

# Statement by President Bashar al-Assad on the Circumstances Leading to His Departure from Syria

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*As terrorism spread across Syria and ultimately reached the capital, Damascus, on the evening of Saturday, December 7, 2024, questions began to arise about the president's fate and whereabouts. This occurred amidst a torrent of misinformation and narratives far removed from the truth, narratives which sought to portray international terrorism as a liberation revolution for Syria.*

At this pivotal moment in the nation's history, when truth must have its place, it is necessary to clarify certain points in this brief statement.

Unfortunately, the prevailing circumstances at the time, including a complete communication blackout for security reasons, prevented this clarification until now. These brief points do not replace a detailed account of what transpired, which will be provided when the opportunity allows.

First and foremost, my departure from the country was neither premeditated nor did it occur during the final hours of the battles, as has been falsely claimed. On the contrary, I remained in Damascus, fulfilling my responsibilities, until the early hours of Sunday, December 8, 2024. As terrorist forces advanced into Damascus, I moved to Lattakia in coordination with our Russian allies to oversee combat operations from there. Upon arriving at the Hmeimim Airbase that morning, it became evident that our forces had withdrawn entirely from all battle lines and that the last army positions had fallen.

As the field situation continued to deteriorate in that area, and with **an escalation in drone attacks targeting the Russian military base itself, it became impossible to exit the base in any direction.** At that point, Moscow requested that the base's command arrange for an immediate evacuation to Russia on the evening of Sunday, December 8, just one day after the fall of Damascus, following the collapse of the last military positions and the subsequent paralysis of the remaining state institutions.

**During these events, at no point was the idea of asylum or resignation discussed, either by me or by any individual or entity. The only course of action was to continue resisting the terrorist onslaught.**

In this context, I must reaffirm that the person who, from the very first day of the war, refused to trade the salvation of his nation for personal safety or to compromise his people in exchange for various offers and enticements, is the same person who stood shoulder to shoulder with the officers and soldiers of the army on the front lines. This is the same person who faced terrorists just meters away in the most dangerous and intense battlefields and

who, during the darkest years of the war, did not leave but remained with his family and his people, enduring bombardments and the recurring threats of terrorist incursions into the capital over 14 years of war.

Moreover, the person who never abandoned the Palestinian and Lebanese resistance, nor betrayed his allies who stood by him, cannot be the same person who would abandon his own people or betray the army and the nation to which he belongs.

I have never, at any point, sought positions for personal gain. Instead, I have always seen myself as the custodian of a national project that drew its strength from the faith of the Syrian people, who believed in its vision. I have carried an unwavering conviction in their will and ability to safeguard the state, defend its institutions, and uphold their choices until the very last moment.

When the state falls into the hands of terrorism and the ability to make a meaningful contribution is lost, any position becomes devoid of meaning, and remaining in it serves no purpose. This does not, in any way, diminish my deep sense of belonging to Syria and her people—a belonging that remains steadfast and unshaken by any position or circumstance. It is a belonging filled with hope that Syria will rise again, free and independent.

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