

At least 5 people killed by armed groups across Syria: report

By [Global Research](#)

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In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

DAMASCUS, Aug. 19 (Xinhua) — At least five people were killed nationwide in separate attacks by armed groups on Friday, including four law-enforcement members, the official SANA news agency reported.

Armed groups attacked a police station in the Ghabagheb area near the southern city of Daraa, killing a law-enforcement member and a civilian and injuring eight others.

Also near Daraa, four law-enforcement members were injured and a civilian was killed when an armed group fired bullets and grenades from an abandoned house in the southern village of Inkhil.

In a separate incident, armed groups opened fire indiscriminately in the Damascus suburb of Harasta, killing two law-enforcement members and injuring four others.

Two of the attackers were also killed in the confrontations, SANA said, without mentioning the location.

Earlier Friday, the state TV said limited protests erupted after Friday's Muslim prayers in some areas in the central province of Homs, the coastal city of Latakia and the northern province of Idlib. Some of the protests were dispersed within a short time.

Meanwhile, the Doha-based al-Jazeera TV cited witnesses as saying that at least 22 people were killed in clashes with the security forces on Friday, as thousands of people poured into the streets in several Syrian cities, calling for the ouster of President Bashar al-Assad.

The report could not be independently verified as journalists are banned from heading to restive areas.

The Syrian authorities have been accusing al-Jazeera and other media of ignoring the facts on the ground as well as incitement and fabricating events in their coverage of the protests.

International pressures mounted on al-Assad for his alleged crackdown on anti-government protesters. U.S. President Barack Obama, for the first time, explicitly urged al-Assad to step down on Thursday and imposed new economic sanctions, which are likely to be followed up by the European Union.

The fresh U.S. sanctions would freeze the Syrian government assets under U.S. jurisdiction, bar U.S. individuals or companies from transactions with al-Assad's government and ban

U.S. imports of Syrian petroleum.

The U.S. sanctions are likely to have limited impact, due to the low level of U.S.-Syrian trade and imports of Syrian oil. However, it would probably be followed by the European nations, which consume 95 percent of the oil exported by Syria.

The Syrian government receives approximately 2.8 million U.S. dollars in oil and gas revenues every year, according to a recent International Monetary Fund report.

Britain, France and Germany have also demanded that Assad go. The EU foreign policy chief said the bloc's 27 members were preparing to target more Syrian entities and looking at ways to broaden their sanctions.

Russia, which is a crucial ally to the Syrian leadership, did not support the U.S. and EU's latest call for al-Assad to resign, the Russian Foreign Ministry said Friday.

"We do not support these calls and believe al-Assad's regime ought to be given some time to complete all the reforms he announced," Russian foreign ministry spokesman Alexander Lukashevich said.

The ministry also stressed the importance of al-Assad's latest promise to stop all the military operations and Damascus decision to accept a U.N. mission on Aug. 20.

Syria has been in unrest since mid March when anti-government protests broke out in the southern province of Daraa and spread to other cities.

The Syrian authorities blamed the unrest on "armed groups and foreign conspiracy" and stressed that it would track down gunmen who have intimidated people and damaged public and private properties.

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