



2.9.3. Security trends

The main security trend in Deir Ez-Zor governorate during the reference period was the loss of territorial control by SDF and the expansion of transitional government authority in January 2026.⁹⁵⁴ In the course of the offensive by pro-government forces in January 2026,⁹⁵⁵ clashes with SDF forces were reported for example in Al-Suwar,⁹⁵⁶ Abu Hammam, Abu Hardoub, Dhiban and Al-Jardhi. In Al-Shuhail and Dhiban SDF military posts were seized by tribal fighters and SDF defectors even before pro-government forces reached the area.⁹⁵⁷ Tribal forces captured several settlements and oil fields, including the Omar Oil Field and the Kuniko Gas Field.⁹⁵⁸

Already in early October 2025, a ceasefire between SDF and the transitional government had been announced.⁹⁵⁹ However, SDF and government forces clashed in Al-Maariya (south of Deir Ez-Zor city) shortly thereafter.⁹⁶⁰ During October 2025, incidents involving SDF and government forces along their frontlines in the governorate were reported.⁹⁶¹

In the period since the fall of Assad, the Arab tribes in Deir Ez-Zor intermittently had fought the SDF, for example, the Al-Shaytat clan and the Bakara Tribe mobilised against SDF forces in September and October 2025 respectively.⁹⁶²

Clashes between different tribes were also reported during the reference period,⁹⁶³ as were attacks by unidentified gunmen, targeting transitional government forces⁹⁶⁴ and civilians.⁹⁶⁵ In March 2026, clashes between groups of local gunmen over the control of oil wells were reported.⁹⁶⁶

Another trend observed in Deir Ez-Zor governorate were ISIL attacks, which were reported throughout the reference period.⁹⁶⁷ Between February 2026 and 17 May 2026, SOHR recorded 26 ISIL attacks in government-controlled areas of the governorate. These incidents resulted in 10 deaths, including two civilians, and accounted for the majority of ISIL attacks countrywide during this period.⁹⁶⁸ In January 2026, the SDF's rapid withdrawal⁹⁶⁹ had prevented an organised transfer of counter-ISIL operations,⁹⁷⁰ but the transitional government sought to address the overall security gap⁹⁷¹ by trying to quickly establish police recruitment centres.⁹⁷² End of February 2026, ISIL announced a 'new phase of operations' against the transitional government.⁹⁷³ The group intensified its lone wolf attacks against security forces,⁹⁷⁴ killing a member of the security forces in Mayadin city in February 2026,⁹⁷⁵ while an alleged ISIL attack on a security forces checkpoint in March 2026 caused no casualties.⁹⁷⁶ As for the situation in the year 2025, SOHR documented 209 attacks by ISIL in Deir Ez-Zor governorate, resulting in 75 deaths, including 14 civilians.⁹⁷⁷ Most ISIL attacks occurring countrywide between June and November 2025 were reported in Deir Ez-Zor, with nearly 70 % of the total ISIL attacks targeting SDF forces.⁹⁷⁸ Joint US-SDF counter-terrorism efforts against ISIL continued in the governorate with a surge of operations reported in October 2025.⁹⁷⁹ ISIL was, for example, targeted by US

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