**Please cite as:** EUAA, '5.8.3. Hama governorate ' in *COI Report - Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025.

# 5.8.3. Hama governorate

979_map5_mapaction_Hama_072025_coi_syria_country_focus

Map 5: © MapAction, Hama governorate[979]

### (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Hama governorate is divided into five administrative districts, namely As-Salamiyeh, As-Suqaylabiyah, Hama, Masyaf, and Muhradah ,which are further divided into a total of 22 sub-districts.[980] The governorate's capital is Hama city.[981] As of March 2025, IOM estimated the governorate's population at 1 718 829, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad.[982] In comparison, the WHO estimated Hama's population at 1 524 494 as of March 2025.[983] For further background information on Hama governorate, see section 2.3.1. of the EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation (October 2024).

### (b) Territorial control and main armed actors

As of 30 May 2025, a map by the ISW and CTP showed Hama governorate as being largely under control of the HTS-led transitional administration. A small part along the area bordering Homs governorate in the east was mapped as being 'Lost Regime Territory'.[984]

Non-state armed groups that were reportedly active in Hama governorate during the reporting period include Saraya Ansar Al Sunnah, a sectarian Sunni militia,[985] that as of April 2025 claimed to have launched a campaign targeting members of the former Assad government.[986] Other pro-Assad armed groups active in Hama governorate included the Syrian Popular Resistance around the Jabal Al-Alawiyin and Masyaf,[987] the so-called Coastal Shield Forces − a splinter group of the Syrian Popular Resistance −

headed by Miqdad Fatiha, a former commander of the Republican Guard,988 and the Military Council for the Liberation of Syria, headed by Ghayth Dallah, a former officer of the SAA's Fourth Division led by the former president's brother Maher Al-Assad.989 Following attacks by the Coastal Shield Forces (also: Coastal Shield Brigade) on military and security positions in the coastal regions in early March 2025, security forces, with the support of military forces, raided several villages in the area, including in Hama governorate, to track individuals involved in the attacks.990 The Syrian army's 62nd Division was reportedly operating in Hama governorate as of May 2025, led by Abu Amsha,991 the former commander of the Sultan Suleiman Shah Division (also known as Amshat).992

Israel carried out airstrikes targeting military facilities in Hama governorate in April993 and May 2025.994

### ☐ (c) Security trends

On 6 March 2025, armed groups linked to former president Assad and his government attacked security and military forces in the coastal region (see sections 5.8.4 Latakia governorate and 5.8.5 Tartous governorate) and Hama governorate. The security operations launched by government forces in response to these attacks escalated into violence, often of 'retaliatory and sectarian nature',995 mainly targeting Alawi communities. Violence included extrajudicial killings,996 random shooting at homes, mass arrests targeting men over the age of 18, and the raiding and burning down of houses in Homs (see section 5.8.6) and western rural Hama, including Al-Bustan, Jeb Ramla,997 and Al-Rasafa villages.998 In Al-Rasafa, pro-Assad 'regime remnants' had started with attacking a convoy outside the village, using spilt oil on the road to aggravate the steering of vehicles. In this village alone, 63 residents were killed, according to the Christian Science Monitor (CSM).999 SNHR recorded the killing of 49 persons by armed forces involved in military operations (irregular factions and organisations nominally affiliated with the MoD) in Hama governorate between 6 and 10 March 2025. Victims included 15 children, 10 women and one medical worker.1000

The International Crisis Group noted that General Security forces had quickly managed to extend their control over several parts of the country, including the capital Damascus and other central cities like Hama. However, unrest had been simmering in some areas since the fall of the Assad regime, where the transitional administration struggled to maintain control, including in rural Hama. Numerous revenge killings and abductions, predominantly targeting Alawites, and the authorities' general inability to maintain public safety had contributed to a 'sense of state persecution' particularly

among that group and further undermined public safety and trust.1001

In April 2025, Israel Defence Forces (IDF) carried out airstrikes targeting the military airport in the city of Hama, reportedly destroying the facility and injuring dozens of civilians and military personnel.1002 According to the Associated Press (AP), the airstrikes targeted an airbase where Türkiye reportedly had 'interests in having a military presence'.1003 Further IDF airstrikes on Hama city in May 2025 targeted the headquarters of the 47th Brigade, a military base formerly linked to the 'Ba'ath regime', according to the Hawar News Agency (ANHA).1004 For further information on the events in early March 2025, see section 4 of the EUAA COI Report Syria – Country Focus (March 2025).

### ☐ (d) Security incidents

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 229 security incidents in Hama governorate (see Figure 13). For the period between 1 March and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 105 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) in Hama governorate. Of these incidents, 7 were coded as battles, 30 as explosions/remote violence and 68 as violence against civilians.1005

1006_evolution_security_events_Hama_dec24_may25_072025_coi_syria_country_focus

**Figure 13: Evolution of security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Hama governorate between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, based on ACLED data.**1006

During the reference period, security incidents were recorded in all five districts of the governorate. The highest number of such incidents was recorded in Hama (49 security incidents), followed by As-Suqaylabiyah (19 security incidents) and As-Salamiyeh (17 incidents). The fewest incidents were recorded in Muhradah district (7 security incidents). According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were involved as a main actor (coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2') in almost 70 % of all security incidents recorded during the reference period, particularly in incidents coded as 'violence against civilians' and 'explosions/remote violence', where in most cases civilians were also involved. Military and police forces of Syria were involved in almost 27 % of all recorded incidents, particularly in incidents coded as violence against civilians and battles. Most incidents coded as violence against civilians were recorded in March 2025 and referred to incidents in the context of 'sweeping operations' against militias, according to sources used by ACLED.1007

### ☐ (e) Civilian casualties

In March 2025, the SNHR recorded 153 civilian fatalities in Hama governorate. In 121 of these cases, SNHR recorded ‘armed forces involved in the Syrian Coast security crackdown’ as the perpetrators.1008 The number of casualties decreased in April 2025, with 15 fatalities recorded across the governorate.1009 In May 2025, the number of civilian fatalities slightly increased to 19.1010 For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 137 civilian fatalities in Hama governorate.1011

1012_civilian_fatalities_Hama_mar_may25_snhr_072025_coi_syria_country_focus

**Figure 14: Civilian fatalities in Hama governorate between March and May 2025. Monthly breakdown based on SNHR data**.1012

### ☐ (f) Conflict-related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

Relief Across Borders noted in April 2025 that in farming communities across Hama governorate ‘routing tasks’ such as agriculture-related work or playing outdoors had become ‘deadly gambles’.1013 Several sources reported that civilians have been killed or injured by explosive devices left behind from the war, including in rural areas of northern,1014 eastern1015 and southern Hama.1016 The Syrian Civil Defence reportedly observed that Hama was among the areas where most incidents involving war remnants occurred between 27 November 2024 and 14 March 2025.1017

The outbreak of violence in early March 2025 caused ‘severe’ damages to infrastructure in the affected regions, including in Hama governorate, according to UNOCHA.1018 The Syria Report pointed to the destruction of agricultural land and cutting of trees by pro-Assad forces, particularly of trees owned by persons affiliated with former opposition groups, leaving many returning IDPs struggling to rebuild their livelihoods.1019

### ☐ (g) Conflict-induced displacement and return

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, there were 212 243 IDPs living in Hama governorate, as well as 181 567 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024.1020 UNHCR further estimated that a total of 616 215 returnees who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate by 15 May 2025, with the vast majority of them (44 971) returning to Hama district, followed by As-Salamiyeh (9 432). Since 8 December 2024, 37 274 individuals had returned to Hama governorate from abroad.1021

UNHCR pointed to reports of land seizures by local authorities of lands used by local families and presumed owners for cultivating olive and pistachio trees. The seizures reportedly affected 12 villages in north-eastern rural Hama, leading to the displacement of an estimated 2 000 (mostly Alawite) families to Hama and Homs.1022 GPC mentioned reports by families returning from internal displacement or abroad on 'forced evictions and retributive property seizures' in several governorates, including Hama.1023

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