



## 2.7.2. Alawites

Alawites constitute between 9 %[547](#) and 10 % of Syria's population[548](#). They are primarily concentrated along Syria's coastal and mountainous hinterlands (Tartous and Latakia governorates), with smaller communities present in Homs, Hama, and Damascus.[549](#) During the rule of Hafez al-Assad and Bashar al-Assad, themselves members of the Alawite minority, Alawites held disproportionate influence in Syria's military, intelligence and political institutions, though much of the rural population remained economically marginalised.[550](#) Their overrepresentation in key positions within the Syrian state and longstanding association with the Assad government contributed to widespread perceptions of Alawite complicity in the regime's actions,[551](#) as well as to mistrust and resentment toward the community, particularly among the new authorities and segments of the Sunni population.[552](#)

### **Targeting by transitional government security forces and affiliated armed actors**

The UNCOI documented cases of arbitrary detention, as well as torture and ill-treatment of Alawite individuals in detention by transitional government forces between January and October 2025. Cases involved Alawites who were former SAA members including some who underwent reconciliation, civilians affiliated with the former government, as well as civilians accused to be remnants of the former regime.[553](#) Deaths of Alawite detainees arrested in early 2025 while in transitional government detention facilities were also documented by the UNCOI.[554](#)

In March 2025, a large-scale violence erupted against Alawite community in Latakia, Tartous, Homs and Hama governorates amidst clashes between pro-Assad remnants, transitional government security forces and private individuals operating alongside them. The violence led to over 1 400 people, including around 100 women, predominantly civilian Alawites being killed.[555](#) UNCOI investigations found reasonable grounds to believe that members of the parties involved in the incidents, including transitional government security forces, committed violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, some of which may constitute war crimes.[556](#)

Since July 2025, the transitional government has introduced corrective measures, such as reducing checkpoints, rotating personnel and arresting individuals linked to earlier abuses, which have limited overt misconduct by state-affiliated forces. However, these steps have not significantly improved the security in the areas affected, leaving minorities exposed to violations by non-state actors and ongoing intercommunal tensions.[557](#) Many Alawites who fled the March 2025 violence to Lebanon reportedly remain abroad,[558](#) while thousands of Alawites reportedly relocated to SDF-controlled areas in northeast Syria. Around 2 000 are estimated to have joined the SDF incentivised by the monthly USD 200 stipend paid to fighters.[559](#) The Alawite

community's trust in the transitional government has been undermined by its perceived failure to protect civilians, allegations of involvement of some of its personnel in the March atrocities, and the absence of credible efforts to ensure accountability or prevent the recurrence of such abuses.[560](#)

### **Targeting by non-state armed actors and unidentified actors**

Incidents of harassment, abduction, killings[561](#), torture, ill-treatment, and forced displacement of Alawite civilians in Damascus[562](#), the coastal areas and in Homs and Hama governorates continued after the March 2025 violence.[563](#) The perpetrators are often reported to be non-state armed actors.

In November 2025, the killing of a couple from the Bani Khalid Bedouin tribe in Zaydal, southern Homs accompanied by sectarian slogans found at the crime scene and fuelled by portrayal of the crime as a sectarian attack committed by Alawites,[564](#) sparked retaliatory attacks against Alawite-majority neighbourhoods, including al-Bassel and al-Muhajirin. Armed tribal members vandalised and burned property, fired on homes and shops, and the violence spread to additional areas of the province as dozens of armed individuals called for revenge. In response, the MoI imposed a curfew and deployed security forces, establishing checkpoints and conducting patrols to contain the unrest. Health authorities in Homs reported that at least 18 people were injured in the violence, while the Alawite organisations stated that attacks carried out by members of Bedouin tribes resulted in two fatalities.[565](#) Large protests were held as a result in Alawite-majority areas in Latakia, Tartous, Homs and Hama.[566](#)

On 26 December 2025, a bombing at an Alawite mosque in Homs city killed at least eight civilians and injured 20 others, with Saraya Ansar al-Sunna claiming responsibility.[567](#) Two days later, protests erupted in coastal areas, including Latakia and Tartous, where Alawite demonstrators called for security and political guarantees.[568](#) Clashes between protesters, transitional government supporters and security forces reportedly left at least three civilians and one security officer dead and more than 100 injured.[569](#) Syrian authorities attributed the violence to pro-Assad loyalists who attacked security forces, while monitoring groups reported that security forces were responsible for some deaths during clashes and the dispersal of demonstrations in Latakia, where confrontations between protesters and counter-protesters also involved beatings, stone-throwing and gunfire being shot in the air.[570](#) In the aftermath of the protests, unidentified individuals attacked Alawite-majority neighbourhoods in Latakia, damaging cars and vandalising shops. Authorities imposed a curfew and arrested 21 individuals it labelled as former regime remnants who were reportedly inciting sectarianism and targeting security forces.[571](#)

Since early 2025, a pattern of assassinations of Alawites by unidentified armed individuals has been reported in Alawite-inhabited areas, particularly in Homs city and its countryside.[572](#) At least 40 Alawites were killed in Homs in separate attacks between 5 June and 31 October 2025. Incidents of kidnapping and murder in Homs governorate also increased, particularly affecting Alawite-majority areas. SNHR assessed that most of these attacks were acts of revenge against former members of the regime and perceived collaborators.[573](#) During the first two months of 2026, local activists documented the killing of 30 civilians in Homs city, the majority Alawites, carried out by unidentified gunmen on motorcycles.[574](#) According to sources, the victims

reportedly included civilians with no known prior involvement in the conflict or in human rights violations, reinforcing a growing perception within the community that sectarian affiliation has itself become a risk factor.[575](#)

### **Situation of Alawite women**

In the aftermath of the March 2025 violence, the number of Alawite female-headed households increased since most of the fatalities were men. The absence of male family members in a patriarchal context has left affected women vulnerable to exploitation, property disputes, and increased risks of gender-based violence and harassment. Women reported facing stigma and abuse when seeking death certificates at civil registries, their deceased being labelled traitors or insurgents. The loss of primary breadwinners has undermined economic stability and, in some cases, discouraged widows from returning to work after the massacres.[576](#)

Throughout 2025, there were reports of women and girls, primarily from Alawite communities, who were abducted[577](#) across several governorates, including Damascus, Latakia, Tartous, Hama, Rural Damascus and Homs.[578](#) The UNCOI documented 21 cases affecting women and four girls, in which perpetrators typically were unidentified armed actors, organised criminal groups or individual criminals, while one case implicated foreign fighters nominally integrated into government forces. During captivity, many victims were subjected to beatings, sectarian slurs and, in some cases, ransom demands, suggesting both sectarian and financial motives. At least eight abductees experienced sexual violence, including gang rape and forced marriage, and three survivors returned pregnant.[579](#)

The Stop the Abduction of Syrian Women campaign documented 130 abduction cases from February to December 2025, mostly affecting Alawite women, with 36 still missing.[580](#) The Syrian Feminist Lobby, an advocacy group for women in Syria, documented more than 80 disappearances between February and December 2025, at least 26 of which were confirmed kidnappings, and nearly all reported victims identified as Alawite women.[581](#)

A New York Times investigation, based on dozens of interviews with Alawite victims, their relatives and individuals involved in the cases, found that kidnappings were widespread and often carried out with brutality. In some cases, ransom was requested by kidnappers. The investigation verified the abduction of 13 Alawite women and girls, as well as one man and one boy; five victims reported rape, and two returned pregnant. Victims reported being abducted either by fellow Syrians motivated by money or sectarian revenge or by foreign jihadists. Many victims claimed their captors insulted Alawites and justified robbery and sexual violence against them, reflecting narratives promoted by extremist Islamist groups.[582](#)

State responses to abduction reports were inconsistent, with some investigations left incomplete, families sometimes discouraged or threatened from pursuing cases, and in two instances victims themselves arrested on morality-related charges after being rescued.[583](#) In November 2025, the Mol stated that, of 42 alleged cases it investigated, only one was confirmed to be an abduction.[584](#) The Syrian authorities dismissed the findings of the New York Times investigation as unsubstantiated, stating that no evidence was found of systematic abductions of Alawite women.[585](#)

## **Situation of Alawites working in the public sector**

Widespread public-sector layoffs enacted by the transitional government after taking power, including the dismissal of the entire former regime's security apparatus,[586](#) has disproportionately affected the Alawite community,[587](#) reflecting both targeted sectarian measures and their overrepresentation in government employment under Assad.[588](#) This measure resulted in a large number of unemployed Alawite men with military training and limited prospects.[589](#) Wives of former officers reportedly also lost their public-sector positions, including in the education and health sectors, apparently after being deemed guilty by association.[590](#)

For many affected individuals, the loss of employment also resulted in the loss of government-provided housing.[591](#) Social and military housing originally provided to public-sector employees, military personnel, and low-income households, along with informal settlements inhabited by Alawites on expropriated land, have been subjected to property destruction and forced evictions, frequently carried out by armed men affiliated with government forces.[592](#) Alawite residents of military and social housing in the Al-Somarya and Al-Zahryat areas of Damascus were reportedly evicted after receiving only hours or days' notice, with properties looted and male residents allegedly arrested. The transitional government, however, stated that the evacuations followed a one-month notice period and that no incidents occurred during the process.[593](#)

While there were reports of authorities reinstating most non-security public-sector employees, implementation remained inconsistent. Former security-sector personnel continued to be excluded.[594](#)

## **Housing, Land, and Property issues**

Following the fall of the Assad government, residents of dozens of Alawi villages in northern Hama fled, after which individuals from nearby communities looted property and seized agricultural land. Attempts by displaced villagers to return were reportedly hindered by authorities' inability to ensure security, while their land continued to be used in their absence without the authorities intervening. Those Alawites who did not flee were subjected to insults, death threats and ill-treatment including from alleged government security forces.[595](#) Looting, seizure, and destruction of property belonging to Alawite residents were reported in Homs city and surrounding rural areas in the context of security operations conducted between December 2024 and March 2025. The perpetrators reportedly included government forces as well as armed Sunni and Bedouin groups.[596](#)

A STJ report documented displacement of Alawites from villages in northern Hama as well as ongoing abuses, including direct security threats and a lack of protective measures preventing their return. Meanwhile, their property was extensively looted, and organised entities, most notably Idlib-based Iktifaa Company, took control of agricultural lands under the pretext of investment, depriving owners of their primary livelihoods.[597](#)

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