

Germany: Thousands protest in Cologne against massacre of Alawites in Syria

Dietmar Gaisenkersting
18 March 2025

On Saturday March 15, several thousand people protested in the German city of Cologne against the recent massacres of members of the Alawite minority in Syria.

Several Alawite associations had called for the rally under the slogan “Stop the genocide of the Alawite population in Syria.” The protest was directed against the massacres recently perpetrated by the Western-backed Islamist militia Haiat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) against the Alawite population.

The violence began after residents of the village of Beit Ana refused to hand over a suspect to the security forces on March 6. Fighting quickly spread from there between former soldiers of the Syrian army under Bashar al-Assad and troops of the HTS government led by Abu Mohammad al-Jolani (real name Ahmed al-Scharaa). In response, the HTS troops launched a large-scale operation.

Within two days, at least 745 civilians were killed. Soldiers of the new government executed Alawite men who had served in the security forces under the Assad regime. Several Alawite villages were looted and burned, and their inhabitants shot.

The president of the umbrella organisation of the Alevi community in Germany (AABF), Hüseyin Mat, opened the rally by accusing the international community and regional actors of simply ignoring the mass murder of the Alawite community that had taken place on the Syrian coast between Latakia and Tartus.

One poster addressed the complicity of the German government. It showed HTS founder and Syrian transitional president al-Sharaa with the Green Party Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock. After the fall of Bashar al-Assad, the German government promised the HTS regime aid projects worth over €60 million. On Monday, during a meeting of EU foreign ministers in

Brussels, Baerbock pledged a further €300 million in aid. The poster at the demonstration demanded the “Immediate arrest of Syrian’s IS founder—I don’t want to finance terrorism with my taxes.”

At the rally, Süleyman Serhan Narl? from the Federation of Arab Alevis in Europe (AAAF) stated: “Since the beginning of the latest massacres, more than 7,000 civilians have been killed on the Syrian Mediterranean coast solely for their beliefs, according to our information.” He calls for the establishment of a humanitarian corridor from Hatay in southern Turkey to Latakia to evacuate the Alawite population if necessary and to deliver aid. “The systematic extermination of Alawites in the region must be stopped,” he demanded.

Many participants carried their own placards with photos of their family members and friends who have been murdered by the HTS militia. Lara and Adam, two hospital doctors who came to Germany a few years ago, are among them. They carried several signs and expressed their despair at having already lost many friends and acquaintances. They fear for their families and friends in Syria.

“We are from Latakia,” said Lara. “They have not only carried out these massacres in Latakia, but also in Tartus. The victims are civilians, both women and men, who we know, with whom we studied.” She points to a photo on her placard. “That’s the sister of a colleague of ours. He’s also a doctor. We studied together and worked together. And that’s his mother and his father.” The terrorists had entered the family home and “They killed his mother and sister. His father survived because he was at work in the hospital at the time. It wasn’t a fight. They entered the home of civilians and shot them all dead.”

She pointed excitedly to another photo. “And this one

here is a pharmacist.” Adam added, “He is a pharmacist and also our colleague. First they killed him and then the next day they killed his pregnant wife. They killed them in cold blood. They killed the whole village.” He immediately pointed to another photo. “Here, too. Dead. They’re innocent people—civilians, unarmed people, doctors.” Lara adds, pointing to a picture of a young person, “And that’s a child.” The boy had nothing to do with the Assad regime, Adam said.

“This family,” he continued, “are relatives of a friend of ours.” He is a doctor in Syria and Adam related how his relatives were killed. “And there are thousands of these reports, thousands,” he said.

“Here is our friend,” he says, bursting with emotion. “His name is Brahim and he is a trauma surgeon. These are two pharmacists, a husband and wife. They never had anything to do with the war, they never fought. They were happy that Assad had gone and thought that peace had finally come.” Instead, they were killed.

He then told of another tragedy. He points to a photo of a little girl. “There were groups that only took the men and boys out of their apartments and shot them.” The girl’s father took his son and fled, believing this to be the case. He left his wife and little daughter behind. “He thought they would never kill his wife and daughter. But they did that too. Both are dead. The little girl was three or four years old.”

It was important for Lara to address the media reports in Germany: “The media reports that this is just a fight between Assad supporters and the army and the new government. Yes, there was fighting and as a result, there were also victims on both sides who died. But what are we talking about now? Civilians.” They had nothing to do with the fighting. “Nobody is saying that thousands of civilians have been executed in cold blood.” The massacres lasted three days.

“We saw it here in Germany on Instagram,” said Lara, “a video of the jihadists gathering and saying, ‘We’re coming to your village and we’re going to kill you all.’ We thought it was just a threat to spread fear. But no, they went to the villages, one after the other, and killed the inhabitants. People asked us on social media to do something. To make it stop! But there was nothing we could do.”

“We are sitting here in Germany and have to watch helplessly,” said Adam. Lara continued, “It’s not over

yet. They stole the mobile phones of those killed. And they call every number and say: “We know your name, we know where you live, and you’re next.” The people who are still alive, who have survived, are paralysed with fear, and we can’t do anything from here. That’s why we’re here, to show and tell people what’s going on. That’s all we can do.”



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact