

Eight Alawite workers massacred in armed attack in Syria

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7 October 2026

Eight people were killed on the evening of Wednesday, September 30, when gunmen attacked a bus carrying engineers and workers home from work in Syria's Homs province. The victims were reportedly Arab Alawites from the villages of Fahel, Shaniyeh and Mahfoura in the western countryside of Homs.

According to Syria's official news agency SANA and AFP, the attack took place as the vehicle belonging to the Al-Matin company was crossing the Masyaf Bridge. One of the wounded died the following day. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), masked gunmen disguised as security personnel stopped the vehicle, checked the passengers' identity cards and then opened fire. That the killings followed an ID check points to the sectarian character of the attack.

Violence against minorities, including the Alawites, has not abated under the regime of Ahmed al-Sharaa. He is the leader of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the Sunni Islamist organization with roots in Al Qaeda that came to power when Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was toppled in December 2024.

This is not the first time the residents of Fahel, the victims' village, have experienced such terror. On January 23, 2025, at least 16 people were summarily executed during a "sweep" operation carried out by the new regime's security forces. Among the victims documented by Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ) were former soldiers who had gone through the regime's "reconciliation" process.

The massacres targeting Alawites in the wake of regime change reached a peak in the coastal region in March 2025. A Reuters investigation found that 1,479 Alawites were slaughtered at 40 separate locations and that the chain of command reached up to leading

figures of the regime in Damascus. The UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria concluded that the attacks by government-affiliated forces had been widespread and systematic.

Among the forces alleged to have taken part in the massacres were the Sultan Suleiman Shah and Hamza divisions. Ankara armed these militias for years, and they have now been integrated into the new army.

The regime is seeking to shift responsibility onto a handful of "rogue" elements. In the first verdicts, announced in Aleppo on September 17, two pro-Assad defendants were sentenced to death and life imprisonment, while only one member of the government forces was sentenced to 20 years in prison. The prosecution of a few gunmen serves to whitewash those within the state apparatus who organized the massacres or turned a blind eye to them.

The attacks have continued. In December 2025, bombs exploded during Friday prayers at a mosque in a predominantly Alawite neighborhood of Homs, killing at least eight people. In January 2026, three hospital employees returning home after their shift at Al-Kindi Hospital were shot dead together with their driver.

The massacre of more than 1,000 Druze in Sweida in July 2025 had already shown that the sectarian terror is directed against all the country's minorities. For working people in Syria, simply going to work and returning home has become a danger to life.

Responsibility for this terror does not lie solely with the Islamist regime in Damascus. The 13-year regime-change war, in which the United States, the Gulf monarchies and Türkiye armed and financed Islamist militias, brought HTS to power. HTS emerged from the Nusra Front, Al Qaeda's Syrian affiliate.

The massacres have done nothing to slow the embrace of the new regime by the NATO powers and

their regional allies. Trump hosted the former jihadist leader al-Sharaa at the White House in November 2025, the Caesar Act imposing secondary sanctions on those dealing with the Syrian government has been repealed, and in September Washington removed Syria from its list of “state sponsors of terrorism.” This, after all, was the aim of the regime-change war: to bind Syria to the US-Gulf axis, eliminate Russian and Iranian influence and open the country up to foreign capital.

The pseudo-left forces that for years hailed this reactionary war as the “Syrian revolution” or the “Rojava revolution” bear political responsibility for the resulting catastrophe. The war cost hundreds of thousands of lives and turned millions of Syrians into refugees. By presenting the Islamist militias armed by the CIA and the Gulf monarchies as “revolutionaries,” these middle-class layers provided a left cover for imperialist intervention. Handing over to the imperialist powers and their regional allies the task of the Syrian working class to settle accounts with the Assad regime, they became supporters of a war for the redivision of the Middle East.

The role of the Turkish ruling class is particularly significant. Türkiye is the principal regional patron of the new regime in Syria. In August 2025, Ankara signed an agreement with Damascus providing for the training and equipping of the Syrian army. In the course of this process, the Syrian Kurds were subordinated to the new regime. This was achieved through a combination of Damascus’s military offensive, pressure from Washington and Ankara, and the recommendations of Abdullah Öcalan, the imprisoned leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

The outcome has further strengthened the influence of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s government in Syria. It has also put Türkiye on a collision course with Israel, which has expanded its occupation in the south of Syria.

These events are the product of escalating imperialist aggression aimed at establishing unchallenged US hegemony over the Middle East. Israel’s genocide in Gaza, its invasion of Lebanon, the US-Israeli war of aggression against Iran, the attacks on the Houthis in Yemen and regime change in Syria are all components of a single war.

For the Syrian people, the price is not limited to

sectarian terror. It is accompanied by a deepening social catastrophe. According to an estimate by Syria’s economy minister, unemployment stands at around 60 percent, and more than 90 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. In line with the prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the regime has slashed bread and fuel subsidies and announced plans to cut public sector employment by one third.

These social attacks, combined with the surge in oil prices triggered by the war against Iran, have provoked a broad wave of protests this year involving workers, students, small shopkeepers and farmers. In the first half of June alone, 41 demonstrations took place. Protests against displacement were held in Homs and Damascus, while farmers’ protests that began over wheat prices spread throughout the country.

In Syria and internationally, the fight against imperialist war cannot be separated from the fight for social and democratic rights. The way forward in Syria lies in the unification of workers on a class basis that transcends all sectarian, ethnic and religious divisions on an international socialist perspective.



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