

The rule of violence

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Résumé ou extrait : "Over much of its rule, the Syrian regime of Hafez al-Asad and his successor, Bashar al-Asad, used violence on a massive scale, deploying disproportionate physical and destructive force to silence its critics and opponents. Indeed, the regime, as constituted under the al-Asads, has as its nucleus not only the figures occupying the top rung of political office, but also the apparatuses of violence, in particular the security services and elite military units. This security regime (al-nidham al-amni) has consistently acted in ways that convey the message that violence is the primary and organising modality of action in dealing with domestic opposition. The extent and scope of killing and destruction mounted by the security and military forces over approximately 40 years of al-Asad regime rule has made manifest a politics of extermination and annihilation as integral to the form of rule in Syria. Rather than betraying an irrational approach to government, this violence is governmental, not in the sense of being merely repressive, but as productive and performative--as shaping regime-citizen relations and forming political subjectivities" (ed.)

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