

5.2.2. Arbitrary arrests, prison conditions and treatment in detention

Following the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, this document has been reviewed and updated. Please consult '[Interim Country Guidance: Syria \(2025\)](#)'

COMMON ANALYSIS

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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 can, 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.

Prison and detention centres have been reported as harsh and, in many instances, life-threatening, due to food shortages, gross overcrowding, physical and psychological abuse, and inadequate sanitary conditions and medical care. Reports mention that prisoners and detainees face the risk of ill-treatment and even execution, while deaths in custody resulting from torture or other ill-treatment have been documented. Various methods of torture have been reported, including physical violence, sexual torture, psychological torture, health neglect and harsh detention conditions, forced labour, torture in military hospitals. Children are not separated from adults and are held in the same prisons, suffering from the same types of torture [[Actors](#), 2.2.6, pp. 23-24, 2.3.3, p. 32, 2.4, p. 38]. Extrajudicial killings and deaths in detention centres due to torture and medical negligence continued to be reported according to recent sources [[Security 2023](#), 1.4.1, p. 26].

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 of serious harm under Article 15(b) QD can occur.

It should be highlighted that in some cases of individuals facing the risk of arrest or detention in Syria, 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 would apply.

Exclusion considerations may be relevant. See [8. Exclusion](#).

See also [2. The implications of leaving Syria](#) and the profiles of [4.1. Persons perceived to be opposing the government](#), [4.2. Persons who evaded or deserted military service](#), [4.3. Persons with perceived links to ISIL](#), [4.7. Persons associated with the Government of Syria](#), [4.8. Journalists, other media professionals and human rights activists](#), [4.9. Doctors, other medical personnel and civil defence volunteers](#).