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Guidance note

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The current version of the document supersedes the 'EUAA, *Interim Country Guidance: Syria*, June 2025'.

The guidance note on Syria is produced by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) together with EU+ countries(4) in accordance with Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation(5). 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.

In Syria, a wide range of groups and individuals can be considered actors of persecution or serious harm and a clear distinction between State and non-State actors may be difficult to make in some cases. It includes the Transitional Government, the Syrian National Army (SNA), and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Other actors include the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), groups and networks set up by former Assad government senior military and intelligence officials, the Israeli military, Türkiye, criminal gangs, unaffiliated gunmen, other armed groups such as *Saraya Ansar al-Sunnah*, the family of the applicant, and the society at large. See Actors of persecution or serious harm.

Among the most commonly encountered profiles of applicants for international protection, the following profiles **would likely not qualify for refugee status**:

- Profiles related to military service
- Sunni Arabs, for the mere fact of being Sunni Arab.

The following would **highly likely qualify for refugee status**:

- Persons with diverse SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity and Expression, and Sexual Characteristics)
- Persons with perceived links to ISIL (exclusion considerations are particularly relevant for this profile)

Further guidance is provided on **the risk-impacting circumstances** which may affect the probability of granting refugee status for the following profiles:

- Persons associated with the former Government of Syria
- Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish-led forces
- Persons perceived to be opposing the SDF/YPG (Kurdish People's Protection Units)
- Journalists and other media professionals
- Kurds
- Alawites
- Druze
- Women and girls
- Children

Given that acts of persecution against Christians and against Individuals perceived to have transgressed religious/moral laws, norms or codes seldom occur, **well-founded fear of persecution would only be substantiated in exceptional cases under these profiles**. Therefore, each case must be assessed individually taking into consideration the most recent information available.

The available information on the situation of Persons perceived to be opposing the Transitional Government being limited at the time of writing, an **individual assessment of such cases should be based on the most recent information available**.

Palestinians who had previously availed themselves of the protection or assistance of UNRWA in Syria are to be granted *ipso facto* refugee status, provided Article 12(2) and 12(3) QD/QR do not apply. For Palestinians who did not previously benefit from UNRWA's protection or assistance, the mere fact for an individual to be a Palestinian refugee in Syria, or a descendant of such a person, does not in itself lead to the level of risk required to establish well-founded fear of persecution.

If an applicant is not considered eligible for refugee status, Member States should proceed to consider the granting of **subsidiary protection, taking into account established individual circumstances**.

With regard to Article 15(a) QD/QR: death penalty or execution, while, at the time of writing, there is no information on the use of the death penalty by the Transitional Government, executions have been reported in the recent months. If there is a reasonable degree of likelihood of execution, and no nexus to a reason for persecution can be substantiated, subsidiary protection under Article 15(a) QD/QR shall be granted.

Article 15(b) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment may be applicable in certain cases. For example, torture, life-threatening detention conditions, and criminal violence have been reported.

With regard to subsidiary protection under Article 15(c) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict the guidance provides an assessment per governorate as per following:

- There are **no areas in Syria** where the degree of **indiscriminate violence** reaches an **exceptionally high level** or **a high level**.

- In the governorates of **Aleppo**, **Dar'a**, **Deir Ez-Zor**, **Hama**, **Hasaka**, **Homs**, **Idlib**, **Latakia**, **Quneitra**, **Raqqa**, **Rural Damascus**, **Sweida** and **Tartous**, **indiscriminate violence** is taking place, however **not at a high level**. Accordingly, a **higher level of individual elements** is required to show substantial grounds for believing that a civilian, returned to these areas, would face a real risk of serious harm.

- In the governorate of **Damascus**, it is considered that there is in general **no real risk** of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

The international protection needs of Syrian applicants are further compounded by the general lack of protection in the country. Neither the Transitional Government nor the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES) can be considered Actors of protection fulfilling the requirements of Article 7 QD/QR.

It is assessed that Internal protection alternative (IPA) may be applicable in the city of Damascus in some cases, without prejudice to the possibility to apply IPA to other places in Syria.

Finally, Exclusion considerations may be relevant in a number of cases concerning applicants from Syria, such as former members of Assad's armed forces, (former) members of Assad-aligned militias created after the fall of the regime, (former) members of the previously called 'anti-government armed groups' (such as the Free Syrian Army, *Jabhat al-Nusrah*, *Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham*, the Syrian National Army, especially the Suleiman Shah Brigade, the Hamza Division and their commanders, and the Sultan Murad Division, and ISIL), (former) Kurdish political actors (PYD/Democratic Union Party), security forces (SDF, YPG, Asayish) and groups linked to the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), such as the *Kurdish Revolutionary Youth Movement*, and individuals who committed a serious crime.

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  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.

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  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

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