

News and Articles on Attacks and Massacres Targeting Alawites and Other Minority Communities in Syria in the Press

Following the overthrow of the Syrian government led by Bashar al-Assad, radical Islamist forces under the umbrella of HTS, designated as a terrorist organization, seized power. The new Syrian administration, composed of Islamist jihadists, includes those responsible for killing thousands of Alawites, Kurds, Christians, and other minority group members, as well as modern and secular Sunnis. These jihadists have repeatedly declared their intention to establish a regime based on Islamic Sharia law. However, these same figures now proclaim, "We will not harm anyone. We respect all beliefs and cultures, and everyone can live as they wish." This propaganda has found support in the West.

Despite these claims, these assurances fail to inspire confidence among Syria's religious minorities, secular citizens, and modern individuals. While the group may not have immediately launched widespread massacres as some feared, they have instead resorted to a calculated policy of intimidation, suppression, and covert killings. This strategy appears to be aimed at achieving their objectives over the long term.

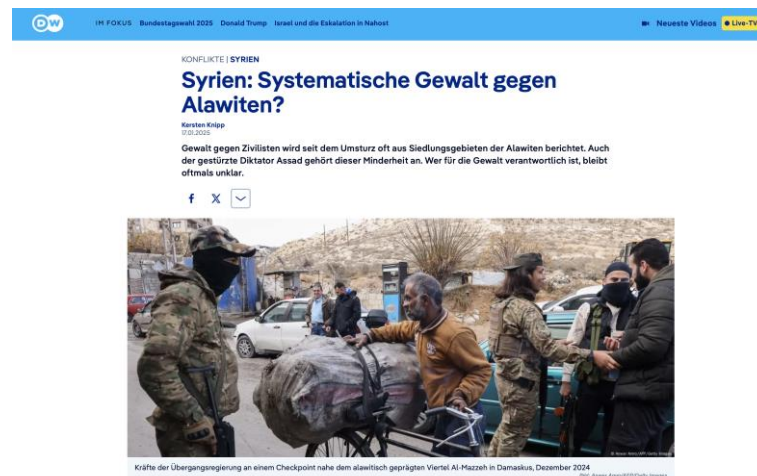
Concerns have been raised regarding the fate and conditions of thousands of detained soldiers. Reports of attacks on holy sites, the mistreatment, torture, abduction, arbitrary detention, and killing of civilians are widespread. Social media circulates videos documenting such incidents, although their verification can sometimes be challenging. Moreover, attacks acknowledged by the new government, albeit without accepting responsibility, have been documented.

The new administration is reportedly employing armed groups loyal to HTS to target Alawite Arabs and other perceived opponents in a campaign of suppression. These groups are accused of raiding villages, killing individuals, abducting people, and seizing property. When local populations report these incidents, HTS officials reportedly respond by stating, "We cannot control these actions," thereby denying responsibility. The purpose of such actions appears to be to instill fear, intimidate communities, and ultimately force them to flee. In essence, the Islamist militants seem to be pursuing a policy of systematically depopulating the region of Alawites through such methods rather than outright mass killings.

There are concerns that these actions may escalate into acts amounting to genocide. Frightened by these measures, many residents are abandoning their homes and relocating to areas where their relatives reside.

While Western media frequently portrays members of HTS as having 'changed, shaved their beards, donned suits, and are ready to establish a democratic political system and collaborate with the West,' there are also, albeit fewer, reports, documents, and accounts that shed light on the situation, concerns, and fears of minorities. In this context, we have conducted a general review of the media and summarized the significant findings as follows in this report.

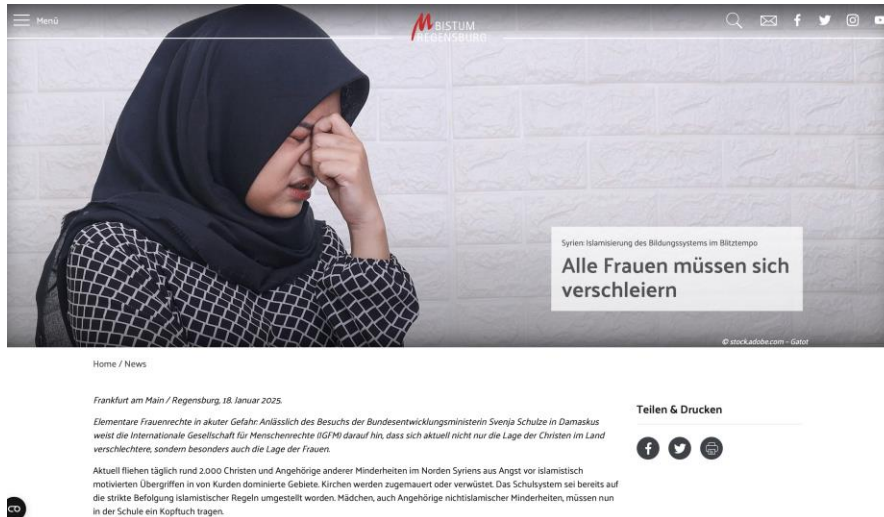
1. In an article titled "Syria: Systematic Violence Against Alawites?" published by Deutsche Welle on January 17, 2025, it is reported that violence against Alawites has increased in regions with significant Alawite populations, such as Latakia, Homs, and Hama, following the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime. Although the newly established transitional government has deployed armed forces to ensure security in these areas, attacks against Alawites continue. Reports indicate that violence, including killings, abductions, and torture, is being directed at the Alawite community. In particular, groups like Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), viewing Alawites as heretics and supporters of the former regime, are leading these attacks.



<https://www.dw.com/de/syrien-nach-dem-sturz-assads-systematische-gewalt-gegen-alawiten/a-71303443>

2. The article titled "Syria: Rapid Islamization of the Education System – All Women Must Veil," published on January 18, 2025, on the Bistum Regensburg's website, includes the following information:

During German Development Minister Svenja Schulze's visit to Damascus, the International Society for Human Rights (IGFM) highlighted worsening women's rights and Christian minorities' conditions in Syria. Christians and minorities are fleeing Islamist violence, while schools enforce strict Islamist rules, including mandatory headscarves for girls. IGFM Chairman Edgar Lamm warned that the new government, with roots in radical Islamist factions, undermines women's freedoms and human rights despite projecting a peaceful image. In Aleppo, Christian women face pressure to wear the hijab, and women are excluded from public roles. IGFM urged Germany to advocate for human and women's rights in Syria.



<https://bistum-regensburg.de/news/syrien-islamisierung-im-blitztempo?q=%2Fnews%2Fsyrien-islamisierung-im-blitztempo&cHash=f9b6beb2c2f794450ae1f0821b5d7af7>

3. In the article titled *"After the Fall of the Former President: Christians in Syria in Great Fear,"* published on December 17, 2024, by the (Christian media magazine) *PRO*, it was reported that Christians and religious minorities are living in fear following Assad's overthrow.



<https://www.pro-medienmagazin.de/christen-in-syrien-in-grosser-angst/>

4. The article titled *"Syria: Human Rights Advocates Warn of Islamization,"* published on January 18, 2025, by *PRO, the Christian Media Magazine*, includes the following information:

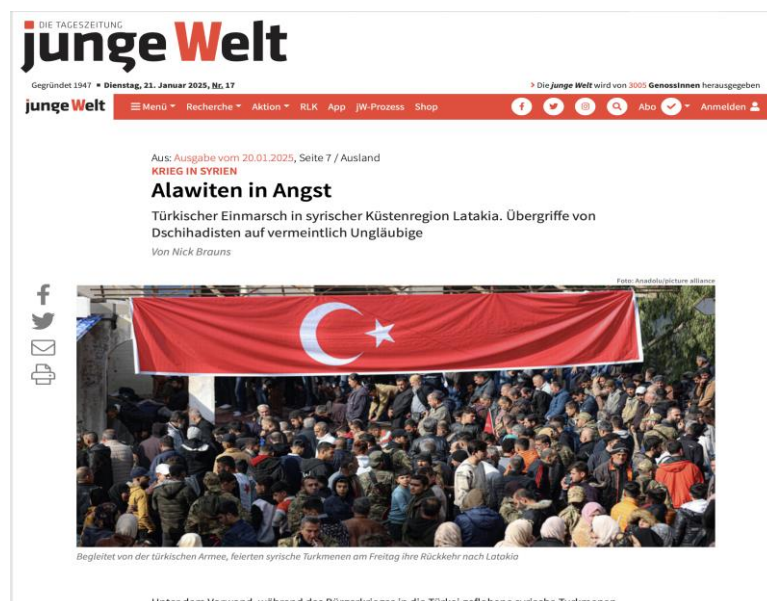
The International Society for Human Rights (IGFM) warns of worsening conditions for Christians, women, and minorities in Syria. Around 2,000 Christians and other minorities flee daily to Kurdish-controlled areas due to Islamist attacks, with churches being destroyed and girls, including non-Muslims, now required to wear headscarves in schools. IGFM Chairman

Edgar Lamm criticized the new government, formed by Islamist-jihadist rebels linked to Al-Qaeda, for suppressing women's and minority rights under Sharia law. Since the civil war began in 2011, Syria's Christian population has dropped from 1.5 million to about 250,000.



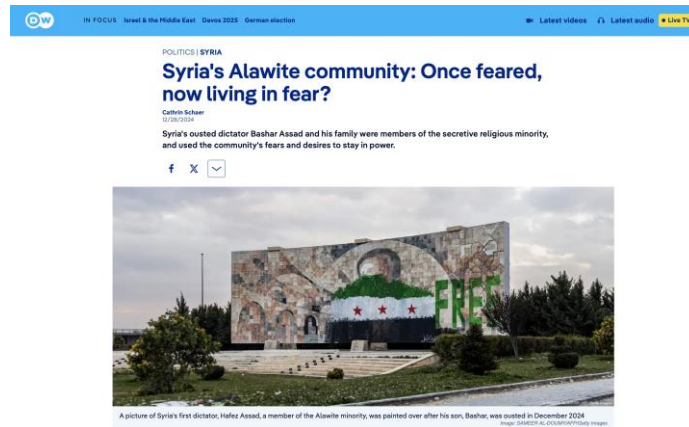
<https://www.pro-medienmagazin.de/syrien-menschenrechtler-warnen-vor-islamisierung/>

5. The article titled "*KRIEG IN SYRIEN: Alawiten in Angst*" (*WAR IN SYRIA: Alawites in Fear*), published on January 20, 2025, in *Junge Welt*, discusses the attacks on the Alawite community by jihadist groups. Jihadist groups such as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) have intensified violence against Alawites, viewing them as apostates from Islam. As of February 2025, some reports indicate that 120 members of the Alawite community have been killed, and 240 have been abducted. Videos circulating on social media depict torture and attacks on Alawites, which contribute to a climate of fear within the community, prompting calls for international protection.



<https://www.jungewelt.de/artikel/492142.krieg-in-syrien-alawiten-in-angst.html>

6. The article titled “Syria's Alawite Community: Once Feared, Now Living in Fear?” published by Deutsche Welle on December 28, 2024, explores the situation of Alawites in Syria, highlighting attacks on their sacred shrine and the fears and anxieties they are currently experiencing.



<https://www.dw.com/en/syrias-alawite-community-once-feared-now-living-in-fear/a-71172759>

7. The WDR article titled "Brennender Weihnachtsbaum: Unsicherheit unter Christen in Syrien" published on December 25, 2024, highlights the growing sense of insecurity and fear of oppression experienced by Christians in Syria under the rule of the Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which assumed power after the fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime. The incident involving the burning of a Christmas tree in Western Syria is seen as an example of the threats faced by minorities in the country. Despite HTS leaders stating that respect should be shown to all groups, concerns among Christians persist due to increasing pressure, restrictions on religious freedoms, and the lack of security guarantees.



<https://www1.wdr.de/nachrichten/weihnachtsbaum-syrien-unruhen-christen-100.html>

8. The report titled “SYRIA: Executions and Torture! 'It's the HTS!' Brutal Videos of the New Rulers Emerge!” aired on Welt TV on January 5, 2025, highlights allegations of torture and executions against Alawites by the new rulers in Syria and features various striking videos as evidence.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DL2noz4vs_I

9. This video, posted on Suroyo TV's Facebook account, features the demonstration held in Hamburg on January 10, 2025, regarding the protection of minorities in Syria, as well as related speeches on the topic.



https://www.facebook.com/watch/?mibextid=wwXIftr&v=626354963232217&rdid=xpyVSO_n8w18BLySQ

10. **Fear and uncertainty dominate in Latakia, where the Alawite population is concentrated in Syria**

In Latakia, a region in western Syria with a significant Alawite population, the takeover by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) after overthrowing the Assad regime has brought widespread fear and uncertainty. According to BBC correspondent Quentin Sommerville, an Alawite family was forcibly evicted from their home by HTS militants. Armed men arrived in a black truck, forced the family out into the street in their pajamas, and moved their own families into the house.



This situation has heightened anxiety within the Alawite community in Latakia, where HTS operates as a de facto law enforcement authority. The report highlights how fear and insecurity have become part of daily life in the city.

<https://www.bbc.com/turkce/articles/c3vr3kzv1g7o>

11. Call for a Democratic and Secular Syria Amid Fear in Latakia

The Alawite population in Latakia, Syria, faces heightened fear and insecurity following the overthrow of the Assad regime and the expansion of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham's (HTS) influence in the region. Religious leaders, community members, and human rights advocates have expressed deep concern over HTS's actions, which include forced evictions, property confiscations, and acts of violence targeting Alawite communities.

According to the report, HTS militants have seized homes and public spaces in areas like Rabia and Khan al-Joz, displacing residents and claiming properties under the guise of restoring order. An Alawite religious figure from Latakia emphasized the need for unity and vigilance, warning against potential acts of revenge and chaos. He called for dialogue and reconciliation, urging Syrians to strive for a democratic and secular state where all religious and ethnic groups can coexist peacefully.



The report highlights a growing consensus among the Alawite community that sustainable peace and stability require abandoning sectarian politics and embracing inclusive governance. However, with HTS acting as a de facto governing force in many areas, uncertainty persists about the future of minority groups and their safety in post-conflict Syria.

<https://bianet.org/haber/lazkiyeli-alevi-din-insani-demokratik-ve-laik-bir-suriye-istiyoruz-302770>

12. Human Rights Violations in Syria: Systematic Breach of the Right to Life

The Human Rights Association (IHD) highlights severe and systematic human rights violations in Syria, particularly targeting the Alawite population and other minorities. Forced evictions, arbitrary arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings are reported, with armed groups like Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) playing a significant role in these abuses. Minority groups face violence, property confiscation, and exclusion from political processes. The IHD calls for urgent international intervention to stop these violations and ensure the protection of human rights across Syria.



<https://www.ihd.org.tr/suriyede-insan-haklari-ihlalleri-yasam-hakkinin-sistemik-ihlali/>

13. Syria's new rulers warn against incitement as tensions brew

Syria's Alawite minority has reported escalating violence and targeted attacks in the wake of the Assad government's fall. In Damascus, Alawite homes have been vandalized, and individuals assaulted based on their religious identity, with community leaders warning of deliberate attempts to incite sectarian conflict. A prominent Alawite sheikh described the incidents as deeply concerning, highlighting the community's growing fear and frustration. Despite official bans on sectarian rhetoric in the media, Alawites continue to face threats to their safety and dignity.



<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/syrias-new-rulers-declare-crackdown-tensions-flare-coastal-area-2024-12-26/>

14. The Challenges Facing Syria's Alawites

A video of the burning of the Al-Khasibi shrine in Aleppo has heightened fears among Syria's Alawite community, as civilians report increasing violence and persecution. In Alawite-majority regions like Homs, Latakia, and Tartous, villages have been raided by armed groups, resulting in displacement, theft, and killings. Civilians have described targeted attacks, including individuals being taken from buses and executed, while others face harassment and violence in their homes. Protests over the desecration of the shrine have been met with armed crackdowns, leading to injuries and deaths, including that of a child in Latakia. Alawite families are increasingly forced to flee their homes, often returning to impoverished villages with little support, while widespread fear of collective punishment for their perceived association with the former regime looms large.

<https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/the-challenges-facing-syrias-alawites/>

15. 'Syrian above all': The Alawite community refuses to pay for Assad's crimes

Reports of brutal mistreatment and violence against Alawite civilians are mounting in Syria, painting a grim picture of fear and persecution. Ali*, a former soldier, recounted being dragged off a bus, beaten with iron bars, and left bruised and terrified, accused of being an "Alawite pig" by masked militants at a checkpoint. Other Alawite civilians describe punitive raids, harassment, and murders targeting their community, with individuals disappearing or being subjected to torture. Social media is flooded with videos allegedly showing HTS fighters humiliating and attacking Alawites, while protests and fear of collective punishment grip communities like Tartus and Latakia. Civilians now live in constant fear, many destroying evidence of their loved ones' military service or fleeing in desperation to avoid further violence.

<https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20250113-syrian-above-all-the-alawite-community-refuses-to-pay-for-assad-crimes>

16. Syria's Alawites, tainted by Assad, endure a fall from grace

Alawite civilians in Syria are facing widespread persecution and insecurity following the fall of the Assad government. Many report being harassed, arrested, or displaced, with some forced to flee their homes at gunpoint. Activists and former soldiers describe beatings, detentions, and constant fear at checkpoints, while incidents of looting, vandalism, and vigilante attacks have risen. Social media is flooded with reports of sectarian violence, and over 130 revenge killings have been documented. Amid growing mistrust and insecurity, many Alawites fear for their survival as they are targeted for their identity and perceived association with the former regime.



<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2025-01-23/syria-after-assad-alawites-endure-fall-from-grace>

17. Thousands of Alawites mourn 3 killed by foreign Islamists: monitor, witness

Source: Arab News, January 2025

Three Alawite farmers, including a child, were killed in the village of Ain Sharqia by foreign Islamist fighters allied with Syria's new authorities, prompting thousands to mourn their deaths. The killings highlight the surge in violence against Alawites since Assad's ouster, with at least 148 members of the community killed. Mourners at the funeral called for justice, the expulsion of foreign fighters, and greater security under local police. The Alawite community has also faced other targeted attacks, including the recent killing of clerics and the desecration of religious sites, fueling anger and fear among the minority group. Despite promises of protection by the new rulers, Alawites remain deeply vulnerable to violence and sectarian reprisals.



<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2585809/middle-east>

18. Syria: Systematic violence against Alawites?

Since the fall of the Assad regime, Alawite communities in Syria have faced systematic violence, including daily attacks, killings, and mass arrests. Reports from the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) document 132 killings, including women and children, primarily in Alawite-majority regions such as Homs, Hama, Latakia, and Damascus. Social media videos highlight brutal acts of violence, although their authenticity remains difficult to verify. Armed groups, some masked and of unclear affiliation, have been linked to attacks on civilians, further exacerbating fear and insecurity among Alawites. Many have disarmed in hopes of peace, but with the transitional government unable to maintain control or provide security, calls for international intervention to protect Alawite communities are growing louder.



<https://www.dw.com/de/syrien-nach-dem-sturz-assads-systematische-gewalt-gegen-alawiten/a-71303443>

19. News in brief from around the world: killings of Alawites in Syria

The UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) has called for restraint in Syria following reports of targeted killings of Alawites and other minority groups in the aftermath of Assad's fall. Spokesperson Liz Throssell acknowledged awareness of videos and reports allegedly showing the killings of Alawite men in cities like Homs and confirmed that efforts are underway to verify these accounts. The UN emphasized the importance of adhering to international humanitarian and human rights laws, including the protection of minority groups. Throssell urged the transitional authorities, led by Ahmed al-Sharaa, to restore security and ensure accountability for crimes while protecting the rights of women, children, and minorities. A UN team has been sent to Damascus to engage with the transitional government on these critical issues.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/01/1158791>

<https://news.un.org/en/audio/2025/01/1158796>

<https://www.europeantimes.news/de/2025/01/Kurzmeldungen-aus-aller-Welt-T%C3%B6dliches-Erdbeben-in-China-T%C3%B6tungen-von-Alawiten-in-Syrien-Hinrichtungen-im-Iran-Autorechtsaktivisten-Finanz--und-Nahrungsmittelkrisen/>

20. Suddenly a threatened minority: Alawites in Syria

The Society for Threatened Peoples (GfbV) warns of escalating violence against Alawites in Syria following the fall of Assad. Sunni Islamist factions, supported by Turkey, have conducted raids in Alawite-majority areas like Latakia, resulting in at least 157 Alawites being killed and over 9,000 imprisoned, with many fearing torture and mistreatment. These revenge acts by Islamist rulers, many with ties to extremist groups like ISIS, have deeply alarmed the Alawite community, raising concerns of a potential armed uprising that could destabilize Syria further. Human rights advocates stress the need for an independent judiciary to address war crimes committed by all sides, including those targeting Alawites, Kurds, and other minorities. Without intervention, this cycle of vengeance risks worsening sectarian tensions and igniting broader regional conflicts.

<https://bistum-regensburg.de/news/ploetzlich-eine-bedrohte-minderheit-alawiten-in-syrien>

21. The Military Operations Department executed 35 people in 72 hours and arrested dozens of people who participated in operations in the countryside of Homs

There has been a dramatic increase in violations, crimes and extrajudicial killings committed by local factions of the Military Operations Authority in towns and villages inhabited by civilians belonging to the Alawite, Shia and Murshidiya communities. The violations included random arrests, harassment, humiliation and attacks on religious symbols. 'These offences have escalated into horrific crimes of murder and desecration of the bodies of murdered civilians, reflecting an unprecedented level of violence,' it said.

<https://www.syriahr.com/746855/بعد-إعدام-35-شخصا-خلال-72-ساعة-إدارة-الع>

22. Syrian Alawites: One breath away from death

On 23 January, disastrous news came from Homs. The operation, announced by HTS days earlier, targeted the villages of Fahil, Meryemin, al-Kabu, Hirbet al-Hamam, Arkaya, al-Shaniyya, Hadese and Harkal in the western countryside of the province.

According to journalist Janaan Moussa, who spoke to residents of the villages, armed men arrived in Fahil on 23 January in minibuses and pick-up trucks and started shooting at random, destroying and looting houses, beating villagers, men, women and elderly, destroying religious symbols, and killing two men who were getting off the Damascus-Fahil bus. The villagers put the number of casualties at 58. Some bodies were found on the roads near the village. On the same day, the village of Maryam was raided. Armed men shot at random, broke into houses and stole valuables. A picture of Suleiman al-Murshid, founder of the Murshidiya sect, was taken down and villagers were ordered to step on it. Men were beaten and forced to bark. Two people were killed. Especially former soldiers and policemen were detained.

Of the 16 people whose bodies were found, 13 were former soldiers and police officers. All of them had gone to the HTS reconciliation table and surrendered their weapons and were given 'emân' (security assurance).

As in many raids, first the Military Operations Administration comes, behaves properly and leaves. Then the groups without logos come and punish them. As in Meryemin, the governor appointed by HTS promises to investigate and find the culprits. So officially, HTS does not get its hands dirty. This is now a vicious circle.

If the issue is to rebuild the country, Syria cannot find its way with 'blind revenge' and 'sectarian cleansing'. Colani's promises to foreign delegations have no equivalent on the ground. In this way, they cannot bring Syria's dispersed sides together, let alone build a pluralistic system. Kurds, Druze and others are watching what is being done to the Alawites. The fact that those who vouch for HTS are playing three monkeys does not save the situation. Not only the Alawites, but the whole of Syria is being harmed, and the future of the country is being darkened...

<https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/suriyeli-aleviler-olume-bir-nefes-otede-makale-1752568>

