

Syria Crisis: Damascus Massacre Leaves Dozens Dead Outside Syrian Capital, Say Activists
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BEIRUT, Sept 26 (Reuters) - Opposition activists said security forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad killed more than 40 people in a small town outside Damascus on Wednesday, calling it a massacre.

The 18-month-old uprising against Assad's rule has descended into civil war of late and grown increasingly bloody.

Video published by activists showed rows of bloodied corpses wrapped in blankets. The victims shown on camera appeared to be male, from 20-year-olds to elderly men.

"A massacre in the Dhiyabia area," says the voice of an activist in one video. "God damn you, Bashar. The bodies are in the dozens. Look, Muslims, look what this dictator is doing."

In one of the videos uploaded by activists, some of the men appeared to have been shot in the forehead, face or neck.

The assailants may have been rounding up potential rebel fighters. Some activists said women and children were also among the dead, but there was no footage of them available.

Activists said the number of killed in the town of al-Dhiyabia, southeast of the capital, might reach as high as 107. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a British-based group with a network of activists across the country, said it could only confirm 40 dead.

The activists' reports could not be verified because the Damascus government restricts foreign media access in Syria.

The Observatory says more than 30,000 people have been killed in the year and half of violence. More than 7,000 of those were soldiers, it said, while the rest were civilians, gunmen and army defectors. (Reporting by Erika Solomon; Editing by Mark Heinrich)

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