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6. Actors of protection

COMMON ANALYSIS | Last update: December 2025

For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this chapter, see 'EUAA, 'Actors of protection' in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.

The Transitional Government

Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES)

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: Country Focus July 2025, 1.1., 1.2., 1.3., 2.1.1., 2.1.2., 5.3.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

During the reference period, the Transitional Government expanded its territorial control and consolidated authority over key urban centres such as Damascus, Aleppo, and Hama. It also entered into agreements with armed factions, including the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), aimed at integrating their forces into its security structures. Despite these developments, the Transitional Government continues to face significant challenges in establishing effective governance and security across Syria.

The judicial system remains underdeveloped. There is no functioning transitional justice process to address past human rights violations, and courts are largely non-operational. Despite formal assertions of judicial independence, the country has been in a legal vacuum with no functioning judiciary, courts have been non-operational or only partially functioning, and access to legal representation is severely limited. In this vacuum, executive and security measures have often proceeded without a clear legal basis, while informal bodies lacking legal authority have tried to fill the gap, leaving people without effective access to justice.

Reports of extrajudicial killings targeting suspected former regime affiliates and Alawite civilians continue. Despite public commitments to minority protection, the government has failed to prevent widespread retaliatory and sectarian violence, as well as attacks on Christian communities and persons with diverse SOGIESC.

Large portions of the country remain under the control of various armed groups, some supported by external actors. Israeli military operations persist in several governorates. Kurdish forces retain control over parts of northern and eastern Syria. The presence of pro-Assad insurgents, sectarian militias, and extremist groups further undermines the Transitional Government's ability to maintain order and protect civilians.

Security forces under the Transitional Government struggle to respond effectively to revenge killings, kidnappings, and looting. Criminality is widespread in areas under its control, exacerbated by the post-Assad security vacuum, societal fragmentation, and economic hardship. Although the government has issued a fatwa prohibiting revenge killings and urging legal resolution of disputes, its impact remains unverified.

Military capabilities are limited. While the Transitional Government can conduct ground raids and limited aerial operations, it lacks robust air defence systems and advanced weapons training. Its inability to prevent or respond to violence in many areas further highlights its limited reach and capacity.

Despite formal control over parts of Syria and efforts to consolidate power, **the Transitional Government does not meet the criteria of an actor of protection under Article 7 QD/QR who is able to provide effective, non-temporary and accessible protection**. It lacks the institutional capacity and effective judicial mechanisms to provide protection against persecution or serious harm.

Besides the Transitional Administration, the Kurdish-led forces in northeast Syria are the only actor that may be considered to control substantial parts of the territory and could, therefore, be subject to analysis under Article 7 QD/QR.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: Country Focus July 2025, 2.3.; 5.1.1.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The SDF controls nearly one-third of Syria's territory, primarily in the north and east. Following the March agreement between the Transitional Government and the SDF, the SDF withdrew from some Kurdish neighbourhoods in Aleppo and partially handed over control of the Tishreen Dam to Transitional Government forces. However, a Kurdish call for federalism lead to tensions between the two actors that are still unresolved at the time of writing. As of early June, negotiations were still ongoing and agreements were reached on prisoner exchanges and establishing specialised committees for the implementation of the March 10 agreement.

The legislative and judicial systems of the DAANES differ from those in the rest of Syria. The legal system is not independent from the executive and is susceptible to interference by armed groups like PYD, YPG, and PKK. During the reference period, the SDF have committed numerous human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests and detention, assault and violence against media professionals.

In light of the volatile security situation, the lack of an independent judiciary and the ongoing reports of human rights violations, it can be concluded **that DAANES in the Kurdish-controlled areas in Syria does not meet the criteria of an actor of protection under Article 7 QD/QR who is able to provide effective, non-temporary and accessible protection.**

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