Crisis in Syria | Introduction

The Syrian authorities have responded to anti-government protests with overwhelming military force since they erupted in March 2011. The protests pose the greatest challenge to four decades of Assad family rule in the country. The unrest began in the southern city of Deraa in March when locals gathered to demand the release of 14 school children who were arrested and reportedly tortured after writing on a wall the well-known slogan of the popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt: "The people want the downfall of the regime." The protesters also called for democracy and greater freedom, though not President Assad's resignation. The peaceful show of dissent was, however, too much for the government and when people marched though the city after Friday prayers on 18 March, security forces opened fire, killing four people. The following day, they shot at mourners at the victims' funerals, killing another person.

Within days, the unrest in Deraa had spiralled out of the control of the local authorities. In late March, the army's fourth armoured division - commanded by the president's brother, Maher - was sent in to crush the emboldened protesters. Dozens of people were killed, as tanks shelled residential areas and troops stormed homes, rounding up those believed to have attended demonstrations. But the crackdown failed to stop the unrest in Deraa, instead triggering anti-government protests in other towns and cities across the country, including Baniyas, Homs, Hama and the suburbs of Damascus. The army subsequently besieged them, blaming "armed gangs and terrorists" for the unrest. By mid-May, the death toll had reached 1,000.

Excerpt from the BBC's guide to the Syria crisis.
Snapshot of the crisis and key actors

- **Crisis in Syria**, by International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect
- **Muslim Brotherhood in Syria**
- **Syrian conflict peace proposals**
- Profile: **Bashar al-Assad**, via BBC
- Profile: **Asma al-Assad**, via BBC
- President's inner circle, via BBC
- **Ruling family dynamics**, via BBC
- **Guide to opposition**, via BBC
- The [Reuters graphic below shows](#) there have been 6,519 men, 190 women and 465 children killed in violence in Syria as of Feb. 5, 2012.
SYRIA CRISIS

Baba Amr
One of the hardest hit areas of Homs, a hotbed of revolt in the protest movement to remove President Bashar al-Assad.

Reported protest / strike locations
Death toll by governate

SYRIA

Turkey
Qamishli
50 km
Iraq

REPORTED NUMBER OF DEATHS
As of Feb. 5

June 10: 210
June 3: 140
April 22: 74
April 8: 157
April 29: 84

Dec. 20: 146
Dec. 19: 121
Dec. 28: 74
Aug. 7: 144
July 31: 140
April 29: 84

Homs governate 2,474
Homs 1,015
Idlib 671
Raslan Talbiseh 258
Deraa 64

Sources: UNITAR-UNOSAT, Syria Violence Documentation Center,
syrianshrutada.com, syriamap.wordpress.com, news reports

Background information & context
- Syria, via Wikipedia
- Arab Uprising, BBC
Politics of Syria, via Wikipedia
Background Note: Syria, US Dept of State
CIA World Factbook, Syria
Syrian Arab Red Crescent

Syrian Government sites
- Ministry of Tourism
- List of embassies and high commissions in Syria (unsure about accuracy of contact details)
- Ministry of Information
- Ministry of Communication and Transportation

GLIDE number
CE-2011-000181-SYR

UN system in Syria
2012 UNHCR country operations profile - Syrian Arab Republic

Key UN contacts
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UN OCHA Crisis Briefing Kit, courtesy Reliefweb
- Briefing Kit produced on 12 April 2012

The above PDFs include,
- Inter-agency and news updates over the past week
- Latest 10 Situation Reports
- Latest 10 maps
- Other key documents

Syria Tracker
UN Common Operations Dataset (COD)

The IASC Guidelines on Common Operational Datasets (CODs) in Disaster Preparedness and Response have been developed to help national authorities and humanitarian organizations exchange data thereby improving the effectiveness of humanitarian response. These guidelines outline the common datasets needed for response in humanitarian emergencies, as well as the governance model for the management of the data (i.e. accountabilities and responsibilities). The CODs are subject to change as new data becomes available. If you would like to suggest any changes to the CODs, or if you have any questions regarding their use, please contact Mr. C.J. Hendrix, OCHA Information Services Section, tel: +41 (0)22 917 2527, mobile: +41 (0)79 217 3083, or via email: hendrix@un.org

Download data for Syria from here.

UN Humanitarian Information (from UN OCHA)

- UN OCHA Regional Office for Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia
- Situation reports and updates on Syria

Situation reports from UN OCHA

- Search for all reports and statements on Syria here.
- OCHA Emergency Relief Coordinator’s Key Message, 2 April 2012
- Situation reports and updates on Syria

Situation reports from UNHCR

- UNHCR Global Appeal 2012-2013 - Syrian Arab Republic, 1 December 2011
- UNHCR Global Appeal 2011 (update) - Syrian Arab Republic, 1 December 2010
- UNHCR Global Appeal 2010-2011 - Syrian Arab Republic, 1 December 2009

Situation reports from ICRC

- Syria: humanitarian situation and ICRC/Red Crescent response, March 2012
Complete list of situation reports and updates from ICRC

Situation reports and statements from other sources

- Now or Never: a Negotiated Transition for Syria International Crisis Group Briefing, 5 March 2012
- Amnesty International Urges Russia and Other Countries to Prevail on Syria to Stop Its Deadly Assault on Homs, Human Rights Watch, 8 February 2012
- A chance for South Africa to do the right thing for Syria, Daniel Bekele and Philippe Boloipon, Human Rights Watch, 2 February 2012
- Syria Veto Costs Lives: U.N. Security Council Members Must Uphold Their ‘Responsibility to Protect’, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 1 February 2012
- Security Council: Russia must not block efforts to end atrocities in Syria, Amnesty International, 1 February 2012
- Hold your horses: The time is not yet right for military intervention in Syria, The Economist, 28 January 2012
- Why We Have a Responsibility to Protect Syria, Shadi Hamid, The Atlantic, 26 January 2012
- No military option in Syria, Marc Lynch, Foreign Policy, 17 January 2012
- Syria: Comply With Agreement, Human Rights Watch, 6 January 2012
- Arab League should clarify human rights situation in Syria, Human Rights Watch, 6 January 2012
- Amnesty International Urges Russia and Other Countries to Prevail on Syria to Stop Its Deadly Assault on Homs, Human Rights Watch, 8 February 2012
- Syria: Comply With Agreement, Human Rights Watch, 6 January 2012
- Arab League should clarify human rights situation in Syria, Human Rights Watch, 6 January 2012
- Uncharted Waters: Thinking Through Syria’s Dynamics, International Crisis Group, 24 November 2011
- Joint call by Civil Society to the UN Security Council: Urgent action needed to provide protection to civilians in Syria and ensure accountability, International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), 19 December 2011
- Syrians Die While the World Dithers, Irwin Cotler, Ottawa Citizen, 29 November 2011
- Right to Intervene and Right to Protect: Dilemmas of Humanitarian in Syria- Analysis, Marika Alpini, Eurasia Review, 23 November 2011
- United Nations General Assembly Vote on Syria, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 22 November 2011
- Syria at the Crossroads: UN General Assembly Must Uphold their Responsibility to Protect, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 21 November 2011
- South Africa and Syria at the UN, Simon Adams, Executive Director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, News24, 18 October 2011
- Silence is Not an Option! Syrians Cannot Afford to Wait: Arab and International Civil Society Present Measures to the League of Arab States to Intensify Leadership on Syria, FIDH, 17 October 2011
- Failing the Syria Test, Javier Solana, Reuters, 13 October 2011
- The End of the Responsibility to Protect? Chris Keeler, Foreign Policy Journal, 12 October 2011
- China/Russia Veto a Victory for ‘Impunity, Inaction and Injustice’, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 4 October 2011
- Syria: The BRICs Must Help Enact the Responsibility to Protect, The European Union Institute for Strategic Studies, 20 September
- UN Security Council Fiddles While Syria Burns, Thalif Deen, Inter Press Service, 16 September 2011
- Will Syria Follow Libya? Interview of Special Advisor on the Responsibility to Protect, Dr. Edward Luck, Bernard Gwertzman, Council on Foreign Relations
- Syria: Who You Gonna Call?, Don Kraus, Care2, 18 August 2011
- Response to Violence in Syria: Why the UN Security Council Presidential Statement Matters, Lara Yeo, Citizens for Global Solutions, 5 August 2011
- Joint NGO Letter to IBSA Delegation to Syria on Human Rights Protection, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 4 August 2011
- Open Letter to the Members of the UN Security Council, FIDH, 2 August 2011
- UN Security Council Must Take Action Over Syria Bloodshed, Amnesty International, 1 August 2011
- Report Reveals Crimes Against Humanity in Syrian Town, Amnesty International, 4 July 2011
- Open Statement on the Situation in Libya, The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 26 April 2011
- Syrian Government Must Uphold R2P, UN Security Council Should Enact Sanctions on Key Syrian Officials, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 26 April 2011

Videos
- CNN videos on Syria
- Al jazeera coverage on Syria
Audio / podcasts
- Syria: Crackdown Continues..., via International Crisis Group
- A lot of podcasts on Syria courtesy National Public Radio (NPR)
- Inside Syria HD, from Al Jazeera (iTunes)

Syrian media
- Syrian media coverage of the 2011-2012 Syrian uprising (Since the start of the 2011-2012 Syrian uprising, the Syrian media attacked channels like Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, BBC and France24 and alleged that sews together a great plan that most of the Syrian government and harm Syria's stability and internal peace. This, combined with Syria to not let in any journalists to monitor what is happening has created a media war and below the horizon at what has happened).
- Syrian Arab News Agency
- Tishreen Newspaper
- Al-Baath Newspaper
- General Organisation of Radio and TV - Syria (Facebook group and YouTube channel)

News and information (Mainstream)

SYRIA STANDOFF
Following The Assad Regime's Year-Long Crackdown

- Via UNHCR RefWorld, news and media stories on Syria
News and information (Crowdsourced / Citizen Journalism)
- The Syrian Revolution 2011 Facebook group
- Social Media Accounts of Protests in Syria, via New York Times
- Syria, citizen journalism and the capital "T," truth, via GigaOM
- Video journalists leading a Syrian media revolution
- Syria: Too Much Information?, Columbia Journalism Review

Twitter feeds with vital links to information
- Syrian Twitter Activist Reports from Aleppo, via Social Media Chimps (@AnonymousSyria)
- @shaamnews (Arabic)
- @UgaritNEWS (Arabic)
- @calperryAl (English, Al Jazeera)
- Must Follow English Syrian Tweeters

News and information (Facebook groups)
- The Syrian Revolution 2011 Facebook group
- Syrian Uprising 2011 Information Centre

Latest news from Google News (automatically updated)

Mapping data / Imagery (General)
- Ministry of Tourism - Maps of key cities
- Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas

Openstreetmap on Syria
- Full screen map of Syria

Logistics information
- Logistics planning maps on Syria from WFP Log Cluster

Mapping data / Imagery / Infographics (UN)
- Situation reports and other mapping resources on Syrian crisis from UN Reliefweb, Featuring very high resolution PDFs.

Photos
- 2012 Syria: Local Reporters

Other Crisis Information wikis and research by ICT4Peace Foundation
- Pakistan Floods
- Crisis in Kyrgyzstan 2010
- Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill - April 2010
- Haiti earthquake 2010
- Haiti and Beyond: Getting it Right in Crisis Information Management
- Chile earthquake 2010
- Cyclone Nargis: Lessons and implications for ICTs in Humanitarian Aid
- Cyclone Nargis: Lessons and implications for ICTs in Humanitarian Aid, (Update to original report)
- 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami
- 2011 Libyan Uprising