

# Guidance note

## 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+ countries?<sup>(4)</sup> in accordance with Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation<sup>(5)</sup>. 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 with 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
- [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.**

[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.