
Syrian forces accused of killing hundreds in clashes



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Syria's interim president, Ahmed Sharaa, has urged national unity following reports that security forces allegedly killed hundreds of Alawite civilians during violent clashes. The British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) claimed that approximately 745 civilians were killed in 30 massacres across Latakia and Tartus on Friday and Saturday. The BBC has not

independently verified these figures.

The ongoing violence, the worst since rebels overthrew Bashar al-Assad's regime in December, has displaced hundreds. Over 1,000 people have reportedly been killed in recent days, including government troops and pro-Assad fighters. SOHR estimates 125 security forces and 148 loyalist gunmen have died in the conflict.

Alawites, an offshoot of Shia Islam, constitute around 10% of Syria's population, which is predominantly Sunni Muslim. The violence has left their community in fear, with large crowds seeking refuge at Russia's Hmeimim military base and others fleeing to Lebanon. Video footage showed displaced civilians pleading for Russian protection.

A Syrian defense ministry spokesman stated that government forces had restored order following "treacherous attacks." Meanwhile, UN special envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen, expressed deep alarm over reports of civilian casualties and urged restraint to prevent further destabilization.

With tensions escalating, Sharaa emphasized the importance of maintaining civil peace, stating, "We must live together in this country." However, uncertainty looms over Syria's future amid the ongoing