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## Southern Syria: Tafas City's Residents Concerned Despite the New Settlement Agreement

## **Southern Syria: Tafas City's Residents Concerned Despite the New Settlement Agreement**

*This special report monitors recent military developments in Tafas city, in the western countryside of Daraa province, following an attack led by Syrian government forces and a new settlement agreement signed in February 2021*

## Executive Summary

A group of Syrian government forces launched a military attack on Tafas city in the western countryside of Daraa province on 24 January 2021. These forces, notably the 4th Division—reputed for being close to Iran—attacked the city, where there are many former opposition fighters, despite the settlement agreement signed in July 2018 in southern Syria.

The day-long attack included multiple exchanges of fire. Personnel of the 4th Division clashed with unreconciled former opposition fighters—those who refused to sign a settlement deal with the Syrian government. Regular forces shelled the city's suburbs and residential neighborhoods with artillery and missiles, causing material damage. These hostilities spread fear and panic among locals and forced hundreds of them to escape to nearby villages and towns.

Reported hostilities halted as city notables and members of negotiation committees held a meeting with officers from the 4th Division and the Security Committee in Daraa under Russian auspices. A source informed of the meeting's details said that the Syrian government forces demanded the expulsion of a number of western Daraa residents to northern Syria, primarily those refused to reconcile with the Syrian government and former commanders of armed opposition groups, including Muhammad Qasim al-Subaihi<sup>1</sup> and Moaz al-Zoubi.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, government forces demanded that all weapons in Tafas be surrendered, as well as several of its security posts and homes searched for affiliates of the Islamic State (IS) and the military group Hurras al-Din (Guardians of Religion).

On 8 February 2021, the meeting between the parties concluded after several rounds of negotiations. The parties ultimately agreed on the terms of a new settlement agreement. The active attack and any future attacks on the city were stopped in exchange for allowing security forces and the 4th Division to inspect farms encircling Tafas city, in addition to surrendering government buildings and medium and light weapons kept by former opposition fighters.

Three days after the meeting, on 11 February 2021, groups of Syrian government forces entered Tafas city. As they made their way into the city, these groups seized houses located at the entrance to al-Muzayrib town. The seized houses all belong to Muhammad Qasim al-Subaihi—one of the armed opposition groups' commanders targeted by government forces—and were eventually turned into military posts for 4th Division personnel.

A field researcher with Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) monitored the enforcement of the new settlement's terms. The researcher reported that government forces withdrew from Tafas city on the evening of 11 February 2021. However, before departing, they established

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Subaihi hails from Atman town and is a former commander in the First Corps of the armed opposition. He spearheaded an attack on a government-run police station in al-Muzayrib town on 4 May 2020, causing the death of nine policemen. The attack was in retaliation to the assassination of his son, Shuja' al-Subaihi, and one of his relatives near an Air Force Intelligence checkpoint set up in central rural Daraa. The commander held the Syrian government forces responsible for the assassination.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Zoubi is a former commander of the Army of the Revolution of the armed opposition. After the 2018 Daraa reconciliation/settlement agreement, he became a member of the reconciliation committee in Horan.

several 4th Division military posts outside the city's borders and searched a number of its surrounding farms. The researcher added that only a small amount of the demanded light and medium weapons were delivered to government forces before they retreated.

This report was compiled on 4 March 2021— namely, 21 days after the new settlement agreement went into effect. However, Tafas continues to suffer from the woes of deteriorating security. The locals' concerns were boosted by the failed assassination of former opposition commander Moaz al-Zoubi, one of the persons government forces asked to be expelled into northern Syria during settlement negotiations. On 26 February 2021, only two weeks after the Tafas attack and corresponding agreement, unidentified gunmen shot and injured al-Zoubi.

The field researcher reported that the situation in Tafas city improved only slightly following the new agreement. The Syrian government forces offered the city a limited range of healthcare services but not protection. Consequently, locals' fears linger, arising chiefly from recurrent assassinations.

The western countryside of Daraa province—where former fighters of the armed opposition are still present— is one of the province's most unstable areas. According to a former STJ report, while the whole province continues to witness rising rates of violent attacks, the western countryside remains an epicenter of security chaos-triggered assassinations and violence.<sup>3</sup>

The reported attack on Tafas city is not the Syrian government forces first military assault on towns and villages in the countryside of Daraa province despite the settlement agreement in southern Syria. Government forces previously attacked al-Sanamayn city, in the northern countryside of Daraa, which also hosts former armed opposition fighters, on 1 March 2020. The al-Sanamayn hostilities resulted in the death of nine persons, including three civilians, and caused extreme fire-related damage to several of the city's houses.<sup>4</sup>

Notably, the attack on Tafas city occurred in a politically turbulent stage in the Syrian conflict, particularly as the presidential elections draw closer,<sup>5</sup> scheduled to be held between mid-

<sup>3</sup> "Southern Syria: A New Wave of Violence Strikes Daraa," STJ, 17 February 2021 <https://stj-sy.org/en/southern-syria-a-new-wave-of-violence-strikes-daraa/> (last visited: 11 April 2021).

<sup>4</sup> "Daraa: Concern over Repeating 'al-Sanamayn Scenario' in Other Areas despite the 'Settlement Agreement'," STJ, 17 April 2020 <https://stj-sy.org/en/concern-over-repeating-al-sanamayn-scenario-in-other-areas-despite-settlement-agreement-daraa/> (last visited: 11 April 2021).

<sup>5</sup> "Syrian Presidential Elections will be Held on Time, regardless of the Constitutional Committee's Work," Russia Today, 21 December 2021 [https://arabic.rt.com/middle\\_east/1185234-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A6%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%88%D9%84%D9%86-%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%83-%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%B7-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/](https://arabic.rt.com/middle_east/1185234-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A6%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%88%D9%84%D9%86-%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%87%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%83-%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%B7-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/) (11 April 2021).



April and mid-May 2021. In preparation for the elections, the Syrian regime has been trying to reinstate its control over parts of the country still outside its power and reinforce its media-promoted illusion of stability for those already living under its administration.

## 1. Major Events in Tafas City Leading up to the New Settlement Agreement

In July 2018, the Russian police entered Tafas city for the first time after a settlement agreement was enforced in Daraa province. The majority of Tafas city's residents signed the settlement and legalized their status with Syrian government forces, except for a small group of former opposition fighters who also retained their light weapons, allegedly to surrender them at a later stage of the agreement.

Dozens of the city's men joined the ranks of various government military formations, primarily the Military Security and the 4th Division. Others enlisted with the Russia-founded 5th Legion. In late 2018, several of these recruits abandoned the legion, refusing to fight alongside Syrian government forces in Idlib province.

On 24 February 2019, a high-level security delegation chaired by the Head of the Military Intelligence Department [Muhammad Mahla](#) visited the city. The delegation met residents and discussed the implementation of the 2018 settlement agreement and promised to release several of the city's residents detained by Military Intelligence. The residents, for their part, demanded that government forces stop arrests—which they have habitually done every time they entered the city and that dismissed government employees be allowed to resume their jobs.<sup>6</sup>

In March 2019, the city's residents organized anti-government demonstrations, calling for the implementation of the promises previously made to them, particularly the release of detainees.

Like other cities and towns in Daraa province, Tafas city witnessed many assassinations perpetrated by unknown persons, such as the assassination of Muhammad Nur al-Bardan in front of his house on 21 April 2019. Al-Bardan was one of the city's prominent former opposition commanders, who joined the Military Intelligence and the 4th Division under the settlement agreement.

Over 2020, the city saw a steep increase in assassinations and rise in violence. After the assassination of two former opposition fighters Shuja' al-Subaihi and Muhammad al-Subaihi in the town of al-Muzayrib, adjacent to Tafas city, their relatives, including former opposition

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<sup>6</sup> STJ's field researcher monitored several detainee releases on 8 February 2021. The Syrian government released at least 62 detainees, including fighters and civilians from Daraa province, among them four women and four former relief and humanitarian organizations' workers. The researcher documented another batch of releases on 16 March 2021. The government released 43 other detainees from Daraa province, mostly fighters. Information obtained by STJ indicates that the larger number of these detainees were signatories to the 2018 settlement agreement. STJ will soon publish a special report, covering recent releases and the circumstances of the released persons' arrests.

commander and Shuja's father Muhammad Qasim al-Subaihi, attacked the towns' police station and killed nine government policemen.

As a result of a series of similar security attacks on government forces, the latter brought military reinforcements into Daraa province and threatened to launch a large-scale military operation against the southwestern countryside of Daraa, which includes the towns in the Yarmouk Basin, al-Muzayrib, al-Yadouda, and Tafas, among other areas. In response to hostilities, province notables and members from the Central Reconciliation Committee (CRC) held negotiations with representatives of the government forces in the city of Daraa. The negotiating government officers alleged that the military operation was necessary to eliminate IS cells from the area. The negotiators ultimately agreed to stop the planned military operation on one condition—allowing the 4th Division to set up checkpoints within target areas.

On 29 May 2020, the 4th Division deployed dozens of checkpoints and military posts, which extended from the suburbs of Daraa city to the towns of the Yarmouk Basin the occupied Golan Heights, and passing through the villages adjacent to the border with Jordan. Despite these measures, a number of former opposition fighters and commanders remained in Tafas city and refused to sign the settlement agreement. Syrian government forces attempted to recruit many of these fighters, including former commander Moaz Al-Zoubi, into their ranks. However, these enlistment drives had little to no success.

On 10 September 2020, forces of the 4th Division, newly deployed in the western countryside of Daraa, were targeted and attacked. Two division fighters were killed on the outskirts of Nahj village, located on the border with Jordan. This attack worsened the security situation in the province's western countryside, turning it into the high-tension area it is today.

## 2. Intra-Clan Disputes in Tafas City

On 13 January 2021, the Kiwan and al-Zoubi clans exchanged fire in Tafas city. The causes of these clashes are rooted in years-long disputes between the two prominent Daraa clans. Members of the two sides used several medium weapons which were meant to be surrendered to government forces under the 2018 settlement but were instead retained by the former opposition fighters. Commenting on the incident, a Tafas-based activist told STJ the following:

"The rift between these two clans, [al-Zoubi and Kiwan] started over five years ago. Clashes between the two clans have so far caused the death of more than 10 persons from both sides. On 13 January 2021, the clans engaged in the most brutal confrontation in the history of their dispute. They used light weapons, machine guns, and RBGs. This last fit of violence resulted in the deaths of three persons, Ausam a Qaseem al-Zoubi, Muhammad Mansour al-Zoubi, and Alaa Suliman al-Awdat. Dignitaries from Daraa intervened to resolve the dispute, but their efforts failed. Worse yet, the Syrian government has likely taken advantage of the dispute and summoned military reinforcements in preparation to storm Tafas."

### 3. Military Reinforcements Arrive in Daraa City, Threatening to Invade Tafas

On 21 January 2021, the Syrian government forces began to fortify their posts and centers in Daraa city. Led by officer Ghayath Dallah—operating under the 4th Division’s 42nd Brigade—several heavy vehicles and 4th Division fighters arrived in the province and spread in the plains around Tafas city. Government forces were ramping up their military presence to initiate a military operation against the city.

From the Yarmouk Basin, rural Daraa, an activist told STJ that the reinforcements, after they arrived in Daraa’s western countryside, were restationed at several points along the Yadouda Road, west of Daraa, and strengthened their existing posts in the plains surrounding Tafas city. Government forces intensified their military presence on 22 January 2021, a day after unidentified gunmen shot and killed Mahmoud al-Ibrahim al-Bannat in front of his house in al-Muzayrib town, adjacent to Tafas. Al-Bannat was a member of the government-found CRC.

The activist also defined the exact places where the reinforcements spread. He said that Syrian government forces were stationed at a farm in the vicinity of Tafas city. Simultaneously, tensions heightened as 4th Division personnel took positions across the western parts of Daraa. While reinforcements settled, local dignitaries, who signed the 2018 settlement agreement, members of negotiation committees, and officers of the security committee held a meeting in Daraa. The activist added:

“On the morning of 24 January 2021, government forces started advancing towards Tafas city, coming from the southwest. They exchanged fire with local armed groups, which formerly operated under the armed opposition. The confrontations killed and injured several government soldiers, which then struck the city with missiles. Some of these missiles landed on the city’s suburbs and residential neighborhoods. The shelling caused material damage to the targeted sites and sent a wave of fear and panic through the city. Schools and markets were all closed.”

### 4. Syrian Government Forces Halt the Military Operation and Engage in Negotiations

On the evening of 24 January 2021, the shelling on Tafas city stopped and clashes in its suburbs ceased after the 4th Division attempted to advance along its western axis. Calm in Tafas corresponded to the Russia-mediated meetings which brought together dignitaries, members of negotiation committees, officers of the 4th division, and the security committee in Daraa city.

A source informed of the meetings held in Daraa city told STJ the following:

“The negotiation rounds included several notables, dignitaries, and members of negotiation committees on the one hand, and officers of the 4th Division and the security

committee on the other. These met in the presence of Russian police officers. The regime officer's demands were:

1. Sending several persons from the eastern area of Daraa to northern Syria. These are individuals who refused to sign a settlement agreement with the Syrian government and former commanders of armed opposition groups that once operated in the area, notably commanders Muhammad Qasim al-Subaihi from Ataman town, Muhammad Jaddallah al-Zoubi from Yadouda town, and Moaz al-Zoubi from Tafas, among others.
2. Surrendering a portion of the weapons in Tafas city, particularly the medium weaponry used during the al-Zoubi and Kiwan clan clashes.
3. Allowing government forces to search several headquarters and homes in Tafas city for recruits of Hurras al-Din (Guardians of Religion) and IS."

The source added that the Russian police threatened the dignitaries with aerial shelling if they did not work to implement these terms.

## 5. Residents Flee Tafas City Fearing Government Invasion

The arrival of government military reinforcements in Tafas's suburbs in late January terrified residents, especially after Syrian and Russian fighter jets hovered over the city on 27 January 2021, seeking to intimidate the population. With ground forces deployed around the city and aircrafts overhead, rumors about the military offensive in the city increased, allied by the media campaign launched by pro-government outlets and Facebook news pages.

On 2 February 2021, for instance, one loyalist news Facebook page reported that a meeting was held at the Ba'ath Party Hall in Daraa city.<sup>7</sup> The parties that joined the meeting were the commander of the government forces' 1st Brigade, the head of the Daraa Province Security Committee, the commander of the 4th Division, directors of security branches, Daraa's governor, as well as the secretary of the Daraa branch of the al-Baath Party and the head of the police department, in addition to several Daraa representatives in the Syrian People's Assembly and local dignitaries.

The news page cited the speech delivered by the head of the security committee, as saying: "We are seeking to establish security. Eliminating terrorism and outlaws, as well as removing weapons are a necessity. The army will pursue its duties of targeting IS fighters and law offenders."

The page also quoted the speech delivered by the head of the 4th Division, which maintained the rhetoric of the security committee's head. He said: "Reality is that Daesh (IS) and the Muslim Brotherhood have created a coalition, through which they are operating together in Daraa."

Driven by the military buildup and media-channeled propaganda, hundreds of Tafas city's residents fled to adjacent areas, particularly to Dael, al-Sheikh Maskin, and Ibttaa, while others

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<sup>7</sup> For more: <https://www.facebook.com/1423308781309255/posts/2464102307229892/>



went as far as the city of Daraa or the capital Damascus, worried that confrontations between government forces and local armed groups would expand beyond Tafas' borders. A Tafas-based activist told STJ that this was the first wave of displacement since the 2018 settlement agreement. He added:

"Hundreds of residents escaped to different areas. The city's streets were almost empty in the evening and at night. The remaining population were terrified of the government attack and the city would have turned completely depopulated if the negotiators did not reach an agreement. Imams from several mosques also asked people to ignore rumors, stop panicking, and take their time before leaving their houses. Many owners closed their shops, wholesale centers, and food warehouses and transported their contents to warehouses outside the city."

The government's media campaign corresponded to attacks on several government military posts and security centers carried out by unidentified groups in the cities and towns of Jasim, Nawa, al-Sanamayn, al-Karak al-Sharqi, and al-Ghariyah al-Sharqiya, among other areas across Daraa province.

## 6. Government Forces Enter Tafas City After Negotiations

On 8 February 2021, after several rounds of negotiations between the CRC and officers from the security committee in Daraa, in the presence of a representative of the Russian forces, attendees agreed on allowing security forces and the 4th Division to search farms around Tafas city and handing over all former government buildings, as well as medium and light weapons still possessed by former opposition fighters in the city to government forces. However, the negotiators avoided the forces' initial demand to expel former opposition fighters and commanders to northern Syria.

A video published by Sputnik news agency<sup>8</sup> on 12 February 2021 documented, as the agency's original caption read, "the first entry of units of the Syrian army and Russian police to [Tafas] city in nearly 8 years, in addition to the disarmament of remaining militants, days after an agreement was reached to reoperate State departments in the city."

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<sup>8</sup> For more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=X-Svc1xmhqs&feature=youtu.be>

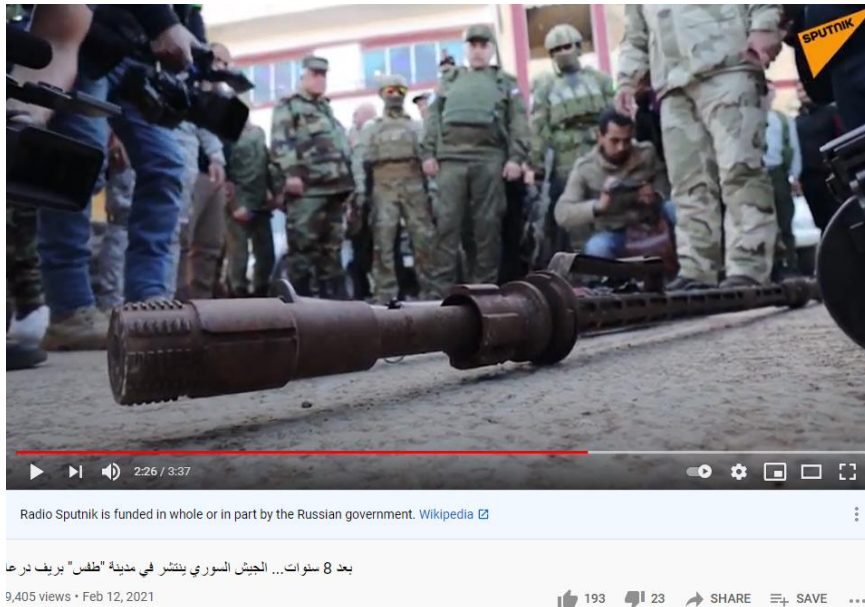


Image 1- Screenshot from the [Sputnik-published video](#), documenting the Syrian government forces' entry into Tafas city.

STJ's field researcher reported that, on the evening of 8 February, the Syrian government forces withdrew from Tafas having set up 4th Division posts outside the city borders. The government forces' retreat followed search operations in several farms around the city and some of its houses. Furthermore, former opposition fighters handed over only a portion of light and medium weapons to the forces, but not the whole retained lot.

Narrating the details of the settlement's enforcement in Tafas, activist Malik al-Tayeb said that a joint security-military group, including officers from the Daraa security committee, government security officials, and Russian officers, entered Tafas on 11 February 2021. Several of these figures made statements to official media outlets, stressing that the army is being admitted into Tafas to reoperate government departments. Al-Tayeb added:

"As they moved into the city, government forces seized a few houses at the entrance to al-Muzayrib town. These houses belong to the wanted former opposition commander Muhammad Qasim al-Subaihi and were ultimately turned into 4th Division military posts. The forces withdrew from Tafas the same day in the evening."

On 11 February 2021, media activists circulated a video<sup>9</sup> of a Russian officer delivering a speech during Tafas negotiations. He said that the Syrian government refrained from using force and opted for a peaceful solution to spare the area any potential military activities and promised to assess security files of area's detainees who are not convicted for crimes punishable by the law. He also accused Jordan of financing armed groups in Daraa province.

<sup>9</sup> For more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXrx7wpA50k&feature=youtu.be>



Image 2- Screenshot from the above-mentioned video, showing the Russian officer delivering a speech during the Tafas city negotiations.

## 7. Storming Daraa's Towns and Villages is a Growing Pattern

On 8 November 2020, Daraa province witnessed a series of military measures which resembled the actions of government forces in Tafas city. Personnel of the 4th Division raided and inspected farmlands south of Daraa city, locally known as the areas of al-Shayah and al-Nakhla. Government personnel arrested nine civilians from Daraa city and workers from the raided farms. Going by the pseudonym Muhammad al-Masalmeh, a Daraa al-Balad-based activist reported the following to STJ:

“Gunmen and former opposition fighters exchanged fire with personnel affiliated with the 4th Division, who drove a car that served as an anti-aircraft (AA) launcher and headed towards the Tariq al-Sad neighborhood. The clashes injured two 4th Division fighters. The former opposition fighters started these clashes as they blocked roads and entrances to the neighborhoods of Daraa al-Balad, and the two neighborhoods of Tariq al-Sad and al-Mukhayam in response to the arrest of civilians in the areas of al-Nakhlah and al-Shayah. Moreover, after the clashes at the entry of the Tariq al-Sad neighborhood, the regime forces shelled the neighborhood with four mortar shells. The area was nothing less than a battlefield. Regime forces sent several messages threatening to storm neighborhoods that housed former opposition fighters who refused to join their ranks after the regime took over Daraa province in 2018.”

The activist added:

“On the evening of 8 November 2020, the Syrian regime forces stopped their military operation and released the detainees following sweeping demonstrations across Daraa province's cities and towns. However, unidentified gunmen, most likely former

opposition fighters, attacked numerous military posts and checkpoints of regime forces in al-Karak al-Sharqi and Masaken Jalin. In al-Karak town, these attacks caused the death of five recruits of the Syrian regular army, while six others were arrested. In Masaken Jalin, an additional ten recruits were captured from one of the 4th Division's military centers."

A field researcher with STJ monitored deaths and arrests within the ranks of the Syrian government forces in al-Karak al-Sharqi town on 8 November 2020. The detained recruits were all released on the same day after the 8th Brigade of the Russia-founded 5th Legion intervened. Reacting to the arrests and deaths, the Syrian government sent military reinforcements to al-Karak al-Sharqi town, preparing to storm it on the pretext of searching for wanted men and weapons withheld in the town. Commenting on this, one of the town's activists told STJ:

"The regime forces' military operation into the town started on 11 November 2020. They first closed the town and prevented movement in and out. There were brief exchanges of fire. Then, the forces searched several of the town's homes seeking wanted persons and weapons. These inspections continued until personnel of the 8th Brigade of the Russia-backed 5th Legion intervened to reinstate calm within the town. Town notables and officials of the government-affiliated security committee in Daraa city held a meeting. The attendees agreed to allow regime forces to enter and carry out searches throughout the town the next day. Other agreement terms included handing over weapons still kept by fighters and settling the status of wanted people in the town. The settlement of status was to cover all [former opposition fighters] except four, who predominantly contributed to the attack on the Syrian regime forces' checkpoint and the death of five personnel. The regime especially wanted to capture Akef al-Zaki, one of the attack's perpetrators. Al-Zaki was a former opposition fighter, who continued to be targeted by regime forces until he was assassinated with his son in front of their house on 7 December 2020— that is, one month after the military operation in the town."

The city of al-Sanamayn witnessed a similar military operation on 1 March 2020. The city hosts a number of former armed opposition groups, including Thuwar al-Sanamayn (Rebels of al-Sanamayn), led by Walid al-Atma (also known as Walid al-Zahra)— a former fighter of the military group Ahrar al-Sham. According to a former STJ report,<sup>10</sup> the one-day operation involved clashes between government forces and former opposition fighters, as well as artillery and missile shelling by government forces. These military activities killed nine people, including three civilians. The attacks also burned and damaged several of the city's homes.

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<sup>10</sup> "Daraa: Concern over Repeating 'al-Sanamayn Scenario' in Other Areas despite the 'Settlement Agreement'," STJ, 17 April 2020 <https://stj-sy.org/en/concern-over-repeating-al-sanamayn-scenario-in-other-areas-despite-settlement-agreement-daraa/> (last visited: 11 April 2021).

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## History

Syrians for Truth and Justice was conceived during the participation of its co-founder in the Middle-East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) Leaders for Democracy Fellowship program, who was driven by a will to contribute to Syria's future. Starting as a humble project to tell the stories of Syrians experiencing enforced disappearances and torture, it grew into an established organisation committed to unveiling human rights violations of all sorts.

Convinced that the diversity that has historically defined Syria is a wealth, our team of researchers and volunteers works with dedication at uncovering human rights violations committed in Syria, in order to promote inclusiveness and ensure that all Syrians are represented, and their rights fulfilled.