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5.8.9. Deir Ez-Zor governorate

1330_map11_mapaction_Deir_Ez_Zor_072025_coi_syria_country_focus

Map 11: © MapAction, Deir Ez-Zor governorate map1330

☐ (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Deir Ez-Zor governorate is divided into three administrative districts, namely Abu Kamal (or Al-Bukamal), Al-Mayadin and Deir Ez-Zor, which are further divided into a total of 14 sub-districts.1331 Its capital is the city of Deir Ez-Zor.1332 As of March 2025, IOM estimated the governorate's population at 1 408 656, including residents, IDPs, and returnees from abroad.1333 In comparison, the WHO estimated Deir Ez-Zor's population at 1 234 199 as of March 2025.1334 For further background information on Deir Ez-Zor governorate, see section 2.9.1. of the EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation (October 2024).

☐ (b) Territorial control and main armed actors

As of late May 2025, the northern and north-eastern parts of Deir Ez-Zor governorate, which border Raqqa governorate to the west and Hasaka governorate to the north and north-east, were mapped by the ISW and CTP as being under the control of the SDF. The area around the Euphrates River, which runs through the middle of the governorate from the western border with Raqqa to the south-eastern border with neighbouring Iraq, was mapped as being under the control of the transitional government. However, in three small areas in the east of this strip of land, including in Al-Mayadin and Abu Kamal, pro-Assad remnants maintained a presence. Some areas to the east of the river, including Bushayrah and another area near the Tanak/Omar oil fields, were mapped as being contested between the transitional government and the

SDF.[1335] According to the ISW and CTP, these were areas where both parties conducted offensive and defensive manoeuvres, while neither fully controlled the areas.[1336] Another strip of land, stretching from Deir Ez-Zor city in the centre of the governorate to its western border with Homs, was also mapped as being under the transitional government's control. The remaining areas of the governorate located in the desert zone in the south and the west of the governorate were mapped as 'Lost Regime Territory'[1337].[1338] On 10 March 2025, the SDF and the transitional government signed an agreement regarding the integration of the SDF forces into the new Syrian army[1339] (see section 5.1.1). However, as of early June the integration of SDF into the Syrian state military was still unresolved.[1340]

The US-led International Coalition was active in Deir Ez-Zor governorate during the reference period.[1341] While the International Coalition Forces reportedly sent reinforcements to Deir Ez-Zor governorate in March 2025,[1342] they began retreating towards Hasaka governorate[1343] and reducing their presence[1344] from mid-April on. [1345] Syria TV reported that the SDF sent reinforcements in May to fill the gap caused by the withdrawal of International Coalition Forces, noting that the originally planned complete withdrawal of US forces had reportedly been postponed following intelligence reports of Iranian-affiliated armed group movements near the Iraqi border.[1346] In early June, U.S. officials reported that around 500 U.S. troops had withdrawn from Syria. Additionally, the governorate's Mission Support Site Green Village base was closed, the Mission Support Site Euphrates base was handed over to the SDF, and a third base was in the process of being vacated.[1347]

The existence of ISIL cells was also reported during the reference period.[1348]

☐ (c) Security trends

As of March 2025, security challenges in north-eastern Syria, including in Deir Ez-Zor governorate, persisted. Clashes in this area had resulted in civilian casualties and displacement.[1349] The presence of ISIL cells further exacerbated this vulnerability. [1350] In the assessment of a Syrian journalist interviewed by the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) in May, Deir Ez-Zor is the only governorate where the security situation in the city 'is largely similar' to that of the surrounding countryside.[1351]

The SDF carried out raids and detention campaigns in Deir Ez-Zor governorate during the reference period, including against individuals who had expressed support for the transitional government,[1352] as well as SDF defectors[1353] and others for unknown reasons.[1354] SNHR reported that at least 47 persons were detained by the SDF in Deir

Ez-Zor and Raqqa governorates in the second half of May 2025, including individuals who were critical of SDF policies and relatives of SDF defectors.1355 The SDF had reportedly scaled up raids and arrest campaigns at the time.1356 After a car bomb attack, attributed to ISIL, on a police station in Al-Mayadin in mid-May 2025,1357 killing three government security forces and one civilian,1358 a curfew was imposed in Al-Mayadin1359 and several other cities in eastern rural Deir Ez-Zor and continued to carry out raids and arrest campaigns in the governorate.1360 In an NPA article, the attack in Al-Mayadin was described as 'one of the most serious attacks in recent weeks'.1361 The SDF also carried out raids against ISIL members in the reference period.1362

In the wake of the violent March 2025 events, particularly affecting the coastal region (see sections 5.8.4(c) and 5.8.5(c), GSS carried out arrest operations targeting remnants of the Assad government,1363 including in Abu Kamal, Deir Ez-Zor city and Al-Mayadin. 1364 Raids against former members of armed organisations with ties to Iran were also reported.1365

According to a Syrian journalist interviewed in May 2025 by DIS, the threat posed by ISIL persists and is reportedly growing, with the group targeting security and civilians in the governorate.1366 ISIL attacks on civilians,1367 SDF targets1368 and on transitional government forces were reported during the reference period.1369 As of mid-April 2025, 46 of overall 56 ISIL attacks in SDF-governed areas in 2025 had reportedly taken place in Deir Ez-Zor governorate.1370 In early May 2025, a high-ranking ISIL leader was captured in eastern rural Deir Ez-Zor.1371

Sources also reported attacks by unidentified armed men on security forces and civilians in the reference period, resulting in civilian casualties.1372

☐ (d) Security incidents

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 638 security incidents in Deir Ez-Zor governorate (see Figure 24). For the period between 1 March 2025 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 307 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, and violence against civilians) in Deir Ez-Zor governorate, marking the highest number of such incidents among all Syrian governorates during this period. Of these, 109 were coded as incidents of violence against civilians, 103 as battles, and 95 as explosions/remote violence.1373

1374_evolution_security_events_Deir_Ez_Zor_dec24_may25_072025_coi_syria_country_focus

Figure 24: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Deir Ez-Zor governorate between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, based on ACLED data.1374

During the reference period, security incidents were recorded by ACLED in all three districts of the governorate, with the highest number documented in the district of Deir Ez-Zor (156 incidents), followed by Al-Mayadin (96 incidents) and Abu Kamal (55 incidents). According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were the main actors involved in around 48 % of all recorded security incidents (coded as either ‘Actor1’ or ‘Actor2’) during the reference period, particularly in incidents coded as explosions/remote violence caused by landmines and IEDs, which affected civilians. The SDF was involved in around 42 % of all security incidents, particularly in incidents coded as violence against civilians and battles (where ISIL or unidentified armed groups were often involved as an actor). ISIL was involved in around 17 % of all security incidents, mainly in incidents coded as battles where the SDF were also an actor. Various militias, including tribal militias, were involved in around 9 % all security incidents.1375

☐ (e) Civilian casualties

In March 2025, the SNHR recorded 23 civilian fatalities in Deir Ez-Zor governorate,1376 in April 2025, SNHR recorded 12 civilian fatalities,1377 and in May 2025, eight civilian fatalities were recorded in the governorate.1378 For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 54 civilian fatalities in Deir Ez-Zor governorate.1379

1380_civilian_fatalities_Deir_Ez_Zor_mar_may25_snhr_072025_coi_syria_country_focus

Figure 25: Civilian fatalities in Deir-Ez-Zor governorate between March and May 2025. Monthly breakdown based on SNHR data.1380

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

Information on conflict-related infrastructure damage during the reference period could not be found within the time constraints of this report.

The Syria Civil Defence was quoted by Enab Baladi as saying that Deir Ez-Zor governorate was the last of seven governorates witnessing the highest numbers of incidents relating to remnants of war between 27 November 2024 and 14 March 2025.[1381] UNOCHA reported in May 2025 that UXOs, ERWs, mines and IEDs are 'reportedly widespread and affect residential areas, farmland, infrastructure, and key access routes' particularly in a handful of Syrian governorates, including in Deir Ez-Zor.[1382] According to UNOCHA, Deir Ez-Zor remained one of the most heavily contaminated areas, accounting for approximately a quarter of all related incidents.[1383] IDPs returning to north-eastern Syrian governorates, including Deir Ez-Zor, reportedly faced extensive explosive ordnance contamination.[1384] Mines planted by the Assad government and other actors in Deir Ez-Zor reportedly continued 'to pose a direct threat to the lives of civilians' and 'hinder the return of displaced people to their homes'.[1385] According to the GPC, the majority of unexploded ordnance incidents since December 2024 in several governorates, including in Deir Ez-Zor, had occurred 'in agricultural settings as people were trying to cultivate land or graze animals'.[1386] Unexploded ordnance detonating in various parts of the governorate has caused civilian deaths and injuries, including in western,[1387] eastern[1388] and south-eastern Deir Ez-Zor.[1389] In mid-March 2025, NPA reported that in the neighbourhood Harabesh in Deir Ez-Zor, landmines planted by the Assad government and by Iranian militias continued to cause civilian casualties, particularly affecting shepherds.[1390]

☐ (g) Conflict-induced displacement and return

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, there were 192 946 IDPs living in the governorate and 46 557 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024.[1391]

UNHCR further estimated that a total 40 105 returnees who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate by 15 May 2025, with the vast majority (24 951) returning to Deir Ez-Zor district, followed by Al-Mayadin (12 061). Since 8 December 2024, 14 131 individuals had returned to Deir Ez-Zor governorate from abroad.[1392]

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