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Interim Country Guidance: Syria



Based on COI up to March 2025

Interim

Country Guidance: Syria

Common analysis and guidance note

Based on information up to 11 March 2025

June 2025



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List of abbreviations and glossary

Term	Definition
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
COI	Country of origin information
DAANES	Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, formerly known as AANES
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
GoS	Government of Syria under the Assad regime
HTS	Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham
IDP	Internally displaced person
IED	Improvised explosive device
IPA	Internal Protection Alternative
ISIL	The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Islamic State, or Daesh
PKK	Kurdistan Worker's Party (<i>Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê</i>)
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



Term	Definition
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
RPG	Rocket-propelled grenades
SAF	Syrian Arab Forces under the Assad regime
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
Sharia	The religious law of Islam, Islamic canonical law
SNA	Syrian National Army
SOHR	Syrian Observatory of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
YPG	Kurdish People's Protection Units
YPJ	Kurdish Women's Protection Units



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 newly adopted Qualification Regulation (QR)⁽²⁾, which will repeal the QD with its entry into application on 1 July 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 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 'EUAA, [Country Guidance: Methodology](#), November 2024'.

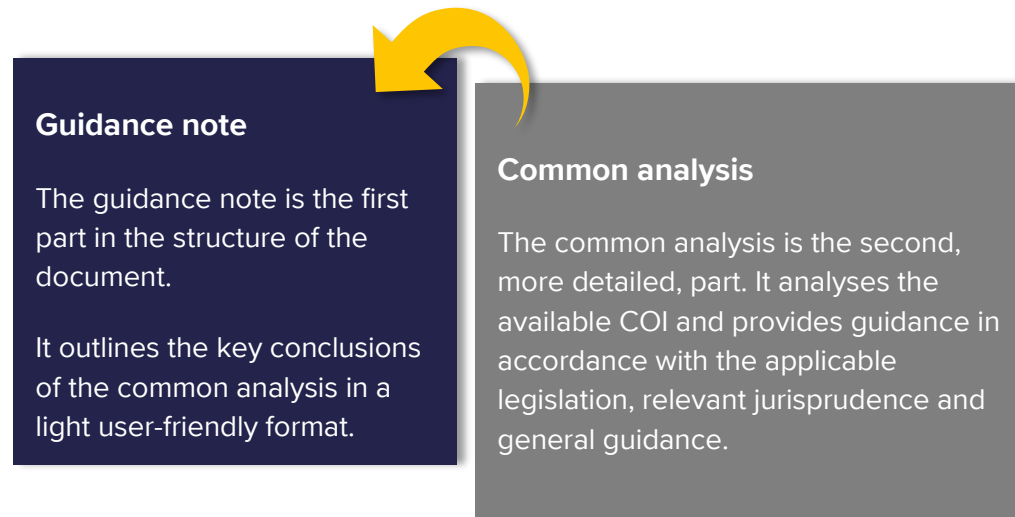
This document encompasses the development, review and update of country guidance and regulates the work of the EUAA Country Guidance Network and all related processes.

- (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.



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.



The Country Guidance documents should be read in conjunction with the separate document 'EUAA, [Country Guidance: Explained](#), February 2025'.

This document outlines the general guidance relied upon in this analysis, as well as the methodological framework, approach and indicators used to assess the different elements of qualification for international protection.



Scope of this update

The current version of the guidance updates the 'EUAA, [Country Guidance: Syria](#), April 2024'.

Following the recent developments in Syria, namely the fall of the Assad regime and the establishment of a Transitional Administration, EU+ countries together with the EUAA identified the need to update the 'EUAA, [Country Guidance: Syria](#), April 2024'.

The contents of the guidance note and the common analysis are structured according to 'EUAA, [Chapters of the country guidance](#)' in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'. However, given the short reference period on which the present guidance is based on and the uncertainties deriving from the transitional situation in Syria, the structure and content of some chapters may be different, compared to other country guidance documents.

This common analysis is based on country of origin information (COI) covering the period from November 2024 to February 2025. Some limited additional information until 11 March has also been reflected. Where relevant, some information has been added directly from the reporting sources.

This interim document takes stock of the change of regime and draws some preliminary conclusions pending a fuller update when the situation in Syria permits. It aims to provide guidance on the impact of the fall of the Assad regime on the profiles who were covered in the 'EUAA, [Country Guidance: Syria](#), April 2024'. Given the short timeframe of this guidance, information is limited and the assessment it contains are necessarily provisional. It builds upon the 'EUAA, [Country Guidance: Syria](#), April 2024', and addresses the impact of the change of regime in the country on the protection needs of the specific applicant profiles covered in the previous guidance.

Where an applicant is not found eligible for refugee status, guidance is provided on the relevant considerations for granting subsidiary protection under Article 15(a) and Article 15(b) QD/QR.

The section on the application of Article 15(c) QD/QR gives an overview of the main security developments and trends in indiscriminate violence from November 2024 to February 2025, including early March 2025. It also provides guidance combining quantitative and qualitative elements in a comprehensive holistic assessment. The importance to take into account personal circumstances is further highlighted.

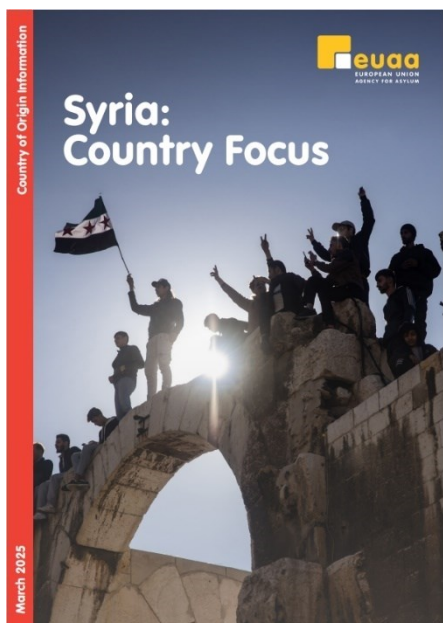
This interim guidance further gives an update regarding the actors of persecution or serious harm and evaluates if any actors of protection could be identified.

Lastly, this document analyses the possibility of an internal protection alternative in Damascus city.



It should be noted that the information referred to in this document is generally limited to events having taken place until 28 February 2025, with some minor updates from the period until 11 March 2025. Within this timeframe, information on several topics remained limited and/or conflicting. Any more recent COI available at the time of examining Syrian applications should be considered.

This update is based on the following EUAA COI report:



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>

[Annex: Country of origin information references](#)

provides further details on all COI reports used as a basis for the analysis within this document. References and links within this document are to the respective sections of these COI reports.

Check the [EUAA COI webpage](#) for the latest EUAA COI products on Syria.



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.

Guidance note

Last update: June 2025



The present version of this Country Guidance document on Syria updates the one issued in April 2024. This interim document takes stock of the change of regime in Syria in December 2024 and draws some preliminary conclusions pending a fuller update when the situation permits.

The guidance note on Syria is produced by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) together with EU+ countries⁴ in accordance with Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation⁵. 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 as well as the most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

A main actor of persecution and serious harm, **the Assad regime, has vanished**. Since its takeover of power, **Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) has been *de facto* ruling Syria in the framework of the Transitional Administration**. A number of non-State actors continue to be active, including the Syrian Democratic Forces, the Asayish, the Syrian National Army, and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), etc. See [Actors of persecution or serious harm](#).

The change of circumstances in Syria will have significantly reduced the fear or risk of persecution or serious harm by the former regime claimed by a number of applicants. However, not all applications lodged before the fall of the former regime should be considered moot, especially in cases where additional or other actors of persecution or serious harm were implicated. In such cases, the risk of persecution or serious harm may have persisted, diminished or increased. Further, the situation in post-Assad Syria may give rise to new or renewed risks of persecution or serious harm.

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

- [\(Former\) Members of anti-Assad armed groups](#), now integrated in the new Syrian military

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.



- [Draft evaders](#)
- [Military deserters and defectors](#) from the Syrian Armed Forces of the Assad regime

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

- [Journalists, other media professionals and human rights activists](#) who are seen as critical by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the Syrian National Army (SNA), and/or the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), in the areas where these groups have operational capacity
- [Persons with perceived links to ISIL](#) and the family members of such persons
- [Kurds](#) from areas under the control of the SNA
- [Members of and persons perceived to be collaborating with the SDF/YPG](#) in areas where the SNA operates
- [Persons with diverse SOGIESC \(also referred to as LGBTIQ persons\)](#)

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

- [\(Former\) Members of anti-Assad armed groups](#), not integrated in the new Syrian military and in relation to the potential targeting by the Transitional Administration
- [Journalists, other media professionals and human rights activists](#) in relation to the potential targeting by the Transitional Administration
- [Civilians who resided in territories previously controlled by ISIL](#)
- [Sunni Arabs](#)
- Other [Kurds](#) than those from areas under the control of the SNA
- [Women and girls](#)
- [Children](#)
- [\(Former\) members of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups](#)
- [Former Assad government officials, and civilians perceived to be supporting the Assad regime](#)
- [Alawites](#)
- [Members of and persons perceived to be collaborating with the SDF/YPG](#) in Kurdish controlled areas
- [Persons perceived to be opposing the SDF/YPG](#)
- [Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish forces](#)
- [Christians](#)

Short of clear conclusions at the time of writing, some considerations are provided for:

- [Political activists, Assad-opposition party members, protesters, and civilians originating from areas associated with opposition by the Assad regime](#)





- [Military deserters and defectors](#) from the new Syrian military in relation to the potential targeting by the Transitional Administration
- [Doctors, other medical personnel and civil defence volunteers](#)

At the time of writing, there is no sufficient information available on the situation of [Druze](#) and [Yazidis](#).

For [Palestinians](#), those who had previously availed themselves of the protection or assistance of UNRWA in Syria are to be granted *ipso facto* refugee status. For Palestinians who have not availed themselves of UNRWA protection or assistance in Syria, the assessment should proceed with risk and nexus analyses.

If an applicant is not considered eligible for refugee status, Member States should proceed to consider the granting of subsidiary protection.

As per the application of [Article 15\(a\) QD/QR](#), executions have been reported in the recent months. Therefore, some profiles of applicants from Syria may be at risk of death penalty or execution.

[Article 15\(b\) QD/QR](#) may also apply, such as in the cases of healthcare facilities having been deliberately destroyed or damaged in targeted attacks and where the supply of food, water and electricity as well as the entry of basic necessities in cases of sieges has been intentionally restricted; in the case of harsh and life-threatening prison and detention conditions and ill-treatment in detention; and in the case of criminal violence due to a state of lawlessness in several governorates.

With regard to subsidiary protection under [Article 15\(c\) QD/QR](#), it is not considered feasible to assess the risk of serious harm in relation to the level of indiscriminate violence in Syria under the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

The protection needs of Syrian applicants are further compounded by the general lack of protection in the country, since **the Transitional Administration is not considered an [Actors of protection](#) in accordance with Article 7 QD/QR and no other actor fulfils these requirements.**

Taking into account the assessment with regard to the three criteria under Article 8 QD/QR, **[Internal protection alternative](#) may be applicable in Damascus city only in exceptional cases.**

The case officer should be reminded that [Exclusion](#) considerations may be relevant in a number of cases concerning applicants from Syria. Particular attention should be paid to acts committed by various actors in the framework of the offensive launched by HTS against the Assad regime, and the subsequent establishment of an interim government under HTS rule.

It should also be noted that **UNHCR does not consider that the requirements for cessation of refugee status for beneficiaries of international protection originating from Syria have currently been met.**





Common analysis





Recent developments in Syria

Last update: June 2025

The information below is retrieved from the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.1, 1.2.2, 4.5, 4.5.6](#); [Country Focus 2024](#), 2. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

In late November 2024, Syrian rebels, led by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), initiated a significant offensive, culminating in the fall of the Assad regime on December 8, 2024. The rebels swiftly captured key cities, including Aleppo, Hama, and Damascus, leading to the end of the Assad family's decades-long rule, with the family fleeing abroad.

A transitional government, formed by HTS and other militias, pledged to stabilise the nation and draft a new constitution within three years. Ahmad al-Sharaa, also known as Abu Mohamed al-Jolani, was appointed transitional president on January 29, 2025, and outlined plans to promote reconciliation and inclusivity while emphasising the importance of preserving national unity. In late January, the transitional administration annulled Syria's 2012 constitution and disbanded the former government's parliament, military, and security agencies. Al-Sharaa announced the creation of an interim legislative council and declared a general amnesty for Syrian army soldiers, abolished conscription, and initiated a reintegration process for former government and military personnel, including high-ranking officials.

On 13 March, Syrian interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa signed a constitutional declaration outlining a five-year transitional period. The declaration stipulates that Islam is the religion of the president and Islamic jurisprudence the primary source of legislation. It also guarantees judicial independence, freedom of expression and media, and political, educational, and labour rights for women. On 29 March, Sharaa announced the formation of a transitional government composed of 23 ministers from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, including Alawite, Christian, Druze, and Kurdish representatives. One woman was appointed to the post of Minister of Social Affairs and Labour. The transitional government does not have a prime minister, and Sharaa is expected to lead the executive branch in his role as interim president ⁽⁶⁾. The government is dominated by ministers associated with HTS. It also includes ministers who served in the Assad government before 2011. No member of the Democratic Autonomous Administration or North and East Syria (DAANES) or the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) is in the cabinet ⁽⁷⁾.

⁶ Security Council Report, April 2025 Monthly Forecast, Posted 31 March 2025, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2025-04/syria-78.php>

⁷ DW, How inclusive is Syria's new technocratic cabinet?, 31 March 2025, <https://www.dw.com/en/is-syrias-new-technocratic-cabinet-as-inclusive-as-it-could-be/a-72100412>; New York Times (The), Syrians Wake Up to a New Government, 30 March 2025, [url](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/30/world/middleeast/syria-new-transitional-government.html); DW, How inclusive is Syria's new technocratic cabinet?, 31 March 2025, [url](https://www.dw.com/en/is-syrias-new-technocratic-cabinet-as-inclusive-as-it-could-be/a-72100412); New York Times (The), Syrians Wake Up to a New Government, 30 March 2025, [urlhttps://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/30/world/middleeast/syria-new-transitional-government.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/30/world/middleeast/syria-new-transitional-government.html).





Syria's political future remains uncertain due to challenges such as ethnic tensions and the integration of various militias. Reports of attacks on ethnic and religious minorities, particularly in the coastal region and the provinces of Homs and Hama, have increased. In the north, factions vie for influence and control, with ongoing clashes between Turkish-backed militias under the Syrian National Army (SNA) and the US-backed Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). In March 2025, SDF leaders agreed to integrate their forces and institutions into the new Syrian government. Previously, the interim government had dissolved all opposition parties and military groups by the end of January. The northeast has seen attacks by the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) against SDF troops.

The civil war and rebel offensive have caused significant internal displacement (see [Displacement and return movements](#)). The transitional administration has initiated economic reforms, including public sector employee reductions, tax system reforms, and reopening border crossings. The United States and the EU Council have lifted various sanctions to facilitate humanitarian aid and economic recovery.

The humanitarian situation in Syria remains extremely critical. After more than 13 years of civil war, around 90% of the population lives in poverty and is largely dependent on humanitarian aid. Half of the country's infrastructure, including hospitals, schools and water supply systems, has been severely damaged or destroyed. Access to basic services, such as medical care and education, is limited in many areas. International organisations such as the United Nations and NGOs are providing emergency aid, but financial resources are limited. Ultimately, the long-term stabilisation and reconstruction of Syria depend on political developments and international support.



The analysis and guidance in this document should be considered valid as long as events and developments in the country fall within the trends and patterns described in the COI report on which they are based.



Displacement and return movements

Last update: June 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 information below is retrieved from the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 4.5.5, 4.5.6](#). Available information from UNHCR is also taken into account. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

Since 27 November 2024, the number of people newly displaced by conflict increased significantly, peaking at 1.1 million on 12 December. According to UN sources, this number was later estimated to be 650 000 as of 5 February 2025. There were notable waves of conflict-related displacement: one in December 2024 in the northern part of the country, and another in March 2025 from the coastal area, following serious security incidents in those regions.

In total, according to UNHCR estimations, between 27 November 2024 and 26 February 2025, an estimated 885 294 IDPs had returned, while about 7.4 million remained internally displaced. Reported concerns hampering IDPs’ return included destruction of property, inadequate infrastructure, insecurity, as well as access to civil documentation and judicial services, including documents regarding housing, land, and property rights.

According to UNHCR estimates, between 8 December 2024 and late February 2025, some 297 292 Syrians returned to Syria from abroad. Fifty-three percents of them returned from Lebanon, 25 % from Türkiye and 14 % from Jordan. Voluntary returns from Türkiye, amounted to 35 114 as of 30 December 2024 according to Turkish government figures.

UNHCR indicated that, from the beginning of 2024 until late February 2025, the governorates where returnees from abroad mainly returned were Aleppo and Raqqqa, followed by Dar’a, Homs, Rural Damascus and Idlib. The potential permanent character of those returns remains unclear.

As of 8 May 2025, UNHCR estimates that 481 730 Syrians have crossed back to the country from neighbouring countries since 8 December 2024. Some 1 186 147 IDPs have returned to their homes ⁽⁸⁾.

⁸ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Regional Flash Update #26- Syria Situation Crisis, May 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/116242>, [accessed 23 May 2025].



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.

Please also consult the UNHCR Position on Returns to the Syrian Arab Republic, still valid at the time of writing this interim guidance, stating that:

‘For the time being UNHCR is not *promoting* large-scale voluntary repatriation to Syria (...)

UNHCR for the time being continues to call on States not to forcibly return Syrian nationals and former habitual residents of Syria, including Palestinians previously residing in Syria, to any part of Syria (...)

UNHCR does not consider that the requirements for cessation of refugee status for beneficiaries of international protection originating from Syria have currently been met’⁹).

⁹ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Position on Returns to the Syrian Arab Republic, December 2024, <https://www.refworld.org/policy/countrypos/unhcr/2024/en/149254> [accessed 23 May 2025]. At the time of writing, ‘UNHCR’s position on Syria returns from December 2024 remains unchanged’, <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/unhcr-operational-framework-voluntary-return-syrian-refugees-and-idps-2025>

Actors of persecution or serious harm

Last update: June 2025

The following sections highlight the main actors of persecution or serious harm in Syria as well as their areas of control and/or activity, in a non-exhaustive manner.



The Assad regime, which was considered a main actor of persecution or serious harm in Syria, has vanished.

The following subsections relate to other actors of persecution or serious harm such as [The Transitional Administration](#), the [Syrian National Army \(SNA\)](#), the [Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#), the [Islamic State of Iraq and Levant \(ISIL\)](#) and [Other non-State actors](#).

Areas of control and influence

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 2.1](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

In Syria, a wide range of groups and individuals may be considered actors of persecution or serious harm. This includes a multitude of internal and external actors pursuing their own interests and goals.

The Assad regime, which was considered a main actor of persecution or serious harm in Syria, has vanished. On 27 November 2024, the militant Islamist group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), led by Ahmad Al-Sharaa, commanded a large-scale offensive in northwestern Syria. They faced minimal resistance as Syrian army forces abandoned their positions. HTS and its allied factions achieved control of the capital on 8 December 2024.

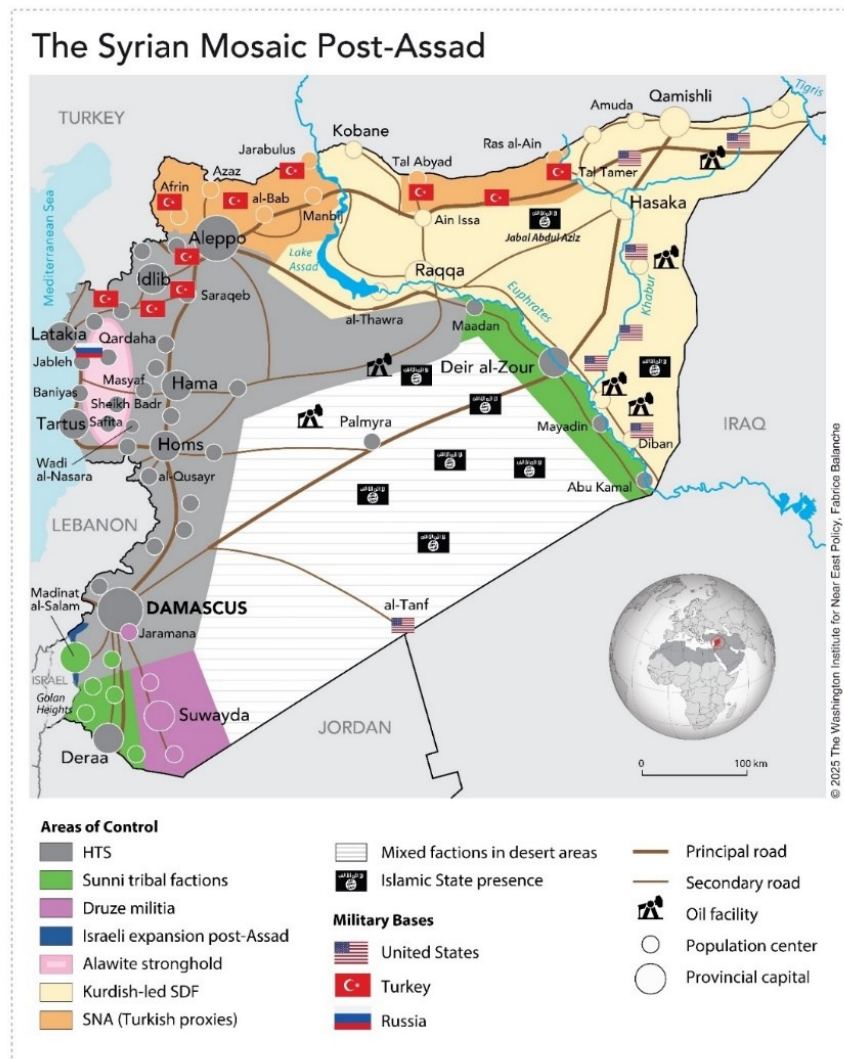
At the time of writing, the HTS-led coalition was in control of most areas previously held by the Assad regime, amounting to just over 60% of Syrian territory. In the north, various factions have struggled for influence and control. Clashes between Turkish-backed militias operating under the umbrella of the Syrian National Army (SNA) and the US-backed Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) continued.

After the takeover, the HTS established a transitional government primarily composed of officials from the former Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) in Idlib [see [Security Situation 2023, 2.1.2 \(a\)](#)]. By mid-February, the transitional administration had successfully integrated around hundred armed factions, including the U.S.-backed Free Syrian Army, into a new Syrian military and Ministry of Defence. Some factions remain resistant. In early March 2025, the SDF signed a deal to integrate their armed forces and civilian institutions into the new Syrian government.

Shortly after the Assad regime fall, the Israeli military moved into the UN-patrolled buffer zone in the Golan Heights and beyond into Syrian territory, in the areas of southern Quneitra and south-west Dar'a. Also, Israel carried out hundreds of airstrikes in early December aimed at destroying weapon sites across Syria, more than half of which took place in Dar'a, Damascus, Rural Damascus and Latakia governorates. As of 20 February 2025, Israeli incursions into and beyond the buffer zone were ongoing.

The map below ([Figure 1. © The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Fabrice Balanche, Syria, Areas of control, 28 February 2025](#)) outlines the approximate areas of control and influence in Syria as of March 3, 2025. This map presents an indication and cannot be seen as an absolute representation of the situation in terms of spatial or temporal accuracy. The depictions on this map do not imply any opinion on the part of the EUAA concerning the legal status or effective control over any territory in the country.

Figure 1. © The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Fabrice Balanche, Syria, Areas of control, 28 February 2025 [\[Country Focus 2025, 1\]](#)



The Transitional Administration

Last update: June 2025

This analysis is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 2.1](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

For information on the human rights violations committed by HTS before the fall of the Assad regime, see 'EUAA, [3.4. Anti-government armed groups](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'.

For further information about the territorial control and the operational capacity of the Transitional Administration, see [Country Focus 2025, 4.1](#).

HTS and its allied factions formed the Military Operations Administration (MOA) in light of their offensive against the Assad regime. Following the overthrow of Bashar Al-Assad, troops comprising the MOA became the primary military force on the ground. On 24 December 2024, the MOA announced the dissolution of all military factions and their integration under the Ministry of Defence. HTS itself announced that it would lead by example, dissolve as an armed group and integrate into the armed forces.

HTS claimed they made efforts to avoid harming the civilian population during their offensive. Some areas that were previously held by the SDF were taken over based on agreements. Following its takeover of power, the Transitional Administration conducted extensive military operations targeting [\(Former\) members of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups](#), which resulted in various human rights violations, including reported deaths in custody as well as allegations of torture. In early March 2025, summary executions of civilians, most of whom were [Alawites](#), were reported.



The fall of the Assad regime and the *de facto* rule of HTS and the Transitional Administration over Syria created an unexpected and unprecedented situation. At the time of writing, the intentions and mode of governance of the new authorities remain unclear.

Syrian National Army (SNA)

Last update: June 2025

This analysis is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 1.3.3, 2.2, 4.2](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

For information on the human rights violations committed by the SNA before the fall of the Assad regime, see EUAA, [3.4. Anti-government armed groups](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024.



For further information about the territorial control and the operational capacity of the SNA, see [Country Focus 2025, 4.2](#).

On 29 January 2025, the Transitional Administration announced the dissolution of former rebel groups, among which the SNA. Some SNA groups have been integrated in name only, continuing to fight the SDF along the Euphrates river and operating as the SNA in northwest Syria where they were only gradually handing over tasks to the MOA. Some SNA faction leaders reportedly showed reluctance to integrate the Ministry of Defence, fearing they might be held accountable for past human rights abuses or losing their political clout.

After the fall of the Assad regime, SNA factions were reportedly involved in kidnapping of civilians, beating and looting as well as in human rights violations against [Kurds](#). Reports also indicated bombardments of villages.

Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)

Last update: June 2025

This analysis is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.4](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

For information on the human rights violations committed by the SDF before the fall of the Assad regime, see EUAA, '[3.3. Syrian Democratic Forces and Asayish](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024.

For further information about the territorial control and operational capacity of the SDF, see [Country Focus 2025, 4.3](#).

The SDF are a military alliance in which the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) is a prominent component. In March 2025, SDF leaders signed a deal with the Transitional Administration to integrate their armed forces and civilian institutions into the new Syrian military and Ministry of Defence. The agreement stipulates a complete cessation of hostilities and requires the SDF to cede control of border posts, the airport, and key oil and gas fields. The practical implementation of this agreement could not be monitored within the scope of this interim guidance.

After the fall of the Assad regime, the SDF engaged in arrests of [persons perceived to be opposing them](#) and shootings of [protesters](#). Recruitment of children by the Revolutionary Youth Movement, affiliated with the YPG/PKK, continued (see [Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish forces](#)).





Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL)

Last update: June 2025

This analysis is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 2.5](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

For information on the human rights violations committed by ISIL before the fall of the Assad regime, see EUAA, '[3.5. Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant \(ISIL\)](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024.

For further information about the operational capacity of the ISIL, see [Country Focus 2025, 2.5, 4.1.3](#).

ISIL reportedly utilised the power vacuum left by the fall of the Assad regime to attack former government forces, expanding its presence in Homs and Hama governorates into areas of the Syrian desert vacated by Assad's forces. The UN Secretary-General reported that the Syrian desert region was still a 'centre for external operational planning' for ISIL and remained crucial for its operations. ISIL reportedly managed to seize large amounts of weapons left by former government troops. Meanwhile, the US expanded its airstrikes on ISIL camps and operatives, likely weakening the group.

The Syrian Observatory of Human Rights (SOHR) documented 17 ISIL operations in January 2025, mainly in SDF-held areas. The group's operations involved ISIL cells attacking SDF patrols (see [Members of and persons perceived to be collaborating with the SDF/YPG](#)) and checkpoints, with some of these attacks involving Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), hand grenades and rocket-propelled grenades (RPG).

Other non-State actors

Last update: June 2025

This analysis is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 1.3.5, 1.3.7](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

For information on the human rights violations committed by other non-state actors before the fall of the Assad regime, see EUAA, '[3.6. Other non-State actors](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024.

Other non-State actors, such as family members, the society at large, criminal gangs, unaffiliated gunmen, and other armed groups also committed human rights violations.

Some examples include domestic, sexual and gender-based violence against [women and girls](#) and violence against [persons with diverse SOGIESC \(also referred to as LGBTIQ persons\)](#).





Refugee status

This chapter provides analysis and guidance on the potential international protection needs of selected profiles of applicants. These profiles were identified based on their relevance in the caseload of EU Member States. The changing circumstances in Syria might affect the composition of the caseload. Member States along with the EUAA will closely monitor the situation and may adapt the list of Refugee Status profiles in future updates.

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 international protection needs. Furthermore, the order of listed profiles does not reflect any ranking of the potential level of risk of persecution.

General remarks

While the conclusions under this common analysis provide general guidance, the international protection needs of each applicant should be **examined individually**. The non-exhaustive lists of risk-impacting circumstances, which would increase or decrease the risk of persecution, are to be taken into account.

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 guidance on how to read the following subsections, please refer to 'EUAA, ['Refugee status'](#) in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.

The change of regime in Syria might have impacted the fear or risk of persecution or serious harm for a number of applicants. Nevertheless, not all applications submitted prior to the collapse of the Assad regime should be deemed obsolete, especially in cases where other actors of persecution or serious harm than the Assad regime were implicated. In such cases, the risk may have persisted, diminished or increased. The situation in post-Assad Syria may also give rise to new risks of persecution or serious harm.

Accordingly, the chapter on refugee status distinguishes between three categories of profiles: [Profiles for which the Assad regime was considered the sole actor of persecution](#), [Profiles at risk of persecution from multiple actors \(including previously the Assad regime\)](#), and [Profiles at risk of persecution from other actors than the Assad regime \(for which the Assad regime was not considered an actor of persecution\)](#).

The fall of the Assad regime and the *de facto* rule of HTS and the Transitional Administration over Syria created an unexpected and unprecedented situation. At the time of writing, the intentions and mode of governance of the new authorities remain unclear.





In this evolving political situation of Syria (see also [Recent developments in Syria](#)), certain elements may be particularly relevant to the assessment of international protection needs and should therefore be given attention. For instance, the political opinion, held by or imputed to the applicant, as well as any behaviour perceived as transgressing Islamic norms or laws should be duly taken into consideration. Likewise, the situation of women and girls should be monitored in light of the policies affecting them, to inform the assessment of their potential international protection needs.





Profiles for which the Assad regime was considered the sole actor of persecution

Last update: June 2025

This section covers the situation of persons for which the Assad regime was considered the sole actor of persecution.



Risks related to the Assad regime as an actor of persecution have essentially vanished. Potential new risks for individuals for whom the Assad regime was considered the sole actor of persecution are addressed below.

Following the fall of Assad's regime on 8 December 2024, a [The Transitional Administration](#) was created. At the end of January 2025, the Transitional Administration declared the annulment of Syria's 2012 constitution and the disbandment of the former government's parliament, military, and security agencies.

Persons perceived to have opposed the Assad regime

Last update: June 2025

The analyses below are primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.2, 1.3.2, 4.3](#); [Country Focus 2024, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

This profile covers the post-Assad situation of persons who were perceived by the Assad regime to oppose it. The Assad regime viewed as political dissent the activities of wide categories of individuals, including members of anti-government armed groups, protesters, political activists and opposition party members. Individuals from former opposition-held areas or civilians from recaptured areas were also treated with a high level of suspicion.

(Former) Members of anti-Assad armed groups

Members of anti-Assad armed groups had been subjected to persecution by the Assad regime (e.g. assassination, torture, arbitrary arrest). As mentioned above, the risk related to the Assad regime has vanished.

At the time of writing, there is no specific information as to their treatment by actors currently present and operating in Syria. However, this should not be interpreted as an indication that there might not be further international protection needs.

Therefore, **it can be concluded that:**



(Former) members of anti-Assad armed groups, now integrated in the new Syrian military, would in general not have a well-founded fear of persecution from the Transitional Administration.

As per the potential targeting by the Transitional Administration of the (former) members of anti-Assad armed groups, not integrated in the new Syrian military, the individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the applicant to face persecution should be made on a case-by-case basis and should take into consideration the most recent COI.

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**.

With reference to the potential targeting by other actors such as the Syrian National Army (SNA), the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), see [Members of and persons perceived to be collaborating with the SDF/YPG](#) and [Persons perceived to be opposing the SDF/YPG](#).



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this sub-profile, as (former) members of anti-Assad armed groups may have been involved in excludable acts.

Political activists, Assad-opposition party members, protesters, and civilians originating from areas associated with opposition by the Assad regime

Individuals under this sub-profile had been subjected to persecution by the Assad regime (e.g. detention, torture, killing). As mentioned above, the risk related to the Assad regime has vanished.

Nevertheless, depending on the topics they advocate for, some political activists and protesters could potentially be seen as critical by the Transitional Administration and/or other actors such as the SDF [see for example [Country Focus 2025, 4.3](#)].

Should a well-founded fear of persecution be substantiated for applicants under this sub-profile, this would highly likely be for reasons of **(imputed) 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.

Also, the CJEU has ruled in 'CJEU, *S and A v Staatssecretaris van Veiligheid en Justitie*, C-151/22, Third Chamber, judgment of 21 September 2023' ⁽¹⁰⁾ on the

¹⁰ CJEU, *S and A v Staatssecretaris van Veiligheid en Justitie*, C-151/22, Third Chamber, judgment of 21 September 2023,



assessment of the well-founded fear of persecution on account of political opinions developed in the host Member State.

Persons who evaded or deserted military service

Last update: June 2025

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 analyses below are primarily based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 1.2.2](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

Draft evaders

Individuals under this sub-profile had been subjected to persecution by the Assad regime (see 'EUAA, [4.2.2. Draft evaders](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'). As mentioned above, the risk related to the Assad regime has vanished.

The Transitional Administration ended mandatory military conscription, except in situations of national emergencies. The Syrian army is said to become an army of volunteers in which the population will be encouraged to participate, with the aim to secure the country's borders. However, potential conscription campaign in case of national emergencies might happen.

While no sources reported on conscription by the Transitional Administration, 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.



Draft evaders would in general not have a well-founded fear of persecution.

Military deserters and defectors

Military deserters and defectors had been subjected to persecution by the Assad regime (see 'EUAA, [4.2.3. Military deserters and defectors](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'). As mentioned above, the risk related to the Assad regime has vanished.

Regarding the risk for military deserters and defectors in relation to their service in the Assad armed forces, please refer to [\(Former\) members of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups](#).

<https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?jsessionid=78F1E42DD71AE262F3228D99B967856C?text=&docid=277631&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=3903916>





Military deserters and defectors from the Syrian Armed Forces of the Assad regime would in general not have a well-founded fear of persecution.



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile, as members of the Syrian Armed Forces of the Assad regime may have been involved in excludable acts.

At the time of writing, there is no information available as per the treatment by the Transitional Administration of military deserters and defectors from the new Syrian military. However, the specific group to which the applicant has defected should be duly taken into consideration to assess potential international protection needs in regard of potential targeting by the Transitional Administration. Please refer to [\(Former\) Members of anti-Assad armed groups](#).



For assessing international protection needs related to military service, please refer to 'EUAA jointly with Member States, [Practical Guide on Political Opinion](#), December 2022', 3.1. Military service.

See also CJEU, *Andre Lawrence Shepherd v Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, C-472/13, judgment of 26 February 2015 (Shepherd) ⁽¹¹⁾, and *EZ v Federal Republic of Germany*, represented by the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, C-238/19, judgment of 19 November 2020 (EZ) ⁽¹²⁾.

¹¹ CJEU, *Andre Lawrence Shepherd v Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, C-472/13, judgment of 26 February 2015 (Shepherd), <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=162544&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=8849097><https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=162544&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=8849097>

¹² CJEU, *EZ v Federal Republic of Germany*, represented by the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, C-238/19, judgment of 19 November 2020 (EZ), <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=233922&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=8849899>



Profiles at risk of persecution from multiple actors (including previously the Assad regime)

Last update: June 2025

This section covers the situation of persons for which the Assad regime was considered as only one among other actors of persecution.



The regime change would partly impact, but not necessarily annihilate, the international protection needs of the profiles under this category. Risks related to other actors of persecution than the Assad regime are addressed below.

Journalists, other media professionals and human rights activists

Last update: June 2025

This profile refers to journalists, other media professionals and bloggers seen as critical. It also refers to human rights activists, i.e. persons who individually or with others, act to promote or protect human rights. For guidance on political opposition activists, see [Political activists, Assad-opposition party members, protesters, and civilians originating from areas associated with opposition by the Assad regime](#).

Journalists, other media professionals and human rights activists had been subjected to persecution (e.g. killing, arbitrary arrest, detention without trial, kidnapping, torture, enforced disappearance) by the Assad regime, the [Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#), the [Syrian National Army \(SNA\)](#), and the [Islamic State of Iraq and Levant \(ISIL\)](#). As mentioned above, the risk related to the Assad regime has vanished. Nevertheless, the SDF, the SNA and ISIL are still present and operating and there is no information available indicating that their approach towards journalists, other media professionals and human rights activists has changed.

While HTS has arrested journalists and media activists and subjected them to detention under harsh conditions in the past, there is, at the time of writing, no specific information as to the treatment of journalists, other media professionals and human rights activists by [The Transitional Administration](#).

Therefore, **it can be concluded that:**

Acts reported to be committed against individuals under this profile are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution (e.g. abduction, killing, arbitrary arrest, kidnapping, torture, ill-treatment, enforced disappearance).

In the case of journalists, other media professionals and human rights activists who are seen as critical by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the Syrian National Army (SNA),



and/or the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated in the areas where these groups have operational capacity.

As per the potential targeting by the Transitional Administration, the individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the applicant to face persecution should be made on a case-by-case basis and should take into consideration the most recent COI.

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**. In the case of persecution by extremist groups such as ISIL, it may also be for **reasons of religion**.

Doctors, other medical personnel and civil defence volunteers

Last update: June 2025

This profile refers to doctors and medical personnel in all parts of Syria. It also refers to members of the White Helmets, also known as Syria Civil Defence, a humanitarian organisation providing support to civilians in Syria, especially after airstrikes, attacks and clashes.

Doctors, other medical personnel and civil defence volunteers had been subjected to persecution by several actors before the fall of the Assad regime (see 'EUAA, [4.9. Doctors, other medical personnel and civil defence volunteers](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'). As mentioned above, the risk related to the Assad regime has vanished. In relation to other actors, there is no recent information that indicates the targeting of individuals under this profile for the mere fact of being a doctor, other medical personnel or civil defence volunteer.

In most cases where a well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, it would be related to circumstances falling under other profiles included in this guidance, for example, for **reasons of (imputed) political opinion**, since links to specific actors might be imputed to them.



Nevertheless, being a doctor, other medical personnel or a civil defence volunteer, is an individual circumstance that should be taken into account for the assessment of international protection needs under [Article 15\(c\) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict](#).

Persons with perceived links to ISIL

Last update: June 2025

This profile refers to persons with perceived links to ISIL and family members of such persons, as well as civilians who resided in territories previously controlled by ISIL.



It should be noted that a very careful examination of international protection needs and exclusion 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 primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), [1.1](#), [1.3.5](#), [2.5](#); [Targeting 2022](#), 3.1, 3.2; [Actors](#), 4.1.4. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

Persons with perceived links to ISIL had been subjected to persecution (e.g. enforced disappearance, death penalty, killing) by the Assad regime and the [Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#). As mentioned above, the risk related to the Assad regime has vanished. The SDF are still present and operating against ISIL and there is no information available indicating that their approach towards persons with perceived links to ISIL has changed.

While HTS has conducted campaigns against ISIL in the past, there is, at the time of writing, no specific information as to the treatment of persons affiliated with ISIL by [The Transitional Administration](#). However, this should not be interpreted as an indication that there might not be further international protection needs.

Therefore, the conclusion on the international protection needs of [persons with perceived links to ISIL](#) in ‘[EUAA, Country Guidance: Syria, April 2024](#)’ would still be valid. More specifically:

‘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, acts reported to be committed against persons with perceived links to ISIL are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution (e.g. enforced disappearance, killing).

For persons with perceived links to ISIL and the family members of such persons, well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated.

In the case of civilians who resided in territories previously controlled by ISIL, 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**, in particular the perceived level of support for ISIL.

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.**’



Exclusion considerations could be particularly relevant to this profile, as members of ISIL may have been involved in excludable acts.



Sunni Arabs

Last update: June 2025

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Targeting 2022](#), 9; [Targeting 2020](#), 10.3.4. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

Sunni Arabs had been subjected to persecution (e.g. arrest, torture, execution) and discrimination by the Assad regime, the [Islamic State of Iraq and Levant \(ISIL\)](#) and Jaysh al-Islam. As mentioned above, the risk related to the Assad regime has vanished. ISIL and Jaysh al-Islam are still present and operating and there is no information available indicating that their approach towards Sunni Arabs who do not adhere to their interpretation of the Sharia has changed.

While HTS also had targeted Sunni Muslims who did not adhere to their interpretation of the Sharia, most of [The Transitional Administration](#)'s high-level positions have been filled by Sunni Arabs and there is, at the time of writing, no specific information as to the treatment by the Transitional Administration of Sunni Muslims who would not adhere to the same interpretation of the Sharia. Also, there are no reports on targeted attacks by any actor against Sunni Arabs for the mere fact of being Sunni Arabs.

Therefore, **it can be concluded that:**

The mere fact of being a Sunni Arab does not in itself lead to the level of risk required to establish well-founded fear of persecution. Should a Sunni Arab be targeted, it would be related to other circumstances. For example, the [Islamic State of Iraq and Levant \(ISIL\)](#), and Jaysh al-Islam (armed group affiliated to the SNA) have targeted Sunnis Muslims who do not adhere to their interpretation of the Sharia.

The individual assessment should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as the regional specifics (e.g. living in areas where ISIL and Jaysh al-Islam have operational capacity).

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

Kurds

Last update: June 2025

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), 1.3.3; [Country Focus 2024](#), 1.5; [Targeting 2022](#), 10. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.



The Assad regime subjected Kurds to various forms of discrimination (refer to EUAA, '[4.10.2. Kurds](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024). As mentioned above, the risk related to the Assad regime has vanished. Before the fall of the Assad regime, the [Syrian National Army \(SNA\)](#) subjected Kurds to persecution (e.g. militia violence, illegal detention, abduction, torture and ill treatment against civilians) and there is no information available indicating that their approach towards Kurds has changed.

In the framework of the agreement between the SDF and the Transitional Administration, the latter stated its intention to acknowledge the Kurdish minority as an integral part of Syria and to ensure their political representation and participation. However, at the time of writing, the practical implementation of the agreement could not be monitored (see [Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#)).

Therefore, **it can be concluded that:**

Acts reported to be committed by the SNA against Kurds are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution (e.g. militia violence, arbitrary detention, kidnapping, killing, enforced disappearance).

For Kurds from areas under the control of the SNA, well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated.

In the case of other Kurds, the potential statelessness of the applicant should be considered. More specifically, stateless Kurds are treated differently depending on their home area. Before the fall of the Assad regime, the Kurdish-led DAANES reportedly did not differentiate between stateless Kurds and those holding citizenship, and stateless individuals had equal access to services, institutions, and education. In the areas under the control of the Transitional Administration, at the time of writing, there is no information available suggesting that stateless Kurds have been naturalised which would give them access to equal rights attached to the Syrian citizenship.

See also [Members of and persons perceived to be collaborating with the SDF/YPG](#).

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this may be **for reasons of race, nationality** and/or **(imputed) political opinion**.

Women and girls

Last update: June 2025



The CJEU has ruled that

'1. Article 9(1)(b) of Directive 2011/95/EU (...) must be interpreted as meaning that **an accumulation of discriminatory measures in respect of women** – consisting, inter alia, in depriving them of any legal protection against gender-based and domestic violence and forced marriage, requiring them to cover their entire body and face,



restricting their access to healthcare and freedom of movement, prohibiting them from engaging in gainful employment or limiting the extent to which they can do so, prohibiting their access to education, prohibiting them from taking part in sports and excluding them from political life – **adopted or tolerated by an ‘actor of persecution’** within the meaning of Article 6 of that directive **comes within the concept of ‘act of persecution’**, since those measures, by their cumulative effect, undermine human dignity as guaranteed by Article 1 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.’⁽¹³⁾

The CJEU has also ruled 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**, notably⁽¹⁴⁾:

‘1. Article 10(1)(d) and (2) of Directive 2011/95/EU (...) must be interpreted as meaning that depending on the circumstances in the country of origin, women who are nationals of that country, including minors, who share as a common characteristic the fact that they genuinely come to identify with the fundamental value of equality between women and men during their stay in a Member State may be regarded as belonging to ‘a particular social group’, constituting a ‘reason for persecution’ capable of leading to the recognition of refugee status.

2. Article 24(2) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union must be interpreted as precluding the competent national authority from deciding upon an application for international protection submitted by a minor without having concretely determined the best interests of that minor in the context of an individual assessment.’



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 primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.3.5](#), [Targeting 2022](#), 13.4. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of

¹³ CJEU, *AH and FN v Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl*, C-608/22, 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>

¹⁴ 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=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=2037991>



COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

Gender-based violence (GBV) existed in Syria before 2011, but the civil war has reportedly increased its frequency, changing its nature, increasing its scope and multiplying the perpetrators involved. Women and girls have been subjected to different forms of violence amounting to persecution such as physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, and domestic violence, sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, as well as forced or early marriage, denial of economic resources or education, restrictions on movement and exploitation, arbitrary arrests, torture, enforced disappearances and displacements as well as extrajudicial killings and executions.

Even though the risk associated with the Assad regime has vanished, other actors of persecution such as the [Syrian National Army \(SNA\)](#), the [Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#), the [Islamic State of Iraq and Levant \(ISIL\)](#) and [Other non-State actors](#) are still present and operating and there is no information available indicating that their approach towards women and girls has changed. Furthermore, perpetrators of violence against women and girls are also their family members, community and the society at large.

HTS had subjected women and girls to arbitrary arrests and detentions for violations of the strict dress code and restrictions on freedom of movement. Punishments ranged from corporal punishments, such as lashing, to execution. Killings and enforced disappearance were also reported.

While the approach of [The Transitional Administration](#) regarding women's rights and representation is still unclear, there have been continued reports of killings and other human rights violations including sexual and gender-based violence by various non-state actors both in public and private spheres. With almost every third Syrian family being headed by a woman, divorced and widowed women are at risk of forced marriages and face societal restrictions and discrimination. Reports also indicate that forced and child marriage increased during the conflict as a negative coping mechanism.

Therefore, **it can be concluded that:**

Acts reported to be committed against women and girls are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution (e.g. sexual assault, abduction, enforced disappearance, killing).

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:

- **Socio-economic situation:** For example, women in need of financial support have been subjected to customary marriages. Also, child marriage has been used to face economic hardship. See also 'EUAA, [4.11.3. Forced and child marriage](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'.
- **Family status:** For example, widows and divorced women are considered to be particularly at risk of gender-based violence including the risk of forced marriage. See



also 'EUAA, ['4.11.3. Forced and child marriage'](#) in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'; 'EUAA, ['4.11.5. Single women and female-headed households'](#) in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'.

- **Lack of documentation:** For example, the lack of civil registration with regard to divorce, custody, property rights and criminal matters. See also 'EUAA, ['4.11.5. Single women and female-headed households'](#) in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'.
- **Perception of traditional gender roles in the family and environment:** The risk of honour-based violence as well as of domestic violence is dependent on how the (extended) family, including the husband, perceive the traditional gender norms. Also, the behaviour women and girls are expected to adopt in specific situations could be imposed by the family and/or the community and society at large. See also 'EUAA, ['4.11.2. Violence against women and girls: overview'](#) in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'.
- **Home area:** 'Honour' crimes can occur throughout the country, including in displaced communities, as individuals from more conservative or tribal areas may now reside in other regions. For example, 'honour' killings occur mainly in areas where tribes play an important role, such as in Sweida or north-eastern Syria, but are not limited to a specific ethnic group. See also 'EUAA, ['4.11.4. Women perceived to have violated family honour'](#) in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'.
- **Living in an IDP situation:** Individuals in IDP camps, in particular women and children, have suffered discrimination, (sexual) harassment, denial of healthcare, restricted movement due to security considerations. See also 'EUAA, ['4.11.2. Violence against women and girls: overview'](#) in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'.

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this may be for reasons of **religion**, and/or **membership of a particular social group**. 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 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.



It should be noted that the different forms of violence against women in Syria are often significantly interlinked. Therefore, the subsections under 'EUAA, ['4.11. Women and girls'](#) in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024', still valid, should be read in conjunction with this interim guidance.

Children

Last update: June 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.



The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 1.3.5, 1.3.6](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

Children have been subjected to different forms of violence amounting to persecution such as killing, maiming, exploitation, torture, sexual violence, abduction, organ trafficking, domestic violence, recruitment by armed groups, forced marriage.

Even though the risk associated with the Assad regime has vanished, other actors of persecution such as, the [Syrian National Army \(SNA\)](#), the [Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#), the [Islamic State of Iraq and Levant \(ISIL\)](#) and [Other non-State actors](#), including unspecified armed actors, are still present and operating and there is no information available indicating that their approach towards children has changed. Furthermore, perpetrators of violence against children are also their family members, community and the society at large.

HTS had subjected children to forced recruitment and had used them as ‘human shields, suicide bombers, snipers, and executioners’. There is, at the time of writing, no specific information as to the treatment of children by as [The Transitional Administration](#).

As of December 2024, an estimated 7.5 million children in Syria were in need of humanitarian assistance and around 6.4 million in need of psychological help. Due to the poor economic situation, child labour and child marriage remained prevalent coping mechanisms (see also the section on [Women and girls](#)). As of January 2025, there were some 2.4 million children out of school and an additional million at a risk of dropping out. Children were also particularly affected by a lack of civil documentation. Children of women heads of households were at an increased risk of statelessness due to the inability to register their births. Instances of recruitment of children by the SDF and by the Revolutionary Youth Movement have been reported.

Therefore, **it can be concluded that:**

Acts reported to be committed against children are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution (e.g. sexual assault, abduction, killing, some forms of child labour, forced recruitment, forced marriage).

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:

- **Socio-economic situation:** Residing in IDP camps where living conditions have been described as inhumane and life-threatening [[Country Focus 2025, 1.3.5](#)]. Children in street situations are particularly at risk of exploitation and child marriage can be used to face economic hardship. Out of school children were at increased risk of child labour and child marriage, as well as trafficking and recruitment [[Country Focus 2025, 1.3.6](#)].
- **Family status:** Children of women heads of households were at an increased risk of statelessness due to the inability to register their births [[Country Focus 2025, 1.3.5](#)].



Children without a male relative who is willing and able to provide support, would particularly be at risk (see also 'EUAA, [4.11.5. Single women and female-headed households](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024').

- **Home area:** Children living in Kurdish controlled areas are at particular risk of recruitment by armed groups. Also, schooling for around 230 000 children was interrupted in northeast Syria and schools in Aleppo and other governorates were used as collective shelters making school attendance impossible. [[Country Focus 2025, 1.3.6](#)]. See also 'EUAA, [4.12.2. Child recruitment](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'.



For more details on the different forms of persecution against children and their **potential nexus** see 'EUAA, [4.12. Children](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024', still considered valid.



The lack of documentation as a consequence of the ongoing conflict cannot as such be considered persecution, as it is not the result of an actor's deliberate actions. However, deliberate restrictions on access to documentation may amount to persecution. See EUAA, [4.12.6. Lack of documentation](#) in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024.

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. See 'EUAA, [4.12.5. Access to education](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'.

Persons with diverse SOGIESC (also referred to as LGBTIQ persons)

Last update: June 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.



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 primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.3.7. Targeting 2022](#), 14. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

Persons with diverse SOGIESC have been subjected to different forms of violence amounting to persecution such as abduction, torture, arbitrary detention, (sexual) violence, killing.

Even though the risk associated with the Assad regime has vanished, other actors of persecution such as the [Islamic State of Iraq and Levant \(ISIL\)](#), the [Syrian National Army \(SNA\)](#), and [Other non-State actors](#) such as their family, community, the society at large, are still present and operating and there is no information available indicating that their approach towards persons with diverse SOGIESC has changed.

At the time of writing, no information is available on a legal framework to be implemented by [The Transitional Administration](#) potentially leading to the discrimination or the protection of SOGIESC persons. However, since December 2024, reports indicate that armed groups linked to the new authorities as well as non-state actors committed serious violations against SOGIESC individuals amounting to arbitrary arrests and torture. Same-sex sexual acts reportedly continued to be criminalised in 2025.

Therefore, the conclusion on the international protection needs of [persons with diverse SOGIESC](#) in 'EUAA, Country Guidance: Syria, April 2024' would largely remain valid. More specifically:

'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 ⁽¹⁵⁾ or gender identity to avoid persecution.

Persecution of 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 LGBTIQ persons in Syria, because they are perceived as being different by the surrounding society. ⁽¹⁶⁾

¹⁵ 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>

¹⁶ CJEU, *X, Y and Z*, paras. 45-49.



Profiles at risk of persecution from other actors than the Assad regime (for which the Assad regime was not considered an actor of persecution)

Last update: June 2025

This section covers the situation of persons for which the Assad regime was not considered an actor of persecution.



The regime change has a limited impact on the international protection needs of the profiles under this category. However, this category could also include renewed or increased risk for certain groups such as former members or supporters of the Assad regime.

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

Last update: June 2025

This section covers the situation of former members of Assad's armed forces, including the police, military, intelligence services and pro-Assad armed groups.

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 1.2, 1.3.1, 4](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

(Former) members of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups had been subjected to persecution (e.g. assassination, kidnapping) by the [Islamic State of Iraq and Levant \(ISIL\)](#) as well as [Other non-State actors](#), such as unspecified armed individuals. Those actors are still present and operating and there is no information available indicating that their approach towards (former) members of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups has changed.

[The Transitional Administration](#) conducted extensive military operations. Security operations focused on former military fighters and ex-government personnel. They were carried out across key regions, such as the coastal cities, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Deir Ez-Zor and Damascus. They involved raids, weapons searches, and the further detention of hundreds of individuals. By mid-January 2025, over 9 000 combatants and officers reportedly remained detained, amid allegations of torture and restricted communication with families. Reports indicate incidents of suspected revenge acts, personal retribution, including killings, kidnappings, and arson by unidentified groups. However, their scale remains unclear.



The Transitional Administration issued a general amnesty for all military personnel conscripted under compulsory service under the Assad regime. The Transitional Administration implemented a so-called ‘settlement process’ and established ‘reconciliation centres’ to provide temporary civilian identity cards to former members of the police, military, intelligence services, and pro-Assad militias who surrendered their weapons.

Thousands of individuals, including high-level members of the armed forces have gone through this process successfully. No report indicates that those who went through the settlement process were subjected to human rights violations during the process. While the process appears to be systematically applied, there is no indication that people returning from abroad would have to go through it.

For individuals under this sub-profile, **it can be concluded that:**

The prosecution of the criminal acts committed by former member of Assad’s armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups and their potential targeting in accordance with the rules of international humanitarian law, in itself, does not amount to persecution. When conducted in accordance with the rules of international humanitarian law, security operations by the new Syrian military against armed individuals or groups associated with the Assad regime taking up arms against the Transitional Administration do not constitute persecution. However, acts reported to be committed against former members of Assad’s armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups outside the conduct of those operations are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution (e.g. arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, physical assault, humiliating treatment, execution, extra judicial killing, revenge killing).

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.

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for (former) member 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 at the time of the fall of the Assad regime who evaded the settlement process have been targeted by the Transitional Administration by way of security operations, leading to arrests and detentions. Deaths in detention were reported as well as other serious human rights violations.
- **Whether the applicant allegedly committed crimes on behalf of the Assad regime:** Hundreds of individuals who had allegedly committed crimes on behalf of the Assad regime, including pro-Iranian fighters, were arrested and detained by the Transitional Administration. Also, revenge acts including killings by non-state actors were reported.



- **Regional specifics:** The security situation in a specific area may impact the risk. More specifically, revenge killings and sectarian violence are more prominent in the areas where the Transitional Administration control is less effective. At the time of writing, such areas include the coastal areas (Latakia and Tartous), Homs, Hama and Rural Damascus, while no report indicates instances of revenge killings in Damascus.

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**.



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile, as (former) members of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups may have been involved in excludable acts.

Former Assad government officials, and civilians perceived to be supporting the Assad regime

Last update: June 2025

This section covers the situation of civilians affiliated, or perceived to be affiliated, to the former Assad regime such as civil servants, and former Baath party members.

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), [1.2](#), [1.3.1](#), [4](#), [4.1.2](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

Former Assad government officials, and civilians perceived to be supporting the Assad regime had been subjected to persecution (e.g. assassination, arbitrary detention), by the [Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#), [the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant \(ISIL\)](#) and [Other non-State actors](#), such as unspecified armed individuals. Those groups are still present and operating and there is no information available indicating that their approach towards former Assad government officials, and civilians perceived to be supporting the Assad regime has changed.

While HTS had subjected civilians perceived to be supporting the Assad regime to persecution (e.g. detention, killing, execution) in the past, [The Transitional Administration](#) has dismissed large numbers of public sector employees reportedly to downsize state institutions. Some former employees – particularly [Alawites](#) – claimed that the dismissals have been based on sectarian and political grounds.

The Transitional Administration announced the dissolution of the Baath party and all of its structures. Measures were taken to remove members of Syria's Central Bar association appointed by the Baath party and replace them with those affiliated with the HTS-led Idlib administration. The implications for former Baath party members and officials remain unclear, with no reporting available on their situation.



Additionally, while there is no information available about the treatment of high-ranking officials in civilian positions of the former Assad government, their situation might be influenced by their potential involvement in human rights abuses committed by the Assad regime.

For individuals under this sub-profile, **it can be concluded that:**

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

- **Whether the applicant allegedly committed crimes on behalf of the Assad regime:** Hundreds of individuals who had allegedly committed crimes on behalf of the Assad regime, including former regime informants, were arrested and detained by the Transitional Administration.
- **Regional specifics:** The security situation in a specific area may impact the risk. More specifically, revenge killings and sectarian violence are more prominent in the areas where the Transitional Administration control is less effective. At the time of writing, such areas include the coastal areas (Latakia and Tartous), Homs, Hama and Rural Damascus, while no report indicates instances of revenge killings in Damascus.

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**.



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile, as former Assad government officials may have been involved in excludable acts.



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.





Also, the CJEU has ruled in ‘CJEU, S and A v Staatssecretaris van Veiligheid en Justitie, C-151/22, Third Chamber, judgment of 21 September 2023’ (17) on the assessment of the well-founded fear of persecution on account of political opinions developed in the host Member State.

Alawites

Last update: June 2025

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), 1.2, 1.2.2, 1.3.2; [Targeting 2020](#), 10.6; [Security 2019](#), 1.1. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

The position of Alawites has changed radically with the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, which was dominated by the Alawite minority.

Alawites had been subjected to persecution (e.g. torture, killing) by different non-State actors including Islamist groups such as Ahrar al-Sham and anti-government armed groups.

[The Transitional Administration](#) emphasised its commitment to integrating Alawites into Syria’s governance and engaged in discussions with local Alawite representatives. Despite these assurances, Alawites remain largely excluded from the new political and military structures, while public distrust toward former regime officers and officials further hinders their integration. Also, the Transitional Administration dismissed hundreds of employees, with some of them accusing the government of dismissal on sectarian and political grounds. These mass public-sector layoffs particularly affecting Alawites led to the loss of state-provided housing. Besides security operations conducted by the Transitional Administration against hostile Alawites associated to the Assad regime who took up arms against the Transitional Administration, Alawites have also been victims of revenge killings, personal retributions, and sectarian violence (see also the situation of [civilians perceived to be supporting the Assad regime](#)).

For Alawites, **it can be concluded that:**

Acts reported to be committed against Alawites are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution (violence, abductions, detention and extrajudicial killings).

The mere fact of being an Alawite in itself would normally not lead to the level of risk required to establish well-founded fear 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:

¹⁷ CJEU, S and A v Staatssecretaris van Veiligheid en Justitie, C-151/22, Third Chamber, judgment of 21 September 2023, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?jsessionid=78F1E42DD71AE262F3228D99B967856C?text=&docid=277631&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=3903916>





- **Perceived opposition to the Transitional Administration:** Alawites with a strong oppositional stance towards the Transitional Administration would face a higher risk.
- **Regional specifics:** Attacks on Alawites took place particularly in areas where the Transitional Administration control is contested or less effective, such as Latakia, Tartous, Homs and Hama. This does not mean that there is no risk for Alawites in other parts of the country.
- **Perceived links to the Assad government:** refer to [Former Assad government officials, and civilians perceived to be supporting the Assad regime](#).

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this may be for **reasons of (imputed) political opinion, race/nationality and/or religion**.

Members of and persons perceived to be collaborating with the SDF/YPG

Last update: June 2025

This profile refers to members of the SDF/YPG, as well as to other individuals perceived to be collaborating with them.

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 2.2, 2.5, 4.2; Targeting 2022, 4](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

Members of and persons perceived to be collaborating with the SDF/YPG had been subjected to persecution (e.g. arbitrary arrest, abduction, killing) by the [Syrian National Army \(SNA\)](#) and the [Islamic State of Iraq and Levant \(ISIL\)](#). These groups are still present and operating and there is no information available indicating that their approach towards members of and persons perceived to be collaborating with the SDF/YPG has changed.

Recent information also indicates that security incidents of (heavy) fighting occurred between the SDF and the SNA, and ISIL attacks on SDF patrols and checkpoints were reported, as well as instances of targeting of civilians.

Therefore, the assessment of the international protection needs of [members of and persons perceived to be collaborating with the SDF and YPG](#) in ‘[EUAA, Country Guidance: Syria, April 2024](#)’ would largely remain valid. More specifically:

‘For members of and persons perceived to be collaborating with SDF/YPG in areas where the SNA operates, well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated.

In Kurdish-controlled areas, ISIL is still capable of conducting attacks and views individuals under this profile as a priority target. **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:** regional specifics (areas where ISIL has



operational capacity), visibility of the applicant (position within the community, nature of activities undertaken by the individual, public expression of support for SDF/YPG or condemnation of ISIL's actions, etc). For further information on how these circumstances impact the risk, refer to the COI summary in 'EUAA, [4.4. Members of and persons perceived to be collaborating with the SDF and YPG](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'.

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**. In the case of persecution by the SNA, **it may also be for reasons of race/nationality.**



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile, as members of the SDF and the YPG may have been involved in excludable acts.

Persons perceived to be opposing the SDF/YPG

Last update: June 2025

This profile refers to different groups perceived by the SDF/YPG as opposing them. It includes, in particular, [political opponents and supporters of opposition parties](#), [persons with perceived links to ISIL](#), [Arabs and Christians in areas controlled by the SDF](#), and [persons associated with Türkiye and/or the SNA](#).

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 4.3](#); [Targeting 2022](#), 4. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

Persons perceived to be opposing the SDF/YPG had been subjected to persecution (e.g. enforced disappearance, torture, arbitrary arrest) by the [Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#) which are still present and operating and there is no information available indicating that their approach towards persons perceived to be opposing them has changed.

Recent information also indicates that the SDF/YPG has been facing dissent from some Arab tribal factions in Deir E-Zor. Dozens of suspected Assad loyalists, National Defence Forces (NDF) militiamen and Sheikh Ibrahim al-Hafel supporters were arrested by the SDF. In the context of these clashes, several civilians were killed or injured in encounters with the SDF and Asayish fighters. The SDF also raided and shelled villages. Additionally, several civilians were injured as the SDF shot at young men in the aftermath of attacks against them. The SDF also reportedly shot at protesters demanding their withdrawal.

Therefore, the assessment of the international protection needs of [persons perceived to be opposing the SDF/YPG](#) in 'EUAA, *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024' would largely remain valid. More specifically:



‘Acts reported to be committed against individuals under this profile are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution (e.g. enforced disappearance, torture, arbitrary arrest). When the acts in question are (solely) discriminatory measures, the individual assessment of whether discrimination could amount to persecution should take into account the severity and/or repetitiveness of the acts or whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures.

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: regional specifics (who is in control of the home area of the applicant, if the applicant was located in any of the IDP camps), the nature of activities and the degree of involvement in activities perceived by the SDF/YPG as opposition, perceived affiliation with ISIL (see ‘[Persons with perceived links to ISIL](#)’) or with Turkish-backed forces, being known to the Kurdish authorities (e.g. previous arrest), etc. For further information on how these circumstances impact the risk, refer to the COI summary in ‘EUAA, [4.5. Persons perceived to be opposing the SDF/YPG](#)’ in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024’.

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.**’



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to some sub-categories of this profile, such as ISIL members and SNA members.

Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish forces

Last update: June 2025

This profile refers to the topic of recruitment under the ‘Duty of Self-Defence’ and the topic of child recruitment by Kurdish forces.

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.3.6](#); [Country Focus 2024, 1.4](#); [Country Focus 2023, 1.4](#); [Targeting 2022, 5.3](#); [Targeting 2020, 3.3, 4.3](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

At the time of writing, the practical implementation of the agreement signed between SDF leaders and the Transitional Administration is not known yet (see [Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#)). As a consequence, Kurdish forces are still to be considered autonomous until new information substantiating their integration in the new Syrian military is available.

For further information about the topic of recruitment by Kurdish forces, please refer to ‘[Duty of Self-Defence and forced recruitment](#)’ and to ‘[Child recruitment](#)’, both under ‘EUAA, [4.6. Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish forces](#)’ in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024’.





Instances of recruitment of children have continued to be reported, including by the SDF and by the Revolutionary Youth Movement in north-eastern Syria.

Therefore, the assessment of the international protection needs of [persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish forces](#) in 'EUAA, *Country Guidance: Syria, April 2024*' would largely remain valid. More specifically:

'The SDF are non-State armed forces, therefore, non-voluntary recruitment by the SDF/YPG, even if imposed under the 'Duty of Self-Defence', is considered as forced recruitment. Forced recruitment and child recruitment are of such severe nature that they would amount to 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: gender in the case of adults, falling within an exception ground, ethno-religious background (Christians vs Kurds), living in an IDP situation, age, economic situation (refer to [Children](#)), etc. For further information on how these circumstances impact the risk, refer to the COI summary in 'EUAA, *'4.6. Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish forces'* in *Country Guidance: Syria, April 2024*'.

For men of recruitment age, note that in Syria a general military draft no longer exists (see also '[Draft evaders](#)').

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. 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.**'

Christians

Last update: June 2025

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.3.4](#); [Targeting 2022](#), 11. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

Christians had been subjected to persecution (e.g. killing, kidnapping) by the [Syrian National Army \(SNA\)](#) and the [Islamic State of Iraq and Levant \(ISIL\)](#). In Kurdish-controlled areas, ethno-religious minorities were generally able to openly express and exercise their religious beliefs, including converting to other religion. However, there were reports of the [Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#) subjecting Christians to discrimination in relation to the school curriculum.





While no recent information could be found on the treatment of Christians by the Assad regime prior to its fall, any potential risk related to the Assad regime has vanished.

While under HTS rule in Idlib before the fall of the Assad regime, homes and properties of Christians were confiscated and the number of Christians living in the area dropped significantly, [The Transitional Administration](#) has pledged to uphold minority rights. However, recent changes in the school curriculum by the Transitional Administration concern civil society activists and reports indicate a rise in targeted incidents against Christian communities.

Therefore, **it can be concluded that:**

Some acts reported to be committed against individuals under this profile are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution (e.g. killing, kidnapping). When the acts in question are (solely) discriminatory measures, the individual assessment of whether discrimination could amount to persecution should take into account the severity and/or repetitiveness of the acts or whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures.

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for individuals under this profile to face persecution should take into account risk-impacting circumstances such as: regional specifics (in particular, Christians in areas where ISIL operates are at higher risk), being critical to the Transitional Administration or of the school curriculum, etc. For further information on how these circumstances impact the risk, refer to the COI summary in 'EUAA, [4.10.5. Christians](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'.

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be **for reasons of religion and/or (imputed) political opinion**'.

Druze

Last update: June 2025

At the time of writing, there is no sufficient information available on the situation of Druze civilians in Syria and a potential integration of the Druze armed factions in Sweida in the new Syrian military is not known yet.



Each case has to be assessed individually taking into consideration the most recent information available.



Yazidis

Last update: June 2025

At the time of writing, there is no sufficient information available on the situation of Yazidis in Syria.



Each case has to be assessed individually taking into consideration the most recent information available.

Palestinians

Last update: June 2025

At the time of writing, the transitional period in Syria is still ongoing. The socio-economic conditions in Syria did not improve [[Country Focus 2024](#), 2.2]. In addition, no available information substantiates an improvement of the capacity of UNRWA to provide assistance to Palestinians. Finally, deadly attacks on civilians were recorded in Yarmouk camp in Damascus [[Country Focus 2025](#), 4.1.1].

Therefore, the conclusion on the international protection needs of [Palestinians](#) in '[EUAA, Country Guidance: Syria, April 2024](#)' would still be valid:

'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. Therefore, **Palestinians who had previously availed themselves of the protection or assistance of UNRWA in Syria are to be granted *ipso facto* refugee status.**

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.'



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 contents of this chapter include:

- the section on [Article 15\(a\) QD/QR: death penalty or execution](#).
- the section on [Article 15\(b\) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment](#).
- the section on [Article 15\(c\) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict](#).



Please note that the CJEU has ruled 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⁽¹⁸⁾:

‘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.’



For further information on the individual circumstances which may be relevant to consider in the assessment of a real risk of serious harm, please consult ‘[Country Guidance: Explained, February 2025](#)’.

¹⁸ 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=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=7856939>



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

Last update: June 2025



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

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.2.2, 1.3.1, 4.1.2](#); [Actors 2019, 2.2.3, 3.1.4, 4.1.4, 6.4](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

Before the fall of the Assad regime, death penalty and executions had been widely carried out in Syria by the Assad regime itself and extremist groups such as HTS and ISIL. In Kurdish-controlled areas, a legal code based on the 'Social Contract' was applied by the Kurdish authorities. According to Article 26 of the Social Contract, the death penalty had been abolished.

For further information about this topic, please refer to 'EUAA, [5.1. Article 15\(a\) QD: death penalty or execution](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'.

After the fall of the Assad regime, the Transitional Administration has outlined a multi-year roadmap that includes the drafting of a new constitution within three years and the holding of subsequent elections. Additionally, a National Dialogue Conference to foster reconciliation and inclusivity was held February 2025 and resulted in the adoption of a temporary constitutional declaration, the formation of an interim legislative council, and the preparation of a draft permanent constitution emphasising human rights and freedom.

The new administration has granted amnesty to some high-level figures associated with the Assad regime. However, the new authorities have simultaneously launched 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 Administration reportedly carried out 35 summary executions, primarily targeting Assad-era officers. Extrajudicial and revenge killings reportedly resulted in the death of 287 individuals between the start of 2025 and mid-February 2025. Unrelated civilians have also been affected and killed.

At the time of writing, the impact of the transition of power on the use of the death penalty in Syria remains unclear, as there is no information regarding the implementation of the death penalty by the Transitional Administration. Assad-era legal structures, including the terrorism



law, remained intact. Furthermore, multiple actors who had been engaging in extrajudicial executions before the fall of the Assad regime are still present and operating. Summary executions have been reported in the recent months. Therefore, it is evident that some profiles of applicants from Syria may be at risk of death penalty or execution. Sometimes, this risk would be connected to a reason for persecution and therefore, refugee status would be applicable.



Executions have been reported in the recent months. Therefore, some profiles of applicants from Syria may be at risk of death penalty or execution. 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 for a serious crime committed by the applicant, or for 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](#)).

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

Last update: June 2025



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to Article 15(b) QD/QR, 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.

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), 1.2.2, 1.3.1, 2.1, 4.5.4; [Security 2023](#), 1.4.1, 1.5.4; [Security 2022](#), 2.3.3, 2.12.3; [Actors 2019](#),



2.2.6, 2.3.3, 2.4. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

With regard to the assessment of an applicant's eligibility for subsidiary protection based on torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment it is necessary to take into account what the situation in Syria was prior to the fall of the Assad regime. This information needs to be assessed together with COI available after the regime change.

Healthcare and socio-economic conditions

The healthcare system in Syria is in dire condition as are also the socio-economic conditions in general. Prior to the fall of Assad's regime there were reports that actors of the conflict were intentionally targeting health care facilities and among other things also restricting the supply of basic necessities in some areas. To know more about healthcare and socio-economic conditions before the fall of the Assad regime please refer to 'EUAA, ['5.2.1. Healthcare and socio-economic conditions'](#) in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'.

In the recent hostilities, civil infrastructure has been largely affected. There is, however, no new information available on the potential intention of the actors to destroy or damage the civil infrastructure.



It is important to note that serious harm must take the form of conduct of an actor (Article 6 QD/QR). In themselves, the general unavailability of healthcare, education or other socio-economic elements (e.g. situation of IDPs, difficulties in finding livelihood opportunities, housing) are 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 of the applicant of appropriate healthcare.

Arbitrary arrests, prison conditions, treatment in detention and criminal violence

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.

Prior to the fall of the regime, prisons and detention centres had been reported as harsh and, in many instances, the conditions were described as life-threatening, due to physical and psychological abuse, food shortages, gross overcrowding, and inadequate sanitary conditions and medical care.

Before the fall of the Assad regime, HTS pledged to maintain Syria's institutional framework and later declared a general amnesty for army soldiers. The Transitional Administration then initiated a settlement process. Alongside voluntary settlement procedures, the Military



Operations Administration (MOA) tracked down individuals evading settlement. During these campaigns, former officers were arrested, while others were released after it was determined that they had not participated in abuses. The number of officers and members of the previous government's forces in prisons such as Adra, Hama, and Harim exceeded 9 000, including 2 000 who were returned from Iraq. Most were arrested during raids or at checkpoints. Relatives of wanted individuals, whether former Assad government affiliates or unrelated civilians, were also arrested.

Numerous human rights violations in detention have been reported, including the deaths of detainees in custody. Videos posted online have shown detainees enduring physical and verbal mistreatment, such as assaults and humiliating treatment. Additionally, there have been allegations of torture.

To know more about arbitrary arrests, prison conditions, and treatment in detention, please refer to 'EUAA, [5.2.2. Arbitrary arrests, prison conditions and treatment in detention](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'.

Insecurity and volatility of the security situation due to criminality and lawlessness have been reported in various regions. Particularly, communities in the Homs countryside with predominantly Alawite and Shiite populations have experienced a sharp escalation in criminal acts.



In cases where the prosecution or punishment is grossly unfair or disproportionate, or where a person is subjected to prison conditions which are not compatible with respect for human dignity, a situation amounting to serious harm under Article 15(b) QD/QR may occur.

It should be highlighted that in some cases, there would be a nexus to a reason for persecution falling under the definition of a refugee, and those individuals would qualify for refugee status. If nexus to a reason for persecution is not substantiated, Article 15(b) QD/QR would apply.



In some cases, the arrest, detention and imprisonment would have been imposed for a serious crime committed by the applicant, or for 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](#)).



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

Last update: June 2025



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to the assessment of subsidiary protection needs under Article 15(c) QD/QR, see 'EUAA, [Country Guidance: Explained](#), February 2025'.

In armed conflicts, the targeting of civilians may have a nexus to one of the grounds 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 1 November 2024 – 28 February 2025. Some limited additional information was added during the finalisation of this report until 11 March 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.

Armed conflict (international or internal)

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 current Syrian 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 non-international armed conflicts with various armed groups which contest the authority of the Transitional Administration, most notably pro-Assad armed groups and ISIL.
- Non-international armed conflicts on Syrian territory further included ongoing fighting among various non-State armed groups, notably between pro-Assad armed groups and armed groups affiliated to the Transitional Administration, as well as between the SNA and SDF/Kurdish forces. Türkiye is engaged in a non-international armed conflict in Syria with Kurdish forces and with ISIL and controls parts of northern Syria with the help of Turkish-backed armed groups.

[Country Focus 2025, 3, 4]



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

Qualification of a person as a ‘civilian’



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.**

In the context of Syria, applications by persons 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:

- **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. See ‘EUAA, [‘3.2. The Government of Syria and associated armed groups’](#) in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024’.
- **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.
- **SDF and Asayish:** Kurdish-led multi-ethnic force that support the US-led coalition in the war against ISIL.
- **SNA:** A collection of Turkish-backed armed opposition groups, being hostile towards the SDF.
- **HTS and other armed groups** integrated into the forces of the Transitional Administration, as well as affiliated armed groups.



- **ISIL and its predecessor groups.**

[[Country Focus 2025](#), 2, 4; [Actors](#), 2.3, 3.2, 4, 5.1, 6]



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

Indiscriminate violence



The common analysis regarding the degree of indiscriminate violence combines quantitative and qualitative elements in a **holistic and inclusive assessment**.

For more information on the methodology and indicators used to assess the level of indiscriminate violence in country guidance documents, see 'EUAA, [Article 15\(c\) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict](#)' in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.

For further information on the sources used for this assessment and their methodology, see [Country Focus 2025, Sources](#).

This section should be read in conjunction with [Recent developments in Syria](#).

The information which forms the basis of this Guidance covers the period from November 2024 to the end of February 2025, as well as significant security incidents from early March 2025, particularly in the coastal provinces (see also [Scope of this update](#)). The information available is limited to a short timeframe and presents a mixed picture.

Taking into account the areas of control of the different actors present and operation in Syria [see [Country Focus 2025](#), 4.1, 4.2, 4.3] and the impact of the Israel-Hamas war on the security in Syria [see [Country Focus 2025](#), 4.4], the following can be noted.

The security situation is marked by the Transitional Administration's lack of a secure grip over certain areas, such as the coastal regions. The extent of military involvement by the United States, Türkiye, and Israel in Syria also remains unclear. This uncertainty is further compounded by the unknown success of integrating armed groups such as the SNA, SDF, and Druze factions into the new military and Ministry of Defence. Additionally, it is yet to be determined whether the events that unfolded in the coastal areas in early March 2025 were isolated incidents or will recur.

Additionally, the quantitative data, and the potential underreporting of certain incidents, makes it difficult to distinguish between targeted and indiscriminate violence. It can be noted, however, that during this period, SNHR recorded 1 032 civilian fatalities [see [Country Focus 2025](#), 4.5.3], significantly higher than the 930 civilian fatalities documented by the same source for the period from September 2023 to August 2024 [[Security 2024](#), 1.5.3]. This



increase is largely due to large-scale hostilities between HTS and Assad forces leading up to the fall of the Assad regime on 8 December 2024. Civilian fatalities declined in January and February 2025 but surged again in early March 2025 due to an uprising by pro-Assad militias, retaliatory actions by armed forces, and sectarian violence.

ACLED data shows a similar trend, with 2 288 security incidents reported between 8 December 2024 and the end of February 2025. Aleppo, Hasaka, Raqqa, and Deir Ez-Zor experienced the most security incidents, while the lowest figures were recorded in Quneitra, Damascus, Sweida, and Tartous. The early March 2025 surge in incidents and fatalities primarily occurred in Latakia, Tartous, and Hama ⁽¹⁹⁾.

By the end of February 2025, 885 294 IDPs had returned within Syria, and 297 292 Syrians had returned mostly from the neighbouring countries. However, the potentially permanent character of such return movements remains to be confirmed. 7.4 million people remain internally displaced, and around 6 million Syrian refugees have not yet returned from neighbouring countries.

The hostilities leading to the fall of Assad regime caused the destruction or damage to healthcare facilities and other civilian infrastructure including water and electricity stations. The potential pressure from high numbers of people returning to Syria must also be considered, given the already fragile situation. Additionally, civilians were killed and injured by explosive remnants of war present in large parts of the country.



It can therefore be concluded that, at the time of writing, the security situation in Syria remains volatile and in various respects uncertain. While developments since the fall of the Assad regime provide important indicators, this period remains too short for definitive conclusions. Future shifts in patterns and risk may emerge and continued monitoring would be essential. Limitations with regard to reliable reporting from the country should also be taken into account. **Therefore, at the time of writing, it is not considered feasible to assess the level of indiscriminate violence in Syria under the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.**



As the security situation in Syria evolves, in order to make a forward-looking assessment with regard to the level of risk due to indiscriminate violence in a situation of armed conflict, several indicators should be taken into account on the basis of relevant and up-to-date COI. See 'EUAA, ['Indiscriminate violence'](#) in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.

¹⁹ Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles, explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 November 2024 and 28 February 2025. EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East (28 February 2025), <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>.



Serious and individual threat

As mentioned above, even if refugee status is not granted, established personal circumstances must be taken into account in the examination of subsidiary protection.



The CJEU has ruled on the importance of the individual circumstances to be taken into account while determining if an applicant is eligible for subsidiary protection, notably ⁽²⁰⁾:

‘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.’

Each case should be assessed individually, taking into account the nature and intensity of the violence in the area, together with the applicant’s personal circumstances. It is not feasible to provide exhaustive guidance as to what the relevant personal circumstances could be and how those should be assessed.



For further 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, please consult ‘EUAA, [‘Serious and individual threat’](#) in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025’.

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 killings, injuries, abduction/kidnapping/forced disappearance, child recruitment, explosive remnants of war, 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.

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

²⁰ 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=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=7856939>



violence, such elements may be taken into account in the assessment, for example: widespread criminal violence as a result of lawlessness, destruction of the necessary means to survive, destruction of infrastructure, denial of or limited access of humanitarian aid, limited access to healthcare facilities.

Conclusion on Article 15(c) QD/QR



At the time of writing, it is not considered feasible to assess the risk of serious harm in relation to the level of indiscriminate violence in Syria under the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.



Actors of protection



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to the assessment of actors of protection, see 'EUAA, ['Actors of protection'](#) in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.

The State

The Transitional Administration

Last update: June 2025

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025 1.1, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.4, 4.4](#). Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

Following the fall of the Assad regime, rebel forces under HTS rule struggled to gain control over the entire territory of Syria. At the time of writing, the Transitional Administration was still facing significant challenges, including escalating retaliatory violence and armed group activity across the country (see also [Recent developments in Syria](#)). It did not have full control over Syria, with large portions of the country under the control of various armed factions, some of which were supported by external actors, and Israel occupying eight villages in different governorates. Additionally, Kurdish forces maintained control over areas in the north and east of Syria (see [Syrian Democratic Forces \(SDF\)](#) and [Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria \(DAANES, previously known as AANES\)](#)).

No information was available regarding potential changes to the judicial system by the Transitional Administration. While HTS announced plans to address crimes committed under the Assad government through the formal judicial system, there have also been reports of extrajudicial killings of suspected former affiliates of the Assad regime, as well as Alawites.

Despite the Transitional Administration's public commitment to uphold minority rights, numerous incidents of sectarian and retaliatory violence against civilians have occurred, which it was unable to prevent (see also [Recent developments in Syria](#)).



While noting the declarations of the Transitional Administration claiming its willingness to protect certain individuals, there are still uncertainties regarding their actual implementation. Therefore, given the unreliable legal system as well as the volatile security situation, it can be concluded that, at the time of writing, the Transitional Administration does not have the capacity to offer protection.



Therefore, the Transitional Administration cannot be considered as an actor of protection meeting the requirements of article 7 QD/QR.

Parties or organisations, including international organisations

Besides the Transitional Administration, the Kurdish 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(2) QD/QR.

Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES, previously known as AANES)

Last update: June 2025

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 4.3](#); [Security Situation 2022](#), 1.4.3. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

The SDF controls nearly one-third of Syria's territory, primarily in the north and east. Some regions west of the Euphrates, south of Al-Bab and Manbij, were contested between the SDF and SNA. During the insurgency, the SDF advanced into areas previously held by Assad forces. As of February and March 2025, SDF-held territories included most of Hasaka, about half of Raqqa (including Raqqa city), parts of Deir Ez-Zor and Aleppo east of the Euphrates River, and a narrow strip on Aleppo's western Euphrates bank, south of Lake Assad and near the Tishreen Dam. Concurrently, the Turkish-backed SNA launched operations in northern and eastern rural Aleppo, leading to heavy fighting between the SDF and the SNA.

In addition to the unstable security environment, 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. Moreover, there have been reports of civilians being killed or injured by SDF forces.

In March 2025, SDF leaders agreed to merge their armed forces and civilian institutions with the new Syrian government. However, at the time of writing, the future developments of this integration remain uncertain.



Taking into account the uncertainties of the current situation in Syria, the previous conclusion in 'EUAA, [6.2. Parties or organisations](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024', that DAANES does not qualify as an actor of protection appears to remain valid.



Internal protection alternative

Last update: June 2025



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to the assessment of internal protection alternative, see EUAA, '[Internal protection alternative](#)' in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025.

The analysis below is primarily based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), 1.1, 1.2.2, 3, 4.1, 4.4, 4.5.1, 4.5.3, 4.5.6; [Country Focus 2024](#), 2.1, 2.2. Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI. The section below should be read in conjunction with most recent COI available at the time of the examination.

Part of the country

At the time of writing, the transitional period following the fall of the Assad regime is still ongoing. While the Transitional Administration reportedly has effective control in Damascus, it continued to face significant challenges in areas outside the capital. Therefore, this analysis focuses on assessing whether Damascus city remains a potential location for an IPA. This does not, however, exclude the potential application of the IPA to other places in Syria provided that all criteria are met.

Safety

As indicated under '[Indiscriminate violence](#)', 'at the time of writing, it is not considered feasible to assess the level of indiscriminate violence in Syria under the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR'. **Whether the safety criterion is met in relation to Damascus should be made on an individual basis taking into consideration the most recent available COI.**

In case where the applicant fears persecution or serious harm by the Transitional Administration, including the factions that might have integrated the new Syrian military, internal protection in Damascus would in general not be considered safe (please refer to [Actors of persecution or serious harm](#) for further information about the potential integration of armed factions).

With regard to persecution by other actors, their [operational capacity](#) in Damascus should be assessed in accordance with the most recent COI.

Particular consideration should also be given to the individual circumstances of the applicants and whether they are perceived by the actor of persecution as a priority target, which would increase the likelihood that the actor would attempt to trace them in Damascus city.



As indicated under '[Indiscriminate violence](#)', 'at the time of writing, it is not considered feasible to assess the level of indiscriminate violence in Syria under the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR'. **Whether the safety criterion is met in relation to Damascus should be made on an individual basis taking into consideration the most recent available COI.**

In some cases, where the applicant faces persecution or serious harm for reasons related to the prevalent social norms in Syria and the actor of persecution or serious harm is the Syrian society at large (e.g. for [Women and girls](#) and [Persons with diverse SOGIESC \(also referred to as LGBTIQ persons\)](#)), the safety requirement would in general not be met.

For certain particularly vulnerable individuals, such as women and children, if the actor of persecution or serious harm is the family or community (e.g. forced marriage, honour crime), taking into account the lack of [State protection](#) and their vulnerability to potential new forms of persecution or serious harm, the safety requirement would in general not be met.

For the other applicants, the requirement of safety may be satisfied in Damascus depending on the profile and the individual circumstances of the applicant. For this assessment the decision-maker should take into account that no actor is found to meet the requirements of Article 7 QD/QR (see [Actors of protection](#)) and should also consult the most recent COI.

Travel and admittance

In case 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 to Damascus City. **The general situation and the individual circumstances of the applicant should be taken into account in this assessment.**

Following the fall of the Assad regime, the control of the area of the Damascus international airport shifted to the Transitional Administration, which dissolved all military and security agencies of the former regime by the end of January 2025. Prior to the fall of the Assad regime, Israel reportedly carried out airstrikes on Damascus International Airport and surrounding areas. After Assad's ouster, Israeli airstrikes targeted former Assad's armed forces sites in Southern Syria, near Damascus city and on the coast.

At the time of drafting this interim guidance, no information was available on procedures for entering the territory, or on how returnees from abroad are treated by the Transitional Administration, which issued a general amnesty for all military personnel conscripted under compulsory service by the Assad regime. 'Reconciliation centres' were established, where former Assad regime affiliates register their personal information in exchange for limited legal protection and safe passage. However, the process lacks transparency, follows inconsistent

criteria, and is influenced by security agencies, with many applicants facing complex bureaucratic hurdles.

It remains unclear how the transitional government deals with persons who lack of documentation, as not all civil registries and courts were operational as of the end of January 2025.



The conditions of travel to Damascus, to access it and to be admitted are too unclear for an assessment to be feasible at the time of writing.

Reasonableness to settle

In case the criteria of safety and travel and admittance are met in individual cases, the assessment of the availability of IPA in Damascus City should proceed with an analysis of its reasonableness in light of the general situation in the city and the individual circumstances of the applicant.

Under the Assad regime, the general circumstances prevailing in Damascus in terms of means of basic subsistence and employment, food security, housing and shelter, water and sanitation, basic healthcare, entailed significant hardship. The Transitional Administration has started to initiate economic reforms, such as the announcement of implementing a free-market system. They reopened the Nasib border crossing with Jordan, a key trade route, and restarted operations at the Syrian Petroleum Company. Türkiye has expressed interest in economic investment, while international actors have eased restrictions: the United States issued a six-month sanctions exemption for humanitarian aid, and the EU lifted several sanctions, enabling financial access and trade. Despite these steps, it remains too soon to assess any substantial improvement regarding Syria's socio-economic situation.

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 any vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms.



For those applicants who meet the 'safety' and 'travel and admittance' requirements under Article 8(1) QD/QR, the availability of IPA in Damascus city will depend on the assessment of the reasonableness to settle there.

At the time of writing, the information available is of no such nature that it would require amending the conclusion on reasonableness to settle as stated in 'EUAA, [7.4.3. Conclusions on reasonableness](#)' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024'. As a consequence, such conclusion would largely remain valid:

'Based on the general situation in the capital city, and taking into account the applicable individual circumstances, internal protection in Damascus City may be a reasonable alternative only in exceptional cases. Such exceptional cases



would in particular include some adult applicants with significant financial means or who have a support network that is willing and capable of assisting them in accessing basic subsistence if they settle in the city.’

General conclusion on the applicability of IPA in Damascus city



Taking into account the assessment with regard to the three criteria under Article 8 QD/QR, internal protection alternative may be applicable in Damascus city only in exceptional cases (see [Reasonableness to settle](#)).



Exclusion

Last update: June 2025



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to Exclusion, 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 occurring in the recent and more distant past.

In addition to the considerations on the potential applicability of the exclusion grounds in 'EUAA, ['8. Exclusion'](#) in *Country Guidance: Syria*, April 2024', particular attention should be devoted to acts committed by various actors in the framework of the offensive launched by HTS against the Assad regime, and the subsequent establishment of an interim government under HTS rule [[Country Focus 2025, 1.1](#)]. Fighters associated with the Transitional Administration reportedly executed individuals associated with the ousted government and former affiliates of militias supportive of the Assad regime [[Country Focus 2025, 1.3.1](#)]. Also, criminality, lawlessness and sectarian violence have been reported in the areas under the control of the Transitional Administration [[Country Focus 2025, 1.3.2, 2.5, 4.1.1](#)].

In addition, during the reference period, various actors have been involved in serious acts of violence against women and children [[Country Focus 2025, 1.3.5, 1.3.6](#)].

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



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



Annex: 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 - Actors (December 2019) Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2019_12_EASO_COI_Report_Syria_Actors.pdf
Country Focus 2023	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Country Focus (October 2023) Available 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 at: https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2024-10/2024_10_EUAA_COI_Report_Syria_Country_Focus.pdf
Country Focus 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
Recaptured areas	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria - Exercise of authority in recaptured areas (January 2020) Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/01_2020_EASO_COI_Report_Syria_Exercise_of_authority_in_recaptured_areas.pdf
Security 2019	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Security situation (November 2019) Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/11_2019_EASO_COI_Report_Syria_Security_situation.pdf
Security 2020	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Security situation (May 2020) Available at: https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/05_2020_EASO_COI_Report_Syria_Security_situation.pdf



Security 2022	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Security situation (September 2022) Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2022_09_EUAA_COI_Report_Syria_Security_situation.pdf
Security 2023	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Security situation (October 2023) Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2023_10_EUAA_COI_Report_Syria_Security_situation.pdf
Security 2024	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria – Security situation (October 2024) Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2024-10-EUAA_COI_Report_Syria_Security_Situation.pdf
Targeting 2020	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Syria - Targeting of individuals (March 2020) Available 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 at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2022_09_EUAA_COI_Report_Syria_Targeting_of_individuals.pdf



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