

BREAKING: Prime German Paper: Syrian Rebels Committed Houla Massacre

By [Global Research](#)

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The prime German daily, the center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, has a [new report](#) (in German) about the Houla massacre. The author is [Rainer Hermann](#) who studied and speaks Arabic, Turkish and Farsi. Hermann also has a PhD in economics and wrote his thesis about the modern Syrian social history. He currently lives in Abu Dhabi and has been reporting from the Middle East for over 22 years.

What follows is a translation of the relevant parts of his report, which is datelined from Damascus, about the Houla massacre:

Syrian opposition members who are from that region were during the last days able to reconstruct the most likely sequence of events based on accounts from authentic witnesses. Their result contradicts the pretenses from the rebels who had accused regime allied Shabiha they alleged were acting under the protection of the Syrian army. As opposition members who reject the use of lethal force were recently killed or at least threatened, the opposition members [talking to me] asked that their names be withheld.

The massacre of Houla happened after Friday prayers. The fighting started when Sunni rebels attacked three Syrian army checkpoints around Houla. These checkpoints were set up to protect the Alawi villages around the predominantly Sunni Houla from assaults.

One attacked checkpoint called up units from the Syrian army, which has barracks some 1500 meters away, for help and was immediately reinforced. Dozens of soldiers and rebels were killed during the fighting around Houla which is said to have lasted about 90 minutes. During these fights the three villages were closed off from the outside world.

According to the witness accounts the massacre happened during this timeframe. Killed were nearly exclusively families from the Alawi and Shia minorities in Houla which has a more than 90% Sunni population. Several dozen members of one extended family, which had in recent years converted from Sunni to Shia believe, were slaughtered. Also killed were members of the Alawi family Shomaliya and the family of a Sunni member of parliament who was [by the rebels] considered a government collaborator. Members of the Syrian government confirmed this version but pointed out that the government committed to not publicly speak of Sunnis and Alawis. President al-Assad is Alawi while the opposition is overwhelmingly from the Sunni population majority.

While I do not agree with the FAZ's general editorial positions, I have followed Rainer

Hermann reports for years. In my view he is an very reliable and knowledgeable reporter who would not have written the above if he had doubts or no additional confirmation about what he was told by the opposition members he talked to.

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