



Please cite as: EUAA, '[4.4. Impact of the Israel-Hamas war on the security in Syria](#)' in *COI Report - Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025.

4.4. Impact of the Israel-Hamas war on the security in Syria

Immediately following the fall of the Assad government, Israel launched hundreds of airstrikes across Syria,[768](#) aimed at preventing the new HTS-led authorities from accessing the former Assad government's arsenal.[769](#) This campaign came after Israel targeted multiple airstrikes on sites of Hezbollah and Iran-backed militias in November 2024[770](#) that according to SOHR resulted in the deaths of 16 civilians.[771](#)

The December 2024 airstrikes mainly targeted airbases linked to the former Assad forces and their contents, including aircraft, military signal stations and radar systems, scientific research facilities and weapons and ammunitions warehouses. Between the fall of Assad and 18 December 2024, SOHR documented 498 airstrikes launched by Israeli aircraft in various governorates (mostly affecting Damascus, Dar'a, Latakia, and Rural Damascus).[772](#) These airstrikes resulted in the destruction of the country's military stocks and defence infrastructure, as well as most of its missile systems and tanks.[773](#) The Israeli armed forces were quoted as saying that during the very first wave of bombardments that occurred within a 48-hour timespan and hit about 320 targets, some 80 % of the Syria's military capabilities had been destroyed,[774](#) although this figure has not been verified independently.[775](#) The aerial campaign reportedly resulted in dozens of deaths.[776](#)

Responding to the demise of Assad's rule, Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that his country no longer recognised the Israel-Syria Disengagement Agreement of 1974.[777](#) Israel's armed forces subsequently occupied the UN-patrolled[778](#) demilitarised zone[779](#) between the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and Syrian-controlled areas of Quneitra governorate.[780](#) Moreover, they further entered Syrian territory beyond the demilitarised zone [781](#) (mainly into Quneitra,[782](#) but also into Dar'a), seizing villages[783](#) and strategic positions.[784](#)

As of 19 December 2024, ACLED noted that Israeli forces were controlling eight villages in the governorates of Quneitra, Dar'a, and Rural Damascus.[785](#) They warned villagers to 'stay home', [786](#) created outposts and raided some homes claiming to search for weapons and Hezbollah members.[787](#) Between 19 December 2024 and 1 February 2025, satellite imagery showed that Israel was constructing six military sites in the buffer zone and another site outside it within Syrian territory.[788](#)

Map 5: Assessed Control of Terrain in Southwestern Syria, © Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project, 4 March 2025[789](#)

As Al Jazeera reported, Israeli forces expelled hundreds of residents from their villages and towns.[790](#) Local residents were quoted as saying that Israeli forces had demolished homes[791](#) and there were reports of some farmers being prevented from going to their fields.[792](#) On at least two occasions, Israeli soldiers reportedly opened fire on protesters,[793](#) including during a 20 December 2024 protest in the village of Maariya (Dar'a governorate) decrying Israeli military activities in the area, when Israeli forces were reported to have shot and injured a Syrian protester.[794](#)

Meanwhile, Israeli forces continued to launch air strikes on former SAA sites in southern Syria, [795](#) near Damascus city,[796](#) and on the coast.[797](#) While, according to sources, Israel was initially avoiding attacks on HTS targets,[798](#) at least one Israeli drone attack in mid-January 2025 killed two HTS fighters as it targeted a convoy of the new transitional administration in Quneitra[799](#) that had been sent de-escalate local clashes in a village.[800](#) Further Israeli airstrikes were reported in late February and early March on military facilities and other targets in Homs, Tartous, Latakia, and Rural Damascus governorates. Meanwhile, Israeli soldiers continued near-daily operations in Quneitra and southwest Dar'a, conducting patrols, raiding farms, and blocking local routes.[801](#)

Syrian authorities have reportedly refrained from military retaliation to Israeli attacks.[802](#) According to reports, there have been 'no major clashes' between Israeli forces and Syria's new security forces as of early March 2025.[803](#)

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