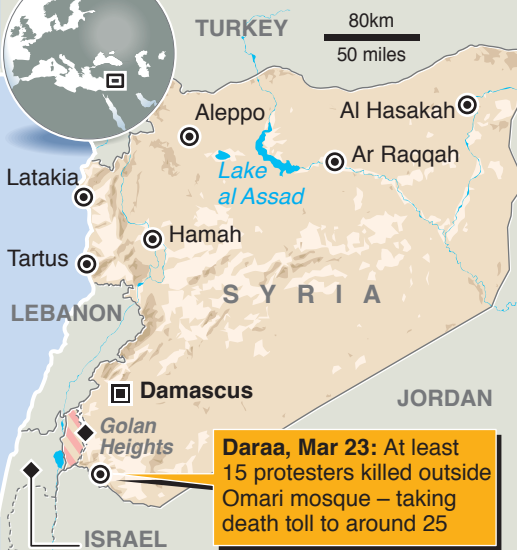
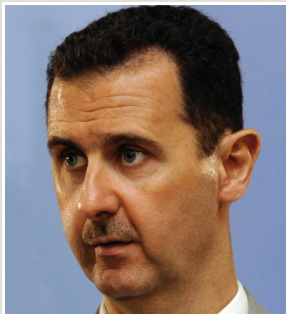


# Syria cracks down on protests

The U.S., EU and UN are calling for those responsible to be held to account after Syrian security forces fired on protesters demanding political freedom and an end to corruption



**Bashar al-Assad**  
Studied medicine before inheriting presidency on death of father **Hafez al-Assad** in 2000. Describes himself as “anti-western and anti-Israel”



**Daraa, Mar 23:** At least 15 protesters killed outside Omari mosque – taking death toll to around 25

## Economy

GDP	\$52.18 billion
Average income	\$2,410
Inflation	2.9%
Unemployment	8.4%
Oil production	400,998 barrels/day
Oil reserves	2.5bn barrels

## Politics: Nationalist **Baath Party**

rules through political repression, state of emergency in place since 1963. Key posts in military and secret police dominated by Assad's Alawite sect

## Religion

Sunni **74%**, Alawite, Druze **16%**, Christian **10%**, Jewish **<1%**