

SYRIA

Upsurge in violence in Daraa governorate

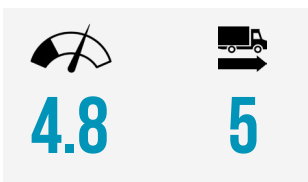
Violence has soared in Daraa governorate in southern Syria amid rising tensions between the local population and Syrian regime forces. Over 2019, assassinations, enforced disappearances, looting, fires, localised clashes, and other security incidents carried out both by regime and opposition forces have wreaked chaos in the region (Middle East Institute 03/07/2019; The New Arab 27/06/2019; The New Arab 06/11/2019).

Daraa was recaptured by the Syrian regime in July 2018, after being held by opposition forces since 2012. As in other areas retaken by the government, people in Daraa were offered Russian-brokered reconciliation deals granting amnesty to those who chose to remain and accept regime rule.

Despite the deals, the regime has cracked down on civilians and people perceived to be part of the opposition. Hundreds have been forcibly conscripted into the army or arrested and detained, including aid workers, media activists and family members, defectors, opposition leaders, and former anti-government fighters (Human Rights Watch 21/05/2019; Syria Direct 27/09/2019).

The violations have fuelled local grievances and prompted resistance from armed opposition groups

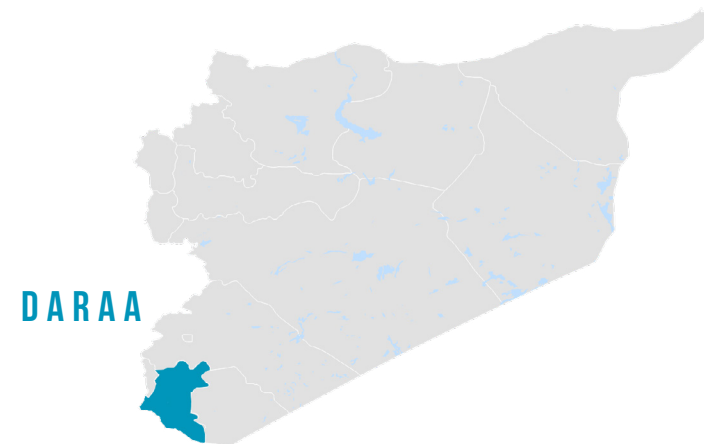
Severity Access



This applies to the country level crisis 'Conflict in Syria'.
Scale values go from 0 to 5.
Source: GCSI October 2019.

such as the Daraa Popular Resistance. In the first half of 2019, more than 57 violent incidents involving opposition forces in the area were recorded. A shift toward greater reliance on explosions and remote-controlled attacks has been noted in 2019, indicating an increase in the intensity of violence (ACLED 2019).

While violations have occurred in other areas retaken by the government, the situation in Daraa is particularly unstable as some degree of former opposition structures have remained intact. Many opposition fighters stayed in Daraa and were allowed to keep medium and light weapons under the reconciliation deal. Additionally, regime security forces were not allowed to enter some areas of Daraa. Moreover, unlike other government-controlled parts of Syria, the regime has relied on former opposition fighters as



regime proxies to ensure security in Daraa (Arab News 31/08/2019).

The heightened instability across southern Syria impacts a region where basic services were already depleted, jobs are lacking, food and fuel prices are extremely high, and the presence of humanitarian actors is limited. Outbreaks of violence have resulted in the displacement of unknown numbers of people (OCHA 25/08/2019). Although humanitarian conditions in Daraa are dire, the situation remains largely overlooked, with international attention focussing on the north of Syria.

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