



By: TA | AP Brief

Syria to hold first parliamentary elections since Assad's fall



Syria will hold parliamentary elections in September, the head of a body tasked with organizing the election process told state media Sunday.

Mohammed Taha al-Ahmad, chairman of the Higher Committee for People's Assembly Elections, told state news agency SANA that elections will take place between Sept. 15 and 20.

They will be the first to take place under the country's new authorities after the **fall** of former President Bashar Assad in a lightning rebel offensive in December.

One third of the 210 seats will be appointed by interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa, with the rest to be elected.

In a recent interview with the Erem News site, another member of the elections committee, Hassan al-Daghim, said an electoral college will be set up in each of Syria's provinces to vote for the elected seats.

A temporary constitution signed by al-Sharaa in March called for a People's Committee to be set up to serve as an interim parliament until a permanent constitution is adopted and general elections held, a process that could take years.

Divided country

The announcement of impending elections comes at a time when the country is increasingly **divided** in its views of the new authorities in Damascus after sectarian violence broke out in the southern province of Sweida earlier this month.

The fighting killed hundreds of people and threatened to unravel Syria's fragile postwar transition.

The violent clashes, which broke out two weeks ago, were sparked by tit-for-tat kidnappings between armed Bedouin clans and fighters from the **Druze** religious minority.

Syrian government forces intervened,

ostensibly to end the fighting, but effectively sided with the clans.

Some government fighters reportedly executed Druze civilians and burned and looted houses. Israel intervened, launching airstrikes on government forces and on the Defense Ministry headquarters. Israel said it was acting to defend the Druze minority.