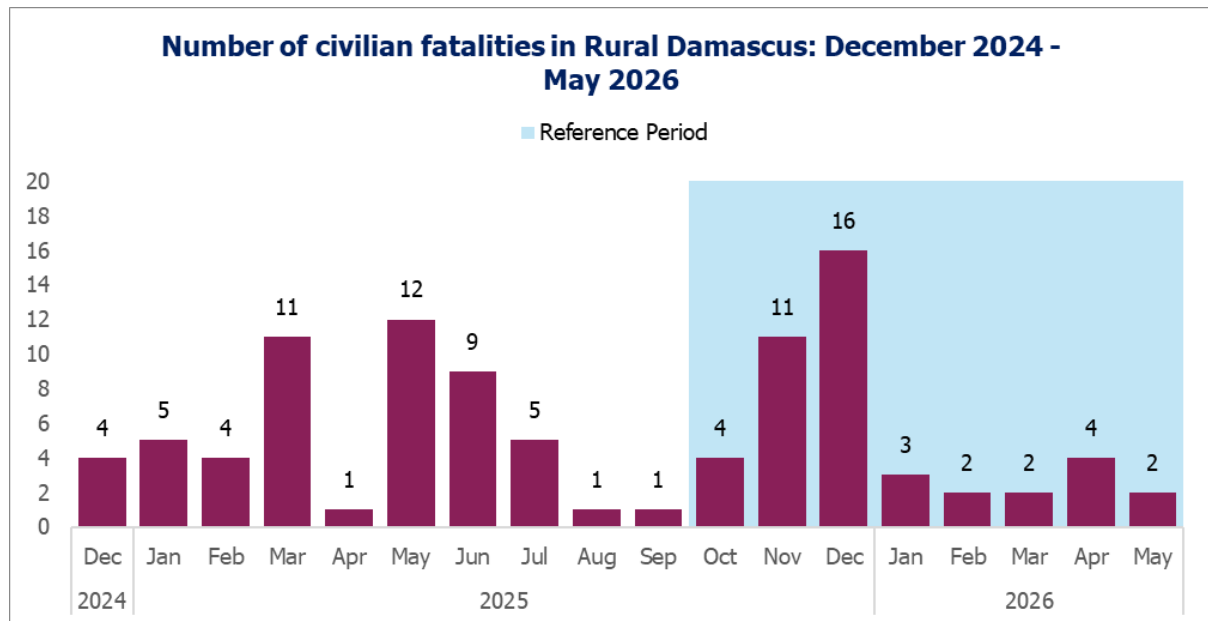


Figure 26: Evolution of civilian fatalities in Rural Damascus per month, based on SNHR data¹⁰⁹⁹

2.11.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Rural Damascus was among the three most damaged governorates as of October 2025.¹¹⁰⁰ As of December 2025, 19 % of housing was completely damaged.¹¹⁰¹ Destroyed suburban areas include Darayya,¹¹⁰² East¹¹⁰³ and West Ghouta, Muaddamiya and Hajar Al-Aswad.¹¹⁰⁴ 70 % of Harasta were destroyed, and ERW remained a major security threat.¹¹⁰⁵ ERW-contaminated areas and limited contamination mapping were a security risk.¹¹⁰⁶ As of January 2026, 68 % of key informants in an IOM assessment monitoring return movements and conditions for reintegration¹¹⁰⁷ reported that no demining activities were ongoing in locations where mines were present.¹¹⁰⁸ Children were reportedly killed and injured by ERW, e.g. in the Qalamoun

¹⁰⁹⁹ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 175-176

¹¹⁰⁰ World Bank, Syria's Post-Conflict Reconstruction Costs Estimated at \$216 billion, 21 October 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁰¹ UNHCR et al., Syria Nationwide Housing Damage Assessment (October-November-December 2025), 23 January 2026, [url](#), p. 7

¹¹⁰² Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), p. 41; Qantara, "Debris isn't waste", 29 October 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁰³ Karlin, M., Seizing the opening in Syria and Lebanon, Brookings Institution, 7 November 2025, [url](#); Qantara, "Debris isn't waste", 29 October 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁰⁴ Qantara, "Debris isn't waste", 29 October 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁰⁵ Die Zeit, Nichts als Staub, Schrott und Ruinen [Nothing but dust, scrap, and ruins], 15 November 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁰⁶ Protection Sector Syria, Syria Protection Sector Update #3 - Sweida Situation, 19 September 2025, [url](#), pp. 1-2; Mine Action AoR, Syria, 2025 – A Year in Review, Situation Update No.6, 8 December 2025, [url](#), pp. 2-3

¹¹⁰⁷ Data was collected between 1 January and 4 February 2026, including through a network 11 343 key informants in all 14 governorates. IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 20

¹¹⁰⁸ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 7

Mountains,¹¹⁰⁹ Harasta,¹¹¹⁰ Al-Habariyah,¹¹¹¹ and Kanaker¹¹¹² between December 2025 and April 2026.

2.11.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

IOM's population movements assessments in Syria, which started as of February 2025, show that there was a slight increase in the IDP population between February 2025 (around 2.04 million out of a total population of approximately 5.37 million, 38 %)¹¹¹³ and April 2026 (around 2.24 million out of a total population of approximately 5.74 million, 39 %).¹¹¹⁴ According to UNHCR estimates, about 213 000 people returned from abroad¹¹¹⁵ and about 82 000 IDPs¹¹¹⁶ returned to the governorate as of 21 May 2026.

According to IOM, about 46 000 returnees arrived in the governorate in October 2025.¹¹¹⁷ According to UNHCR, from 2 to 27 March 2026, about 95 000 people from Lebanon crossed the Jdeidat Yabous border into Rural Damascus.¹¹¹⁸

¹¹⁰⁹ AA, Landmine blast kills 2 children in Damascus countryside, 18 April 2026, [url](#)

¹¹¹⁰ Mine Action AoR, Syria, Situation Update No.7, December 2025 - March 2026, 16 March 2026, [url](#), p. 5

¹¹¹¹ Lister, C., Syria Weekly: October 28 - November 11, Syria Weekly, 11 November 2025, [url](#)

¹¹¹² Lister, C., Syria Weekly: November 11-18, 2025, Syria Weekly, 18 November 2025, [url](#)

¹¹¹³ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

¹¹¹⁴ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

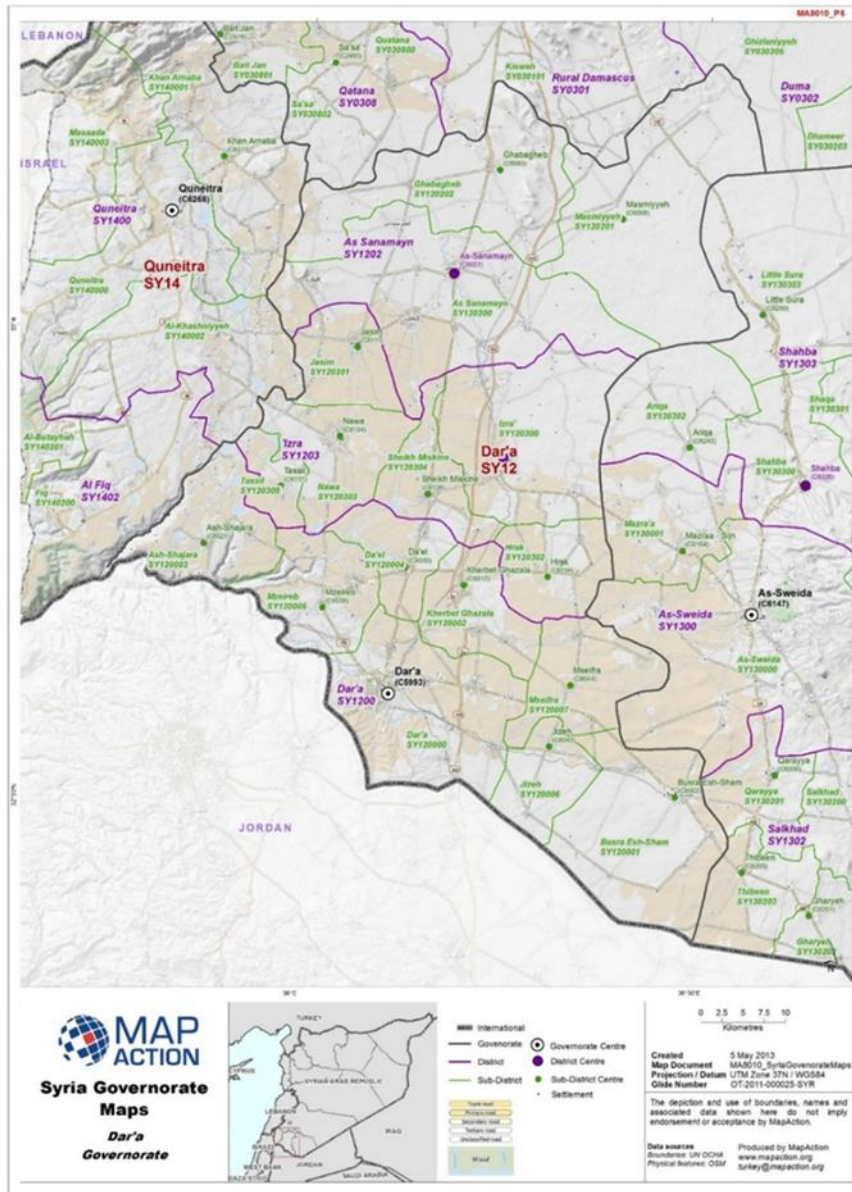
¹¹¹⁵ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

¹¹¹⁶ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

¹¹¹⁷ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 9 – October 2025, 10 November 2025, [url](#), p. 7

¹¹¹⁸ UNHCR, UNHCR Syria: Flash Update - Middle East Situation (27 March 2026), 29 March 2026, [url](#), p. 1

2.12. Dar'a governorate



Map 15: © MapAction, Dar'a governorate¹¹¹⁹

2.12.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Dar'a governorate is divided into three administrative districts, namely As-Sanamayn, Dar'a, and Izra', which are further divided into a total of 17 sub-districts.¹¹²⁰ Its capital is the city of

¹¹¹⁹ MapAction, Dar'a governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

¹¹²⁰ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 107

Dar'a.¹¹²¹ As of April 2026, IOM estimated the governorate's population at around 1 367 000, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad.¹¹²²

2.12.2. Territorial control and main armed actors

During the reporting period, Dar'a governorate appeared to be under the control of the Syrian Transitional Government,¹¹²³ although its authority and security presence were reportedly contested and not fully established.¹¹²⁴ Syria's southern region has seen a broad proliferation of armed groups between 2018 and 2024,¹¹²⁵ and Dar'a governorate has a long history of militias and tribal networks engaging in smuggling of various goods.¹¹²⁶ The presence of numerous local armed groups reportedly constrained the transitional government's control, with territorial control in Dar'a described as 'highly fragmented' in January 2026. Some groups were nominally under the control of the MoD, but effectively 'operated in a semi-autonomous manner'.¹¹²⁷ By mid-February 2026, anti-government Druze groups controlled areas in Sweida governorate along the south-eastern border of Dar'a governorate.¹¹²⁸ As of March 2026, local warlord Ahmad Al-Awda maintained a power base around Busra Al-Sham.¹¹²⁹ In mid-April 2025, the transitional government took over his Dar'a-based armed faction, the Eighth Brigade, in Busra Al-Sham, while his supporters remained active in the region.¹¹³⁰ He reportedly submitted himself to the authority of the transitional government's MoD in February 2026, after which he left Busra Al-Sham for Damascus.¹¹³¹ Additionally, numerous small armed groups, consisting of six to ten members, were reportedly operating in the Tafas area as of October 2025.¹¹³²

In February 2025, the transitional government established the 40th Division of the Syrian army¹¹³³ as the primary division for Dar'a governorate.¹¹³⁴ In October 2025, a new cohort of 250 Special Tasks Forces' members reportedly graduated in the governorate. A member of the

¹¹²¹ UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic, Map No. 4204 Rev. 4, August 2022, [url](#)

¹¹²² IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

¹¹²³ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#); Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), p. 48

¹¹²⁴ Al-Jabassini, A., Security Transformations in Southern Syria: Authority, armed networks, and foreign intervention, Arab Reform Initiative, 4 December 2025, [url](#), p. 15

¹¹²⁵ Al-Jabassini, A., Security Transformations in Southern Syria: Authority, armed networks, and foreign intervention, Arab Reform Initiative, 4 December 2025, [url](#), p. 17

¹¹²⁶ Rose, C., Illicit economies play big role in Syria's post-Assad flashpoints, Al Majalla, 2 August 2025, [url](#)

¹¹²⁷ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), p. 48

¹¹²⁸ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#)

¹¹²⁹ Belgium, CGRS-CEDOCA, Syrië: Veiligheidssituatie (ACLED), 31 March 2026, [url](#), p. 30

¹¹³⁰ EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), p. 180

¹¹³¹ Syria TV, Former Eighth Brigade commander surrenders to military police as clan announces his banishment from Daraa, The Syrian Observer, 23 February 2026, [url](#)

¹¹³² Syria Direct, In post-regime Daraa, insecurity overshadows the state, 30 October 2025, [url](#)

¹¹³³ Al-Jabassini, A., Security Transformations in Southern Syria: Authority, armed networks, and foreign intervention, Arab Reform Initiative, 4 December 2025, [url](#), p. 16

¹¹³⁴ Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 28 March 2025, [url](#)

internal security forces in northern Dar'a indicated that these forces were still being developed, highlighting that the police force faced a shortage of qualified personnel.¹¹³⁵

The Israeli army, having advanced deep into the UN-monitored demilitarised zone separating the occupied Golan Heights and the Syrian-held territory in Quneitra since December 2024,¹¹³⁶ has established positions in western Dar'a governorate.¹¹³⁷ In an opinion piece published in May 2026, SNHR's executive director Fadel Abdulghany noted that reports indicated the existence of 10 Israeli military bases in the Dar'a and Quneitra governorates by July 2025. Incursions into villages in these governorates continued until April 2026.¹¹³⁸ The transitional government maintained a presence on Dar'a's roads connecting localities and large cities, reportedly giving locals the impression of strong security control. This control reportedly becomes weaker in the Al-Yarmouk Basin,¹¹³⁹ where the Israeli army's military post near Ma'raya village, known as Al-Jazira barrack,¹¹⁴¹ and regular patrols, have created a zone of constrained operational freedom and presence for the transitional government.¹¹⁴² Since the onset of the US-Israeli conflict with Iran in late February 2026, Israeli forces had reportedly achieved significant aerial dominance over southern Syria, intercepting Iranian unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) over Dar'a and Quneitra governorates. As part of enhanced security measures for Quneitra governorate, a first line of two internal security checkpoints was reportedly set up in western Dar'a governorate by transitional government forces.¹¹⁴³ Sources reported that the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) conducted patrols in various cities in Dar'a during the reporting period,¹¹⁴⁴ entering Al-Sanamayn city in late December 2025 for the first time,¹¹⁴⁵ as part of their mandate to gather information from residents and assess Israeli incursions into the area.¹¹⁴⁶

The execution of an internal security forces member in Dar'a by ISIL in mid-September 2025 suggests a potential resurgence of ISIL in the South.¹¹⁴⁷ In February 2026, the UN Secretary

¹¹³⁵ Syria Direct, In post-regime Daraa, insecurity overshadows the state, 30 October 2025, [url](#)

¹¹³⁶ HRW, Syria: Israel Forcibly Displaces Villagers in Occupied South, 17 September 2025, [url](#); TIMEP, After Assad, a New Uncertainty in Syria's South, 26 March 2026, [url](#)

¹¹³⁷ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), p. 49; Etana Syria, Brief: Recent developments in south-west Syria [Map], 25 May 2025, [url](#)

¹¹³⁸ Abdulghany, F., Israel's Gradual Annexation of Southern Syria under the Pretext of Mine Removal [Blog], SNHR, 17 May 2026, [url](#)

¹¹³⁹ A river valley forming the western border of Dar'a governorate; TIMEP, After Assad, a New Uncertainty in Syria's South, 26 March 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁰ Al-Jabassini, A., Security Transformations in Southern Syria: Authority, armed networks, and foreign intervention, Arab Reform Initiative, 4 December 2025, [url](#), p. 15

¹¹⁴¹ Daraa24, إسرائيل تواصل تعزيز وجودها في ثكنة الجزيرة غربي درعا [Israel continues reinforcing its presence in Al-Jazira barracks west of Daraa], 25 January 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁴² Al-Jabassini, A., Security Transformations in Southern Syria: Authority, armed networks, and foreign intervention, Arab Reform Initiative, 4 December 2025, [url](#), p. 15

¹¹⁴³ Etana Syria, Brief: Impact of regional conflict on south Syria, 10 March 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁴ SOHR, UNDOF patrols inspect and monitor Israeli incursion routes in Daraa countryside, 10 May 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Field mobilization | Patrol of UNDOF enters Al-Nasriya Village in Daraa, 28 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Assessing Israeli violations | UNDOF forces visit village in Daraa countryside, 7 April 2026, [url](#); Etana Syria, Brief: Israeli operations continue in south-west Syria, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁵ Etana Syria, Brief: Israeli operations continue in south-west Syria, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁶ SOHR, Assessing Israeli violations | UNDOF forces visit village in Daraa countryside, 7 April 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁴⁷ Ultra Syria, Black Flags in Southern Syria: Who is helping ISIS Expand and Regroup?, The Syrian Observer, 10 October 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, Brief: Rising instability in south-west Syria, 8 October 2025, [url](#)

General reported assassination attempts targeting Al-Sharaa in 2025 by Saraya Ansar Al-Sunnah, a group identified as a front for ISIL, including in Dar'a governorate.¹¹⁴⁸

2.12.3. Security trends

In July 2025, a robbery on the Damascus-Sweida highway allegedly driven by competition over smuggling routes, lead to retaliatory kidnappings and clashes between Druze militias and Bedouin fighters, escalating into the widely reported violence in Sweida governorate.¹¹⁴⁹ This unrest led to significant displacement towards Dar'a governorate,¹¹⁵⁰ particularly of Bedouin people.¹¹⁵¹ In October 2025, an eastern Dar'a-based journalist reportedly noted that the events intensified blood feuds and killings among clans displaced to Dar'a.¹¹⁵² For further information on the July 2025 events, see section [2.13. Sweida governorate](#).

In September 2025, significant mutual conflicts and tensions among the local armed groups in Dar'a governorate were reported.¹¹⁵³ In a December 2025 report, researcher Abdullah Al-Jabassini described violence in Dar'a as episodic and often localised, fuelled by uncollected weapons and the resilience of armed networks.¹¹⁵⁴ Not all cities and towns were equally affected. For instance, as of October 2025, Inkhil saw improved security under the transitional government.¹¹⁵⁵ Despite a remarkable decline in violence in the governorate since December 2024, Al-Jabassini noted that sporadic killings, abductions and localised armed clashes had occurred. Between December 2024 and mid-November 2025, the source documented the killing of at least 120 civilians, former oppositions members and transitional government and 40th Division forces. He noted that the perpetrators' identities remained unknown in most cases, making it difficult to identify the motives. Al-Jabassini also recorded 75 incidents involving lethal weapon misuse and indiscriminate gunfire, resulting in 50 fatalities, including children. Furthermore, he documented 35 incidents of interpersonal disputes escalating into armed confrontations resulting in fatalities, as well as 49 localised clashes, including tribal clashes and clashes sometimes involving transitional government forces. The latter resulted in over 50 fatalities.¹¹⁵⁶ As of May 2026, Etana Syria noted that particularly areas connected to organised crime networks in western Dar'a were still affected by active abduction and extortion networks. Throughout April, the source reported targeted killings in Inkhil, Izra' and

¹¹⁴⁸ UNSG, Twenty-second report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat, S/2026/57, 2 February 2026, [url](#), para. 10

¹¹⁴⁹ Rose, C., Illicit economies play big role in Syria's post-Assad flashpoints, Al Majalla, 2 August 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁰ Mine Action AoR, Syria, 2025 – A Year in Review, Situation Update No.6, 8 December 2025, [url](#), p. 2; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 12

¹¹⁵¹ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), p. 35

¹¹⁵² Syria Direct, In post-regime Daraa, insecurity overshadows the state, 30 October 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁵³ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), p. 48

¹¹⁵⁴ Al-Jabassini, A., Security Transformations in Southern Syria: Authority, armed networks, and foreign intervention, Arab Reform Initiative, 4 December 2025, [url](#), pp. 6, 18

¹¹⁵⁵ Syria Direct, In post-regime Daraa, insecurity overshadows the state, 30 October 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁶ Al-Jabassini, A., Security Transformations in Southern Syria: Authority, armed networks, and foreign intervention, Arab Reform Initiative, 4 December 2025, [url](#), p. 17

Khirbet Ghazaleh, as well as several attempted killings, including those of civilians, former opposition members and local affiliates.¹¹⁵⁷

Al-Jabassini explained that the Israeli state has maintained a 'strategic foothold' in southern Syria since December 2024, shaping the region's security environment through interventions including a continuous presence, ground incursions, precision air strikes and 'limited forward deployments'.¹¹⁵⁸ In the reporting period, Dar'a governorate, particularly its western parts,¹¹⁵⁹ saw the second-highest concentration of Israeli incidents after Quneitra.¹¹⁶⁰ Western Dar'a¹¹⁶¹ was reportedly one of the areas in the country where Israel expanded its operations and presence during the reference period¹¹⁶² which witnessed Israeli airstrikes,¹¹⁶³ and ground operations in the governorate,¹¹⁶⁴ focusing on military sites¹¹⁶⁵ and suspected arms convoys.¹¹⁶⁶ In March 2026, military sites in Izra' were reportedly attacked by Israeli airstrikes in a first attack against the transitional government in months, with no reported casualties.¹¹⁶⁷ Ground operations by the Israeli army sometimes also involved house searches,¹¹⁶⁸ checkpoints, artillery shelling,¹¹⁶⁹ road closures, or the use of armed drones.¹¹⁷⁰ The UNCOI reported that Israeli operations led to civilian casualties, displaced civilians and damaged and destroyed property. Arrests, detention, and fundamental freedom restrictions were also reported. Some of the arrested were reportedly released hours or days later, while others remained in detention for months.¹¹⁷¹

Amid the ongoing US-Israel-Iran conflict hundreds of projectiles coming from Iran on their way to targets in Israeli occupied Golan and Israel were reportedly intercepted in Syrian

¹¹⁵⁷ Etana Syria, RIEF: Recent developments in south-west Syria [Map], 25 May 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁵⁸ Al-Jabassini, A., Security Transformations in Southern Syria: Authority, armed networks, and foreign intervention, Arab Reform Initiative, 4 December 2025, [url](#), p. 14

¹¹⁵⁹ SARI Global, Southern Syria Under Pressure: Israeli Operations, Civilian Dynamics, and Emerging Risk Trajectories, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 2

¹¹⁶⁰ SARI Global, Southern Syria Under Pressure: Israeli Operations, Civilian Dynamics, and Emerging Risk Trajectories, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 2; Al Jazeera, Israel attacked Syria more than 600 times over the past year, 9 December 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁶¹ SOHR, Ongoing violations | Israeli patrol advances into Daraa countryside and establishes checkpoint, 4 May 2026, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 112; Shafaq News, Israeli forces raid village in Syria's Daraa, 15 November 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁶² UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 111

¹¹⁶³ Al Jazeera, Israel attacked Syria more than 600 times over the past year, 9 December 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 111; Etana Syria, Brief: Israeli operations continue in south-west Syria, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁵ Enab Baladi, غارة إسرائيلية على مواقع عسكرية في درعا [Israeli airstrike targets military positions in Dar'a], 20 March 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁶ Al Jazeera, Israel attacked Syria more than 600 times over the past year, 9 December 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁷ Etana Syria, Brief: Recent developments in south-west Syria, 8 April 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁸ Enab Baladi, Syrian detainees from Daraa disappear in Israeli custody, 17 October 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Israeli army raids home in rural Daraa, southern Syria, 14 November 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁶⁹ Enab Baladi, Israel shells Koya farmland in western Daraa after incursions and threats, 23 October 2025, [url](#)

¹¹⁷⁰ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), p. 49

¹¹⁷¹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), paras. 111, 119

airspace.¹¹⁷² This also led to drone and missile debris fall across Dar'a governorate,¹¹⁷³ particularly in early-March 2026. Multiple drones were downed over or close to populated areas, including Inkhil, Izra', and Nawa cities, resulting in limited civilian harm.¹¹⁷⁴

In January 2026, the transitional government reportedly carried out nearly daily raids in south-west Syria, including Dar'a governorate, arresting security commanders of the former regime, individuals involved in abduction operations, and Hezbollah affiliates.¹¹⁷⁵

2.12.4. Security incidents

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, ACLED recorded 187 security incidents in Dar'a governorate. Of these, 92 were coded as explosions/remote violence, 68 as incidents of violence against civilians, and 27 as battles. The majority of the incidents occurred in October 2025 (32 incidents). April 2026 saw the fewest (13 incidents). An analysis of ACLED data for the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad, from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, indicates three peaks in security incidents in the governorate: March and April 2025, with 53 and 49 incidents respectively, and June 2025 (48 incidents).¹¹⁷⁶

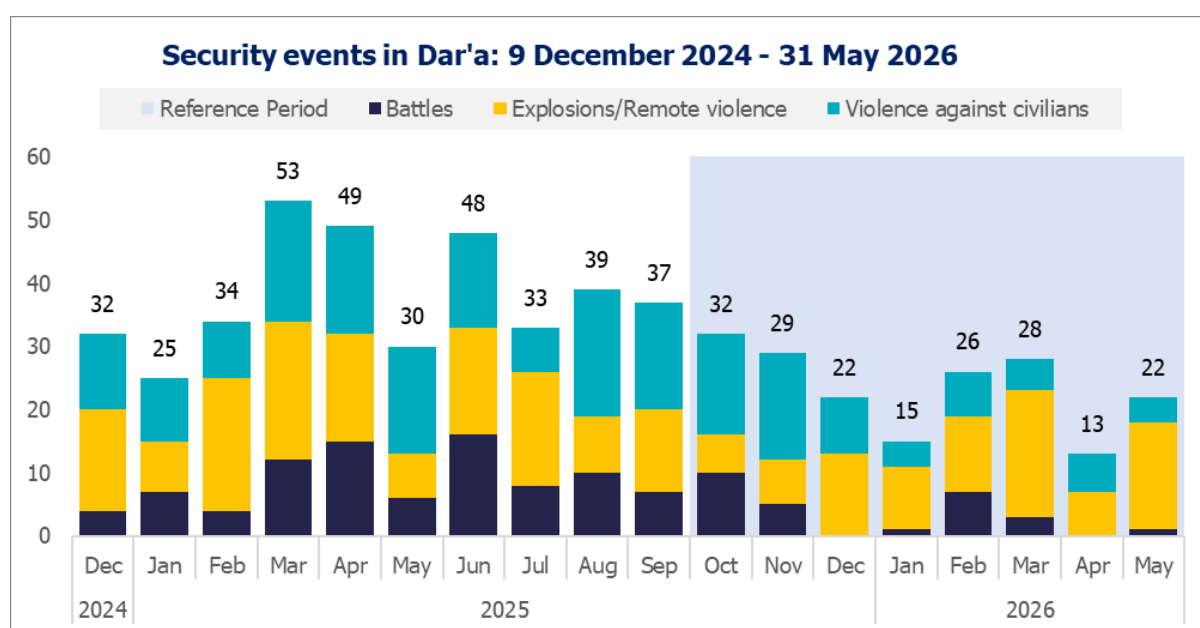


Figure 27: Evolution of security events in Dar'a per type, based on ACLED data¹¹⁷⁷

During the reference period, ACLED recorded security incidents in all three districts of Dar'a governorate. The highest number was documented in Dar'a district (107 incidents), followed by

¹¹⁷² Etana Syria, Brief: Recent developments in south-west Syria, 8 April 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁷³ Etana Syria, Brief: Impact of regional conflict on south Syria, 10 March 2026, [url](#); Ultra Syria, لا أضرار مسجلة.. الدفاع المدني يستجيب لبلاغات سقوط بقايا صواريخ جنوباً [No reported damage: Civil defence comments reports on missile debris fallen in the South], 28 February 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁷⁴ Etana Syria, Brief: Recent developments in south-west Syria, 25 May 2026, [url](#); Etana Syria, BRIEF: Recent developments in south-west Syria, 8 April 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁷⁵ Etana Syria, Brief: Israeli operations continue in south-west Syria, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁷⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁷⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

Izra (58 incidents) and As-Sanamayn (22 incidents). Since the fall of Bashar al-Assad, the highest number of incidents in the governorate was also recorded in Dar'a district (281 incidents), again, followed by Izra (176 incidents) and As-Sanamayn (110 incidents). According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were the main actors involved in security incidents during the reference period, appearing in around 68 % of all recorded incidents, either coded as Actor 1 or Actor 2. They were followed by the military forces of Israel, and the security forces of the transitional government (police forces, military forces), involved in around 25 % and 14 % of all recorded incidents respectively.¹¹⁷⁸ A comparison between the current reference period and the overall security situation since 9 December 2024 suggests a sharp decrease in the number of incidents involving tribal and communal militias in the governorate.¹¹⁷⁹ 5 of all recorded security incidents during the reference period were linked to the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp (IRGC) and 3 to the military forces of Jordan.¹¹⁸⁰

68 security incidents during the reporting period were coded as 'violence against civilians', 75 % of which involved unidentified armed groups. Approximately 19 % involved Israeli military forces, and around 4 % (3 incidents) involved the police forces of Syria.¹¹⁸¹

2.12.5. Civilian casualties

In October 2025, the SNHR recorded 7 civilian fatalities in Dar'a governorate, 6 in November, 6 in December, 4 in January 2026, 5 in February, 1 in March, 2 in April and 3 in May, as of 1 June 2026.¹¹⁸² Between October 2025 and May 2026, all recorded civilian fatalities in the governorate were attributed to actors that SNHR could not identify.¹¹⁸³ An analysis of the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad shows peaks in the civilian death toll in March and April 2025 followed by a general decline with two smaller peaks in June and September 2025.¹¹⁸⁴

¹¹⁷⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁷⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁸⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁸¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁸² SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

¹¹⁸³ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹¹⁸⁴ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 183-184

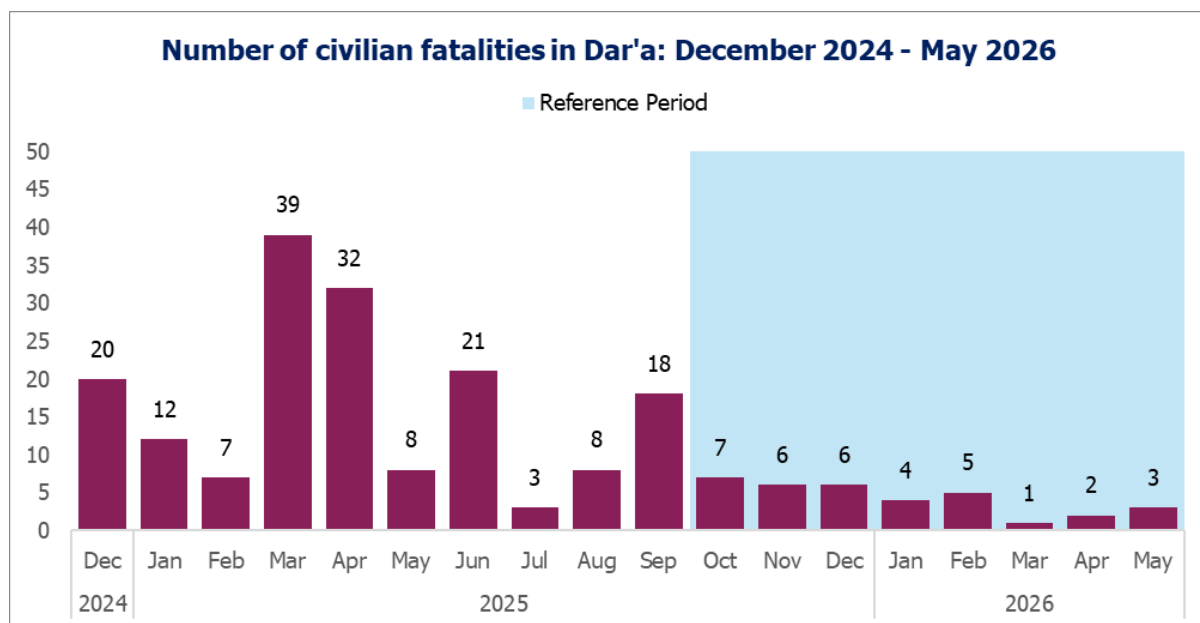


Figure 28: Evolution of civilian fatalities in Dar'a per month, based on SNHR data¹¹⁸⁵

2.12.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Sources reported that Israeli military interventions have impacted the daily lives of civilians in western Dar'a governorate,¹¹⁸⁶ including access to agricultural land,¹¹⁸⁷ livestock,¹¹⁸⁸ and water.¹¹⁸⁹

Reportedly, former frontlines, including areas in the countryside¹¹⁹⁰ of Dar'a governorate, were particularly affected by ERW contamination.¹¹⁹¹ UNHCR reported that Dar'a governorate was one of those heavily affected by a high number of deaths due to ERW contamination in the first quarter of 2026.¹¹⁹² ERW were reportedly frequently found on agricultural or grazing land,¹¹⁹³ on roads, on the grounds of schools, hospitals and other public infrastructure or on private properties,¹¹⁹⁴ often involving displaced families or children occupied with livelihood activities.¹¹⁹⁵ The abovementioned July 2025 hostilities in Sweida governorate led to large-

¹¹⁸⁵ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 183-184

¹¹⁸⁶ SARI Global, Southern Syria Under Pressure: Israeli Operations, Civilian Dynamics, and Emerging Risk Trajectories, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 10

¹¹⁸⁷ Etana Syria, Brief: Recent developments in south-west Syria, 8 April 2026, [url](#); Etana Syria, Brief: Israeli operations continue in south-west Syria, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁸⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 118

¹¹⁸⁹ TIMEP, After Assad, a New Uncertainty in Syria's South, 26 March 2026, [url](#); SARI Global, Southern Syria Under Pressure: Israeli Operations, Civilian Dynamics, and Emerging Risk Trajectories, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 10

¹¹⁹⁰ New Arab (The), Every step could be their last as Syrian children navigate mine-contaminated land, 7 April 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁹¹ SARD, UXO Challenge in Syria and Awareness Campaign, 5 March 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁹² UNHCR, Syria Protection and Reintegration Insights. January – March 2026, 28 April 2026, [url](#), p. 14

¹¹⁹³ Mine Action AoR, Syria, Situation Update No. 5, 15 October 2025, [url](#), p. 5

¹¹⁹⁴ SARD, UXO Challenge in Syria and Awareness Campaign, 5 March 2026, [url](#)

¹¹⁹⁵ Mine Action AoR, Syria, Situation Update No. 5, 15 October 2025, [url](#), p. 5

scale displacement toward Dar'a governorate, increasing ERW exposure in areas where contamination levels are not fully known yet.¹¹⁹⁶ Dar'a reportedly saw a 'notable increase' in ERW incidents between mid-August 2025 and mid-October 2025 (11 incidents causing 6 fatalities and 13 injuries) compared to the previous reporting period. Among others, the increase reflected renewed movement of civilians into rural areas which were considered unsafe before.¹¹⁹⁷ SNHR reported that Dar'a governorate recorded 1.26 % of landmine victims between 8 December 2024 and April 2026 (4 of overall 317).¹¹⁹⁸ During the reporting period, sources reported several incidents in Dar'a governorate in which civilians were killed or injured by explosions caused by ERW,¹¹⁹⁹ including children.¹²⁰⁰

2.12.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

The abovementioned July 2025 escalation of violence in Sweida governorate reportedly led to the displacement of thousands of civilians towards Dar'a governorate.¹²⁰¹ IOM's population movements assessments in Syria, which started as of February 2025, show that there was an increase in Dar'a's IDP population between February 2025 (around 36 000 out of a total population of approximately 1.19 million, 3 %)¹²⁰² and April 2026 (around 68 000 out of a total population of approximately 1.37 million, 5 %).¹²⁰³

UNHCR further estimated that, as of 21 May 2026, 28 000 individuals had returned to locations in Dar'a governorate from internal displacement since December 2024¹²⁰⁴ and 144 000 had returned to the governorate from abroad within the same period.¹²⁰⁵

¹¹⁹⁶ Mine Action AoR, Syria, 2025 – A Year in Review, Situation Update No.6, 8 December 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹¹⁹⁷ Mine Action AoR, Syria, Situation Update No. 5, 15 October 2025, [url](#), p. 5

¹¹⁹⁸ SNHR, On the International Day for Mine Awareness: Documenting the deaths of at least 3,799 civilians from landmines and cluster munitions in Syria, March 2011 – April 2026, 4 April 2026, [url](#), p. 8

¹¹⁹⁹ SOHR, Old ordnance | Three people killed and injured in landmine explosion in Hama and Daraa, 9 February 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Including a child | Three civilians killed and injured in explosion of war remnants in Daraa and Idlib, 16 January 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Young woman from Al-Suwaiaa injured severe in eastern Daraa countryside, 3 January 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁰⁰ SOHR, Old ordnance | Child killed in explosion of shell in Daraa countryside, 28 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Child and young man injured in explosion of landmines in Daraa and Al-Raqqa, 27 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Old ordnance | Person killed and two children injured in explosion of war remnants in Daraa, 13 February 2026, [url](#); Etana Syria, Brief: Israeli operations continue in south-west Syria, 3 February 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁰¹ UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria; Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 43; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 12

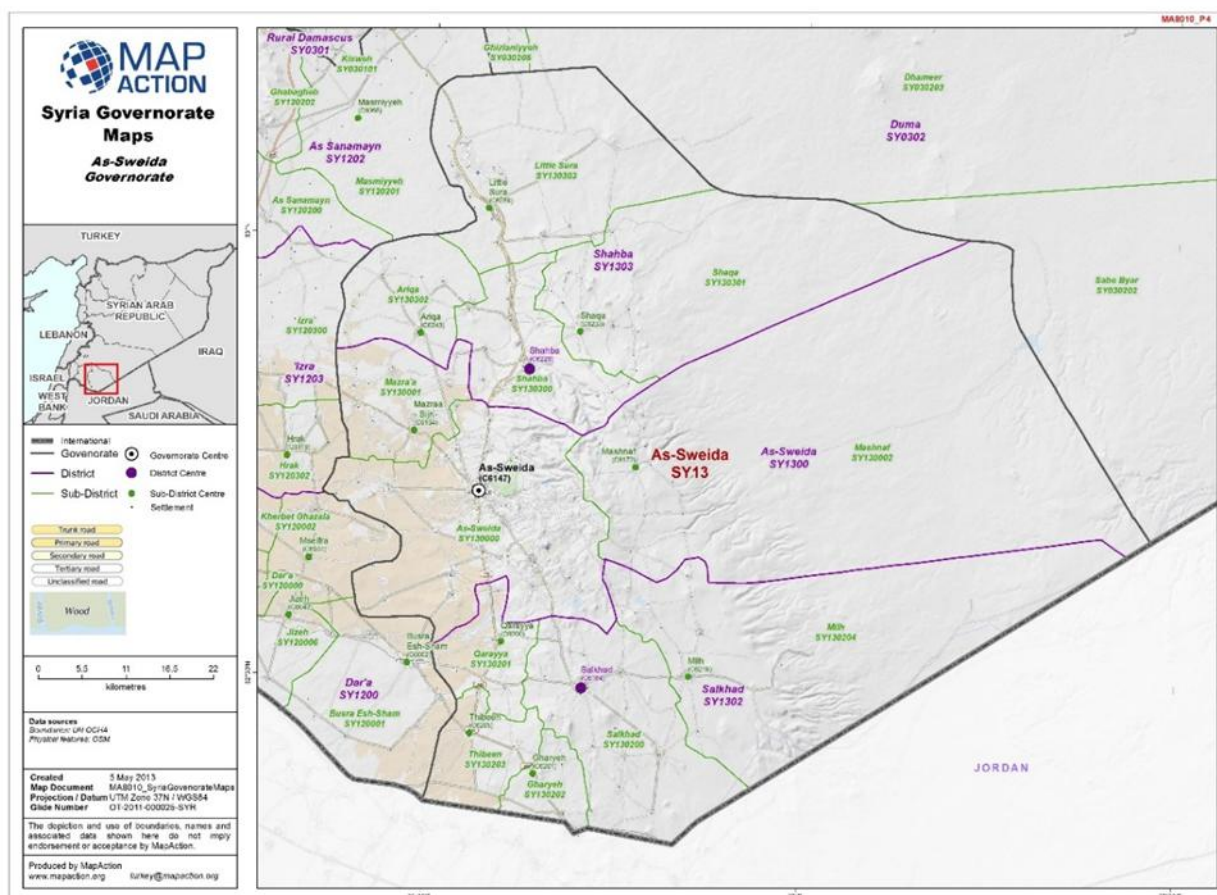
¹²⁰² IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

¹²⁰³ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

¹²⁰⁴ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁰⁵ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

2.13. Sweida governorate



Map 16: © MapAction, Sweida governorate¹²⁰⁶

2.13.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Sweida governorate is divided into three administrative districts, namely As-Sweida, Salkhad, and Shahba, which are further divided into a total of 12 sub-districts.¹²⁰⁷ Its capital is the city of Sweida.¹²⁰⁸ As of April 2026, IOM estimated the governorate's population at around 480 000, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad.¹²⁰⁹ Sweida governorate has a significant Druze population.¹²¹⁰

¹²⁰⁶ MapAction, Sweida Governorate, 29 July 2016, [url](#)

¹²⁰⁷ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, [url](#), p. 107

¹²⁰⁸ UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic, Map No. 4204 Rev. 4, August 2022, [url](#)

¹²⁰⁹ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

¹²¹⁰ Shtuni, A., From Insurgency to Statecraft: Al-Sharaa and Syria's Foreign Fighters Test, 19 February 2026, [url](#), p. 7; International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), p. 13

2.13.2. Territorial control and main armed actors

Syria's southern region has seen a broad proliferation of armed groups between 2018 and 2024,¹²¹¹ and Sweida governorate has a long history of militias and tribal networks engaging in smuggling of various goods.¹²¹² As of mid-April 2026, Sweida governorate's northern, northwestern and western parts bordering Dar'a governorate appeared to be under the control of the Syrian Transitional Government. Significant southern and central areas around the cities Shahba, Salkhad and Sweida were under the control of Druze groups.¹²¹³ These groups had operated there for many years in a semi-autonomous manner, with armed confrontations occasionally occurring between them.¹²¹⁴ They resisted integration into the transitional government's security apparatus, reportedly out of fear to jeopardise their influence.¹²¹⁵ At the time of writing, most of Sweida governorate, including Sweida city,¹²¹⁶ remained outside of transitional government control.¹²¹⁷

After violence escalated in Sweida in mid-July 2025 between local Druze armed groups and armed Bedouins, the transitional government deployed forces to the governorate allegedly to quell the fighting,¹²¹⁸ but ended up clashing with the Druze itself.¹²¹⁹ It subsequently took over around 30 villages in the northern and eastern parts of the governorate.¹²²⁰ Interventions by the Israeli military were reported,¹²²¹ according to Israeli officials aiming at protecting the Druze community.¹²²² A ceasefire agreement was reached the same month.¹²²³ In a December 2025 report, researcher Abdullah Al-Jabassini noted that these events and the continuing threat of further Israeli interventions have contained the transitional government's authority across much of Sweida governorate. The report noted that emergent local actors, particularly the

¹²¹¹ Al-Jabassini, A., Security Transformations in Southern Syria: Authority, armed networks, and foreign intervention, Arab Reform Initiative, 4 December 2025, [url](#), p. 17

¹²¹² Rose, C., Illicit economies play big role in Syria's post-Assad flashpoints, Al Majalla, 2 August 2025, [url](#)

¹²¹³ Etana Syria, Brief: Recent developments in Suwayda [Map], 17 April 2026, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#)

¹²¹⁴ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), p. 23

¹²¹⁵ International Crisis Group, Restoring Security in Post-Assad Syria: Lessons from the Coast and Suweida, 26 November 2025, [url](#), p. 15

¹²¹⁶ MEE, 'We got rid of a tyrant': Syria's tumultuous first year without Assad, 8 December 2025, [url](#)

¹²¹⁷ Lister, C., How Israel-Backed Sweida Became Syria's Narcotics Capital, New Lines Magazine, 19 May 2026, [url](#); New Arab (The), Jordan strikes drug, weapons storage sites in Syria's Suweida province, 2 May 2026, [url](#); Reuters, Syrian government forces and Druze factions exchange prisoners in Sweida, 26 February 2026, [url](#)

¹²¹⁸ Al Jazeera, Israel says it hit Syrian army camps in the south after Druze 'attacked', 20 March 2026, [url](#); Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), pp. 53-54

¹²¹⁹ Al-Jabassini, A., Security Transformations in Southern Syria: Authority, armed networks, and foreign intervention, Arab Reform Initiative, 4 December 2025, [url](#), p. 15; International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: July 2025, n.d., [url](#)

¹²²⁰ Enab Baladi, Suwayda governorate launches "humanitarian initiative" to facilitate the return of the displaced, 15 October 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Al-Hijri states his demands: What is happening in Suwayda is "genocide", 11 October 2025, [url](#)

¹²²¹ Al Jazeera, Israel says it hit Syrian army camps in the south after Druze 'attacked', 20 March 2026, [url](#)

¹²²² Guardian (The), Israel says airstrikes in Syria are 'message' to protect Druze minority, 3 May 2025, [url](#); DW, Israel hits Syria's military HQ and near presidential palace, 16 July 2025, [url](#)

¹²²³ Etana Syria, Brief: Clashes in western Suwayda, 28 March 2026, [url](#)

Supreme Legal Committee¹²²⁴ and the National Guard Forces,¹²²⁵ who reportedly received support from Israel¹²²⁶ and were established by spiritual Druze leader Hikmat Al-Hijri,¹²²⁷ took care of governance and security affairs. This limited state authority, enabling militarised criminal networks to resume drug smuggling into neighbouring Jordan.¹²²⁸ Syria Weekly referred to Al-Hijri as the leader of the governorate's de facto authorities.¹²²⁹ He reportedly aimed at establishing a form of self-governance in Sweida.¹²³⁰

The Sweida Military Council, established after the fall of the Assad regime by a group of retired officers and defectors, was reportedly the backbone of the Sweida National Guard (also National Guard Forces).¹²³¹ The formation of the National Guard Forces in August 2025 reportedly included fighters who had previously served in Assad-led government forces. This was said to be the largest reorganisation of Druze armed groups since the conflict began.¹²³² It is said that both the Supreme Legal Committee and the National Guard Forces included several officers who had served under the Assad government.¹²³³ In a May 2026 article, Charles Lister noted that more than half of the National Guard force's leadership were former senior Assad government officers, while other leading figures in the National Guard had been involved in organised crime related to Assad's Military Intelligence Directorate.¹²³⁴ The landscape became even more complex due to internal rifts within the Druze community, as certain factions promoted the idea of integrating into state institutions while others preferred decentralised control. More hardline armed factions, such as the National Guard forces, have reportedly taken on confrontational stances.¹²³⁵

¹²²⁴ The Supreme Legal Committee comprises six judges and three lawyers and was established in July 2025 as a local authority in Sweida. Its formation reportedly raised fears about the emergence of an entity parallel to the state. Zaman Alwasl, Druze leader forms committees to carry out state duties in Sweida, 26 July 2025, [url](#); SANA, Syrian Justice Ministry Refers Suweida's "Supreme Legal Committee" Judges for Investigation, The Syrian Observer, 8 August 2025, [url](#)

¹²²⁵ The National Guard Forces were formed in August 2025 under the leadership of spiritual Druze leader Hikmat Al-Hijri. Around 30 local Druze armed factions joined the formation. Enab Baladi, What Is the "National Guard" Formed by Sheikh al-Hijri in Suwayda, Southern Syria?, 23 August 2025, [url](#); Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), pp. 24-25, 51

¹²²⁶ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), pp. 23, 24-25

¹²²⁷ Zaman Alwasl, Druze leader forms committees to carry out state duties in Sweida, 26 July 2025, [url](#); Al-Tamimi, A. J., Druze Factions in al-Suwayda' after the National Guard Merger: Interview with a Constituent Group, 4 October 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, What Is the "National Guard" Formed by Sheikh al-Hijri in Suwayda, Southern Syria?, 23 August 2025, [url](#)

¹²²⁸ Al-Jabassini, A., Security Transformations in Southern Syria: Authority, armed networks, and foreign intervention, Arab Reform Initiative, 4 December 2025, [url](#), pp. 6, 16

¹²²⁹ Lister, C., Syria Weekly Conflict & Security: December 9-30, 2025, Syria Weekly, 30 December 2025, [url](#)

¹²³⁰ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), pp. 23; New Arab (The), Protection or partition? The future of Suweida and Syria's Druze, 22 January 2026, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Al-Hijri insists on independence with Israeli guarantees, 13 January 2026, [url](#)

¹²³¹ Syria Direct, Suwayda stands at a crossroads, one year after Assad's fall, 19 December 2025, [url](#)

¹²³² UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria; Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 53

¹²³³ ISW and CT, Iran Update, 25 August 2025, [url](#)

¹²³⁴ Lister, C., How Israel-Backed Sweida Became Syria's Narcotics Capital, New Lines Magazine, 19 May 2026, [url](#)

¹²³⁵ Arab Weekly (The), Clashes in Suweida expose fragile balance in southern Syria, 5 May 2026, [url](#)

In early January 2026, ISW and CTP reported that transitional government forces had been deployed to Al-Shaab village at the request of the village's residents and had taken control of the village from drug smugglers.¹²³⁶

ISIL cells were reportedly active in eastern Sweida's remote desert areas.¹²³⁷

2.13.3. Security trends

In July 2025, a robbery on the Damascus-Sweida highway allegedly driven by competition over smuggling routes, led to retaliatory kidnappings and clashes between Druze militias and Bedouin fighters, escalating into the widely reported violence in Sweida governorate¹²³⁸ (see also section [2.13.2. Territorial control and main armed actors](#)). The escalation included the mobilisation of tribes across the country, allegedly in support of the Bedouins.¹²³⁹

The governorate was described as 'volatile',¹²⁴⁰ with the violence in Sweida primarily driven by the transitional government's attempts to assert control and disarm the region and resistance from Druze groups to these demands. The security situation was characterised by 'sudden, large-scale confrontations and heavy casualties'.¹²⁴¹ Despite the ceasefire being in effect,¹²⁴² sporadic¹²⁴³ clashes between Druze fighters/National Guard forces and internal security forces,¹²⁴⁴ continued into May 2026.¹²⁴⁵ Some resulted in civilian casualties.¹²⁴⁶ The launch of a suicide drone by Druze militias targeting transitional government forces in western Sweida in mid-December 2025 was reported as the first indication that the militias had acquired this new capacity.¹²⁴⁷ In mid-February 2026, the transitional government increasingly pressured Sweida

¹²³⁶ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Suwayda Province, January 2, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 2 January 2026, [url](#)

¹²³⁷ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), p. 55

¹²³⁸ Rose, C., Illicit economies play big role in Syria's post-Assad flashpoints, Al Majalla, 2 August 2025, [url](#)

¹²³⁹ UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria; Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 42; MEE, 'We got rid of a tyrant': Syria's tumultuous first year without Assad, 8 December 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Arrests in Suwayda to "foil a coup" against al-Hijri, 30 November 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁴⁰ MEE, 'We got rid of a tyrant': Syria's tumultuous first year without Assad, 8 December 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁴¹ Al-Jabassini, A., Security Transformations in Southern Syria: Authority, armed networks, and foreign intervention, Arab Reform Initiative, 4 December 2025, [url](#), p. 18

¹²⁴² SOHR, Ceasefire violations | Five civilians injured in indiscriminate bombardment on Al-Suwaia city, 4 May 2026, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Four killed in clashes between Syrian Interior Ministry forces and Suwayda factions, 23 December 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁴³ UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria; Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 52

¹²⁴⁴ Belgium, CGRS-CEDOCA, Syrië: Veiligheidssituatie (ACLED), 31 March 2026, [url](#), p. 29

¹²⁴⁵ SOHR, Military escalation | Violent clashes erupt between "National Guards" and government forces in Al-Suwaia, 9 May 2026, [url](#); Etana Syria, Brief: Recent developments in south-west Syria, 8 April 2026, [url](#); Belgium, CGRS-CEDOCA, Syrië: Veiligheidssituatie (ACLED), 31 March 2026, [url](#), p. 29; Enab Baladi, Four killed in clashes between Syrian Interior Ministry forces and Suwayda factions, 23 December 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁴⁶ SOHR, Ceasefire violations | Five civilians injured in indiscriminate bombardment on Al-Suwaia city, 4 May 2026, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly: March 17-24, 2026, Syria Weekly, 24 March 2026, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Four killed in clashes between Syrian Interior Ministry forces and Suwayda factions, 23 December 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Two civilians injured | Governmental forces and "National Guard Forces" trade fire in Al-Suwaia countryside, 6 November 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁴⁷ Lister, C., Syria Weekly Conflict & Security: December 9-30, 2025, Syria Weekly, 30 December 2025, [url](#)



governorate, including through threats to intervene militarily, to integrate into the Syrian state.¹²⁴⁸ Late February 2026, detainees were exchanged¹²⁴⁹ between the transitional government and Druze authorities following the July 2025 clashes.¹²⁵⁰ Additionally, talks between pro-government Druze militia leader Suleiman Abdel Baqi and US representatives to re-integrate Sweida governorate into the state were reported.¹²⁵¹ Renewed clashes between Druze armed men and transitional government forces were reported on 19 March 2026, described by Etana Syria as ‘the most significant’ clashes since July 2025,¹²⁵² with Israel carrying out airstrikes against Syrian military infrastructure for the first time since then.¹²⁵³ Clashes between Druze armed men and transitional government forces during the reporting period occurred for example in frontlines along Al-Mansouria, near Al-Wulgha,¹²⁵⁴ Tel Hadid, Al-Ara, Al-Majdal and Al-Mazraa.¹²⁵⁵ They included the use of drones,¹²⁵⁶ comprising suicide drones,¹²⁵⁷ mortars,¹²⁵⁸ heavy machine guns,¹²⁵⁹ and shelling.¹²⁶⁰ Inter-factional clashes between Druze armed groups were also reported.¹²⁶¹

In late April 2026, Syria Weekly reported that the security situation in Sweida governorate had notably deteriorated in the preceding months. The report noted an increase in attacks on critics of Hikmat Al-Hijri's authorities by members of Druze militias.¹²⁶² According to a New Arab article from April 2026, Al-Hijri instructed supporters of the transitional government to leave Sweida governorate in a video message. The article also noted that, according to the governor of Sweida, individuals who had expressed support for the transitional government had been threatened with death by Sweida militias, and that one prominent Al-Hijri opponent had been killed in Sweida city the same month.¹²⁶³ The killing by gunshot of a Druze poet and activist in Sweida, who had criticised local separatist militias, was reported in December

¹²⁴⁸ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 19, 2026, 19 February 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁴⁹ SNHR, No less than 210 Cases of Arbitrary Arrests and Detentions in the First Quarter of 2026, 5 April 2026, [url](#), p. 9

¹²⁵⁰ ICRC, Syria: ICRC facilitates release and transfer of 86 detainees between Damascus and Sweida, 26 February 2026, [url](#); Reuters, Syrian government forces and Druze factions exchange prisoners in Sweida, 26 February 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁵¹ ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 27, 2026, 27 February 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁵² Etana Syria, Brief: Clashes in western Suwayda, 28 March 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁵³ UN Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria Claudio Cordone, Briefing to the Security Council, 22 April 2026, [url](#), p. 1

¹²⁵⁴ Lister, C., Syria Weekly: March 17-24, 2026, Syria Weekly, 24 March 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁵⁵ Lister, C., Syria Weekly Conflict & Security: December 9-30, 2025, Syria Weekly, 30 December 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁵⁶ Etana Syria, Brief: Clashes in western Suwayda, 28 March 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Military escalation I Two drones attack vicinity of checkpoint of “National Guards” in Al-Suwaiaa, 10 May 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁵⁷ SOHR, Ongoing escalation I Members of National Guard shoot down kamikaze drone of government forces in Northwestern Al-Suwaiaa, 6 May 2026, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly Conflict & Security: December 9-30, 2025, Syria Weekly, 30 December 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁵⁸ Al Jazeera, Israel says it hit Syrian army camps in the south after Druze ‘attacked’, 20 March 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁵⁹ SOHR, Military escalation I Violent clashes erupt between “National Guards” and government forces in Al-Suwaiaa, 9 May 2026, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Four killed in clashes between Syrian Interior Ministry forces and Suwayda factions, 23 December 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁰ SOHR, Ceasefire violations I Five civilians injured in indiscriminate bombardment on Al-Suwaiaa city, 4 May 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁶¹ UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria; Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 52; Lister, C., Data Update (October 14-28, 2025), Syria Weekly, 30 October 2025, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly: October 21-28, Syria Weekly, 28 October 2025, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly: September 23-29, 2025, Syria Weekly, 30 September 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁶² Lister, C., Syria Data Update (April 14-28, 2026), Syria Weekly, 29 April 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁶³ New Arab (The), Rival of Druze leader Hikmat al-Hiri gunned down in Syria's Suweida, 15 April 2026, [url](#)



2025.¹²⁶⁴ Syria Weekly also reported in late April 2026 increased fighting among rival Druze factions and violence perpetrated by Druze militias to assert control over public sector bodies allegedly influenced by the transitional government.¹²⁶⁵ Other sources also reported detentions¹²⁶⁶ and killings¹²⁶⁷ by National Guard Forces of persons opposing Al-Hijri, including Druze notables.¹²⁶⁸ In a report from mid-May 2026, the UN Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria stated that Sweida governorate was experiencing ‘persistent political and security instability’. According to the report, weekly demonstrations demanding the release of detainees, greater autonomy, and the return of displaced persons have been taking place in the governorate, alongside ongoing infighting within the Druze community.¹²⁶⁹ Sources also reported incidents of violence perpetrated by unknown people during the reference period,¹²⁷⁰ among which abductions,¹²⁷¹ including of children.¹²⁷² In December 2025, MEE noted that abductions on the Damascus-Sweida highway were a regular occurrence.¹²⁷³

During the reporting period, sporadic Jordanian airstrikes on Sweida governorate, allegedly targeting arms caches and organised crime cells, particularly those involved in drug production and smuggling,¹²⁷⁴ were reported.¹²⁷⁵

2.13.4. Security incidents

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, ACLED recorded 318 security incidents in Sweida governorate. Of these, 165 were coded as battles, 109 as explosions/remote violence, and 44 as incidents of violence against civilians. The majority of the incidents occurred in November 2025 (64 incidents) while April 2026 saw the fewest (24 incidents). An analysis of ACLED data for the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad, from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, indicates two peaks in security incidents in the governorate: the first with 128 incidents in July 2025 was largely due to the escalating violence mid-month between local Druze armed groups and armed Bedouins, followed by the involvement of transitional government forces described further above (see sections [2.13.2. Territorial control and main armed actors](#) and [2.13.3. Security trends](#)). A smaller, second peak can be observed between November and

¹²⁶⁴ New Arab (The), Druze poet killed in Syria's Suweida after criticising local militias, 16 December 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁵ Lister, C., Syria Data Update (April 14-28, 2026), Syria Weekly, 29 April 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁶ Enab Baladi, Arrests in Suwayda to “foil a coup” against al-Hijri, 30 November 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁷ Belgium, CGRS-CEDOCA, Syrië: Veiligheidssituatie (ACLED), 31 March 2026, [url](#), p. 29; Lister, C., Syria Weekly Conflict & Security: December 9-30, 2025, Syria Weekly, 30 December 2025, [url](#); SANA, Armed militia abducts and tortures to death Sheikh Raed al-Matani in Sweida, 2 December 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), Second Druze cleric dies after detention in Suweida, local reports say, 3 December 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁸ Enab Baladi, Arrests in Suwayda to “foil a coup” against al-Hijri, 30 November 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), Second Druze cleric dies after detention in Suweida, local reports say, 3 December 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁶⁹ OSES, Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria – Claudio Cordone – Briefing to the Security Council, 15 May 2026, [url](#), paras. 11-12

¹²⁷⁰ SOHR, Indiscriminate gunfire | Two persons injured in Al-Suwaidda city, 12 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Unknown attackers | Young man killed by gunfire in Al-Suwaidda City, 18 October 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁷¹ SOHR, Working in agricultural land | Two civilians from Nijran west of Al-Suwaidda kidnapped by armed group, 11 March 2026, [url](#); Belgium, CGRS-CEDOCA, Syrië: Veiligheidssituatie (ACLED), 31 March 2026, [url](#), p. 29

¹²⁷² SOHR, Showing signs of torture | Child found injured in Al-Suwaidda Hospital, 8 April 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁷³ MEE, ‘We got rid of a tyrant’: Syria’s tumultuous first year without Assad, 8 December 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁷⁴ OSES, Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria – Claudio Cordone – Briefing to the Security Council, 15 May 2026, [url](#), para. 15; ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 2, 2026, 2 January 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁷⁵ Jerusalem Post (The), Jordan is enforcing a red line in Syria via airstrikes – analysis, 3 May 2026, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly Conflict & Security: December 9-30, 2025, Syria Weekly, 30 December 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Jordan strikes drug, arms smugglers in Syria border region: Reports, 25 December 2025, [url](#)

December 2025. This is mainly due to clashes between the transitional government's security forces and Sweida National Guard, with 64 and 61 incidents respectively.¹²⁷⁶

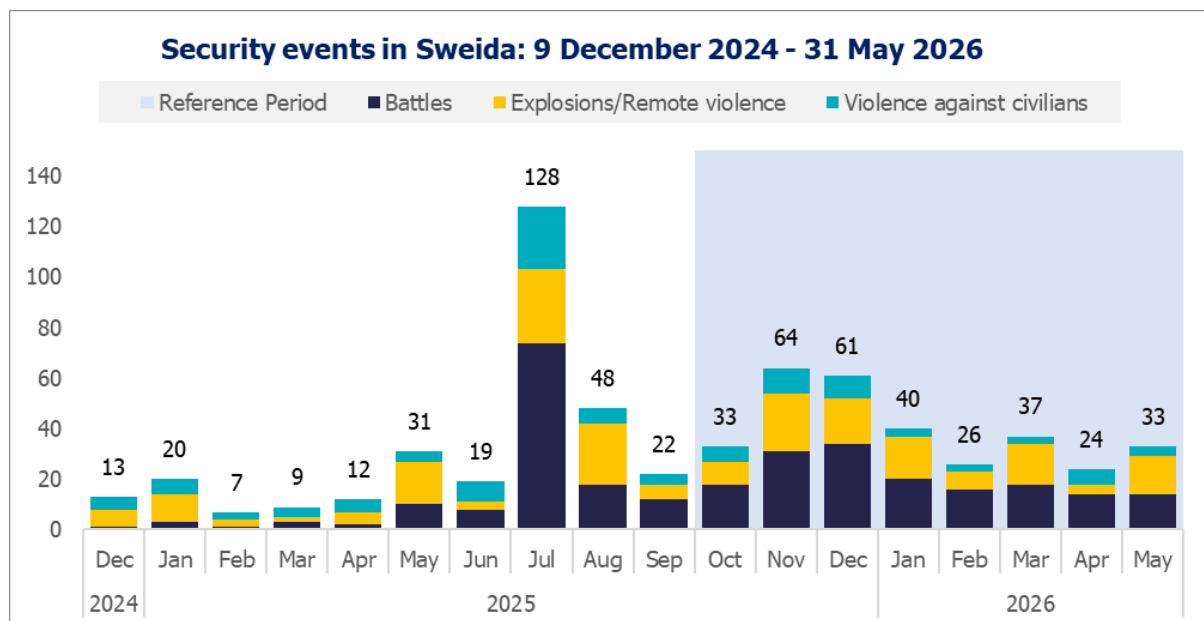


Figure 29: Evolution of security events in Sweida per type, based on ACLED data¹²⁷⁷

During the reference period, ACLED recorded security incidents in all three districts of Sweida governorate. The highest number was documented in Sweida district (258 incidents), followed by Salkhad (33 incidents) and Shahba (27 incidents). Since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad, the highest number of incidents in the governorate was also recorded in Sweida district (472 incidents), followed by Shahba (111 incidents) and Salkhad (44 incidents). According to ACLED data, security forces of the transitional government (police forces, military forces) were the main actors involved in security incidents during the reference period, appearing in around 69 % of all recorded incidents, either coded as Actor 1 or Actor 2. They were followed by the Sweida National Guards, involved in around 65 % of all recorded incidents, and unidentified armed groups, involved in around 16 %. 20 of all recorded security incidents during the reference period were linked to the military forces of Jordan and another 19 were linked to smugglers.¹²⁷⁸

44 security incidents during the reporting period were coded as 'violence against civilians', nearly 45 % of which involved unidentified armed groups. Approximately 36 % involved the Sweida National Guards and around 18 % involved the security forces of the transitional government.¹²⁷⁹

¹²⁷⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁷⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁷⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁷⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

2.13.5. Civilian casualties

In October 2025, the SNHR recorded 8 civilian fatalities in Sweida governorate, 5 in November, 9 in December, 5 in January 2026, 10 in February, 1 in March, 1 in April and 3 in May, as of 1 June 2026.¹²⁸⁰ Between October 2025 and May 2026, all recorded civilian fatalities in the governorate were attributed to actors that SNHR could not identify, except for one civilian killed by transitional government forces in October 2025 and five civilians killed by the same forces in February 2026.¹²⁸¹ An analysis of the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad suggests that the civilian death toll peaked in July 2025, with 372 civilian deaths¹²⁸² resulting from the aforementioned violent escalation that month (see sections [2.13.2. Territorial control and main armed actors](#) and [2.13.3. Security trends](#)).¹²⁸³ In late March 2026, the UN Commission of Inquiry (UNCOI) on Syria reported that 1 707 people had been killed in the escalation, including 1 190 Druze men, 99 Druze women and 53 Druze children. Among the Bedouin community, 53 men, 9 women and 8 children were killed. Most of the victims were reportedly civilians who were not participating in hostilities. However, some of the Druze and Bedouin men killed were armed group members or civilians who were directly taking part in the clashes. Furthermore, at least 225 deaths of government personnel were reported, many of whom were killed in Israeli airstrikes on Sweida and Damascus governorates in mid-July. There were also tribal fatalities.¹²⁸⁴ This was followed by two months with no civilian fatalities (August and September 2025).¹²⁸⁵

¹²⁸⁰ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

¹²⁸¹ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; SNHR, The Killing of 268 Civilians in the First Quarter of 2026 in Syria, including 43 Children, 27 Women, and 1 person due to torture was Documented, 1 April 2026, [url](#), pp. 4-5; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, The Death of 73 Civilians Including 12 Children and Six Women, and Two Deaths due to Torture Recorded in November 2025, 1 December 2025, [url](#), p. 3; SNHR, The Death of 66 Civilians Including Nine Children and Seven Women, and Three Deaths due to Torture Recorded in October 2025, 1 November 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹²⁸² SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 3

¹²⁸³ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 190-191

¹²⁸⁴ OHCHR, UN Syria Commission releases report on July massacres and other grave violations committed in Suwayda and calls for expanded accountability measures, 27 March 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁸⁵ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 190-191

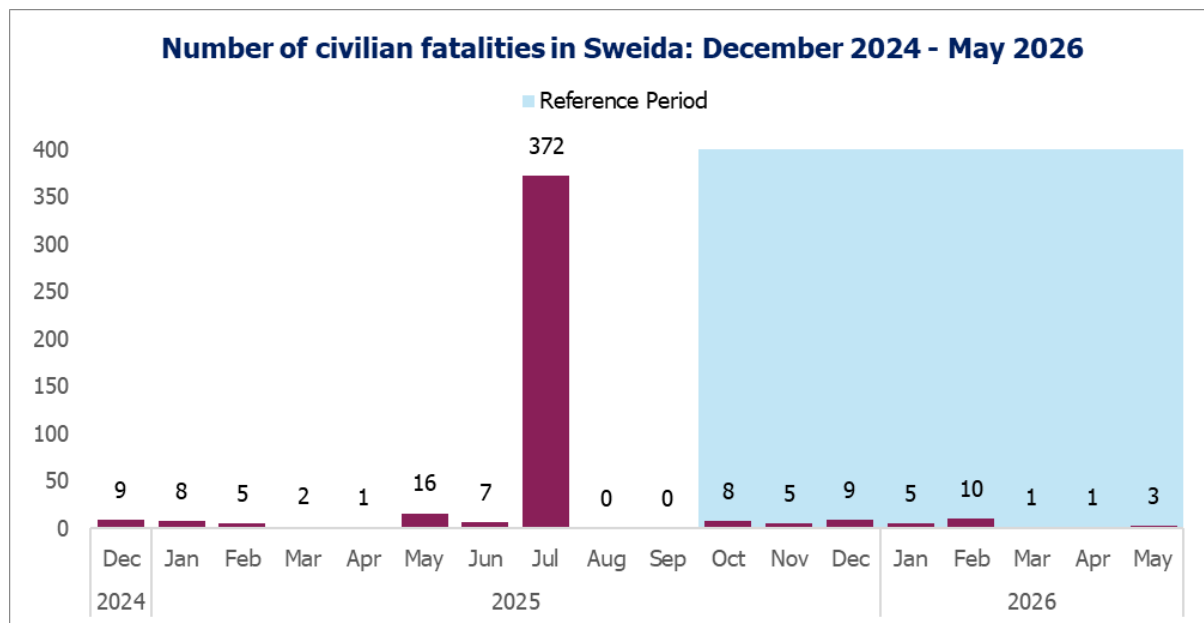


Figure 30: Evolution of civilian fatalities in Sweida per month, based on SNHR data¹²⁸⁶

2.13.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

In mid-October 2025, the Syria Mine Action AoR reported that ‘critical infrastructure’ had been damaged or destroyed during the violence in July 2025.¹²⁸⁷ UNCOI reported widespread devastation with tens of thousands of homes, places of worship and businesses destroyed, particularly in Druze villages. Almost all homes, places of worship and businesses in around 35 Druze-majority or mixed-population villages were reportedly burned and looted.¹²⁸⁸ Syria Mine Action AoR also reported that all schools in Sweida were closed between 22 October 2025 and 4 November 2025 for security reasons.¹²⁸⁹ In February 2026, SOHR reported that the National Guard Forces had announced the closure of the Sweida-Damascus highway in Sweida governorate following attacks on civilians by unknown armed men.¹²⁹⁰ In March 2026, SOHR reported that clashes on the western Sweida frontlines had rendered the high-voltage power line, which feeds transformer stations in Sweida and Shahba cities, out of service.¹²⁹¹ In February 2026, Sweida’s governor reportedly dismissed claims¹²⁹² that the governorate was

¹²⁸⁶ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026; SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 3; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24; EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), pp. 98-99, 190-191

¹²⁸⁷ Mine Action AoR, Syria, Situation Update No. 5, 15 October 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹²⁸⁸ OHCHR, UN Syria Commission releases report on July massacres and other grave violations committed in Suwayda and calls for expanded accountability measures, 27 March 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁸⁹ Mine Action AoR, Syria, Situation Update No. 5, 15 October 2025, [url](#), p. 4

¹²⁹⁰ SOHR, Until further notice | Al-Suwaidaa-Damascus highway blocked, 8 February 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁹¹ SOHR, Clashes in western Al-Suwaidaa lead to power outage in Shahbaa and Al-Suwaidaa city, 19 March 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁹² SANA, Sweida governor denies siege claims, confirms that supplies are entering normally, 22 February 2026, [url](#)

under siege, which was preventing the supply of sufficient food, water, medicine and fuel, resulting in shortages of resources.¹²⁹³

Former frontline areas, including those in Sweida governorate, were reportedly particularly affected by ERW contamination.¹²⁹⁴ SNHR reported that Sweida recorded the sixth-highest number of landmine victims between 8 December 2024 and April 2026, with 22 victims, accounting for 6.94 % of the total.¹²⁹⁵ As of January 2026, 52 % of key informants in an IOM assessment monitoring return movements and conditions for reintegration¹²⁹⁶ reported the presence of mines or unexploded ordnance in Sweida.¹²⁹⁷ During the reporting period, sources reported several incidents in Sweida governorate in which civilians were killed or injured by explosions caused by ERW,¹²⁹⁸ including children.¹²⁹⁹

2.13.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

The abovementioned July 2025 escalation of violence in Sweida governorate reportedly led to the displacement of thousands of civilians inside the governorate¹³⁰⁰ and to other governorates,¹³⁰¹ including Dar'a and Rural Damascus,¹³⁰² particularly of Bedouin people.¹³⁰³ In late March 2026, the UNCOI reported that approximately 155 000 of overall around 200 000 people displaced by the escalation, primarily from burned Druze villages, were still unable to return. Furthermore, the UNCOI noted that almost the entire Bedouin population remained forcibly displaced, many still residing in inadequate shelters.¹³⁰⁴

IOM's population movements assessments in Syria, which started as of February 2025, show that there was an increase in Sweida's IDP population between February 2025 (around

¹²⁹³ Enab Baladi, Al-Hijri states his demands: What is happening in Suwayda is "genocide", 11 October 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, October 14, 2025, 14 October 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁹⁴ SARD, UXO Challenge in Syria and Awareness Campaign, 5 March 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁹⁵ SNHR, On the International Day for Mine Awareness: Documenting the deaths of at least 3,799 civilians from landmines and cluster munitions in Syria, March 2011 – April 2026, 4 April 2026, [url](#), p. 8

¹²⁹⁶ Data was collected between 1 January and 4 February 2026, including through a network 11 343 key informants in all 14 governorates. IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 20

¹²⁹⁷ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic, Communities of Return Index, January 2026 – Round 4, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 7

¹²⁹⁸ SOHR, Al-Suwaidaa | Accidental grenade explosion leaves civilian killed, 25 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, Playing with it | Young man dies in explosion of hand grenade in Al-Suwaidaa, 18 April 2026, [url](#); SOHR, While working on tractor | Explosion of old landmine leaves two young men dead in Al-Suwaidaa countryside, 19 March 2026, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly Conflict & Security: December 9-30, 2025, Syria Weekly, 30 December 2025, [url](#)

¹²⁹⁹ SOHR, Mostly children | Explosion of grenade leaves eight people dead and injured in Al-Suwaidaa, 25 January 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁰⁰ EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 12

¹³⁰¹ UN Human Rights Council, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, Syria; Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/CRP.7, 27 March 2026, [url](#), para. 43; Lister, C., Syria Weekly: March 17-24, 2026, Syria Weekly, 24 March 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁰² Mine Action AoR, Syria, 2025 – A Year in Review, Situation Update No.6, 8 December 2025, [url](#), p. 2; EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 12

¹³⁰³ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, 30 January 2026, [url](#), p. 35

¹³⁰⁴ OHCHR, UN Syria Commission releases report on July massacres and other grave violations committed in Suwayda and calls for expanded accountability measures, 27 March 2026, [url](#)



26 000 out of a total population of approximately 439 000, 6 %) ¹³⁰⁵ and April 2026 (around 101 000 out of a total population of approximately 480 000, 21 %). ¹³⁰⁶

UNHCR further estimated that, as of 21 May 2026, around 15 000 individuals had returned to locations in Sweida governorate from internal displacement since December 2024 ¹³⁰⁷ and around 4 000 had returned to the governorate from abroad within the same period. ¹³⁰⁸

¹³⁰⁵ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

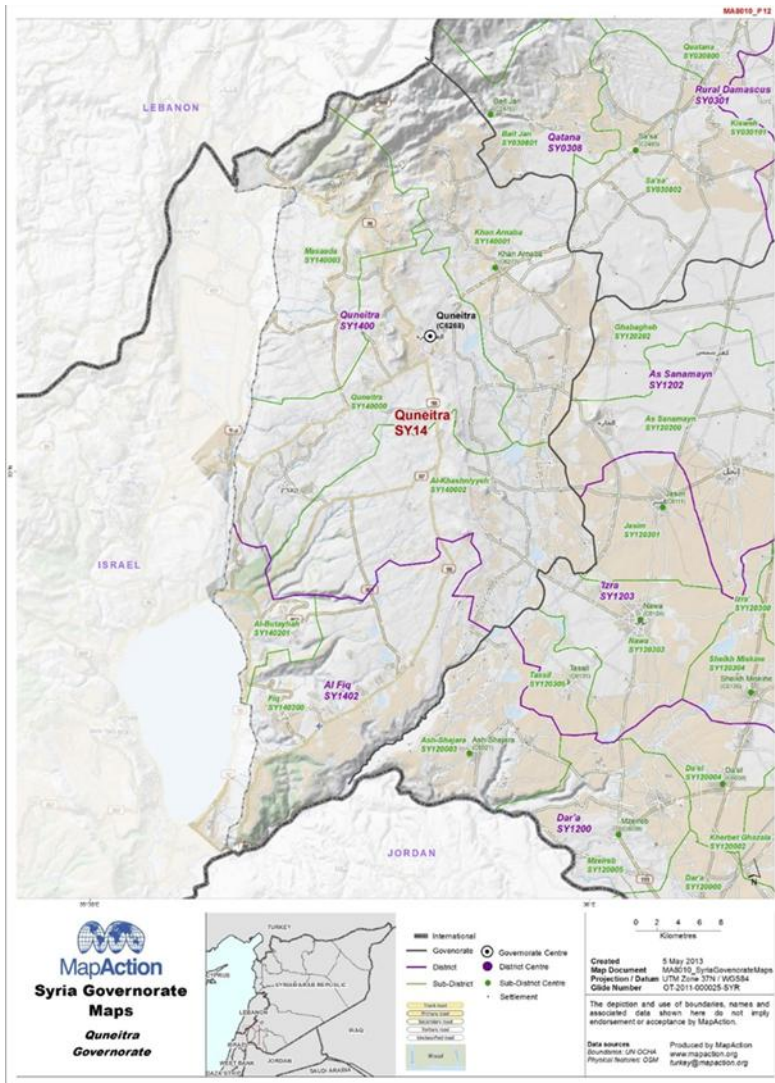
¹³⁰⁶ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

¹³⁰⁷ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁰⁸ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)



2.14. Quneitra governorate



Map 17: © MapAction, Quneitra governorate¹³⁰⁹

2.14.1. Administrative division and population estimates

Quneitra governorate is divided into two administrative districts, namely Al Fiq and Quneitra, which are further divided into a total of six sub-districts.¹³¹⁰ Its capital is the city of Quneitra.¹³¹¹ As of April 2026, IOM estimated the governorate's population at about 119 000, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad.¹³¹²

¹³⁰⁹ MapAction, Syria Governorate Maps – Quneitra Governorate, last updated 29 July 2016, [url](#)

¹³¹⁰ UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Quneitra Governorate Reference Map, February 2016, [url](#); UNOCHA, Humanitarian Atlas: Syria Arab Republic – Syria sub-district maps [select Quneitra], n.d., [url](#)

¹³¹¹ UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic, Map No. 4204 Rev. 4, August 2022, [url](#)

¹³¹² IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

2.14.2. Territorial control and main armed actors

The Israel-controlled Golan Heights cover roughly two thirds of Quneitra governorate. In November 2025, ISW and CTP indicated that the presence of Israel Defense Forces (IDF) also extended to an area adjacent to the east of that territory. The remaining part of Quneitra was mapped as controlled by the Syrian Transitional Government.¹³¹³ By mid-February 2026, ISW and CTP indicated that Israel had established a Closed Military Zone in the area west of Quneitra city.¹³¹⁴

Following the fall of Bashar Al-Assad, Israeli forces moved into the UN-monitored demilitarised separation area¹³¹⁵ between the Israel-controlled Golan Heights and Syria,¹³¹⁶ and have since then further advanced into parts of Quneitra,¹³¹⁷ and western Dar'a.¹³¹⁸ A UN source mentioned the presence of 11 IDF positions on the Golan Heights as of April 2026.¹³¹⁹ A March 2026 map by Etana Syria indicated the same number of IDF military positions, including eight in or near the area of separation in Quneitra governorate.¹³²⁰ Other sources mentioned IDF military bases in Jubata Al-Khashab, Al-Hamidiya, Al-Adnaniyah,¹³²¹ at the Mount Hermon Observatory, in the Teloul Al-Homr area, in Qurs Al-Nafl (in Hadar), Tal Ahmar Al-Gharbi (in Kudna), and in Quneitra city.¹³²² The IDF reportedly also set up temporary checkpoints near Khan Arnabeh, Ofania, Jubata Al-Khashab, Taranja,¹³²³ and other locations in central Quneitra.¹³²⁴

In terms of state actors, ISW and CTP assessed that Quneitra and Dar'a governorates were under the responsibility of the Dar'a-based 40th Division (the 'Southern Division') of the Syrian army.¹³²⁵ As part of the GSS' ground security measures and to restrict the movement of non-locals into the border area, Internal Security set up a line of security checkpoints stretching seven kilometers into Syria from the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights and border region (a similar security line was established across western Dar'a governorate, see section [2.12. Dar'a governorate](#)).¹³²⁶ Researcher Abdullah Al-Jabassini pointed to the 'uneven distribution of

¹³¹³ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria November 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 10 November 2025, [url](#)

¹³¹⁴ ISW and CTP, Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, February 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET [Map], 16 February 2026, [url](#)

¹³¹⁵ The June 1974 Israel-Syria Agreement on Disengagement foresaw the establishment of an area of separation, delimited by lines A and B, with Israeli forces remaining west of line A (Alpha), and Syrian forces remaining east of line B (Bravo), and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) stationed within. Two equal 'areas of limitation' in terms of armament and forces were established west of line A and east of line B. UN Security Council, Israel-Syria: Agreement on Disengagement, S/11302/Add.1, 30 May 1974, [url](#); UNDOF, UNDOF Deployment Map, March 2026, [url](#)

¹³¹⁶ MEE, Smart borders, military gates and land seizures: How Israel is encroaching in southern Syria, 5 May 2026, [url](#); HRW, Israel Bankrolls War Crimes in Occupied Syrian Golan, 28 April 2026, [url](#); Helmi, K., After Assad, a New Uncertainty in Syria's South, TIMEP, 26 March 2026, [url](#)

¹³¹⁷ Nair, A., Life Under Israeli Occupation in Syria's Quneitra, New Lines Magazine, 21 April 2026, [url](#)

¹³¹⁸ New Arab (The), Israel kidnaps three people in latest raid on south Syria, 11 April 2026, [url](#)

¹³¹⁹ UN DPPA, Gaza ceasefire 'increasingly fragile' as Israeli strikes and armed activities by Hamas and other groups continue, ASG Khiari tells Security Council, 28 April 2026, [url](#)

¹³²⁰ Etana Syria, Brief: Recent developments in south-west Syria, 8 April 2026, [url](#)

¹³²¹ MEE, Smart borders, military gates and land seizures: How Israel is encroaching in southern Syria, 5 May 2026, [url](#)

¹³²² Enab Baladi, Israel destabilizes southern Syria through incursions and land grabs, 7 December 2025, [url](#)

¹³²³ Enab Baladi, Israel Sets Up Checkpoint in Quneitra Countryside, 12 May 2026, [url](#)

¹³²⁴ New Arab (The), Syrians fear Israel building military base after Quneitra incursions, 19 April 2026, [url](#)

¹³²⁵ ISW and CTP, The New Syrian Army: Order of Battle, 14 November 2025, [url](#), p. 43

¹³²⁶ Etana Syria, Brief: Impact of regional conflict on south Syria, 10 March 2026, [url](#)

authority' in Quneitra governorate, with state control being strong in interior localities, but weaker or non-existent in others, restricted by the presence of Israeli forces along the Golan Heights and local community actors such as in the Druze town of Hadar.¹³²⁷

2.14.3. Security trends

The main security trend in Quneitra governorate during the reference period was the ongoing and expanding presence of Israeli forces in the area.¹³²⁸ Israeli activity in southern Syria was reportedly highest in Quneitra, followed by Dar'a governorate, and Quneitra remained the primary zone of direct contact.¹³²⁹ More than 900 IDF incursions into the governorate were reported throughout 2025.¹³³⁰ According to an analysis by the Syrian Sijil Centre quoted by MEE, the recorded number of Israeli incursions was higher in northern and central Quneitra than in the south, with central Quneitra being particularly affected by Israeli military operations, both in terms of density and intensity.¹³³¹

Israeli activities included the establishment of military positions,¹³³² fortification works,¹³³³ patrols,¹³³⁴ and the setting up of temporary checkpoints.¹³³⁵ Restrictions of movement,¹³³⁶ including to agricultural land,¹³³⁷ orchards, grazing routes and water points limited the local population's ability to maintain their livelihoods.¹³³⁸ Other sources described incidents of house searches,¹³³⁹ interrogations,¹³⁴⁰ and detentions, including of children. In some cases, detained civilians were brought into Israeli-controlled territory, or information about their status and whereabouts was not available.¹³⁴¹

¹³²⁷ Al-Jabassini, A., Security Transformations in Southern Syria: Authority, armed networks, and foreign intervention, Arab Reform Initiative, 4 December 2025, [url](#), p. 15

¹³²⁸ SNHR, The Fifteenth Annual Report on Human Rights Situation in Syria 2025, 26 March 2026, [url](#), p. 12

¹³²⁹ SARI Global, Southern Syria Under Pressure: Israeli Operations, Civilian Dynamics, and Emerging Risk Trajectories, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 2

¹³³⁰ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 82 and Annex I section III.A, FN 150

¹³³¹ MEE, Smart borders, military gates and land seizures: How Israel is encroaching in southern Syria, 5 May 2026, [url](#)

¹³³² UN DPPA, Gaza ceasefire 'increasingly fragile' as Israeli strikes and armed activities by Hamas and other groups continue, ASG Khiari tells Security Council, 28 April 2026, [url](#); Syria Direct, Israel's occupation of southern Syria persists, nearly a year on, 14 November 2025, [url](#)

¹³³³ Enab Baladi, Israeli Army Intensifies Moves, Fortifications in Quneitra, 12 May 2026, [url](#); UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response in Southern Syria - Situation Report No. 3 (as of 11 November 2025), 13 November 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹³³⁴ Etana Syria, Brief: Recent developments in south-west Syria, 8 April 2026, [url](#); Syria Direct, Israel's occupation of southern Syria persists, nearly a year on, 14 November 2025, [url](#)

¹³³⁵ Nair, A., Life Under Israeli Occupation in Syria's Quneitra, New Lines Magazine, 21 April 2026, [url](#); Syria Direct, Israel's occupation of southern Syria persists, nearly a year on, 14 November 2025, [url](#)

¹³³⁶ Helmi, K., After Assad, a New Uncertainty in Syria's South, TIMEP, 26 March 2026, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Israeli incursions in Quneitra, southern Syria, put civilians at risk and erode their sense of belonging, 21 October 2025, [url](#)

¹³³⁷ OHCHR, Human rights update on Syria, 28 April 2026, [url](#); Etana Syria, Brief: Recent developments in south-west Syria, 8 April 2026, [url](#)

¹³³⁸ SARI Global, Southern Syria Under Pressure: Israeli Operations, Civilian Dynamics, and Emerging Risk Trajectories, 2 April 2026, [url](#), p. 10

¹³³⁹ OHCHR, Human rights update on Syria, 28 April 2026, [url](#); Helmi, K., After Assad, a New Uncertainty in Syria's South, TIMEP, 26 March 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁴⁰ UN DPPA, Gaza ceasefire 'increasingly fragile' as Israeli strikes and armed activities by Hamas and other groups continue, ASG Khiari tells Security Council, 28 April 2026, [url](#); UN Security Council, United Nations Disengagement Observer Force. Report of the Secretary-General, S/2025/784, 2 December 2025, [url](#), para. 16

¹³⁴¹ OHCHR, Human rights update on Syria, 28 April 2026, [url](#)



Analysing the security situation since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad, the UNCOI stated that the IDF had ‘placed additional territory under its authority in fact’, thereby expanding its area of occupation in Quneitra governorate.¹³⁴²

In April 2026, Syrian authorities reportedly claimed to have foiled preparations for a rocket attack in Quneitra governorate planned by a Hezbollah-linked cell¹³⁴³ — a claim rejected by Hezbollah, saying that it had ‘no presence on Syrian territory’.¹³⁴⁴ ACLED data indicated Hezbollah as a main security-related actor in the governorate during the reference period, particularly in March and April 2026, predominantly due to the group’s rocket and missile attacks fired from Lebanon on Israeli positions.¹³⁴⁵

2.14.4. Security incidents

Between 1 October 2025 and 31 May 2026, ACLED recorded 189 security incidents in Quneitra governorate. Of these, 1 incident was coded as battle, 106 were coded as explosions/remote violence and 82 incidents were coded as violence against civilians.¹³⁴⁶

The number of incidents recorded per month during the reference period ranged from 6 to 46. ACLED’s records showed a steady increase in security incidents during the reference period, from 6 incidents recorded each in October and November 2025 to 21 incidents in December 2025. In 2026, ACLED recorded from 20 to 46 security incidents per month, with figures peaking in March and April 2026 (46 and 39 incidents), mainly due to actions by the Military Forces of Israel, and Hezbollah targeting Israeli positions.¹³⁴⁷

¹³⁴² UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I, section III.A, para. 112

¹³⁴³ FDD, Syria’s Crackdown on Hezbollah Opens a Door to Cooperation With Israel, 21 April 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁴⁴ Enab Baladi, Syria’s Interior Ministry Says Hezbollah Cell Foiled in Quneitra, 19 April 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁴⁵ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁴⁶ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁴⁷ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)



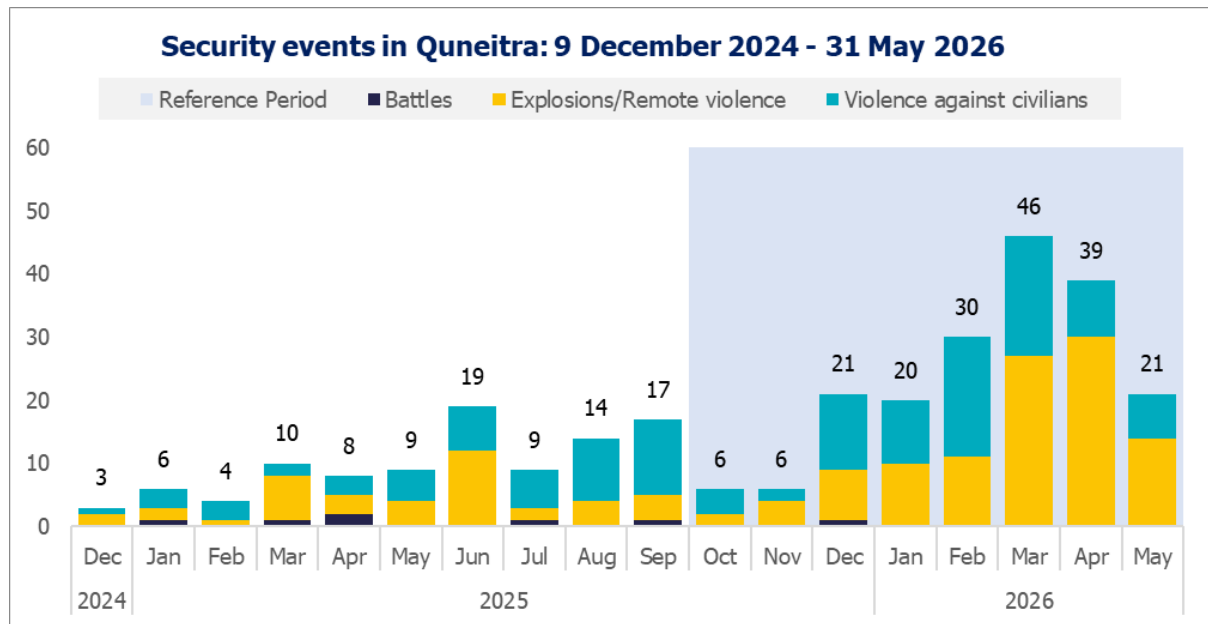


Figure 31: Evolution of security events in Quneitra per type, based on ACLED data¹³⁴⁸

An analysis of ACLED data for the period since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad, from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, shows between 3 and 10 recorded security incidents per month from December 2024 to May 2025. This was followed by an increase in June, August and September 2025, with 19, 14, and 17 incidents, predominantly involving violence against civilians and explosions/remote violence. The figures declined in October and November 2025 and have risen again since then.¹³⁴⁹

During the reference period, ACLED recorded security incidents in both districts of Quneitra governorate, almost all of them in Quneitra district (175 of the 189 recorded incidents). Similarly, most of the security incidents recorded since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad occurred in Quneitra district (272 of 288).¹³⁵⁰

According to ACLED data, Military Forces of Israel and Hezbollah were the main actors involved in security incidents during the reference period. Military Forces of Israel were recorded in 156 of the 189 incidents, while Hezbollah was recorded to be involved in 41 security incidents.¹³⁵¹

Compared with the overall security situation since 9 December 2024, the number of security incidents involving unidentified armed groups as either Actor1 or Actor2 has dropped to almost zero (only one incident during the reference period), and no incidents involving Military Forces of Syria or Military Forces of Iran (except for the Iranian IRGC, which was involved in two incidents) were recorded during the reference period. Military Forces of Israel have

¹³⁴⁸ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁴⁹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁵⁰ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁵¹ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

remained the primary actor involved in security incidents since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad, while Hezbollah became a main actor during the reference period.¹³⁵²

82 security incidents during the reference period were coded as ‘violence against civilians’, all of them involving Military Forces of Israel, often involved in the detention of civilians for unknown reasons.¹³⁵³

2.14.5. Civilian casualties

The SNHR recorded no civilian fatalities in Quneitra governorate in October and November 2025, and one civilian death in December 2025,¹³⁵⁴ killed by a party SNHR was unable to identify.¹³⁵⁵ SNHR recorded no civilian fatalities in the period from January to 31 May 2026.¹³⁵⁶

An analysis of the period since the fall of the previous government shows two fatalities recorded by SNHR in the period from December 2024 to May 2025,¹³⁵⁷ none recorded in the period from June to September 2025,¹³⁵⁸ and one recorded in the period October 2025 to 10 May 2026.¹³⁵⁹ Several civilians in Quneitra and Dar’a governorates were reportedly killed in May 2026 by debris from drones intercepted in the context of the ongoing Israeli-US conflict with Iran.¹³⁶⁰

2.14.6. Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

During the reference period, sources reported of Israeli forces bulldozing land,¹³⁶¹ spraying chemical substances on agricultural land,¹³⁶² which caused the vegetation to yellow and die,¹³⁶³ and building fortifications across grazing routes.¹³⁶⁴ IDF operations reportedly also resulted in property damage and destruction, including of the homes of displaced residents.¹³⁶⁵

¹³⁵² EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁵³ EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Syria, data covering 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2026, as of 9 June 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁵⁴ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

¹³⁵⁵ SNHR, The Death of 3666 Individuals Including 328 Children and 312 Women, and 32 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in the year 2025 in Syria, 1 January 2026, [url](#), p. 9

¹³⁵⁶ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

¹³⁵⁷ EUAA, Syria – Country Focus, July 2025, [url](#), p. 98

¹³⁵⁸ EUAA, Syria – Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments [Q33-2025], 1 October 2025, [url](#), p. 24

¹³⁵⁹ SNHR, data covering from 1 October 2025 to 31 May 2026 provided by courtesy of SNHR in an email, 1 June 2026

¹³⁶⁰ Etana Syria, Brief: Recent developments in south-west Syria, 25 May 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁶¹ Al Jazeera, Israel launches new raids in Syria’s Quneitra, establishes checkpoints, 20 December 2025, [url](#)

¹³⁶² MEE, Smart borders, military gates and land seizures: How Israel is encroaching in southern Syria, 5 May 2026, [url](#); OHCHR, Human rights update on Syria, 28 April 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁶³ Syria Direct, ‘We lost everything’: How Israeli herbicides destroyed Quneitra crops and pastures, 3 March 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁶⁴ Helmi, K., After Assad, a New Uncertainty in Syria’s South, TIMEP, 26 March 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁶⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/61/62, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 82, 84

According to SNHR, two people were killed by landmine explosions across the governorate in the period from 8 December 2024 to early April 2026.¹³⁶⁶

2.14.7. Conflict-induced displacement and return

According to IOM's population movement assessment, the IDP population in Quneitra governorate increased by about 1 700 individuals between February 2025 (about 5 400 or 5 % of a total population of approximately 109 000)¹³⁶⁷ and March 2026 (about 7 100 or 6 % of a total population of approximately 119 000).¹³⁶⁸

UNHCR estimated that as of 21 May 2026, around 1 600 individuals had returned to locations in Quneitra governorate from internal displacement since December 2024.¹³⁶⁹ Within the same period, about 30 600 individuals had returned to the governorate from abroad.¹³⁷⁰

¹³⁶⁶ SNHR, On the International Day for Mine Awareness: Documenting the deaths of at least 3,799 civilians from landmines and cluster munitions in Syria, March 2011 – April 2026, 4 April 2026, [url](#), p. 8

¹³⁶⁷ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Community Baseline Assessment – Round 1 – February 2025, 6 March 2025, [url](#), p. 8

¹³⁶⁸ IOM, Syrian Arab Republic – Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment – Round 15 – April 2026, 18 May 2026, [url](#), p. 7

¹³⁶⁹ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁷⁰ UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard [Map], 21 May 2026, [url](#)



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Annex 2: Terms of Reference

- **General security situation**

- Overview of current conflicts
- Armed actors
 - Brief description and capacity
 - Presence and areas of control/influence of the different actors
 - Conduct during the reference period
- International involvement
- Recent security trends
- Security incidents
- Civilian casualties
- Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war
- Conflict-induced displacement and return

- **Security situation and conflict impact on civilians by governorate**

The analysis of security trends will focus on entire governorates. The structure below is to be replicated for each governorate.

- Administrative division and population figures
- Armed actors
- Security trends during the reference period
- Security incidents
- Civilian casualties
- Conflict related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war
- Conflict-induced displacement and return



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