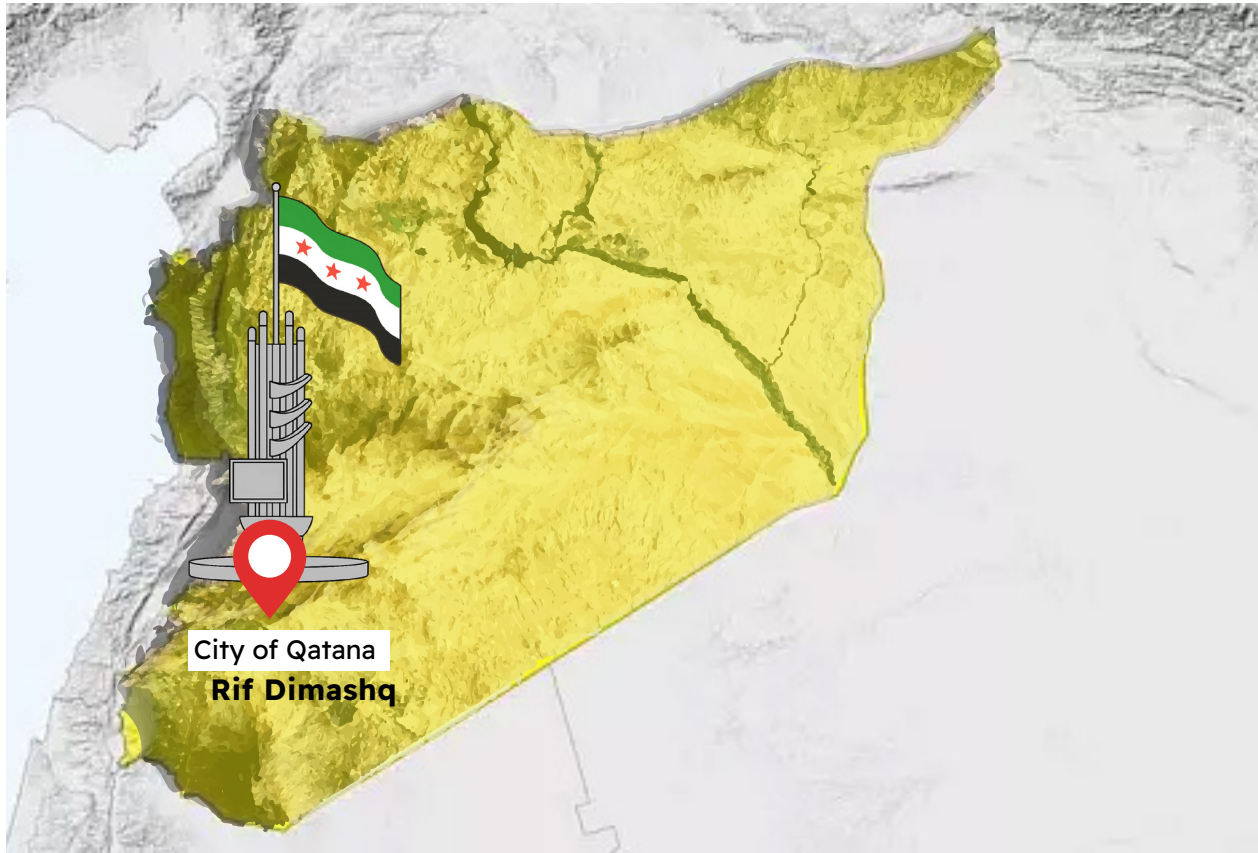


## Statement

### Documentation of the Killing of Three Civilians and Attacks on Property in the City of Qatana in Rif Dimashq Governorate between May 29 and June 1

Call for Investigations and Accountability for Incidents of Retaliatory and Discriminatory Nature

Wednesday 18 June 2025



The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), founded in June 2011, is a non-governmental, independent group that is considered a primary source for the OHCHR on all death toll-related analyzes in Syria.

Between May 29 and June 1, 2025, the city of Qatana in the Rif Dimashq Governorate witnessed an escalation in security tensions following the killing of a local officer working within the Internal Security Forces of the Ministry of Interior of the transitional government. The officer was killed by gunmen suspected of being linked to smuggling networks.

According to documentation by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), this incident was followed by a series of violent acts carried out by unidentified armed groups, resulting in the deaths of at least three civilians, one of whom was a medical worker, after they were kidnapped. The attacks also targeted private property, in circumstances that suggest retaliatory and discriminatory motives.

## Security context and developments (May 29 – June 1, 2025)

**On Thursday, May 29, 2025,** Jamil Moumna (known as “Abu Walid”), a commander in the Internal Security Service and a native of Qatana, was killed after being shot by an armed group believed to belong to a drug-smuggling network near the village of Aisam in the Mount Hermon area west of the city. According to the information we obtained, the incident occurred during a security ambush targeting this network, as part of a security campaign aimed at curbing its growing activity in the area.

Following the incident, and based on field documentation, multiple incidents were recorded in the city of Qatana, including kidnappings and attacks on property, including businesses, including arson and vandalism, amidst an atmosphere of heightened societal tension, with indications that some acts were motivated by revenge or discrimination.

## DOCUMENTING THE KILLING OF THREE CIVILIANS AFTER THEY WERE ABDUCTED FOLLOWING THE KILLING OF THE OFFICER:

- **Majd Kaboul, a young man, killed after abduction:**

On Friday, May 30, 2025, [Majd Hassan Kaboul](#), 28 years old, from the village of Arna in Rif Dimashq Governorate, and a member of the Druze community, was abducted by an unidentified armed group that raided his location in the city of Qatana. His abduction is part of a wave of abductions that escalated following the officer's killing. On Saturday, May 31, Majd's body was found, but there was no information available on the location his body was found or the nature of his death

- **Rafat Asbar, a doctor, killed after abduction:**

On the same day, May 30, laboratory technician [Rafat Asbar](#), an Alawite from the village of Wadi al-Qalaa in the Latakia countryside, was abducted by unknown gunmen when he was in the city of Qatana. His abduction was also part of a series of incidents that followed the officer's killing. On Saturday, May 31, Asbar's body was found, and there was no information available on the location his body was found or the nature of his death.

- **Nadim al-Zughbi killed after abduction:**

On May 30, an unidentified armed group stormed the home of [Nadim al-Zughbi](#), 56, a Druze from the village of Rakhla in the west of Rif Dimashq Governorate. According to information we obtained, the gunmen assaulted him inside his home, stole his car, and took him to an unknown location. On Sunday, June 1, his family was informed via phone call that his body was in a hospital.

## Legal Conclusions

The acts documented in this statement, including extrajudicial killings, kidnappings, and attacks on private property, constitute a clear violation of international human rights law, in particular the following principles:

- **The right to life:** Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights protects the right to life and obliges states to take all necessary measures to prevent its violation, whether by their officials or within areas under their control.
- **Prohibition of enforced disappearance and unlawful detention:** The abduction and detention of individuals without legal basis constitutes a serious violation of the protection against enforced disappearance, as confirmed by the United Nations principles and paragraph (9) of General Comment No. 35 issued by the Human Rights Committee.
- **Non-discrimination:** International law prohibits all forms of discrimination in the enjoyment of rights and legal protection, whether based on religion, sect, or region. Targeting civilians on this basis constitutes a direct violation of Article 2 of the International Covenant.
- **Attacks on private property:** The burning and vandalism of civilian property constitute a violation of civilians' right to property ownership and the legal protection of their property, as stipulated in Article 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms that "everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others," and that "no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property." The competent authorities have a responsibility to prevent and investigate such violations and ensure compensation for those affected.
- **State Responsibility:** The transitional government bears full legal responsibility for protecting civilians, investigating violations, and ensuring that impunity is not violated. This contributes to strengthening public confidence in its institutions and reflects its commitment to the transitional justice process.

## Recommendations

- Open independent and transparent investigations into all incidents of killing, kidnapping, and property damage, ensuring accountability for perpetrators, compensation for victims, and public disclosure of the circumstances.
- Take urgent measures to ensure respect for the fundamental rights of civilians, most notably the right to personal security, freedom of movement, and protection from any acts of reprisal.
- Preventing incitement to violence and hatred by regulating media and community discourse and holding accountable anyone who contributes to fueling tensions.
- Strengthening the role of judicial and security institutions in enforcing the rule of law, avoiding selectivity or laxity, and working to restore the trust of the local population.
- Encouraging community initiatives aimed at calming tensions and promoting a culture of dialogue and mutual respect, thus contributing to overcoming tensions and strengthening civil cohesion during the transitional period.



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*No justice without accountability*

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