

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

COMMON ANALYSIS

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.

See other topics concerning 'Profiles at risk of persecution from other actors than the Assad regime':

- Profiles at risk of persecution from other actors than the Assad regime (for which the Assad regime was not considered an actor of persecution)
 - *(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
 - Persons perceived to be opposing the SDF/YPG
 - Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish forces
 - Christians
 - Druze
 - Yazidis