Please cite as: EUAA, '5.8.12. Dar’a governorate ' in *COI Report - Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025.

5.8.12. Dar’a governorate

1496_map14_mapaction_Dar_a_072025_coi_syria_country_focus

Map 14: © MapAction, Dar’a governorate[1496]

☐ (a) Administrative division and population estimates

Dar’a governorate is divided into three administrative districts, namely Dar’a, Izra’ and As-Sanamayn, which are further divided into a total of 17 sub-districts.[1497] Its capital is the city of Dar’a.[1498] As of March 2025, the population of Dar’a governorate was 1 268 536, including residents, IDPs, IDP returnees, and returnees from abroad, according to IOM estimates.[1499] By comparison, the WHO estimated the governorate’s population at 1 081 657 as of the same month.[1500] For further background information on Dar’a governorate, see section 2.12.1. of the EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation (October 2024).

☐ (b) Territorial control and main armed actors

As of the end of May 2025, Dar’a governorate was mapped by the ISW and the CTP as being almost entirely under the control of the transitional administration. Some sections along the governorate’s eastern edges were being controlled by unidentified opposition groups whose realm of control extended into western Sweida. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) held a small stretch of territory in the southwest bordering the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights[1501] and Israeli forces operated across villages in the Yarmouk Basin (western rural Dar’a).[1502] Meanwhile, there were isolated pockets of presence of Assad remnants, including around As-Sanamayn town,[1503] where an armed faction formerly linked to the Assad-era Military Intelligence Directorate[1504] operated under the command of Mohsen Al-Hamid as of early March 2025.[1505] The

group was subsequently dismantled, although its leader escaped.1506

The Dar'a Division of the new Syrian army is led by former Ahrar al-Sham rebel commander Ahmad Binian al Hariri,1507 who heads the 40th Division,1508 a newly formed force1509 initially known as the Southern Division.1510 The MoD's forces include former members of the so-called central committees, bodies created in 2018 to administer previously opposition-held areas during Assad's rule1511 that have since merged with the new ministry.1512 The MoD started registration and recruitment of Dar'a locals into the 40th Division in March 20251513 in an effort to enhance control in the south, a region where the transitional administration's grip has remained weak. 1514

Up until mid-April 2025,1515 the Eighth Brigade, a Dar'a-based armed faction under the leadership of Ahmed Al-Awda1516 (also transliterated Ahmad Al-Awdeh),1517 operated around its stronghold in Busra al-Sham town.1518 The Eighth Brigade, the governorate's most prominent armed faction, was known for refusing to merge into the MoD forces1519 and maintaining a 'degree of autonomy' in controlling parts of eastern Dar'a1520 (for more information on the Eighth Brigade, see section 2.12.2. of the EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation (October 2024)).

However, on 13 April 2025, following clashes with a rival group affiliated with the transitional administration1521 and large-scale deployment of security forces towards Busra al-Sham,1522 the Eighth Brigade announced its dissolution.1523 By 15 April, the transitional administration had taken over the Eighth Brigade's former positions in Busra al-Sham.1524 With all armed factions in the governorate now dissolved,1525 GSS permanently stationed 400 fighters in Busra al-Sham and took control of the region.1526 However, supporters of Ahmed Al-Awda continued to be active in the area. 1527

☐ (c) Security trends

Following a temporary decrease in assassinations and targeted attacks after the fall of Assad's rule,1528 the governorate witnessed a renewed escalation of assassinations 1529 that according to social expert Ahmad al-Awadat were motivated by revenge and score-settling between parties that had been involved in years of conflict,1530 alongside reports of some civilians being killed over sectarian affiliations.1531

In early March 2025, clashes broke out in As-Sanamayn city between GSS forces and the armed group commanded by Mohsen al-Hamid after the latter refused to disarm.

1532 At least three civilians were killed while members of the Al-Hamid group resorted to indiscriminate gunfire1533 as General Security stormed the city, dismantling the group.1534

As of mid-April 2025, Enab Baladi observed that despite the assumption of security control by the MoI's GSS forces, the security apparatus remained unable to significantly shift realities on the ground given the wide spread of weapons among the population and the lack of actual dissolution of armed groups.1535 On 17 April 2025, following the announced dissolution of the Eighth Brigade, clashes were reported in Busra al-Sham between local residents and supporters of the group's leader Ahmed Al-Awda.1536 Arrest campaigns were conducted several towns and villages in a marked escalation in security operations.1537

The reference period saw multiple attacks on GSS members by unidentified armed men,1538 including while being off-duty.1539 On the other hand, killings of former local militia members1540 and individuals previously affiliated with the political1541 and security apparatus of the former Assad government were reported in various parts of the governorate.1542 At the same time, numerous attacks by unidentified gunmen caused casualties among individuals with no reported affiliation to any military party. 1543 Several casualties arose from armed disputes between tribal groups1544 and families.1545

The reference period further witnessed several Israeli airstrikes1546 that caused multiple casualties,1547 including in Dar'a city,1548 as well as regular Israeli ground incursions.1549 Following an attempt by local armed men to stop advancing Israeli ground forces,1550 the IDF escalated operations in late March, launching an incursion into Koya town in the Yarmouk Basin.1551 This operation involved Israeli artillery and drone strikes as well as armed clashes,1552 with sources reporting between four1553 and six deaths among local residents.1554 Another Israeli incursion into the Nawa town area in early April left nine people dead.1555

☐ (d) Security incidents

Between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 219 security incidents in Dar'a governorate (see Figure 29). For the period between 1 March and 31 May 2025, ACLED recorded 128 security incidents (defined as battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) in Dar'a governorate. Of these, 33 were coded as battles, 43 as explosions/remote violence and 52 as incidents of violence against civilians. The number of security incidents across the governorate was highest in March (52) and

April (48) and dropped to 28 in May.1556

1557_evolution_security_events_Dar_a_dec24_may25_snhr_072025_coi_syria_country_focus

Figure 29: Evolution of security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in Dar’a governorate between March and May 2025, based on ACLED data.1557

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 Dar’a (53 incidents). According to ACLED data, unidentified armed groups were involved as a main actor (coded as either ‘Actor1’ or ‘Actor2’) in around 65 % of all security incidents recorded during the reference period, particularly in incidents coded as violence against civilians. Military and police forces of Syria were involved in around 30 % of all security incidents, including in battles with unidentified armed groups. Israeli forces were involved in around 18 % of all security incidents, mainly in incidents where military forces of Syria were also an actor.1558

☐ (e) Civilian casualties

In March 2025, the SNHR recorded 39 civilian fatalities in Dar’a governorate caused by parties to the conflict or controlling forces in the governorate.1559 In April 2025, SNHR recorded 32 civilian fatalities,1560 and in May 2025, 8 civilian fatalities were recorded in the governorate.1561 SNHR attributed responsibility for the majority of the civilian fatalities it recorded over this three-month period to unspecified/unidentified parties (67 deaths, including 37 in March) and Israeli forces (9 deaths, all in April).1562 SNHR does not provide more detailed information on these fatalities. For the period between March and May 2025, UCDP recorded 41 civilian fatalities in Dar’a governorate.1563

1564_civilian_fatalities_Dar_a_mar_may25_snhr_072025_coi_syria_country_focus

Figure 30: Civilian fatalities in Dar’a governorate between March and May 2025. Monthly breakdown based on SNHR data.1564

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

A high degree of contamination with unexploded remnants of war was observed on premises of unsecured military bases and in certain rural areas, causing deaths and injuries among civilians.1565 Numerous such incidents were reported across the governorate, including in western,1566 northern,1567 and eastern rural Dar'a1568 and in the city of Busra al-Sham.1569 In March 2025, GPC reported that the majority of unexploded ordnance accidents since December 2024 in several governorates, including in Dar'a, had occurred 'in agricultural settings as people were trying to cultivate land or graze animals'.1570

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

☐ (g) Conflict-induced displacement and return

According to UNHCR estimates, as of 12 June 2025, 66 480 IDPs and 24 122 individuals who had returned to areas of the governorate from internal displacement since 27 November 2024, were living in the governorate.1571 The violence around Koya town in late March 2025 prompted at least 3 000 local residents to flee for other areas within western Dar'a in what was reported as the largest displacement incident seen in months in southern Syria. Most of these displaced returned the following day.1572

UNHCR further estimated that, as of 15 May 2025, a total of 71 498 individuals who had returned from abroad since the beginning of 2024 were living in the governorate, the vast majority having returned to Dar'a (42 422) and Izra' (22 915) districts. Since 8 December 2024, 43 822 individuals had returned to Dar'a governorate from abroad. 1573

- 1496

  MapAction, Dar'a governorate, 29 July 2016, url

- 1497

  UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024: Syrian Arab Republic, 3 March 2024, url, p. 107

- 1498

  UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic [Map], August 2022, url

- 1499

IOM, Syrian Arab Republic: Population Mobility and Baseline Assessment Round 2 – March 2025, 7 April 2025, url, p. 8

- 1500

  WHO, Health Sector Syria - Health Sector Bulletin - March 2025, 2 April 2025, url, p. 7

- 1501

  ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, url, pp. 3, 7

- 1502

  Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, url; Enab Baladi, Israeli military operations paralyze life for residents of Yarmouk Basin, 24 March 2025, url; SOHR, Comprising armoured vehicles and machineries | Group of Israeli forces advance into western Daraa, 22 March 2025, url

- 1503

  ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 30, 2025 [Map], 30 May 2025, url, p. 7; ISW and CTP, Iran Update May 1, 2025 [Map], 1 May 2025, url, p. 4

- 1504

  Asharq Al-Awsat, 3 Members of Syrian Security Forces Killed in Clashes with Regime Remnants in Daraa, 6 March 2025, url; SOHR, Following clashes left seven casualties, including civilians | Internal Security Forces launch security campaign in Daraa’s Al-Sanamayn, 5 March 2025, url

- 1505

  Etana Syria, Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025, 8 March 2025, url; Asharq Al-Awsat, 3 Members of Syrian Security Forces Killed in Clashes with Regime Remnants in Daraa, 6 March 2025, url

- 1506

  Enab Baladi, Assassinations: A continuing phenomenon in Daraa, 13 April 2025, url

- 1507

  FDD's Long War Journal, Profiles of commanders in the new Syrian army’s regional divisions, 20 March 2025, url

- 1508

  Asharq Al-Awsat, Syrian Defense Ministry Begins Reshaping Military Affairs in Daraa, 22 April 2025, url

- 1509

Waters, G., The New Syrian Army: Structure and Commanders, Syria Revisited, 19 April 2025, url

- 1510

ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 11, 2025, 11 March 2025, url, p. 3

- 1511

Syria Direct, Why the delay in merging Daraa's factions into a new Syrian army?, 21 February 2025, url

- 1512

SOHR, Security violations | Former Central Committee members assault civilians including women in Daraa, 26 April 2025, url; Syria Direct, Why the delay in merging Daraa's factions into a new Syrian army?, 21 February 2025, url

- 1513

ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 22, 2025, 22 April 2025, url, p. 5

- 1514

ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 17, 2025, 17 March 2025, url, p. 9

- 1515

Etana Syria, BRIEF: The Dissolution of Ahmad al-Awdeh's Groups in Daraa, 16 April 2025, url

- 1516

ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 11, 2025, 11 April 2025, url, p. 3

- 1517

Etana Syria, BRIEF: The Dissolution of Ahmad al-Awdeh's Groups in Daraa, 16 April 2025, url

- 1518

Enab Baladi, Eighth Brigade in Daraa dissolves itself, 13 April 2025, url

- 1519

PSI, Daraa Beyond the Eighth Brigade: Strategic Shifts and Potential Implications, 15 April 2025, url

- 1520

ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 11, 2025, 11 April 2025, url, p. 3

- 1521

  Etana Syria, BRIEF: The Dissolution of Ahmad al-Awdeh’s Groups in Daraa, 16 April 2025, url; ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 11, 2025, 11 April 2025, url, p. 3

- 1522

  Etana Syria, BRIEF: The Dissolution of Ahmad al-Awdeh’s Groups in Daraa, 16 April 2025, url; Enab Baladi, Daraa: Agreement ends tension in Busra al-Sham, 12 April 2025, url

- 1523

  Etana Syria, BRIEF: The Dissolution of Ahmad al-Awdeh’s Groups in Daraa, 16 April 2025, url; Enab Baladi, Eighth Brigade in Daraa dissolves itself, 13 April 2025, url

- 1524

  ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 15, 2025, 15 April 2025, url, p. 2

- 1525

  Enab Baladi, Assassinations: A continuing phenomenon in Daraa, 13 April 2025, url

- 1526

  Etana Syria, BRIEF: The Dissolution of Ahmad al-Awdeh’s Groups in Daraa, 16 April 2025, url

- 1527

  ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 18, 2025, 18 April 2025, url, p. 11

- 1528

  Enab Baladi, Assassinations: A continuing phenomenon in Daraa, 13 April 2025, url

- 1529

  Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Harmoon Centre Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, url; SOHR, Collecting unlicensed weapons | General security forces launch security campaign in Daraa countryside, 19 April 2025, url; Enab Baladi, Assassinations: A continuing phenomenon in Daraa, 13 April 2025, url

- 1530

  Enab Baladi, Assassinations: A continuing phenomenon in Daraa, 13 April 2025, url

- 1531

  SOHR, Mostly killed over sectarian affiliation | 144 civilians assassinated and executed in different areas across Syria in March, 6 April 2025, url

- 1532

Etana Syria, Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025, 8 March 2025, url

- 1533

  SOHR, Following clashes left seven casualties, including civilians | Internal Security Forces launch security campaign in Daraa's Al-Sanamayn, 5 March 2025, url

- 1534

  Enab Baladi, Assassinations: A continuing phenomenon in Daraa, 13 April 2025, url

- 1535

  Enab Baladi, Assassinations: A continuing phenomenon in Daraa, 13 April 2025, url

- 1536

  ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 18, 2025, 18 April 2025, url, p. 11

- 1537

  Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Harmoon Centre Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, url

- 1538

  SOHR, Armed attack | Member of general security forces killed in Daraa city, 4 May 2025, url; SOHR, Armed attack | Two members of general security forces killed in Daraa countryside, 15 April 2025, url; ISW and CTP, Iran Update April 16, 2025, 16 April 2025, url, p. 7; SOHR, New attack | Gunmen attack military post of General Security forces in northern Daraa, leaving member injured, 1 April 2025, url

- 1539

  SOHR, Armed attack | Member of general security forces killed in Daraa city, 4 May 2025, url

- 1540

  Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, url

- 1541

  ISW and CTP, Iran Update March 21, 2025, 21 March 2025, url, p. 4

- 1542

  See, for example: Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 20-27, 2025, 27 May 2025, url; SOHR, Accused of "committing violations against civilians" | Officer of former regime army executed in northern Daraa, 3 May 2025, url; SOHR, Security chaos | Three former members of Military Intelligence Department killed by gunmen in Daraa, 4 March 2025, url

- 1543

  See, for example: Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 27-June 3, 2025, 3 June 2025, url; Lister, C., Syria Weekly: May 20-27, 2025, 27 May 2025, url; SOHR, Security vacuum | Civilian shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Daraa countryside, 21 April 2025, url; SOHR, Horrible crime | Six people killed in attack by unidentified armed gunmen in Daraa., 8 March 2025, url

- 1544

  SOHR, New murder | Young man killed in armed clashes between two tribes in Daraa, 25 March 2025, url

- 1545

  Enab Baladi, Daraa: Tribal dispute escalates into factional conflict in Jassim, 18 April 2024, url; SOHR, Family disputes | Young man injured in armed clashes between two families in Daraa, 16 March 2025, url

- 1546

  Rudaw, Syria says one person killed in Israeli airstrike, 3 May 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Two people killed in Israeli air strike on Deraa in southern Syria, 17 March 2025, url; SOHR, Death toll update | Four people including a military combatant killed under Israeli airstrikes on Daraa, 17 March 2025, url

- 1547

  Harmoon Center for Contemporary Studies, Harmoon Centre Monitoring Report for April 2025, 30 May 2025, url; SOHR, Death toll update | Four people including a military combatant killed under Israeli airstrikes on Daraa, 17 March 2025, url

- 1548

  SOHR, Death toll update | Four people including a military combatant killed under Israeli airstrikes on Daraa, 17 March 2025, url

- 1549

  Etana Syria, Syria Update #24: 8 May 2025, 8 May 2025, url; BBC News, Israeli strikes in Syria a challenge to Türkiye , 4 April 2025, url; Etana Syria, Syria Update #21: 8 March 2025, 8 March 2025, url

- 1550

  BBC News, Israeli strikes in Syria a challenge to Türkiye , 4 April 2025, url

- 1551

  Etana Syria, Syria Update #23: 31 March 2025, 31 March 2025, url; Enab Baladi, Koya: A border village paying the price for rejecting Israeli presence, 26 March 2025, url

- 1552

  Etana Syria, Syria Update #23: 31 March 2025, 31 March 2025, url

- 1553

  BBC News, Israeli strikes in Syria a challenge to Türkiye , 4 April 2025, url

- 1554

  Enab Baladi, Koya: A border village paying the price for rejecting Israeli presence, 26 March 2025, url; International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: March 2025 – May 2025, n.d., url

- 1555

  SNHR, SNHR Condemns the Intensified Attacks and Wide Ground Incursions by Israeli Occupation Forces into Syrian Territority [Blog], 5 April 2025, url; BBC News, Syria condemns 'unjustified' Israeli strikes as tensions rise over Türkiye , 3 April 2025, url

- 1556

  EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, url

- 1557

  EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, url

- 1558

  EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East, as of 6 June 2025, url

- 1559

  SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, url, p. 9

- 1560

  SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, url, p. 3

- 1561

  SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, url, p. 4

- 1562

SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, url, p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, url, p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, url, pp. 8-10

- 1563

  EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 March to 31 May 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 12 June 2025.

- 1564

  SNHR, The Death of 157 Civilian Including 20 Children and 11 Women, and One Death due to Torture Recorded in May 2025, 1 June 2025, url, p. 4; SNHR, The Death of 174 Civilian Including 23 Children and 13 Women, and 5 Deaths due to Torture Recorded in April 2025 in Syria, 2 May 2025, url, p. 3; SNHR, 1,562 Deaths, Including 102 Children and 99 Women, as well as 33 Medical Personnel, Recorded in March 2025 in Syria, 9 April 2025, url, p. 9

- 1565

  HRW, Syria: Landmines, Explosive Remnants Harming Civilians, 8 April 2025, url

- 1566

  SOHR, Old ordnance | Civilian dies in explosion of war remnants in Daraa countryside, 29 April 2025, url; SOHR, Bringing total death toll to four | Civilian dies of wounds following explosion of unexploded shell in western Daraa, 15 April 2025, url

- 1567

  SOHR, Old ordnance | Civilian killed in northern Daraa countryside, 30 March 2025, url; SNHR, Civilian injured by a landmine of unidentified source in N. Daraa, March 8, 2025, 10 March 2025, url

- 1568

  SNHR, Three children killed by a landmine of unidentified source in E. Daraa, March 18, 2025, 20 March 2025, url; SOHR, Daraa | Landmine explosion kills child in eastern countryside, 13 March 2025, url

- 1569

  SOHR, Old ordnance | 12 civilians including a woman killed and injured in explosion of war remnants in Hama and Daraa, 9 March 2025, url

- 1570

  GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, url, p. 8

- 1571

  UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview [Map], 12 June 2025, url

- 1572

  Etana Syria, Syria Update #23: 31 March 2025, 31 March 2025, url

- 1573

  UNHCR, Syrian returnees' figures by sub-districts - data 15 May 2025, 15 May 2025, url

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu