

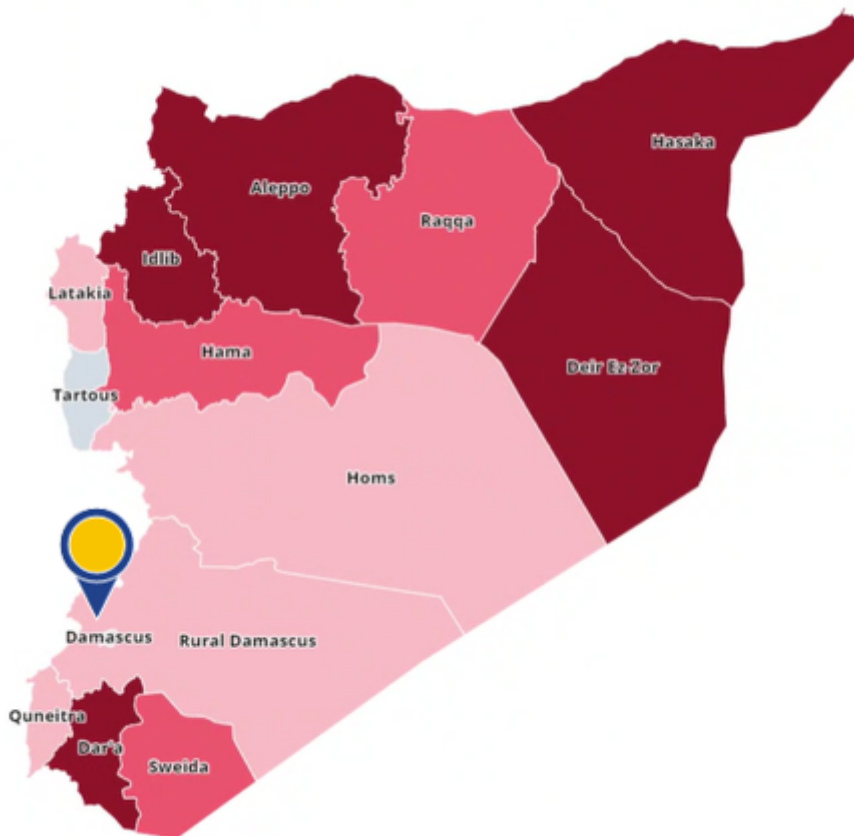
Damascus

Following the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, this document has been reviewed and updated. Please consult '[Interim Country Guidance: Syria \(2025\)](#)'

COMMON ANALYSIS

Last update: April 2024

[Main COI reference: [Security 2023](#), 2.10, pp. 131-135; [COI Update 2023](#), 2, pp. 3-10]



General information

Damascus governorate, which covers Syria's capital, is located in the south-western part of Syria and is completely surrounded by the Rural Damascus (Rif Damashq) governorate. The governorate is divided into two districts, Damascus city and Yarmouk. As of May 2022, UNOCHA estimated the population of Damascus governorate to be of 1 818 517 inhabitants.

Background and actors involved in armed confrontations

During the entire war, the GoS special forces were able to defend the capital, and while Sunni rebels captured the suburbs in the early stages of the conflict, they were never able to advance towards the central districts. The conflict inside Damascus city mainly played out in opposition-held areas, including the Jobar, Qaboun, Tishreen, and Barzeh neighbourhoods that were connected to eastern Ghouta, the opposition's stronghold. The southern neighbourhoods of Yarmouk Camp and Tadamoun also frequently experienced conflict activity. In 2018, the GoS forces, backed by Iran and Russia, regained complete control of the capital. [[Security 2022](#), 2.10, p. 183]

GoS and affiliated groups were in control of Damascus governorate throughout the reference period. Iranian and Russian forces were also reportedly deployed at several sites within the governorate.

'Some infrequent activity' of ISIL in Damascus was also reported. In May 2023, ISIL claimed responsibility for a car bombing targeting a police station in Damascus.

Nature of violence and examples of incidents

Although the capital has been 'largely spared the violence that happens in other parts of the country', car bomb attacks were reported in April and May 2023. The May 2023 incident involved a car bomb exploding at the Barzeh police station, whereby reportedly a lieutenant colonel was killed and four others were wounded. The UNSC noted that three police officers were killed. ISIL claimed responsibility. In June 2023, four people were injured when attackers threw a bomb and stabbed a person in Dummar district.

Israeli airstrikes were mainly carried out near Damascus city or on Damascus International airport. On 19 February 2023, 15 people, including two civilian women, were killed in an Israeli air strike in Kafr Sousa district of the capital. On 30 March 2023, the area was hit again by Israeli missiles. Airstrikes by Israel on Damascus international airport, were also reported in mid-October and November 2023, putting the airport temporarily out of service.

Incidents: data

Damascus recorded the second lowest number of security incidents out of all governorates [[Security 2023](#), 1.5.2 p. 38]. ACLED recorded 36 security incidents (average of 0.7 security incidents per week) in Damascus governorate in the period from 1 August 2022 to 28 July 2023. Of the reported incidents, 11 were coded as 'battles', 8 as 'explosions/remote violence' and 17 as 'violence against civilians'. In the period 1 August – 30 November 2023, 10 security incidents were recorded in Damascus representing an average of 0.6 security incident per week.

Geographical scope

All recorded security incidents were recorded in Damascus city.

Civilian fatalities: data

Damascus recorded the second lowest number of civilian fatalities out of all governorates [[Security 2023](#), 1.5.3 p. 40]. Between August 2022 and July 2023, SNHR documented three civilian fatalities. In August – November 2023, the SNHR recorded 4 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from May 2022, this represented less than one civilian fatality per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

Displacement

As of May 2022, there were 600 097 IDPs in Damascus.

According to UNOCHA, between January to December 2022, approximately 1 888 persons were displaced from Damascus governorate, as well as 112 within the governorate. Approximately 163 persons were displaced from other governorates to Damascus. In the first five months of 2023, there were approximately 68 IDP movements out of Damascus, and four IDP movements to Damascus.

In terms of IDP returns, UNOCHA recorded in 2022 approximately 2 000 IDP returns to Damascus and 7 000 returns from Damascus to other governorates. In the first five months of 2023, 9 returns were recorded to Damascus and about 135 returns from Damascus to other governorates.

Further impact on civilians

In its February 2023 report, the UN Secretary-General noted that about a third of Syrian communities were affected by explosive contamination, with one of the highest percentages reported in Damascus neighbourhoods. The existence of explosive ordnance in residential buildings in Yarmouk (Damascus) was also reported by UNMAS in its annual report covering 2022.

Looking at the indicators, it can be concluded that in the governorate of **Damascus**, there is, in general, **no real risk** for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD.

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