



2.13.3. Security trends

In July 2025, a robbery on the Damascus-Sweida highway allegedly driven by competition over smuggling routes, lead to retaliatory kidnappings and clashes between Druze militias and Bedouin fighters, escalating into the widely reported violence in Sweida governorate¹²³⁸ (see also section [2.13.2. Territorial control and main armed actors](#)). The escalation included the mobilisation of tribes across the country, allegedly in support of the Bedouins.¹²³⁹

The governorate was described as ‘volatile’,¹²⁴⁰ with the violence in Sweida primarily driven by the transitional government’s attempts to assert control and disarm the region and resistance from Druze groups to these demands. The security situation was characterised by ‘sudden, large-scale confrontations and heavy casualties’.¹²⁴¹ Despite the ceasefire being in effect,¹²⁴² sporadic¹²⁴³ clashes between Druze fighters/National Guard forces and internal security forces,¹²⁴⁴ continued into May 2026.¹²⁴⁵ Some resulted in civilian casualties.¹²⁴⁶ The launch of a suicide drone by Druze militias targeting transitional government forces in western Sweida in mid-December 2025 was reported as the first indication that the militias had acquired this new capacity.¹²⁴⁷ In mid-February 2026, the transitional government increasingly pressured Sweida governorate, including through threats to intervene militarily, to integrate into the Syrian state.¹²⁴⁸ Late February 2026, detainees were exchanged¹²⁴⁹ between the transitional government and Druze authorities following the July 2025 clashes.¹²⁵⁰ Additionally, talks between pro-government Druze militia leader Suleiman Abdel Baqi and US representatives to re-integrate Sweida governorate into the state were reported.¹²⁵¹ Renewed clashes between Druze armed men and transitional government forces were reported on 19 March 2026, described by Etana Syria as ‘the most significant’ clashes since July 2025,¹²⁵² with Israel carrying out airstrikes against Syrian military infrastructure for the first time since then.¹²⁵³ Clashes between Druze armed men and transitional government forces during the reporting period occurred for example in frontlines along Al-Mansouria, near Al-Wulgha,¹²⁵⁴ Tel Hadid, Al-Ara, Al-Majdal and Al-Mazraa.¹²⁵⁵ They included the use of drones,¹²⁵⁶ comprising suicide drones,¹²⁵⁷ mortars,¹²⁵⁸ heavy machine guns,¹²⁵⁹ and shelling.¹²⁶⁰ Inter-factional clashes between Druze armed groups were also reported.¹²⁶¹

In late April 2026, Syria Weekly reported that the security situation in Sweida governorate had notably deteriorated in the preceding months. The report noted an increase in attacks on critics of Hikmat Al-Hijri's authorities by members of Druze militias.¹²⁶² According to a New Arab article from April 2026, Al-Hijri instructed supporters of the transitional government to leave Sweida governorate in a video message. The article also noted that, according to the governor of Sweida, individuals who had expressed support for the transitional government had been threatened with death by Sweida militias, and that one prominent Al-Hijri opponent had been killed in Sweida city the same month.¹²⁶³ The killing by gunshot of a Druze poet and activist in

Sweida, who had criticised local separatist militias, was reported in December 2025.[1264](#) Syria Weekly also reported in late April 2026 increased fighting among rival Druze factions and violence perpetrated by Druze militias to assert control over public sector bodies allegedly influenced by the transitional government.[1265](#) Other sources also reported detentions[1266](#) and killings[1267](#) by National Guard Forces of persons opposing Al-Hijri, including Druze notables.[1268](#) In a report from mid-May 2026, the UN Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria stated that Sweida governorate was experiencing ‘persistent political and security instability’. According to the report, weekly demonstrations demanding the release of detainees, greater autonomy, and the return of displaced persons have been taking place in the governorate, alongside ongoing infighting within the Druze community.[1269](#) Sources also reported incidents of violence perpetrated by unknown people during the reference period,[1270](#) among which abductions,[1271](#) including of children.[1272](#) In December 2025, MEE noted that abductions on the Damascus-Sweida highway were a regular occurrence.[1273](#)

During the reporting period, sporadic Jordanian airstrikes on Sweida governorate, allegedly targeting arms caches and organised crime cells, particularly those involved in drug production and smuggling,[1274](#) were reported.[1275](#)

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