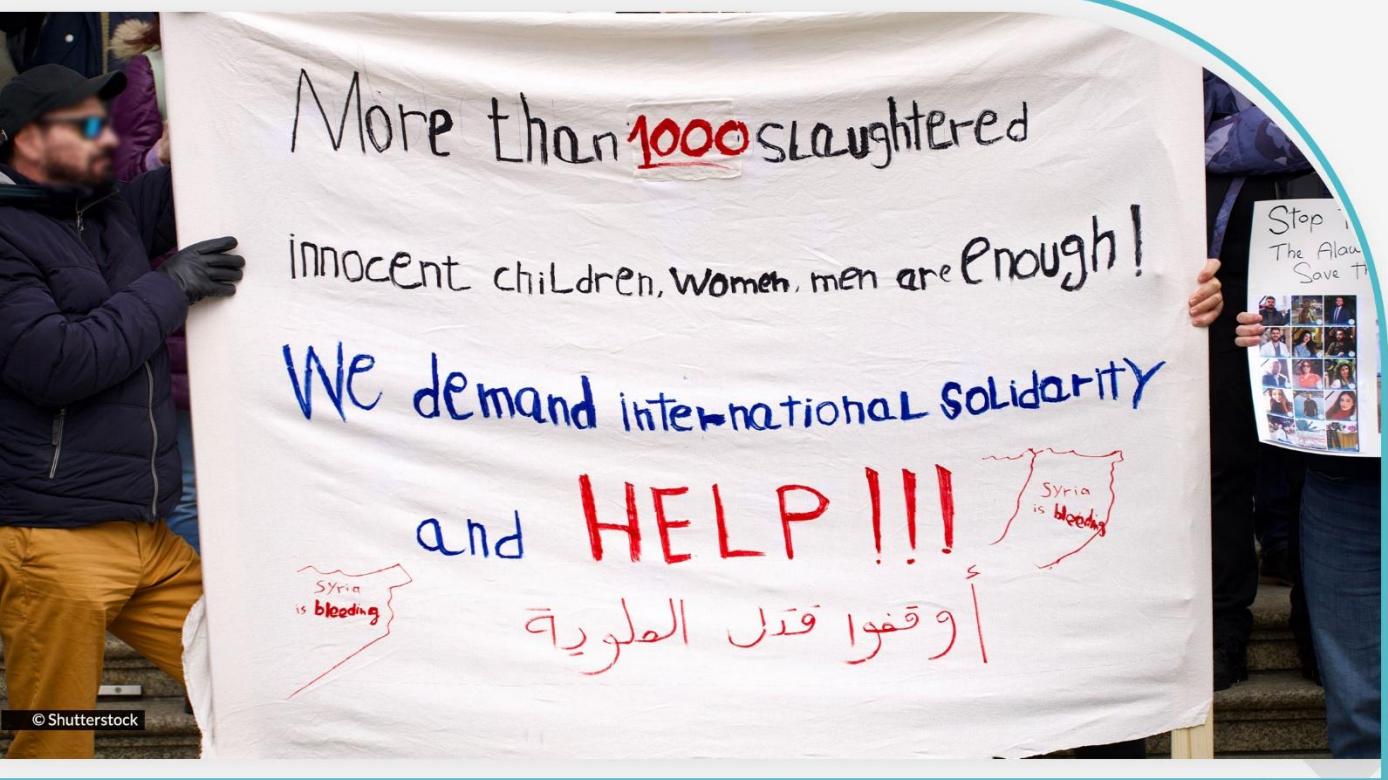


Left to Their Fate: Grave Violations Against Alawites Following the Coastal Massacres



The Failure To Hold Leaders And Senior Officials Accountable For The Massacres That Took Place In The Coastal Region Has Opened The Door To Further Sectarian Violations Against Alawites In Syria And Established An Environment Of Impunity

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1. Executive Summary:

This report, issued by Syrians for Truth and Justice (SFTJ), documents a series of grave violations committed against Alawite men and women civilians from March 10 to the end of June 2025, in the governorates of Latakia, Homs, Hama, Tartous, and Damascus Rural.

These violations come in the wake of the [brutal massacres](#) that took place in the Syrian coastal region (from March 6-9, 2025), with the inability of the Syrian Interim Authorities to ensure security and effective protection for vulnerable groups in Syria.

The violations documented in the report ranged from extrajudicial killings, abduction, torture, looting and vandalism, sectarian violence, and gender-based violence, particularly targeting women and girls.

During the period covered by the report, the organization documented a number of grave violations, including 64 killings, among them 9 children and 9 women, in addition to 4 cases in which the victims survived, one of them was a girl. Five cases of abduction, including two women, were also recorded, as well as 10 cases of physical or psychological torture, beatings, or inhumane treatment, including one child. It should be noted that these figures do not represent the total number of victims, but only the cases documented within the scope of this report.

The testimonies collected by Syrians for Truth and Justice and field investigations supported by open sources reveal that these crimes were not isolated incidents. Rather, they appear to have been carried out as part of a policy targeting specific communities on sectarian and gender grounds, amid a lack of protection, official denial, and failure to investigate.

Although a national commission was formed to investigate the massacres in the coastal region, its mandate was limited to a few days and specific areas, precluding subsequent violations. Its report also avoided holding military or security leaders accountable, denied the sectarian nature of the incidents, and refrained from making its full findings public. This reflects a fundamental and serious shortcoming in the approach to accountability and reinforces a climate of impunity. Thus, there are real fears that victims' rights will be lost if these violations are not investigated by independent and credible international bodies.

The report does not claim to cover all violations, but rather to provide documented examples and patterns that represent part of a broader cycle of violence and violations. These include extrajudicial killings, abduction, torture, gender-based violations, looting, and vandalism. The report focuses on the responsibility of official bodies and armed factions affiliated with or supported by them.

At the conclusion of this report, Syrians for Truth and Justice provide a set of recommendations to the Syrian Interim Authorities, the international community, and UN mechanisms.

2. Introduction and Background:

Following [the sectarian massacres that took place in the Syrian coastal region and in the governorates of Homs and Hama between March 6 and 9, 2025](#), the Syrian authorities quickly formed the "[Independent National Commission for Investigation and Fact-Finding on the Events in the Syrian Coastal Region](#)," by decision of interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa on March 9. The commission was tasked with investigating the events that occurred on March 6, within a thirty-day period, [later extended](#) until mid-July 2025.

On July 22, the commission presented its findings at a [press conference](#) in Damascus, emphasizing its commitment to "legal and professional standards." It confirmed documenting the killing of 1,426 people, including 90 women, and the disappearance of 20 persons, in addition to widespread violations during military operations. However, it considered these violations to be "unsystematic" and driven by various motives, such as revenge and chaos. It also refrained from publishing its full report to the public, avoiding mentioning the sectarian nature of the events or holding military leaders directly responsible.

Despite the formation of the commission, grave violations against Alawite civilians continued, amid the authorities' evident inability to control the crimes and a deterioration in public confidence in state actions. This was also confirmed by the International Commission of Inquiry in its [report](#) published on August 14, 2025.

In this context, Syrians for Truth and Justice prepared this documentary report, which monitors the violations committed between March 10 and the end of June 2025. It is based on 19 in-depth interviews with victims, their families, and eyewitnesses, in addition to an analysis of open-sources material, including videos, photos, and documented posts.

While obtaining their informed consent, all interviewees were made aware of the voluntary nature of the interview and the ways in which the information they shared would be used, including the publication of this report. They chose to conceal their identities or any information that might identify them, fearing any reprisals against them or their families. Accordingly, pseudonyms have been used to identify individuals whose testimonies are partly quoted in the report.

The report seeks to shed light on violations that continued after the end of the investigation commission's work, which were not covered by state reports or procedures, despite their seriousness and scale. Testimonies and open sources collected by Syrians for Truth and Justice show that the targeting was not random, but rather affected members of the Alawite community in the governorates of Homs, Hama, Latakia, Tartous, and Damascus Rural,¹ within a broader context of sectarian violence and amidst the absence of protection or accountability.

¹ In its report, "[Syria: Documentation of Enforced Disappearances and Arbitrary Arrests in Al-Qadam Neighborhood of Damascus](#)," Syrians for Truth and Justice documented several violations committed in Damascus Rural against Alawite civilians residing in Al-Anazi, Al-Qadam neighborhood. The report highlights two campaigns carried out in December 2024 and March 7, 2025, resulting in the disappearance of dozens, with reports of a number of them being extrajudicially executed.

3. The Commission's deficiency in light of the ongoing events:

Although the Independent National Commission for Investigation and Fact-Finding was formed shortly after the massacres took place in the coastal region, its official report was limited to the period between March 6 and 9, 2025, ignoring the subsequent violations, which this report partially documents. This reveals a significant gap between what the commission observed and what is actually occurring on the ground, including murders, torture, and abduction of Alawite civilians in the coastal governorates, Homs, Hama, and Damascus Rural.

Syrians for Truth and Justice intends to publish a detailed legal paper analyzing the commission's report. However, we present here a summary of the most important observations related to the report. The commission described the violations as "unsystematic" and committed by individuals, without holding senior leaders responsible or referring to the sectarian grounds, which minimizes the gravity of what occurred and excludes the confirmed systematic dimension of these crimes.

In contrast, in [its report](#) published on August 14, 2025, the International Commission of Inquiry on Syria concluded that members of some factions, recently integrated into the Interim Government's security forces, committed extrajudicial executions and systematically and widely tortured and ill-treated civilians in numerous Alawite-majority villages and neighborhoods. The commission also documented recurring patterns of violence against civilians in several areas, including targeting based on religion, age and gender, as well as mass executions.

[A joint report](#) by Human Rights Watch, Syrians for Truth and Justice, and the Syrian Archive confirmed that the attacks on Alawite civilians between March 7 and 10, 2025 were not isolated incidents, but rather part of a centralized military operation overseen by the Ministry of Defense. The report noted the involvement of dozens of armed factions in raids on villages, accompanied by summary executions, abduction of women, and looting and burning of houses on the basis of sectarian identity. This clearly contradicts the official narrative, which described these violations as "individual" and unsystematic acts.

[A special report](#) by Reuters indicated that the massacres that occurred in the coastal region, which claimed the lives of at least 1,500 Alawites, were widespread sectarian revenge attacks.² The field operations were led by figures linked to the transitional authority, undermining allegations of lack of control or ignorance of the facts.

As the commission's full report has yet to be published, victims and their families remain deprived of their right to know the truth, which undermines the principles of transparency and transitional justice and perpetuates a climate of impunity.

² The Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression published a [report](#) that found that 1,060 Alawite civilians were summarily executed by pro-government armed forces in 61 locations across the governorates of Latakia, Tartous, and Hama. The death toll included 71 women and 61 children. The report clarified that this figure does not distinguish between civilians and Alawite fighters who participated in the fighting against the state. However, the widespread execution of prisoners or surrendered and unarmed fighters -which took place on a large scale- is a crime under international law. The report also documented the killing of 218 members of the security services.

4. Documented field violations by type:

This section adopted a methodology that combined field testimonies and open sources into a unified classification of violations. The most prominent type of violation in each incident was first identified based on its content (such as extrajudicial killing, abduction, torture, looting and vandalism, sectarian violations, and threats). When the incident involved more than one violation, the most severe or evident violation was chosen as the primary classification. The incidents within each classification were then arranged chronologically, while keeping the transcripts of the testimonies and sources as they were reported. Subheadings were added to summarize the key incident, with the aim of facilitating reading and linking the incidents to the broader pattern of documented violations.

4.1 Extrajudicial killing:

Testimonies and field and open sources demonstrate that extrajudicial killings in and around the Syrian coastal region were not the result of isolated, individual incidents, but rather often occurred within the context of sectarian-based targeting and as part of a policy to intimidate, subjugate, and humiliate the population. The victims were mostly Alawite civilians, who were not involved in any military or political activity. The killings were often committed after raiding houses or stopping civilians in the streets, sometimes accompanied by brutal practices, such as beheading or shooting at close range, without any legal procedures or fair trials. These incidents reveal the absence of protection and accountability mechanisms, which entrench impunity and increase the likelihood of crimes recurrence.

4.1.1 Four members of the same family, including two children, shot dead in Al-Idekhar neighborhood, Homs, on March 20, 2025:

At dawn on March 20, 2025, a mass killing took place in [Al-Idekhar neighborhood](#), Homs, claiming the lives of four members of the same family. A group of armed men stormed the house of Jabr Muhammad (58 year old) and shot him and his three sons: Ahmad (22 year old), Ali ([a high school student](#)), and Hatem ([a high school student](#)).³

The investigation's progress or findings have not been disclosed by official authorities, despite the numerous crimes committed in this neighborhood, which is controlled by the Syrian transitional government forces. It had witnessed crimes targeting its Alawite residents even before the coastal massacres. For example, on February 25, 2025, citizen Zaher al-Hassan and his daughter, Ola, were found slaughtered in their home west of Tadmur Roundabout in the Al-Idekhar neighborhood. Their bodies were transferred to comprehensive clinics and hospitals.⁴

The absence of any announced measures to protect the population or prosecute the perpetrators reflects the government's failure to fulfill its legal duty to ensure the safety of civilians and its commitment to effective investigations and accountability, allowing these violations to continue undeterred.

³ Facebook [post](#) on March 20, 2025. See also another two Facebook [posts](#) on the same date and a third [post](#) on the same day.

⁴ Facebook [post](#) dated February 25, 2025. See also Facebook [post](#) dated February 26, 2025.

4.1.2 A young man was killed and another was severely beaten -Bustan al-Hamam, Baniyas Countryside, March 27, 2025:

On March 27, 2025, a military pickup vehicle entered the village [of Bustan al-Hamam](#), Baniyas Countryside, Tartous Governorate to arrest a wanted person. Meanwhile, a number of unarmed young men from the village fled into the surrounding forests, fearing arrest or murder. When the gunmen noticed them, they opened fire, killing the young man, Muhammad Izzat Shiha.⁵

The gunmen severely beat another young villager (from the Sarem family). They then attempted to arrest Dr. Ghaith Ahmed for unknown reasons. However, when he lost consciousness, they abandoned him and continued wandering the village streets, firing a barrage of bullets into the air to intimidate the residents before they continued on their way to Baniyas.⁶

Official authorities have not issued any statement regarding the investigation into the incident, the location of the military vehicle, or the prosecution of any suspects. It is worth noting that the village of Bustan al-Hamam and its surroundings are completely under the control of the transitional government forces.

4.1.3 An entire family, including three children, and their guests, were slaughtered - Karm al-Zeitoun Neighborhood, Homs, March 31, 2025:

At dawn on March 31, the transitional government-controlled neighborhood of [Karm al-Zeitoun](#), Homs, witnessed a mass murder that targeted an entire (Alawite) family and two other guests (from the Sunni Bakkar family).⁷

Cross-referenced sources (which SFTJ was unable to verify) reported that a man and his son, believed to be affiliated with the General Security, stormed the house of Bashar Talal Ibrahim and slaughtered him and his family, as he was accompanied by his wife Ola, and his children, Ghazal (17 year old), Ahmed (13 year old) and Haitham (3 year old).⁸

Although some sources indicated that the General Security arrived at the crime scene after a while to begin investigations, official authorities have not issued any comments or clarifications until the date of preparing this report.⁹

⁵ Bustan Al Hamam News Network Page, [post/obituary](#) dated March 27, 2025.

⁶ Tartous Events Moment by Moment page, [posted](#) on March 27, 2025.

⁷ Zaman Al Wasl, [posted](#) on March 31, 2025.

⁸ [Obituary](#) on Al-Qadmus's page, dated March 31, 2025, see also the [post](#) on Raif Al-Salama's page, on the same date.

⁹ A [p_o_s_t](#) on the page of journalist Amir Abdel Baqi, dated March 31, 2025. See also the [post](#) on the page of General Security officer Laith Omar Al-Dughim, on the same date. It is noteworthy in Laith Al-Dughim's post that he attempts to deny the sectarian nature of the crime by focusing on the killing of the two Sunnis who were being hosted by the family. Note that this conclusion alone is not sufficient to rule out a sectarian motive behind the crime.

4.1.4 Killing of six people, including a child -Harf Banimra, Baniyas Countryside, March 31, 2025:

In the morning of March 31, 2025 (the first day of Eid al-Fitr), the village of [Harf Banimra](#), Baniyas Countryside, witnessed a mass murder that claimed the lives of Ibrahim Shaheen, his two sons Thaer and Sumer, his 12-year-old grandson Ibrahim, as well as the village headman Jawdat Fares and his nephew Najdat Fares.¹⁰

In a phone call with Sky News Arabia,¹¹ Samer Shaheen, the son of the victim, Ibrahim, said:

"My house is close to my brother's. On the morning of Eid al-Fitr, I went to him as usual. A short while later, two masked men, one carrying a gun and the other a sniper rifle with a silencer and a camera, entered the courtyard. At first, the two gunmen said they were lost in the area and wanted to help us. They asked about the name of the village and if we had weapons. My brother told them we were farmers and didn't have weapons. My father and brother came downstairs to learn what was happening. My father congratulated those we thought were lost on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr and offered them hospitality. After that, they asked us to show them the way. It was at that moment that I began to feel that they had bad intentions. I went out with them to the beginning of the street and sent my son to the mukhtar to come and tell him what had happened. When I returned, I found that the mukhtar had arrived and sat next to my father. My cousin and I went upstairs with the children, and then we heard the sound of gunfire. The two men killed my father, my brothers, and my nephew, the child Ibrahim, who was targeted alone with 8 shots."

Samer concluded that the blood of his brothers was still on his body, unable to remove it due to the horror of what happened.

Following the circulation of the massacre victims' photos (including the photo of the child Ibrahim), Syrian public opinion was triggered, and the authorities faced widespread condemnation. They responded by sending a General Security patrol to the village. According to statements by a security official, **"Eyewitnesses confirmed that two individuals wearing military uniforms opened fire on a gathering of residents before fleeing toward the neighboring Al-Disna area."**¹²

The official added, **"The patrols headed directly to the Al-Disna area to investigate. They spotted an armed group claiming to have come to the area to support the Ministry of Defense, against the backdrop of reports of the regime remnants movements. They also indicated that some of them had lost relatives in a previous campaign in the area. During the interrogation, one of the officers pointed out the two suspects, who were immediately arrested and transferred to the relevant security department. During the initial investigation, the two**

¹⁰ Journalist Abdullah Suleiman Ali's account, [posted](#) on March 31, 2025. See also: Women Now, [statement](#) dated April 2, 2025.

¹¹ Sky News Arabia, Baniyas crime... A [member of the Shaheen family recounts the details of the day of treachery](#), April 1, 2025.

¹² Tartous Governorate, [video attached to a post](#), dated March 31, 2025.

detainees confessed committing the crime against the residents of Harf Banimra. The security official also confirmed in his statement that the accused had been transferred to the competent judiciary in Tartous Governorate.¹³

The Syrian authorities have not published the findings of the investigations, nor have they provided any information about the trial of the perpetrators and its outcome. Instead, a few days after the massacre, on April 7, they began distributing “financial aid” to the residents of Harf Banimra.¹⁴

The circulated comments¹⁵ reflected a wave of popular anger. One expressed, **“It is better to hang the killers in front of people than to buy their approval in exchange of money.”** Another commented briefly, **“Blood money,”** indicating that the financial compensation offered was seen as an alternative to holding those responsible for the bloodshed accountable. Others asked: **“What is it? The price of massacres? ... A bribe to keep them silent?”** They rejected what they considered an attempt to buy the silence of the victims and their families instead of seeking justice. A number of commentators demanded that the fate of those involved in the crimes be revealed, asserting, **“Excuse me, what happened to the killers who committed massacres against civilians? Arrest them and try them in front of the people?”**

4.1.5 Murder of a mother and her two daughters -Karm al-Loz Neighborhood, Homs, April 18, 2025:

On Friday, April 18, 2025, while Mrs. Manal Hassan and her twin daughters, Luna and Leen Mohammed Haidar (19 year old), were near their home in the Karm al-Loz neighborhood, controlled by government forces, two unidentified gunmen riding a motorcycle opened fire on them, killing the mother and her two daughters instantly. Accounts of the incident were circulated on several open-source websites, and Syrians for Truth and Justice worked to cross-reference and verify them. It is worth noting that the family is from the village of Qarb Ali, Homs’s countryside, and that the victims are members of the Murshidi sect.¹⁶ At the time of writing, there is no statement on any official action taken to prosecute the perpetrators.

4.1.6 Targeting four men, including a child, on their motorcycles -Zama village, Latakia Governorate, May 10, 2025:

According to the information obtained by Syrians for Truth and Justice, at 7:50 p.m. on May 10, four four-wheel-drive vehicles crossed the road from the [Beit Yashout](#) Highway toward Brigade 107. According to eyewitnesses, the lights were off and the vehicles were moving slowly. Two vehicles entered the brigade headquarters directly, while one was stationed at the gate, and

¹³ Syria TV: [A security official reveals details of the Harf Banimra crime in Baniyas. What happened inside the village?](#) April 2, 2025.

¹⁴ Tartous Governorate, [posted](#) on April 7, 2025.

¹⁵ Levant News, [Undisclosed “blood money” under security supervision under the guise of “financial aid” for the village of Harf Banimra.](#) April 8, 2025.

¹⁶ Lawyer Raif Al-Salama’s Facebook page, [posted](#) on April 18, 2025. See also: Voices of Alawites Facebook page, [post and attached photos](#), dated April 18, 2025; Syrian Network for Human Rights, [Woman and her two daughters killed by unknown gunmen in the Karm Al-Loz neighborhood of Homs on April 18, 2025](#), April 20, 2025.

the other remained behind the site toward the town of [Ain al-Sharqiya](#). The villagers reported that the faction that entered was the Faction 100, previously based in [Qarfeis](#).

Syrians for Truth and Justice met with one of the victims' relatives, Sarah, who knew what had happened to them through direct conversations with eyewitnesses. She reported the following:

"Anwar Hamouda (a 46 year old grocery store owner) and Hilal al-Ali (47 year old) were visiting an acquaintance near the brigade's headquarters. When they left, they rode a motorcycle and took a dirt road leading to the main road. They were surprised to find a military vehicle directly in front of them. Eyewitnesses from our village told me that the gunmen didn't give them time and opened fire near the brigade's wall. Anwar was killed and Hilal was injured by several bullets."

Sarah added,

"The gunmen stole Anwar's phone and sent a brief message to the numbers on it: 'There is no god but God, and God is the Greatest.'"

Speaking about another crime in the same context, Sarah continued,

"Two other young men were riding a motorcycle, coming from the village of [Zama](#) towards Ain al-Sharqiya. One of them was from the village of [Bshili](#), and the other was a 14-year-old boy from the village of [al-Arqoub](#). They had just finished their work collecting bay leaves. Their fate was similar, as a hail of bullets was fired at them, killing them instantly. I learned this from eyewitnesses. After the incident, a number of residents of the neighborhood known as Marah Zama began to leave their homes in a hurry, fearing of spread violence or raids."

4.1.7 Killing five civilians while working in agriculture -Mashqita, Latakia countryside, May 26, 2025:

On the evening of May 26, 2025, two masked men, one carrying a Russian rifle and the other a pistol, wearing different military uniforms (one with a General Security badge, the other with a camouflage military uniform), stopped a group of civilians working in agricultural land near the town of [Mashqita](#).

According to Romil Zubari, the sole survivor of the massacre (in an interview with Syria Untold),¹⁷ the man wearing camouflage got off his motorcycle and asked the group what they were doing. He accused them of theft and demanded their IDs. The killer then asked, "Are you Alawites?" Rommel replied, "What if we are Alawites? Come to Mashqita and you will find the Sunnis houses near the Alawites houses for a hundred years." The witness added:

"I hadn't finished the sentence when the gunman pulled out his rifle and began shooting at us all at once, from the first one to the last. Yasser's wife, Umm Jaafar, fell first, wailing. The masked man then shot her again four times, until she died. Seconds

¹⁷ Syria Untold, [Harvest of Blood: About the Mashqita Massacre: Land, Clans, Conflicts, Revenge, and an Absent State](#). July 7, 2025.

before the shooting, Yasser's young sons had managed to escape among the olive trees. I was shot in the shoulder and foot and fell to the ground.”

The incident resulted in the deaths of five victims: Kasser Maala, Yasser Maala, Samar Maala, Yamen Maala, and Alaa Zubari.

Following the incident, a delegation from the General Security Service attended the funeral and vowed to hold those responsible accountable. Despite reports indicating that they had arrested two suspects, and that the survivors recognized them, official authorities did not provide any further clarification regarding the suspects' identities or whether they belonged to an official entity.

4.1.8 Ambush killed eight civilians, half of them women – Al-Rabi'a, Hama, June 4, 2025:

Syrians for Truth and Justice documented an ambush set up by armed men, targeting a bus carrying civilians traveling from [Hama](#) to the town of [Al-Rabi'a](#) on June 4, 2025. The bus came under heavy fire from the front and the side, killing eight victims (including four women): Nour al-Din Amin al-Bakir, Muhammad Muwaffaq al-Bakir, Adania Nasr al-Din al-Bakir, Thanaa Ali al-Bakir, Muhammad Ali al-Khatib, Mayassa Mahmoud Anoush, Maysa Mahmoud Anoush, and Waddah Musa al-Younes.¹⁸

There is no official information about pursuing the militants or opening an investigation into the incident by the competent authorities. The authorities' failure to take any public action to investigate or prosecute the perpetrators raises concerns about their commitment to ensuring the safety of civilians and their right to justice.

4.1.9 Father and son killed, granddaughter injured -Karm al-Zeitoun, Homs, June 8, 2025:

Based on what Syrians for Truth and Justice documented through verified open sources, citizen Rafeh Melhem and his son Amjad were killed, and his granddaughter Tia (one and a half year old) was injured, as a result of gunfire by two gunmen riding a motorcycle in the al-Nazihin neighborhood of Karm al-Zeitoun, Homs, which is under the control of the transitional government. The gunmen then fired a barrage of bullets into the air and fled the scene, without being pursued by the police or security forces.¹⁹

4.1.10 Killing of six civilians and vandalism of properties -Barouha, Talkalakh, June 11, 2025:

Armed groups carried out major attacks in the village of [Barouha](#), [Talkalakh](#), targeting cars and properties belonging to Alawites. They then killed six people, including citizen Fahd Salim al-Asaad, his son Youssef Fahd al-Asaad, and his nephew Faris Salman al-Asaad. Consequently, Interior Security Forces intensified their deployment in Talkalakh and surrounding villages.

¹⁸ Civil Peace Group, [statement](#) dated June 6, 2025

¹⁹ A [post](#) on the page of one of the victims' relatives, dated June 9, 2025. See also, a [post](#) on Facebook dated June 9, 2025

However, according to eyewitnesses from the village,²⁰ the same elements returned to the site, claiming to be searching for the perpetrators in an attempt to obscure evidence. They considered this a diversionary action reflecting the perpetrators' attempt to evade legal responsibility for the criminal act, in the absence of any official statement regarding the incident or investigation.

4.1.11 Two men found shot dead -Darmini, Jableh Countryside, June 26, 2025:

Based on what was monitored and documented by Syrians for Truth and Justice, relying on open sources and cross-reference, two young men, Muhammad Suleiman and Muhannad Suleiman, from the village of [Darmini/Darmina](#), were found shot dead by unknown assailants while they were on their way to pick bay leaves on the Beit Yashout-al-Ghab highway.²¹ There is no information about an official investigation into the crime or the arrest of the perpetrators, reflecting the authorities' weak response to their duty to enforce the law and ensure security.

4.2 Abduction and enforced disappearance:

Abduction is one of the gravest violations in the Syrian coastal region after massacres, often a prelude to other serious violations such as murder or torture. In most cases, the victims are civilians unrelated to the armed conflict, and it is believed that they are targeted on sectarian grounds or with the aim of spreading terror among local communities. The testimonies also reveal the failure of the authorities and security services to investigate or intervene promptly to rescue the kidnapped individuals. They sometimes deny any connection to the perpetrators, which fosters a climate of impunity and undermines public trust.

4.2.1 Five civilians from one family, including a child, abducted and later killed -Al-Zahraa neighborhood, Homs, April 3, 2025:

Syrians for Truth and Justice met with a relative of the victims, Mahmoud (20 year old). He narrated the details of the abduction and killing of five civilians from one family in the [Al-Zahraa neighborhood](#), Homs, explaining what happened from the moment the militants arrived until the bodies were found. Mahmoud said:

“On April 3, 2025, a number of people came to the building where my three relatives lived in the Zahraa neighborhood of Homs, claiming to be surveying residents in need of humanitarian aid. They recorded the names of the building's residents. The next day, at around 7:00 PM, two vehicles arrived, a white van and a gray Peugeot. Officers wearing General Security uniforms got out and said they wanted to search the house for weapons. When they entered, the owner of the house went out to meet them. They asked him who was with him, and he replied that there were only women. They took him with them to his brother's apartment, where they found him standing by the door. They also asked him who was in his house. When he replied that his children and wife were inside, they asked him to bring his two young sons, Ibrahim and Kazem, and took

²⁰ See Homs Governorate Press Office [post](#), dated June 11, 2025. See also another Facebook [post](#) on the same date.

²¹ See Facebook [post](#) dated June 26, 2025. See also another [post](#) on the same date. See funeral video: Facebook [post](#) on the same date.

everyone with them. They then headed to the third brother's apartment and knocked on the door. His daughter opened the door while talking on her cell phone. They snatched it from her hand. When her younger brother, Hassan, appeared, they took him with them."

Mahmoud added,

"It all happened quickly. We contacted the General Security headquarters in Al-Zahraa, but they denied the group's affiliation. Although we provided them with information about the route the kidnappers took after carrying out their operation, and despite the presence of two General Security checkpoints in the area, we got nothing. The next day, a relative of the victims informed us that he had identified the bodies of the five kidnapped people at the Al-Waer Hospital."

Mahmoud concluded:

"Ibrahim Muhammad Mansour, Saeed Muhammad Mansour, Ibrahim Saeed Mansour, Kazem Saeed Mansour, and the child Hassan Daniel Mansour were killed in this incident. They were civilians, and none of them had previously served in the army or security services. Saeed was a building worker, Ibrahim was a health employee, Kazem and Ibrahim were university students, and Hassan was a child."

4.2.2 Armed men killed a civilian and kidnapped a woman -Akkakir village, Hama countryside, April 13, 2025:

Syrians for Truth and Justice interviewed Abu Watan, an Alawite and member of a civil peace preservation committee. He gave his testimony about a murder and abduction incident that took place in the village of Akkagir, Hama countryside, discussing the details of the crime, its sectarian background, and the security response that followed.

"On April 13, 2025, two gunmen arrived in the village of [Akkagir](#), Hama countryside. They killed Alaa al-Mahmoud, and kidnapped a woman from the village. As they were leaving and passing through General Security checkpoints, security personnel became suspicious, so they pursued and clashed with them. When they were able to stop the car the two gunmen were traveling in, they arrested one of them, while the other had died from a bullet wound to the head during the clash. Security personnel found the woman bound inside a large bag and freed her."

Abu Watan added:

"Some claim that the Alawite victims in Hama bear responsibility for what happened to them because of their actions, but I confirm that the victims were civilians, with no connection to the army or any military activity. What happened was a purely sectarian murder, simply because they belonged to the Alawite sect and lived in Alawite villages."

The source concluded:

"The methods of murder in our area were extremely horrific: killing with stones or slaughtering. What is worse is that the General Security Service not only turned a blind

eye to what was happening, but also justified the crimes, claiming there were previous disputes between the victims and the perpetrators, completely disavowing any responsibility. We live here and know each other well. We know every person's background and whether they have any connection to previous events. There is no justification for what happened.”

4.2.3 University student kidnapped and killed with a bullet to the head -Al-Nuzha Neighborhood, Homs, April 25, 2025:

Syrians for Truth and Justice interviewed Walid, a close associate of the victim, Mohammed al-Waari, who was killed in the Al-Nuzha neighborhood, Homs. The witness confirmed that Mohammed, a university student, was not involved in any military or armed activities. He noted that the mother searched for her son after his disappearance and found his body in a hospital in the city. Walid recounted the details of what happened the night of the incident:

“On April 25, 2025, at approximately 2:00 a.m., heavy gunfire erupted in Comprehensive Clinics Street and Karm Al-Loz, [Al-Nuzha neighborhood](#) of Homs. Then, a knock was heard on the ground floor. The two men, masked and wearing General Security uniforms, said they wanted to search the building for weapons. When they arrived at the victim's home on the third floor, they specifically asked about “Muhammad,” claiming they wanted to ask him something. When he got out, one of the gunmen led him out of the building, while the other stayed with the victim's mother to distract her. When they left, the mother went downstairs to look for her son, but she couldn't find him.”

Walid continued:

“Mohammad's mother went directly to the police station in the [Bab al-Sabaa neighborhood](#), where a sheikh greeted her. 'They will bring him back soon if there's nothing against him,' he reassured. The next day, she went to the Comprehensive Clinics Center to look for Muhammad. She found his body there, shot in the head between his eyes. The center informed her that General Security had found Muhammad's body around 3:00 a.m. and brought it to the clinic.”

The witness confirmed that the victim was a university student and had not previously involved in any military activities.

4.2.4 Six restaurant workers kidnapped, five found dead -Ash al-Warwar Neighborhood, Damascus Rural, June 2, 2025²²

In the early hours of June 2, 2025, a group of workers left the “Talat Jabal” restaurant, located near Qasioun Mall in [Barzeh](#), Damascus, after completing their last night shift. Six workers, including the driver, Milad Ali, took a van heading to the Ash al-Warwar area. Contact with the

²² In its report, "[Syria: Documentation of Enforced Disappearances and Arbitrary Arrests in the Al-Qadam Neighborhood of Damascus](#)," Syrians for Truth and Justice documented several violations committed in Damascus Rural against Alawite civilians residing in the Al-Anazah/Al-Anazi quarter in the Al-Qadam neighborhood. The report highlights two campaigns carried out in December 2024 and March 7, 2025, which resulted in the disappearance of dozens of residents, with reports of a number of them being extrajudicially executed.

group was lost between the al-Salam Mosque and the Barzeh Cemetery, and no information was received regarding their whereabouts. Local residents began searching and reported the relevant police station.

The same day, the van in which they were traveling was found near the Harasta Police Hospital. Later, on the evening of June 4, the Qaboun Police Station reported finding the bodies of five people, in addition to an injured man named Yahya Ali Akkari, in al-Baala area near the Electricity Company, Qaboun Neighborhood. The injured man was transferred to Ibn al-Nafis Hospital, and the bodies to al-Mujtahid Hospital.

Five civilians were killed in this incident: Abbas Suleiman Hammad, Yahya Muhammad Ibrahim, Mahmoud Muhammad Hamoud, Ahmed Wajih Muhammad, and Milad Ali (the van driver). As of the time of writing, the competent authorities have not issued an official statement clarifying the circumstances of the incident or the party responsible.

Details of the incident were widely circulated through multiple sources,²³ with [accounts](#) suggesting that Damascus Governor Maher Marwan, the head of the Civil Peace Committee, Hassan Soufan, and [Fadi Saqr](#) offered their condolences to the neighborhood's residents. Marwan stressed the need to preserve civil peace during this sensitive period the country is passing through, noting that the Interior Security Forces are continuing their investigations to identify the perpetrators.

4.3 Torture (or Murder by Torture)

According to what Syrians for Truth and Justice documented, this grave violation combined depriving the victim of liberty and subjecting him/her to harsh physical and psychological torture, often resulting in death.

These crimes not only target individuals but also send a message of intimidation to the entire local community. In some cases, testimonies documented the deliberate use of torture to humiliate victims on sectarian grounds or to coerce them into confessing, in flagrant violation of international law, which prohibits torture under all circumstances.

4.3.1 Two people, including a child, kidnapped and tortured to death -Al-Shaniya village, Homs Countryside, March 11, 2025:

In a painful testimony, “Umm Al-Nour,” a fifty-year-old woman from the village of [Al-Shaniya](#), the western countryside of Homs, documented for us a series of violations witnessed in her village, including abductions, killings, torture, sectarian-based humiliations, raids and vandalism carried out by armed groups before and after the massacres in the coastal region.

“On March 11, 2025, unknown armed men stormed the village and took two young civilians, Ibrahim Ahmed Ibrahim and Youssef Ahmed Ibrahim, while they were working in a poultry farm. One is a 17-year-old school student, and the other is 26 year old, recently married and has a one-month-old daughter. Neither was a soldier, and their

²³ See, for example: Ash Al-Warwar Neighborhood Notables Council, [published](#) on June 4, 2025. See also: Civil Peace Group, [statement](#) on June 6, 2025.

father was a merchant. A few days later, on March 15, their bodies were found in a well in the neighboring village of al-Tayba, with signs of severe torture.”

Umm al-Nour added:

“In March, after the massacres ended, checkpoints belonging to Chechen groups arrived in the village. They tried to reassure the residents with phrases such as, 'Don't be afraid, you are not traitors like the people of the coastal region.' But they refused to eat the food they were served, claiming that meat had been prepared in an unacceptable manner, an 'Alawite slaughter.' They left after a while.”

The witness concluded,

“Now, an unarmed local committee has been formed to protect the neighborhood. However, the violations are still ongoing, and fear still looms over the villagers.”

According to the witness, the attacks on the villagers began before the massacres in the March 6 coastal region.

“On January 23, 2025, factions affiliated with the Syrian Ministry of Defense, along with General Security forces, surrounded and then entered the village, and carried out acts of sabotage, such as blowing up graves and shrines and disabling electricity transformers. They also stormed civilians' houses under the pretext of searching, stole their belongings, and took ten young men from the village, beating, insulting, and humiliating them. They later returned eight of them, while they killed a former soldier named Radwan Muhammad, and another person remains missing to this day.”

The testimony provides preliminary indications of two issues that require investigation: first, the possible connection of official elements to the January 23 incident and whether they created an environment that later allowed for the kidnappings and killings. Second, the possible motive related to religious identity is inferred from statements attributed to armed groups and the pattern of targeting. In all cases, the authorities still have duties to prevent and protect and to launch an effective investigation that leads to accountability.

4.3.2 Abductees severely tortured, one of them killed -Qarfeis, Jableh Countryside, April 17-27, 2025:

According to eyewitnesses from the village of Qarfeis, located in the countryside of Latakia, Syrians for Truth and Justice learned that a military faction affiliated with the General Security (Division 400) committed serious violations against civilians in April 2025, including physical and psychological torture. The faction had used the Jar al-Qamar Hotel and other residential buildings in the village as its headquarters.

According to Ziad, a resident in his mid-forties, the violations began on April 17²⁴ with the arrest of a young civilian by some elements riding a car belonging to the Division 400. The victim was

²⁴ The witness was unsure of the date, stating that it might be April 18, 2025.

taken to the division's headquarters at the Jar al-Qamar Hotel, where he was he was subjected to prolonged torture:

"He was tortured from 3:00 p.m. until 11:00 a.m. the next day."

Although there was no connection between the victim and any armed party, he was later transferred to another faction headquarters inside the Naval College, Jableh, where his torture continued. He was later found in the al-Assaliyah area handcuffed, with signs of severe beatings, in a deplorable physical and psychological state.

In a similar context, the source told us that a school principal in Qarfeis was kidnapped for two hours by the same faction, despite not being involved in any military activity. During his detention, he was severely beaten.

In another incident documented in the testimony, members of the faction arrested a man and his son (a third-grade student), took them separately, and asked them a series of questions along with threats during interrogation, such as:

"If you don't talk, we will kill your son."

"Who among your neighbors carried a gun?"

"Where are the shabiha?"

"Did your father carry a weapon?"

"Are you Sunni or Alawite?"

On April 27, 2025, Hassan Abdul Hadi Yousef, a young man who worked in motorcycle maintenance, was kidnapped and last seen near the faction's headquarters at 7:00 PM. [His body was found](#) the next day, 500 meters from the faction's headquarters, bearing signs of severe torture. According to the witness, the forensic doctor reported that he died of suffocation or pain shock:

"His eyes were swollen and teary, blood was coming out of his mouth and nose, and there were traces of blood on his head. He had been dragged and his tongue was between his teeth."

Despite his family's attempts to search for him immediately after his disappearance, the faction's members refused to allow them to do so.

The doctor reported that his death occurred between 1:30 AM and 2:00 AM, indicating that the victim was subjected to torture for approximately six continuous hours.

4.4 Looting, vandalism, and sectarian insults:

This section documents incidents that involved attacks on private property, whether through looting, vandalism, or arson, alongside targeting civilians with sectarian rhetoric, insults, or direct threats. These violations reveal a pattern of targeted violence that not only causes physical harm but also seeks to humiliate the targeted communities and undermine their sense of security based on sectarian identity.

In many cases, these acts were accompanied by other crimes, such as abduction or murder, reflecting a systematic nature aimed at spreading terror and creating deep societal divisions. Together, these violations constitute a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law and may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population.

4.4.1 Burning and looting of houses and cars amid sectarian insults -Al-Daliyah and Beit Anah, Jableh countryside, June 4, 2025:

Syrians for Truth and Justice spoke with Samar (33 year old) after her house was looted and vandalized and two of her relatives went missing. In her testimony, she recounted:

“On June 4, 2025, two armed factions entered the villages of [al-Daliyah](#) and [Beit Anah](#), stopping in residential neighborhoods on the main road. The convoys came from the town of Shatha, heading toward Nahr al-Bared, al-Saqliyyah, and Abu Qubays. They passed through the villages of Sheikh Ali and al-Majdal, then the Umm al-Sayyad and al-Shandakha junctions, and finally settled in Beit Anah and our village (al-Daliyah), where they took up positions at the post office building. The militants began raising their voices, chanting takbirs and sectarian insults. My family, along with a large number of other families and residents of our town, quickly fled to the nearby woods, fearing for their lives. In the evening, members of the two factions looted and set fire to several houses and cars, including my family's house, which the militants looted everything inside, including money, furniture, batteries, and power banks. They also destroyed my brother's car parked in front of the house. Five houses were burned and 11 cars were destroyed or stolen in the surrounding neighborhoods.”

Samar also highlighted the targeting of civilians, including extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances,

“Doctor Radwan Ahmed and lawyer Osama Ahmed, my relatives, were kidnapped. Their whereabouts and the party responsible for their arrest are still unknown. Citizen Ali Abboud Rasouq was also killed in front of his mother in Beit Anah after they stormed his house. Other murders were committed in the town of Daliyah. Mazen Habib Ibrahim (from the village of Batshah) was killed while riding his motorcycle on a public road. Citizen Issam Sharouf was killed while working on his farmland, unaware of what was happening. Yahya Karim, a 22-year-old man from the village of al-Daliyah, was also kidnapped. When his mother asked about him, she was told he was in Latakia, but she searched police stations in Latakia without success.”

She added,

“When the factions left the area and the General Security forces entered, the latter declared their inability to control the situation and promised to hold the perpetrators accountable, but made no efforts afterward to fulfill their pledge.”

It is worth noting that official Syrian media reported on these violations, adopting the narrative that “outlaws attacked the communications center in al-Daliyah district.”²⁵

4.4.2 Insults and inhumane treatment -Jubb al-Jarrah, Homs, June 6, 2025:

On the evening of June 6, 2025, General Security officers arrested five young men from the town of [Jubb al-Jarrah](#), Homs, including the witness Nour, a 25 year old Alawite man. The officers searched their phones under security pretexts and then assaulted and insulted them. Nour said that the security officers forced them to “**howl like animals**,” in a humiliating and degrading scene:

“When one of us refused to comply, the officers beat him on the head with a metal tool and rifle butts until he bled. They forced us all to walk barefoot through the village streets, in a humiliating scene. They then brought us back and threatened us not to leave the village until our wounds were healed. They said, ‘Thank God that we didn’t send you to Homs.’”

Two days later, on the morning of June 8, a new group of the General Security stormed the town in black vehicles and raided Nour’s house, accusing him of being a “remnant of the former regime” and of hiding a weapon. They took him to the town police station, where he was severely tortured. Nour said,

“At the police station, they beat me randomly with a four-pronged cable on my feet and various other parts of my body. While they were torturing me there, other elements broke into my home, smashed the furniture, and stole a sum of money and my wife’s gold jewelry.”

4.4.3 Writing threats on the walls of Alawite houses -Al-Kharibeh village, Baniyas, March 23, 2025:

Violence against members of the Alawite sect has continued over the past six months, with threats spreading throughout their areas. The threats are not limited to what is posted on social media,²⁶ but also include threats, intimidation, and hate speech through printed leaflets or by writing on the walls of Alawites’ houses.

For example, on March 23, 2025, residents of [Al-Kharibeh village](#) in the Baniyas countryside, Tartous, woke up to find [threats written on the walls](#) of their houses, signed by “Ansar al-Sunna.”²⁷

The name of the “Saraya Ansar al-Sunna” faction first came to prominence on February 1, 2025, following its claim of responsibility for an attack on the village of [Arzah](#), Hama countryside,

²⁵ Latakia Governorate, [Circular](#) dated June 4, 2025.

²⁶ See the Syrians for Truth and Justice report: [Syria: The Role of Hate Speech in the Massacres that took place in the Coastal Region in March 2025](#), May 27, 2025.

²⁷ [Post](#) on Facebook on March 23, 2025.

which killed 15 civilians and displaced hundreds of residents.²⁸ It is worth noting that the official spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior, Nouredine al-Baba, stated to the media on June 24 that Saraya Ansar al-Sunna is a fictitious organization.²⁹



Image 1: Threats on the walls of Alawite houses, the village of al-Khariba, the Baniyas countryside, March 23, 2025. [Source](#)

²⁸ An-Nahar Newspaper, ["Ansar al-Sunna" Raises Terror in Syria and declares al-Sharaa an infidel: Our Priority is Minorities, and We Plan to Expand in Lebanon](#), May 21, 2025.

²⁹ SANA, [Ministry of Interior reveals details of arresting the cell that bombed Mar Elias Church in Damascus](#), June 24, 2025.



Image 5: The phrase Allahu Akbar" (God is the Greatest) signed in the name of Ansar al-Sunna on the walls of Alawite houses, the village of al-Khariba, the Baniyas countryside, March 23, 2025. [Source](#)

4.5 Gender-based violations: abduction of women and official denial:

Several human rights and media reports have indicated an escalation in the number of abductions of women in the Syrian coastal areas over the past months, amid almost complete official silence by the transitional authorities. Reuters published [a special investigation](#) documenting the abduction of 33 women. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, the head of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, also confirmed that the commission [documented](#) the abduction of six women, the fate of two of whom remains unknown.

For its part, the United Nations documented in [a special report](#) the abduction of 38 Alawite women. The report identified several patterns of gender-related violations, highlighting the lack of an effective response from the Syrian transitional government.

Amnesty International, in its turn, issued a [report](#) stating that it had received “credible reports of at least 36 Alawite women and girls, aged between three and 40, abducted and kidnapped across Latakia, Tartous, Homs, and Hama governorates by unidentified individuals.” The report condemned what it described as “the authorities’ failure to conduct effective investigations,” noting that the authorities had not taken effective measures to stop the violations against Alawite women. It pointed out that the affected families reported to police or security services, but the evidence provided was dismissed or never acknowledged. According to the report:

“Police and security forces either blamed them for the abduction, such as by accusing them of negligence for allowing their relatives to run errands during the day, mocked

them for failing to protect the woman or girl, or dismissed concrete leads and evidence that could help locate their relative, claiming it was unimportant or fake, despite its clear credibility.”

Daraj Media [published](#) several documentations of the disappearance of Alawite women and girls, aged between 15 and 36, from areas predominantly inhabited by Alawites, including the Latakia countryside, Homs, Hama, and Tartous.

As these testimonies and reports frequented, the position of the transitional authorities was in complete denial. Speakers at the press conference of the Investigation and Fact-Finding Commission on the Events of the Coastal Region confirmed that no report had been received about kidnapping girls or women, neither verbally nor in writing.

Earlier, [Anas Ayrot, a member of the Civil Peace Committee](#), appeared on the Syrian News Channel, Al-Ekhbariya, and swore three times that “there has been no abduction of women” and that everything published was slanderous and untrue.

On the other hand, Syrians for Truth and Justice documented direct testimonies from the families of the victims, including two cases related to sexual assault in Hama and a third involving the kidnapping of a woman in Baniyas. Regarding the kidnapping incident, Amani, a 31-year-old eyewitness, said:

“I saw some people dragging my neighbor by the hair toward a vehicle belonging to a military faction, while she was screaming, 'Oh God!' Her husband tried to catch up with her, repeating, 'Oh God, what have we done?' But the gunmen shot him and fled with the kidnapped woman.”

As of the date of writing, no information is known about the woman's fate or the kidnappers.

In the context of documenting cases of sexual violence related to sectarian violations, we present the following testimony by a survivor from the Hama countryside. This testimony reflects a mixture of sectarian insults and sexual assault at gunpoint. The witness, Reem (30 year old), provided a detailed account of the sexual violence she experienced, including precise descriptions of what happened. To protect her privacy, safety, and dignity, these details are not published publicly and remain kept in the database of Syrians for Truth and Justice.

“On the morning of March 7, 2025, armed men stormed our house in the town of Asilah. They insulted my husband with sectarian language. One of them, a young man, entered my room. He began cursing me, then searched the room and began provocatively messing with my underwear drawer to humiliate me. He then told me he wanted to search me. I tried to object, but he threatened to kill my husband if I didn't comply. He sexually assaulted me in a humiliating and degrading manner. I was completely powerless to protect myself or my family. To this day, I still suffer from profound psychological effects, including nightmares, sleep disturbances, and recurring panic attacks,” Reem said.

In a similar context, we documented the following testimony by a survivor from the Hama countryside, which reflects how sexual threats were used as a means of blackmail. The husband

ended up being killed as punishment for the victim's refusal to surrender. The witness, Nadia, 28 year old, gave her account of what she experienced:

“Armed men stormed our house, claiming they were affiliated with a security agency. They confiscated our phones, then took my husband to the ground floor and violently beat him. At the same time, one of the elements took me into the bedroom and said he wanted to search me. He physically harassed me and threatened me, saying that if I didn't allow him to approach me, he would kill my husband. I was extremely afraid, so I handed him my money and gold jewelry. I tried to appease him verbally to avoid being assaulted, but I resisted fiercely and refused to allow him to rape me. I thought I had succeeded in convincing him, but he left the room in a rage and shot my husband, killing him in revenge.”

This testimony reflects how sexual violence was used as a tool of extortion and revenge, as the threat of attempting to rape the victim was accompanied by the killing of the husband after she refused to obey.

All these testimonies and documented reports reveal a disturbing indicator of violations specifically targeting women and girls, within a context that reflects gender-based discrimination, to which both armed groups and official authorities contribute through action or inaction. This places these violations within the framework of gender-based violence and require special legal accountability.

5. Legal commentary:

The violations documented therein reveal patterns of violence that may amount to crimes against humanity under Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, particularly with regard to murder, abduction, torture, and abuse.

The violations documented in this report and other reports referred to above also demonstrate a clear failure by the Syrian transitional authorities to fulfill their obligations stipulated in the [Interim Constitutional Declaration](#) issued on January 29, 2025. It affirms, in more than one place, the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms for all citizens without discrimination (Articles 9, 10, 12, 23, and 42). It also stipulates the state's commitment to combat all types and forms of violent extremism while respecting rights and freedoms (Article 8), and the protection of women in particular from “oppression, injustice, and violence” (Article 21). Enforced disappearance and torture were also prohibited under Article 18 of the declaration.

The continued violations, along with the lack of serious official action to investigate them or protect victims, constitutes a violation of the fundamental principles enshrined in applicable Syrian law. In particular, [General Penal Code No. 148 of 1949 and its amendments](#) criminalizes extrajudicial killing (Articles 533-535), rape and sexual violence (Article 489), looting and theft of private property (Article 622 et seq.), and unlawful deprivation of liberty (Article 556). This is in addition to Article 391 of the Penal Code and [Law No. 16 of 2022 on the Criminalization of Torture](#).

The widespread and systematic nature of many of these violations, and targeting specific communities based on sectarian or gender basis, constitute discrimination that violates the very

essence of international human rights law, including the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), [the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#), and [the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#).

Testimonies from victims and witnesses indicate the involvement of armed groups with de facto authority, whether formally affiliated with, or supported by, the transitional authorities, in commitment to violations or complicity with their perpetrators, with the absence of accountability or protection.

The testimonies provided in the report also indicate the failure of official agencies to fulfill their duty to receive and investigate reports. Sometimes, they even deny the occurrence of crimes or blame the victims themselves. This is in direct contravention of the principle of duty of care, which holds the state responsible for protecting individuals within its territory from grave violations, whether committed by state officials or non-state actors.

The Syrian transitional government promised accountability for the violence acts that occurred in March 2025, but it provided [little transparency](#) regarding whether its investigation explored the role of senior military or civilian leaders, or what steps it would take to hold those with command authority accountable. The failure to hold accountable commanders and officials who deployed or directed abusive forces opens the door to further reprisals and atrocities in Syria. It is the duty of the Syrian authorities to ensure that judicial proceedings are not limited to individual crimes, but also including institutional responsibility, to allow access to international accountability mechanisms, and to introduce fundamental security reforms.

This failure not only jeopardizes individual rights, but also threatens the legal foundations of the state upon which the transitional phase is supposed to be built, fosters a climate of impunity, and undermines citizens' confidence in the emerging transitional institutions.

6. Recommendations:

6.1 To the Syrian Transitional Government:

- Publish the findings of the Independent National Commission for Investigation and Fact-Finding on the violations that took place in the Syrian coastal region, and enable victims, their families, and human rights organizations to access information, learn the truth, and participate in determining the justice processes.
- Establish an independent mechanism to receive complaints from victims, while providing them with legal and societal protection, and ensure the independence of the mechanism from the security and military apparatus.
- Adopt a clear national policy to combat gender-based violence, including preventive and punitive mechanisms, and ensure the representation of women and minorities in transitional justice institutions.
- Adopt a comprehensive national plan to combat torture, including mandatory training for security and military forces on the principles of international humanitarian law and human rights, and mechanisms for preventing torture.

- Conduct a comprehensive review of national legislation, particularly the Penal Code, to ensure its alignment with international human rights conventions and fill legal gaps that hinder accountability of perpetrators, particularly with regard to sexual violence and religious and sectarian discrimination.
- Ensure the protection of private property and stop the looting of civilian property, while activating the powers of the civil police to investigate these crimes and preventing the interference of military or security agencies.
- Immediately refrain from any degrading practices and hold all those involved accountable, as these crimes degrade human dignity.
- Allocate financial and institutional resources to provide compensation to victims, including psychosocial support programs and community reintegration plans.
- Expand the mandate of the National Transitional Justice Commission to include violations committed by all parties, not only the former regime. Include violations against members of the Alawite sect within the official transitional justice framework and ensure their documentation in the National Violations Registry, thus ensuring non-recurrence in the future.
- The Independent National Commission for the Missing (established by Decree No. 19 of 2025), in accordance with the tasks assigned to it by its establishment decree, shall investigate and reveal the fate of missing/forcibly disappeared women, document cases, and provide legal and humanitarian support to their families.
- Ratify the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the 2006 UN Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

6.2 To the international community and UN mechanisms:

- Pressure the Syrian transitional authorities to support international investigative efforts, including the work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria (COI), the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM), and the International Institution on Missing Persons in Syria (IIMP), and allow them to conduct independent and impartial investigations within Syria.
- The Independent International Commission on Missing Persons in Syria to document the incidents of abduction of women referred to in reports issued by various bodies, including the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, and calls on the Syrian transitional government to assume its responsibilities for revealing the fate of missing/abducted women and holding perpetrators accountable.
- Pressure the Syrian transitional authorities to respect their obligations under international law and ensure victims' participation in justice processes.
- Provide technical and financial support to civil society organizations involved in documentation and legal advocacy, and enable them to access victims, and provide them with legal and psychological support throughout all stages of justice.



ABOUT STJ

Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) started as an idea in a co-founder's mind while attending the U.S. Middle-East Partnership Initiative's (MEPI) Leaders for Democracy Fellowship program (LDF) in 2015. The idea became a reality and flourished into an independent, non-profit, impartial, non-governmental human rights organization.



ABOUT Ceasefire

The Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights aims to empower civilians in situations of armed conflict or prevailing insecurity to document violations of their rights; to seek justice and accountability for violations of civilian rights; and to develop the practice of civilian rights protection and raise public support for the promotion of civilian rights.

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