



الشبكة السورية لحقوق الإنسان
SYRIAN NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Statement

SNHR Is a Main Source of Information in the Report of the European Union Agency for Asylum on the Security Situation in Syria, with 382 Citations

Tuesday 21 July 2026

586 civilian casualties

SNHR documented 586 civilian casualties during the reference period

killing of **317** civilians

SNHR separately documented the killing of 317 civilians due to landmine explosions between December 2024 and April 2026

4,201 civilian casualties

from December 2024 until May 2026, SNHR documented 4,201 civilian casualties.

382
Citations



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.

Damascus - The Syrian Network for Human Rights

In July 2026, the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) released a Country of Origin Information (COI) report that addressed the developments of the security situation in Syria over the period extending from October 1, 2025, until May 31, 2026, with a particular focus on the main conflicts, the armed actors, the international involvement, and the recent security trends, in addition to the security situation and the impact of the conflict on civilians in each of Syria's fourteen governorates.

According to what is stated in it, the report aims to provide relevant information for the assessment of applications for international protection, particularly for use in updating the agency's country guidance on Syria. The report covers the reference period from October 1, 2025, until May 31, 2026, relying on public and specialized sources that were researched up until May 29, 2026, with limited additions introduced during the quality review until June 19, 2026. The report was prepared in accordance with the agency's COI report methodology (2023), and it relies heavily on the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) with regard to the security incidents, and on the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) with regard to the human rights situation, alongside the bodies of the United Nations, most notably the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, and a wide range of media and research organizations.

The report is divided into two main parts; the first part offers a general description of the security situation, including an overview of the current conflicts, the armed actors operating in the country, the international involvement, and the recent security trends, including data on the security incidents, civilian casualties, the damage inflicted on infrastructure by the conflict and the explosive remnants of war, and displacement and return. As for the second part, it addresses the security situation and the impact of the conflict on civilians in each of Syria's fourteen governorates, where each governorate chapter follows a unified structure: the administrative division and population estimates, control over territory and the most prominent armed actors, security trends, security incidents, civilian casualties, damage to infrastructure and remnants of war, and conflict-driven displacement and return.

The report relied on SNHR's reports and data as a main source for the figures of civilian casualties; SNHR was cited **382 times** across the various parts of the report, alongside 284 references to ACLED, 93 references to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and 13 references to Amnesty International, in addition to multiple UN bodies and a wide range of international and local organizations.

The report places the current security landscape in the context of what followed the fall of the regime of Bashar al-Assad on December 8, 2024. It describes a transitional phase during which the new government sought to extend its control over the entirety of the Syrian territory, at a time where it faced recurrent waves of violence of a sectarian, regional, and political character. The report identifies four main theaters of conflict and instability.

The first of these is in the coastal region, where attacks carried out by elements loyal to the Assad regime against the government's security forces in early March 2025 led to wide-scale retaliatory operations in Latakia, Tartus, Homs, and Hama, during which more than 1,400 persons were killed, most of them civilians from the Alawite community. The report points to the continuation of tensions, arrest campaigns, and intermittent acts of violence in the coastal governorates during the reference period.

The second is in the north and the northeast, where the relationship between the government and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) deteriorated despite the integration agreement signed on March 10, 2025, between the President al-Sharaa and the SDF's Commander-in-Chief Mazloum Abdi. In January 2026, the government forces and the factions allied with them launched an offensive on the areas under the SDF's control, which included the neighborhoods of Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyeh in Aleppo city between January 6 and 10, 2026, and they seized wide swaths of the governorates of Aleppo, Raqqa, and Deir Ez-Zour; according to sources cited by the report, the SDF had lost nearly 80% of the territory it used to control by January 18, 2026. A series of ceasefire agreements and implementation agreements concluded between January 18 and 30, 2026, halted the fighting, which left an estimated 250 to 300 dead or more, most of them combatants, and by early May 2026 several SDF brigades had formally integrated into the new national army.

The third is the threat represented by the insurgency of ISIS, which carried out attacks concentrated in the Badia and the eastern governorates, in addition to the more recently established group "Saraya Ansar al-Sunna", which claimed attacks of a sectarian character, among them the suicide bombing of the Mar Elias Church in Damascus in June 2025 and the bombing of a mosque in Homs in December 2025. ISIS's activity escalated in late 2025 and early 2026, and on February 21, 2026, the spokesperson of the organization called for a "new phase" of operations in Syria; however, the report records a notable decline in the organization's attacks since late March and April 2026, which analysts linked to the counter-ISIS operations carried out by the government in cooperation with the US-led international coalition. The report also points to the foiling of assassination attempts that targeted the President al-Sharaa and were attributed to ISIS-linked cells.

The fourth is in the south, where the report describes two overlapping sources of instability. In Suwayda, the fighting that erupted in July 2025 between Druze fighters, fighters from the Bedouin tribes, and the government forces left no fewer than 1,700 dead, and it led to a continuing stalemate between the government and the Druze spiritual leadership headed by Hikmat al-Hijri, who called for separation from Damascus; despite the ceasefire agreements announced on July 18 and 19, 2025, the governorate remained practically outside the government's control during the reference period, with a renewed escalation in March 2026. In parallel with that, Israel maintained a military presence in the buffer zone monitored by the United Nations, and it carried out extensive operations inside the Syrian territory, as sources cited by the report counted nearly 900 ground incursions in Quneitra between December 2024 and the end of 2025, and nearly 830 airstrikes and 15 artillery attacks during the year that followed the fall of the Assad government, at a time where the security negotiations between Israel and Syria continued.

As for the armed actors and the international involvement, the report dedicates a chapter to the armed actors operating in Syria. It describes the formation of a new national army that was built through the restructuring of the former opposition factions into nearly twenty divisions, in which the former commanders of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham occupy a dominant position, as they reportedly lead nearly a third of the divisions. The report points to the persistence of challenges related to command and control, particularly over the former Syrian National Army factions such as the Hamza Division, the Suleiman Shah Brigade, and the Sultan Murad Division, some of which were implicated in violations. It also addresses the establishment of the Internal Security Command in May 2025 under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior, and Syria's joining of the US-led international coalition against ISIS in November 2025.

As for the SDF, the report cites estimates indicating a decline in its strength from nearly 100,000 fighters in early and mid-2025 to between 50,000 and 80,000 by late January 2026, following its loss of most of its areas of control and the integration process that followed. As for the international involvement, the report addresses the American military presence and its reduction, the Turkish operations and the influence of Turkey in the north, the shrinking of the Russian presence, including the reported withdrawal from the Qamishli airport in late January 2026, and the Israeli operations in the south, in addition to the remaining presence of the elements linked to Iran; it notes that the artillery shelling carried out by Hezbollah from the Lebanese territory in March 2026 came in the context of the broader regional escalation of 2026.

As for the recent security trends, the report records, based on ACLED's data, the occurrence of 2,884 security incidents in Syria during the reference period extending from October 1, 2025, until May 31, 2026. The monthly trajectory shows a sharp peak in January 2026, when 683 incidents were recorded, an increase of 77% compared to December 2025, driven mainly by the government offensive on the SDF; the numbers of incidents then declined steadily to 283 in February, 330 in March, 242 in April, and 206 in May 2026, the lowest monthly figure during the period. In terms of type, the incidents were distributed between 1,081 explosions and other forms of remote violence, 981 incidents of violence against civilians, and 822 clashes. The governorates with the highest numbers of recorded incidents were Aleppo (513), Deir Ez-Zour (482), Hasakah (336), and Suwayda (318), while Tartus (23) and Damascus (32) recorded the lowest numbers. Unidentified armed groups were involved in nearly 38% of the incidents, the government's military and police forces in 31%, the SDF in 28%, and ISIS in 7%.

As for civilian casualties, the report relies primarily on the documentation of SNHR, which recorded 586 civilian casualties during the reference period, with a monthly peak of 111 casualties in January 2026, declining to 55 in April and 44 in May 2026. The governorates with the highest civilian casualty tolls during the reference period were Aleppo (106), Homs (90), Hama (85), and Idlib (67). The attribution data contained in the report attributes 339 of these casualties to unidentified parties, 71 to the SDF, 16 to the government forces, and 14 to the Israeli attacks. Over the longer period from December 2024 until May 2026, SNHR documented 4,201 civilian casualties, and the two deadliest months were March 2025 (1,562 casualties, in connection with the coastal violence) and July 2025 (460 casualties, in connection with the Suwayda conflict); meanwhile, the UN Commission of Inquiry separately reported the killing of more than 3,500 civilians between December 2024 and January 2026. The report also cites the Deputy Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Syria, Claudio Cordone, as saying that March 2026 witnessed the lowest levels of violence directly linked to the conflict in fifteen years, at a time where major challenges remained, among them the escalation of the activity of the insurgents loyal to al-Assad in Latakia in late February 2026 and the intensification of the communal tensions in Homs and Hama.

As for the damage to infrastructure and the explosive remnants of war, the report documents the enduring material legacy of the conflict. It cites estimates indicating that nearly 52% of the housing in Syria had been damaged or destroyed by late 2025, alongside extensive damage to the health and education infrastructure and the water and electricity networks. The contamination with landmines and other explosive remnants of war is presented as one of the gravest threats facing civilians: sources cited by the report recorded nearly 900 explosive ordnance incidents between December 2024 and December 2025, which caused the killing of 607 persons and the injury of more than a thousand by the end of 2025, and no fewer than 700 dead by March and April 2026. SNHR separately documented the killing of 317 civilians due to landmine

explosions between December 2024 and April 2026. Children are affected disproportionately, as they constitute nearly 30% of those killed and 40% of those injured. The report notes that the demining efforts progressed during 2025, as billions of square meters were surveyed and more than 27,000 items of explosive ordnance were destroyed, and it identifies Deir Ez-Zour, Aleppo, and Idlib as the governorates most severely affected by this contamination.

On the level of displacement, the report records a continuing downward trend in internal displacement during the transitional phase. The proportion of the internally displaced among the population fell from 27% in February 2025 to nearly 21% by April 2026, equivalent to nearly 5.86 million displaced persons out of a population estimated at nearly 27.9 million, while the proportion of returnees from displacement rose to nearly 7% of the population, or nearly 1.95 million persons. The hostilities in Aleppo in January 2026 caused a major new wave of displacement, as nearly 148,000 persons were displaced between January 6 and 10, 2026, most of them heading toward Afrin, though many of them returned following the ceasefire agreements. Based on the figures of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as of May 21, 2026, the report states that nearly 1.91 million persons have returned from internal displacement and nearly 1.65 million from outside the country since the fall of the former government, with the returns concentrated in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Daraa, and Aleppo. The report also points to cases where return remained impossible, such as the case of the Bedouin communities who were displaced almost entirely from Suwayda and whose return remained barred during the reference period.

On the whole, the report paints the picture of a country passing through a fragile transitional phase; it records clear indicators of stabilization during the reference period, reflected in the declining figures of incidents and casualties, the ceasefire and integration agreements in the northeast, and the wide-scale return movements. At the same time, it documents the persistence of serious dangers to civilians, most notably the continuing stalemate in Suwayda, the insurgency of ISIS and the sectarian attacks, the remaining activity of the insurgents loyal to al-Assad on the coast, the Israeli military operations in the south, the extensive contamination with explosive ordnance, and the violence practiced by unidentified armed actors, and these are dangers that are distributed unevenly among the fourteen governorates that the report addresses in detail. Hence, the report doesn't offer general conclusions on risks; rather, it is a factual reference intended to inform the agency's protection assessments and its forthcoming country guidance on Syria.

In light of these findings, SNHR believes that any serious discussion of return should proceed from the principle of voluntariness, from the guarantees of safety and dignity, from the principle of non-refoulement, and from the importance of conducting an individual and updated risk assessment in each case separately. It also believes that justice and accountability, the protection of rights without discrimination, the reform of the security and judicial institutions, and the guaranteeing of freedom of expression constitute essential foundations that make any return sustainable and consistent with human rights standards.

Therefore, SNHR hopes that the states considering the asylum applications of Syrians, including the European states to which the agency's country guidance is addressed, will deal carefully with the indicators of partial improvement contained in the report, and will make sure that return policies remain coupled with the guarantees of protection and dignity and based on the individual assessment of risks. It also encourages the continued commitment to the principle of non-refoulement, and the reliance on updated and multi-sourced information that takes into account the differences in conditions among regions, groups, and individuals.

SNHR also encourages the Syrian authorities in the transitional phase to continue the efforts aimed at protecting civilians in the areas of tension, particularly in the coastal region, Suwayda, and the northeast, to strengthen the path of transitional justice and accountability, and to accelerate the efforts of clearing the landmines and the explosive remnants of war that are still claiming the lives of civilians, nearly a third of them children. In the same context, it calls on the parties exercising de facto control, including the SDF in its areas of influence, to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law and to protect civilians without discrimination.

In conclusion, SNHR believes that safeguarding the rights of all components of the Syrian people, ensuring justice and accountability, and protecting returnees and displaced persons from violations and discrimination remain essential elements in any serious rights-based approach to the file of return, and that the cooperation between states, the Syrian authorities, and the human rights and UN organizations remains the most effective way to entrench them.

The [full report](#) can be accessed via the official website of the European Union Agency for Asylum.





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No justice without accountability

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