



# **PRESS RELEASE ON THE ESCALATION OF ARMED CONFLICT IN SWEIDA**

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The Access Center for Human Rights (ACHR) raises its deep concern about the ongoing military escalations in Sweida and condemns the grave human rights abuses being committed— including the taking of civilian hostages, extrajudicial killings, the excessive use of force, indiscriminate attacks on residential areas, and the destruction of civilian property. ACHR unequivocally condemns all parties involved in this violence and denounces the government's politicized stance and its failure to protect civilians including minority groups such as the Druze and the Bedouins. ACHR firmly stresses that civilians must never be the target of attacks and that sectarianism should not be weaponized as a tool to justify foreign interference.

ACHR also expresses deep concern over the breakdown of the transitional government-led mediation efforts – without clear verifiable information on which party is primarily responsible for the breakdown of the ceasefires - which were intended to preserve civil peace but were ultimately breached. It calls upon the Syrian Transitional Government to uphold its responsibility ensure safety and stability for all civilians and launch an independent investigation alongside international actors to ensure accountabilities for all violations committed.

Further, ACHR reiterates its condemnation Isarel's ongoing incursions and inference in Syria including the repeated Israeli airstrikes on Syrian territory, the latest of which targeted areas in Damascus. These actions pose a severe threat to civilian lives, violate Syrian sovereignty, and directly contribute to the destabilization of the country, fuelling internal sectarian tensions such as the recent confrontations in Sweida.

ACHR calls on the international community to act urgently to end Israeli interference, to ensure full adherence to international law and to uphold the 1974 Disengagement Agreement.

Although ACHR's mandate focuses on monitoring the situation of Syrian refugees in host countries and advocating for their safe and dignified return, the current surge in violence inside Syria signals a grave deterioration of conditions that undermines safety and security and the prospects for voluntary and safe return. This poses serious obstacles to any genuine pathway toward stability, safety and reconstruction which are all necessary preconditions for Syrians to voluntarily return to Syria in a genuinely dignified manner. The series of massacres across various parts of Syria in the last few months — from coastal cities to neighbourhoods in Damascus —and the continuous human rights violations committed by all warring parties signifies why a real national dialogue process that is inclusive of all segments of Syrian society (including Syrian refugees) is necessary to begin to discuss accountability and justice and prevent future violations from taking place.

Lastly, ACHR cannot overlook the ongoing targeting of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, especially in Lebanon, where systematic raids, arbitrary arrests, and forced deportations — primarily in the northern and Beqaa regions — are carried out by security and military forces, in blatant disregard of basic rights and Lebanon's international obligations. ACHR views these violations against refugees as a continuation of the Syrian tragedy and a stark reflection of regional and international failure to uphold protections for Syrians — both within Syria and abroad. Localized sectarian tensions inside Syria and dangerous sectarian language being used to justify attacks threatens to incite further tensions in other areas as seen by the retaliatory actions taking place against Syrian refugees in some Druze-majority areas of Lebanon.

Accordingly, ACHR renews its calls to:

- Ensure the protection of civilians across all parts of Syria, and rejection of all forms of forced displacement.
- Launch an independent, transparent international investigation into the violations committed against civilians in Syria, committed by perpetrators, regardless of affiliation.
- Halt all forms of forced deportation and rights violations targeting Syrian refugees in host countries, especially in Lebanon.
- Adopt a comprehensive and peaceful political solution through an inclusive national dialogue process — one based on justice, accountability, and respect for human rights, away from the logic of power struggles and armed confrontation.

ACHR firmly believes that the ongoing violence inside Syria and the increasing violations against refugees abroad are two sides of the same crisis — one that can only be resolved through serious, responsible international action that places human life and dignity at the heart of any future settlement.

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