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Accusing the Syrian Regular Forces of the Facilitate to Carrying out the Attacks Against the Province on June 5, 2018

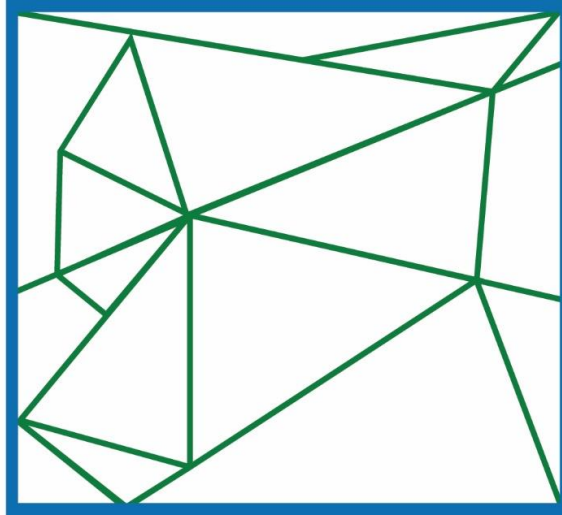
About Syrians for Truth and Justice

[Syrians for Truth and Justice \(STJ\)](#) is an independent, non-governmental and non-profit organization whose members include Syrian human rights defenders, advocates and academics of different backgrounds and nationalities. It also includes members of other nationalities.

The initiative strives for SYRIA, where all Syrian citizens (males and females) have dignity, equality, justice and equal human rights.

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The recent military attacks launched by the group that calls itself the Islamic State- also known as ISIS, in [al-Sweida province](#) was accompanied with widespread summary executions against the residents of many villages such as Rami, Shabaki, Sharihi in the al-Sweida countryside on July 25, 2018, and resulted in the death of about 100 civilians in these three villages.

Shadi Sa'eb, the journalist and the activist who lives in al-Sweida, said in an interview with STJ on July 28, 2018, that eyewitnesses from these villages talked to him about extrajudicial executions against women and children. The elements of ISIS executed 84 civilians from the Jiba'ei Family, Sa'eb Family and Abu Ammar Family in their own homes in [Shabaki](#) village, distributed among thirteen families, including 27 women and 7 children. In addition, they executed 19 civilians from Sa'eb Family in their own houses in [Sharihi](#) village, distributed among three families whom nobody escaped the execution except one girl who was not present at the time.

Quoting eyewitnesses in Ghidat Hamayel village, that ISIS could kill 8 civilians in their houses before the outbreak of clashes among members and armed individuals from "the Domestic Protection Groups", besides they killed 21 civilians in their houses in Rami village, distributed among 4 families, the journalist said.

Concerning the mechanism of implementing the attacks on the villages, an eyewitness- a wounded who survived from the Jba'ei Family, that elements of ISIS assaulted the villages within groups, each group contain about 30 to 50 elements; they entered with the help of their pro-Bedouins and shepherds. They guided them to the houses that lie on the outskirts of the villages.

He added,

"the Bedouin escorting the ISIS elements was knocking the door and calling the name of the owner of the house, and when the owner got out, the elements were shooting him then enters the house and kill the rest of the family, kill everyone who was inside."

The attacks were inflicted on the villages of Sharihi, Shabaki, Duma, Ghidat Hamayel, Rami, Tarba, Kaseeb, Tayma located in the east countryside of al-Sweida. And the village of Matouni in the north countryside of the city where 4 civilians were killed, in addition to the village of Sweimeri where 2 displaced civilians were killed in the same way. All the mentioned village are adjacent to the ISIS-controlled areas, which are only some kilometers away from these villages whose residents are of the Druze sect who were left without protection. The journalist Sa'eb said.

A local source, who asked anonymity for security purposes, said that on July 25, 2018, at 5: a.m. elements of the Islamic State-ISIS targeted at the start of its offensive two Syrian regular forces-observation posts affiliated to the National Defense Militias. The first post was in **Tell al-Hash**, near Duma village, it contained only five elements who were killed by Daesh who were then able to enter Duma from the eastern side. The fighters of ISIS clashed with some civilians in the village, those who have got some simple weapons that they use for haunting and other members of "the Domestic Protection Groups". During these clashes, 19 civilians and armed



men were killed. At the same time, another group of ISIS entered Kaseeb village and clashed with the residents and three civilians were killed. Similar clashes went on in Tayma village but no one was killed. In conjunction with these attacks, another group of ISIS militants assaulted the second Syrian regular forces-observatory post near **Tell al-Bseir**, adjacent to Tarba. In this attack, all the fighters who belong to the National Defense were killed, and clashes occurred among ISIS elements against members of "the Domestic Protection Groups" inside Tarba and resulted in the killing of 6 ISIS elements plus 4 of the village's residents.

Another group of ISIS sneaked from al-Lajat area to the north countryside of the province, used machine guns, automatic rifles, and suicide vests, plus there were another group stationed in the hills with snipers and mortar shells. The Islamic State-ISIS was encircling the villages from all sides. The source added.

Concerning description of those elements who carried out the attack, eyewitnesses from Shabaki said some of the elements were non Syrian, their body, voices and languages were different. They were wearing blue long shirts and white loose pants and had got long beards. Some of them were carrying identity cards indicated that they were residents from al-Yarmouk Camp area south of the capital Damascus. Moreover, some of the survivors were able to identify the identities and voices of the Bedouins who escorted the ISIS elements.

Regarding reasons of the attack and its conjunction with the almost-complete withdrawal of the Syrian regular forces their elements from the region, two local sources, who refused to disclose their identities for security purposes, said in an interview with STJ that there is a possibility of involving of the Syrian regular forces in this attack, because it came after a meeting among a delegation of Russian officers and Rijal al-Karama¹ in which the Russian officers demanded Rijal al-Karama to hand over all its weapons in addition to the weapons of the "Domestic Protection Groups" to the Syrian regular forces. In addition, the nonofficial Hmeimim Airbase published statements that there were terrorist groups in al-Sweida and therefore, the Syrian regular forces facilitated the assault on the province aiming to drain the power of Domestic Protection Groups and Rijal al-Karama in order to make it easy to control the province later, the sources said.

The local sources illustrated that they had no "conclusive evidence" that condemn the involvement of the Syrian regular forces, but there are many indicators such as the Syrian regular forces' withdrawal of the majority of the elements days before the offensive, and the inaction to counter the offensive and not bringing reinforcement and support although the Tha'alh Airport is only 15 km away from the location.

¹ Akl Sheikhdome takes over the supreme spiritual and social service of the Unitarian Druze community in Syria by virtue of the laws in force which have consolidated their full autonomy to their religious affairs and their charitable endowments. The Sheikhdome legislates the systems and administers of their institutions in compliance with the spiritual provisions of the community and its confessional privileges and laws and regulations.

Furthermore, the sources noted that there are more than 50,000 young men who are wanted for the compulsory military service, and that the Russian delegation demanded the join of those youths to the Fifth Legion affiliated to the Syrian regular forces, which was rejected by Rijal al-Karama who insisted on the province neutrality from any internal conflict.

On July 25, 2018, al-Sweida province had witnessed [bloody attacks and explosions that targeted the city](#), and a ground offensive that targeted 8 villages in the eastern countryside. [The non-final total](#) was 240 deaths, being civilians or militants from the "the Domestic Protection Groups" and 170 injuries. The Islamic State- ISIS announced responsibility, claiming that it had targeted military zones and security headquarters of the Syrian regular forces. this was denied by local activists who confirmed that it targeted civilian gatherings. STJ published detailed reports on the incidents.