

Syrian Turmoil

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Track day-by-day events in Syria, facing major popular unrest and atrocities

June 11, 2011 — Thousand of elite troops and tanks seal off entrances to the mostly deserted town of Jisr al-Shughour. Soldiers loyal to the regime come under sniper fire as they approach. June 10, 2011 — The Syrian army is amassed on the outer edges of the virtually deserted town of Jisr al-Shughour, preparing to enter the city after protesters and mutinous forces rose up against the rule of President Bashar Assad there. Three protesters are killed in other parts of the country. June 8, 2011 — Tanks and elite troops led by President Assad's brother head to the restive northern Idlib Province, where soldiers reportedly joined an antigovernment uprising, an activist says. Tanks also surround Jisr al-Shughour. Meanwhile, Syria's ambassador to France says a woman impersonated her and announced her "resignation" on French TV Tuesday. June 7, 2011 — Fearing reprisals, residents flee Jisr al-Shughour, where authorities say clashes between armed men and troops killed 120 security forces. Turkey says Syrians are crossing the border for shelter and medical treatment. June 6, 2011 — The Syrian government says armed groups in Jisr al-Shughour attacked government buildings and used medium-sized weapons and hand grenades, killing at least 80 troops. June 5, 2011 — The death toll in a government crackdown in Jisr al-Shughour and Khan Sheikhoun rises to 35 Sunday, including six police officers, a group says. The army withdraws from Dael and Hiraq, near Deraa, and tanks pull back from Hama, where residents march in funeral processions. June 4, 2011 — The government lifts its stranglehold on the Internet, but tanks roll toward the town of Hama as funeral are being held for killed protesters. Tanks also roll toward Jisr al-Shughour, where six people were killed. June 3, 2011 — Tens of thousands of Syrians return to the streets. Five people are killed in protests in Hama, where 50,000 protesters march, says activist Ahmad al-Raad. Internet services are cut off in most parts of Syria's largest cities—including Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and Hama. Large demonstrations also emerge in the central city of Homs, in Qamishli and Deir ez-Zour in the northeast, Idlib in the northwest, and three towns surrounding Deraa in the South. In the western coastal city of Baniyas, some 300 protesters march out of two mosques, with security forces beating people and detaining most. Antiregime activists gathered in Turkey elect an advisory body to give the protest movement shape and support. June 2, 2011 — Government troops pound the town of Rastan with artillery and gunfire, renewing attacks in a restive area that has been largely cut off from outside contact for six days. At least 15 people are killed in the latest attacks, bringing the total killed there to 72 since the onslaught began, activists said. June 1, 2011 — Troops shell a southern town with tanks and artillery, killing at least eight people, including an 11-year-old girl, according to a human-rights activist. Separately, the government is expected to begin releasing political prisoners in a move rejected by the opposition as an effort to buy time. May 31, 2011 — The Syrian military uses heavy machine guns and artillery in renewed attacks on Rastan, a few miles north of the central city of Homs. At least one person is killed, according to activists. Separately, President Bashar al-Assad issues a general amnesty that includes all political prisoners, in a gesture aimed at calming protests. May 30, 2011 — Troops bombard a town in Homs Province, causing several casualties. Residents armed with automatic rifles and rocket-propelled grenades put up fierce resistance, activists say. May 29, 2011 — Troops backed by tanks attack Rastan, Talbiseh and Teir Maaleh in Homs Province, killing at least five people and wounding scores of others, activists say. May 27, 2011 — Security forces open fire on anti-government demonstrations, killing at least four people, as thousands take to the streets. May 26, 2011 — Opposition leaders call on the Syrian army to join the uprising against President Bashar Assad's regime, saying regime elements are targeting protesters and troops. Protests planned for Friday will honor the "Guardians of the Nation," a reference to the army. May 25, 2011 — President Bashar Assad, according to the state-run Tishrin newspaper, tells religious leaders in Deraa that reform is coming. May 23, 2011 — A Syrian official says organizers canceled the first government-approved demonstration, a silent candlelight vigil, in Damascus. The event was meant to honor some 900 people killed in the uprising. May 21, 2011 — Security forces open fire on thousands of people attending a funeral procession for slain protesters, killing at least three and injuring dozens, according to a human-rights activist. May 20, 2011 — Syria's security forces opened fire on demonstrators in a Damascus suburb and at least two other cities Friday, killing 21 people, according to a human rights group. Large protests of thousands of Syrians each first emerged Friday in Baniyas on the Mediterranean coast, Aleppo in the North, Homs in central Syria and a few towns surrounding Deraa in the south. Security forces opened fire on protesters in Homs and the Damascus suburb of Daraya, according to activists. May 19, 2011 — The Syrian army shells the border town of Talkalakh, killing at least eight people, two human rights activists tell the AP. Syrians fleeing to Lebanon in recent days have described horrific scenes of execution-style slayings and bodies in the streets in Talkalakh. May 18, 2011 — President Bashar Assad claims the country's "crisis" is drawing to a close even as forces unleash tank shells on opponents and U.S. sanctions take aim at the Syrian leader and his senior aides for their brutal crackdowns. May 17, 2011 — Government agents chase and beat university students who were protesting against President Assad's regime at a campus in Aleppo and security forces disperse a rally of about 3,000 people in Homs, activists say. May 16, 2011 — At least 16 people — eight of them members of the same family — have been killed in recent days in Talkalakh, a town of about 70,000 residents that has been under siege since May 12, witnesses and activists say. May 15, 2011 — Gunfire and

explosions echo through the border town of Tal Kalakh in Homs, as hundreds of frightened civilians pour into neighboring Lebanon to escape a harsh crackdown against antigovernment protesters. At least eight people are killed. May 14, 2011 — Soldiers shell Tal Kalakh in Homs, near the border with Lebanon, killing at least three people and injuring at least 20. President Assad forms a committee to lead a dialogue with the opposition. May 13, 2011 — Security forces and snipers open fire on thousands of protesters Friday, killing at least six people as mass arrests and heavy security keep crowds below previous levels seen during the two-month uprising against President Bashar Assad, activists say. Three rallies are held in Damascus -- the largest number of protests held at one time in the capital. May 12, 2011 — An activist says soldiers and tanks have surround the city of Hama, which was laid to waste in 1982 during an attempt by President Bashar Assad's father to stamp out an earlier uprising. Forces also use clubs to disperse 2,000 demonstrators on a northern university campus. May 11, 2011 — Syria escalates a countrywide crackdown on protesters as tanks shell a central city and a southern town, killing at least 20 people, rights activists say. May 10, 2011 — Troops backed by tanks enter several southern villages near the flashpoint city of Deraa, as the government presses its efforts to end a nationwide uprising. May 9, 2011 — Security forces arrest hundreds of activists and antigovernment protesters in house-to-house raids across the country, part of an escalating government crackdown. May 8, 2011 — Security forces arrest more than 200 people, including a 10-year-old boy, in Baniyas and a 12-year-old boy is fatally shot amid shelling and shooting in Homs, according to activists. May 7, 2011 — Tanks roll into the coastal town of Baniyas, a day after clashes left at least 30 dead nation-wide. Thousands of people take part in funerals for three people who were killed Friday in Homs. May 6, 2011 — Syrian security forces open fire on protesters, killing 15 people in one city -- numbers for other cities were not apparent -- as thousands join demonstrations across the country calling for an end to President Bashar Assad's regime, witnesses and activists say. May 5, 2011 — Syria's military says it has started to gradually move out of Deraa, 11 days after deploying troops and tanks in the city, but residents say tanks, troops and snipers still restricted their movement. Scores of Syrians around the capital go into hiding after the army and security forces carried out a dawn raid on the Damascus suburb of Saqba, arresting at least 300 people, residents and activists say. May 4, 2011 — A day after student protesters face tear gas in the previously quiet city of Aleppo, Syria's president says the military operation in Deraa will end "very soon." President Bashar Assad's remarks are reported in the private Al Watan daily. May 3, 2011 — A human-rights group says weekend arrests netted more than 1,000 people and many more have been reported missing in Syria since Saturday. Separately, the International Committee of the Red Cross calls on Syria to allow it "immediate and unimpeded" access to those injured in Deraa. May 2, 2011 — Syrian troops go door-to-door in cities and towns across the nation, arresting scores of people in a campaign of intimidation aimed at crushing an uprising against President Bashar Assad's authoritarian regime, activists say. May 1, 2011 — Army tanks shell Deraa and roll in reinforcements as defiant residents struggle to find food, water and supplies. April 30, 2011 — More than 100 tanks, 1,000 soldiers and helicopters move into Deraa and take control of a prominent mosque, killing at least four people. Security forces keep dozens of women from marching on parliament in Damascus. April 29, 2011 — Security forces open fire on demonstrators in the capital and in Latakia, the heartland of the ruling elite, wounding at least five people as thousands take to the streets across Syria, witnesses say. April 28, 2011 — Hundreds of Syrian ruling party members quit over the military's use of force against protesters, and activists reported fighting between soldiers and elite troops, in signs of growing cracks among loyalists of the Assad regime. Turkey sent a high-level delegation to advise Syria on rapid reforms, a sign of Ankara's concern that rising violence could trigger instability across the region. April 27, 2011 — The Syrian army sends more tanks and reinforcements into Deraa as part of a widening crackdown against opponents of President Bashar Assad's authoritarian regime, while opposition figures say their "massive grassroots revolution" will break the regime unless Mr. Assad leads a transition to democracy. April 26, 2011 — Gunfire reverberates in Deraa, where the dead lay unclaimed a day after a government crackdown, residents say. A human-rights group says dozens are detained, mainly in Damascus and Jableh. Nevertheless, protests resumed. A draft statement condemning the violence makes the rounds at the United Nations. April 25, 2011 — Syrian military tanks and armored vehicles move into the restive southern city of Deraa, and eyewitnesses say a key army unit close to president Bashar al-Assad is shooting at people. April 24, 2011 — Dozens of activists are detained in raids. In Jableh, witnesses say soldiers and police open fire from rooftops, even though no protest is in progress, killing at least one person. April 23, 2011 — Security forces fire on tens of thousands of mourners during funeral processions in Douma and Izraa, killing at least 20 people. Meanwhile, two Syrian parliamentarians and the top cleric from Dara'a resign, apparently in protest over the government's handling of antiregime protests. April 22, 2011 — Syrian security forces move forcefully in an attempt to disperse protests before they gained momentum in the afternoon, in some places by shooting at even potential protesters and using tear gas to break up groups heading to mosques for prayers. Dozens are killed. April 21, 2011 — Protesters take credit for forcing President Bashar al-Assad to lift the country's 50-year state of emergency and brush off his attempts to placate the monthlong uprising. Activists say they are planning the biggest protests to date Friday against Mr. Assad. April 20, 2011 — Thousands of students protest in Daraa and at Aleppo University, brushing off President Bashar Assad's sweeping declarations of reform; the protest movement vows to stage the biggest rallies to date on Friday. April 19, 2011 — Around 2 a.m., police use live ammunition and tear gas to clear protesters from a square in Homs, north of Damascus. At least one person is killed, according to witnesses. The government later issues a stern warning to the nation to stop protesting. In the afternoon, more than 10,000 demonstrators march back toward the square. April 18, 2011 — More than 10,000 mourners in Syria join funeral processions. After the burial of at four people in the western city of Homs, some 5,000 protesters take over the main square of the city, vowing to occupy it until President Bashar al-Assad is ousted. April 17, 2011 — Gunmen open fire during a funeral near Homs, Syria, for a slain antigovernment protester, killing at least three people on a day when tens of thousands of protesters take to the streets. April 16, 2011 — Thousands of Syrians take to the streets for the

funeral of a slain protester hours before President Bashar Assad is expected to appear in a televised speech. April 15, 2011 — Thousands demonstrate in several Syrian cities, including Daraa, Bayda and Douma, with some chanting "freedom, freedom," activists and witnesses tell the Associated Press. Security forces fire tear gas and beat protesters with batons as tens of thousands of people march toward the Syrian capital. April 14, 2011 — Syrian President Bashar Assad orders the release of hundreds of detainees. The order signals an attempt to calm weeks of growing protest anger and pre-empt what is expected to be another day of large demonstrations on Friday. The country's new prime minister, meanwhile, announces his cabinet, two weeks after President Assad fired the previous government in an earlier gesture that failed to contain the unrest. April 13, 2011 — Thousands of women and children holding white flags and olive branches block a main coastal highway, demanding authorities release people detained in the northeastern villages of Bayda and Beit Jnad during a crackdown on opponents of the regime. April 12, 2011 — Pro-government gunmen attack the villages of Bayda and Beit Jnad, days after security forces shot dead four protesters in the same region, according to a leading Syrian opposition figure. April 11, 2011 — Thousands of mourners chanting "Death is better than humiliation!" attend a funeral for four protesters killed Sunday in the port city of Baniyas, according to witnesses by pro-government gunmen. Elsewhere, security forces beat and arrest several students out of hundreds who protest for freedom. April 10, 2011 — Shots ring out after the army seals off the key port city of Baniyas, where antigovernment protesters turn out. At least three protesters are killed. April 9, 2011 — Security forces fire live ammunition to disperse a funeral march in Daraa for dozens killed a day earlier in the single bloodiest day of the country's three-week antigovernment uprising, a human-rights group says. Several mourners are wounded. April 8, 2011 — Syrian security forces fire tear gas and live ammunition in Daraa as thousands of protesters gather in a tense southern city despite overtures by the president to end three weeks of unrest, witnesses tell the Associated Press. April 5, 2011 — Syrian activists using a Facebook page to collect attention call for a new wave of nationwide protests on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. April 4, 2011 — A new governor is sworn in to rule the troubled Daraa province, center of anti-government protests in which at least 80 people have been killed. Replacing the governor is one of the gestures by President Bashar Assad aimed at defusing the protests. April 3, 2011 — President Assad appoints a former agriculture minister to form a new government. Meanwhile, hundreds of people march in a suburb of Damascus during funerals to mourn those killed in the latest round of protests. April 2, 2011 — Government forces tighten security Saturday and make sweeping arrests after at least seven people are killed Friday in clashes with security forces, according to the Associated Press. April 1, 2011 — Thousands of Syrians take to the streets in cities across the nation, defying security forces in a showdown between the government and opposition. Security forces clash with the crowds using tear gas and batons in several cities, including Daraa and Latakia. Plainclothes agents line the main squares in Damascus to prevent residents from demonstrating, witnesses said. March 31, 2011 — President Assad sets up committees to replace the decades-old emergency laws and investigate civilian deaths in the recent unrest. His steps appear to be in an attempt to get ahead of fresh protests planned for Friday. March 30, 2011 — In a much-anticipated speech to parliament, Syria's President Bashar al-Assad offers no concrete concessions and blames foreign enemies for plotting unrest in the country. March 29, 2011 — President al-Assad accepts the cabinet's resignation. Hundreds of thousands of supporters of Syria's regime rally on the streets of Damascus and at least four other major cities. March 28, 2011 — Security forces fire tear gas on thousands of protesters in the southern city of Deraa. President al-Assad is expected to address the nation to try to ease the crisis. March 27, 2011 — The government warns against more demonstrations, makes a major concession by promising to lift the emergency law in place since 1963. Reports emerge from the city of Latakia that 12 people were killed and 200 injured during protests. March 26, 2011 — Protesters and government forces clash in Latakia, where the offices of President al-Assad's ruling Baath Party are set on fire, an activist says. The government frees more than 200 political prisoners to curb the unrest. Funerals are held across the country for victims killed in protests. March 25, 2011 — Thousands take to the streets demanding reforms and mourning dozens of protesters killed. An activist says troops in the village of Sanamein, near Daraa, opened fire on demonstrators. He says there are witness reports of fatalities; numbers were unclear. March 24, 2011 — Thousands call for liberty in the southern city of Daraa, defying a deadly government crackdown as they take to the streets in funeral marches for protesters killed by police gunfire. Media access is restricted but an AP reporter hears sporadic bursts of gunfire echoing through the city. March 23, 2011 — Fifteen people are killed in the southern city of Daraa when security forces launch an attack near the al-Omar Mosque, where anti-government demonstrators have taken shelter. Six people die in the initial attack, which begins at 12.30 a.m. Wednesday. The death toll climbs as bodies are found in the streets and later in the day when residents come under fire as they attempt to return to the mosque. March 22, 2011 — Protests in the south of Syria continue for a fifth consecutive day. Small gatherings reported in several agricultural towns around the city of Deraa, as well as in Hajjar al-Aswad, a town close to Damascus. March 21, 2011 — Syrians hold a defiant march in Deraa after a deadly government crackdown failed to quash three days of massive protests. March 18, 2011 — Security forces launch a harsh crackdown on protesters calling for political freedoms, killing at least five people amid a group of demonstrators in Daraa, near the Jordanian border, according to a prominent activist. Credit: Wall Street

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