

Please cite as: EUAA, '4.1. Areas under the control of the Transitional Administration' in *COI Report - Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025.

4.1. Areas under the control of the Transitional Administration

On 27 November 2024, HTS and allied Türkiye-backed factions started a lightning military offensive in northwestern Syria that eventually led to the collapse of Assad's rule. This operation followed a marked intensification of attacks by troops of the Assad government574 and Russian forces, with ACLED recording 684 aerial and artillery strikes across in opposition-held territories in northern Syria between 1 October and 26 November. These strikes reportedly caused at least 39 deaths among militants and civilians.575

Concurrently with the HTS-led offensive launched on 27 November, assassinations, Israeli strikes, ISIL attacks, and indiscriminate gunfire in the areas formerly controlled by the Assad government led to multiple deaths of civilians.576 Aerial strikes by pro-Assad forces, including by Russian aircraft, killed dozens of civilians in Idlib city between 27 November and 2 December 2024,577 including 22 civilians in a series of strikes that hit a market and five residential areas on 1 December,578 as well as in strikes targeting a hospital in Aleppo city (1 December)579 and areas in Aleppo's western countryside (between 27 and 30 November).580 Meanwhile, four students were killed when a HTS rocket hit their Aleppo dormitory (29 November 2024).581 By 12 December 2024, more than 1.1 million people had been newly displaced due to the escalation in hostilities since the beginning of the offensive.582

As of February and early March 2025, the territories controlled by the Military Operations Administration (MOA), the umbrella command centre583 of the new HTS-led transitional administration, encompassed most of western, central and southern Syria as well as the western Euphrates bank in Deir Ez-Zor. These areas included the cities of Damascus, Idlib, Aleppo, Hama, Homs, as well as the coastal cities of Latakia and Tartous.584 Sources noted that the control of the new authorities remained fragmented in certain areas.585 While their control in the cities of Damascus, Aleppo and Hama was reportedly effective,586 in areas of Homs, rural Hama and southern Syria (Dar'a and Sweida governorates)587 the MOA forces are overstretched and competing with other autonomous armed factions.588 The coastal areas of Latakia and Tartous have been prone to attacks on security forces589 and sectarian violence590 in the aftermath of Assad's fall (for more information see section 4.1.2.).

According to ACLED data, the districts most affected by security incidents (battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) during the reporting period were the districts of Ain Al Arab/Kobane (401 incidents) and Jebel Saman (307 incidents) (both Aleppo

governorate) and Deir Ez-Zor district (258 incidents) of Deir Ez-Zor governorate.591 Meanwhile, among all governorates, the fewest security incidents were recorded in Tartous (40 incidents). 592 In the coastal areas, the highest number of security incidents was recorded in the district of Latakia (47 incidents).593 The highest number of security incidents in southern Syria was recorded in the districts of Dar'a (75 incidents), Izra (66) and Quneitra (57 incidents).594

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