

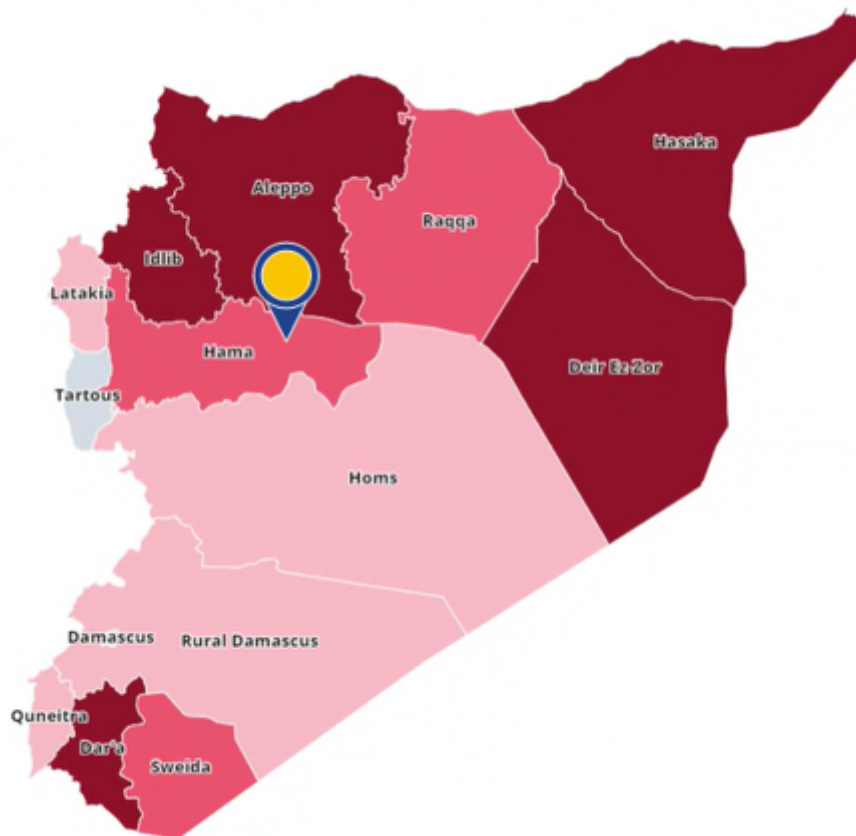
Hama

Following the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, this document has been reviewed and updated. Please consult '[Interim Country Guidance: Syria \(2025\)](#)'

COMMON ANALYSIS

Last update: April 2024

[Main COI reference: [Security 2023](#), 2.3, pp. 75-83; [COI Update 2023](#), 2, pp. 3-10]



General information

Hama governorate is in central Syria and has internal borders with the governorates of Latakia and Tartous to the west, Homs to the south and Aleppo, Idlib and Raqqqa to the north. It comprises five districts: Hama, Misyaf, Muhardah, As-Suqaylbiyah, and As-Salamiyeh.

As of May 2022, UNOCHA estimated the population of Hama governorate at 1 485 590 inhabitants and the population of Hama city at 996 000. Hama city is predominantly inhabited by Sunni Muslims while the rest

of the governorate is more diverse with a presence of Alawites, Ismailis and Christians [[Security 2022](#), 2.3.1, pp. 101].

Background and actors involved in armed confrontations

Between April 2019 and March 2020, the northwestern parts of Hama were reconquered by the GoS in a large-scale military offensive which left nearly a million people displaced. Nevertheless, conflict activity between the GoS and armed opposition groups remained high in those areas afterwards and included shelling/aerial bombardments by GoS and Russian forces. While the eastern areas of Hama had been free from ISIL activity for some time after October 2017, the group resumed its actions in mid-2020. Ultimately, however, ISIL lacked the capacity to hold on to these villages located ‘on the periphery of core regime territory’.

During the reference period, most of Hama governorate was under the control of the GoS, except for a small strip of HTS-controlled land on its northwesternmost edge bordering Idlib and pockets of ISIL presence in areas east bordering Aleppo, Raqqa and Homs. Some of the main and best trained fighting GoS forces such as the Fifth Corps and 25th Special Tasks Division (previously Tiger Forces) were reportedly present in the governorate.

Russian forces were present in areas north and northwest of the city, their sites extending towards the opposition-held areas bordering Idlib. Further sites of Iranian/Iran-backed forces were located in southern and eastern Hama as well as in the west, where pro-Iranian militias were stationed in Masyaf.

ISIL continued to carry out attacks of an asymmetric nature, with small cells routinely conducting attacks in the governorate’s east

Nature of violence and examples of incidents

The beginning of the reference period saw a continued intensification of bombardment by GoS forces and affiliated militias against a variety of military and civilian targets. Sometimes supported by Russian forces, these artillery attacks hit towns and villages in western and northern areas of Hama causing several civilian casualties. The positions of GoS forces in western Hama were reportedly targeted by the armed opposition groups HTS and Jaysh alNasr.

Clashes between HTS and GoS forces in North-west Syria, including Hama countryside were reported in August and September 2023. In the aftermath of a drone strike on the Military College in Homs governorate in October 2023, which resulted in substantial casualties, GoS and Russian forces stepped up attacks on the HTS-controlled areas in North-west Syria, while HTS reportedly responded with artillery and drone strikes, including in the governorate of Hama.

ISIL activities, such as multiple ambush attacks on civilians and security forces, were still observed in the east of Hama governorate. Dozens of civilians were killed or injured in ISIL attacks in rural and desert areas of eastern Hama. Moreover, ISIL abducted several civilians during the reporting period. The largest attack took place when ISIL militants ambushed a group of truffle-searching civilians in the eastern Hama countryside resulting in several people killed. ISIL attacks were followed by heavy airstrikes jointly carried out by GoS and Russian forces targeting positions and movements linked to suspected ISIL cells.

Furthermore, Israeli airstrikes against targets in Hama governorate, including on scientific research centres as well as positions and weapons/ammunition depots of Iranian-backed militias in the Masyaf area took place.

Incidents: data

ACLED recorded 557 security incidents (average of 5 security incidents per week) in Hama governorate in the period from 1 August 2022 to 28 July 2023. Of the reported incidents, 483 were coded as 'explosions/remote violence', 54 were coded as 'battles', and 20 as 'violence against civilians'. In the period 1 August – 30 November 2023, 225 security incidents were recorded in Hama representing an average of 13 security incident per week.

Geographical scope

Security incidents were recorded in all Hama governorate districts during the reporting period, with the highest number recorded in As-Suqaylabiyah, followed by As-Salamiyeh district. By comparison, very few incidents were recorded in the districts of Muhradah, Hama and Masyaf

Civilian fatalities: data

Between August 2022 and July 2023, the SNHR recorded 76 civilian fatalities in Hama. In August – November 2023, the SNHR recorded 14 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from May 2022, this represented six civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

Displacement

As of May 2022, there were 153 814 IDPs in Hama governorate.

According to UNOCHA, between January and December 2022, approximately 2 400 persons were displaced from Hama, as well as 600 within the governorate. About 1 400 persons were displaced from other governorates to Hama. In the first five months of 2023, there were approximately 200 IDP movements out of Hama and 140 IDP movements into the governorate as well as about 115 movements within the governorate.

In terms of IDP returns, UNOCHA recorded in 2022 approximately 2 000 IDP returns to Hama and 9 000 returns from Hama to other governorates. In the first five months of 2023, 380 IDP returns were recorded into Hama and about 6 000 returns from Hama to other governorates.

Further impact on civilians

Reports of damage to civilian infrastructure state that the conflict has left entire districts of Hama in ruins.

Hama was one of the governorates where contamination from UXOs was particularly widespread, including on roads, agricultural land and private property.

Notably, the governorate has experienced numerous conflict-related incidents that affected the condition of agricultural land (e.g., landmines, unexploded ordnance, shelling, arson and air/drone strikes). During the reference period, there were multiple reports of civilians, some of them children, being killed or injured by explosive remnants of war.

Looking at the indicators, it can be concluded that 'mere presence' in the area would not be sufficient to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD in the governorate of **Hama**, however indiscriminate violence reaches **a high level**. Accordingly, **a lower level of individual elements** is required in order to show substantial grounds for believing that a civilian, returned to the territory, would face a real

risk of serious harm within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD.

It can further be noted that, at the time of writing, the indiscriminate violence primarily affects the district of As-Suqaylabiyah, and, to a lesser extent, As-Salamiyyeh.

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