

Please cite as: EUAA, '4.9.2. Kurds' in *Country Guidance: Syria*, December 2025.

4.9.2. Kurds

COMMON ANALYSIS | Last update: December 2025

This profile refers to Kurds, including members of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)/YPG and persons perceived to be collaborating with the SDF/YPG.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: COI Update, 5.; Country Focus July 2025, 1.3.2.(a), 2.2., 2.4.1., 5.1.3.; Country Focus March 2025, 2.2.; Country Focus 2024, 1.5.1., Targeting 2022, 10.2.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Kurds are the largest ethnic minority in Syria, with an estimated population of 2 to 2.5 million, or up to 10 % of the country's pre-war population of 23 million. They are concentrated in the regions of Afrin, Kobani, and Jazira, neighbourhoods of Aleppo and Damascus cities, and, to a lesser extent, in several districts in Raqqa city.

The agreement in March 2025 between the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the Transitional Government promised that stateless Kurds would be given the right to citizenship and other constitutional rights, and that Kurds in general would be given the right to use and teach the Kurdish language, while those in displacement would be able to return to their homes. The agreement has not been implemented yet.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which Kurds could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution, such as execution, killing, torture, arbitrary arrests, illegal detention, kidnapping, enforced disappearance and forced displacement.

More precisely, the Syrian National Army (SNA) factions have been implicated in serious human rights violations in areas under their control, particularly in parts of Aleppo governorate. These include arbitrary arrests and detentions of individuals arriving from territories controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), often on pretextual charges such as alleged affiliation with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the SDF, or the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES). As a result, large numbers of Kurds remain detained in SNA-run facilities. There have also been arbitrary arrests and detentions of an 'ethnic character' in SNA-controlled parts of Aleppo governorate. Reports also describe summary executions, killings, and torture, targeting individuals affiliated with the SDF, YPG, or Asayish.

Additionally, there are incidents of the Transitional Government arresting persons accused of working with the SDF. In SDF-held areas, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is still capable of conducting attacks, targeting members and persons affiliated with the SDF/YPG.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts to which Kurds could be subjected and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should also be considered. More precisely, following the recapture of Manbij from the SDF, SNA fighters reportedly threatened, robbed, and extorted civilians at checkpoints. The SNA has also been accused of preventing internally displaced persons (IDPs) from returning to or reclaiming their homes, of extorting them or seizing their properties. Kurds returning to Northern Aleppo also continuously faced denial of access to civil documentation and basic services.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

Kurds from areas under the control of the SNA are particularly at risk, especially those returning from SDF-controlled areas. Notably, Kurds are subjected to serious human rights violations by the SNA in areas under their control, often on pretextual charges as well as based on ethnic grounds.

Kurds from areas under the control of the Transitional Government would face a risk when perceived to have links to the SDF as documented cases indicate arrests based on such alleged affiliations.

Kurds from areas within the reach of ISIL would face a risk when perceived to have links to the SDF given ISIL's capability to carry out attacks and target individuals based on such alleged affiliations.

For further information about the presence and control of actors of persecution, refer to 3. Actors of persecution or serious harm.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **race** and/or **nationality** as Kurds are a distinct ethnic group. **(Imputed) political opinion** is also relevant in case of persecution due to perceived affiliation with SDF/YPG/DAANES.



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile, as members of the SDF/YPG may have been involved in excludable acts. See 8. Exclusion.

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