

Scores killed as opposition forces fight HTS militants in Syria

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Militants aligned with Syria's ruling Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) administration gather in Sanamayn in the southern province of Daraa during a reported large-scale military campaign, on March 5, 2025. (Photo by AFP)

Damascus, March 8 (RHC)-- More than 70 people have reportedly been killed and dozens wounded in Syria due to heavy fighting between the ruling Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) militants and armed opposition groups in the west of the country.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said in a post on X on Friday that the casualties were recorded on the Syrian coast after HTS militants were ambushed.

In the coastal town of Jableh and adjacent villages in Latakia Governorate, 48 people were killed in fighting, the Britain-based war monitor said. The SOHR said the coordinated attacks were the biggest against Syria's new rulers since President Bashar al-Assad was toppled in early December last year.

At least 16 HTS militants were killed during clashes on Thursday in the the Mediterranean province of Latakia, which is populated by Alawites and Shia Muslims.

The region is home to the Hmeimim air base – a strategic Syrian base that Russia operates.

The operation by opposition groups came after the monitor earlier reported strikes launched by helicopters on the village of Beit Ana and the surrounding forests and artillery strikes on a neighboring village.

Alawite leaders had called in a statement on Facebook for “peaceful protests” in response to the helicopter strikes, which they said had targeted “the homes of civilians.”

The Syrian regime has declared curfews in a number of the country's regions after mass rallies are held in protest at the regime's increasing violence against civilians. HTS authorities imposed overnight curfews on Latakia, the port city of Tartus and the western city of Homs.

Tensions erupted after residents of Beit Ana, the birthplace of Suhail al-Hassan, a former high-ranking Syrian army commander under Assad, prevented HTS militants from arresting an individual in the village.

Hassan reportedly commanded an elite special mission division known as the Tiger Forces.

[SOURCE: PRESS TV and AFP NEWS AGENCY]

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