

Rebels Seize Damascus, Topple Assad Dynasty After 53 Years; Israel Moves Into Syria

Syrian rebels entered the heart of Damascus, Syria's capital, on Sunday as the 53-year reign of Bashar al-Assad and his father, Hafez, came to a dramatic end.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Assad fled the capital for an undisclosed location early Sunday ahead of advancing troops, according to *The Associated Press*.

The Assad government's Prime Minister Mohammed Ghazi Jalali indicated he was willing to work with the rebels toward a transition government as some Damascus residents celebrated the regime's downfall in the streets.

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"I am in my house and I have not left, and this is because of my belonging to this country," Jalili stated in a video announcement. He urged citizens not to deface public property.

The opposition forces' surprising march through Syria picked up speed as people stocked up on food and many fled to the Lebanese border. The government was forced to deny that Assad had fled the country as several reports indicated his family escaped to Russia after the rebels' initial advances.

Israel has fortified its troops in the Golan Heights amid rebel claims that they were advancing on Quneitra near the Israeli border. An Israel Defense Forces spokesman also confirmed that Israeli soldiers helped United Nations forces fend off an attack by the rebels in a Syrian-controlled section of the Golan.

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The IDF pledged there would be a powerful response to the rebels if they “turn in our direction.”

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu convened his Security Cabinet Saturday night to assess the situation.

President-elect Donald Trump, in Paris for the reopening of the Notre Dame Cathedral and a meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron, released a statement on *Truth Social* calling for no U.S. involvement in Syria.

Trump noted the rebels are “obviously preparing to make a very big move toward taking on Assad.” He added, “Syria is a mess, but is not our friend, & THE UNITED STATES SHOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. THIS IS NOT OUR FIGHT. LET IT PLAY OUT. DO NOT GET INVOLVED!”

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