



1.2.4. Druze armed groups controlling Sweida

Dozens of Druze militia groups are active in Sweida governorate.¹⁹⁴ These armed factions were grouped into four main coalitions,¹⁹⁵ the most prominent being the Men of Dignity and the Sweida Military Council (SMC). While some Druze factions have supported coordination with the government, others have called for resistance against the central authorities.¹⁹⁶

Druze armed factions seized control of the governorate in late 2023¹⁹⁷ and territorial control did not change over the reference period.¹⁹⁸ While Druze factions joined the offensive that led to the downfall of the Assad regime in December 2024,¹⁹⁹ some Druze leaders soon rejected the transitional government's plans to deploy troops in Sweida and to disarm²⁰⁰ and integrate the local factions into the new security institutions.²⁰¹ Notably, Sheikh Hikmat Al-Hijri, one of the three highest Druze spiritual authorities in Sweida,²⁰² and known for his pro-Israel stance,²⁰³ rejected talks with the new central government.²⁰⁴ Attempts by the government to engage with more moderate Druze figures further alienated these hardliners while simultaneously fuelling rivalries among Druze factions.²⁰⁵ Besides Druze armed factions, there are Bedouin and other tribal forces in the governorate and in neighbouring areas. These groups, bound together by blood lineage and shared sets of values, maintain various complex alliances and show different levels of organisation and coordination.²⁰⁶ Some Sunni tribes have been accused by Druze leaders of siding with the transitional government.²⁰⁷ In July 2025, a lingering conflict between Druze and Bedouin communities escalated into heavy clashes that prompted military interventions by transitional government and Israeli forces.²⁰⁸ For further information on the events of July 2025, see section [1.1. Overview of current conflicts](#) and section [2.13. Sweida governorate](#).

In August 2025, between around 30²⁰⁹ and 40 Druze factions formed a new military body, the National Guard Forces (NGF),²¹⁰ with the aim of consolidating military and security efforts in Sweida, pledging allegiance to Al-Hijri.²¹¹ Amongst others, this military body includes the Men of Dignity²¹² and reportedly also the SMC.²¹³ The NGF was accused of cracking down on dissent²¹⁴ and arresting rivals. Two Druze clerics were reported to have died in late 2025 after being detained by the NGF.²¹⁵ Furthermore, alleged NGF members attacked political activists and arrested protesters they accused of siding with the transitional government.²¹⁶

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