

8.1.2. The Muslim Brotherhood Uprising in Syria (1979-1982) which comprised the Hama massacre (February 1982)

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: September 2020

Islamist resistance to the Assad government grew in 1979-1981. After the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Muslim groups instigated uprisings and riots in Aleppo, Homs and Hama. The Muslim Brotherhood attempted to topple the Assad regime with targeted killings, guerrilla warfare and large-scale uprisings. Between 1979 and 1981, Muslim Brotherhood militants killed over 300 Assad supporters in Aleppo alone; Syrian forces responded by killing 2 000 members of the Muslim Brotherhood.

In February 1982, the Muslim Brotherhood attacks on the government and the uprising in the city of Hama were suppressed in a month-long siege by the army. An estimated 10 000 to 25 000 civilians were killed. Special forces belonging to the intelligence services, in particular the 'Defence Brigades' (Sirayat al-difa') commanded by Rif'at al-Assad, President Hafez al-Assad's brother, are reported to have carried out massive arrests of civilians, as well as torture and executions. [[Security 2020](#), Annex II, pp. 242, 243]

See other relevant circumstances (Exclusion):

- [8.1.1. The Syrian intervention in the Lebanese civil war and presence in Lebanon \(1976-2005\)](#)
- *8.1.2. The Muslim Brotherhood Uprising in Syria (1979-1982) which comprised the Hama Massacre (February 1982)*
- [8.1.3. Current conflicts \(2011-ongoing\)](#)
- [8.1.4. Criminality](#)
- [8.1.5. Violence against women and children](#)