



By: TA | AP Brief

Syria's Druze leader calls for international probe into deadly clashes



A spiritual leader of Syria's Druze community called for an international investigation into last month's **clashes** that left hundreds of people dead in southern Syria.

Sheikh Hikmat Al-Hijri, whose fighters clashed with pro-government gunmen in Sweida province last month, also thanked U.S. President Donald Trump, as well as Israel and Gulf Arab countries for their help in ending the violence.

"Thanks to those who stood by righteousness," Al-Hijri said in a televised speech.

The days-long **clashes** first broke out in July between Druze militias and local Sunni Muslim Bedouin tribes in Sweida. Government forces then intervened, nominally to restore order, but ended up essentially siding with the Bedouins against the Druze.

Israel intervened in defense of the Druze, launching dozens of airstrikes on convoys of government fighters and even striking the Syrian Defense Ministry headquarters in central Damascus.

The Druze form a substantial community in Israel, where they are seen as a loyal minority and often serve in the Israeli military.

Al-Hijri called for an international and independent investigation into the clashes and argued that perpetrators should be referred to the International Criminal Court. He also called for the deployment of international observer missions to protect civilians.

He thanked Trump for his support of minorities, and he thanked Israel for what he called a "humanitarian intervention" which he said limited the extent of the massacres against the Druze.

Formation of a decentralized state

Al-Hijri's comments came a day after he spoke remotely at a **conference** hosting

representatives of Syria's various ethnic and religious groups who called for the formation of a decentralized state and the drafting of a new constitution that guarantees religious, cultural and ethnic pluralism.

The conference was held in Hassakeh, a northeastern Syrian city under the control of the Kurdish-led and U.S.-**backed** Syrian Democratic Forces.

The government criticized the meeting, and alleged that among the attendees were some with secessionist ambitions.

It said that as a result it long longer intends to join planned talks with the SDF in Paris that had been agreed upon in late July. No date had yet been set for the Paris talks.

State news agency SANA quoted an unnamed government source as saying that the conference violated an agreement reached in March with the SDF.