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1.3.1. Persons affiliated with the government of Bashar Al-Assad

Upon its takeover of power, the transitional administration did not pursue a sweeping de-Baathification process akin to Iraq's post-war policies and the offices of the Baath Party were not systematically targeted. In December, the Baath Party leadership suspended activities.155 At the end of January, it was announced that the party had been dissolved.156

From the outset, the new authorities announced that soldiers who had been recruited under compulsory service were safe, and it was forbidden to assault them. On 9 December, the MOA issued a general amnesty for all military personnel conscripted under compulsory service.157 The new administration subsequently established so-called 'reconciliation centres' to provide temporary civilian identity cards to former members of the police, military, intelligence services, and pro-Assad militias who surrender their weapons.158 These reconciliation centres oversee the process by which former regime affiliates surrender their weapons and register their personal information in exchange for temporary identification cards. These cards grant limited legal protection and safe passage, but the process lacks transparency, follows inconsistent criteria, and is influenced by security agencies, with many applicants facing complex bureaucratic hurdles.159 In late December, the BBC reported significant participation, with hundreds of individuals queuing at a reconciliation centre in Damascus.160

In January and February, local media and organisations following the events in Syria reported that the new administration granted amnesty to some high level figures associated with the Assad government, such as Fadi Saqr, previous leader of the National Defence Forces.161 The MOA was further said to have granted reconciliation to collaborators of Maher Al-Assad, such as businessmen who sponsored his activities,162 as well as Major General Talal Makhlouf, leader in the Assad government's Republican Guard.163 Concurrently, the collapse of Bashar Al-Assad's government prompted numerous senior officials and associates of the ruling family to flee to Lebanon. However, Lebanese authorities expelled Syrian officers and soldiers who had entered illegally, returning them to Syria, where they were detained by the new administration.164

By the end of December, the transitional administration intensified efforts to apprehend individuals associated with the ousted government.165 Authorities claimed their arrest

campaigns target only individuals who committed crimes on behalf of the Assad regime.166 Campaigns in Deir Ez-Zor, Aleppo, and Tartous focused on confiscating illegal weapons and apprehending suspects involved in illegal activities.167 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. According to SOHR, some detainees accused of having provided intelligence to the Assad government were reportedly executed immediately after their arrest.168 On 10 January, SOHR reported that fighters associated with the transitional administration publicly executed Mazen Kneneh, a local official accused of serving as an informant for the ousted president Assad.169 In February, further extrajudicial killings of former affiliates of militias supportive of Bashar Al-Assad were reported, such as the assassination of four members of the Meido family, who were part of a local militia, which had fought alongside the previous government. According to SOHR, extrajudicial and revenge killings resulted in the deaths of 287 individuals between the start of 2025 and middle of February 2025.170

Operations continued throughout January, with members of the general security administration inspecting houses, looking for weapons and individuals who had not reconciled with the transitional administration.171 Extensive military and security operations across key regions, such as the coastal cities, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, and Damascus involved raids, weapons searches, and the further detention of hundreds of individuals.172 The operations focused on former military fighters and ex-government personnel and resulted in significant amounts of weapons and ammunition seized. The arrested individuals were transported to Homs Central Prison, Hama Central Prison, and Adra Prison in the Rural Damascus area. Additionally, videos posted online showed detainees, apprehended during these operations, enduring physical and verbal mistreatment, including assaults and humiliating treatment.173 According to the Syria Justice and Accountability Center, these security operations resulted in various human rights violations, including the reported death of detainees in custody and the arrest of relatives of wanted individuals, affecting both former Assad government affiliates and unrelated civilians.174 By mid-January, the SOHR reported that over 9 000 combatants and officers remained detained, amid allegations of torture and restricted communication with families.175 Information by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) match the allegations of torture, as reported by families who had bodies of family members returned after their detention by the General Security Directorate.176 Concurrently, SOHR reported that 275 detainees from the Central Homs Prison were released following a determination of their innocence in war crimes committed against the Syrian population.177 In January 2025, the transitional administration freed around 641 individuals, mainly from the governorates of Homs, Hama, and Latakia, who had been held in detention for durations spanning a few days to a month, with the majority being released in small groups from Homs Central Prison.178

At the beginning of February, the Ministry of Information imposed a prohibition on conducting interviews with or disseminating statements attributed to individuals affiliated with the former government.179

Since the takeover by the transitional administration, remnant pro-Assad groups have conducted small-scale, targeted hit-and-run attacks against its security forces across Syria.180 These attacks have prompted the authorities to launch operations to capture the culprits which at times resulted in civilian casualties.181 In early March, coordinated attacks by pro-Assad groups on security forces, particularly in the coastal areas, led to a significant escalation which resulted in large numbers of civilian casualties, mostly from the Alawite community.182 For more information see section 4.1.2.

Next to the transitional administration's operations, incidents of suspected revenge acts, including killings, kidnappings, and arson, by unidentified groups have been documented, though their scale remains unclear. At the end of December, three Alawite judges in Masyaf, responsible for property disputes, were killed, an act condemned by the transitional administration.183 In January, SOHR reported the execution of 15 people, including officers of the former government, by unidentified gunmen in Homs governorate. Furthermore, 53 people were arrested and brought to unknown locations.184

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