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1.1. Separation of powers and government formation

On 13 March, Syrian interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa signed a Constitutional Declaration outlining a five-year transitional period. The constitutional declaration is set to serve as a transitional constitution for five years until a permanent constitution and elections are established.20 The constitutional declaration also guarantees judicial independence, freedom of expression and media, and political, educational, and labour rights for women.21

The Constitutional Declaration establishes a strong presidential system without a prime minister, granting the president sweeping powers with minimal oversight. The president appoints all ministers, vice presidents, and judges of the Higher Constitutional Court, and selects all members of parliament, one third by direct appointment and the rest selected by a 'high committee' he forms. The president can also issue executive orders, propose laws, declare states of emergency for up to three months (with approval from a National Security Council he appoints), and serves as head of the armed forces.22

On 13 March, several sources reported the establishment of a National Security Council tasked with overseeing Syria's national security affairs and political policies. The council is chaired by President Ahmad al-Sharaa and includes the ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Defence, and intelligence chief, along with three other seats.23 The council's duties and operational mechanisms will be defined by directives issued directly by the president.24 Prominent HTS figures have been appointed to the positions of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice,25 Ministry of Defence (MoD),26 Ministry of Interior (MoI) and head of the General Intelligence Directorate.27

On 29 March, the interim President announced the formation of a transitional government composed of 23 ministers from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, including Alawite, Christian, Druze, and Kurdish representatives. One woman was appointed to the post of Minister of Social Affairs and Labour.28 The government is dominated by ministers associated with Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). It also includes technocrats, civil society leaders and ministers who served in the Assad government before 2011.29 None of the ministers from ethno-religious minorities are affiliated with any known political faction, prompting criticism that their inclusion is tokenistic and lacks genuine political representation. The Kurdish and Druze appointees in the government are not affiliated with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES)30 nor represent the Druze spiritual leadership or Sweida's armed factions.31

In June, a presidential decree announced the appointment of the Supreme Committee for Elections to the People's Assembly who is tasked with overseeing the indirect election of 100 out of the 150 members of the People's Assembly (Parliament) through electoral colleges. It will also define the electoral timeline and set eligibility criteria for both electors and candidates.32

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