

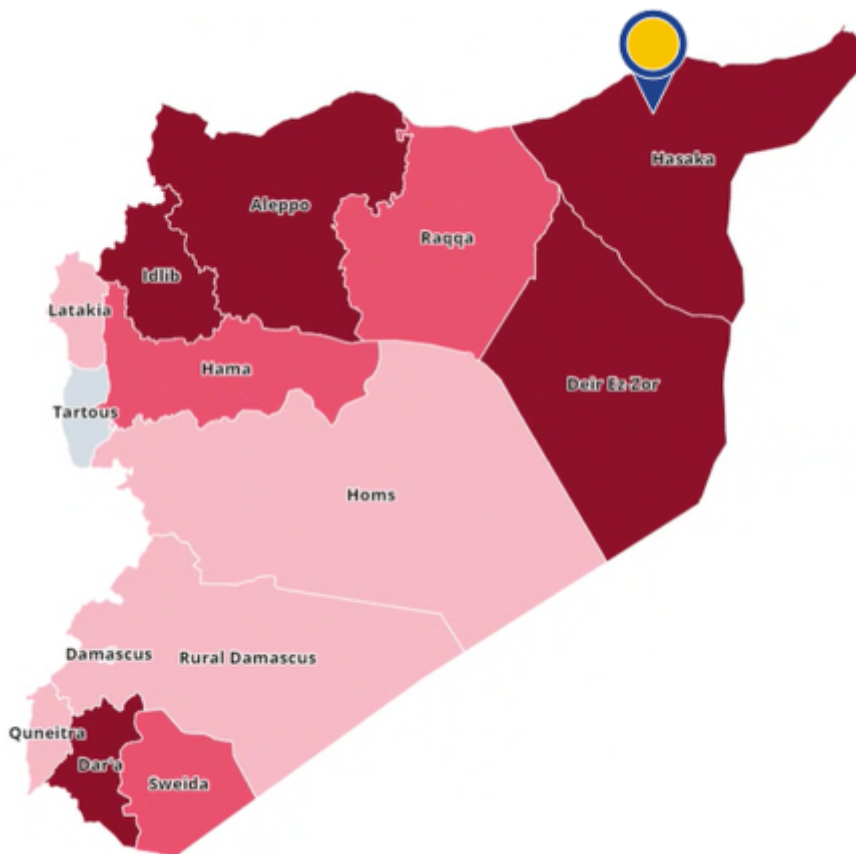
# Hasaka

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](#), 2.7, pp. 103-111; [COI Update 2023](#), 2, pp. 3-10]



## General information

The governorate of Hasaka is located in the northeast end of Syria, bordering Türkiye to the north, Iraq to the east and the governorates of Raqqqa and Deir Ez-Zor to the west and southwest respectively. The governorate is divided into four districts: Hasaka, Ras al Ain, Qamishli and al-Malikiya. As of May 2022, UNOCHA estimated the population of Hasaka governorate at 1 206 229 inhabitants.

The Hasaka governorate has an ethnic Kurdish majority. Areas north of Hasaka city are described as either

Kurdish or mixed areas, while the southern Hasaka governorate is considered as populated mainly by Arabs.

The Tal Tamr area has a Christian population, with villages inhabited by Assyrians and Armenians. The governorate is also home to Yazidis.

### **Background and actors involved in armed confrontations**

Following the retreat of GoS forces from large parts of northeast Syria in 2012, the Kurdish forces were able to take over Syria's northeast and established the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, creating their own institutions and security forces. Since 2014, the PYD and its armed wing, the YPG, have become the most essential political and military force on the ground in the US-led coalition campaign against ISIL in Syria. In October 2019, Türkiye launched its 'Operation Peace Spring' in order to oust the SDF/YPG from the Syrian side of the border and to establish a 'safe zone' for resettlement of Syrian refugees.

During the reference period, most of Hasaka was under the control of the Kurdish forces (SDF/YPG) which were supported by US-led coalition forces.

GoS forces controlled several security enclaves in and around the cities of Hasaka and Qamishli which also hosted sites of Iranian and Russian forces. In addition, GoS forces were granted permission by the SDF to pass between GoS held and Kurdish-controlled territories. In response to Türkiye's warnings of a potential new military campaign against Kurdish forces in border areas, the GoS reinforced its presence in northern Hasaka's borderlands in mid-2022.

Russian troops were present with GoS along the Syrian-Turkish border and the front lines between the Kurdish-controlled and Turkish-held areas.

Meanwhile, Türkiye controlled a part of northern Hasaka that belonged to a territory roughly delimited by Ras al-Ayn in the east, Tall Abyad (Raqqa) in the west, the Syrian-Turkish border in the north and the M4 motorway in the south. This area has been referred to as the Operation Peace Spring area. The SNA operated in this area.

ISIL was reportedly increasingly present in the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES).

### **Nature of violence and examples of incidents**

The security situation in Hasaka governorate is described as 'volatile', with continuing reports of security incidents in the vicinity of SNA-controlled areas or the Syrian-Turkish border, including around Tal Tamr.

Hasaka's front line zones remained one of the most conflict-affected areas in Syria. Since Turkish forces seized control of Ras al-Ayn from the SDF in autumn 2019, the Ras al-Ayn area experienced frequent mutual bombing between Turkish forces/SNA and the SDF. There were also a number of reports of alleged Turkish drone strikes targeting SDF personnel, and several instances of drone strikes, heavy shelling and gunfire by Turkish forces which caused civilian casualties. In November 2022, Türkiye launched Operation Claw-Sword, carrying out a series of air, drone and artillery strikes targeting SDF and GoS military sites in the governorate. Turkish intelligence also launched a security operation early January 2023 that led to the killing of two officials of the PKK-allied Turkish Communist Party - Marxist-Leninist (TKP-ML) at their

homes north of Hasaka city.

In the Operation Peace Spring area itself, there were a number of security incidents during the reference period such as several civilians shot dead by Turkish forces, attacks of members of Turkish forces/SNA, infighting among armed factions and IED attacks, mainly occurring in residential areas and markets.

Following a PKK attack in Ankara (Türkiye) on 1 October 2023, Türkiye conducted a campaign of drone strikes which hit more than 150 locations in Hasaka, Raqqa and Aleppo governorates leading to several fatalities. Most attacks were concentrated on the border areas in northern Hasaka governorate as well as on Hasaka city, Qamishli and Tal Tamer. The attacks also targeted water and energy infrastructure, as well as oil installations in Hasaka governorate.

Infighting between GoS forces and the National Defence Forces (NDF) reportedly took place in September 2023 in neighbourhoods of Hasaka city, leading to several civilian casualties, damage to infrastructure and temporary displacement.

ISIL attacks in the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES) were reported to have increased significantly during the second half of 2022 and continued to occur in 2023. Incidents in Hasaka targeted members of the Kurdish Internal Security Forces (Asayish) and SDF as well as civilians in the governorate.

Meanwhile, the SDF conducted anti-ISIL security operations in rural areas in the governorate's south and south-east, as well as in Hasaka city, sometimes with the support of the US-led coalition.

The security situation in Al-Hol camp, which houses suspected ISIL family members, was described as 'volatile' and was characterized by 'high levels of violence, criminality and social tensions' among its residents, with reports of killings by unidentified perpetrators.

Following the eruption of the Israel-Hamas conflict in October 2023, Iran-backed armed groups have attacked U.S. forces in Syria with drone strikes, improvised missiles and mortar shells, including in Hasaka governorate, prompting US response strikes.

#### **Incidents: data**

ACLED recorded 1 104 security incidents (average of 21.4 security incidents per week) in Hasaka governorate in the period from 1 August 2022 to 28 July 2023. Of the reported incidents, 686 were coded as 'explosions/remote violence', 551 as 'battles' and 467 as 'violence against civilians'. In the period 1 August – 30 November 2023, 497 security incidents were recorded in Hasaka representing an average of 28.8 security incident per week.

#### **Geographical scope**

Security incidents were recorded in all governorate districts, with the highest number being documented in the districts of Hasaka and Ras Al Ain. Fewer incidents were recorded in the districts of Malikeyyeh

#### **Civilian fatalities: data**

Between August 2022 and July 2023, SNHR documented 52 civilian fatalities in Hasaka governorate. In August – November 2023, the SNHR recorded four civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from May 2022, this represented five civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

### **Displacement**

As of May 2022, there were 331 573 IDPs in Hasaka governorate.

The UN noted that the negative impact of local hostilities on civilian lives and key civilian infrastructure prompted civilians to flee their homes and that residents' conflict-related exposure to displacement persisted across the northern region in the first half of 2023.

According to UNOCHA, between January and December 2022, approximately 1 000 persons were displaced from Hasaka, as well as 3 000 within the governorate. Approximately 2 000 persons were displaced from other governorates to Hasaka. In the first five months of 2023, there were approximately 135 IDP movements out of Hasaka and 220 IDP movements into the governorate as well as about 360 movements within the governorate.

In terms of IDP returns, UNOCHA recorded in 2022 approximately 220 IDP returns to Hasaka and 3 640 returns from Hasaka to other governorates. In the first five months of 2023, 55 IDP returns were recorded into Hasaka and about 67 returns from Hasaka to other governorates.

### **Further impact on civilians**

The governorate is largely contaminated with improvised mines and other improvised devices causing heavy damage to civilians. During the first quarter of 2023, 12 deaths from explosive remnants of war were reported in Hasaka governorate. Civilian casualties from landmine explosions were also recorded.

The Turkish strikes in November 2022 hit key infrastructure in parts of the governorate, including grain silos, oil fields and power stations, putting some installations out of service.

Looking at the indicators, it can be concluded that in the governorate of **Hasaka**, indiscriminate violence reaches such a high level that substantial grounds are shown for believing that a civilian, returned to the governorate, would, **solely on account of their presence on its territory**, face a real risk of being subject to the serious threat referred to in Article 15(c) QD.