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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	3
List of abbreviations and glossary	6
Introduction.....	9
Common analysis, guidance note and methodological approach.....	10
Scope of this update.....	11
Guidance Note	12
Common analysis	15
1. Recent developments in Syria	16
2. Displacement and return movements.....	18
3. Actors of persecution or serious harm.....	20
3.1. Map: areas of control and influence.....	20
3.2. The Transitional Government.....	22
3.3. The Syrian National Army (SNA).....	23
3.4. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)	24
3.5. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).....	25
3.6. Other actors	25
4. Refugee status.....	27
4.1. Persons associated with the former Government of Syria.....	28
4.1.1. (Former) members of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups	28
4.1.2. Former Assad government officials and other civilians who (are perceived to) have collaborated with the Assad regime.....	30
4.2. Persons perceived to be opposing the Transitional Government.....	32
4.3. Profiles related to military service.....	33
4.4. Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish-led forces	34
4.5. Persons perceived to be opposing the SDF/YPG	35
4.6. Persons with perceived links to ISIL.....	36
4.7. Journalists and other media professionals.....	37
4.8. Individuals perceived to have transgressed religious/moral laws, norms or codes	39
4.9. Ethno-religious groups.....	40
4.9.1. Sunni Arabs	40
4.9.2. Kurds.....	41
4.9.3. Druze	43
4.9.4. Alawites	44

4.9.5. Christians.....	46
4.9.6. Palestinians.....	47
4.10. Women and girls.....	49
4.11. Children.....	51
4.12. Persons with diverse SOGIESC	53
5. Subsidiary protection.....	55
5.1. Article 15(a) QD/QR: death penalty or execution	55
5.2. Article 15(b) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment	57
5.2.1. Arbitrary arrests, illegal detention and prison conditions	57
5.2.2. Healthcare and socio-economic conditions	58
5.2.3. Criminal violence.....	59
5.3. Article 15(c) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict.....	60
5.3.1. Armed conflict (international or internal)	61
5.3.2. Qualification of a person as a ‘civilian’	62
5.3.3. Indiscriminate violence.....	63
(a) Security situation in Syria: recent events.....	63
(b) Assessment of indiscriminate violence per governorate.....	71
Mere presence.....	72
No such areas have been identified in Syria.....	72
High level of indiscriminate violence.....	72
No such areas have been identified in Syria.....	72
Indiscriminate violence not at a high level.....	72
Aleppo	72
Dar'a	74
Deir Ez-Zor.....	75
Hama.....	76
Hasaka.....	77
Homs	79
Idlib	80
Latakia.....	81
Quneitra	82
Raqqa.....	83
Rural Damascus	85
Sweida	86
Tartous	87
No real risk.....	88
Damascus	88



5.3.4. Serious and individual threat	90
5.3.5. Qualification of the harm as a 'threat to (a civilian's) life or person'.....	91
5.3.6. Nexus/'by reason of'	91
6. Actors of protection	92
6.1. The State.....	92
6.1.1. The Transitional Government.....	92
6.2. Parties or organisations, including international organisations.....	93
6.2.1. Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES).....	93
7. Internal protection alternative	95
7.1. Part of the country.....	95
7.2. Safety	95
7.2.1. Absence of persecution or serious harm	95
7.2.2. Availability of protection against persecution or serious harm	96
7.2.3. Conclusion on safety.....	97
7.3. Travel and admittance.....	97
7.3.1. Conclusion on travel and admittance.....	98
7.4. Reasonableness to settle	98
7.4.1. General situation	99
7.4.2. Individual circumstances.....	101
7.4.3. Conclusion on reasonableness.....	102
7.5. General conclusion on the applicability of IPA in the city of Damascus	102
8. Exclusion	103
8.1. Exclusion based on the commission of international crimes.....	104
8.2. Exclusion based on the commission of a serious crime	105
8.3. Exclusion based on acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.....	105
8.4. Exclusion based on constituting a danger to the community or to the security of the Member State	106
Annex I: Country of origin information references	107

List of abbreviations and glossary

Term	Definition
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CiSS	Children in street situations
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
COI	Country of Origin Information
DAANES	Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria
DAM	Damascus International Airport
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
EU	European Union
EU+ countries	Member States of the European Union and associated countries
FSA	Free Syrian Army
GAPAR	General Administration for Palestinian Arab Refugees
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GoS	Government of Syria
GSS	General Security Services
HTS	Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham
ID	Identification Documentation
IDF	Israel Defence Forces
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEDs	Improvised Explosive Devices
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPA	Internal Protection Alternative
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
KWU	Kurdistan Women Union



Term	Definition
LGBTIQ	<p>LGBTIQ people are people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who are attracted to others of their own gender (lesbian, gay) or any gender (bisexual); - whose gender identity and/or expression does not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth (trans, non-binary); - who are born with sex characteristics that do not fit the typical definition of male or female (intersex); and - whose identity does not fit into a binary classification of sexuality and/or gender (queer).
MS	Member States of the European Union
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MOI	Ministry of Interior
NDF	National Defence Forces, <i>Quwat al Difa al Watani</i>
NLF	National Liberation Front
PiN	People in Need
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
PYD	Democratic Union Party (Kurdish)
QD (Qualification Directive)	Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast)
QR (Qualification regulation)	Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted, amending Council Directive 2003/109/EC and repealing Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council.
Refugee Convention	The 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees and its 1967 Protocol (referred to in EU asylum legislation and by the CJEU as 'the Geneva Convention')
RPGs	Rocket Propelled Grenades

Term	Definition
SAF	Syrian Armed Forces
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SJAC	Syria Justice and Accountability Centre
SNA	Syrian National Army
SNHR	Syrian Network for Human Rights
SOGIESC	Sexual orientation (SO) and/or gender identity and expression (GIE), and sex characteristics (SC)
UAS	Unmanned Aircraft Systems
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
US	United States of America
UXO	Unexploded ordnance
YPG	Kurdish People's Protection Units
YPJ	Kurdish Women's Protection Units
WFP	UN World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation



Introduction

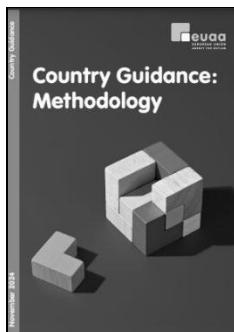
The country guidance documents provide country-specific common analysis and guidance in relation to the assessment criteria established in the recast Qualification Directive (QD) ⁽¹⁾ and in the Qualification Regulation (QR) ⁽²⁾, which will repeal the QD with its entry into application mid-2026. They are developed by the EUAA together with a network of senior-level policy officials from EU+ countries and represent their joint assessment of the situation in main countries of origin, in accordance with current EU legislation and jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). The European Commission and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also provide valuable input in this process.

The aim of the country guidance documents is to assist decision-makers and policy-makers in their daily work and to foster convergence in the assessment of applications for international protection and the type of protection granted in the context of the Common European Asylum System.

The development, review and update of country guidance is regulated under [Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation](#) ⁽³⁾.



In accordance with Article 11(3) EUAA Regulation, Member States have the obligation to take into account the common analysis and guidance notes when examining applications for international protection, without prejudice to their competence to decide on individual applications.



For more details on the process of producing country guidance documents and the exact role of stakeholders involved, see '[Country Guidance: Methodology](#)' (November 2024).

This document encompasses the development, review and update of country guidance and regulates the work of the EUAA Country Guidance Network and all related processes.

This common analysis is based on country of origin information (COI) covering the period December 2024 – May 2025. Some additional information on major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments covering the period 1 June to 30 September 2025 has also

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast).

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted, amending Council Directive 2003/109/EC and repealing Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council.

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010.

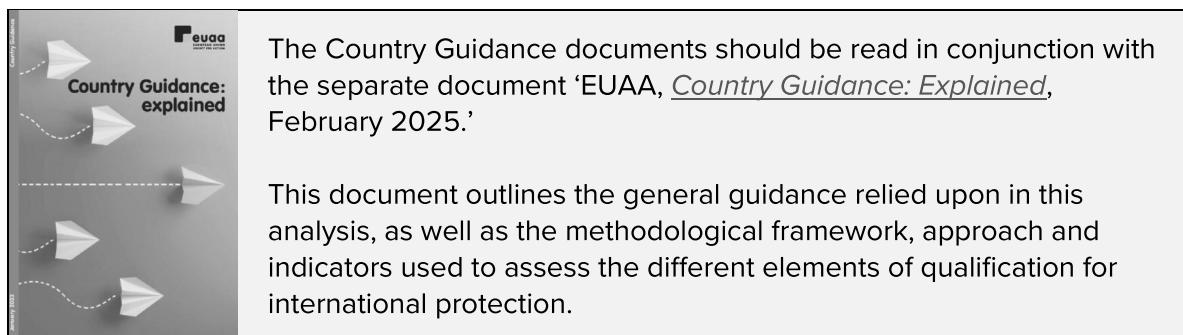
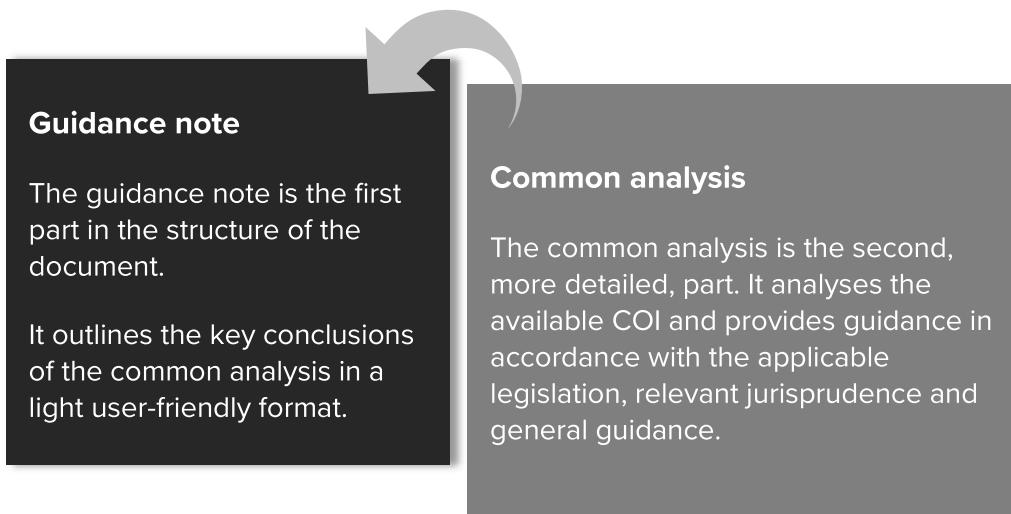
been reflected. Each section of the country guidance documents also clearly states the timing of its last update.

The analysis and guidance within this document should be considered valid as long as current events and developments in the country fall within the trends and patterns described within the COI on which the assessment at hand is based on.

The analysis and guidance provided within this document are not exhaustive.

Common analysis, guidance note and methodological approach

The country guidance document consists of two components: the guidance note and the common analysis. These two parts focus on the situation in the country of origin and provide analysis and guidance on the assessment of relevant international protection needs.

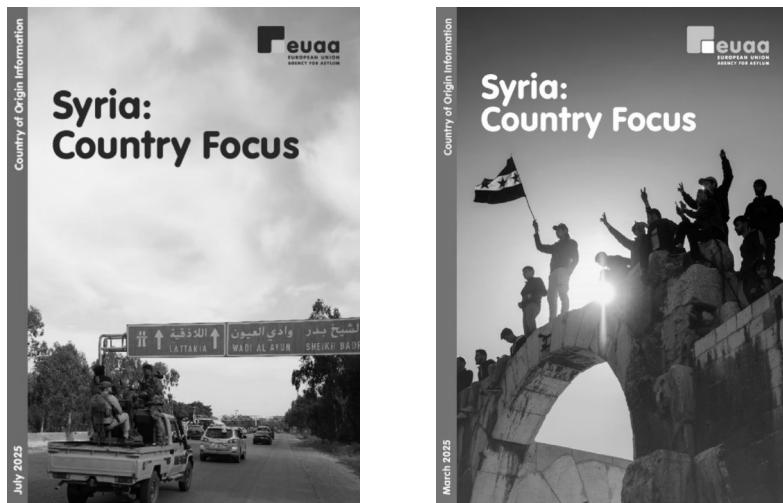


Scope of this update

The current version of the guidance supersedes the ‘EUAA, *Interim Country Guidance: Syria*, June 2025’.

This document is the first comprehensive update of the EUAA Country Guidance on Syria following the fall of the Assad regime.

All the sections of the document have been updated, based on the most recent EUAA COI Reports and Query:



EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Country Focus (July 2025)

<https://euaa.europa.eu/coi/syria/2025/country-focus/coi-report-syria-country-focus-July-2025>

EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Country Focus (March 2025)

<https://euaa.europa.eu/coi/syria/2025/country-focus/coi-report-syria-country-focus>

The following relevant EUAA COI query has also been used:

‘EUAA, Country of Origin Information Query, Syria: Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments, October 2025’.

Annex I: Country of origin information references provides further details and links to all COI documents used as a basis for the analysis within this document. References within this document are to the respective sections of these COI documents.



To access EUAA COI reports, visit <https://euaa.europa.eu/country-origin-information>.

Guidance Note

Last update: December 2025

The current version of the document supersedes the 'EUAA, Interim Country Guidance: Syria, June 2025'.

The guidance note on Syria is produced by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) together with EU+ countries ⁽⁴⁾ in accordance with Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation ⁽⁵⁾. It is based on and summarises the conclusions of the comprehensive common analysis. The aim of the guidance note and the common analysis is to assist EU+ countries in the examination of applications for international protection, thereby fostering convergence of asylum practices and decisions across the EU.

The guidance note is part of the 'Country Guidance: Syria' and should be read in conjunction with the Common analysis.

In Syria, a wide range of groups and individuals can be considered actors of persecution or serious harm and a clear distinction between State and non-State actors may be difficult to make in some cases. It includes the Transitional Government, the Syrian National Army (SNA), and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Other actors include the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), groups and networks set up by former Assad government senior military and intelligence officials, the Israeli military, Türkiye, criminal gangs, unaffiliated gunmen, other armed groups such as *Saraya Ansar al-Sunnah*, the family of the applicant, and the society at large. See Actors of persecution or serious harm.

Among the most commonly encountered profiles of applicants for international protection, the following profiles **would likely not qualify for refugee status**:

- Profiles related to military service
- Sunni Arabs, for the mere fact of being Sunni Arab

The following would **highly likely qualify for refugee status**:

- Persons with diverse SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity and Expression, and Sexual Characteristics)
- Persons with perceived links to ISIL (exclusion considerations are particularly relevant for this profile)

⁽⁴⁾ The assessment and guidance reflect the conclusions of the EUAA Country Guidance Network, which consists of EU Member States, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. The guidance note has been endorsed by the EUAA Management Board.

⁽⁵⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010.

Further guidance is provided on the **risk-impacting circumstances** which may affect the probability of granting refugee status for the following profiles:

- Persons associated with the former Government of Syria
- Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish-led forces
- Persons perceived to be opposing the SDF/YPG (Kurdish People's Protection Units)
- Journalists and other media professionals
- Kurds
- Alawites
- Druze
- Women and girls
- Children

Given that acts of persecution against Christians and against Individuals perceived to have transgressed religious/moral laws, norms or codes seldom occur, **well-founded fear of persecution would only be substantiated in exceptional cases under these profiles.**

Therefore, each case must be assessed individually taking into consideration the most recent information available.

The available information on the situation of Persons perceived to be opposing the Transitional Government being limited at the time of writing, an **individual assessment of such cases should be based on the most recent information available.**

Palestinians who had previously availed themselves of the protection or assistance of UNRWA in Syria are to be granted *ipso facto* refugee status, provided Article 12(2) and 12(3) QD/QR do not apply. For Palestinians who did not previously benefit from UNRWA's protection or assistance, the mere fact for an individual to be a Palestinian refugee in Syria, or a descendant of such a person, does not in itself lead to the level of risk required to establish well-founded fear of persecution.

If an applicant is not considered eligible for refugee status, Member States should proceed to consider the granting of subsidiary protection, taking into account established individual circumstances.

With regard to Article 15(a) QD/QR: death penalty or execution, while, at the time of writing, there is no information on the use of the death penalty by the Transitional Government, executions have been reported in the recent months. If there is a reasonable degree of likelihood of execution, and no nexus to a reason for persecution can be substantiated, subsidiary protection under Article 15(a) QD/QR shall be granted.

Article 15(b) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment may be applicable in certain cases. For example, torture, life-threatening detention conditions, and criminal violence have been reported.

With regard to subsidiary protection under Article 15(c) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict the guidance provides an assessment per governorate as per following:

- There are **no areas in Syria** where the degree of **indiscriminate violence** reaches an **exceptionally high level** or a **high level**.
- In the governorates of **Aleppo, Dar'a, Deir Ez-Zor, Hama, Hasaka, Homs, Idlib, Latakia, Quneitra, Raqqa, Rural Damascus, Sweida** and **Tartous**, **indiscriminate violence** is taking place, however **not at a high level**. Accordingly, a **higher level of individual elements** is required to show substantial grounds for believing that a civilian, returned to these areas, would face a real risk of serious harm.
- In the governorate of **Damascus**, it is considered that there is in general **no real risk** of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

The international protection needs of Syrian applicants are further compounded by the general lack of protection in the country. Neither the Transitional Government nor the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES) can be considered Actors of protection fulfilling the requirements of Article 7 QD/QR.

It is assessed that Internal protection alternative (IPA) may be applicable in the city of Damascus in some cases, without prejudice to the possibility to apply IPA to other places in Syria.

Finally, Exclusion considerations may be relevant in a number of cases concerning applicants from Syria, such as former members of Assad's armed forces, (former) members of Assad-aligned militias created after the fall of the regime, (former) members of the previously called 'anti-government armed groups' (such as the Free Syrian Army, *Jabhat al-Nusrah*, *Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham*, the Syrian National Army, especially the Suleiman Shah Brigade, the Hamza Division and their commanders, and the Sultan Murad Division, and ISIL), (former) Kurdish political actors (PYD/Democratic Union Party), security forces (SDF, YPG, Asayish) and groups linked to the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), such as the *Kurdish Revolutionary Youth Movement*, and individuals who committed a serious crime.



Common analysis

1. Recent developments in Syria

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 2., 4.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 1.1., 1.2., 1.3., 1.5., 1.6., 3.1., 5.6.](#); [Country Focus March 2025, 1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

On 8 December 2024, a 12-day offensive led by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and allied Syrian opposition forces resulted in the collapse of the Assad regime, ending over five decades of family rule. A Transitional Government was established on 29 January 2025, with Ahmad al-Sharaa appointed as transitional president. The 2012 constitution was annulled, and core state institutions—including the parliament, military, and security services—were dissolved. Al-Sharaa initiated sweeping reforms, including a general amnesty for Syrian army personnel, the abolition of mandatory conscription, and a reintegration programme for former officials. On 13 March 2025, a Constitutional Declaration was signed, launching a five-year transitional phase. It introduced a strong presidential system with extensive powers and minimal oversight, designated Islam as the president's religion and Islamic jurisprudence as the main legislative source, and affirmed judicial independence and certain freedoms, though without detailed safeguards.

A new cabinet of 23 ministers was announced on 29 March 2025, reflecting ethnic and religious diversity, although some members had prior affiliations with HTS. In May 2025, two national commissions were created: the National Commission for Transitional Justice and the National Commission for the Missing. However, no transitional justice process has begun, and the mandate is limited to crimes committed by the Assad regime. In June 2025, a presidential decree established the Supreme Committee for Elections to oversee the indirect election of 100 parliamentary members and define electoral criteria. Despite these institutional developments, governance remains fragile and incomplete.

Military integration of armed groups into the New Syrian Army of the Transitional Government remains a major challenge. While the Syrian National Army (SNA) is nominally part of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), it continues to operate with varying degrees of autonomy and fragmented command structures. Some armed groups have resisted integration, while others have been rebranded as official MoD units without structural reform. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) remain fully independent, with integration negotiations ongoing. Extremist groups, including ISIL, remain active, and Israeli military operations continue. The new Syrian army comprises former opposition factions and new recruits but lacks meaningful reform. Some factions, including the SNA, have committed violations against civilians, particularly in coastal and Druze-majority areas.

Security remains volatile. In early March 2025, clashes between pro-Assad groups and Transitional Government forces in Latakia, Tartous, and Hama led to hundreds of civilian deaths, predominantly among Alawites. In July 2025, violence escalated in Sweida following clashes between Druze militias and Bedouin tribal fighters, with further conflict between 14–16 July involving Transitional Government forces, leading to more than a thousand deaths. Both episodes included summary executions by forces linked to the Transitional Government, highlighting ongoing instability and human rights concerns.

Despite the lifting or easing of several sanctions by the UK, US, and EU in May 2025, humanitarian conditions remain dire. Poverty affects 90 % of the population, and 16.5 million people require aid. Infrastructure damage, unemployment, and limited access to services hinder recovery. Although 1.9 million internally displaced persons have returned, 7.4 million remain displaced, and new displacements continue due to ongoing violence and unresolved housing, land, and property issues.

2. Displacement and return movements

Last update: December 2025

This section uses the terms 'return' and 'returnee' in their usual meaning in everyday language and should not be understood as a reference to Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals (Return Directive).

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 7.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 4.1., 4.2., 5.6.](#); [Country Focus March 2025, 4.5.5., 4.5.6.](#); [Country Guidance](#) should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Internal displacement and return

Conflict-related displacement surged after 27 November 2024, peaking at 1.1 million on 12 December 2024, before stabilising at around 650 000 by 5 February 2025. Significant displacement waves were recorded in December 2024 in northern Syria. Serious security incidents in coastal areas in March 2025 also caused significant displacement, most of those IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) having returned since then. Additionally, clashes between pro-government and Druze armed groups in Rural Damascus in late April 2025 and early May 2025 led to the displacement of 15 000 people.

Between 27 November 2024 and 12 June 2025, approximately 1.34 million IDPs returned to their areas of origin, with over 533 000 departing from IDP sites since 8 December 2024. Most returns occurred in Aleppo, Hama, Idlib, and Homs governorates. Despite this, according to UNHCR, an estimated 7.4 million individuals remain displaced within Syria.

These patterns reflect the ongoing volatility and insecurity in the country, underscoring the challenges to sustainable return and the need for stabilisation and protection measures in affected regions.

Returnees from abroad

As of 18 September 2025, UNHCR estimated that 988 134 Syrians returned from abroad since 8 December 2024. The top countries of departure for returnees were Türkiye (41 %), Lebanon (32 %) and Jordan (20 %). The top intended governorates of return were Damascus (170 624), Aleppo (159 450), Idlib (134 436) and Homs (128 531). Returnees from neighbouring countries are reported to be working-age adults, including women, female-headed households, children, men of military age (formerly 18-40 years of age), and older individuals.

However, the sustainability of these returns is severely limited. Many returnees encounter major obstacles in accessing basic services, legal documentation, and livelihood opportunities. The main challenges to sustainable return cited by returnees were unemployment (77 %), high cost of living (74 %), poor infrastructure and living conditions (57 %) and lack of humanitarian or development support (52 %).

Requirements and conditions upon return



Syrian nationals returning to Syria must present valid identification, such as a national passport or ID card. Documents issued by the former government remain accepted. Those registered in Syria's civil registries but lacking documentation may be admitted after identity verification via the Civil Affairs database. Syrian diplomatic missions abroad can issue temporary travel documents to facilitate returns.

Since the fall of the Assad regime, returnees have generally not faced repercussions from authorities. Arrest warrants issued by former intelligence agencies or military police are reportedly not enforced. However, individuals with civil court judgments or charges remain subject to assessment, contributing to a more permissive return environment despite unresolved criminal charges and a non-functioning judiciary.

Testimonies from returnees via Lebanon, Jordan, and other neighbouring countries describe border interactions as brief and welcoming, with no systematic mistreatment reported. Nonetheless, tensions with host communities have emerged, often linked to perceived political or religious affiliations.

Authorities do not screen returnees past activities abroad. According to an IOM (International Organization for Migration) study, 78 % of returnees have returned to their areas of origin. Key challenges to sustainable return include deteriorating economic conditions (94 %), unemployment (74 %), limited access to services (55 %), and community tensions (33 %). Another study highlights housing and property issues, particularly the lack of ownership documentation, as significant barriers to reintegration.



Please note that an assessment on returns in the context of the Return Directive falls outside the mandate of the EUAA and therefore also outside the scope of the country guidance documents.

The reader may refer to the [UNHCR Position on Returns to the Syrian Arab Republic](#), still valid at the time of writing of this guidance.

3. Actors of persecution or serious harm



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see 'EUAA, 'Actors of persecution or serious harm' in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025.

The following sections highlight the main actors of persecution and serious harm in Syria as well as their areas of control and influence, in a non-exhaustive manner. In Syria, a wide range of different groups and individuals can be considered as actors of persecution or serious harm, and a clear distinction between State and non-State actors within the meaning of Article 6 QD/QR may be difficult to make.

3.1. Map: areas of control and influence

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: COI Update, 1; Country Focus July 2025, 5.1.3., 5.3., 5.8.3., 5.8.7.; Country Focus March 2025, 1.2.1., 2.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

As of 29 September 2025,

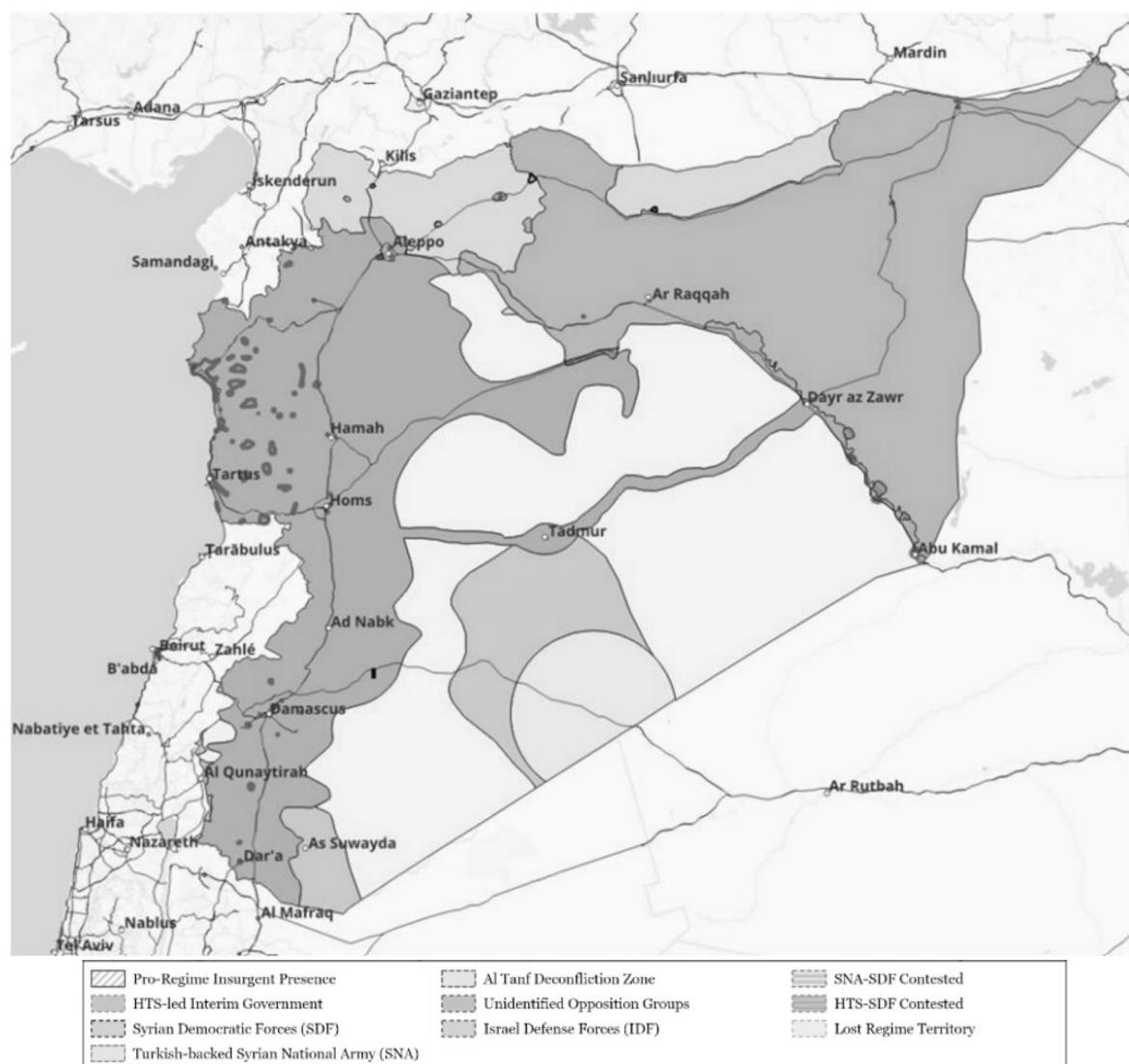
- The Transitional Government controls most Syrian territory besides Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)-governed areas in northeast Syria and the mostly Druze-controlled Sweida governorate. The Transitional Government forces and The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) operate in close proximity in Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zor governorates. The Transitional Government has control over villages in Sweida's eastern and northern countryside.
- The Syrian National Army (SNA) remains active in Afrin, Ras al-Ayn and Tall Abyad despite a reduced presence. They control the areas between Afrin, Azaz and Jarabulus (Aleppo governorate) and the areas between Tall Abyad (Raqqa governorate) and Ras al-Ayn (Hasaka governorate) under the influence of the SNA.
- The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) controls northern and northeastern Deir Ez-Zor, Hasaka governorate and parts of Raqqa, especially around Raqqa city. While the SDF controls most Iraqi border crossing points in eastern Syria, the Transitional Government forces maintain a presence at the Albu Kamal-Al Qa'im border crossing point.
- The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has cells active predominantly in the Badiya desert in Homs, and Deir Ez-Zor. ISIL presence and activity have also been reported in Aleppo, Hasaka, Idlib, Raqqa, Rural Damascus, Sweida, and desert areas.
- Most of Sweida governorate including its capital are under the control of Druze local factions.
- Assad-aligned remnants are present in Homs, Hama, Latakia and Tartous and in small pockets Al-Mayadin, Abu Kamal, and eastern Deir Ez-Zor. See 3.6. Other actors.



- Israel has been occupying parts of southern Syria and conducting extensive airstrikes, particularly in Dar'a, Damascus, and Latakia. It maintains a presence in the Golan Heights and actively engages with the Druze minority, opposing Syrian military deployment south of Damascus.
- Türkiye and the US still have military presence in Syria and have been conducting armed operations in the country.

The approximate areas of control and influence of the main actors are outlined in the map below.

Figure 1. Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, © Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project, 29 September 2025. EUAA, Country of Origin Information Query, Syria: Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments, October 2025.



3.2. The Transitional Government

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 1](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 1.3., 1.3.1., 1.3.2.](#); [Country Focus March 2025, 1.3.2., 2.1.](#); [Actors, 4.1.4.](#); [Country Guidance](#) should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Following the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, Syria has experienced significant shifts in territorial control and governance. On 27 November 2024, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), under Ahmad Al-Sharaa's leadership, launched a large-scale offensive in north-western Syria, capturing the capital by 8 December 2024 amid minimal resistance. The Transitional Government subsequently consolidated control over major urban centres including Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, and Hama, and expanded into central, northern, and southern regions. Nonetheless, widespread insecurity persisted. As of September 2025, the Transitional Government controlled most territory besides the areas governed by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the northeast and the Druze-controlled Sweida governorate.

Security operations are divided between the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and Ministry of Defence (MoD). The MoI, including the police and General Security Services (GSS) staffed by former HTS and Syrian Salvation Government (the governance body of HTS responsible for civilian functions) personnel, maintains a structured and professional force. The MoD oversees a loosely integrated army of former opposition factions, with limited cohesion and ongoing friction with MoI units, particularly over checkpoint control.

More precisely, the new Syrian army has been formed by integrating former opposition armed factions, based on an agreement signed in March 2025 between the Transitional Government and armed factions, in addition to new recruits. Instead of requiring reforms or restructuring, the MoD has largely rebranded these factions as official army divisions or brigades. Some factions nominally integrated into the structure of the MoD, such as the SNA, often operate semi-independently, committing violations against civilians, particularly in coastal and Druze-majority areas.

The agreement signed in March 2025 between the Transitional Government and [The Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#) led to a significant decline in armed confrontations between the SDF and [The Syrian National Army \(SNA\)](#) factions nominally affiliated with the government. However, tensions between the SDF and the Transitional Government remained and the integration of military and civilian institutions of the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES) into the state remained largely unresolved as of late September 2025.

The Transitional Government remains in the early stages of establishing effective security across Syria. While its security forces have demonstrated the ability to carry out limited ground raids, Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) strikes, and rocket and missile attacks, they possess minimal air defence capabilities and have received limited training in advanced weapons systems.

Security forces affiliated to the Transitional Government have committed numerous serious human rights violations such as arbitrary arrest, incommunicado detention, killing, torture, and abuse of individuals such as [Persons associated with the former Government of Syria](#) and



Persons with perceived links to ISIL. In early March 2025, clashes between pro-Assad groups and security forces of the Transitional Government in Latakia, Tartous, and Hama governorates led to hundreds of civilians being killed, most of whom were Alawites. In July 2025, violence escalated sharply after intense clashes erupted on 13 July between Druze militias and Bedouin tribal fighters in Sweida. The conflict intensified between 14-16 July 2025 amid the deployment of Transitional Government forces in Sweida. Both events of violence included summary executions carried out by forces linked to the Transitional Government.



While the Transitional Government has made progress in consolidating formal structures and integrating some armed groups, it cannot be considered a unified actor. Its authority is fragmented, its control over armed factions is incomplete, and regional/local autonomy persists in many areas. The government's legitimacy and effectiveness are further challenged by ongoing violence, sectarian tensions, and the presence of powerful non-state and external actors.

3.3. The Syrian National Army (SNA)

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: COI update, 1., 4.; Country Focus July 2025, 1.3.2., 2.3.; Country Focus March 2025, 2.2.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The Syrian National Army (SNA) is a coalition of loosely affiliated militias supported by Türkiye. Despite its formal integration into the Syrian Ministry of Defence (MoD), the SNA has largely continued to operate within its original structures and areas of control. Many of its factions maintain independent sources of funding, primarily through Turkish financial support, and function with considerable autonomy from the MoD.

Following the deployment of the Transitional Government forces to Afrin in February 2025, SNA factions have largely reduced their presence in the region. Some SNA units are also active west of the Tishreen Dam in Aleppo governorate. Nominally integrated into official army divisions, SNA factions are deployed across various parts of Syria, particularly in Aleppo and Hama governorates.

Certain factions, such as the Suleiman Shah Brigade, wield significant influence. Their autonomy is reflected in the frequency and severity of violations attributed to them. SNA commanders implicated in serious violations have been appointed to prominent positions within the government's military structure.

The SNA has committed numerous serious human rights violations. Following the recapture of Manbij in Aleppo governorate, the SNA threatened and robbed civilians and extorted bribes and valuables from them to pass checkpoints. They also committed summary executions, killings, arbitrary arrests and detentions, and torture against civilians.

In May 2025, the European Union sanctioned three SNA factions—the Suleiman Shah Brigade, the Hamza Division, and the Sultan Murad Division—along with their commanders, due to their involvement in violent incidents in coastal areas during March 2025. Since the end of March

2025, Türkiye and the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) have refrained from engaging in hostilities.

For further information, see [4.9.2. Kurds](#), and [4.9.4. Alawites](#).

3.4. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 1., 4.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 2.6., 2.7., 5.1.1.](#); [Country Focus March 2025, 2.4.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) are a military alliance in which the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) is the prominent component.

In March 2025, the SDF and the Transitional Government agreed to integrate SDF forces into the national military and Ministry of Defence, ceasing hostilities and transferring control of strategic sites. Initial steps included SDF withdrawals from the Kurdish neighbourhoods of Sheikh Maksoud and Ashrafieh in Aleppo city in early April and a partial handover of the Tishreen Dam, with joint patrols marking early progress. However, a Kurdish call for federalism escalated tensions, prompting both sides to reinforce positions near the dam. By late May 2025, negotiations over the dam remained unresolved, with no final agreement reached, highlighting ongoing friction despite initial cooperation. On 9 August 2025, Syria's state news agency reported that the Transitional Government withdrew from scheduled talks in Paris with the SDF after an SDF-backed conference called for decentralisation, highlighting ongoing difficulties in implementing the 10 March agreement on integrating the SDF into state institutions.

The SDF have committed numerous serious human rights violations. They engaged in arrests and/or detentions of [Persons perceived to be opposing the SDF/YPG](#), supporters of the Transitional Government, civilians and SNA personnel who had returned to their homes in SDF-held areas after prior displacement, persons who have defected from the SDF and their family members, as well as [Persons associated with the former Government of Syria](#). During some of the SDF-conducted raids, its members reportedly physically assaulted [Women and girls](#). Reports also describe violence against [Journalists and other media professionals](#) and instances of [Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish-led forces](#).

3.5. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 1.](#), [4.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.1.3.](#); [Country Focus March 2025, 2.5.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) persists. The group continued to opportunistically exploit the volatile security landscape following the fall of the Assad regime.

ISIL has continued its attacks against [The Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#). This coincided with growing concerns over the security of detention facilities housing ISIL fighters in the northeast, as funding for their maintenance and staffing become uncertain. Several attempted prison breaks have recently been thwarted.

Sporadic ISIL attacks targeting [The Transitional Government](#) forces and civilians particularly in Deir Ez-Zor governorate, were reported.

3.6. Other actors

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 5.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 2.1.2., 5.1.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Former Assad government senior military and intelligence officials formed new groups and networks aimed at fighting against the Transitional Government. Several armed formations occurred. Some of those groups have been accused of fuelling sectarian divisions while presenting themselves as defenders of the Alawite community. Among these, factions operating in Syria's coastal regions have been described as the most organised insurgent elements. Reports indicate that insurgent attacks by Alawite militias affiliated with the former regime—primarily targeting government infrastructure and Sunni communities—have decreased and now occur with less frequency since reaching a peak in March 2025.

Following the collapse of the Assad regime, the **Israeli military** advanced into the UN-monitored buffer zone in the Golan Heights and further into the Syrian territory, specifically targeting areas in southern Quneitra and south-west Dar'a. In early December 2024, Israel conducted several hundred airstrikes across Syria, primarily aimed at dismantling weapons facilities. Over half of these strikes occurred in the governorates of Dar'a, Damascus, Rural Damascus, and Latakia. Israeli operations in south-west Syria continued, including ground incursions and aerial attacks on various strategic targets, notably in proximity to the Presidential Palace in Damascus. Israel has consistently opposed the deployment of the Transitional Government forces south of Damascus and has actively engaged with the Druze minority in the region, allegedly offering protection and seeking their support.

Türkiye carried out military attacks targeting [The Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#), and conducted air and drone strikes in Northern Syria hitting civilians and critical civilian

infrastructure. Since the end of March 2025, Türkiye and the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) have refrained from engaging in hostilities. This pause in fighting extended from Kobane along the Euphrates River to Raqqa.

The '**Revolutionary Youth Movement**', also known as 'Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement', an affiliated YPG/PKK armed group, detained children for recruitment. For further information, see [Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish-led forces](#).

Other actors, such as **criminal gangs, unaffiliated gunmen, and other armed groups** such as *Saraya Ansar al-Sunnah* also committed human rights violations. Some examples include revenge killings of [Persons associated with the former Government of Syria](#) and [Alawites](#), and trafficking in human beings of [Women and girls](#), including for the purpose of sex exploitation.

Family members and **the society at large** can also be considered actors of persecution or serious harm as they committed domestic, sexual and gender-based violence, forced and early marriage, and honour crimes against [Women and girls](#) and violence against [Persons with diverse SOGIESC](#).



For further information on human rights violations committed by different State and non-State actors and their relevance as potential exclusion grounds, see [8. Exclusion](#).

4. Refugee status

This chapter provides analysis and guidance on the potential international protection needs of selected profiles of applicants. These profiles were selected based on their relevance in the caseload of EU Member States.

The list of profiles addressed in this chapter is non-exhaustive and the fact that a certain profile is included or not is without prejudice to the determination of their protection needs. Furthermore, the order of listed profiles does not reflect any ranking of the potential level of risk of persecution.

While the conclusions under this common analysis provide general guidance, the protection needs of each applicant should be **examined individually**. The non-exhaustive lists of examples with regard to sub-profiles at a differentiated risk and to circumstances, which would normally increase or decrease the risk, are to be taken into account in light of all circumstances in the individual case.

The considerations under each profile should, furthermore, be viewed without prejudice to the credibility assessment of the applicant's claims. This common analysis deals solely with issues of risk analysis and qualification.

For each profile, the guidance responds to the following questions:

Step 1: Do the reported acts qualify as persecution?

This part provides examples of acts reported to be committed against individuals belonging to the profile as well as guidance on whether such acts would reach the level of persecution according to Article 9 QD/QR.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

This part assesses how likely it is for applicants within the profile to have a well-founded fear of persecution. Further guidance is provided with regard to the circumstances which should be taken into account in the individual assessment, addressing also how they would impact the risk.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

This part provides guidance on whether in case of established well-founded fear of persecution, this would be connected to a reason falling within the provision of Article 10 QD/QR (nexus).

Relevant COI is also included in the analysis to substantiate the assessment provided. Links to the relevant EUAA COI reports and/or queries are also added.



For more guidance on how to read the following subsections, please refer to 'EUAA, 'Refugee status' in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.

4.1. Persons associated with the former Government of Syria

Last update: December 2025

This section covers the situation of (Former) members of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups and Former Assad government officials and other civilians who (are perceived to) have collaborated with the Assad regime.

This section should be read in conjunction with 4.9.4. Alawites.

4.1.1. **(Former) members of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups**

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: COI Update, 5; Country Focus July 2025, 1.3.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2; Country Focus March 2025, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In the aftermath of regime change, The Transitional Government announced a general amnesty for military personnel conscripted under compulsory service during the Assad era. Individuals who surrendered themselves and their weapons were issued a 'security settlement certificate' and were reportedly protected from prosecution provided they were not suspected to have been involved in war crimes. Reports indicate that thousands of individuals including high level members of the armed forces of the Assad regime have gone through this process successfully. While the procedure appears to be systematically applied, there is no indication that returnees from abroad are required to undergo it. Former soldiers and security officials were permitted to reintegrate into civilian life, 'provided they had not participated in massacres or war crimes during the civil war'. Defected officers from the Syrian military under the Assad regime have been included into the structure of the new Syrian army including in senior positions. Nonetheless, reports suggest that thousands of soldiers, including senior officers, remain imprisoned despite the amnesty.

Against this background, individuals under this profile have been targeted by different actors.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

In itself, the prosecution of persons responsible for serious human rights violations and criminal acts committed under the rule of the former Assad government does not amount to persecution.

When conducted in accordance with applicable international legal standards, security operations by the new Syrian military against armed individuals or groups associated with the Assad regime taking up arms against the Transitional Government do not constitute persecution.

However, some acts outside the conduct of those operations to which persons falling under this profile could be exposed are of such a severe nature that they would amount to

persecution, such as execution, extrajudicial killing, revenge killing, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, and physical assault. More precisely, by mid-January 2025, over 9 000 combatants and officers were reportedly detained by The Transitional Government, amid allegations of torture and restricted communication with families. Hundreds of those detainees were released because it was determined they were not involved in any crimes. Between March 2025 and May 2025, Ministry of Interior-affiliated forces conducted raids targeting individuals accused of violations under the Assad regime, including those allegedly involved in attacks against the Transitional Government forces. These arrests, concentrated in Latakia, Homs, Hama, and Damascus, were not followed by formal charges or trials due to the judiciary's inactivity. Reports of torture, abuse, and deaths in custody continue. High-ranking individuals linked to atrocities were publicly named and detained, while lower-level officials and informants often remained at large. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) also arrested suspected Assad loyalists, including militiamen.

The Transitional Government reportedly discouraged reprisals against Assad affiliates. However, a climate of lawlessness prevailed, with armed groups, including some that are affiliated with or have been technically incorporated into State security forces, committing violations including extrajudicial killings. Since December 2024, targeted revenge killings of men allegedly linked to Assad's military or intelligence services were documented. These attacks, carried out by unidentified gunmen and Salafi-jihadi factions such as *Saraya Ansar al-Sunnah*, targeted individuals from Sunni, Alawite, and Shia communities based on their alleged roles in past violations. In June 2025, the Transitional Government issued a *fatwa* prohibiting revenge killings and urging legal resolution of disputes. The impact of this measure remains unverified.

Additionally, the Special Accountability Force, a newly emerged group in northern Aleppo, claimed responsibility for eliminating former regime collaborators, contributing to a rise in vigilante attacks across several governorates.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The mere fact of having been a (former) member of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups, would not in itself lead to the level of risk to establish well-founded fear of persecution.

Therefore, the individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for (former) members of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Whether the applicant went through the settlement process:** members of Assad's armed forces (e.g. former members of the police, military, intelligence services) and pro-Assad armed groups who evaded the settlement process have been targeted by the Transitional Government by way of security operations, leading to arrests and detentions. Consequently, those who evaded the settlement process would be at higher risk.
- **Whether the applicant is alleged to have committed crimes under the Assad regime:** hundreds of individuals who have been alleged to have committed crimes while affiliated with the Assad regime, including pro-Iranian fighters, were arrested and detained by the Transitional Government. Also, revenge acts including killings by non-state actors were reported.

- **Home area:** the demographic composition of an area may also impact the risk. For example, individuals under this profile living in areas where Alawites make up a large part of the population may be at higher risk. Refer to [4.9.4. Alawites](#).

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for **reasons of (imputed) political opinion**, as being a (former) member of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups is seen as a political opinion.



Exclusion considerations are particularly relevant to this profile, as (former) members of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups may have been involved in excludable acts. See [8. Exclusion](#).

4.1.2. Former Assad government officials and other civilians who (are perceived to) have collaborated with the Assad regime

Last update: December 2025

This profile covers the situation of civilians who (are perceived to) have collaborated with the Assad regime, such as government employees, doctors affiliated with military hospitals, media professionals formerly employed by state-run outlets, former Ba'ath Party members, and informants.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [COI Update, 5](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 2.1.1, 2.3](#); [Country Focus March 2025, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

In itself, the prosecution of persons responsible for serious human rights violations and criminal acts committed under the rule of the former Assad government does not amount to persecution.

However, some acts to which persons falling under this profile could be exposed are of such a severe nature that they would amount to persecution, such as execution, extrajudicial killing, revenge killing, arbitrary arrest and detention, incommunicado detention, physical assault, enforced disappearance.

More precisely, [The Transitional Government](#) has carried out sporadic arrests of individuals suspected of involvement in violations under the Assad regime, such as government employees, doctors affiliated with military hospitals linked to security services, and media professionals formerly employed by state-run outlets. Former Ba'ath Party membership alone does not appear to result in targeting. However, the arrest of former civilian officials is reported to be arbitrary. Prominent individuals who were publicly visible or made statements during the previous regime may be singled out, likely to demonstrate the authorities' commitment to justice. In contrast, lesser-known individuals are generally not detained unless implicated in specific crimes or known to have ties to intelligence services.



Since April 2025, vigilante attacks against former regime collaborators have reportedly increased. Documented incidents include executions of Sunni collaborators and assaults on Alawites accused of supporting the former government or acting as informants. Between January and April 2025, at least 361 civilians were reportedly killed extrajudicially in Homs and Hama governorates, with most incidents occurring in Alawite-majority areas. In Homs, the targeting of Alawites appears to be sectarian in nature, driven by perceptions of collective complicity in regime crimes.

Additionally, The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have reportedly carried out arbitrary detentions of civilians, including suspected Assad regime supporters. In response to escalating retaliatory violence, the Transitional Government issued a *fatwa* in June 2025 prohibiting revenge killings and extrajudicial retaliation, urging resolution through legal channels. The impact of this measure remains unverified.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The mere fact of having been a civilian affiliated to the Assad regime, including having been a former member of the Ba'ath party, would not in itself lead to the level of risk to establish well-founded fear of persecution.

Therefore, the individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for former Assad government officials and other civilians who (are perceived to) have collaborated with the Assad regime to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Whether the applicant is alleged to have committed crimes under the Assad regime:** individuals who have been alleged to have committed crimes while affiliated with the Assad regime, including former regime informants, face a higher risk.
- **Religious background:** although persons of Sunni and other religious backgrounds have been targeted as well, individuals belonging to the Alawite minority face a higher risk, particularly from non-state actors. See also 4.9.4. Alawites.
- **Home area:** the demographic composition of an area may also impact the risk. For example, individuals under this profile living in areas where Alawites make up a large part of the population may be at higher risk. Refer to 4.9.4. Alawites.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for **reasons of (imputed) political opinion**, as being a former Assad government official or another civilian who (is perceived to have) has collaborated with the Assad regime is seen as a political opinion.



Exclusion considerations could be particularly relevant to this profile, as former Assad government officials and other civilians who (are perceived to) have collaborated with the Assad regime may have been involved in excludable acts. See 8. Exclusion.

4.2. Persons perceived to be opposing the Transitional Government

Last update: December 2025

This profile refers to civilians perceived by The Transitional Government as opposing it. It encompasses a range of activities, such as expressing dissent from the policies, actions, or authority of the Transitional Government, as well as political party membership, and activism such as taking part in protests.

Refer to 4.1. Persons associated with the former Government of Syria, for the situation of those individuals perceived to be affiliated to the former regime.

Refer to 4.7. Journalists and other media professionals for the situation of individuals active in journalistic and media activities.

This profile does not include members of armed groups, who are addressed separately. See 4.6. Persons with perceived links to ISIL, 4.1.1. (Former) members of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups, and members of the SDF/YPG under 4.9.2. Kurds.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: COI Update, 5; Country Focus July 2025, 1.1., 1.2., 2.2.; Country Focus March 2025, 1.2.2.; Security 2024, 1.4.4.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

On 29 January 2025, the Transitional Government formally announced the dissolution of all opposition parties. The Constitutional Declaration establishes a strong presidential system, granting the president sweeping powers with minimal oversight. It also guarantees freedom of expression, media freedom and judicial independence, but does not include specific safeguards to ensure these protections.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

There is limited information regarding the treatment of individuals who oppose or are perceived to oppose the Transitional Government.

No documented cases exist of targeting by the Transitional Government based on membership of political parties or activism.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The information on the treatment of dissent by the Transitional Government is, at the time of writing, limited. Therefore, an individual assessment should be based on the most recent information available.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where a well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **(imputed) political opinion**, as opposing the Transitional Government is perceived as a political opinion.



For practical guidance on how to assess claims related to political opinion, including *sur place* claims and claims based on social media activities, please refer to 'EUAA jointly with Member States, *Practical Guide on Political Opinion*, December 2022', and to 'EUAA, *Practical Guide on Evidence and Risk Assessment*, January 2024', Publications on social media, pp.118-120.

4.3. Profiles related to military service

Last update: December 2025

This section covers the treatment by The Transitional Government of draft evaders, deserters and defectors from the Syrian Army of the Assad regime, and of individuals fearing conscription from the new Syrian Army (i.e. the Transitional Government army).

For the situation of members of Assad armed forces who were still active when the Assad regime fell, refer to 4.1.1. (Former) members of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups.



Refer to 'EUAA jointly with Member States, *Practical Guide on Political Opinion*, December 2022', 3.1.1, for the relevant terminology related to military service.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: Country Focus July 2025, 1.3.1; Country Focus March 2025, 1.2.2; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In the immediate aftermath of the regime change, The Transitional Government declared a general amnesty for individuals who had evaded military service or deserted while serving under the Assad administration. There are no indications that this amnesty is not implemented as announced. Defected officers from the former Syrian army have been included in the new MoD. Defectors under Assad are relied upon in the new army.

Following the fall of the Assad regime, the newly established Transitional Government announced the termination of mandatory military conscription, except in circumstances classified as national emergencies. The Syrian army is reportedly transitioning into a volunteer-based force, with efforts aimed at encouraging public participation to safeguard national borders. Nonetheless, the possibility of conscription campaigns being reintroduced in response to emergencies cannot be excluded.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

No acts of persecution have been reported against individuals who had evaded military service or deserted while serving under the Assad administration, and against defectors from the Syrian Army of the Assad regime.

Additionally, even though the Transitional Government abolished conscription, it has to be noted that conscription itself, which is a legitimate right of a state, would in general not meet the requirements of Article 9 QD/QR.



For profiles related to military service, well-founded fear of persecution would in general not be substantiated.

4.4. Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish-led forces

Last update: December 2025

This profile refers to the topic of recruitment by The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)/YPG, and by the 'Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement' (see 3.6. Other actors).

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: COI Update, 4.; Country Focus July 2025, 2.6., Country Focus 2023, 1.4.; Targeting 2022, 5.3.; Targeting 2020, 4.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

While SDF leaders agreed in March 2025 to integrate their armed forces and civilian institutions into The Transitional Government, representatives of Kurdish political and armed groups, including the SDF, collectively rejected the attempt to centralise power in Damascus. At the time of writing, the March 2025 agreement had not yet been implemented.

As a consequence, Kurdish-led forces are still to be considered autonomous until potential new information substantiating their integration in the new Syrian military is available.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

SDF/YPG are non-State armed forces, therefore, non-voluntary recruitment by SDF/YPG is considered as forced recruitment. Forced recruitment and child recruitment are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution.

There are continued cases of children being recruited by the SDF, and the Kurdistan Women Union (KWW). The YPG and Kurdish Women's Protection Units (YPJ) recruited and used boys and girls as young as 12 years old. In 2025, all the cases of child recruitment were attributed to the Kurdish Revolutionary Youth Movement. Very little information on the background of the children who were recruited was available at the time of writing.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for persons to be forcibly recruited by Kurdish-led forces should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Gender and age:** males between 18 and up to 31 years of age face a risk. In June 2019 the Kurdish Administration passed a law about the 'Duty of Self Defence', where



conscription became mandatory for all male residents of the DAANES territory, including Syrian nationals and stateless Kurds, between 18 and 31 years of age. Women can join the YPJ on a voluntary basis.

- **Ethno-religious background:** Kurds are the primary target. Other ethno-religious groups are less at risk. More precisely, Christians were not subjected to the same level of enforcement of the 'Duty of Self Defence' as Kurds. Additionally, DAANES was said to be more cautious in enforcing the 'Duty of Self Defence' law in Arab dominated regions.
- **Falling within an exemption ground:** persons falling under an exemption ground are not at risk, since exemptions are reported to be generally respected. Exemptions to the 'Duty of Self-Defence' include medical reasons, disabilities, family members of martyrs holding a proving certificate thereof, or only sons.

In addition to those risk-impacting circumstances, the individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood **for children**, to face persecution, in relation to child recruitment by Kurdish-led forces, should take into account the following **risk-impacting circumstance**:

- **Displacement:** children living in IDP camps face a higher risk. The YPG and YPJ reportedly recruited and used boys and girls from IDP camps in north-eastern Syria.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

While the risk of **forced recruitment** as such may not generally imply a nexus to a reason for persecution, the consequences of refusal, could, depending on individual circumstances, substantiate such a nexus, among other reasons, to **(imputed) political opinion**, as refusing such recruitment would be perceived as a political opinion.

In the case of **child recruitment**, the individual circumstances of the applicant need to be taken into account to determine whether a nexus to a reason for persecution can be substantiated. For example, in the case of children who refuse to join the Kurdish forces, persecution may be for reasons of (imputed) political opinion.

4.5. Persons perceived to be opposing the SDF/YPG

Last update: December 2025

This profile refers to different groups perceived by the SDF/YPG as opposing them. It includes political opponents, such as those supporting the Transitional Government, as well as persons associated with Türkiye and/or the SNA.

Refer to [4.6. Persons with perceived links to ISIL](#) for the situation of those individuals.

For the situation of members of [The Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)/YPG](#) and persons perceived to be collaborating with the SDF/YPG, refer to [4.9.2. Kurds](#).

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [COI Update, 5.;](#) [Country Focus July 2025, 2.3.;](#) [Country Focus March 2025, 4.3.;](#) [Security 2024, 1.4.3.;](#) Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which persons perceived to be opposing the SDF/YPG could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution, such as torture, arbitrary arrest, detention and physical assault. Reports describe physical assaults against women during some of the SDF-conducted raids. Instances of violence against media professionals by the SDF (see also [4.7. Journalists and other media professionals](#)) and arrests and detention of civilians criticising the SDF and/or expressing support for [The Transitional Government](#), have also been reported. Also, civilians and [The Syrian National Army \(SNA\)](#) personnel have been arrested after returning to their homes in SDF territory after having been displaced before.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for persons perceived to be opposing the SDF/YPG to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Home area and regional specifics:** individuals originating from SDF-controlled areas who lived temporarily in SNA-controlled areas are at higher risk.
- **Publicly expressing criticism:** publicly expressing opposition or criticism against the SDF heightens the risk. It includes, e.g., reporting on sensitive topics exposing SDF conduct, and expressing public support to the Transitional Government.
- **Being known to the SDF/YPG:** knowledge by the SDF/YPG of a prior involvement with Turkish-backed forces, and/or the fact of having been arrested by the SDF/YPG in the past, heightens the risk.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **(imputed) political opinion**, as opposing the SDF/YPG is perceived as a political opinion.

4.6. Persons with perceived links to ISIL

Last update: December 2025

This profile refers to persons with perceived links to ISIL, to family members of such persons, and to persons who have resided in a territory previously controlled by ISIL. It should be noted that a very careful examination of international protection needs and possible exclusion issues should be conducted in relation to those with actual affiliation to ISIL. For example, applications from individuals formerly detained in SDF-managed camps Al-Hol and Al-Roj and other detention facilities in Northeast Syria should be examined carefully in relation to their potential actual affiliation to ISIL as well as their individual responsibility.



The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 2.3.](#), [5.1.3.](#); [Country Focus March 2025, 1.1.](#), [1.3.5.](#), [2.5.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

In itself, the prosecution of the criminal acts of the insurgents and their targeting in accordance with the rules of international humanitarian law do not amount to persecution.

However, other acts to which persons falling under this profile could be exposed are of such a severe nature that they would amount to persecution, such as extrajudicial killings, arbitrary and mass detentions and abusive treatment in detention facilities.

Persons with perceived links to ISIL have been targeted by [The Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#) and the General Security Services (GSS) of [The Transitional Government](#). Between March 2025 and May 2025, the SDF carried out mass raids and arrests against civilians under the pretext of combating ISIL cells. There are reports that the Transitional Government also carried out security operations against ISIL, resulting in the death of ISIL fighters and persons accused of being affiliated with ISIL. Around 9 000 male ISIL suspects are detained without due process in northeast Syria and around 42 500 individuals, mainly women and children, including family members and ISIL associates, are held in camps such as Al-Hol and Al-Roj. Civilians suspected of being ISIL affiliates continued to be targeted at least until end of September 2025.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

Given the severity of treatment they are subjected to by the SDF and the GSS of the Transitional Government, **for persons with perceived links to ISIL and the family members of such persons, well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated**.

Additionally, **there is no available information substantiating that, in itself, the mere fact of having resided in a territory previously controlled by ISIL is sufficient to establish perceived links to ISIL**.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Persecution of applicants under this profile is highly likely to be for reasons of **(imputed) political opinion**, as being affiliated with ISIL is perceived as a political opinion.



Exclusion considerations are particularly relevant to this profile, as members of ISIL may have been involved in excludable acts. See [8. Exclusion](#).

4.7. Journalists and other media professionals

Last update: December 2025

A journalist is a professional who is involved in the process of gathering, assessing, creating, and broadcasting news and information in newspapers, magazines, on the internet, on the

radio, or on television. Other media workers include a wide range of roles such as producers, directors, technicians, and many others who are involved in the creation and dissemination of media content.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [COI Update, 5.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 2.2., 2.3.](#); [Country Focus March 2025, 1.1., 1.3.5., 2.5.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Previously exiled Syrian journalists and foreign reporters have increasingly resumed reporting from within Syria since December 2024, including in areas formerly controlled by the Assad government. However, journalists and other media professionals have been targeted by different actors because of their activities.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which journalists and other media professionals could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution, such as killings, arbitrary detentions, and attacks. More precisely, journalists and other media professionals have been subjected to persecution by [The Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#), [The Syrian National Army \(SNA\)](#), and other (unidentified) armed groups and individuals. Unidentified armed individuals and groups targeted journalists reporting on conflict situation such as the violence in the coastal areas in March 2025. Other journalists were attacked and threatened by local armed factions in Sweida while covering the signing of an agreement with the Transitional Government in May 2025.

Overall, there is very limited information on the treatment of journalists and other media workers by [The Transitional Government](#). One source mentions arbitrary arrests of journalists by the Transitional Government.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for journalists and other media professionals to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Topic they report on:** journalists and other media professionals reporting in conflict situations and/or on other sensitive topics (e.g. reporting on criminal acts committed by this or that actor) face a higher risk.
- **Perceived criticism:** journalists and other media professionals who are perceived to be critical of the SDF, and/or the SNA in areas where those groups operate face a higher risk. Instances of targeted attacks and detention by those groups have been reported.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for **reasons of (imputed) political opinion**, as journalistic work reporting on sensitive topics may be perceived as political dissent.

4.8. Individuals perceived to have transgressed religious/moral laws, norms or codes

Last update: December 2025

A wide range of individuals and/or behaviours can be considered by this or that actor of persecution to be transgressive of religious/moral laws, norms or codes.

In the context of Syria, behaviours that may be perceived to transgress moral or religious codes include conversion from Islam, atheism and apostasy, as well as non-respect of Islamic obligations such as selling and consuming alcohol, breaking the fast in public during Ramadan, mixed-gender entertainment, and violation of a specific dress-code in public.

Practices perceived as a transgression of these norms depend on several factors, such as local context, actors involved and their interpretation of these norms. Some behaviours adopted by women and girls and by persons with diverse SOGIESC can be considered, by the family, the community, and/or the society at large, as transgressing these norms. Refer to [4.10. Women and girls](#) and [4.12. Persons with diverse SOGIESC](#).

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [COI Update, 3.; Country Focus July 2025, 1.5.; 2.4.5.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts reported to be committed against individuals under this profile generally do not amount to persecution.

More precisely, the Transitional Government has not enacted any laws restricting alcohol, music, or gender mixing, nor has it required women to wear headscarves or curtailed their rights. However, many residents report that an atmosphere of religious conservatism has swept over Damascus and there have been singular incidents of gender segregation on buses and Islamic proselytization in public. Conversion from Islam was prohibited, however, no information indicates that this law is actively enforced by the Transitional Government. Additionally, no specific cases of problems for atheists or apostates have been reported in Syria since the takeover by the Transitional Government.

However, isolated incidents of violence that could amount to persecution have been reported. For example, reports describe violent attacks by armed men or Islamist groups on night clubs in and around Damascus during which one woman was killed and patrons were assaulted. Also, unidentified men attacked an alcohol shop in Homs, assaulting a young man and looting the shop. Arrests of individuals accused of publicly breaking the fast during Ramadan have also been reported.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

Given that the abovementioned acts generally do not amount to persecution, well-founded fear of persecution would only be substantiated in exceptional cases. Therefore, each case

must be assessed individually and taking into consideration the most recent information available.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, the individual circumstances of the applicant should be taken into account to determine whether a nexus to a reason for persecution can be substantiated.

In the exceptional cases where a well-founded fear of persecution would be substantiated, this may be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**. Such individuals may be perceived as being different by the surrounding society because of their common background which cannot be changed (perceived past behaviour) and/or a shared characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to identity or conscience that they should not be forced to renounce it (opposition to cultural, social or religious norms and the unwillingness to comply with them). This may also be for reasons of **religion** in the case of the transgression is seen as non-compliant to Islamic norms.

4.9. Ethno-religious groups

Last update: December 2025

This section addresses the situation of certain ethno-religious groups: Sunni Arabs, Kurds, Druze, Alawites, Christians and Palestinians.



The contents of this section include:

[4.9.1. Sunni Arabs](#)

[4.9.2. Kurds](#)

[4.9.3. Druze](#)

[4.9.4. Alawites](#)

[4.9.5. Christians](#)

[4.9.6. Palestinians](#)

4.9.1. Sunni Arabs

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus July 2025, 1.1., 1.5., 2.1.2., 5.8.5.](#); [Targeting 2020, 10.3.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.



Sunni Arabs form the biggest ethno-religious group in Syria and live throughout the country. The Transitional Government is dominated by Ministers from Sunni Arab background and the leadership positions at the police, General Security Services (GSS) and army are largely filled with Sunni Arabs. The new Fatwa council is comprised entirely of Sunni members, and Islamic jurisprudence is the primary source of legislation. Sunni Arabs cannot be considered a homogenous group as they vary according to their political affiliation, practice and identity, as well as regional and tribal loyalties.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

There is no information on acts amounting to persecution committed against individuals for the mere fact of being Sunni Arab.

More precisely, reports describe attacks by Assad-aligned militias (see 3.6. Other actors) against Sunni communities in March 2025, and clashes between Sunni and Alawite communities in May 2025, without mentioning the reason of those events.

Should a Sunni Arab be targeted, it would be related to other circumstances than the mere fact of being a Sunni Arab.



The mere fact of being Sunni Arab would in general not substantiate a well-founded fear of persecution.

4.9.2. Kurds

Last update: December 2025

This profile refers to Kurds, including members of The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)/YPG and persons perceived to be collaborating with the SDF/YPG.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: COI Update, 5.; Country Focus July 2025, 1.3.2.(a), 2.2., 2.4.1, 5.1.3; Country Focus March 2025, 2.2.; Country Focus 2024, 1.5.1., Targeting 2022, 10.2.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Kurds are the largest ethnic minority in Syria, with an estimated population of 2 to 2.5 million, or up to 10 % of the country's pre-war population of 23 million. They are concentrated in the regions of Afrin, Kobani, and Jazira, neighbourhoods of Aleppo and Damascus cities, and, to a lesser extent, in several districts in Raqqa city.

The agreement in March 2025 between The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and The Transitional Government promised that stateless Kurds would be given the right to citizenship and other constitutional rights, and that Kurds in general would be given the right to use and teach the Kurdish language, while those in displacement would be able to return to their homes. The agreement has not been implemented yet.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which Kurds could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution, such as execution, killing, torture, arbitrary arrests, illegal detention, kidnapping, enforced disappearance and forced displacement.

More precisely, The Syrian National Army (SNA) factions have been implicated in serious human rights violations in areas under their control, particularly in parts of Aleppo governorate. These include arbitrary arrests and detentions of individuals arriving from territories controlled by The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), often on pretextual charges such as alleged affiliation with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the SDF, or the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES). As a result, large numbers of Kurds remain detained in SNA-run facilities. There have also been arbitrary arrests and detentions of an 'ethnic character' in SNA-controlled parts of Aleppo governorate. Reports also describe summary executions, killings, and torture, targeting individuals affiliated with the SDF, YPG, or Asayish.

Additionally, there are incidents of The Transitional Government arresting persons accused of working with the SDF. In SDF-held areas, The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is still capable of conducting attacks, targeting members and persons affiliated with the SDF/YPG.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts to which Kurds could be subjected and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should also be considered.

More precisely, following the recapture of Manbij from the SDF, SNA fighters reportedly threatened, robbed, and extorted civilians at checkpoints. The SNA has also been accused of preventing internally displaced persons (IDPs) from returning to or reclaiming their homes, of extorting them or seizing their properties. Kurds returning to Northern Aleppo also continuously faced denial of access to civil documentation and basic services.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

Kurds from areas under the control of the SNA are particularly at risk, especially those returning from SDF-controlled areas. Notably, Kurds are subjected to serious human rights violations by the SNA in areas under their control, often on pretextual charges as well as based on ethnic grounds.

Kurds from areas under the control of the Transitional Government would face a risk when perceived to have links to the SDF as documented cases indicate arrests based on such alleged affiliations.

Kurds from areas within the reach of ISIL would face a risk when perceived to have links to the SDF given ISIL's capability to carry out attacks and target individuals based on such alleged affiliations.

For further information about the presence and control of actors of persecution, refer to 3. Actors of persecution or serious harm.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **race** and/or **nationality** as Kurds are a distinct ethnic group.



(Imputed) political opinion is also relevant in case of persecution due to perceived affiliation with SDF/YPG/DAANES.



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile, as members of the SDF/YPG may have been involved in excludable acts. See [8. Exclusion](#).

4.9.3. Druze

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [COI Update, 4., 5.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 2.4.4., 5.8.13.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The Druze constituted approximately 3 % of Syria's pre-war population (more or less 700 000 individuals), primarily residing in Sweida governorate, with smaller communities near Damascus and in Idlib. Historically, the Druze maintained a degree of autonomy, including local militias with tens of thousands of fighters. The Men of Dignity, the largest Druze militia, was to be placed under the Ministry of Interior (MoI) in March 2025, but this had not been effectively implemented at the time of writing. As of October 2025, Druze militias still control much of Sweida governorate. In the framework of the violence that took place between February and July 2025 between [The Transitional Government](#), Druze, and Bedouins, more than one thousand casualties were reported among Transitional Government security forces, Druze fighters, and civilians. Anti-Druze sentiment surged online, with accusations of collaboration with Israel and the Assad regime and calls for violence.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which Druze could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution such as extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests, kidnappings, abductions, sexual violence, and enforced disappearances. Reports on events that took place from February to July 2025 describe killings of civilians in homes, a square, a school and a hospital. Druze civilians were arbitrarily arrested or forcibly disappeared by security forces of the Transitional Government, often without warrants or notification to families. Reports revealed deaths under torture. Also, retaliatory kidnappings between Druze and Bedouin groups occurred in Sweida in July 2025 and more than one hundred women and girls were abducted by armed groups linked to the Transitional Government. In at least three documented cases, Druze women were reportedly raped before being executed.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that Druze could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered. For example, Druze properties have been looted, and Druze have been extorted. Also, Druze, including students in Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, and Latakia, continued to face harassment. Druze civilians were subjected to sectarian slogans, and religious men were humiliated, including by the forcible shaving of their culturally significant moustache.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for Druze to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, including the facts and circumstances in the relevant area at the time of the decision, such as:

- **Regional specifics:** whether, in the applicant's area of origin at the time of the decision, the Druze community benefits from security guarantees or faces increased risks of targeted violence.
- **(Perceived) political background:** whether, at the time of the decision, the Druze community, including the applicant themselves, is generally perceived to be opposing the Transitional Government, to be associated with Israel, or to be affiliated to a militia.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **race/nationality** and/or **religion** as Druze are a distinct ethno-religious group. **(Imputed) political opinion** is also relevant in case of persecution due to perceived affiliation with the Assad regime and/or Israel.



Exclusion considerations could be particularly relevant to this profile, as members of Druze militias may have been involved in excludable acts. See [8. Exclusion](#).

4.9.4. Alawites

Last update: December 2025

This profile should be read in conjunction with [4.1. Persons associated with the former Government of Syria](#).

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [COI Update, 5.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 1.3.1., 2.4.2.](#); [Country Focus March 2025, 1.3.2.](#); [Targeting 2020, 10.6.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Alawites represent around 1.7 million individuals or 9 % of Syria's population. They are primarily residing in the coastal and mountainous hinterlands (Tartous and Latakia governorates), with smaller communities living in the governorates of Homs, Hama and Damascus.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which Alawites could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution such as extrajudicial killings, execution, revenge killings, torture, abductions.

More precisely, since early 2025, there are weekly reports of Alawites being victims of acts of retribution or revenge killings by unknown persons. Most of these incidents occurred in areas predominantly inhabited by Alawites. Not only Alawites actually linked to the former Assad



regime's security apparatus have been targeted. There are reported killings of Alawites based on sectarian identity, driven by the conception that all Alawites were complicit in the Assad regime's actions. From 6 to 10 March 2025, clashes between the General Security Services (GSS) of The Transitional Government and their affiliates (mainly The Syrian National Army (SNA) factions) on one side and pro-Assad remnants on the other side, resulted in civilian deaths in Latakia and Tartous governorates, and to a lesser extent in Homs and Hama. Field executions and mass killings resulted in over 1 000 deaths of Alawite civilians most of whom were killed by SNA factions. Sporadic reports of attacks by the Transitional Government forces and affiliated armed groups against Alawites and killings of Alawites continue to emerge in the aftermath of this violence. Reports of attacks by unidentified armed individuals and groups against Alawites continued. Also, *Saraya Ansar al-Sunnah* Sunni militia claimed several attacks and killings of Alawites.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts to which Alawites could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should also be considered. More precisely, Alawites were largely represented within the Assad government, where they held key military, intelligence and security positions. The Transitional Government's layoffs have disproportionately affected Alawites reflecting both their overrepresentation in government employment under Assad and targeted sectarian measures. They remain largely excluded from the new political and military structures. Forced evictions and confiscations of land have also been reported.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for Alawites to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, including the facts and circumstances in the relevant areas at the time of the decision, such as:

- **(Perceived) political background:** (perceived) association with the Assad government and/or an (imputed) oppositional stance towards the Transitional Government heighten the risk. See also 4.1. Persons associated with the former Government of Syria.
- **Home area:** sectarian-motivated assassinations of Alawites have been particularly notable in areas under the control of the Transitional Government such as Latakia, Hama, Homs, and Tartous governorates. As a consequence, Alawites from those governorates face a higher risk.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for **reasons of (imputed) political opinion** as the mere fact of being Alawite could lead to an imputed affiliation to the Assad government. Persecution of Alawites may also be for reasons of **religion**.



Exclusion considerations could be particularly relevant for Alawites associated with the Assad government; refer to 4.1. Persons associated with the former Government of Syria.

4.9.5. Christians

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [COI Update, 5.;](#) [Country Focus July 2025, 2.4.5.;](#) [Country Focus March 2025, 1.3.4.;](#) Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

There is no official statistical data available on the current number of Christians in Syria. However, estimates indicate a significant decline in their population, from approximately 10 % of the total population prior to the outbreak of the conflict in 2011, to around 2 % at present, corresponding to roughly 300 000 individuals. Christian communities are primarily located in and around the cities of Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs, and Latakia, as well as in the Hasaka governorate and the Jazira region, which is under the control of the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES).

[The Transitional Government](#) has pledged to uphold minority rights and has appointed a Christian woman as minister. In Kurdish-controlled areas, Christians are generally able to openly express and exercise their religious beliefs. However, there have been several religious motivated attacks in Damascus, Hama, Homs, and Latakia governorates.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Besides an isolated attack at the Greek orthodox Church in the Dweila neighbourhood of Damascus and rare instances of abductions of women (see also [4.10. Women and girls](#)), acts reported to be committed against Christians do not amount to persecution.

More precisely, reports describe several incidents targeting Christian symbols and places of worship such as an arson attack by an unidentified perpetrator and looting by unidentified men of property belonging to members of the Christian community. Insults and threats at residents of Christian towns were also reported. Christian communities report a general sense of uncertainty and fear for their religious freedom, safety and ability to practice their faith openly.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

Given that acts of persecution against Christians seldom occur, well-founded fear of persecution would only be substantiated in exceptional cases. Therefore, each case must be assessed individually taking into consideration the most recent information available.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **religion**.

4.9.6. Palestinians

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [COI Update, 5.;](#) [Country Focus July 2025, 2.4.7.;](#) [Country Focus March 2025, 4.1.1.;](#) [Targeting 2022, 12., 12.2.;](#) [Targeting 2020, 11.;](#) Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Most of the Palestinian refugees in Syria are those who arrived between 1948 and 1956 and their descendants. They are registered as 'Palestinian refugees' by the governmental General Administration for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR) and they have the same rights as Syrian citizens in terms of residence, freedom of movement, work, trade and access to civil service positions and public services. Palestinians who fled to Syria after 1956 and their descendants were registered with United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in other countries or the occupied Palestinian Territories and are treated as Arab foreigners. They have a 10-year renewable residence permit and have to apply for a work permit. They have access to UNRWA-services but have restricted access to employment. There is no information that this has changed since the fall of the Assad regime.

In 2024, the UNRWA estimated the number of Palestinian refugees in Syria at 438 000. They live across 12 refugee camps and 'various other gatherings' throughout the country. Palestinian refugee camps have been affected by hostilities and conflict-related displacement, albeit to varying degrees. The Palestinian refugee camps of Yarmouk, Ain al Tal and Dera'a remain largely destroyed.

Twenty-five percents of households of Palestinian refugees are female-headed. Children and women are increasingly affected by child labour and early marriage. For the situation of women and children, please refer to [4.10. Women and girls](#) and [4.11. Children](#).

Almost 96 % of Palestinian refugees in Syria rely on UNRWA assistance to cover basic needs. Returnees rely on UNRWA for emergency cash support and there is a 'critical need for non-food items and shelter repair, with efforts being constrained by ongoing funding shortages'. Since the fall of the Assad regime, no cash assistance has been distributed. The vulnerability of Palestine refugees has worsened due to a significant UNRWA funding shortfall. Food insecurity has increased sharply leading to malnutrition, especially among children, pregnant women, and the elderly.

At the time of writing, there is no further information about the treatment of Palestinians by state and non-state actors.

(a) Conclusion and guidance with regard to Article 12(1)(a) QD/QR [Article 1D Geneva Convention]

UNRWA protection or assistance is not available to Palestinian refugees in Syria at a level which would guarantee that the 'living conditions in that area will be commensurate with the mission entrusted to that agency'.



It is found that the protection or assistance from UNRWA in all of Syria can be considered to have ceased in the meaning of Article 12(1)(a) QD/QR. (⁶)

Therefore, Palestinians who had previously availed themselves of the protection or assistance of UNRWA in Syria are to be granted *ipso facto* refugee status, provided Article 12(2) and 12(3) QD/QR do not apply.

For Palestinians who have not availed themselves of UNRWA protection or assistance in Syria, the assessment should proceed with risk analysis and analysis of nexus to a reason for persecution.

(b) Conclusions and guidance (for those outside the scope of Article 1D of the Geneva Convention)

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Palestinians who arrived between 1948 and 1956 and their descendants are registered as 'Palestinian refugees' by the governmental General Administration for Palestinian Arab Refugees (GAPAR). They have the same rights as Syrian citizens in terms of residence, freedom of movement, work, trade and access to civil service positions and public services. They are not allowed to apply for Syrian citizenship except for Palestinian women married to a Syrian national. They do not have the right to vote, hold public office, own agricultural land or more than one house per person. There is no information that this would have changed since the fall of the Assad regime.

The aforementioned restrictions do not, in themselves, amount to persecution.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The mere fact for an individual to be a Palestinian refugee in Syria, or a descendant of such a person, does not in itself lead to the level of risk required to establish well-founded fear of persecution.

Should a Palestinian be targeted, it would be related to other circumstances. For example, if they were member of a faction that was supporting the former Assad government. See 4.1. Persons associated with the former Government of Syria.

(⁶) Please note that the CJEU has interpreted the second sentence of Article 12(1)(a) QD/QR and determined the assessment to follow to determine whether or not UNRWA's protection or assistance has ceased. See CJEU, *SN and LN v Zamestnik-predsedatel na Darzhavna agentsia za bezhantsite*, Case C-563/22, Fourth Chamber, judgment of 13 June 2024, operative part (Court's ruling), <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=287065&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=983958>

The CJEU has also ruled on the direct effect of the Article 12(1)(a) QD/QR. See, CJEU, *Serin Alheto v Zamestnik-predsedatel na Darzhavna agentsia za bezhantsite*, Case C-585/16, Grand Chamber, judgment of 25 July 2018, operative part (Court's ruling), <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=204382&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=981655>



4.10. Women and girls

Last update: December 2025



Please note that the CJEU has ruled on the assessment of the **accumulation of discriminatory measures in respect of women** ⁽⁷⁾ as well as on the assessment of the well-founded fear of persecution of women, including minors, who identify with the value of **gender equality by reason of their stay in a Member State** ⁽⁸⁾.



For assessing international protection needs of women and girls related to Membership of a Particular Social Group, please refer to '[EUAA, *Practical Guide on Membership of a Particular Social Group*, Second edition, May 2025'](#)

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [COI Update, 6.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 2.7.](#); [Country Focus March 2025, 1.3.5.](#); [Country Focus 2023, 1.3.](#); [Targeting 2022, 13.3.1.](#); [Situation of women, 2.1.1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Women and girls in Syria have been subjected to different forms of violence by various actors, including security forces associated with [The Transitional Government](#), [The Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#), [The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant \(ISIL\)](#), armed groups and [Other actors](#) including family members, the community and the society at large. At the end of 2024, 93 % of the approximately 8.5 million people in need of Gender Based Violence (GBV) assistance are women and girls. At the same time, support services for GBV survivors are increasingly limited due to a lack of funding.

The International Crisis Group noted a growing number of incidents involving the harassment of women. In some instances, restrictive measures, such as the enforcement of gender segregation in public and professional settings, were introduced on the initiative of local authorities. It was noted that in most cases, these measures were subsequently reversed following public backlash.

For further information on child recruitment by Kurdish-led forces, refer to [4.4. Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish-led forces](#) and [4.11. Children](#).

⁽⁷⁾ CJEU, AH and FN v Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl, Joined Cases C-608/22 and C-609/22, Third Chamber, judgment of 4 October 2024, operative part (Court's ruling), <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=290687&mode=req&pageIndex=1&dir=&occ=first&part=1&text=&doclang=EN&cid=94756>

⁽⁸⁾ CJEU, K and L v Staatssecretaris van Veiligheid en Justitie, C-646/21, Grand Chamber, judgment of 11 June 2024, operative part (Court's ruling), <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=286987&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=st&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=2037991>

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which women and girls in Syria could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution, such as extrajudicial and honour killings, executions, sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, forced and early marriage, arbitrary arrests, torture, enforced disappearances and displacements as well as certain forms of violence, including of domestic violence and sexual violence.

Reports also indicate that forced and child marriage increased during the conflict as a negative coping mechanism.

There have also been reports of kidnapping of, mostly Alawite, Christian or Druze women and girls in several provinces, including Homs, Tartous, Latakia and Hama. Kidnappings of young women and girls also reportedly happened for conscription to Kurdish-led forces (see also section on Children).

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts to which women and girls could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be also considered. Women frequently lack civil registration in matters related to divorce, child custody, property rights, and criminal proceedings. Female-headed households including divorced and widowed women face societal restrictions and discrimination and were particularly vulnerable to housing, land and property issues. In certain cases, local authorities have imposed restrictions on women's presence in public spaces, although these measures were often later rescinded. Reports of harassment targeting women have been increasingly frequent. Additionally, women have reportedly encountered discrimination and harassment in the workplace, have encountered denial of economic resources or education, restrictions on movement, and exploitation.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for women and girls to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Personal status:** women without a husband or male relatives are particularly vulnerable to being targeted. With almost every third Syrian family being headed by a woman, divorced and widowed women are at risk of forced marriages. Female-headed households face substantial challenges in meeting basic needs, often experiencing economic exclusion and social stigma. Many lack essential documentation, which increases their susceptibility to sexual exploitation and limits their access to humanitarian aid.
- **Socio-economic situation:** women in need of financial support have, in some cases, been coerced into customary marriages. The deteriorating economic situation in Syria has also been linked to increased risks of sexual exploitation, including through online platforms. Additionally, economic hardship heightened the risk of existing negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage. Elements such as education, or lack thereof, job experience, and social standing also have an impact on the risk.



- **Age:** young adult women and underage girls are among the most vulnerable to gender-based violence (GBV). They are particularly at risk of sexual exploitation, harassment, and early or forced marriage.
- **Perception of traditional gender roles in the family and environment:** the risk of honour-based and domestic violence is influenced by how traditional gender norms are perceived within the (extended) family, including by the husband. Expectations regarding the behaviour of women and girls in specific situations are often imposed by the family, the community, and society at large. For example, 'honour' killings occur mainly in areas where tribes play an important role, such as in Sweida or north-eastern Syria. However, 'honour' crimes can occur throughout the country and are not limited to a specific ethnic group.
- **Home area:** incidents such as kidnappings of girls and women seem to occur mostly in areas populated by religious and ethnic minorities and in volatile security situations. Also, while domestic violence and sexual exploitation is on the rise in the whole of Syria, the risk of gender-based violence is higher in areas experiencing a deterioration in the security situation and IDP camps and shelters.
- **Displacement:** women and girls residing in IDP camps have been subjected to exploitation, and abuse, including sexual harassment, denial of healthcare, discrimination, and restrictions on movement due to security concerns. Within these camps and shelters, women and girls have faced heightened risks of survival sex and forced marriage. Furthermore, the incidence of gender-based violence was reportedly higher among women in these settings.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where a well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this may be for reason of **membership of a particular social group** ⁽⁹⁾. For example, women who have previously been subjected to sexual violence may be at risk of 'honour' crimes for reasons of membership of a particular social group, based on their common background which cannot be changed (past sexual abuse) and their distinct identity, because they are perceived as being different by the surrounding society, due to the stigmatisation related to being a survivor of sexual violence. Persecution of this profile may also be for reason of **religion** (e.g. targeting by extremist groups in relation to religious gender norms).

4.11. Children

Last update: December 2025

This profile refers to individuals from Syria under the age of 18. The focus is on certain child specific circumstances of increased vulnerability and risks that children in Syria may be exposed to.

⁽⁹⁾ CJEU, WS v Intervyuirasht organ na Darzhavna agentsia za bezhantsite pri Ministerskia savet, case C-621/21, Judgment of 16 January 2024, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=281302&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=r%20eq&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=1717409>

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 5.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 2.6.](#); [Country Focus March 2025, 1.3.5.](#), [1.3.6.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Children in Syria have been subjected to different forms of violence by various actors, including security forces associated with [The Transitional Government](#), [The Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#), [The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant \(ISIL\)](#), armed groups and [Other actors](#) including family members, the community and the society at large.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts reported to be committed against children are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution, such as killings, abductions, some forms of child labour, child recruitment, child marriage, sexual exploitation, trafficking in human beings, sexual violence and certain forms of psychological violence.

Not all forms of **child labour** would amount to persecution. An assessment should be made in light of the nature and conditions of the work and the age of the child. Work that is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children could be considered to reach the severity of persecution ⁽¹⁰⁾. The impact of child labour on access to education should also be taken into account. Other risks, such as involvement in criminal activities should also be considered. Due to the poor economic situation, child labour and **child marriage** remained prevalent coping mechanisms. For further information, see [4.10. Women and girls](#).

Instances of **recruitment of children**, including girls, by the SDF and by the Revolutionary Youth Movement have been reported mostly occurring in Aleppo governorate, Hasaka and Raqqa. Between March and May 2025, at least 11 girls and young women were reportedly abducted in multiple incidents across northeastern and northern Syria, primarily for conscription. Child recruitment reportedly continued in August 2025. For further information, see [4.4. Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish-led forces](#).

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts to which children could be subjected and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should also be considered.

Children were also particularly affected by **a lack of civil documentation**. However, the lack of documentation as a consequence of the conflict cannot be considered persecution, as it is not the result of an actor's deliberate actions. On the contrary, deliberate restrictions on access to documentation may amount to persecution. Children of women heads of households were at an increased risk of statelessness due to the inability to register their births.

The **general deficiencies in the educational system** as a consequence of the conflict cannot as such be considered persecution, as they are not the result of an actor's deliberate actions. However, in the case of deliberate restrictions on access to education, it should be assessed whether it amounts to persecution. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) indicated that between 40 % and 50 % of children aged 6 to 15 did not attend school.

⁽¹⁰⁾ International Labour Organization (ILO), Minimum Age Convention, C138, 26 June 1973, available at http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C138; Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, C182, 17 June 1999, available at http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C182



Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the applicant to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Family status:** children without a male relative who is willing and able to provide support, would particularly be at risk. Children of women heads of households are at an increased risk of statelessness due to the inability to register their births.
- **Lack of civil documentation:** the lack of civil documentation and nationality/(citizenship) hinders the access of children to education and health services, further exposing them to exploitation, abuse and trafficking.
- **Age and gender:** Gender Based Violence (GBV) particularly affects vulnerable persons including adolescent girls.
- **Socio-economic situation:** children IDPs and children in street situations (1) are particularly at risk of exploitation, and child marriage can be used to face economic hardship. Out of school children are at increased risk of child labour and child marriage, as well as trafficking in human being and recruitment.
- **Home area:** children living in Kurdish controlled areas are at particular risk of recruitment by armed groups.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, the individual circumstances of the child should be taken into account to determine whether a nexus to a reason for persecution can be substantiated.

For example, refusal to enter into child marriage may result in honour-based violence for reasons of **membership of a particular social group** in relation to a common background which cannot be changed (refusal to marry) and/or a characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to identity or conscience that a person should not be forced to renounce it (the right to choose whom to marry) and the distinct identity of such girls in Syria (as they would be considered as violating the honour of the family).

4.12. Persons with diverse SOGIESC

Last update: December 2025

This profile refers to persons who are perceived as not conforming to religious and/or social norms because of their sexual orientation (SO) and/or gender identity and expression (GIE), and sex characteristics (SC), including the treatment of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or trans-gender, intersex and queer, also commonly referred to as LGBTIQ individuals.

(11) 'Children in street situations (CiSS) are defined as children whose world and livelihood depends upon what they can obtain in the streets. CiSS include those who accompany their peers, siblings, or family members in the streets.', [https://www.unicef.org/iran/en/children-street-situations#:~:text=Children%20in%20street%20situations%20\(CiSS,family%20members%20in%20the%20street](https://www.unicef.org/iran/en/children-street-situations#:~:text=Children%20in%20street%20situations%20(CiSS,family%20members%20in%20the%20street)



For practical guidance on SOGIESC-based claims, please refer to EUAA, *Practical Guide on applicants with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics — Examination procedure*, November 2024, to be read in conjunction with the *Information Note*.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: Country Focus July 2025, 2.5.; Country Focus March 2025, 1.3.7.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The situation for persons with diverse SOGIESC in Syria is deteriorating as shown by reports of increasing violence.

Persons with diverse SOGIESC have been subjected to different forms of violence by several actors, for example extremist groups such as The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), armed groups such as The Syrian National Army (SNA), and Other actors such as their family, community and the society at large.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts reported to be committed against persons with diverse SOGIESC are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution, such as killing, torture, sexual and physical violence, arrests, arbitrary detention, and abduction.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts to which persons with diverse SOGIESC could be subjected and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered, as individuals under this profile are reportedly at increasing risk of severe discrimination, legal persecution and threats of violence.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

For individuals under this profile, **well-founded fear of persecution** would in general be substantiated.

It has to be noted that an applicant cannot be expected to conceal their sexual orientation (12) or gender identity to avoid persecution.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Persecution of applicants under this profile is highly likely to be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group** based on a shared characteristic which is so fundamental to their identity that they should not be forced to renounce it, and based on a distinct identity of persons with diverse SOGIESC in Syria, because they are perceived as being different by the surrounding society (13).

(12) CJEU, *Minister voor Immigratie en Asiel v X and Y and Z v Minister voor Immigratie en Asiel*, joined cases C-199/12 to C-201/12 judgment of 7 November 2013, operative part (Court's ruling), <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=144215&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=104449>

(13) CJEU, *X, Y and Z*, paras. 45-49.



5. Subsidiary protection

This chapter addresses the EU-regulated status of subsidiary protection. Where the applicant has not been found to qualify as a refugee, they may be eligible for subsidiary protection in accordance with Article 15 QD/QR.



The CJEU ruled in 2023 on the **importance of the individual circumstances to be taken into account while determining if an applicant is eligible for subsidiary protection, before identifying the type of serious harm**, notably⁽¹⁴⁾:

'1. Article 15 of Directive 2011/95/EU (...) must be interpreted as meaning that in order to determine whether an applicant for international protection is eligible for subsidiary protection, **the competent national authority must examine all the relevant factors**, relating both to the individual position and personal circumstances of the applicant and to the general situation in the country of origin, **before identifying the type of serious harm** that those factors may potentially substantiate.'

Therefore, where refugee status is not granted, **established personal circumstances** (e.g. age, gender, professional and economic background, home area, potential vulnerabilities) **are still to be taken into account in the assessment of Article 15 QD/QR**.



For further information on the **specific individual circumstances** which may be relevant to consider in the assessment of a **real risk of serious harm under Article 15 QD/QR**, see relevant sections below.

5.1. Article 15(a) QD/QR: death penalty or execution

Last update: December 2025



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see 'EUAA, Article 15(a) QD/QR: death penalty or execution' in *Country Guidance: Explained, February 2025*.

⁽¹⁴⁾ CJEU, X and Y v Staatssecretaris van Veiligheid en Justitie, C-125/22, Fourth Chamber, judgment of 9 November 2023, operative part (Court's ruling), <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=279488&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=st&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=7856939>

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [COI Update, 4., 5.; Country Focus July 2025, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4.2., 2.5, 5.8.4., 5.8.5.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The Transitional Government announced the dissolution of the Counter-Terrorism Courts and has referred 87 of its judges for investigation. Under the Assad regime, these courts were responsible for imposing numerous death penalties.

The Transitional Government has granted amnesty to some high-level figures associated with the Assad regime, while simultaneously launching extensive campaigns to apprehend others, claiming these campaigns targeted individuals who committed crimes on behalf of the Assad regime. Nearly 300 individuals were detained in one week alone across Damascus, Latakia, Tartous, Homs, Hama, and Deir Ez-Zor, including former regime informants, pro-Iranian fighters, and lower-ranking military officers. Some detainees accused of having provided intelligence to the Assad regime were reportedly executed immediately after their arrest. In late January 2025, fighters affiliated to the Transitional Government reportedly carried out 35 summary executions, primarily targeting Assad-era officers. In July 2025, they carried out executions of Druze civilians.

[The Syrian National Army \(SNA\)](#) was reported to be responsible for significant human rights violations, including summary executions, in December 2024. Reportedly, 15 persons belonging to the SDF/YPG, or the Forces of the Internal Police of DAANES (Asayish) were executed. In March and April 2025 reports emerge of 'sectarian attacks, execution-style killings and other violations against civilians' by factions nominally affiliated with the Transitional Government security forces, including in Latakia city, in the town of Saqoubin, and in the vicinity of Masaytara. In May 2025, General Security Services (GSS) reportedly arrested and executed two alleged ISIL members accused of killing a MoD officer.

According to an Amnesty International report covering 2024, Syria retained the death penalty and continued to use it, although, at the time of writing, no information on the retention or use of the death penalty by the Transitional Government was available.

 While, at the time of writing, there is no information on the use of the death penalty by the Transitional Government, executions have been reported in the recent months. Therefore, some profiles of applicants from Syria may be at risk of execution such as [4.1. Persons associated with the former Government of Syria](#), [4.9.2. Kurds](#), and [4.9.4. Alawites](#). In some cases, this risk would be connected to a reason for persecution and therefore, refugee status would be applicable. In cases where there is no nexus to a Convention ground, the need for subsidiary protection under Article 15(a) QD/QR should be examined.

In some cases, the death penalty would have been imposed on the applicant for a serious crime committed, or other acts falling within the exclusion grounds (Article 17 QD/QR). Therefore, although the criteria of Article 15(a) QD/QR would be met, exclusion considerations should be examined (see [Exclusion](#)).



5.2. Article 15(b) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Last update: December 2025



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see 'EUAA, ['Article 15\(b\) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in the country of origin'](#) in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.

As noted in the chapter on [Refugee status](#), some profiles of applicants from Syria may be at risk of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In such cases, there would often be a nexus to a reason for persecution falling under the definition of a refugee, and those individuals would qualify for refugee status. However, with reference to cases where there is no nexus to a Convention ground, the need for subsidiary protection under Article 15(b) QD/QR should be examined.

5.2.1. Arbitrary arrests, illegal detention and prison conditions

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 5.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 1.2., 2.1.1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Special attention should be paid to the phenomena of arbitrary arrests and illegal detention, as well as to prison conditions. When assessing the conditions of detention, the following elements should, for example, be taken into consideration, cumulatively: number of detained persons in a limited space, adequacy of sanitation facilities, heating, lighting, sleeping arrangements, food, recreation or contact with the outside world.

It was reported that, while torture practices in prisons have 'largely ceased', poor detention conditions persist, with overcrowded and unsanitary makeshift facilities replacing looted or abandoned Assad-era prisons. Limited humanitarian access, absence of independent monitoring, and destroyed records further obstruct justice efforts, weaken detainee protections, and threaten long-term stability.

The Syria Justice and Accountability Centre (SJAC) noted sporadic reports of torture and abuse of detainees held for criminal or security-related reasons, including incidents in Adra prison. Cases of persons who died under torture were reported in Homs in February 2025, with the general Security Services (GSS) of [The Transitional Government](#) taking responsibility for some of the deaths and promising to open investigations.



In cases where a person faces conditions of arrest/or detention amounting to torture or inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment, a situation of serious harm under Article 15(b) QD/QR would occur.

In cases where there would be a nexus to a reason for persecution, those individuals would qualify for refugee status. If a nexus cannot be substantiated, Article 15(b) QD/QR would apply.

In some cases, the arrest, detention and imprisonment would have been imposed on the applicant for a serious crime committed, or other acts falling within the exclusion grounds (Article 17 QD/QR). Therefore, although the criteria of Article 15(b) QD/QR would be met, exclusion considerations should be examined (see [Exclusion](#)).

5.2.2. Healthcare and socio-economic conditions

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 6.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 3.2., 3.4., 3.7., 5.8.4., 5.8.5., 5.8.11.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The **healthcare system** in Syria is in dire condition. The World Health Organisation (WHO) indicated that 15.8 million people - more than 65 % of the total population – were in need of humanitarian health assistance. As of December 2024, 57 % of the hospitals and 37 % of primary healthcare facilities were fully functional, while the rest remain partially or completely out of service.

Accessing basic services is reportedly particularly challenging in and around Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Homs, and Dar'a, while in the northwest region, the operativity of health facilities has been affected by the freeze of US-funded activities. The escalation of hostilities in early March 2025 affected at least one hospital in both Tartous and Latakia. The hospital in the town of Mar'at Numman in Idlib had been destroyed in airstrikes and the one in the town of Daraya in Damascus was described as 'heavily damaged'.

Lack of specialised healthcare has been identified as a consistent challenge across governorates, including where basic services have been restored. The capacity to address chronic illnesses, injuries and disabilities, particularly among vulnerable groups remains thus limited.

Syria continued to face severe economic hardship. In February 2025, Syria was reportedly still struggling with a 'massive humanitarian crisis' affecting more than 70 % of its population. According to UN sources, the number of People in Need (PiN) – an indicator reflecting both infrastructure damage and limited access to essential services – continued to rise across all humanitarian sectors affecting 16.7 million of people. According to UNDP in February 2025, 90 % of population could no longer afford essential goods and 75 % depended on some form of humanitarian assistance, up from 5 % in the first year of the conflict. The same report indicated that 66 % of the population (equal to 15.8 million) lived in condition of extreme poverty and 60 % of the population (equal to 13.8 million) faced extreme food insecurity.

Prior to the fall of Assad's regime there were reports that actors of the conflict were intentionally targeting healthcare facilities and among other things also restricting the supply of basic necessities in some areas. There is no information indicating this is still the case in Syria.



It is important to note that serious harm must take the form of conduct of an actor (Article 6 QD/QR). In itself, the general unavailability of healthcare, education or other socio-economic elements (e.g. situation of IDPs, difficulties in finding livelihood opportunities, housing) is not considered serious harm meeting the



requirements of inhuman or degrading treatment under Article 15(b) QD/QR in relation to Article 6 QD/QR, unless there is intentional conduct of an actor, such as the intentional deprivation from the applicant of appropriate healthcare.

Personal circumstances such as the home area of the applicant as well as his/her gender, being in an IDP situation, belonging to a minority are to be taken into account in the assessment of real risk of inhuman or degrading treatment based on the socio-economic conditions. Where there is the intentional conduct of an actor and no nexus to a reason for persecution is substantiated, the treatment may qualify under Article 15(b) QD/QR, depending on the severity of its consequences in the individual case.

5.2.3. Criminal violence

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 1.2., 3.9.1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Since December 2024, urban areas have seen rising criminality. Reportedly, personal security concerns, relevant to theft, harassment, kidnapping and revenge killing, persist across all governorates.

Criminality has been particularly reported in Damascus, Homs, Latakia, Sweida, and Tartous. Lawlessness is reported in Sweida governorate. Petty crime is reported in Tartous governorate. Criminal networks in Latakia have been targeted by security operations aiming at dismantling them. Kidnapping and criminality are reported in the Damascus suburbs and travel routes between Damascus to Dar'a, Sweida, Homs are not safe, especially at night. In Homs city, in March-April 2025 authorities have set up checkpoints across the city to clamp down on criminality. Despite the presence of security forces of [The Transitional Government](#), including General Security Services (GSS) checkpoints at the city's entrances, the attacks on civilians, particularly Alawites, continued according to reporting from May 2025. Some civilians have accused the authorities of condoning or even facilitating the murders.



Personal circumstances such as the home area of the applicant as well as his/her gender, being in an IDP situation, and/or belonging to a minority are to be taken into account for the assessment of real risk of criminal violence. A real risk of a violent crime, such as abduction, murder, robbery and violence related to trafficking in human beings and forced child labour would meet the requirements under Article 15(b) QD/QR. Where there is no nexus to a reason for persecution under the refugee definition, but there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the individual to face violent crime, this risk would qualify under Article 15(b) QD/QR.

5.3. Article 15(c) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict

Last update: December 2025



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see 'EUAA, Article 15(c) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.

In armed conflicts, the targeting of civilians may have nexus to one of the reasons for persecution according to the refugee definition. Therefore, refugee status may be granted. Such targeted violence, furthermore, would not be considered 'indiscriminate'.

Reference period: The following assessment is primarily based on the 'EUAA, *COI Report – Syria: Country Focus*, March 2025', with the reference period November 2024 – February 2025, the 'EUAA, *COI Report - Syria: Country Focus*, July 2025', with the reference period March to May 2025, and the 'EUAA, *Country of Origin Information Query, Syria: Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments*, October 2025', with the reference period from June to September 2025. Background information regarding the conflict in Syria is also taken into account.



This guidance should be considered valid as long as current events and developments fall within the trends and patterns of violence observed within the reference period of the mentioned COI report. New events and developments that cause substantial changes, new trends or geographical shifts in the violence, may lead to a different assessment. The security situation in a given territory should always be assessed in light of the most up-to-date COI available.

All of the elements under Article 15(c) QD/QR (Figure 2) have to be fulfilled in order to grant subsidiary protection in accordance with this provision.



Figure 2. Article 15(c) QD/QR: elements of the assessment.

5.3.1. Armed conflict (international or internal)

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.1., 5.2.](#); [Country Focus March 2025, 3., 4.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Syria is currently affected by multiple overlapping conflicts, in the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR:

- Syria continued to be involved in an international armed conflict with the US-led coalition against ISIL, due to the coalition's military intervention in the country without the consent of the Transitional Government.
- Syria continued to be involved in an international armed conflict with Israel as well, which has intensified air strikes on numerous targets in the country and which, beyond the parts of Syrian territory which it already had occupied, seized control of the demilitarised buffer zone between the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights and Syria and conducted ground incursions on southern Syrian territory beyond the buffer zone.
- Syria continued to be involved in several internal armed conflicts with various armed groups which contest the authority of the Transitional Government, most notably pro-Assad remnants and ISIL.
- At least up until March 2025, Türkiye has been engaged in an internal armed conflict in Syria with Kurdish forces and with ISIL and controls parts of northern Syria with the help of Turkish-backed armed groups.
- Internal armed conflicts on Syrian territory further included ongoing fighting among various non-State armed groups, notably between pro-Assad remnants and armed

groups affiliated to the Transitional Government, as well as between the SNA and SDF/Kurdish forces.



These conflicts affect different areas in Syria at different degrees. See more under [5.3.3. Indiscriminate violence](#).

5.3.2. Qualification of a person as a ‘civilian’

Last update: December 2025



Being a civilian is a prerequisite in order to be able to benefit from protection under Article 15(c) QD/QR. The purpose of the provision is to protect only those who are not taking part in the conflict. **This includes the potential application of Article 15(c) QD/QR to former combatants who have genuinely and permanently renounced armed activity.**

Applications by Syrian nationals falling under the following profiles should be examined carefully. Based on an individual assessment, such applicants may be found not to qualify as civilians under Article 15(c) QD/QR. For example, members of:

- **Transitional Government Security forces** of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and of the Ministry of Interior (MoI), included the police and General Security Services (GSS).
- **Military and security forces of the Assad regime that would have not genuinely and permanently renounced armed activity**, including all the components of the Assad Syrian Armed Forces (SAF), the police force, the intelligence services, etc.
- **Pro-Assad militias and armed gangs that would have not genuinely and permanently renounced armed activity**: Remnants of pro-Assad groups are still operating but there is unclarity regarding their structure, presence and operational capacity.
- **Armed groups** claiming to restore justice against (perceived) Assad regime collaborators.
- **SNA**: A collection of Turkish-backed armed opposition groups, being hostile towards the SDF.
- **SDF and Asayish**: Kurdish-led multi-ethnic force that support the US-led coalition in the war against ISIL.
- **ISIL and its predecessor groups**.



See also [3. Actors of persecution or serious harm](#).

Actively taking part in hostilities is not limited to openly carrying arms but could also include substantial logistical and/or administrative support to combatants.



Exclusion considerations may also apply (see [8. Exclusion](#)).



5.3.3. Indiscriminate violence

Last update: December 2025



The common analysis regarding the degree of indiscriminate violence combines quantitative and qualitative elements in a **holistic and inclusive assessment which cannot exclusively depend on a minimum number of civilian casualties and deaths in the country of origin**.

For more information on the methodology and indicators used to assess the level of indiscriminate violence in country guidance documents, see 'EUAA, 'Indiscriminate violence' in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.



It should, furthermore, be noted that the COI used as a basis for this assessment cannot be considered a complete representation of the extent of indiscriminate violence and its impact on the life of civilians. Concerns with regard to underreporting should be underlined.

(a) Security situation in Syria: recent events

Situation in Syria

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: COI Update, 4.; Country Focus July 2025, 1.3., 2.4.2., 2.4.4., 5.2.2., 5.3.; Actors 2019, 1.1., 3.1.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

This section should be read in conjunction with 1. Recent developments in Syria.

The Syrian armed conflict began in 2011 as a civil uprising against President Bashar al-Assad, inspired by the wave of Arab Spring protests across the Middle East. By 2012, the situation escalated into a full-scale civil war, with armed opposition groups confronting the Transitional Government forces and seizing key territories. The fall of the Assad regime in late 2024 and the establishment of the Transitional Government in 2025 marked a significant turning point for Syria. However, the security situation remains highly fragile.

Although the state apparatus of the Assad regime has been dismantled, numerous actors from the civil war remain active. The security forces of the Transitional Government are still in the process of formation and have reportedly been overstretched outside of the main urban centres, limiting their effectiveness. Some armed groups nominally integrated into the structure of the new Syrian army continue to function semi-independently.

Incidents of retaliatory and sectarian violence have been reported. Between 6 and 10 March 2025, clashes between Transitional Government forces and their affiliates on one side, and pro-Assad remnants on the other, reportedly led to the deaths of hundreds of civilians, primarily in the coastal governorates of Latakia, Tartous, and to a lesser extent, Hama and Homs. In mid-August 2025, Assadist remnants have reportedly intensified their attacks against Transitional Government forces in coastal areas. In northeast Syria, longstanding tensions

between [The Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#) and [The Syrian National Army \(SNA\)](#) persist, rooted in Kurdish demands for autonomy. Disagreement between the SDF and the Transitional Government remains, particularly regarding the integration of the military and civilian institutions of the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES) into the state structure, despite an agreement reached in March 2025. In August 2025, sporadic clashes between local tribal fighters and SDF were reported in Deir Ez-Zor governorate. Since early September 2025, clashes between the SDF and transitional government's forces have intensified.

In southern Syria, security incidents involving the Druze community have been reported, culminating in a surge of anti-Druze violence at the end of April 2025. In July 2025, violence sharply escalated in Sweida governorate, following intense clashes between Druze militias and Bedouin tribal fighters. More than one thousand casualties were reported among the Transitional Government security forces, Druze fighters, and civilians. In this context, Israel continued to carry out incursions and attacks in southern Syria and airstrikes on multiple targets across the country including in Damascus city.

Presence, methods and tactics of actors

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [COI Update, 1.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 1.3.2.](#), [5.1.1.](#), [5.1.2.](#), [5.1.3.](#), [5.3.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

[The Transitional Government](#) is in the early stages of establishing effective security across the country. It has consolidated control over key urban centres such as Damascus, Aleppo, and Hama, and expanded its presence in central, northern, and southern regions. The Transitional Government had control over villages in Sweida's eastern and northern countryside, and conducted raids against pro-Assad remnants and individuals suspected to have committed crimes under the Assad regime across several governorates. Governmental security forces still face significant challenges in addressing various threats, including sectarian violence, kidnappings, and looting.

[The Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#) maintain control in northern and northeastern Syria, including parts of Aleppo (east of the Euphrates), Raqqa, Deir Ez-Zor, and Hasaka. The SDF has conducted ambushes, artillery strikes and drone strikes, mainly targeting SNA forces, and ISIL.

[The Syrian National Army \(SNA\)](#) operates primarily in northern border regions, including the governorates of Aleppo, Raqqa, and Hasaka. SNA factions, nominally integrated into army divisions, have also been deployed in other areas, particularly Aleppo and Hama. The SNA carried out artillery attacks against the SDF, conducted drone attacks against SDF, employed the indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas, forcibly evicted civilians and prevented them from returning to their homes, extorted civilians at checkpoints, etc.

The activity of [The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant \(ISIL\)](#) has significantly declined since the fall of the Assad regime. While ISIL continues to target the SDF, there are also reports of attacks against Transitional Government forces and civilians, primarily in the northeast. ISIL used improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and rocket propelled grenades (RPGs).

As of mid-September 2025, most of Sweida governorate including its capital were under the control of Druze local factions.

New groups and networks have emerged, composed of former senior military and intelligence officials from the Assad government. These factions, particularly those operating in Syria's coastal areas, are considered among the most organised insurgent groups and aim to resist the new authorities and have been involved in armed clashes with the Transitional Government forces and the SDF.

For further information about the different armed actors present in Syria, see [3. Actors of persecution or serious harm](#). For further information on the tactics and weapons used by the different armed actors in Syria, see 'EUAA, ['5.1. Armed actors'](#) in *COI Report - Syria: Country Focus, July 2025*' and 'EUAA, ['4.5.2. Tactics and weapons used'](#) in *COI Report - Syria: Country Focus, March 2025*'.

Security incidents and geographical scope

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [COI Update, 4.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.4.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.



Data concerning this indicator are primarily based on ACLED reporting from 1 November 2024 to 31 May 2025 and from 1 June to 26 September 2025.

Please note that different sources use different methodologies for the recording of incidents, therefore some discrepancies on data are to be expected. For more information on the methodologies of data collection see 'EUAA, [COI Report - Syria: Country Focus, July 2025, Sources](#)'.

Between November 2024 and May 2025, the highest number of security incidents documented by ACLED occurred in the lead-up to and immediate aftermath of the regime change, particularly in November, December 2024, and January 2025.

Following the fall of the Assad regime, ACLED recorded 4 271 security incidents in Syria between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025. Of these, 1 518 were classified as acts of violence against civilians, 1 907 as explosions or remote violence, and 846 as battles.

Most incidents occurred in January 2025, largely attributed to clashes between the SDF and Türkiye-backed armed groups, as well as incidents involving landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs). March 2025 also saw a spike in violence, primarily due to confrontations between Transitional Government forces and affiliated armed groups on one side, and anti-government militias on the other, alongside acts of violence against civilians reportedly committed by Transitional Government forces and unidentified armed actors. Incident levels declined significantly in April and May 2025.

Between 1 June and 26 September 2025, ACLED documented 1 665 security incidents in Syria: 491 of these were coded as battles, 416 as explosions/remote violence, and 758 as violence against civilians. The highest number of security incidents occurred in the months of July and August 2025. Three governorates saw the highest number of security incidents: Deir

Ez-Zor (332), Sweida (206) and Aleppo (187). Most battles in Deir Ez-Zor involved clashes between SDF and ISIL, SDF and unidentified armed groups, and SDF and tribal militias. In Sweida governorate, most security incidents were recorded by ACLED in July 2025 and attributed to clashes between Transitional Government forces and Druze militias, as well as between Bedouin and Druze militias. In Aleppo governorate, most incidents coded 'involved clashes between Transitional Government forces and SDF, most of them recorded in September 2025 around frontlines. The lowest number of security incidents were recorded in the governorates of Tartous (24), Latakia (41) and Damascus (41).

Figure 3. ACLED security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ on governorate level between 9 December 2024 and 31 May 2025.

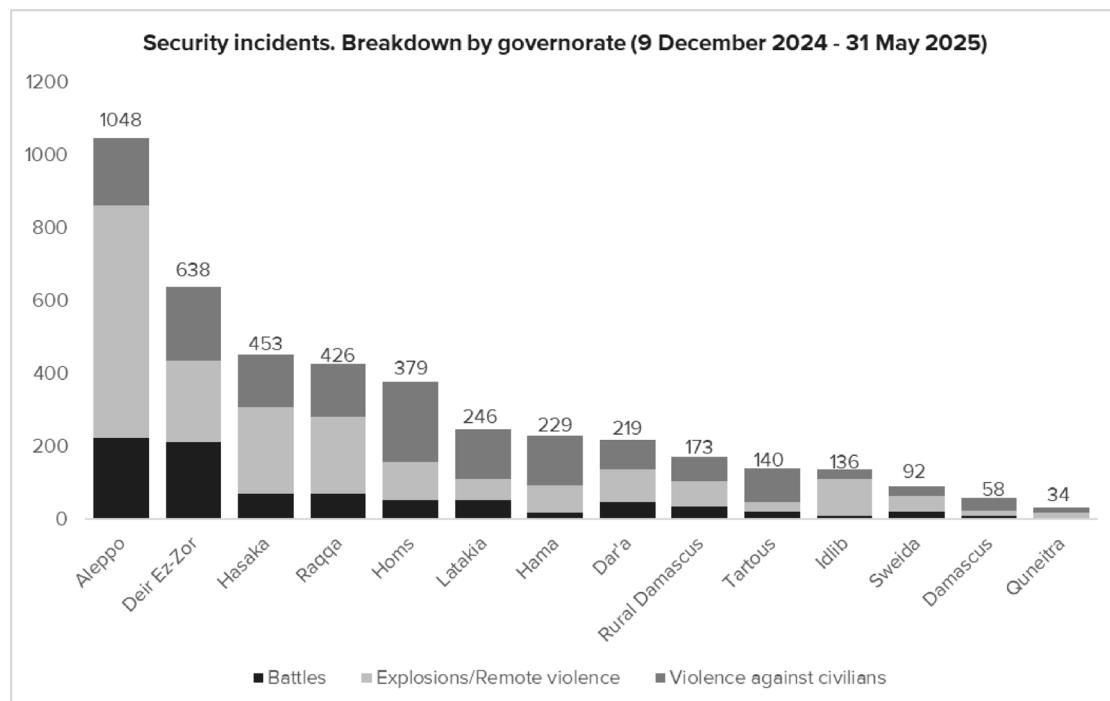
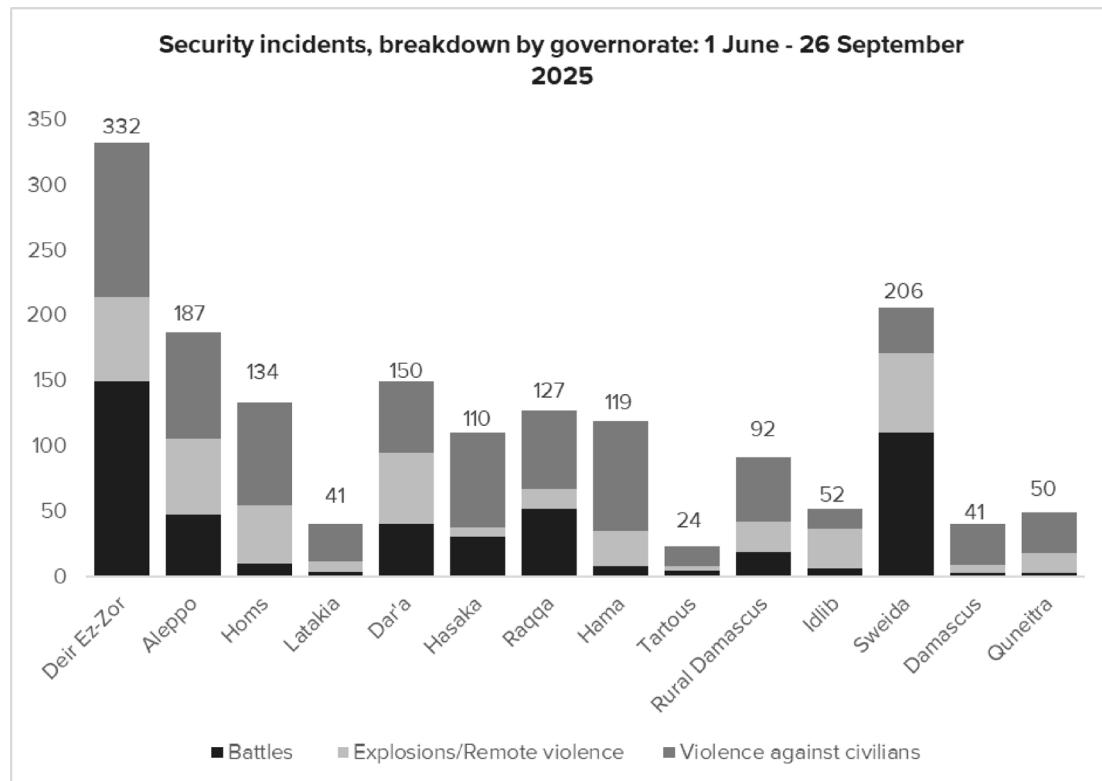


Figure 4. ACLED - security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ on governorate level recorded between 1 June and 26 September 2025.



Civilian fatalities

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [COI Update, 4.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.5.](#); [Country Focus March 2025, 4.5.3.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.



Data concerning this indicator are primarily based on SNHR reporting from 1 December 2024 to 31 May 2025, and from 1 June to 30 September 2025.

Please note that different sources use different methodologies for the recording of incidents, therefore some discrepancies on data are to be expected. For more information on the methodologies of data collection see '[EUAA, COI Report - Syria: Country Focus, July 2025, Sources](#)'.

Between December 2024 and May 2025, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) documented 2 854 civilian fatalities. Except for December 2024 and March 2025, the majority of these fatalities were attributed to attacks by unidentified actors, as well as incidents involving landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs). The spike in fatalities during March was primarily linked to the outbreak of violence in Syria's coastal regions.

Between June and September 2025, SNHR documented 1 402 fatalities across Syria. Apart from the fatalities recorded in Sweida in July 2025, most civilian fatalities were attributed to gunfire and bombings by unidentified perpetrators, followed by landmines explosions, and to a significant lesser extent by Transitional Government forces and the SDF.

Further calculations on fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants in each region for the period, based on SNHR data, are provided in the hereunder section [Assessment of indiscriminate violence per governorate](#).

Figure 5. Breakdown by governorate of number of civilian fatalities recorded by SNHR between December 2024 and May 2025.

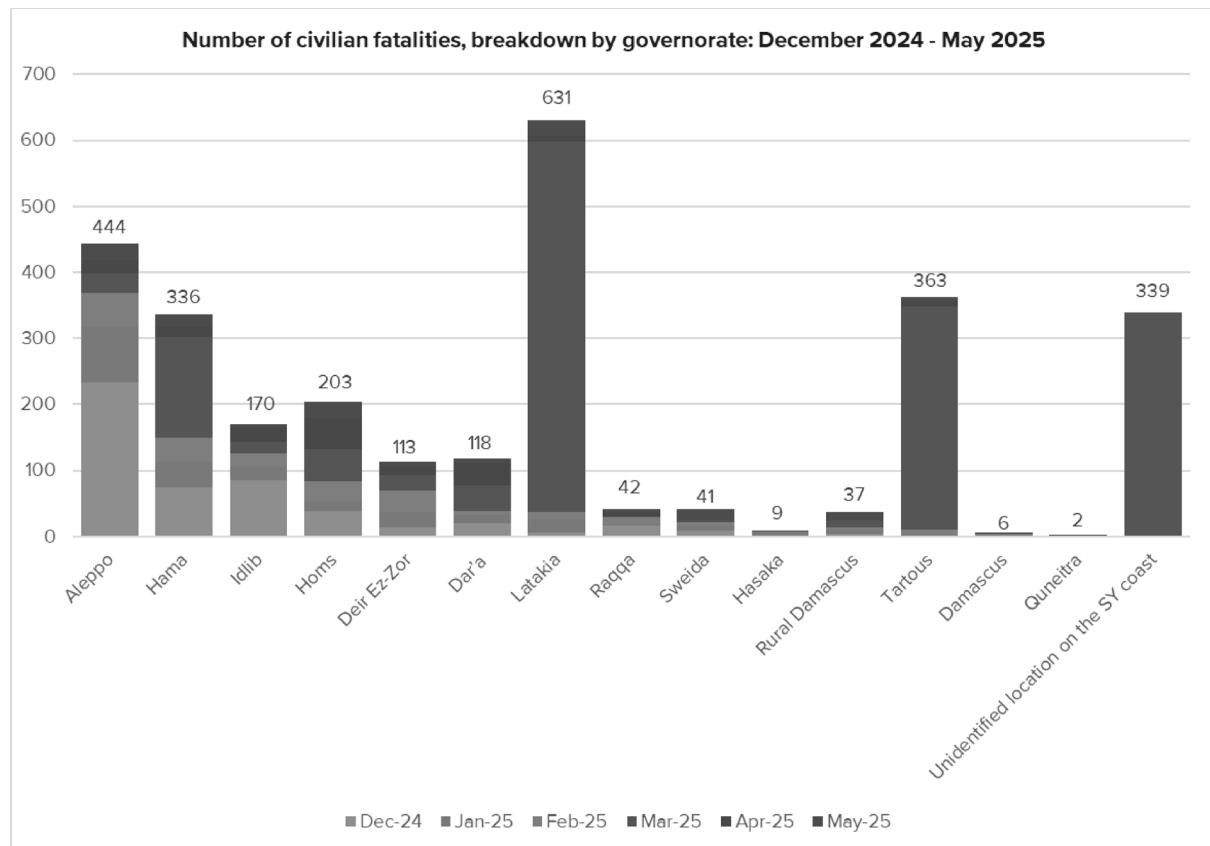
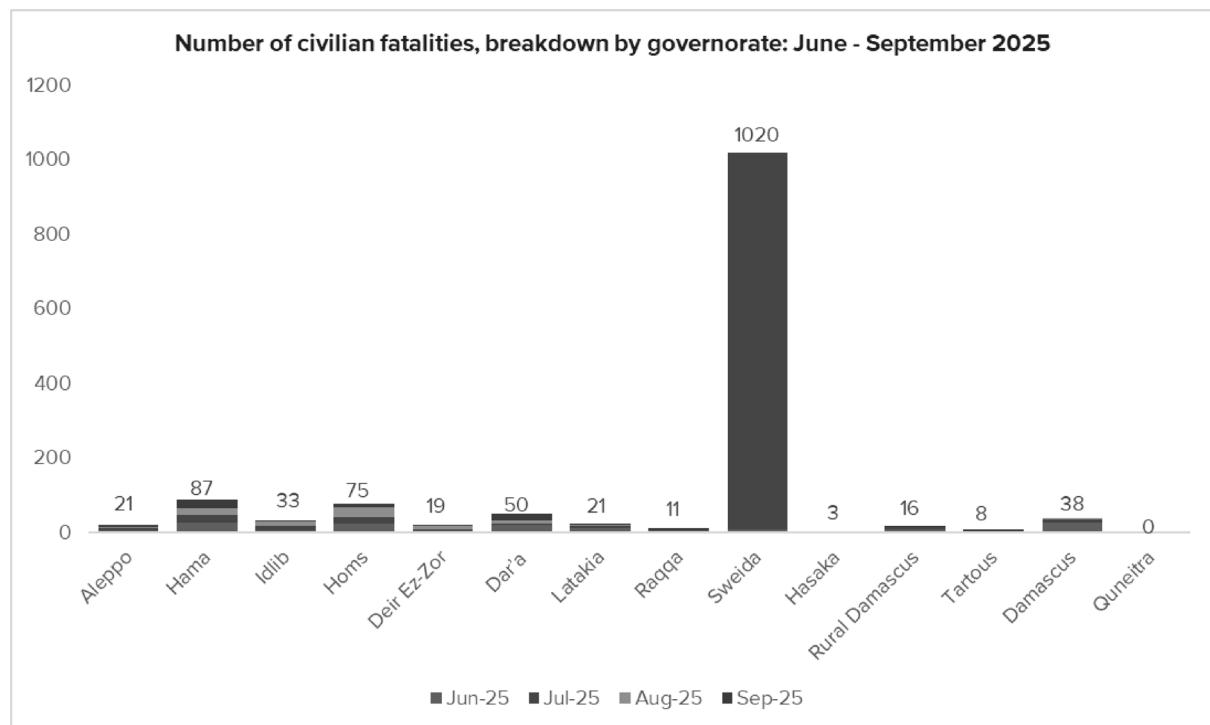


Figure 6. Breakdown by governorate of number of civilian fatalities recorded by SNHR between June and September 2025.



Conflict-related displacement

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [COI Update, 4.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.6.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.



Data concerning this indicator are primarily based on UNHCR reporting from 27 November 2024 to 18 September 2025.

For more information on the methodologies of data collection see 'EUAA, [COI Report - Syria: Country Focus](#), July 2025, Sources.'

As of mid-September 2025, there were around 7 million IDPs in Syria, residing in host communities (around 4.8 million) and IDP sites. Most IDPs were located in Idlib (30.06 %), Aleppo (22.5 %), Rural Damascus (13.15 %) and Damascus (8.3 %) governorates. The offensive which started in November 2024 and led to the fall of the Assad regime and the July violence in Sweida have triggered further displacement with more than 892 000 new IDPs reported as of 18 September 2025. In terms of IDP returns, UNHCR reported that 1 855 698 individuals returned to their homes since 27 November 2024 (972 085 since 8 December 2024). Most IDP returns were recorded in Aleppo (39.9 %), Hama (16.2 %), Idlib (14.1 %) and Homs (14 %) governorates.

Further impact on civilians

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.7.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Syria's services and infrastructure have been severely impacted by years of conflict, with estimates indicating that approximately 50 % of the country's infrastructure has been destroyed or rendered non-functional. This includes housing, agricultural land, hospitals, sewage systems, and roads, leaving many areas uninhabitable. Access to basic services remains particularly difficult in and around Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Homs, and Dar'a.

Unexploded ordnance (UXOs), explosive remnants of war (ERWs), landmines, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are reportedly widespread, affecting residential areas, farmland, infrastructure, and key access routes—especially in the governorates of Idlib, Deir Ez-Zor, Aleppo, Raqqa, Hasaka, and Rural Damascus. Deir Ez-Zor is among the most heavily contaminated regions, accounting for roughly a quarter of all such incidents.

Between 8 December 2024 and 1 June 2025, 532 incidents involving explosive ordnance resulted in 1 052 casualties (428 killed and 624 injured) out of which 360 were children. The areas with the highest contamination of explosive ordnances were Aleppo, Raqqa, Deir Ez-Zor, Idlib and Hama. Deir Ez-Zor accounted for at least one quarter of all incidents recorded. Casualties have steadily increased in early 2025, especially in regions with intense conflict and limited access for humanitarian partners. Notable areas affected include Manbij, Ain al Arab/Kobani, Ras al-Ayn, Tall Abyad, and the Deir Ez-Zor governorate.



(b) Assessment of indiscriminate violence per governorate

Last update: December 2025

The map below summarises and illustrates the assessment of indiscriminate violence as well per governorate under Article 15(c) QD/QR:

Figure 7: Assessment of the level of indiscriminate violence by governorate based on the reference period 9 December 2024 – 30 September 2025, © EUAA Country Guidance, December 2025.



Indiscriminate violence is taking place, however **not at a high level**, and a higher level of individual elements is required to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

There is **no real risk** for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

For more information and analysis on the level of indiscriminate violence per governorate, see sections below.

Mere presence

Areas where the degree of **indiscriminate violence reaches such an exceptionally high level** that substantial grounds are shown for believing that a civilian, returned to the relevant area, would, **solely on account of their presence there**, face a real risk of being subject to the serious threat referred to in Article 15(c) QD/QR. Accordingly, additional individual elements are not required in order to substantiate subsidiary protection needs under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

No such areas have been identified in Syria.

High level of indiscriminate violence

Areas where 'mere presence' would not be sufficient to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR, but where, **indiscriminate violence reaches a high level**. Accordingly, **a lower level of individual elements** (see Serious and individual threat) is required to show substantial grounds for believing that a civilian, returned to the area, would face a real risk of serious harm in the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

No such areas have been identified in Syria.

Indiscriminate violence not at a high level

Areas where **indiscriminate violence is taking place**, however **not at a high level**. Accordingly, **a higher level of individual elements** (see Serious and individual threat) is required in order to show substantial grounds for believing that a civilian, returned to the area, would face a real risk of serious harm in the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

The areas assessed as belonging to this category as well as the main elements leading to this assessment are highlighted below.

Aleppo

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: COI Update, 4., 7.; Country Focus July 2025, 5.8.1.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Aleppo governorate remains fragmented in terms of territorial control. As of late May 2025, the southwestern region bordering Idlib was under the control of the Transitional Government, while a small pocket west of Aleppo city remained under pro-Assad remnants. The Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA), now formally under the Ministry of Defence (MoD), controls parts of the northwestern and northern areas bordering Türkiye. The SDF holds the northeastern and eastern parts, although areas near the Khafsa Water Treatment Plant and west of Jirah Air Base are contested between the SDF and SNA, with both sides conducting operations without full control.

Following the 10 March 2025 agreement between the SDF and the Transitional Government, Kurdish forces reportedly reduced their presence in Aleppo city, and pro-Turkish groups scaled back in Afrin district. Non-state armed groups such as ISIL and Saraya Ansar Al-Sunnah, a Sunni sectarian group targeting Alawites, were also active during the reference period.



Clashes between the SDF and SNA declined significantly after the March agreement, although Turkish aerial attacks continued until mid-March. Tensions and clashes between the SDF and the transitional government were reported, mostly in the countryside of Aleppo governorate. Sporadic violence persisted, including attacks by Saraya Ansar Al-Sunnah, killings by unidentified armed men, kidnappings, and raids.

ACLED recorded 1 048 security incidents (average of 42.4 security incidents per week) in Aleppo governorate in the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2025. Most of these incidents were cases of explosions/remote violence, that peaked in January and February 2025, following a downwards trend the following months. The number of battles that had been reported consistently in the previous months, followed a similar trend. The number of incidents of violence against civilians slightly declined in February and March, rising again in April and May. In the period 1 June – 26 September 2025, 187 security incidents were recorded in Aleppo representing an average of 10.8 security incident per week. The districts of Ain Al-Arab, Jebel Saman, and Manbij saw the highest incident rates. From 9 December 2024 to 26 September 2025, ACLED recorded 1235 security incidents, representing an average of 29.4 incidents per week.

Between December 2024 and 31 May 2025, SNHR documented 444 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented approximately 9 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. In June – September 2025, the SNHR recorded 21 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented less than 1 civilian fatality per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. For the period December 2024 to September 2025, SNHR recorded 465 fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 9 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

UNHCR estimated 1 545 049 IDPs and 467 198 returnees from internal displacement as of June 2025. Additionally, 197 265 individuals returned from abroad since early 2024, with most settling in Jebel Saman, Al-Bab, and Manbij. As of 18 September 2025, UNHCR reported 1 596 832 IDPs and 740 365 recent returns. Additionally, 159 450 individuals returned from abroad since 8 December 2024. This makes Aleppo the governorate with the most IDPs returnees in Syria.

Over 400 000 people in Manbij and Ain Al-Arab were affected by water and electricity shortages due to the Tishreen Dam failure. Unexploded ordnance (UXOs), explosive remnants of war (ERWs), mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are reportedly widespread and affect residential areas, farmland, infrastructure, and key access routes, particularly in Aleppo governorate.

Following the agreement between the Transitional Government and the SDF, the security situation in the governorate Aleppo has improved with security incidents steadily declining. While the total number of security incidents is the highest of all governorates, the average of civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants is comparatively low due to the large population of the governorate and the number of fatalities is sharply declining since March 2025. Also taking into consideration the high number of IDP returns and returns from abroad, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in the governorate of Aleppo, however not at a high level.**

Dar'a

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4., 7.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.8.12.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Dar'a governorate is largely under governmental control, with limited areas in the east held by unidentified opposition groups and a small southwestern stretch under the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), adjacent to the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights. Despite the formal transfer of security responsibilities from the Eighth Brigade to governmental forces, effective control remains fragmented due to widespread armament and the continued presence of armed groups.

The reporting period saw revenge assassinations, sectarian killings, and attacks on General Security Service (GSS) personnel and civilians by unidentified gunmen. Tribal and familial disputes further contributed to instability. Israeli airstrikes and ground incursions were reported, causing casualties, including in Dar'a city. The roads linking Dar'a and Sweida governorates have seen a sharp increase in armed attacks, kidnappings, and robberies.

ACLED recorded 219 security incidents (average of 8.9 security incidents per week) in Dar'a governorate in the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2025. Most of these incidents were cases of explosions/remote violence, that were almost steadily recorded throughout this period, with a decline in May. There was a reported increase in incidents of violence against civilians following March in comparison with the previous three months. Incidents of battles were reported throughout this period, and peaked in April, decreasing slightly in May. In the period 1 June – 26 September 2025, 150 security incidents were recorded in Dar'a representing an average of 8.7 security incident per week. From 9 December 2024 to 26 September 2025, ACLED 369 security incidents, representing an average of 8.8 incidents per week.

Between December 2024 and 31 May 2025, SNHR documented 118 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented approximately 9 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. In June – September 2025, the SNHR recorded 50 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 4 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. For the period December 2024 to September 2025, SNHR recorded 168 fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 13 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

UNHCR estimated 66 480 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 24 122 returnees from internal displacement as of June 2025. Additionally, 71 498 individuals returned from abroad since early 2024, with most settling in Dar'a (42 422) and Izra' (22 915) districts. Since December 2024, 43 822 individuals returned from abroad to the governorate. As of 18 September 2025, UNHCR reported 52 621 IDPs and 39 874 recent returns. Additionally, 93 339 individuals returned from abroad since 8 December 2024.

Civilians face ongoing risks from unexploded remnants of war, particularly in unsecured military sites and rural/agricultural areas. These hazards continue to cause casualties and restrict access to essential services and livelihoods.

Given that the security situation in the governorate Dar'a has improved with security incidents steadily declining after a peak in March and April 2025, and the average of civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants declining and being comparatively low, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in the governorate of Dar'a, however not at a high level.**

Deir Ez-Zor

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4.](#), [7.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.8.9.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The northern and northeastern regions of Deir Ez-Zor are under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). The Euphrates River corridor, stretching from Raqqa's western border to Iraq's southeastern border, is largely held by the transitional government, though pro-Assad elements maintain a presence in pockets such as Al-Mayadin and Abu Kamal. Areas like Bushayrah and the vicinity of the Tanak/Omar oil fields remain contested between the SDF and transitional authorities. A central-western strip from Deir Ez-Zor city to Homs is also under transitional government control, while southern and western desert zones are classified as 'Lost Regime Territory'. In August 2025, as political tensions escalated between the transitional government and the SDF, several Arab tribal leaders announced mobilisation efforts and publicly demanded armed action against the SDF. Nevertheless, these tribes remained fragmented, with certain tribal factions maintaining their cooperation with the SDF. From early September 2025 onward, confrontations between the SDF and Transitional Government forces have intensified.

The US-led International Coalition remains active but has scaled down operations since April 2025. The SDF reinforced its positions in May following partial US troop withdrawals and base closures, including Green Village and Euphrates. Intelligence on Iranian-linked armed groups near the Iraqi border reportedly delayed a full US exit.

ISIL cells continue to operate in the governorate. The SDF has conducted raids targeting transitional government sympathisers, defectors, and others. The General Security Service (GSS) has arrested remnants of the Assad regime and individuals linked to Iranian-backed groups. ISIL attacks persist against civilians, SDF, and transitional forces, prompting curfews and security operations. Unidentified armed groups have also targeted civilians and security personnel.

ACLED recorded 638 security incidents (average of 25.8 security incidents per week) in Deir-Ez-Zor governorate in the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2025. The incidents of violence against civilians were almost consistently recorded throughout this period, with a decline in December and a peak in January 2025. Battles were also almost consistently reported throughout this period. Incidents of explosions/remote violence were also steady throughout these months, with only some decline during May 2025. In the period 1 June – 26 September 2025, 332 security incidents were recorded in Deir-Ez-Zor representing an average of 19.2 security incidents per week. According to ACLED data, most battles involved clashes between SDF and ISIL, SDF and unidentified armed groups, and SDF and tribal militias. From 9 December 2024 to 26 September 2025, ACLED recorded 970 security incidents, representing an average of 23.1 incidents per week.

Between December 2024 and 31 May 2025, SNHR documented 113 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented

approximately 8 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. In June – September 2025, the SNHR recorded 19 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 1 civilian fatality per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. For the period December 2024 – September 2025, SNHR recorded 132 fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 9 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

Security incidents occurred across all districts, with Deir Ez-Zor being the most affected district. As of June 2025, UNHCR reported 192 946 IDPs and 46 557 recent returnees. Explosive ordnance contamination remains a major concern. Additionally, 40 105 individuals returned from abroad since early 2024, mostly to Deir Ez-Zor and Al-Mayadin. The governorate faces widespread threats from UXOs, ERWs, mines, and IEDs impacting civilian infrastructure and mobility. As of 18 September 2025, UNHCR reported 119 399 IDPs and 82 245 recent returns. Additionally, 21 320 individuals returned from abroad since 8 December 2024.

Given these indicators, including the intensity and frequency of security incidents, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in the governorate of Deir Ez-Zor, however not at a high level**. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the presence of multiple armed actors, tensions between the SDF and the Transitional Government, sectarian tensions, and ongoing violence—including targeted attacks and war remnants—contribute to a highly volatile security environment in Deir Ez-Zor governorate.

Hama

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4., 7.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.8.3.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Hama governorate is largely under the control of the transitional government, though effective governance remains challenged by the presence of non-state armed groups. These include Saraya Ansar al-Sunnah, targeting former Assad affiliates, and pro-Assad factions such as the Coastal Shield Forces, involved in the March 2025 attacks. A small area bordering eastern Homs is designated as ‘Lost Regime Territory’. The Syrian Army’s 62nd Division, led by Abu Amsha, was also active in the governorate as of May 2025. Israeli airstrikes targeted military infrastructure, including the 47th Brigade headquarters and Hama’s military airport, causing civilian and military casualties.

In early March, pro-Assad groups launched attacks against transitional forces, prompting retaliatory operations marked by sectarian violence. These included extrajudicial killings, mass arrests of adult males, and the burning of homes, particularly in Alawite communities. Despite the General Security Forces securing Hama city, rural areas remained unstable. Sporadic violent incidents such as killings, kidnappings and abductions, mainly targeting Alawites, continued and contributed to a sense of persecution and eroded public trust.

ACLED recorded 229 security incidents (average of 9.3 security incidents per week) in Hama governorate in the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2025. Most of these incidents were cases of violence against civilians, that peaked in January and March; they persisted however throughout the whole period. Explosions/remote violence were also reported consistently, with only a slight decrease in March and May. Incidents of battles were also recorded almost steadily, with a slight peak in February and a decline in May. In the period 1

June – 26 September 2025, 119 security incidents were recorded in Hama representing an average of 6.9 security incidents per week. From 9 December 2024 – 26 September 2025, ACLED recorded 348 security incidents, representing an average of 8.3 incidents per week.

Between December 2024 and 31 May 2025, SNHR documented 336 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented approximately 20 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. In June – September 2025, the SNHR recorded 87 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 5 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. For the period December 2024 to September 2025, SNHR recorded 423 fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 25 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

Security incidents were recorded across all five districts, with Hama district most affected. UNHCR estimated 212 243 IDPs and 181 567 returnees from internal displacement as of June 2025. Additionally, 61 215 ⁽¹⁵⁾ individuals returned from abroad since early 2024, with most settling in Hama and As-Salamiyeh districts. As of 18 September 2025, UNHCR reported 194 395 IDPs and 300 481 recent returns. Additionally, 84 566 individuals returned from abroad since 8 December 2024.

Land seizures in northeastern rural Hama displaced around 2 000 families, mostly Alawite. War remnants continue to cause civilian casualties, particularly in farming areas. The March violence also led to infrastructure damage and destruction of agricultural assets, affecting livelihoods of returning populations.

Given that most civilian fatalities were recorded during the March 2025 events, with the number of civilian fatalities steadily declining afterwards, and the number of security incidents sharply declining after reaching a peak in December 2024, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in the governorate of Hama, however not at a high level.**

Hasaka

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4., 7.; Country Focus July 2025, 5.8.7.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Hasaka governorate is predominantly under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), with the exception of a northwestern area bordering Türkiye, where the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) and affiliated factions under the transitional administration's Ministry of Defence maintain control. Turkish military posts are also present in this zone. ISIL cells remain active, particularly within SDF-held detention facilities such as Al-Hol. Localised non-state armed groups reportedly aim to undermine SDF authority.

The US military maintains bases in the governorate, though some infrastructure has been withdrawn toward Iraq. A small Russian contingent remains stationed in Qamishli.

⁽¹⁵⁾ A typo has been identified in 'EUAA, '5.8.3. Hama governorate' in COI Report - Syria: Country Focus, July 2025'. '61 215 returnees who had returned from abroad' should be read instead of '616 215 returnees who had returned from abroad', <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/116355>.

Security dynamics include SDF-led arrest campaigns, some targeting civilians for unclear reasons or alleged support for the transitional government. Despite the March 2025 ceasefire, Türkiye and the SNA resumed attacks on SDF positions. In August 2025, as political tensions escalated between the transitional government and the SDF, several Arab tribal leaders announced mobilisation efforts and publicly demanded armed action against the SDF. Nevertheless, these tribes remained fragmented, with certain tribal factions maintaining their cooperation with the SDF. From early September 2025 onward, confrontations between the SDF and Transitional Government forces have intensified. ISIL insurgent activity persists, prompting SDF and US-led coalition raids and detentions.

ACLED recorded 453 security incidents (average of 18.3 security incidents per week) in Hasaka governorate in the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2025. Most of these incidents were cases of explosions/remote violence, that peaked in January 2025 and decreased almost steadily afterwards. Incidents of battles and violence against civilians peaked in January 2025, however, they were almost steadily reported during this period. In the period 1 June – 26 September 2025, 110 security incidents were recorded in Hasaka representing an average of 6.4 security incidents per week. From 9 December 2024 to 26 September 2025, ACLED recorded 563 security incidents, representing an average of 13.4 incidents per week.

Between December 2024 and 31 May 2025, SNHR documented 9 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented approximately 1 civilian fatality per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. In June –September2025, the SNHR recorded 3 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented less than one civilian fatality per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. For the period December 2024 to September 2025, SNHR recorded 12 fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 1 civilian fatality per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

Security incidents occurred across all four districts, with Al-Hasaka district most affected (71 incidents), followed by Qamishli (19). Ras Al-Ayn recorded the fewest (8).

UNHCR estimated 352 763 IDPs and 1 795 returnees from internal displacement as of June 2025. Additionally, 7 093 individuals returned from abroad since early 2024, mostly to Hasaka and Qamishli districts. As of 18 September 2025, UNHCR reported 376 204 IDPs and 2 857 recent returns. Additionally, 11 022 individuals returned from abroad since 8 December 2024.

The Alouk Water Station remains non-functional, affecting water access in Hasaka city. Unexploded ordnance (UXOs), explosive remnants of war (ERWs), mines, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are widespread and affect residential areas, infrastructure, and key access routes, and in particularly in agricultural areas during routine activities such as farming and grazing.

Even though there is a high contamination of remnants of war affecting residential areas and farmlands, the number of security incidents is steadily decreasing over several months and the number of civilian fatalities is low. Therefore, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in the governorate of Hasaka, however not at a high level.**



Homs

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4., 7.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.8.6.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Homs governorate remains affected by a complex and volatile security environment involving multiple armed actors. The western part of the governorate and the corridor linking it to Deir Ez-Zor are under the control of governmental forces. Adjacent to the Al Tanf Deconfliction Zone, areas are held by unidentified opposition groups. Pro-Assad insurgents maintain a presence near Homs city.

In early March 2025, hostilities originating in the coastal region between pro-Assad groups and security forces extended into Homs, prompting widespread raids and house burnings by transitional forces in rural areas. While the General Security Service (GSS) has consolidated control over central cities like Damascus, it faces persistent challenges in Homs city and its countryside. Sectarian violence, particularly targeting Alawites and other religious minorities, has undermined trust in the new authorities. These attacks—often carried out by unidentified gunmen on motorcycles—led to a surge in killings in April 2025, prompting the deployment of GSS forces and a reported decline in violence after mid-May 2025. However, sporadic violent incidents, such as killings, kidnappings, and infringements on individual liberties, have persisted.

Explosive remnants of war (ERWs), landmines, and other ordnance continue to pose significant risks, especially near Palmyra and eastern rural Homs. Between 27 November 2024 and 14 March 2025, Homs was among the governorates with the highest number of incidents involving war remnants.

ACLED recorded 379 security incidents (average of 15.3 security incidents per week) in Homs governorate in the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2025. Most of these incidents were cases of violence against civilians, that were steadily reported throughout this period, even following March 2025. Incidents of explosions/remote violence were almost steadily reported, with a peak in March. Incidents of battles were reported throughout this period, with a peak in February and declining afterwards. In the period 1 June – 26 September 2025, 134 security incidents were recorded in Homs representing an average of 7.7 security incidents per week. Most security incidents recorded by ACLED during 1 June – 26 September 2025 were coded ‘violence against civilians’ and were mainly attributed to unidentified actors who were involved in killings and abductions of Alawites and of persons perceived to be associated with the Assad regime. From 9 December 2024 to 26 September 2025, ACLED recorded 513 security incidents, representing an average of 12.2 incidents per week.

Between December 2024 and 31 May 2025, SNHR documented 203 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented approximately 14 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. In June – September 2025, the SNHR recorded 75 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 5 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. For the period December 2024 to September 2025, SNHR recorded 278 fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 19 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

As of 12 June 2025, UNHCR estimated 283 779 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Homs, with 65 843 individuals returning from abroad since December 2024, many to areas still affected by insecurity and contamination. As of 18 September 2025, UNHCR reported 221 895 IDPs and 260 710 recent returns. Additionally, 128 531 individuals returned from abroad since 8 December 2024.

The governorate of Homs has seen a steady and clear decline in the number of security incidents. The number of fatalities has also gone down, although the numbers are still relatively high in comparison to other governorates. As most of the violence against civilians appears to be of targeted nature, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in the governorate of Homs, however not at a high level.**

Idlib

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4., 7.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.8.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Idlib governorate is almost entirely under the control of the Transitional Government, though its forces remain fragmented. Dominant actors include Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and armed factions within the Syrian National Army (SNA). Reports also indicate the presence of foreign jihadists. Pockets in the southern and western border areas are marked by a 'Pro-Regime Insurgent Presence'.

In March 2025, Transitional Government forces launched security operations and established checkpoints to reinforce control. The Harmoon Center described Idlib as 'relatively stable' compared to other governorates, with new security forces maintaining firm control despite occasional external threats. Pro-Assad insurgents carried out attacks against governmental forces, prompting retaliatory operations targeting regime loyalists and collaborators. By mid-April, authorities reportedly improved relations with the local population and initiated local recruitment.

ACLED recorded 136 security incidents (average of 5.5 security incidents per week) in Idlib governorate in the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2025. Most of these incidents were cases of explosions/ remote violence, which were steadily reported throughout this period. They peaked in January 2025, slightly declining the following months. After a peak in February, the number of recorded battles followed a similar trend. The number of incidents of violence against civilians remained steady throughout this period, with a decrease recorded in December and March compared to the other months. In the period 1 June – 26 September 2025, 52 security incidents were recorded in Idlib representing an average of 3 security incident per week. From 9 December 2024 to 26 September 2025, ACLED recorded 188 security incidents, representing an average of 4.5 incidents per week.

Between December 2024 and 31 May 2025, SNHR documented 170 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented approximately 6 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. In June – September 2025, the SNHR recorded 33 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 1 civilian fatality per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. For the period December 2024 to September 2025, SNHR recorded 203 fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 7 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.



Security incidents were recorded across all five districts, with Al Ma’ra district most affected (33 incidents), followed by Idlib district (16). Ariha and Harim districts saw the fewest incidents.

UNHCR estimated 1 208 927 IDPs living in camps and 753 696 outside camps as of June 2025. Additionally, 175 161 individuals returned from internal displacement since November 2024, and 87 646 from abroad since early 2024—most to Idlib and Harim districts. As of 18 September 2025, UNHCR reported 2 132 759 IDPs and 732 359 recent returns. Additionally, 134 436 individuals returned from abroad since 8 December 2024.

Unexploded ordnance (UXOs), explosive remnants of war (ERWs), mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are reportedly widespread and affect residential areas, farmland, infrastructure, and key access routes, particularly in Idlib governorate.

Landmines and war remnants continue to pose serious risks. A single clinic treated 500 victims between December and May. Rural areas and former frontlines are particularly affected, with incidents involving children and farmers. A March 2025 survey found that 95% of IDPs planning to return to frontline districts in Idlib and Hama reported that their homes were severely damaged or destroyed.

Given the control of the Transitional Government over the whole governorate, the steady decline of both the number of security incidents and the number of civilian fatalities, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in the governorate of Idlib, however not at a high level.**

Latakia

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4.](#), [7.; Country Focus July 2025, 5.8.4.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Latakia governorate is formally under the control of the Transitional Government, though pro-Assad remnants maintain a presence in several pockets. The governorate hosts multiple armed formations, including the 400th Division (ex-HTS), the Coastal Division (ex-National Liberation Front (NLF)), and the newly formed 56th Reserve Division. Following the March 2025 uprising, additional forces—including MOA, General Security, HTS, SNA, and non-official fighters—were deployed to Latakia city and Jablah. Assad loyalist insurgents and a Sunni sectarian group targeting Alawites also operate in the region.

During the March 2025 uprising, pro-Assad fighters launched coordinated attacks across Latakia, Jablah, Al-Qardaha, and rural areas. Although governmental forces regained control of urban centres by early April, targeted raids and sporadic attacks persisted into late May. Sectarian violence, including execution-style killings and retaliatory attacks, was reported in Latakia city, Saqoubin, and Masaytara. Civilians were also affected by kidnappings, disappearances, and violence attributed to factions nominally affiliated with security forces. Israeli airstrikes targeted security infrastructure throughout the governorate.

ACLED recorded 246 security incidents (average of 10 security incidents per week) in Latakia governorate in the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2025. Most of these incidents were cases of violence against civilians, with a sharp increase noted in March 2025. Incidents of violence against civilians persisted throughout this period. Incidents of explosions/remote violence were almost steadily reported, with only a slight decrease in March and May.

Incidents of battles were also recorded, with a peak noted in March and a declining trend afterwards. In the period 1 June – 26 September 2025, 41 security incidents were recorded in Latakia representing an average of 2.4 security incidents per week. Most security incidents recorded by ACLED during 1 June – 26 September 2025 were coded ‘violence against civilians’ and involved unidentified armed groups and civilians, and Transitional Government forces and civilians, the latter particularly in the context of security operations against Assad remnants. From 9 December 2024 to 26 September 2025, ACLED recorded 287 security incidents, representing an average of 6.8 incidents per week.

Between December 2024 and 31 May 2025, SNHR documented 631 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented approximately 43 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. In June – September 2025, the SNHR recorded 21 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 1 civilian fatality per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. For the period December 2024 to September 2025, SNHR recorded 652 fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 45 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

Latakia accounted for 36 % of all civilian fatalities recorded across Syria in that month.

Security incidents occurred in all four districts, with Latakia district most affected. UNHCR estimated 447 179 IDPs and 25 005 recent returnees as of June 2025. The March 2025 hostilities displaced 51 000 people across Latakia and Tartous, including 6 000 to Lebanon. An additional 18 544 individuals returned from abroad since early 2024. As of 18 September 2025, UNHCR reported 449 619 IDPs and 41 283 recent returns. Additionally, 21 198 individuals returned from abroad since 8 December 2024.

The conflict caused extensive damage to homes, schools, and hospitals, particularly in Alawite-majority areas. Fires—some reportedly set by MoD-affiliated individuals and insurgents—affected civilian properties and forested areas. Latakia was among the governorates most impacted by war remnants, with UXO detonations causing civilian casualties in Latakia city and countryside.

Given the significant decline of both the number of security incidents and the number of civilian fatalities after their peak in March 2025 due to sectarian violence and considering the number of civilian fatalities in unspecified locations on the coast, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in the governorate of Latakia, however not at a high level.**

Quneitra

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4., 7.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.8.14.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Quneitra governorate, with a population estimated between 111 706 and 149 374, remains divided in terms of territorial control. The Israeli-controlled Golan Heights cover approximately two-thirds of the governorate. As of May 2025, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) controlled additional stretches east of this zone, including the area around Quneitra city. The remaining eastern territory is under the control of the Transitional Government.



Israeli forces conducted aerial and mortar strikes targeting military sites and units across the governorate, alongside regular ground incursions into southwestern Syria. According to UNOCHA, in Quneitra, Israeli actions including targeting civilians, killing livestock, and bulldozing farms, posed significant risks to civilian lives and agricultural land, and have raised concerns among the population.

ACLED recorded 34 security incidents (average of 1.4 security incidents per week) in Quneitra governorate in the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2025. The majority of these incidents were explosions, that were recorded throughout this period and peaked in May. Cases of violence against civilians also followed an almost steady pattern, slightly rising in May. Two incidents of battles were reported throughout this period, one in January and one in April respectively. In the period 1 June – 26 September 2025, 50 security incidents were recorded in Quneitra representing an average of 2.9 security incidents per week. From 9 December 2024 to 26 September 2025, ACLED recorded 84 security incidents, representing an average of 2 incidents per week.

Between December 2024 and 31 May 2025, SNHR documented 2 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented approximately 2 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. In June – September 2025, the SNHR recorded 0 civilian fatality. For the period December 2024 to September 2025, SNHR recorded 2 fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 2 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

All recorded incidents occurred in Quneitra district; no incidents were reported in Al-Fiq district.

UNHCR reported 794 individuals had returned from internal displacement and 2 880 from abroad as of June 2025. As of 18 September 2025, UNHCR reported 3 124 IDPs and 1 278 recent returns. Additionally, 12 039 individuals returned from abroad since 8 December 2024.

Despite the risks to civilian lives posed by the Israel Defense Forces actions, both the number of the security incidents and the number of the civilian fatalities are low. Therefore, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in the governorate of Quneitra, however not at a high level.**

Raqqa

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4., 7.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.8.8.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Raqqa governorate is divided among three main actors: the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) control the central areas, the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA)—formally integrated into the Ministry of Defence—holds most of the north, and the transitional government controls the south. ISIL cells remain active in the governorate.

From December 2024 to mid-March 2025, Türkiye conducted near-daily airstrikes on SDF positions, including in Raqqa. These attacks declined following the 10 March agreement between the transitional government and the SDF, which also led to reduced confrontations between the SDF and SNA. Despite this, the SDF continued raids and detention campaigns,

including targeting relatives of defectors. Joint operations with US-led coalition forces were carried out against ISIL cells.

ACLED recorded 426 security incidents (average of 17.2 security incidents per week) in Raqqa governorate in the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2025. Most of these incidents were cases of explosions/remote violence, that peaked in January 2025 and sharply decreased following March. Incidents of violence against civilians were almost steadily reported throughout this period. Battles were also reported throughout this period, with a decrease noted after March. A higher number of battles was recorded in May in comparison to the two previous months. In the period 1 June – 26 September 2025, 127 security incidents were recorded in Raqqa representing an average of 7.3 security incidents per week. From 9 December 2024 to 26 September 2025, ACLED recorded 553 security incidents, representing an average of 13.2 incidents per week.

In Raqqa and Hasaka governorates, most incidents coded ‘battles’ by ACLED during 1 June – 26 September 2025 involved clashes between SDF and ISIL and between SDF and unidentified armed groups, whereas most incidents coded ‘violence against civilians’ involved SDF and civilians, usually suspected of being ISIL affiliates.

Between December 2024 and 31 May 2025, SNHR documented 42 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented approximately 5 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. In June – September 2025, the SNHR recorded 11 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 1 civilian fatality per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. For the period December 2024 to September 2025, SNHR recorded 53 fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 6 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

Security incidents were most frequent in Raqqa district. UNHCR reported 4 616 returnees from internal displacement and 16,565 from abroad as of June 2025. In March, 20,000 people were displaced due to clashes near the Tishreen Dam in Aleppo governorate. As of 18 September 2025, UNHCR reported 280 505 IDPs and 6 860 recent returns. Additionally, 18 724 individuals returned from abroad since 8 December 2024.

The Tishreen Dam has remained inoperable since December 2024 due to fighting, severely affecting water access for thousands of families in Raqqa. Additionally, unexploded ordnance (UXOs), explosive remnants of war (ERWs), mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are reportedly widespread and affect residential areas, farmland, infrastructure, and key access routes, particularly in Raqqa governorate.

Given the impact of the March 2025 agreement on the security situation reflected in the low number of civilian fatalities in comparison with the number prior to the said agreement, the pattern of violence that appears to be mostly targeted, the decline of the number of security incidents after a peak in January and February 2025, and the number of returnees, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in the governorate of Raqqa, however not at a high level.**

Rural Damascus

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4., 7.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.8.11.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

As of March 2025, population estimates for Rural Damascus governorate ranged between 3.4 and 5.1 million. The security landscape remains complex, with active non-state armed groups including Druze militias such as the Men of Dignity Movement, remnants of Lebanese Hezbollah, the Syrian Popular Resistance, and a radical Salafist group hostile to the transitional government. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) also conducted airstrikes in the governorate.

Security incidents frequently involved explosions caused by remnants of war, often planted by unidentified perpetrators. Key actors responsible for incidents included unidentified armed groups, Transitional Government forces, and the Israel Defence Forces. Acts of revenge targeting individuals suspected of ties to the former government persisted, including several killings.

ACLED recorded 173 security incidents (average of 7 security incidents per week) in Rural Damascus governorate in the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2025. Incidents of violence against civilians, followed an almost steady pattern throughout this period, with a small decline in December 2024 and April 2025. Explosions/remote violence peaked in December 2024 and were reported almost with a steady pattern for the rest of this period. There was a steady pattern of incidents recorded as battles, with a slight peak in March, and declining the following months. In the period 1 June – 26 September 2025, 92 security incidents were recorded in Rural Damascus representing an average of 5.3 security incidents per week. Clashes between Sunni and Druze militias in Jaramana and Sahnaya led to both civilian and militia casualties. April saw kidnappings and armed attacks, and in May, several ISIL suspects were arrested in Western Ghouta.

In Rural Damascus, most security incidents recorded by ACLED during 1 June – 26 September 2025 were coded 'violence against civilians' and were mainly attributed to unidentified actors involved in killings of civilians for unknown reasons. This violence appears to be mainly of a targeted nature. Most incidents coded 'explosions/remote violence' were attributed to Israeli airstrikes. From 9 December 2024 to 26 September 2025, ACLED recorded 265 security incidents, representing an average of 6.3 incidents per week.

Between December 2024 and 31 May 2025, SNHR documented 37 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented approximately 1 civilian fatality per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. In June – September 2025, the SNHR recorded 16 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented less than one civilian fatality per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. For the period December 2024 to September 2025, SNHR recorded 53 fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 1 civilian fatality per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

UNHCR reported 109 779 returnees from internal displacement and 60 135 from abroad as of June 2025. Clashes in early May displaced approximately 15 000 individuals from the governorate. As of 18 September 2025, UNHCR reported 932 816 IDPs and 102 301 recent returns. Additionally, 120 889 individuals returned from abroad since 8 December 2024.

Unexploded ordnance (UXOs), explosive remnants of war (ERWs), mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are reportedly widespread and affect residential areas, farmland, infrastructure, and key access routes, particularly in Rural Damascus governorate.

Despite the presence of multiple actors and the complex security situation, both the numbers of security incidents and civilian fatalities are low, the majority of the incidents classified as explosions/remote violence were explosions of remnants of war, and returns are numerous. Therefore, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in the governorate of Rural Damascus, however not at a high level.**

Sweida

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4., 7.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.8.13.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Sweida governorate, with a population estimated between 446 048 and 482 982 as of March 2025, presents a highly complex security landscape. Approximately 160 armed groups operate in the governorate, some organised into four distinct operations rooms. These include pro-government factions such as *Men of Dignity* and *Ahrar Jabal al-Arab*, as well as groups aligned with Sheikh Hikmat al-Hijri, who oppose integration with the transitional administration. While some Druze factions agreed in March to form locally-led security forces under transitional government control, full integration remains limited. A deployment of General Security forces was reported in early May.

Between March and May 2025, armed disputes among residents and sporadic clashes between Druze and Bedouin groups resulted in civilian casualties, particularly in Sweida city and the western countryside. Tensions, though low in intensity, carried sectarian overtones. A series of violent incidents in late April and early May caused both civilian and non-civilian casualties. An Israeli airstrike in Kanaker killed four individuals, while ISIL claimed two IED attacks targeting Ministry of Defence vehicles in the desert zone. Another IED injured six civilians in an ambulance.

In July 2025, violence sharply escalated in Sweida governorate, following intense clashes between Druze militias and Bedouin tribal fighters. Hundreds of casualties were reported among security forces, Druze fighters, and civilians. There were reports of extrajudicial killings, mass displacement and damage to critical infrastructure. Sources assessed that over 1 000 people were killed in the violence including Druze and Bedouin civilians, members of the transitional government's security forces, local and tribal armed groups.

ACLED recorded 92 security incidents (average of 3.7 security incidents per week) in Sweida in the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2025. The majority of these incidents were cases of explosions/remote violence, that saw a decline in February to April, before peaking in May. Incidents of violence against civilians were reported with an almost consistent pattern throughout this period, with an increase during January and April. Incidents of battles were reported throughout this period, peaking in May. In the period 1 June – 26 September 2025, 206 security incidents were recorded in Sweida representing an average of 11.9 security incidents per week. Most security incidents were recorded by ACLED in July 2025 and attributed to clashes between Transitional Government forces and Druze militias, as well as between Bedouin and Druze militias. Incidents coded 'violence against civilians' mainly involved unidentified armed groups and civilians, and Druze militias and civilians. From 9

December 2024 to 26 September 2025, ACLED recorded 298 security incidents, representing an average of 7.1 incidents per week.

Between December 2024 and 31 May 2025, SNHR documented 41 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented approximately 8 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. In June – September 2025, the SNHR recorded 1 020 fatalities, which included armed men as well as civilians, while no further fatalities were registered in August and September. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 211 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. For the period December 2024 – September 2025, SNHR recorded 1 061 fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 220 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

UNHCR reported 792 returnees from internal displacement and 2 246 from abroad as of June 2025. At least one civilian was killed by explosive remnants of war. As of 18 September 2025, UNHCR reported 7 184 IDPs and 1 261 recent returns. Additionally, 4 023 individuals returned from abroad since 8 December 2024.

Despite a peak in the number of security incidents and civilian fatalities in July 2025 in Sweida governorate, the level of violence has diminished in the subsequent months, therefore, it can be concluded, at the time of writing that **indiscriminate violence takes place in the governorate of Sweida, however not at a high level**. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the presence of multiple armed actors, sectarian tensions, and ongoing violence—including targeted attacks and war remnants—contribute to a highly volatile security environment in Sweida governorate.

Tartous

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4.](#), [7.; Country Focus July 2025, 5.8.5.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Tartous governorate is formally under the control of the Transitional Government. However, multiple pockets of pro-Assad armed groups remain active, alongside the Sunni sectarian group *Saraya Ansar al-Sunnah*. Israeli aerial operations have also been reported during the reference period.

In early March 2025, coordinated attacks by well-armed pro-Assad fighters targeted military and security forces across the coastal region, including Tartous. The resulting security operations were marked by retaliatory and sectarian violence, particularly affecting civilians in Alawite-majority areas. Throughout the reporting period, there were continued reports of sectarian attacks, killings, and other violations by factions nominally affiliated with the military and security forces, as well as kidnappings and killings by unidentified gunmen.

ACLED recorded 140 security incidents (average of 5.7 security incidents per week) in Tartous governorate in the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2025. Most of these incidents were cases of violence against civilians, with a sharp increase noted in March 2025. Incidents of violence against civilians persisted throughout this period. Incidents of explosions/remote violence were almost steadily reported, although to a more limited extent following December. Incidents of battles were reported throughout this period, with a peak in March and declined

afterwards. In the period 1 June – 26 September 2025, 24 security incidents were recorded in Tartous representing an average of 1.4 security incident per week. From 9 December 2024 to 26 September 2025, ACLED recorded 164 security incidents, representing an average of 3.9 incidents per week.

Between December 2024 and 31 May 2025, SNHR documented 363 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented approximately 30 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. In June – September 2025, the SNHR recorded 8 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 1 civilian fatality per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. For the period December 2024 to September 2025, SNHR recorded 371 fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 30 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

The districts of Tartous and Banyas recorded the highest number of incidents.

UNHCR estimated 171 273 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 4 286 returnees from internal displacement as of June 2025. Additionally, 7 931 individuals returned from abroad since early 2024, with most settling in Tartous and Banyas districts. As of 18 September 2025, UNHCR reported 139 919 IDPs and 5 339 recent returns. Additionally, 7 973 individuals returned from abroad since 8 December 2024.

The escalation of hostilities in March 2025 led to the burning of homes in Alawite villages and damage to civilian infrastructure. These developments, combined with the presence of multiple armed actors and ongoing violations, contribute to a volatile security environment relevant for assessing risk under Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive.

Given the decline of both the number of security incidents and the number of civilian fatalities after their peak in March 2025 due to sectarian violence and considering the number of civilian fatalities in unspecified locations on the coast, it can be concluded that **indiscriminate violence takes place in the governorate of Tartous, however not at a high level**.

No real risk

Areas where, **there is no real risk** for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR. This may be because the criteria for **an armed conflict** within the meaning of this provision **are not met**, or because **no indiscriminate violence** is taking place.

The areas assessed as belonging to this category as well as the main elements leading to this assessment are highlighted below.

Damascus

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [COI Update, 4., 7.](#); [Country Focus July 2025, 5.8.10.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Damascus governorate remains under the control of the Transitional Government and is considered the most stable area in Syria. The strong presence of security forces has contributed to a generally secure environment, with a reduction in checkpoint arrests and a noticeable decline in overall security incidents. However, isolated incidents continue to occur,



including kidnappings, armed attacks, and targeted violence. Notably, a suicide bombing at a Greek Orthodox Church on the outskirts of Damascus on 22 June 2025 highlighted ongoing risks. Israeli forces also conducted airstrikes on targets within Damascus city, resulting in civilian casualties, during the reference period.

ACLED recorded 58 security incidents (average of 2.3 security incidents per week) in Damascus governorate in the period from 9 December 2024 to 31 May 2025. Most of these incidents were cases of violence against civilians, which followed a steady pattern throughout this period. The battles, whose number was already low in the previous months, were totally absent in May. Explosions/remote violence peaked in December 2024, declined in the following months, and rose slightly to three incidents in May 2025. In the period 1 June – 26 September 2025, 41 security incidents were recorded in Damascus representing an average of 2.4 security incidents per week. From 9 December 2024 to 26 September 2025, ACLED recorded 99 security incidents, representing an average of 2.4 incidents per week.

Between December 2024 and 31 May 2025, SNHR documented 6 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented approximately less than 1 civilian fatality per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. In June – September 2025, the SNHR recorded 38 civilian fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 2 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for this reference period. For the period December 2024 – September 2025, SNHR recorded 44 fatalities. Compared to the figures for the population as from March 2025, this represented 2 civilian fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants for the whole reference period.

UNHCR estimates indicate that, as of 15 May 2025, 589 271 internally displaced persons (IDPs) were residing in Damascus, alongside 5 935 individuals who had returned from internal displacement since 27 November 2024. As of 18 September 2025, UNHCR reported 588 781 IDPs and 11 569 recent returns. Additionally, 170 624 individuals returned from abroad since 8 December 2024. Reports also noted forced evictions of predominantly Alawite families, often linked to the loss of government employment and housing.

Damascus is among the governorates most affected by incidents involving unexploded ordnance and other remnants of war. The destruction of public infrastructure, particularly in areas such as Yarmouk camp, has led to disruptions in electricity, water supply, and essential services.

However, Damascus maintains a relatively secure environment compared to other governorates, even though there are isolated incidents of violence, forced evictions, and the presence of war remnants.

Considering the strong presence of the Transitional Government forces, the continued stability in the area, and the stable low number of security incidents with minimal impact on civilians, it can be concluded that **in the governorate of Damascus there is no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected by indiscriminate violence.**



Please note that in areas where there would be 'no real risk' for a civilian to be affected by indiscriminate violence within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR, depending on personal circumstances, an applicant may still be exposed to a risk of persecution or a risk of serious harm under Article 15(a) or (b) QD/QR. Hence, this

assessment of ‘no real risk’ should in no way be misconstrued as the designation of ‘safe areas’ for return or any other purposes.

5.3.4. Serious and individual threat

Last update: December 2025



For general information on the individual circumstances which may be relevant to consider in the assessment of a serious and individual threat in territories where the ‘mere presence’ threshold is not reached, see ‘EUAA, Serious and individual threat’ in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025’.

As mentioned above, even if refugee status is not granted, established personal circumstances are yet to be taken into account in the examination of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

In the context of the ‘sliding scale’, each case should be assessed individually, taking into account the applicant’s personal circumstances together with the nature and intensity of the violence in their home area (see also Assessment of indiscriminate violence per governorate). It is not feasible to provide exhaustive guidance as to what the relevant personal circumstances could be and how those should be assessed. Individual elements can exist in combination. Other factors may also be relevant.

Below are some examples of personal circumstances to be taken into account, where the ‘mere presence’ threshold is not reached, in the context of Syria.

- **Age:** this personal circumstance would be of particular importance in relation to the ability of the person to assess the risks. For example, children may not be able to assess the risk associated with contamination by unexploded remnants of war. Children may also not be in a position to quickly assess a changing situation and avoid the risks it entails. In some cases, elderly age may also impact the person’s ability to assess and avoid risks associated with an armed conflict.
- **Gender:** it is difficult to ascertain whether and in what circumstances men or women would be at a higher risk in general. It would also depend on other factors, such as the nature of the violence in the area. For example, men may be at higher risk of violence targeting local markets, banks, governmental institutions, as men are the ones more frequently being outside the home and visiting such locations. On the other hand, general gender norms in Syria suggest that women may have less information regarding the current security situation and the associated risks. Moreover, if the violence moves closer to the residence of people, e.g. in the case of airstrikes or ground engagements in populated areas, women may have a more limited ability to avoid it.
- **Health condition and disabilities, including mental health issues:** serious illnesses and disabilities may result in restricted mobility for a person, making it difficult for them to avoid immediate risks and, in the case of mental illnesses, it can make them less capable of assessing risks. In other cases, such conditions may require frequent visits to a healthcare facility. For example, the road security and/or the contamination of key access routes with explosive remnants of war may increase the risk of indiscriminate



violence as the person would be required to travel. Moreover, if healthcare facilities are damaged and closed as a result of the years of conflict, such an applicant may be at a higher risk due to the indirect effects of the indiscriminate violence as they would not be able to access the health care they need.

- **Economic situation:** applicants in a particularly dire economic situation may also be less able to avoid the risks associated with indiscriminate violence. They may be forced to expose themselves to risks such as working in areas which are affected by violence and/or explosive remnants of war in order to meet their basic needs. They may also have less resources to avoid an imminent threat by relocating to a different area.
- **Occupation and/or place of residence:** the occupation the person is likely to have when they return to their home area may also be relevant. It may, for example, be linked to the need for traders who have to travel through conflict areas or areas contaminated with explosive remnants of war for their livelihoods. It may also be linked to the need to frequent locations known to be particularly targeted in the conflict, such as when journalists must cover a specific event in the vicinity of a conflict, or physicians working in the vicinity of a conflict.
- **Knowledge of the area:** the relevant knowledge of the area concerns the patterns of violence that affect it, the existence of areas contaminated by landmines, etc. Different elements may contribute to a person's knowledge of the area. It can relate to their own experience in the specific area or in areas similarly affected by indiscriminate violence, or to their connection to a support network which would ensure they are informed of the relevant risks.
- **Family members or support network:** the family or support network can be a source of information, that is necessary to evaluate dangerous situations. Therefore, a person with no or limited support network may be more susceptible to indiscriminate violence. On the contrary, a person with a substantial family or support network may be more able to assess the risks linked to indiscriminate violence.

In some cases, these personal circumstances may be cumulative, leading to enhanced exposure to indiscriminate violence.

5.3.5. Qualification of the harm as a ‘threat to (a civilian’s) life or person’

Some of the commonly reported types of harm to civilians’ life or person in Syria include killing, injury, forced displacement, etc. A real risk of such serious harm would qualify as a threat to a (civilian’s) life or person in accordance with the provision of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

5.3.6. Nexus/‘by reason of’

The interpretation of the causation ‘by reason of’ may not be limited to harm which is directly caused by the indiscriminate violence or by acts that emanate from the actors in the conflict. To a certain extent, it may also include the indirect effect of indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict. As long as there is a demonstrable link to the indiscriminate violence, such elements may be taken into account in the assessments, for example: destruction of the necessary means to survive, destruction of infrastructure, criminality.

6. Actors of protection



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this chapter, see 'EUAA, 'Actors of protection' in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.

6.1. The State

6.1.1. The Transitional Government

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: Country Focus July 2025, 1.1., 1.2., 1.3., 2.1.1., 2.1.2., 5.3.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

During the reference period, The Transitional Government expanded its territorial control and consolidated authority over key urban centres such as Damascus, Aleppo, and Hama. It also entered into agreements with armed factions, including the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), aimed at integrating their forces into its security structures. Despite these developments, the Transitional Government continues to face significant challenges in establishing effective governance and security across Syria.

The judicial system remains underdeveloped. There is no functioning transitional justice process to address past human rights violations, and courts are largely non-operational. Despite formal assertions of judicial independence, the country has been in a legal vacuum with no functioning judiciary, courts have been non-operational or only partially functioning, and access to legal representation is severely limited. In this vacuum, executive and security measures have often proceeded without a clear legal basis, while informal bodies lacking legal authority have tried to fill the gap, leaving people without effective access to justice.

Reports of extrajudicial killings targeting suspected former regime affiliates and Alawite civilians continue. Despite public commitments to minority protection, the government has failed to prevent widespread retaliatory and sectarian violence, as well as attacks on Christian communities and persons with diverse SOGIESC.

Large portions of the country remain under the control of various armed groups, some supported by external actors. Israeli military operations persist in several governorates. Kurdish forces retain control over parts of northern and eastern Syria. The presence of pro-Assad insurgents, sectarian militias, and extremist groups further undermines the Transitional Government's ability to maintain order and protect civilians.

Security forces under the Transitional Government struggle to respond effectively to revenge killings, kidnappings, and looting. Criminality is widespread in areas under its control, exacerbated by the post-Assad security vacuum, societal fragmentation, and economic hardship. Although the government has issued a fatwa prohibiting revenge killings and urging legal resolution of disputes, its impact remains unverified.



Military capabilities are limited. While the Transitional Government can conduct ground raids and limited aerial operations, it lacks robust air defence systems and advanced weapons training. Its inability to prevent or respond to violence in many areas further highlights its limited reach and capacity.



Despite formal control over parts of Syria and efforts to consolidate power, **the Transitional Government does not meet the criteria of an actor of protection under Article 7 QD/QR who is able to provide effective, non-temporary and accessible protection**. It lacks the institutional capacity and effective judicial mechanisms to provide protection against persecution or serious harm.

6.2. Parties or organisations, including international organisations

Besides the Transitional Administration, the Kurdish-led forces in northeast Syria are the only actor that may be considered to control substantial parts of the territory and could, therefore, be subject to analysis under Article 7 QD/QR.

6.2.1. Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES)

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus July 2025, 2.3.; 5.1.1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The SDF controls nearly one-third of Syria's territory, primarily in the north and east. Following the March agreement between the Transitional Government and the SDF, the SDF withdrew from some Kurdish neighbourhoods in Aleppo and partially handed over control of the Tishreen Dam to Transitional Government forces. However, a Kurdish call for federalism lead to tensions between the two actors that are still unresolved at the time of writing. As of early June, negotiations were still ongoing and agreements were reached on prisoner exchanges and establishing specialised committees for the implementation of the March 10 agreement.

The legislative and judicial systems of the DAANES differ from those in the rest of Syria. The legal system is not independent from the executive and is susceptible to interference by armed groups like PYD, YPG, and PKK. During the reference period, the SDF have committed numerous human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and detention, assault and violence against media professionals.



In light of the volatile security situation, the lack of an independent judiciary and the ongoing reports of human rights violations, it can be concluded **that DAANES in the Kurdish-controlled areas in Syria does not meet the criteria of an actor of protection under Article 7 QD/QR who is able to provide effective, non-temporary and accessible protection.**

7. Internal protection alternative



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this chapter, see 'EUAA, 'Internal protection alternative' in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.

7.1. Part of the country

Last update: December 2025

The first step in the analysis of IPA is to identify a particular part of the country with regard to which the criteria of Article 8 QD/QR would be examined in the individual case. The example of **the city of Damascus** has been selected as it is the capital of the country and it remained the most stable area in Syria, with a generally secure environment. Following the fall of the Assad regime, the Transitional Government successfully restored trust and maintained public order.



This is without prejudice to the possibility to apply IPA to other places in Syria, provided that all criteria described hereunder are met.

7.2. Safety

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: Country Focus July 2025, 1.3., 2.1., 3., 5.8.10.; Country Focus March 2025, 2.5.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

7.2.1. Absence of persecution or serious harm

When examining the element 'absence of persecution or serious harm', the decision-maker should refer to chapters 1 – 5 of this document.

When assessing the requirement of safety with regard to the applicability of IPA in individual cases of applicants from Syria, the following elements should be taken into account:

- **General security situation in relation to indiscriminate violence**

The general security situation in the city of Damascus should be assessed in accordance with the analysis under the section on Article 15(c) QD/QR. In this regard, it has been concluded that in the governorate of Damascus, including the city of Damascus, there is, in general, no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

- **Actor of persecution or serious harm and their reach**

There is a good level of security in Damascus and security forces have a strong presence in the city. However, in case where the applicant fears persecution or serious harm by the Transitional Government, including the factions that might have integrated into the new Syrian military, internal protection in Damascus would in general not be considered safe (please refer to [The Transitional Government](#) for further information about the potential integration of armed factions).

With regard to persecution by other actors, such as [The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant \(ISIL\)](#) or other armed groups, it should be noted that there was one targeted attack on a Greek Orthodox church in Damascus' Dweila neighbourhood in June 2025. However, generally these groups are active within certain regions and their operational capacity in the city Damascus remains limited.

Therefore, the criterion of safety may be considered satisfied in most cases where the applicant fears persecution or serious harm by other actors than the Transitional Government. However, particular consideration should be given to the individual circumstances of the applicant.

- **Whether the profile of the applicant is considered a priority target and/or a threat by the actor of persecution or serious harm**

The applicant's profile could make him or her a priority target, increasing the likelihood that the actor of persecution or serious harm would attempt to trace them in the potential IPA location.

- **Behaviour of the applicant**

It is recalled that an applicant cannot be reasonably expected to abstain from practices fundamental to his or her identity, such as those related to religion or sexual orientation⁽¹⁶⁾ and gender identity, in order to avoid the risk of persecution or serious harm.

- **Other risk-enhancing circumstances**

The information under [4. Refugee status](#) should be used to assist in this assessment.

7.2.2. Availability of protection against persecution or serious harm

Alternatively, it may be determined that the requirement of safety is satisfied if the applicant would have access to protection against persecution or serious harm, as defined in Article 7 QD/QR, in the area where IPA is considered. In the case of persecution by the State, a presumption of non-availability of State protection applies.

Additionally, since it has been assessed that the Transitional Government does not meet the criteria of an actor of protection under Article 7 QD/QR who is able to provide effective, non-temporary and accessible protection (see [6. Actors of protection](#)), the requirement of safety can only be satisfied when there is an absence of persecution or serious harm in Damascus.

For example, in the case of persecution or serious harm by the **Syrian society at large**, these actors would likely have the reach necessary to target the applicant in any part of the country. Therefore, and in light of the lack of State protection, the safety requirement would in general

⁽¹⁶⁾ CJEU, *X, Y and Z*, paras. 70-76; CJEU, *Y and Z*, para. 80.; Art.10 par.3 QR



not be met. It can be the case when the applicant faces persecution or serious harm for reasons related to the prevalent social norms in Syria (e.g. Persons with diverse SOGIESC).

Careful consideration must be given to whether, in the event of persecution or serious harm by the **family** or the **community**, these actors have the reach necessary to target the applicant in other parts of the country than their home area. If that is the case and in light of the lack of State protection, the safety requirement would in general not be met. It would apply to certain particularly vulnerable individuals, such as Women and girls and Children, in case, for example, of forced or child marriage and/or 'honour' crime.

See also 3. Actors of persecution or serious harm.

7.2.3. Conclusion on safety



The requirement of safety may be satisfied in the city of Damascus, depending on the profile and the individual circumstances of the applicant.

For those who have a well-founded fear of persecution or real risk of serious harm by the Transitional Government and/or by the society at large, the criterion of safety will in general not be met.

For those who have a well-founded fear of persecution or real risk of serious harm by the family and/or the community, the requirement of safety may be satisfied depending on the reach of the specific actor.

7.3. Travel and admittance

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: Country Focus July 2025, 3.9., 4.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

If the criterion of 'safety' is satisfied, as a next step, it has to be established whether an applicant can **safely** and **legally travel** and **gain admittance** in the city of Damascus. The general situation and the individual circumstances of the applicant should be taken into account in this assessment.

- **Safely travel**

As of January 2025, international flights to Damascus International Airport (DAM) resumed. Domestic flights between Damascus and Aleppo had already resumed on 18 December 2024. In the second half of June 2025, the military escalation in the Middle East led to the temporary closure of airspace and air corridors leading to DAM. Aleppo airport was not affected and ground transportation between Aleppo and DAM would be provided regularly.

Freedom of movement has improved since the fall of the Assad regime and no violations regarding the freedom of movement in the country in general have been reported. Civilians can generally travel between major cities without facing restrictions. Most fixed checkpoints

within urban areas have been removed and the remaining ones, mainly on intercity highways, are fewer and conduct less stringent checks. The road from Damascus airport to the city is well secured.

- **Legally travel**

Syrians returning to the country must present a national passport or ID card to enter. Passports and ID cards issued by the former government are deemed valid. Those without documents but registered in Syria's civil registries may still be allowed entry after their identity is verified through the Civil Affairs database at border checkpoints, at which point they are issued a civil record extract for entry. Additionally, Syrian diplomatic missions abroad are authorised to issue temporary travel documents and passports to facilitate the return of nationals who had lost them.

Children entering Syria must present a birth certificate and have to be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. For children born abroad who have not been registered in Syrian civil records either through diplomatic missions or domestic civil affairs offices, a birth certificate from the country of birth is required. In exceptional cases, hospital-issued birth notifications may be accepted for unregistered children at the border.

- **Gain admittance**

The Transitional Government has annulled all arrest warrants issued by Assad-era security agencies for political reasons but retained those related to criminal cases. With the judiciary still not functioning, many returnees remain in legal limbo due to unresolved criminal charges and are often prevented from leaving the country again. The authorities are working to establish a mechanism to revoke such warrants issued on false grounds by the former criminal police. Any mistreatment or targeting of returnees from abroad has not been documented. There are no legal requirements for individuals wishing to settle in Damascus by renting or purchasing property.

7.3.1. Conclusion on travel and admittance



It is concluded that, in general, a person can access the city of Damascus without risk, legally travel and settle there.

7.4. Reasonableness to settle

Last update: December 2025

If the criteria of safety and travel and admittance are met, the next step in assessing the existence of an IPA in the city of Damascus is to consider the reasonableness to settle in light of the general situation in the city and the individual circumstances of the applicant. According to Article 8(1) QD/QR, IPA can only apply if the applicant 'can reasonably be expected to settle' in the area of internal protection under consideration.



7.4.1. General situation

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [COI Update, 6.; Country Focus July 2025, 1.4., 3.1., 3.3., 3.4., 3.5., 3.6., 3.7., 3.9.3.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Means of basic subsistence and employment

Despite the lifting of several sanctions, and the easing or the waiving of other sanctions by the UK, the US and/or EU in May 2025 and the clearance of Syria's arrears to the World Bank, Syria continued to face severe economic hardship. Damascus' overall socio-economic situation is considered just above the threshold of sustainability.

The cost of living had risen by 21 % in 2024 and more than tripled in the last two years. One in four Syrians lives in extreme poverty on less than USD 2.15 a day, while 67 % fall below the lower middle-income poverty line of USD 3.65. The minimum monthly cost of living for a family of five in Damascus had reached SYP 8 million at the end of March 2025. Household expenditures continued to exceed income levels.

According to UNDP in February 2025, 90 % of the Syrian population could no longer afford essential goods and 75 % depended on some form of humanitarian assistance. 66 % of the population lived in condition of extreme poverty, with poverty rates highest among female headed households and displaced households.

Starting in December 2024, the Transitional Government dismissed tens to hundreds of thousands of public sector employees. Civil servants working in areas previously controlled by the Syrian government faced the most severe economic challenges, with wages covering only 5.6 % of basic needs. Unemployment in Syria reached 24 % in 2024 and access to livelihoods in Damascus is considered challenging. In Damascus, 25 % of the industry and manufacturing sectors were described as non-operational.

The lack of economic opportunities and essential services pose the greatest challenge for returnees. Many households resorted to borrowing money, selling productive assets, or engaging in high-risk, degrading jobs. Many are forced into low paid and insecure informal jobs.

Cash liquidity remained limited with continued restrictions on bank withdrawals and disruptions to online payment systems. In April 2025 the Ministry of Finance introduced the digital salary directing public institutions to pay their employees through the Sham Cash electronic application starting from May 2025.

Food security

Syria remained highly dependent on food imports, making it vulnerable to fluctuations in global commodity prices and exchange rates. Soaring inflation and the depreciation of the Syrian Pound have significantly reduced purchasing power, rendering food unaffordable for large segments of the population. According to UNDP in February 2025, 60 % of the population (equal to 13.8 million) faced extreme food insecurity. As of April 2025, UN World Food Program (WFP) indicated that Damascus registered the highest Minimum Expenditure Basket in the country for the third consecutive month (equal to SYP 2 403 097), driven by elevated prices for potatoes, apples, eggplants and white beans.

Housing and shelter

About one-third of the housing units in Syria have been either destroyed or severely damaged over the conflict. This created in the suburbs of Damascus a severe shortage of housing and limited availability of residential areas. Additionally, high property prices in the city of Damascus make renting or purchasing unaffordable for most returnees, while some housing on the outskirts or in more remote areas have generally poor living conditions.

There is a certain degree of social discrimination against individuals relocating to Damascus from other parts of the country. Locals are often reluctant to rent to newcomers or charge them higher prices, based on the perception that they may not properly maintain the property.

Water and sanitation

For the first time in 50 years, Damascus faces a severe water shortage, prompting the strictest rationing since the 1950s. Residents now receive water once every three days, while many rely on costly private tankers charging USD 35–70 per 1 000 litres. In surrounding rural areas such as Qudsia, Jabal al-Ward, and al-Arein, households endure water cuts of over 90 hours, leaving families torn between thirst and financial strain. Syria is experiencing severe drought-like conditions, the worst in over 36 years, further compounding an already fragile humanitarian situation. The drought has had devastating impacts on staple crops, livestock, water access, and public health. In an assessment conducted by IOM between March and April 2025, 26 % of key informants in Damascus lacked access to drinking water, 21 % lacked water for hygiene and 19 % did not have access to a sewage system.

Basic healthcare

More than 65 % of the Syrian population were in need of humanitarian health assistance. There is a shortage of medications for emergency conditions such as pain and infections. Maternal and child health services were found to be lacking in 48 % of cases.

In areas like Damascus, hospitals remained largely non-operational. According to IOM, 7 % of key respondents in Damascus did not have access to primary health facilities, 69 % did not have access to specialised health facilities and 19% did not have access to emergency health facilities. In Damascus, 34 % of health centres (29 out of 86) were affected by underfunding, with an impact on approximately 712 000 individuals. Syria also faces a critical shortage of health workers, exacerbated by low salaries, which significantly hinders access to health services. Doctors working in areas like Damascus reportedly received monthly salaries as low as 30 USD.



The **general circumstances** prevailing in the city of Damascus assessed in relation to the factors above entail significant hardship. However, they **do not preclude the reasonableness to settle in the city of Damascus as such**. The person's ability to navigate the above circumstances will mostly depend on access to financial means and in some cases, the reasonableness requirement may be satisfied. The assessment should take into account the individual circumstances of the applicant.



7.4.2. Individual circumstances

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus July 2025, 2.6., 3., 4.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In addition to the general situation in the area of potential IPA, the assessment whether it is reasonable to settle in that part of the country should take into account the individual circumstances of the applicant, including his/her vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms. A non-exhaustive list of relevant considerations is provided below:

- **Civil documentation:** access to documentation is needed for legal employment, housing, to reclaim property and to access basic services. Individuals without documentation such as IDPs might be more vulnerable and socio-economically disadvantaged.
- **Gender:** women, particularly single women or female-headed households might face more socio-economic hardship. Female headed households including divorced and widowed women were particularly vulnerable to housing, land and property issues. Poverty rates are highest among members of this category. Girls are particularly affected by educational challenges such as curriculum gaps, language barriers and integration challenges.
- **Age:** young and elderly age could limit the applicant's access to means of subsistence such as through employment, making him or her dependent on other providers. Therefore, this element should be seen in conjunction with the available support by family or a broader support network. In the case of children, the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration, for example, with regard to access to basic education. Damaged infrastructure and displacement severely disrupted access to education. Children are more at risk of malnutrition caused by the elevated prices of food.
- **Support network:** the lack of economic opportunities, the shortage of housing and high property prices in Damascus, make purchasing or renting unaffordable for most returnees. Community ties in Damascus, the support from relatives, or having access to savings or remittances, can improve access to housing, employment and support.
- **Professional and educational background and financial means:** access to livelihood in Damascus is considered challenging, with 25 % of the industry and manufacturing sectors non-operational. There is a general lack of employment opportunities and essential services. Unskilled labour is underpaid. Many households resorted to borrowing money, selling productive assets, or engaging in high-risk or degrading jobs.
- **Ethnoreligious background:** Damascus is a diverse city with minority groups. There is a degree of social discrimination against individuals relocating to Damascus from other parts of the country. While not driven by state policy, this bias stems from a longstanding distinction between Damascenes and non-locals. Locals are often reluctant to rent to newcomers or charge them higher prices, based on the perception that they may not properly maintain the property.
- **State of health:** healthcare facilities are limited. In Damascus hospitals remained largely non-operational. Persons who need specialised health facilities, may not

receive adequate treatment. There is limited capacity to address chronic illnesses, injuries and disabilities, particularly among vulnerable groups such as children, older persons, and persons with disabilities.

These factors would often intersect, leading to different conclusions on the reasonableness of IPA. In some cases, more than one element of vulnerability would indicate that IPA is not reasonable for the particular applicant (e.g. person with a disability without support network), while in other cases the relevant factors may balance each other (e.g. single woman with a strong support network).

7.4.3. Conclusion on reasonableness

The general conclusion on the reasonableness of IPA for particular profiles of applicants are based on an assessment of the general situation in the city of Damascus and the individual circumstances of such applicants, as outlined in the sections above.



Based on the general situation in the city of Damascus, and taking into account the applicable individual circumstances, internal protection in the city of Damascus may be a reasonable alternative in some cases. Such cases would include adult applicants with sufficient financial or other means or who have a support network that is willing and capable of assisting them in catering for their basic needs if they settle in the city. In this regard, the economic situation, the healthcare situation and food insecurity, should also be considered.

7.5. General conclusion on the applicability of IPA in the city of Damascus



Taking into account the assessment with regard to the three criteria under Article 8 QD/QR, it can be concluded that internal protection alternative in the city of Damascus may be applicable in some cases.

This assessment pertaining to the city of Damascus is without prejudice to the possibility to apply IPA to other places in Syria, provided that all criteria described above are met.



8. Exclusion

Last update: December 2025



For general guidance on Exclusion, see 'EUAA, *Practical Guide: Exclusion*, January 2017' and 'EUAA, *Practical Guide on Exclusion for Serious (Non-political) Crimes*, December 2021'.

For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this chapter, see 'EUAA, 'Exclusion' in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.

In the context of Syria, various circumstances may require consideration of the potential applicability of exclusion grounds. The QD/QR does not set a time limit for the application of the grounds for exclusion. Applicants may be excluded in relation to events having occurred in the recent and more distant past.

More specifically, the need to examine possible exclusion issues in the context of Syria may arise, for example, in cases of applicants being former or current members of the groups cited below. This list is non-exhaustive:

- Former members of Assad's armed forces, especially former members of the Syrian Arab Army (SAA), the intelligence and security services, and associated pro-Assad armed groups, such as the National Defence Forces (NDF) and Palestinian militias, such as the Liwa al-Quds (the Quds Brigade).
- (Former) members of Assad-aligned militias formed after the fall of the regime, such as the Syrian Popular Resistance.
- (Former) members of the formerly called 'anti-government armed groups', such as Free Syrian Army (FSA), *Jabhat al-Nusrah/HTS*, SNA, especially the Suleiman Shah Brigade, the Hamza Division and their commanders, and the Sultan Murad Division, and ISIL.
- (Former) Kurdish political actors (PYD), and security forces (SDF, YPG, Asayish) and groups linked to the PKK, such as the *Kurdish Revolutionary Youth Movement*.
- Druze militias.
- Individuals who committed serious crimes, such as violence against women and children.



Given the serious consequences that exclusion may have for the individual, the exclusion grounds should be interpreted restrictively and applied with caution.

The examples mentioned in this chapter are non-exhaustive and non-conclusive. Each case should be examined on its own merits.

8.1. Exclusion based on the commission of international crimes

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus July 2025](#), [2.4.1.](#), [2.4.2.](#), [2.6.](#); [Security 2021](#), [1.1.](#); [Security 2020](#), Annex II.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

It can be noted that the ground 'crime against peace' is not likely to be of relevance in the cases of applicants from Syria.

Reported crimes such as murder, torture, and rape by the different actors could amount to crimes against humanity when committed as part of a widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population. Crimes in the context of past events, such as the Muslim Brotherhood uprising could also trigger the consideration of exclusion in relation to 'crimes against humanity'.

Violations of international humanitarian law by different parties in the current and in past conflicts in Syria could amount to war crimes, such as the deliberate and systematic attacks on hospitals, the use of prohibited weapons and the deliberate indiscriminate attacks on civilians, etc.

Acts reported to be committed in the context of the following past and current situations of armed conflicts in Syria could be also relevant for Article 12(2)(a) QD/QR and Article 17(1)(a) QD/QR, as they may, depending on the circumstances, amount to 'war crimes' and/or 'crimes against humanity', if the legal requirements in this regard are fulfilled:

- The Syrian intervention in the Lebanese civil war and presence in Lebanon (1976-2005).
- The Muslim Brotherhood Uprising in Syria (1979-1982) which comprised the Hama Massacre (February 1982).
- Armed conflict between the former Government of Syria (GoS) and various former anti-GoS armed groups, most notably HTS, SNA, SDF and ISIL.
- International armed conflict between the US-led coalition against ISIL and Syria (due to its military intervention in Syria without the consent of the former GoS or the Transitional Government).
- International armed conflict between Syria and Türkiye, as the former GoS had not accepted Turkish presence on its territory; military confrontations between Syrian and Turkish armed forces also took place during the conflict.
- International armed conflict between Syria and Israel, who has been conducting air strikes on numerous targets in Syria without the consent of the Transitional Government.
- Non-international armed conflict between Türkiye and the YPG forces and with ISIL.
- Non-international armed conflict between different former anti-GoS armed groups.
- Non-international armed conflict between the transitional authorities and their affiliates and Alawite militias loyal to Assad.

In the context of the ongoing armed conflicts in Syria, acts such as extrajudicial killings, child recruitment and forced disappearance, could amount to both war crimes and crimes against humanity. According to COI, especially (former) members of the Assad-aligned militias formed after the fall of the regime, (former) members of ISIL, (former) members of Kurdish security forces, such as SDF, have been implicated in acts that would qualify as war crimes and/or crimes against humanity. (Former) members of groups linked to the PKK, especially the Kurdish Revolutionary Youth Movement have been implicated in acts of child recruitment, while (former) members of SNA have been involved in acts particularly against Kurds and Alawites, that would qualify as war crimes and/or crimes against humanity.

8.2. Exclusion based on the commission of a serious crime

Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus July 2025](#), [2.6.](#), [2.7.](#), [3.9.1.](#), [5.3.](#); [Country Focus March 2025](#), [4.1.1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Criminal activity in Syria is widely reported and includes kidnappings, assassinations, arms and drug smuggling, and trafficking in human beings. Such serious (non-political) crimes would trigger the application of Article 12(2)(b)/Article 17(1)(b) QD/QR.

Violence against women and children (for example honour-based and domestic violence, sexual violence, early/forced marriage) has been prevalent both in public and private spheres and could also potentially amount to a serious (non-political) crime. See also [4.10. Women and girls](#) and [5.2.3. Criminal violence under Article 15\(b\)](#) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Some serious (non-political) crimes could be linked to an armed conflict (e.g. if committed in order to finance the activities of armed groups) or could amount to fundamentally inhumane acts committed as a part of a systematic or widespread attack against a civilian population, in which case they should instead be examined under Article 12(2)(a)/Article 17(1)(a) QD/QR.

8.3. Exclusion based on acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations

Last update: December 2025

(Former) membership in group such as ISIL and *Jabhat al-Nusrah/HTS* could trigger relevant considerations and require an examination of the applicant's activities under Article 12(2)(c)/Article 17(1)(c) QD/QR, in addition to the considerations under Article 12(2)(b)/Article 17(1)(b) QD/QR.

Membership alone is not sufficient to substantiate exclusion, however, participation in the activities of a terrorist group, undertaken with knowledge of the fact that such participation will contribute to the criminal activities of the terrorist group, should be given significant weight in the exclusion assessment (Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA).

The application of exclusion should be based on an individual assessment of the specific facts in the context of the applicant's activities within that organisation. The position of the applicant within the organisation would constitute a relevant consideration and a high-ranking position could justify a (rebuttable) presumption of individual responsibility for crimes or acts within the scope of Article 12(2)(c)/Article 17(1)(c) QD/QR. Other engagement with a group, such as the aforementioned, could also trigger exclusion considerations. Nevertheless, it remains necessary to examine all relevant circumstances before an exclusion decision can be made.

Where the available information indicates possible involvement in crimes against peace, war crimes or crimes against humanity, the assessment would need to be made in light of the exclusion grounds under Article 12(2)(a)/Article 17(1)(a) QD/QR.

8.4. Exclusion based on constituting a danger to the community or to the security of the Member State

Last update: December 2025

In the examination of the application for international protection, the exclusion ground under Article 17(1)(d) QD/QR (danger to the community or the security of the Member State) is only applicable to persons otherwise eligible for subsidiary protection.

Unlike the other exclusion grounds, the application of this provision is based on a forward-looking assessment of risk. Nevertheless, the examination takes into account the past and/or current activities of the applicant, such as association with certain groups considered to represent a danger to the security of the Member State or criminal activities of the applicant.



Annex I: Country of origin information references

The main COI sources used in the common analysis are the following (listed alphabetically by reference used in the text)

Actors	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Country Focus (December 2019) Available in PDF at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2019_12_EASO_COI_Report_Syria_Actors.pdf
COI update	EUAA COI Query: Syria - Major human rights, security, and socio-economic developments (October 2025) Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2025_10_EUAA_COI_Query_Response_Q33_Syria_Major_Human_rights.pdf
Country Focus 2023	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Country Focus (October 2023) Available in PDF at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2023_10_EUAA_COI_Report_Syria_Country_focus.pdf
Country Focus 2024	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Country Focus (October 2024) Available in PDF at: https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2024-10/2024_10_EUAA_COI_Report_Syria_Country_Focus.pdf
Country Focus March 2025	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Country Focus (March 2025) Available in PDF at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2025_03_EUAA_COI_Report_Syria_Country_Focus.pdf Available online at: https://euaa.europa.eu/coi/syria/2025/country-focus/coi-report-syria-country-focus
Country Focus July 2025	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Country Focus (July 2025) Available in PDF at: https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-syria-country-focus-1 Available online at: https://euaa.europa.eu/coi/syria/2025/country-focus/coi-report-syria-country-focus-July-2025
Security 2020	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Security Situation (May 2020) Available in PDF at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/05_2020_EASO_COI_Report_Syria_Security_situation.pdf
Security 2021	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Security Situation (July 2021) Available in PDF at:

	https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2021_07_EASO_COI_Report_Syria_Security_situation.pdf
Security 2022	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Security Situation (September 2022) Available in PDF at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2022_09_EUAA_COI_Report_Syria_Security_situation.pdf
Security 2024	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Security Situation (October 2024) Available in PDF at: https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2024-10/2024-10-EUAA_COI_Report_Syria_Security_Situation_0.pdf
Situation of women	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Situation of women (February 2020) Available in PDF at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/02_2020_EASO_COI_Report_Syria_Situation_of_women.pdf
Targeting 2020	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Targeting of individuals (March 2020) Available in PDF at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/03_2020_Syria_Targeting_of_individuals.pdf
Targeting 2022	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Targeting of individuals (September 2022) Available in PDF at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2022_09_EUAA_COI_Report_Syria_Targeting_of_individuals.pdf



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