

## Joint Statement on Recent Unrest in Deir Ezzor



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*The undersigned organizations call for prioritizing the protection of civilians and addressing the root causes that led to the recent conflict*

On 27 August 2023, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) announced in a [statement](#) published on their official website the launch of Operation "Security Reinforcement" in areas they control in Deir Ezzor province. The statement outlined the objectives of the operation as aimed at **“eradicating the ISIS terrorist cells; thwarting their potential attacks; pursuing criminals responsible for perpetrating injustices against the local population; enforcing the law; and tracking down smugglers who exploit the populace’s livelihoods.”**

On 30 August 2023, the SDF made a second statement, announcing their [decision](#) to dismiss the Commander of the Deir Ezzor Military Council, Ahmed al-Kh’bail (Abu Khawlah). The statement said that the arrest was carried out upon the order of the Public Prosecution in North-eastern Syria (NES).

In the early days of Operation "Security Reinforcement", clashes between the SDF-commissioned forces and the Deir Ezzor Military Council were limited to several towns and villages in the northern countryside of Deir Ezzor province, notably in the town of Al-Busayrah. Later, the confrontations expanded to several areas in the province’s eastern countryside, including the towns of Theeban and al-Shuhail.

In another field development, hundreds of armed tribal elements joined the confrontations. Several tribal figures emphasized that the tribal armed groups were not defending the Deir Ezzor Military Council and its leader, Ahmed al-Kh’bail, but that they were driven by their own demands, including their right to secure their areas.

Over the past few days, numerous [statements](#) have been made by tribal leaders, dignitaries, civil society activists, and intellectuals. They stressed the necessity of ceasing hostilities to spare civilians’ lives. They also highlighted the negative humanitarian and security consequences for the residents and the region if clashes continue. Additionally, the U.S.-led Coalition issued a [statement](#) on 1 September 2023, calling for a ceasefire in Deir Ezzor.

The current situation has resulted in civilian casualties; multiple deaths and injuries have been recorded, while the continuation of hostilities threatens to deprive the population of essential supplies as many routes leading to Deir Ezzor have been severed. Moreover, there have been attempts at exploiting the current security chaos by several groups involved in the hostilities, many of which have attacked public and private properties, such as water pumping stations and hospitals, amidst heightened concerns that other groups may take advantage of the current upheavals to sow discord among the NES components.

Considering the situation relayed above, the undersigned organizations call for an immediate ceasefire by all parties and cooperation to restore calm to Deir Ezzor province through direct dialogue. Additionally, the organizations strongly condemn the media campaigns that

accompanied the recent turmoil and their attempts to depict the situation as a "Kurdish-Arab" dispute. They, therefore, demand an end to media incitement against any Syrian component.

The undersigned organizations call for prioritizing the protection of civilians and holding all those allegedly involved in violations against civilians accountable. Therefore, they demand that:

**First: Syrian Democratic Forces and the U.S.-led Coalition:**

- Expedite the provision of essential supplies to areas of Deir Ezzor affected by the hostilities, neutralize public utilities, ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid, and facilitate the movement of humanitarian organizations to assist the affected.
- Establish an independent legal committee to initiate a transparent and independent investigation into attacks against civilians during the recent events in the affected areas of Deir Ezzor and ensure justice for all wronged individuals.

**Second: Autonomous Administration and the Syrian Democratic Council:**

- Immediately address the local demands by commencing discussions that ensure the active participation of Deir Ezzor's residents. To achieve this, they must hold consultations with local community representatives, tribal leaders, civil society organizations, intellectuals, and independent individuals, including on the cooperation with local leadership to select suitable representatives for civil and security administrations.
- Adopt clear and serious oversight and accountability mechanisms to prevent violations against civilians and impunity. This should be done in consultation with local community representatives and civil society organizations.

**Third: Local Community Representatives, Tribal Leaders, Civil Society Organizations, Intellectuals, and Independent Individuals in Deir Ezzor:**

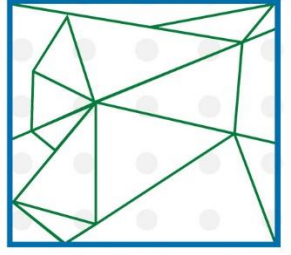
- Launch local consultations to involve civil leadership and civil society activists in developing a comprehensive vision for civil and security administration in the region.
- Engage in negotiations with the Syrian Democratic Forces and the U.S.-led Coalition to convey the demands of the local community related to their involvement in civil and security administrations.

**Undersigned Organizations in Alphabetical Order:**

1. Amal for development
2. Analysis and Strategic Studies Organization (ASO)
3. anwar algad
4. Ashna for development
5. Awda for development
6. Baytna
7. Better Tomorrow organization

8. Bridges of peace for development
9. C.D.R
10. Center for Civil Society and Democracy /CCSD
11. coalition of civil society organizations in north east Syria
12. Community Solidarity Organization
13. Country Raqqa Organization
14. DAR Association for Victims of Forced Displacement
15. Deirna organization
16. Ella Organization For Development and Peacebuilding
17. Ensaf for development
18. Eridu center for civil society and democracy
19. Euphrates NGO
20. Fajr
21. For Them Organisation
22. ForFeminist
23. Future Makers Team
24. Hamzet wasel
25. Haneen.alfurat
26. HDF Humanitarian
27. HLOM
28. Human Organization for Construction and Development
29. Jasmine Association
30. Justice for Life
31. Medical Relief for Syria
32. PÊL- Civil Waves
33. Qadar Organization
34. Rose organization for support and empowerment
35. Sahem Organization for Cooperation and Development
36. SALAM organization
37. Share for Community Development
38. Shawshaka Association for Women
39. Swaedna Organization for Relief and Development
40. Synergy Association for Victims
41. Syriac Strategic Research Centre
42. Syrian Forum
43. Syrians for Truth and Justice - STJ
44. Tal-Abiyad Forum for civil society
45. Tara Organisation
46. Tayif Humanitarian Organization
47. The Day After
48. Together For Deir Ezzor
49. TOTOL Foundation
50. Urnammu for Justice & human rights
51. Youth for change
52. Zameen for development and peacebuilding
53. Zorna Organization for Development

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& Justice



## About Us:

Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization monitoring human rights violations in Syria. Founded in 2015, STJ has been based in France since 2019.

STJ is an impartial and independent Syrian human rights organization operating across Syria. Our network of field researchers monitor and report human rights violations occurring on the ground in Syria, while our international team of human rights experts, lawyers, and journalists gather evidence, examine emerging patterns of violations, and analyze how violations break domestic Syrian and international law.

We are committed to documenting violations of human rights committed by all parties in the Syrian conflict and elevating the voices of all Syrians victimized by human rights violations, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, class, and/or gender. Our commitment to human rights monitoring is founded on the idea that professional human rights documentation meeting international standards is the first step to uncovering the truth and achieving justice in Syria.



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