

# Dispatch from Suweida:



## Ceasefire Masks a Deepening Humanitarian Crisis

## Introduction

Though multiple ceasefire declarations have been issued, the situation remains fragile, and the violence in Suweida has left deep and unhealed wounds.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), nearly 1,400 people have been killed in the governorate of Suweida due to armed clashes, bombardments, extrajudicial executions, and Israeli airstrikes. Among them are at least 196 individuals who were executed prior to the ceasefire declaration. Civilians—including women, children, and the elderly—have been among the victims of recent violence, with reports indicating that residential areas, streets, and public gathering places have been impacted.

Medical infrastructure has been severely impacted: most hospitals are now out of service due to the violence, impeding both the movement of medical staff and the delivery of essential supplies. Morgues are overflowing, and bodies are reportedly being left in public spaces due to the ongoing dangers of retrieval.

Over 176,000 people have been displaced from Sweida, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Reports from multiple media outlets indicate that around 30,000 people—primarily Druze residents—remain besieged in Suweida city and nearby towns. A severe humanitarian crisis is ongoing, marked by widespread shortages of food, water, electricity, and telecommunications, caused by extensive damage to vital infrastructure.

A first ceasefire was declared on July 15, 2025, by Syria's Defense Minister following pressure from Druze community leaders. The Syrian presidency formally reaffirmed this ceasefire on July 19, calling for a "comprehensive and immediate" cessation of hostilities and deploying Interior Ministry forces to the region. However, despite these announcements, sporadic clashes, sectarian attacks, and armed raids persist, particularly in rural areas and volatile neighborhoods, underscoring the fragility of the situation.

The scale of the violence—marked by executions, kidnapping, looting, and sectarian targeting—has left communities traumatized and fearful of what may come next. Suweida, long seen as a relatively autonomous and stable province, is now a site of grave humanitarian concern.

In this urgent context, Femena has spoken directly with women human rights defenders (WHRDs) who are documenting the atrocities, demanding justice, and struggling to protect their communities. Their stories shed light on the human cost of this crisis—and the resilience of those determined to resist it.

## **Amal Naem, 40 years old, WHRD and Widow of Early Revolution Martyr: “The Massacre at Al-Radwan Guesthouse”**

In a massacre that defies description, 13 Druze civilians, including a woman, were executed in cold blood inside the Al-Radwan guesthouse in Suweida’s Tabliyah neighborhood, on the morning of Tuesday, July 16. Amal Naem, a WHRD and the widow of revolutionary activist Moeen Radwan, spoke with Femena:

“At around 1 PM, military vehicles with armed men in uniforms affiliated with Syrian general security arrived in the neighborhood. After a brief search of an empty house, they began chanting ‘Allahu Akbar’ and fired bullets into the air.

They entered the guesthouse where over 20 civilians were gathered, mostly elders and youth, peacefully discussing the state of the city. The men asked if anyone had weapons; the group replied they did not. After finding nothing, one officer shot the portrait of my late husband, martyr Moeen Radwan, which hung on the wall. Then the massacre began—indiscriminate gunfire on everyone present.

Thirteen people died instantly, including one woman, and three others were critically wounded. It took half an hour for ambulances to arrive—by then, some had already bled to death.

This was not just an attack—it was a message. A public execution meant to humiliate an entire community. We demand an international investigation and urgent protection for civilians.”

## **R.M., 27 years old, WHRD in Suweida: “They Executed Them in Mid-Air”**

The sectarian killings in Suweida echo the same brutal pattern we’ve seen in Syria’s coastal regions—where government-affiliated militias target civilians based on their sect. These are not isolated incidents. They are calculated acts of terror, filmed and shared proudly on social media by the perpetrators themselves. That’s exactly what happened to three young Druze men.

I saw the video online. It was grainy and shaky—likely filmed on a phone—but the horror was unmistakable. Three young men, trapped on a fourth-floor balcony in Suweida. Unarmed.

Surrounded by government-affiliated militias. You could see the fear on their faces. One of the armed men shouted at them to jump. And they did.

All three were professionals—two doctors and an engineer. As they leapt, they were shot in mid-air. This wasn’t a firefight. It was a public execution. A deliberate, brutal message meant to instill fear. Through local contacts, we confirmed their identities. Their bodies were left on the ground for hours.

We call for an immediate, independent international investigation into the atrocities unfolding in Suweida—including mass executions, indiscriminate shootings, and public killings of civilians. These are crimes that cannot go unpunished.

We demand justice. We demand accountability. We urge the international community to act swiftly to protect civilians, uphold human rights, and put an end to the impunity that fuels this cycle of violence.

## **S.H., 31, Woman Human Rights Defender in Exile: “They Took Our Women—And Silence Followed”**

In the past few days, we have witnessed one of the most horrific patterns of violence targeting women in Suweida and its surrounding villages. Over 80 women and girls have been abducted—some from their homes, others while fleeing. Entire families were taken. Some of the abducted women have been confirmed dead, others returned in silence, and the fate of many remains unknown. What is happening is not just war. It is systematic terror against women. Against dignity. Against identity. And it is fueled by impunity and hateful propaganda—even fatwas now circulate online justifying the enslavement of Druze women.

We call on international human rights bodies to act immediately. We need a transparent investigation into the abductions, killings, and gender-based crimes taking place in Suweida and across Syria. The silence of the world is emboldening the perpetrators. Women are not spoils of war. They are not bargaining chips. They are not messages. They are human beings.

We demand urgent protection for women in Suweida. We demand justice.



## **Conclusion: Women of Suweida Demand Action, Not Silence**

Behind every ceasefire declaration lies a deeper reality—one where women are burying loved ones, searching for the disappeared, and preparing their children to flee at a moment's notice. The women of Suweida are not just victims of violence—they are witnesses, documenters, and defenders of their communities in the face of unspeakable terror.

The women of Suweida demand urgent protection—not only from ongoing violence, but from the fear, disappearance, and systematic terror that now define daily life.

They call on international human rights bodies, feminist movements, and global civil society to recognize the crisis for what it is: a campaign of sectarian and gender-based violence, unfolding in real time and with impunity. Their appeals are clear—document the crimes, expose the perpetrators, and ensure justice for the disappeared, the executed, and the violated.







**Femena supports Women Human Rights Defenders, their organizations and feminist movements in Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA) through analysis of trends and policy, documentation, fostering the development of regional communities of practice and advocacy.**


**Femena's work is primarily focused on contexts of shrinking or closed civic space and contexts complicated by growing extremism and conflict.**

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