

TÜRKİYE

MIDDLE EAST

Syria arrests Ali Kayali, chief suspect in 2013 Baniyas massacres

Arrest carried out in special operation coordinated with Turkish intelligence, says Syrian news agency SANA

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- Ali Kayali, also known as Mıhrac Ural, is accused of involvement in mass killings of civilians in coastal Baniyas and nearby village of al-Bayda during country's uprising against Assad
- Kayali has also been implicated in 2013 twin bombings in Reyhanlı, Hatay, in southern Türkiye, which killed dozens of people

In an operation coordinated with Turkish intelligence, Syrian intelligence arrested Ali Kayali, also known as Mıhrac Ural, the chief suspect in the 2013 Baniyas massacres, as he was trying to flee across the border, state media reported Thursday.

The Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) said the General Intelligence Directorate detained Kayali, who is accused of playing a leading role in the May 2013 massacre in the coastal city of Baniyas.

The report did not specify where the arrest took place or which border Kayali was attempting to cross.

The arrest was carried out in a special operation coordinated with Turkish intelligence, SANA said in an updated report.

Kayali, a former militia leader loyal to Syria's then-leader Bashar al-Assad, has long been accused of involvement in the mass killings of civilians in Baniyas and the nearby village of al-Bayda in western Syria during the early years of the country's uprising.

His arrest came less than two weeks after Syrian counterterrorism authorities detained Jamal Trabulsi, his former deputy in the pro-Assad Syrian Resistance militia, on Oct. 4.

Syrian authorities have accused Trabulsi of taking part in military operations alongside forces loyal to Assad, including the 2013 massacres in Baniyas and al-Bayda.

2013 massacres in Syria, twin bombings in southern Türkiye

On May 2, 2013, Syrian regime forces and allied militias stormed the village of al-Bayda in the Tartus province, killing hundreds of civilians.

Survivors said regime forces carried out mass executions, burned homes, and killed women and children during the assault.

Kayali has also been implicated in the May 2013 twin bombings in Reyhanlı, in Türkiye's southern Hatay province, which killed dozens of people.

Following Assad's ouster in December 2024, Syrian authorities have intensified efforts to arrest former regime officials and militia commanders accused of committing crimes against civilians during the country's civil war.

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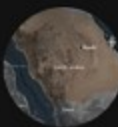


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