



NEWS LOG

Last update:
03/08/2026

OVERVIEW - 2026



- **January 18 - 30:** The transitional government and Kurds sign an agreement for the integration of SDF forces into the national army.
- **February:** The United States military completes its total withdrawal from al-Tanf and the northeastern region. The Syrian army takes control of the positions.
- **April 24 - 26:** Transitional justice begins with the arrest of the primary suspect in the Tadamon massacre.
- **May 8 - 12:** High-ranking former officers from the Al-Assad era are arrested for their roles in the 2013 chemical attacks.
- **June 15:** The Interior Ministry reports the detention of nearly 6,000 former security members for formal prosecution.
- **June 24:** Wassim al-Assad, the cousin of the ousted president, stands trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- **June 29:** Syria condemns "Israeli aggressions" following ground incursions and artillery fire in southern provinces.
- **July 2 - 7:** Deadly bomb attacks occur in Damascus, including explosions near French President's hotel during a State visit.
- **July 9:** The OPCW restores Syria's voting rights, citing measures taken to dismantle Al-Assad's chemical arsenal.
- **July 12:** The new transitional parliament holds its inaugural session to initiate a new Constitutional drafting.

All information was verified and sourced from OSINT, unless specifically mentioned otherwise.

Most of the information are from Franceinfo with Agence France Presse, Reuters and the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Please note that victims mentioned in the articles are individuals who are not directly participating in hostilities, unless explicitly stated otherwise. In principle, the DCCI-ICCD does not record KIA and WIA, when engaged validly under IHL.

DCCI-ICCD – SYRIA – NEWS LOG

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UN SECRETARY GENERAL CALLS FOR LIFTING SANCTIONS

On July 26, 2026, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres urged the immediate lifting of all remaining sanctions against Syria at the conclusion of his two-day visit. During a press conference in Damascus he welcomed recent measures that alleviated some restrictions but emphasized that total removal is necessary for economic recovery. Since the fall of Bashar al-Assad in December 2024 the new authorities led by Ahmad al-Chareh have focused on reconstruction with costs estimated by the World Bank at 216 billion dollars. Antonio Guterres met with transition officials and visited the infamous Saydnaya prison which served as a symbol of atrocities committed under the previous regime. The Secretary General expressed his solidarity with the Syrian people and noted that the political transition is moving in the right direction. He also reiterated that violations of Syrian sovereignty and territorial integrity are unacceptable following Israeli incursions.

ISRAELI INCURSION DURING UN SECRETARY GENERAL VISIT

On July 26, 2026, the official news agency Sana reported that Israeli troops conducted an incursion into southern Syria despite calls from the UN Secretary General to respect national sovereignty. The report indicated that occupation forces entered the villages of Maariya and Alanis-Arda in Deraa province early in the morning. Israeli soldiers accompanied by three military vehicles and a bulldozer established a checkpoint and dropped leaflets instructing residents not to block roads. Artillery fire was also reported targeting agricultural lands in the Qouneitra province. Syrian Foreign Minister Assaad al-Chaibani demanded an immediate and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from the sector. The Syrian center Sijil documented nearly 300 Israeli operations or violations in Deraa and Qouneitra during the month of June including 107 incursions.

SYRIA SEIZES WEAPONS SHIPMENT BOUND FOR HEZBOLLAH

On July 16, 2026, Syria said it had foiled an attempt to smuggle a “huge” shipment of sophisticated weapons, including long-range missiles, to the Lebanese Hezbollah via its border with Iraq. The interior ministry said units searched a suspect tanker truck near the Al-Tanf crossing, seizing long-range missiles, guided anti-tank missiles and drones bound for the coastal city of Baniyas. Hezbollah dismissed the allegations as fabricated, saying they served “American-Zionist interests” in the region. Iraq announced it would form an investigative commission and coordinate with Syria. President Ahmad al-Sharaa has said he refuses to intervene militarily against the armed group, but authorities said they have dismantled

Hezbollah-linked cells planning attacks within the country, allegations denied by the armed group.

SYRIA ARRESTS FORMER CHEMICAL WEAPONS OFFICER

On July 15, 2026, Syria's interior ministry announced the arrest of a former colonel accused of overseeing the production of sarin gas bombs used against civilians under Bashar al-Assad. Ahmad Habib Ali, described as a chemical weapons specialist and former director of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre, was responsible for sarin storage and chemical production at Unit 417, one of the former regime's main chemical weapons depots near Damascus, the ministry said. Authorities said he was among officers who oversaw the manufacture of about 20 sarin-filled bombs, each weighing 250 kilograms, used in attacks on Syrian towns and villages in 2013 and 2017, including the August 2013 Ghouta attack that killed 1,429 people, according to rights groups.

SYRIA'S TRANSITIONAL PARLIAMENT HOLDS FIRST SESSION

On July 12, 2026, Syria's transitional parliament held its first session, with President Ahmad al-Sharaa hailing a “new chapter” for the country as it emerges from civil war. Al-Sharaa urged the new 210-seat parliament's members to serve as “models of responsibility and competence” in building a culture of dialogue, rule of law and respect for institutions. Over its renewable two-and-a-half-year term, the body must form a commission to draft a new constitution, approve a budget and pass legislation while navigating challenges around independence from the executive. Two-thirds of members were appointed by local committees, a process civil society groups have criticized as concentrating excessive power in Al-Sharaa's hands and under-representing the country's ethnic, religious and female population.

OPCW RESTORES SYRIAN RIGHTS

On July 9, 2026, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons announced the restoration of Syria's voting rights. Director General Fernando Arias stated that the new government in Damascus has taken concrete measures to dismantle its arsenal of prohibited substances. Syria's rights were originally suspended in 2021 after investigations confirmed that the air force of Bashar al-Assad used sarin and chlorine gas against its own population. Damascus has committed to its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention. This decision aims for the complete and verified elimination of all remaining chemical weapons associated with the previous regime.

1 KILLED & 36 WOUNDED IN BOMB ATTACKS DURING FRENCH PRESIDENT VISIT

On July 7, 2026, authorities reported that 2 bombs exploded near the hotel where French President Emmanuel Macron spent the night in Damascus. The explosions occurred simultaneously just after the President departed for the presidential palace to meet with his counterpart, Ahmad al-Chareh. 1 was killed and 36 were wounded, including 4 police officers. One artisanal device was hidden in a trash bin and the other was placed in a vehicle near the Four Seasons hotel. Journalists reported seeing blood on the sidewalks and shattered windows at the Ministry of Tourism. Despite the security risks, Macron chose to stay in the Syrian capital to support the political transition following 13 years of civil war. During the visit, the 2 leaders signed economic agreements and participated in a forum for the reconstruction of Syria. French CEOs accompanied the French delegation.

2 SYRIAN OFFICIALS SENTENCED TO 8 YEARS FOR TORTURE BY VIENNA COURT

On July 6, 2026, an Austrian court sentenced a former general and a former police officer from Syria to 8 years in prison for the systematic torture. General Khaled al-Halabi and police chief Musab Abu Rukbah were found guilty of aggravated assault, coercion, and sexual aggression committed in Raqqa between 2011 and 2013. The court ordered the defendants to pay 130,000 euros in moral damages to 19 victims who testified about being bound, blindfolded, and held in overcrowded cells. The trial drew significant attention after it was revealed that a secret agreement between Israeli and Austrian services in 2015 helped al-Halabi obtain asylum in Vienna.

TRIAL OVER 2025 SWEIDA MASSACRE

On July 3, 2026, Syrian authorities said several suspects had been referred to trial as part of the investigation into last year's violence in the Druze-majority province of Sweida, with some trials already underway. The province was the scene of sectarian violence in July 2025 that killed more than 2,000 people, including 789 Druze civilians, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. A government-appointed inquiry commission had counted at least 1,760 dead in a report presented in March. The commission said the military prosecutor had begun “referring several people to the investigating judge,” with some cases transmitted to Damascus's military criminal court, which began public hearings on July 1st. It said the proceedings aim to “establish the facts and hold accountable anyone whose responsibility for violations is established, regardless of their status.” The commission had earlier drawn up a list of suspects from the State security forces, Druze factions and civilians, including Bedouins and tribal members. The violence, a week of clashes between Druze fighters and Bedouin armed groups that escalated after government forces intervened, followed by tribal fighters backing the Bedouins, was marked by summary executions and other abuses targeting Druze, according to survivors and NGOs.

DAMASCUS BOMBING KILLS 10

On July 2, 2026, a bomb exploded at a Damascus café, killing 10 and injuring 21. The blast occurred near the Palace of Justice in a busy central Damascus district, caused by a roughly one-kilogram homemade bomb packed with metal fragments that had been planted on site. No group immediately claimed responsibility. The attack is the deadliest in Damascus since the June 2025 church bombing that killed 25 people, claimed by a Sunni fundamentalist group, though authorities blamed the Islamic State.

ISRAELI TROOPS INCURSION INTO SOUTHERN VILLAGE

On June 29, 2026, Syria's foreign ministry condemned Israeli incursions and gunfire in the South of the country, a day after tensions near the Golan Heights forced residents to flee temporarily. In the village of Abdine, western Deraa province, Israeli forces carried out an incursion on Sunday, June 28, which residents tried to block. Israel responded with artillery fire, and local notable Mahmoud Mouaffak said shells landed near homes, forcing residents to flee overnight to neighboring villages before Israeli forces withdrew and calm returned Monday morning. Syria's foreign ministry “firmly” condemned the “Israeli aggressions” as a “flagrant violation of Syria's sovereignty.” Since Assad's fall in late 2024, Israeli forces have entered the UN-monitored buffer zone on the Golan Heights and increased incursions into Deraa and Quneitra provinces. The Syrian monitoring group Sijil documented nearly 300 Israeli operations or violations in the two provinces in June, including 107 incursions and raids. Israel said it had killed “several armed terrorists” in the “security zone” in Southern Syria, without specifying numbers or location. Defence Minister Israel Katz said on June 25 that Israel intended to keep troops in the sector it occupies in Syria “indefinitely,” as in Lebanon and Gaza.

Israel seized most of the Golan Heights in the 1967 war and later annexed the areas under its control.

WASSIM AL-ASSAD STANDS TRIAL FOR WAR CRIMES

On June 24, 2026, Wassim al-Assad, a cousin of ousted President Bashar al-Assad, appeared in person at Damascus criminal court for his first public hearing, charged with founding and leading 2 armed groups and supplying them with “weapons, ammunition, financing and logistical support” for operations in Eastern Ghouta that killed “large numbers of civilians.” The charges include war crimes, crimes against humanity, drug trafficking and extortion. He denied the groups were affiliated with him. Wassim al-Assad is the first member of the Assad family to be arrested and tried in person. The trial of former mufti Ahmad Hassoun was scheduled to open the following day.

LEBANON TRANSFERS 128 SYRIAN PRISONERS

On June 24, 2026, Lebanon handed over 128 Syrian detainees to Damascus, the second batch under a bilateral agreement signed in February. A first transfer of 132 prisoners took place in March. The deal covers approximately 300 prisoners sentenced to 10 years or more, who will serve the remainder of their sentences in Syria. Those convicted of rape and murder are excluded. About 2,000 Syrians are held in Lebanese jails.

SYRIAN-BRITISH ACTIVIST RELEASED

On June 21, 2026, Syrian-British activist Hassan Akkad announced his release after being arrested in Syria, reportedly in connection with his online campaign. Akkad had targeted businessman Mohammad Hamcho, who had close ties to the former Assad government and was subject to US and European sanctions but had reached a financial deal with the current authorities. He had previously been summoned by cybercrime authorities and had received death threats. He wrote on Instagram (200,000+ followers): “I am back home, safe and sound.”

DAMASCUS PROTESTERS ATTACK ALAWITE DISTRICTS

On June 17, 2026, dozens of Syrians demonstrated in Damascus neighborhoods including Mazzé 86 and Ach al-Warwar to demand that supporters of fallen President Bachar al-Assad be held accountable. Protesters attacked businesses and vehicles while shouting sectarian slogans in these predominantly Alawite districts. Former anti-Assad fighters claimed that those who suffered under the previous regime deserve the houses and public service positions currently held by Assad supporters. Interior Ministry spokesperson Nouredine al-Baba reiterated that the transition government is determined to prosecute crimes through the legal system.

US PRESIDENT TRUMP SUGGESTS SYRIA MANAGE HEZBOLLAH IN LEBANON

On June 16, 2026, US President Donald Trump recommended that Israel allow Syria to handle the Hezbollah group in Lebanon to reduce military casualties. The US President praised Syrian leader Ahmad al-Chareh for his effective stance against the armed group. This proposal followed increased tensions between US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu after Israeli strikes in Beirut delayed a peace deal with Iran. While Syrian leader Ahmad al-Chareh has expressed reluctance to intervene, the US President insisted that Syria is capable of addressing the threat without destroying entire buildings. The suggestion follows the historical precedent of former leader Hafez al-Assad who intervened in the Lebanese civil war in 1976 and maintained a military presence. On the same day, Syria signed a contract with American energy company ConocoPhillips and Novaterra Energy to

modernize its gas infrastructure. Syrian Petroleum Company (SPC) Director General Youssef Qablawi described the agreement as the most important contract since the fall of Al-Assad.

SYRIAN INTERIOR MINISTRY WARNS AGAINST REVENGE ON AL ASSAD SUPPORTERS

On June 15, 2026, Interior Ministry spokesperson Nouredine al-Baba warned against acts of vengeance targeting individuals suspected of ties to the ex-regime of Bashar al-Assad. Protests have erupted in cities including Aleppo, Idleb, Deir ez-Zor, Raqqah and Hama where demonstrators demanded accountability for pro-regime *chabbiha* militias and former officials. Spokesperson Nouredine al-Baba stated that the new government is determined to bring criminals to justice through the formal judicial system. He confirmed that the counter-terrorism department currently detains nearly 6,000 former security members including dozens of high-ranking officers. Sectarian threats have been reported in Lattaquié and videos show alleged supporters being beaten in Aleppo.

ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER REFUSES TO WITHDRAW TROOPS

On June 15, 2026, Israeli Defense Minister Israël Katz announced that Israel will maintain its military forces in Syria, Lebanon and Gaza for an unlimited period. This policy aims to establish of security zones according to the Minister. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed this stance and informed US President Donald Trump of the decision despite a recent regional peace agreement. Defense Minister Israël Katz warned that Israel would respond with full force if Iran attacked in retaliation for these ongoing operations.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DEMANDS WAR CRIMES PROBE INTO ISRAELI DESTRUCTIONS

On May 14, 2026, Amnesty International called for an investigation into potential war crimes committed by the Israeli army in southern Syria. The organization reported the deliberate destruction of civilian homes in the Quneitra governorate since the fall of Bashar al-Assad. Israeli troops entered 3 villages within the UN demilitarized zone on the Golan Heights after an Islamist coalition seized power in late 2024. Using satellite imagery, Amnesty International verified the damage or destruction of 23 buildings plus 2 houses and adjacent farmland in 2024 and 2025. Amnesty International Middle East and North Africa Deputy Director Kristine Beckerle stated there were no active hostilities during these destructions. She argued that border security cannot justify destroying homes in another country.

FORMER SYRIAN AIR FORCE CHIEF ARRESTED FOR CHEMICAL ATTACK

On May 12, 2026, Syrian authorities announced the arrest of General Jayez Hamoud al-Moussa, who served as air force chief of staff under the regime of Bashar al-Assad. The Ministry of Interior stated that General Jayez Hamoud al-Moussa was responsible for repressing civilians and using chemical weapons. He served for 4 decades and coordinated with Russian forces during their 2015 intervention. General Jayez Hamoud al-Moussa had been under European Union sanctions since 2017. Following his retirement in 2016, he became governor of Hassaké. This follows the arrest of other former generals accused of a major 2013 chemical attack.

TURKISH SYRIAN BORDER CROSSING REOPENS AFTER 12 YEARS

On May 11, 2026, Turkish authorities announced the full reopening of a border crossing with Syria that had been closed since 2014. The crossing point links Akçakale in Turkey to Tal Abyad in northern Syria. Reopening for civil and commercial traffic follows the central Damascus government taking control of the area from Kurdish forces through an agreement

signed in January. Turkish Ambassador to Damascus Nuh Yilmaz welcomed the normalization of the situation. Turkey currently maintains 6 land crossing points along the 900 km border.

AL-ASSAD COUSIN TRIED FOR CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

On May 10, 2026, the Damascus criminal court presented charges of crimes against humanity against Atef Najib, who is the cousin of Bashar al-Assad and former head of political security in Deraa. Judge Kakhr al-Din al-Aryan described the trial as the first step to transitional justice in Syria. Atef Najib faces accusations for the systematic repression of peaceful protests in 2011, including murder, torture and arbitrary detentions. He is specifically prosecuted for torture leading to death in a political security detention center.

SYRIAN PRESIDENT AND LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER DISCUSS SECURITY

On May 9, 2026, Syrian President Ahmed al-Chareh received Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam in Damascus to discuss security and bilateral cooperation. The officials addressed economic and commercial cooperation as well as transport and energy sectors. Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam stated they discussed efforts regarding Syrian detainees in Lebanon and the fate of missing or detained persons in both countries. They also focused on controlling the 330 km porous border to prevent smuggling activities. The Syrian authorities remain hostile to Hezbollah, which lost a major ally and supply route after the fall of Bashar al-Assad in December 2024.

EX GENERALS ARRESTED FOR 2013 CHEMICAL ATTACK

On May 08, 2026, the Syrian Ministry of the Interior announced the arrest of former Brigadier General Khardal Ahmad Dayoub for his role in the 2013 Ghouta chemical attack. He is accused of coordinating the bombardment that killed at least 1,429 people including 426 children. Another former officer, General Sahel Fajr Hassan, was also arrested for his participation in operations of repression against the Syrian people. These arrests follow that of General Adnan Abboud Hilweh in April. The current Islamic authorities have promised justice for the crimes committed by the previous regime after Bachar al-Assad fled to Moscow in 2024.

SYRIA DISMANTLES HEZBOLLAH CELL

On May 05, 2026, the Syrian Ministry of the Interior announced it foiled a terrorist plan by dismantling a Hezbollah cell. Security operations took place near Damascus and in the provinces of Aleppo, Homs, Tartous, and Lattaquié. Authorities arrested 11 people and seized firearms, explosives, and surveillance equipment. The Ministry claimed the cell members entered Syria clandestinely after receiving training in Lebanon to operate targeted assassinations. Hezbollah denied these accusations stating it has no presence in Syria anymore.

JORDANIAN AIR STRIKES TARGET SOUEIDA

On May 02, 2026, Syrian state television reported Jordanian strikes against drug and weapons warehouses in the southern province of Soueida. The Jordanian army stated it conducted a deterrence operation against smugglers along the northern border and will continue to act against threats to its sovereignty. Local sources indicated that 5 locations were hit including warehouses in the town of Arman. Since the fall of al-Assad in December 2024, Damascus and Amman have committed to fighting cross border trafficking.

FAMILIES SEEK RELEASE OF PRISONERS IN ISRAEL

On May 1, 2026, families in the Syrian village of Beit Jinn reported that approximately 50 people have been captured during Israeli incursions since December 2024. Residents

described the kidnapping of their sons by Israeli forces during operations such as the one on June 12. An Israeli military spokesperson stated that individuals are apprehended when there is suspicion of involvement in terrorist activities. One of them, Mohammad Mahmoud al-Sayed, was held for 65 days before being released. However, a report from Human Rights Watch claims Israeli forces have established military positions inside Syria and are conducting arbitrary arrests of civilians. Qouneitra province official Mohammad al-Saïd reported that Israel has occupied 240 square kilometers of Syrian territory.

SHIA RELIGIOUS LEADER ASSASSINATED NEAR DAMASCUS

On May 1, 2026, a bomb explosion near the Sayyeda Zeinab shrine killed Shia imam Farhan Hassan al-Mansour. The Syrian Ministry of Interior described the assassination as a dangerous escalation aimed at destabilizing society and promised that the crime would not go unpunished. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a bomb was thrown at the man's car. The Shia minority, numbering approximately 300,000 people, has expressed fear since the Sunni coalition took power following the fall of Bashar al-Assad. While President Ahmad al-Chareh has pledged to protect minorities, previous violence includes massacres of Alawites in March 2025 and clashes with Druze fighters in July 2025. Another Shia dignitary was killed in the Homs region in July 2025. The Ministry of Interior confirmed an investigation is currently underway to identify those responsible for the attack.

GENERAL ARRESTED FOR 2013 CHEMICAL ATTACK

On April 29, 2026, Syrian Minister of Interior Anas al-Khattab announced the arrest of former General Adnan Abboud Hilweh. The officer is being held in a counter-terrorism department prison for his role in the 2013 sarin gas attack in Eastern Ghouta. US intelligence reports indicate the massacre killed more than 1,000 people. Although the government of Bashar el-Assad denied involvement at the time, Adnan Abboud Hilweh and 2 other generals are accused of denying the right to life to those people. This arrest follows the commitment of new Syrian authorities to seek justice for atrocities committed during the 13 year civil war which has caused over 500,000 deaths.

TRIAL OF AL-ASSAD'S OFFICIALS OPENS

On April 26, 2026, a court in Syria held the first hearing in the trial of former President Bashar al-Assad and his inner circle. Judge Fakhr al-Din al-Aryan opened proceedings for transitional justice regarding abuses committed during the civil war that began in 2011. While Bashar al-Assad and his brother Maher al-Assad fled to Moscow in December 2024 and are being tried in absentia, their cousin Atef Najib appeared in court in handcuffs. Atef Najib served as the former head of political security in Deraa and is accused of leading a campaign of repression. According to a judicial source, other figures slated for trial include Wassim al-Assad, another cousin of the former president, and Amjad Youssef, a suspect in a 2013 massacre who was arrested a few days before. The court also intends to prosecute pilots involved in bombing Syrian cities.

TADAMON MASSACRE KEY SUSPECT CAPTURED

On April 24, 2026, the Syrian Ministry of Interior announced the arrest of Amjad Youssef who is the main suspect in the 2013 Tadamon massacre. Syrian Interior Minister Anas Khattab confirmed the capture. Amjad Youssef appeared in a leaked video ordering blindfolded and handcuffed men to run before opening fire. 41 victims fell into a mass grave and were later burned. Human Rights Watch teams discovered many bodies in the Tadamon neighborhood days after the fall of Al-Assad in 2024. Families in the area had informed new authorities of

massacres committed by former governmental forces during the early years of the civil war. New authorities have arrested several former officials accused of involvement in these crimes.

FORMER ISLAMIST REBEL LEADER FREED

On April 23, 2026, former leader of the Jaich al-Islam rebel group Issam Buwaydani returned to Damascus after nearly 1 year of detention in the United Arab Emirates. His return followed a visit by Syrian President Ahmad al-Chareh to meet his Emirati counterpart Emirati President Mohamed ben Zayed. Issam Buwaydani was received at the presidential palace by the President and the Minister of Defense. He was arrested in April 2025 at Dubai airport while arriving with a Turkish passport for unknown reasons. Jaich al-Islam fought against the regime of Bashar al-Assad and is now integrated into new Syrian forces. Activists have attributed the December 2013 kidnapping of 4 human rights defenders including lawyer and journalist Razan Zaitounh to this group. Since the fall of the previous regime in 2024, Issam Buwaydani has appeared multiple times alongside the new Syrian president. Residents in his hometown of Douma prepared a ceremony under high security to welcome him back.

ISRAELI SETTLERS INFILTRATE SYRIAN TERRITORY

On April 22, 2026, about 40 Israelis briefly entered Syria before being apprehended by the Israeli army. According to Kan public television, the individuals belong to “The Pioneers of Bashan” group which advocates for Israeli settlements in southern Syria. They gathered near the border and penetrated the territory on several hundred meters. Militants retrenched in the Syrian village of Hader and stated that military presence will not hold without civilian colonization. The Israeli army condemned the incident. The group was handed to the police.

HEZBOLLAH CELL NEUTRALIZED

On April 19, 2026, the Syrian Ministry of Interior announced it foiled an attack plan by a cell linked to Hezbollah which was a loyalist of the former Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The group prepared an attack from Quneitra province against targets, possibly located outside Syrian borders. Members were arrested after camouflaging a civilian transport vehicle with equipment intended for firing rockets. This operation follows a shift as new Syrian leaders distance themselves from Iranian influence and remain hostile to Hezbollah. The Lebanese main group denied any link to this cell. Damascus also reported dismantling another cell that planned an attack against an unidentified religious figure the previous week.

PRESIDENT PROPOSES GOLAN SECURITY NEGOTIATIONS

On April 17, 2026, Syrian President Ahmed al-Chareh stated he is considering long-term negotiations with Israel regarding the Golan Heights. Speaking at a diplomatic forum in Antalya, he emphasized that a security agreement must guarantee an Israeli withdrawal from recently occupied territories and a return to 1974 lines. Following the fall of Bachar al-Assad, Israel sent troops into the United Nations buffer zone. Al-Chareh aims to either reactivate the 1974 disengagement rules or establish a new agreement ensuring mutual security. Syrian Foreign Minister Assaad al-Chaibani mentioned in February that ongoing security talks focused on recently occupied areas while excluding the broader Golan question. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has maintained that he does not intend to return the Golan territory to Syria.

GOVERNMENT REGAINS FORMER AMERICAN BASES

On April 16, 2026, the Syrian government announced it regained control of all military bases previously housing United States forces. The Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed the complete handover of sites performed in coordination with the American

government. United States Central Command specified that forces completed the transfer of main bases as part of a structured transition. Syrian troops entered the Qasrak air base in Hassaké province after the withdrawal of the United States led international coalition. Witnesses observed American military vehicles heading toward the Iraqi border.

US MEDIATES DRUZE PRISONER EXCHANGE

On February 24, 2026, a Druze source revealed that the United States is mediating a prisoner exchange between the Syrian government and the Druze minority in Soueïda. The negotiations involve Druze spiritual leader Hikmat al-Hijri and aim to release 61 civilians held by Damas since the violence in July. In exchange, 30 members of the Syrian interior and defense ministries held by the Druze National Guard would be freed. Hijri has recently called for the creation of a separate region for the Druze community. The ICRC facilitated the exchange of detainees between Damas and Druze factions. ICRC head Stephan Sakalian confirmed that 61 detainees were sent to Soueïda and 25 to Damas. The OSDH reported that the July 2025 violence in the region killed over 2000 people, including 789 Druze civilians who were victims of summary executions.

US BEGINS TOTAL MILITARY WITHDRAWAL

On February 23, 2026, sources reported that US forces have begun a final one-month withdrawal from Syria. A column of dozens of trucks carrying armored vehicles was seen leaving the Qasrak base in Hassaké toward the Iraqi border. Bases at al-Tanf and al-Chaddadi were reportedly evacuated in the previous 2 weeks. A Syrian official stated that no military presence would remain in the bases within 30 days. This withdrawal follows President Ahmad al-Chareh's decision to join the anti-jihadist coalition.

AL-HOL CAMP CLOSED AFTER MASS ESCAPES

On February 22, 2026, interim official Fadi al-Qassem announced the closure of the Al-Hol camp after thousands of relatives of ISIS jihadists escaped. The remaining families were relocated to the Akhtarín camp north of Aleppo for reintegration assistance. Human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch warned that prisoners transferred to Iraq face risks of torture. Humanitarian teams have reportedly dismantled all equipment and evacuated the site.

RAMADAN DRAMAS DEPICT PRISON ATROCITIES

On February 21, 2026, several television series depicting the atrocities of the former Assad regime's prisons began airing for Ramadan. The show directed by Mohammed Lutfi and starring Jamal Souleiman, recreates the Saydnaya prison. Another series focuses on the torture documented by the whistleblower code-named Caesar.

ISIS SPOKESPERSON CALLS FOR REBELLION

On February 21, 2026, the Islamic State (ISIS) released its first audio message in 2 years featuring spokesperson Abou Houdhayfah Al-Ansari. He called on fighters to prioritize combat against the new Syrian government and its national army. **ISIS maintains sleeper cells** in desert regions despite its territorial defeat in 2019. The new president, Ahmad al-Chareh, formerly of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, has been trying to distance himself from his jihadist past.

SYRIAN DRUZE COMMUNITY UNDER SIEGE, ISRAELI LEADER CLAIMS

On February 19, 2026, Cheikh Mowafaq Tarif, the spiritual leader of Israel's Druze community, stated that Druze in Syria remain besieged and completely encircled seven months after deadly clashes with government forces. Tarif accused Syrian authorities of

blocking all humanitarian aid, including supplies coordinated by Israel. He reported that 38 villages were seized by Damascus, with residents forbidden to return, and over 300 captives, including children and women, remain detained. The clashes in Suweida province last July left more than 2,000 dead, including 789 Druze civilians summarily executed by Syrian defense and interior ministry forces, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The UN estimates 187,000 were displaced, with Tarif claiming over 120,000 remain so. Israel, home to over 150,000 Druze, has provided aid and conducted airstrikes in support of the community. Tarif also called for regional access to Druze holy sites.

SYRIAN AUTHORITIES EMPTY AL-HOL CAMP

On February 17, 2026, Syrian authorities transferred the remaining residents of the al-Hol camp to another site in northern Syria, following the escape of thousands of relatives of foreign Islamic State jihadists. Camp official Fadi al-Qassem announced the evacuation would be completed within a week, citing uninhabitable conditions. The UN refugee agency noted a significant drop in residents and urged identification of escaped foreigners for repatriation. Kurdish forces, who led the fight against IS with US support, still control the smaller Roj camp, where foreign jihadist relatives, including French and Australians, remain detained. Human Rights Watch warned that over 5,700 jihadists transferred to Iraq risk torture, unfair trials and forced disappearances.

THOUSANDS OF FOREIGN JIHADIST FAMILIES LEAVE AL-HOL

On February 12, 2026, humanitarian sources and witnesses reported that thousands of foreign women and children linked to ISIS have left the al-Hol camp in northeastern Syria. The camp, previously controlled by Kurdish forces, housed about 24,000 people, including 6,300 foreigners in a high-security section. Since the Syrian army took control in January, the camp's population has sharply declined. Some families have been clandestinely transferred to Idleb and other Syrian provinces, while others have left for Lebanon.

US FORCES WITHDRAW FROM AL-TANF BASE

On February 11, 2026, two Syrian military sources reported that US forces had fully withdrawn from the al-Tanf base near the Jordanian border. The withdrawal began 15 days earlier and US forces are now coordinating with Syrian authorities from Jordan. On February 12, 2026, the Syrian Ministry of Defense announced that the Syrian army had taken control of the al-Tanf base, following the withdrawal of US forces. The handover was coordinated between Syrian and US authorities. Syrian troops have begun deploying in the border triangle between Syria, Iraq, and Jordan. The US-led coalition remains active in northeastern Syria.

OVER 4,580 ISIS DETAINEES TRANSFERRED FROM SYRIA TO IRAQ

On February 10, 2026, Iraqi authorities reported that 4,583 suspected ISIS members had been transferred from Syria to Iraq, as part of a US-led operation. The operation was launched after Kurdish forces withdrew from northern Syria under pressure from Damascus. The detainees are now in Iraqi detention centers. Iraqi courts have opened legal proceedings, but past trials have been criticized for being expedited and relying on torture-extracted confessions. Among the transferred detainees, 3,245 are Syrians, 900 are from Europe, Asia, or Australia, and 271 are Iraqis. German, Dutch, British, and French nationals are among the Europeans.

SYRIAN SECURITY OFFICER ARRESTED FOR MURDER OF CIVILIANS

On February 8, 2026, a Syrian security officer suspected of killing four civilians in the Druze-majority province of Suweida was arrested. The incident occurred in the village of al-Matana, where four people were shot dead and a fifth seriously injured while harvesting olives. The suspect, an agent of the local Internal Security Directorate, was immediately detained. The Druze region of Suweida remains the last area outside the control of the Islamist authorities in Damascus, following recent government troop deployments in Kurdish areas.

TURKEY BLOCKS AID CONVOY TO KOBANE

On February 4, 2026, Turkish authorities blocked a 25-truck aid convoy destined for the Kurdish-majority Syrian city of Kobane, forcing it to return to Diyarbakir. The convoy, carrying water, food and blankets, was stopped at the Suruç border crossing. Kobane, a symbol of Kurdish resistance against ISIS in 2015, is now surrounded by Syrian government forces. The blockade underscores ongoing restrictions on cross-border aid to Kurdish areas.

SYRIAN TROOPS DEPLOY TO KURDISH HOLDINGS

On February 2, 2026, Syrian government forces entered the Kurdish stronghold of Hassaké following a landmark agreement with Kurdish authorities to integrate Kurdish forces and administration into the Syrian state. The deal, announced after months of tension and clashes, allows Damascus to deploy security forces in the Kurdish autonomous zone and absorb the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) into the national army. The agreement also mandates the handover of oil fields, Qamichli airport, and border crossings to Damascus within ten days. SDF commander Mazloum Abdi stated only a “limited internal security force” would enter Hassaké and Qamichli, with no military troops deployed in Kurdish towns. A 24-hour curfew was imposed in Hassaké’s center. The only remaining area outside Damascus’s control is the Druze region of Suweida.

SYRIA DISBANDS HEZBOLLAH-LINKED CELL

On February 1, 2026, Syria’s Interior Ministry announced the dismantling of a “terrorist cell” responsible for recent attacks in Damascus’s Mazzeh district, linking seized weapons to Lebanon’s Hezbollah. Security forces arrested the cell members and confiscated drones prepared for attacks. Investigations revealed the group’s ties to foreign entities and Hezbollah’s supply of rockets and launch platforms. The porous Lebanon-Syria border has been a route for arms smuggling, especially after the fall of Bashar al-Assad in December 2024.

LEBANON AND SYRIA AGREE ON PRISONER TRANSFER

On January 31, 2026, Lebanon and Syria agreed to transfer Syrian prisoners from Lebanese jails to Syria, according to Lebanese Vice Prime Minister Tarek Mitri. The deal, to be signed the following week, applies to Syrians convicted of crimes in Lebanon who have served at least ten years. The move aims to resolve bilateral issues and build trust following the fall of Bashar al-Assad. About 2,250 Syrians, many accused of links with Syrian armed groups, are imprisoned in Lebanon.

SYRIA AND KURDS REACH AGREEMENT

On January 30, 2026, Syria and the Kurdish-led SDF announced a “comprehensive” agreement to integrate Kurdish forces and administration into the Syrian State. Syrian security forces will deploy in the Kurdish strongholds of Hassaké and Qamichli, while Kurdish forces will be reorganized into three brigades within the Syrian army. The agreement undermines Kurdish autonomy hopes. Syrian President Ahmad al-Chareh is determined to regain control over all Syrian territory.

SYRIA DECLARES AL-HOL CAMP A “SECURITY ZONE”

On January 30, 2026, the Syrian army declared al-Hol camp, housing IS-affiliated individuals, a “closed security zone” after taking control from Kurdish forces. The camp holds Syrians and about 6,200 foreign women and children from 42 countries. An anonymous humanitarian worker reported detainee escapes during the security transition. NGOs warned of rapidly deteriorating humanitarian conditions, with food, water, and medicine shortages.

RUSSIAN FORCES WITHDRAW FROM KURDISH-HELD AIRPORT

On January 27, 2026, Russian forces withdrew troops and heavy weapons from Qamishli airport in Syria’s Kurdish-held northeast, according to a military source. Equipment and arms were transported to Russia’s Hmeimim base in western Syria. Russia, a former ally of ousted President Bashar al-Assad, had deployed to Kurdish areas in 2019 under a Turkey agreement. The US also maintains a military presence in northern Syria, while Russia retains bases in Tartous and Hmeimim.

FRENCH LAWYERS DENOUNCE “ILLEGAL TRANSFER” OF 47 FRENCH PRISONERS TO IRAQ

On January 27, 2026, French lawyers Marie Dosé and Matthieu Bagard condemned the “illegal transfer” of 47 French IS suspects from Syria to Iraq. The lawyers met 13 detainees in Baghdad, who reported torture and inhumane conditions in Iraqi prisons. The detainees, including a young adult taken to Syria as a child, were transferred from Dêrik prison in July 2025. France’s embassy in Baghdad confirmed consular support for the detainees.

SYRIAN FORCES RELEASES 126 MINORS FROM KURDISH-RUN PRISON

On January 24, 2026, Syrian state media reported the release of 126 minors from Al-Aqtan prison in Raqqa province, previously managed by Kurdish forces. The prison, now under Syrian army control, held members of the Islamic State. Syria and Kurdish forces extended their ceasefire by 15 days to support the US transfer of up to 7,000 IS detainees from Syrian prisons to Iraq. The Syrian Defense Ministry confirmed the extension, while the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) stated the move aimed to de-escalate and protect civilians. The ceasefire, declared on January 23, followed Kurdish territorial concessions to Syrian government forces. Earlier, 150 high-ranking IS detainees, including Europeans, were transferred to Iraq.

EUROPEAN JIHADISTS TRANSFERRED TO IRAQ

On January 23, 2026, the US began transferring high-ranking IS detainees, including Europeans, from Syria to Iraq. Iraqi Prime Minister Mohamed Chia al-Soudani called on European countries to repatriate their nationals during a phone call with French President Emmanuel Macron. The transfers follow the withdrawal of Kurdish forces from prisons in northeast Syria, raising concerns about security gaps. The UN warned of volatile conditions in al-Hol camp, where over 23,000 IS-affiliated individuals, including 6,280 foreigners, are detained. The EU expressed alarm over potential escapes, while the HCR resumed water and bread deliveries after a three-day interruption.

KURDISH LEAVE RAQQA PRISON UNDER DEAL WITH DAMASCUS

On January 23, 2026, the SDF withdrew from al-Aqtan prison in Raqqa, handing control to the Syrian government as part of a ceasefire agreement. The control transfer followed five days of negotiations and international mediation. The Syrian Interior Ministry will now

manage the prison, which holds 800 prisoners, including ISIS fighters. On the same day, the UN refugee agency reported it could not enter al-Hol prisoners camp due to volatile security, despite delivering water and hoping to resume food distribution. The government pledged to ensure security for humanitarian operations. The SDF's retreat and the army's takeover have left the camp's future uncertain.

OVER 134,000 DISPLACED IN NORTH-EAST

On January 22, 2026, the UN migration agency reported that over 134,000 people were displaced in Hassakeh province as the Syrian army advanced and the SDF retreated. More than 41,000 sought shelter in collective centers, lacking food and basic supplies. The UN warned of a humanitarian crisis as civilians fled the violence.

2016 CHEMICAL ATTACK CONFIRMED

On January 22, 2026, the OPCW confirmed that Syrian government forces under Bashar al-Assad used chlorine in a 2016 attack near Kafr Zita. The report, based on witness interviews and satellite imagery, marked the first time the OPCW directly blamed Assad's forces for the attack. The new Syrian regime, led by Ahmad al-Chareh, has pledged to dismantle Assad's chemical weapons program and granted OPCW investigators full access.

THE "BUTCHER OF HAMA" RIFAAT AL-ASSAD IS DEAD

On January 21, 2026, Rifaat al-Assad, uncle of former president Bashar al-Assad, died at 88 after a week-long illness, according to sources close to the family. He had relocated to the United Arab Emirates following his nephew's fall in December 2024. A Lebanese security source previously reported his escape from Syria via Beirut. Rifaat al-Assad commanded the 1982 Hama massacre, killing 10,000 to 40,000 during the suppression of an uprising. Exiled in 1984 after a failed coup, he lived in France for 37 years before returning to Syria in 2021 to avoid a French conviction. Swiss prosecutors also accused him of ordering murders, torture and illegal detentions in Hama.

ARMY ENTERS AL-HOL CAMP, 7,000 ISIS PRISONERS TRANSFERRED

On January 21, 2026, the Syrian army entered the al-Hol camp, home to 24,000 ISIS family members, after the SDF withdrew to defend their heartland in Hassakeh. The camp, the largest of its kind, holds 15,000 Syrians and 6,300 foreigners from 42 countries. The UN's refugee agency was unable to enter due to volatile security. Meanwhile, the US decided to transfer up to 7,000 ISIS prisoners from Syria to Iraq, fearing security breaches. The US military already transferred 150 ISIS prisoners from Hassakeh, with thousands more to follow. Iraq's judiciary will prosecute the detainees, including foreigners. The US Centcom stressed the need for all parties to avoid interfering with the operation. The Syrian government, now responsible for ISIS detention centers, pledged to coordinate with the US-led coalition. The SDF, forced to retreat from al-Hol, warned of security risks.

KURDISH PROTESTS ERUPT ON TURKISH BORDER

On January 20, 2026, over 1,000 pro-Kurdish protesters clashed with Turkish police at the Nusaybin border crossing, demanding an end to Syria's offensive against Kurdish armed groups. The DEM Party, Turkey's third-largest, organized rallies in support of the Syrian Kurds, accusing the international community of abandoning them. In Syria, the SDF called on Kurds worldwide to join their resistance. The PKK vowed never to abandon Syrian Kurds, accusing Damascus, Ankara and ISIS of colluding against them.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND KURDS

On January 18, 2026, President Ahmad al-Chareh announced a 14-point ceasefire agreement with the Kurds, forcing the integration of SDF forces into the Syrian army and state security. The deal, following Kurdish military defeats, requires the SDF to hand over Raqqa and Deir Ezzor provinces, border crossings and oil fields to Damascus. Kurdish civil institutions in Hassakeh will be integrated into the state, and a Kurdish governor may be appointed. The agreement also makes Damascus responsible for ISIS prisoners camps. The SDF, which had sought decentralization, called the deal a blow to Kurdish autonomy.

ARMY TAKES CONTROL OF MAJOR OIL FIELDS

On January 18, 2026, the Syrian army took the al-Omar and al-Tanak oil fields in Deir Ezzor from the SDF, marking a significant step in President Ahmad al-Chareh's campaign to reassert State control. The SDF withdrew, while the army claimed the move would boost reconstruction. The oil fields, Syria's largest, had been under Kurdish control since 2017. Clashes also erupted near Raqqa's al-Aqtan prison. 2 civilians were killed in Raqqa by SDF fire, according to State media.

ARMY ADVANCES ON KURDISH TERRITORY

On January 17, 2026, the Syrian army massed troops in Aleppo. Local residents accused Kurdish forces of preventing evacuations and using civilians as human shields, a charge denied by SDF spokesperson Farhad Shami. The Kurdish administration warned of a "new war" and urged international intervention. President al-Chareh, in an interview, called on SDF leader Mazloun Abdi to cooperate, rejecting current Kurdish demands for autonomy.

PRESIDENT RECOGNIZES KURDISH RIGHTS AMID CONFLICT

On January 16, 2026, Syrian President Ahmad al-Chareh issued a decree recognizing the national rights of Kurds, making their language official and declaring Nowruz a public holiday. The move came as his forces clashed with Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in Aleppo. Al-Chareh, who overthrew Bashar al-Assad in December 2024, called on Kurds to participate in rebuilding Syria. The US-led coalition intervened to reduce tensions, as both sides are US allies. Negotiations over a March 2025 agreement to integrate Kurdish institutions into the state remained stalled.

SYRIAN ARMY DEPLOYS REINFORCEMENTS EAST OF ALEPPO

On January 14, 2026, the Syrian army sent reinforcements to Deir Hafer, east of Aleppo, and warned civilians to avoid Kurdish positions ahead of a planned offensive. President Ahmad al-Chareh reiterated calls for Kurdish integration into the state. The Kurds accused the army of bombing civilian sites, including a post office and bakery, and warned of a broader conflict. The army demanded the Kurdish armed groups to withdraw from Deir Hafer to the Euphrates, declaring the area a "closed military zone."

KURDISH FIGHTERS EVACUATE ALEPPO AFTER DEADLY CLASHES

On January 11, 2026, the Kurdish SDF announced the evacuation of their fighters from Aleppo's Cheikh Maqsoud and Achrafieh neighborhoods after days of heavy fighting. Civilians returned to find destroyed homes and looted property. The Syrian army confirmed the departure of SDF convoys, while crowds in Qamichli vowed revenge for the fallen. The SDF reported forced displacements and abductions. US envoy Tom Barrack and President al-Chareh both called for calm, but tensions remained high as negotiations over Kurdish autonomy stalled.

FRAGILE CEASEFIRE IN ALEPPO'S KURDISH DISTRICTS

On January 9, 2026, a fragile ceasefire took hold in Aleppo's Kurdish neighborhoods after four days of clashes that killed 21. The US praised the truce and called for its extension. Syrian forces proposed a passage for Kurdish fighters to withdraw to the northeast. Kurdish fighters entrenched in two neighborhoods of Aleppo refused to leave the city, defying authorities. Civilians used the ceasefire to flee, while regional tensions persist with Turkey backing Damascus and Israel supporting the Kurds.

TURKEY PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR SYRIAN ARMY AGAINST KURDS

On January 8, 2026, Turkey's Defense Ministry announced readiness to "support" the Syrian army's "anti-terrorist operation" against Kurdish fighters in Aleppo, if requested. Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan confirmed intensive talks with Damascus and Washington. On the same day, the Syrian army shelled Kurdish-held neighborhoods of Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyeh in Aleppo, with a death toll of at least 21 people in 3 days of clashes and 16,000 civilians forced to flee through humanitarian corridors. The violence erupted as negotiations stalled over integrating Kurdish institutions into the new Syrian state. Kurdish leader Mazloum Abdi warned the assaults undermine peace efforts. Aleppo's airport remained closed. Kurdish protesters in Qamishli and Turkish Kurds in Diyarbakir demanded international intervention.

KURDISH STRONGHOLDS IN ALEPPO UNDER SIEGE: 21 CIVILIANS KILLED

On January 7, 2026, the Syrian army launched a major offensive against Kurdish-held neighborhoods in Aleppo, targeting Cheikh Maqsoud and Achrafiyeh. By January 10, the army claimed to have ended operations in Cheikh Maqsoud, asserting control and announcing the transfer of Kurdish fighters to Tabqa. However, Kurdish forces denied the claim, stating that fighting continued. The clashes, the deadliest in Aleppo since the fall of Bashar al-Assad in December 2024, killed at least 21 civilians and displaced 155,000 residents. Civilians like Imad al-Ahmad and Nahed Mohammad Qassab described fleeing their homes, with some still trapped inside. The Syrian government suggested "humanitarian corridors" for civilians to leave, while Kurdish official Elham Ahmed insisted on maintaining local Kurdish protection.

SYRIAN ARMY BOMBARDS KURDISH DISTRICTS

On January 7, 2026, the Syrian army bombarded Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafiyeh in Aleppo after a three-hour civilian evacuation window expired. Nine people died in clashes that began January 6, as both sides blamed each other for violating a March agreement on Kurdish integration. Thousands fled, and the airport suspended flights. Kurdish forces accused Damascus of "genocidal war," while the army warned of further strikes.

9 KILLED IN ALEPPO CLASHES BETWEEN KURDS AND SYRIAN FORCES

On January 6, 2026, clashes between Syrian government forces and Kurdish fighters in Aleppo left nine dead, including civilians and a soldier. The violence prompted a 24-hour airport shutdown and school closures. Both sides accused each other of initiating the attacks, as a March agreement on Kurdish integration remains unfulfilled. The FDS reported four civilians killed by government shelling, while Damascus claimed five deaths from Kurdish fire.

ALAWITE NEIGHBORHOODS TARGETED IN LATTAKIA RIOTS

On December 29, 2025, armed groups vandalized Alawite-majority neighborhoods in Latakia, Syria, leaving one Alawite man dead and widespread damage. The victim was shot dead in his car by three assailants. Residents described 40-50 attackers smashing cars, shops, and restaurants, while shouting anti-Alawite slogans. Locals accused security forces of slow response. Authorities imposed a curfew and reinforced security. Since the Islamist

coalition took power in late 2024, Alawites, linked to former president Bashar al-Assad, have faced repeated attacks, including March 2025 massacres.

DEADLY CLASHES DURING ALAWITE PROTESTS

On December 28, 2025, at least 3 people were killed and 60 injured during protests by thousands of Alawites in Lattakia, Syria. A local NGO reported that security forces killed 2 protesters, while state media (Sana) confirmed 3 deaths. General Abdel Aziz al-Ahmad, regional security chief, claimed both security forces and protesters were targeted by gunfire from unknown sources. Protesters, including Ghazal Ghazal, the head of the Alawite Islamic Council, accused authorities of attacking unarmed civilians. The protests followed a mosque attack in Homs on December 26, claimed by Saraya Ansar al-Sunna, which killed 8 Alawites. Demonstrators demanded federalism and the release of Alawite detainees.

BOMBING AT ALAWITE MOSQUE IN HOMS KILLS 8

On December 26, 2025, an explosion at the Ali Ben Abi Taleb mosque in Homs' Wadi al-Dahab district killed eight people and wounded 18 during prayers. The Syrian Interior Ministry blamed explosive devices planted inside the mosque. Saraya Ansar al-Sunna, a Sunni extremist group, claimed responsibility on Telegram, vowing further attacks against “infidels and apostates.” The same group claimed a June suicide bombing at a Damascus church that killed 25. The attack is the latest in a series targeting Syria’s Alawite minority since Islamist groups took power a year ago.

3 KILLED IN CLASHES BETWEEN SECURITY FORCES AND ALAWITE LOYALISTS

On December 24, 2025, three members of Syria’s former regime were killed in clashes with security forces on the outskirts of Jableh, Latakia province. State TV reported the incident, while the official SANA news agency mentioned confrontations with “outlaws” linked to the ousted Assad regime. The Alawite-majority coastal region, Assad’s stronghold, has seen frequent security operations against regime remnants. In March, over 1,700 Alawites were killed in sectarian massacres, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR).

ISRAELI FORCES INJURE 3 IN SYRIA

On December 9, 2025, Israeli troops injured three people during an incursion in Syria’s Quneitra region, near the Golan Heights. Syrian state media reported that Israeli forces set up a checkpoint and fired on civilians. The Israeli military stated it clashed with “suspects” who approached troops, first firing warning shots before targeting two individuals. This follows a November 28 incursion that killed 13 people and wounded 6 Israeli soldiers.

DAMASCUS IN “DANGEROUS POSITION” BECAUSE OF ISRAEL

On December 6, 2025, Syria’s interim president Ahmed al-Chareh stated that Israel’s insistence on creating a demilitarized zone in southern Syria places Damascus in a “grave and dangerous position.” Chareh emphasized Syria’s commitment to the 1974 disengagement agreement with Israel, warning that new demands risk destabilizing the region. His remarks came during a conference in Doha, as Israel continues to conduct strikes and incursions in southern Syria.

ISRAELI KILLS 13, DAMASCUS DENOUNCES “WAR CRIME”

On November 28, 2025, Israeli forces killed 13 people in Beit Jinn, 40 km southwest of Damascus, during a pre-dawn operation targeting alleged Jamaa Islamiya militants. The Syrian Foreign Ministry condemned the raid as a “war crime,” while survivors Iyad Taher and

Ahmad Kamal described Israeli fire hitting homes and a mosque. The Israeli military reported six soldiers wounded in clashes. Beit Jinn's mayor, Abdel Rahmane al-Hamraoui, said locals resisted the incursion. The SOHR called it the deadliest Israeli operation outside the Golan buffer zone since Assad's fall. Israel has conducted hundreds of strikes in Syria over the past year, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insists on demilitarizing southern Syria, despite UN opposition to Israel's Golan annexation.

SYRIAN PRESIDENT PLEDGES TO ADDRESS ALAWITE DEMANDS BUT FEDERALISM

On November 27, 2025, Syrian President Ahmad al-Chareh acknowledged “legitimate popular demands” from Alawite protesters but rejected calls for coastal federalism, insisting on national unity and Syria’s strategic need for coastal access. The former jihadist leader, in power since December 2024, referenced decades of Assad-era divisions and pledged to examine grievances seriously, while emphasizing the coast's importance.

ALAWITE PROTESTS FOR JUSTICE ON SYRIAN COAST

On November 25, 2025, thousands protested in Latakia, Jableh, and other coastal cities, strongholds of Syria’s Alawite minority, demanding justice, the release of 9,000 detained former soldiers, and federalism for the region. Clashes with pro-government counter-protesters left several lightly injured. The Alawite Supreme Islamic Council organized the rallies, echoing fears after March massacres killed over 1,700 Alawites and July's Druze-Sunni violence left 2,000 dead. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) recorded 42 protests, as authorities imposed a curfew in Homs.

ISRAEL REAFFIRMS MILITARY PRESENCE IN SYRIAN BUFFER ZONE

On November 19, 2025, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited the Golan Heights buffer zone, declaring its “immense importance” for Israel’s defense and protection of Druze allies. Syria condemned the visit as a “grave violation” of its sovereignty, and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged Israel to respect the 1974 disengagement agreement. Netanyahu, accompanied by Defense Minister Israel Katz and military chiefs, reaffirmed Israel's refusal to return Golan, annexed in 1981. The visit followed Syrian President Ahmad al-Chareh's U.S. trip, where he called Israeli occupation a barrier to normalization. Israel has previously conducted hundreds of strikes in Syria amid rising intercommunal tensions with Druzes.

SYRIA OPENS TRIAL OVER MARCH MASSACRES

On November 18, 2025, a Syrian court in Aleppo began the first trial for the March massacres on the coastal region, which left at least 1,426 civilians dead, mostly Alawite, according to a national inquiry. Fourteen defendants appeared: seven former pro-Assad fighters charged with sedition, incitement, murder, and pillage; and seven members of the new Islamist security forces charged with premeditated murder. The trial will resume on December 18 and 25 for the respective groups.

SYRIA HAND OVER 400 UYGHUR TO CHINA

On November 17, 2025, Syrian authorities agreed to transfer 400 Uyghur jihadists to China, according to government and diplomatic sources. The move follows China's refusal to integrate these fighters, mostly from the Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP) in Idlib into Syria's new army. Foreign Minister Assaad al-Chaibani discussed the issue with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, who pledged support for Syria's peace efforts. Syria's new leadership, which took power in December 2024, has been dissolving armed groups and integrating some

former rebels, including at least one Uyghur, into the military. The Syrian Observatory For Human Rights estimates 3,200–4,000 Uyghur fighters remain in Syria. The Uyghurs are at risk of persecution in China.

DRUZE PASSENGER BUS SHOT

On October 28, 2025, unknown gunmen opened fire on a passenger bus traveling from Damascus to Suweida in Syria's majority-Druze Suweida province, killing two people, a man and a woman, and wounding others, according to state media and local outlet Suwayda24. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (OSDH) confirmed all passengers were Druze. The attack occurred in an area with government checkpoints. The OSDH warns of checkpoints manned by pro-government militias not affiliated with official security forces. Suweida remains volatile after July's sectarian clashes between Druze fighters and Sunni Bedouins, which left over 2,000 dead, including 789 Druze civilians allegedly executed by security forces, according to OSDH. Druze leader Hikmat al-Hijri, a vocal critic of Damascus, recently demanded "complete independence" for the province. Government forces control the Damascus-Suweida road, while Druze fighters hold Suweida city. On October 29, 2025, Lamis, a 32-year-old Druze woman from Suweida, recounted to AFP from her hospital bed about the attack of the bus. It left her injured in both thighs and severely injured her seven-year-old daughter's hand.

AL ASSAD AND FORMER SYRIAN OFFICIALS WANTED BY FRANCE

A third international arrest warrant was issued in Paris against former Syrian president Bashar al-Assad on 29 July 2025 for complicity in crimes against humanity and war crimes linked to the 2013 chemical attacks in Adra, Douma, and the Ghouta region, which killed over one thousand people with sarin gas, according to U.S. intelligence. The decision came after Assad's ousting on 8 December 2024, which lifted his immunity. Other senior Syrian officials, including Maher al-Assad, Talal Makhlof, Ghassan Abbas, and Bassam al-Hassan, are also targeted by French justice. Two prior warrants were issued earlier in 2025 for Assad's role in the 2017 bombardment of Deraa and the 2012 shelling of a media center in Homs that killed journalists Marie Colvin and Rémi Ochlik and injured Edith Bouvier, Paul Conroy, and Wael al-Omar. In total, 17 former Syrian officials are under French arrest warrants in four separate cases, including the enforced disappearance of Franco-Syrians Mazzen and Patrick Dabbagh. Lawyer Clémence Bectarte of the FIDH emphasized that these actions reflect Assad's systematic repression of civilians and journalists. Although Assad resides in Russia, he could face trial in absentia in France.

CLASHES BETWEEN SYRIAN ARMY AND FRENCH JIHADISTS

Syrian government forces clashed on Wednesday, 22 October 2025, with a group of French jihadists led by Oumar Diaby, also known as Omar Omsen, in a camp near Harim, close to the Turkish border. Authorities accuse Diaby, 50, of kidnapping a young girl and refusing to surrender, claiming he used civilians as human shields. The jihadists, estimated at around fifty and part of the group Firqat al Ghouraba ("the group of foreigners"), are mostly French and unaffiliated with the Islamic State. Fighting, which began after midnight, subsided by early afternoon, according to an AFP correspondent, as foreign jihadists mediated to reach a peaceful resolution, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (OSDH). The confrontation marks the first since the Islamist coalition led by Ahmad al-Chareh took power in December 2024 and sought to distance itself from its jihadist past. Diaby, a Franco-Senegalese preacher wanted by French authorities, is suspected of having recruited numerous French nationals for jihad in Syria.

Syrian authorities and a group of French jihadists led by Oumar Diaby, have reached a ceasefire agreement in the northwest of the country 23 October 2025. The deal, in place since Wednesday, ends clashes around a camp in the Idleb province near the Turkish border, where Diaby and several dozen followers were surrounded by government forces. It provides for the withdrawal of heavy weapons and allows Syrian authorities to enter the camp, while the alleged kidnapping of a young girl by Diaby will be handled by the Justice Ministry.