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1.3. Security institutions

Security operations are managed by both the MoI and the MoD, with the former operating under a more centralised and structured command,62 while the latter continues efforts to unify various armed factions under its control.63 MoI units, including the police and General Security Service (GSS) are largely composed of former HTS and Idlib-based Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) personnel at the leadership level, with local units reporting to Regional Directors (mudir mantiqa) and other security officials at the regional and governorate levels.64 After it took power, the interim government reorganised its affiliated armed groups around a core of former HTS elements, forming a new security body known as GSS.65 The GSS was the main policing force of HTS in northwestern Syria, and since the overthrow of Assad became the transitional government's gendarmerie.66 This force was tasked with nationwide deployment in government-held areas, combining existing fighters with newly recruited personnel.67

The MoI has structured its administrative apparatus primarily along geographic lines. Regional Directors coordinate directly with local police stations and act as intermediaries between civilians, civil governance, and local security forces. Despite facing resource and staffing constraints, the MoI is relatively robust and possesses a more developed bureaucratic structure than the MoD, according to Syria analyst Gregory Waters.68 The prior experience of most Regional Directors in the Idlib administration has contributed to MoI forces having stronger command and generally exhibiting higher professionalism compared to the country's military forces.69

The MoD is tasked with overseeing both conventional military operations and the increasingly complex network of checkpoints scattered across the country. These checkpoints are reportedly a major source of friction between MoD and MoI forces, as they operate as semi-autonomous security outposts within areas officially under the jurisdiction of MoI Regional Directors, often undermining their authority and complicating coordination on the ground. The military units that comprise the MoD have a more complex chain of command and maintain varied levels of affiliation with the ministry.70

In early June, Syrian military officials stated that the MoD had recruited 100 000 of a planned 200 000 volunteer soldiers71 to join the new Syrian Army.72 The new army reportedly consists mainly of members of HTS and other allied armed groups rather than conscripts without military

experience. It is envisioned to have 20 divisions of 10 000 troops each, further organised into brigades. A Syrian MoD official stated that most brigades are currently ‘at skeleton stage’. Salaries of soldiers reportedly range between USD 150 and 500, paid partly from assets seized from the Assad government.73 For detailed information on the integration of armed groups into the MoD see section 1.3.2.

Regarding the capabilities of the Syrian security forces, U.S. military sources assessed in a report published in April 2025 that the interim government remains in the early stages of establishing effective security across Syria and will likely require sustained foreign assistance. While the interim government’s security forces have demonstrated the ability to carry out limited ground raids, Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) strikes, and rocket and missile attacks, they possess minimal air defence capabilities and have received limited training in advanced weapons systems.74 According to International Crisis Group, Israeli airstrikes have destroyed ‘much of Syria’s air force, navy and heavy weaponry’.75

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