

Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish forces

COMMON ANALYSIS

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.**

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](#)