
From: Milan Dalal <milan@tigerhillpartners.com>
Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2026 at 10:17 PM
To: "McGeeJ@state.gov" <McGeeJ@state.gov>
Subject: Letter to Sec. Rubio

Dear Mr. McGee,

I hope you are well. On behalf of the Foundation for the Development of Western Syria, please see attached for a letter to Sec. Rubio regarding human rights in Syria.

Best,
Milan

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Foundation for the Development of Western Syria

June 10, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Subject: Urgent Appeal Regarding Systematic Sectarian Targeting of Alawite Civilians in Syria

Dear Secretary Rubio,

The Foundation for the Development of Western Syria (the “Foundation”) is writing to you today to express our profound concern regarding a dangerous escalation of grave human rights violations directed against vulnerable civilian communities in Syria, particularly the systematic sectarian targeting of Alawite and Druze populations.

The Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting Christians, Druze, Alawites, and Kurds in Syria. Through advocacy, humanitarian support, and documentation of human rights abuses, we work to safeguard vulnerable communities facing existential threats in one of the world’s most challenging regions. During the first week of June 2026, the Foundation’s monitoring teams documented a series of incidents that indicate a clear, systematic policy of identity-based targeting, extrajudicial killing, and structural discrimination.

The documentation for early June 2026 highlights several alarming patterns across multiple Syrian governorates:

- **Systematic Identity-Based Targeting and Sectarian Violence:** The governorates of Homs, Hama, and Damascus have witnessed a dangerous rise in sectarian violence. This includes the targeted assassination of Ali Ismail Abu Ghadir in the Al-Arman neighborhood of Homs, as well as armed assaults on Alawite civilians in Al-Shuhayb, Tal Skeen Al-Sarout, and Kitlon in the Hama countryside. Furthermore, we documented a violent sectarian assault by a group using cold weapons against three Alawite students at the University of Damascus, specifically within the dormitories of the Faculty of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering. Local authorities and university security complicitly failed to take deterrent action despite the perpetrators' identities being known.
- **Extrajudicial Killings, Torture, and Kidnapping:** We have documented heinous physical attacks, including the death of Hassan Yousef Al-Tawil under torture in the Al-Zara area of Homs after five days of arbitrary detention. His family was barred from seeing his body, denied the right to perform standard religious burial rites, and forced under threat to bury him in Western Sindyannah under strict security control. Additionally, our teams recorded the kidnapping and subsequent murder of 60-year-old Abdul Hadi Al-Duwaihi, whose body was found on the outskirts of Al-Mayadin, Deir ez-Zor. In the Hama countryside (Nahr Al-Bared), a minor, Hamza Ibrahim Sarem, was

kidnapped while traveling to sell local herbs to support his family, and his fate remains entirely unknown.

- **Forced Displacement and Financial Extortion:** In Damascus, families in the Al-Wuroud and Haras residential neighborhoods were issued arbitrary eviction notices by security centers, forcing them to sign pledges to vacate their homes within three days. Concurrently, these families were subjected to heavy financial extortion, being forced to pay up to two million Syrian pounds to secure temporary, unstable permission to remain in their homes.
- **Deprivation of Education and Institutional Marginalization:** In the Al-Suwayda governorate, thousands of students are facing systematic educational deprivation following the Syrian Ministry of Education’s decision to relocate basic and secondary examination centers to Damascus. This decision forces Druze students to travel along the highly dangerous Al-Suwayda-Damascus highway – locally known as the “Road of Death” due to rampant kidnappings, killings, and armed sectarian ambushes against civilians. Despite peaceful protests and localized appeals before the UNHCR office to hold exams locally under UN supervision, the government rejected negotiations. State media subsequently broadcast fabricated reports claiming the road was safe, which was immediately debunked when the very bus featured in the state propaganda was subjected to an armed attack in the government-controlled Al-Mutallah area hours later.
- **Suppression of Civil Rights:** Peaceful protesters gathered by the “Law and Dignity” initiative in front of the Parliament building in Damascus were threatened with force and arbitrary arrest, being given a mere 10-minute ultimatum to disperse under the pretext of lacking a permit. Conversely, pro-government groups were permitted to hold intimidating, sectarian marches in the exact same location without any legal restrictions or interference.

These documented incidents constitute a severe threat to civil peace and underscore a recurring, systematic pattern of targeting based on identity. The Foundation respectfully urges the U.S. State Department to utilize its diplomatic channels, exert its influence, and deploy its good offices to address this deteriorating humanitarian situation, protect these vulnerable civilian populations, and push for a cessation of these sectarian and discriminatory policies.

The Foundation remains fully available to provide further comprehensive evidence, documentation, and testimony to your office.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this escalating humanitarian crisis.

Sincerely,

Milan Dalal
Counsel to The Foundation for the Development of Western Syria