

The Situation in Daraa after the Government of Syria Took Control of the Province in June 2018

Update The Security situation

1. Summary

In June 2018, Daraa province fell under the control of the Government of Syria (GoS) which, along with its allies and Russia, had made many threats to invade the province. Like other regions, the residents of Daraa then had no choice but to submit to the so-called “settlement agreement,” with Russia guaranteeing that no harm would come to the population. The agreement stated that opposition armed groups had to hand over their heavy and medium-sized weapons and allow the gradual entry of state institutions into their areas of control. The agreement also indicated that civilians would not be made the targets of retaliation by the GoS, its security services, or militias, as well as ending the prosecution of Daraa’s residents.

The Syrian Civic Platform (SCP) is preparing a series of situation reports that highlight the conditions experienced by the civilian population in Daraa after GoS took control of the province. This report attempts to shed light on the security situation in Daraa since June 2018.

2. The security situation

Tensions has continued in Syria’s southern region as a result of increased assassinations of leaders and people affiliated with some GoS bodies and agencies, as well as attacks on some of the military checkpoints and security headquarters of the GoS. In addition, the absence of police forces in Daraa and increased scrutiny at military checkpoints were noted.

The following are the most important incidents documented:

- The assassination of persons affiliated with military security and those of the 4th Armoured Division in Dael, Mazraib, Inkhil and other areas in Daraa province. The 4th Armoured Division is an elite group within the Syrian Army whose primary purpose is to defend the GoS from internal and external threats. The perpetrators of these assassinations are still unidentified.

In November, several security incidents were documented, despite the general stability in the province:

- An attack on Jassim Nawi checkpoint and the killing of two members affiliated with the GoS.
- An attack on military checkpoints in the town of al-Sanamayn, 55 kilometers north of Daraa.
- An attack on the recruitment division in the town of Busra al-Sham.
- The killing of a Syrian army officer, Saeed Assi, in Daraa countryside.
- Two people were killed in the town of Tafas by unknown persons.
- Weapons depots belonging to the Artillery Regiment were discovered in the town of Karak and handed over to the GoS.
- A weapons depot was found in a cemetery in Dael, and new weapons depots were handed over to the GoS in the town of Busra al-Harir.
- Anti-GoS writings appeared in Inkhil, Mazraib and al-Jiza.
- Demonstrations have continued against the presence of GoS forces in Tafas.



- A demonstration took place in Daraa al-Balad on December 21, 2018, demanding the release of the detainees as well as Assad's departure.
- There is continued security chaos as a result of the GoS's failure to control the security situation, which has resulted in the spread of theft and kidnapping.
- Continued indiscriminate proliferation of weapons as well as armed clashes between people in the towns of Tafas and Taybeh.
- Continuing raids and arrests of citizens under the pretext of ISIS affiliation in Inkhil. The arrests also extended to previous leaders or activists originally from Damascus and / or Latakia, despite the fact that they hold settlement cards.
- Continued raids in the Yarmouk Basin in Daraa's western countryside.
- At the entrance to the towns of Tafas, Daraa al-Balad and al-Musayfirah, the military checkpoints established an information chamber for follow-up and checking on names as well as arrests. In addition, the military checkpoints tightened the security grip in areas between al-Lujat, Bosir and Nahteh; areas that have witnessed anti-GoS activities.
- The Military Intelligence Branch threatened the residents of the town of Tafas if they continued with their opposition to the entry of the Syrian army. These threats are contrary to the settlement agreement.
- Cases of mine explosion were documented in multiple areas, such as in the towns of Abtaa, al-Musayfirah and the western region.

3. Other updates

- At the political level, a political group inside Syria and abroad was established, presenting itself as part of the revolutionary movement in the province.
- There is concern of several new developments. This includes the spread of Shi'ite doctrine, which began after GoS took control of the province; converting some mosques to Husseinias –a congregation hall for Shia commemoration ceremonies–and opening cultural centers for the Shi'ite doctrine. In addition, a number of Daraa residents have joined the Iranian militias, such as the Lebanese Hezbollah, after being lured by the offer of money.