The massacre of the Druze is a moral test: Israel acted, the world failed

written by Arsen Ostrovsky | 18.07.2025

The massacre unfolding against the Druze in southern Syria, in which hundreds of civilians have been slaughtered, is not just another footnote in a region otherwise filled with constant bloodshed and turmoil. This is a moral test for the international community, and those who claim to stand for human rights and seek to rebuild the country torn apart by decades of civil war and the brutal dictatorship of the Assad regime.

In recent days, we have witnessed Druze civilians systematically hunted, humiliated, and murdered by forces loyal to, or possibly even part of, the Syrian regime of Ahmad al-Sharra: the jihadist-turned-would-be statesman, and new darling of the international community. That same international community has remained largely silent in the face of this unfolding massacre.

But silence is complicity.

As Holocaust survivor Elie Weisel implored us: “We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere.”

That is precisely why Israel chose to interfere with military action, to defend the Druze.

The Druze are a small but proud religious and ethnic minority in the Middle East, numbering around one million, primarily in Syria, Lebanon, and northern Israel. In Israel, they are an integral and cherished part of our society. They serve in the military, hold senior positions in government, and have long stood shoulder to shoulder with the Jewish people in defending the state, including fighting in Gaza, after the October 7 massacre by Hamas. They are our brothers-in-arms.

But in Syria, the Druze are now at a perilous crossroad. After more than a decade of civil war, economic collapse, betrayal and hardship, the Druze in the southern

Syrian city of Sweida, home to the country's largest Druze community, sought to peacefully protest for their basic rights, dignity, and freedom.

And for that, they are now in the regime's crosshairs.
What started with attacks by Bedouin forces against the Druze escalated when government forces entered Sweida, supposedly to oversee a ceasefire. But according to media reports and eye witnesses, the Syrian soldiers, recognisable by their uniforms and military insignia, joined the Bedouins and murdered Druze on the streets and in their homes.

Sickening videos have also emerged of thugs forcibly shaving the beards of Druze men, a calculated act of religious humiliation. Such outrages against personal dignity, particularly acts of humiliating and degrading treatment, constitute clear violations of international law and the Geneva Conventions.

For the Jewish people, this evokes a chilling reminder of one of the darkest chapters in our history, when Nazis similarly sought to strip Jewish men of their dignity and faith by publicly shaving their beards and humiliating them in public. This is not just repression, it is dehumanisation.

And as the world largely stood by – silent, or offering little more than empty words and meek statements of concern – while Druze were massacred in Sweida, I am proud that Israel did not turn its back. The Jewish state showed courage, conviction and leadership, to step in with military force against the Syrian regime, to help defend our Druze brothers.

For Israel, the bond with the Druze is not abstract. It is deeply personal. Their loyalty has never wavered. Nor can ours now.
The Druze have also stood for moderation, coexistence, and resistance to extremism. In a region overrun by Iranian proxies, jihadist militias, and failed regimes, the Druze offer a rare glimmer of hope.

This is not only about doing the right thing and protecting a vulnerable minority. Supporting the Druze is a moral imperative.
Meantime, the international community cannot continue treating President al-Sharra as a legitimate partner on the world stage or welcome Syria into the Abraham Accords, while turning a blind eye to the atrocities that are being committing in Sweida.

It is not enough for al-Sharra to issue vague condemnations or deflect blame onto so-called “outlaw groups.” Even if he did not give the orders, these atrocities are unfolding on his watch, under his authority, carried out by forces loyal to his regime – and reportedly by his own troops.

There must be accountability.

If al-Sharra wishes to be seen as a credible leader or statesman, he must demonstrate it – not with empty rhetoric, but through decisive action. That begins with reining in these jihadist thugs, whether they are merely aligned with his regime or, worse, operating within it.

The Druze of Sweida are not pleading for your sympathy, they are demanding their inalienable right to live in peace and dignity, with full civil rights. What happens next will reveal whether the international community truly seeks a new Syria, or will continue rewarding tyranny with silence. For Israel however, silence was simply not an option.

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