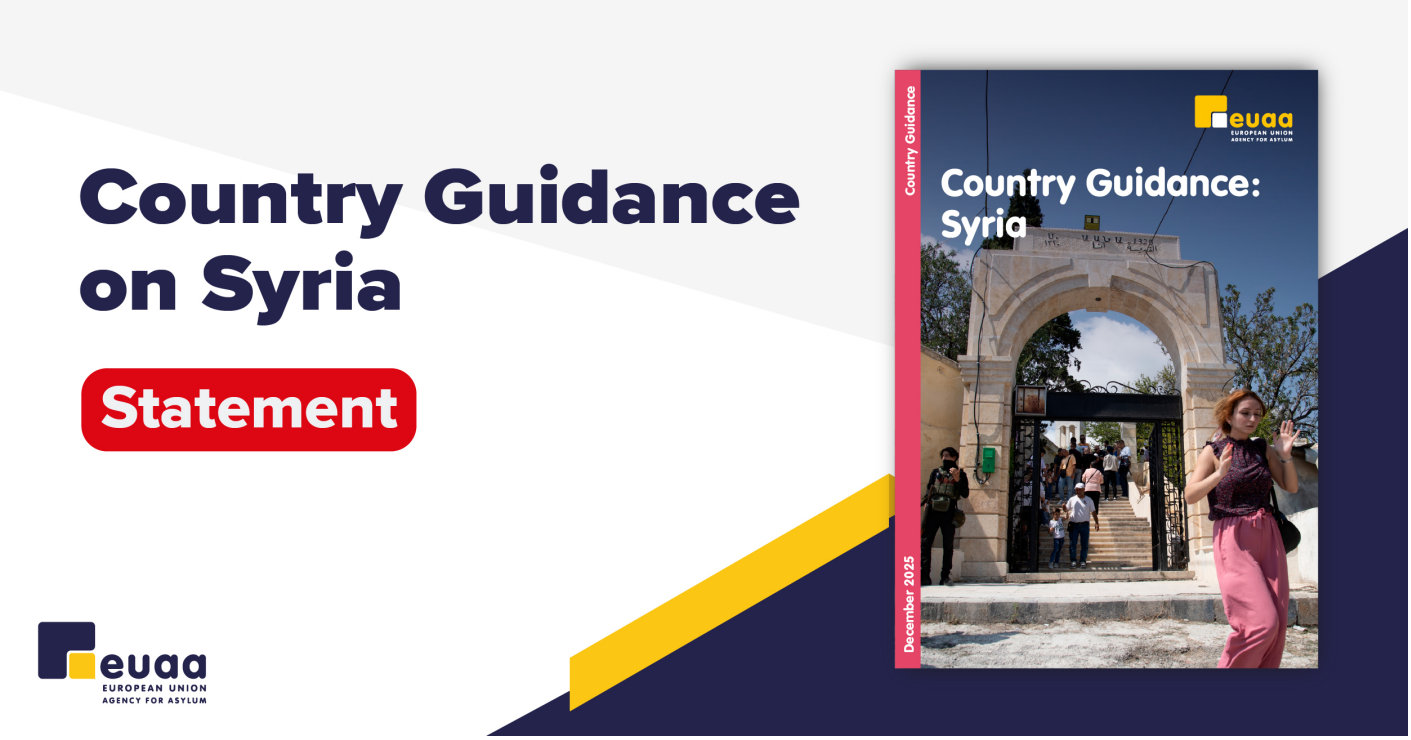
**Statement Published: 4 February 2026**

# Statement: EUAA Country Guidance on Syria – Individuals with perceived links to ISIL




**Following a series of comments and reports mischaracterising the most recent EUAA Country Guidance on Syria, the Agency finds it necessary to correct these misleading interpretations as follows.**

The Country Guidance on Syria is a common assessment by EU countries' national asylum authorities, on the international protection needs of Syrians who have applied for asylum in the EU. As required by EU law, Country Guidance documents are adopted by the Agency's Management Board, which consists of all 27 Member States, together with the European Commission. Accordingly, the Country Guidance on Syria was endorsed unanimously, last November. **Neither the EUAA nor EU Member States have agreed, or even jointly decided, that international protection should be given to former ISIL members. Nor have they decided to overlook the protection needs of other groups, such as Christians of Syria.**

**In fact, at no point does the Guidance state that former ISIL members should be granted international protection.** The one-page section in the Guidance clearly and specifically relates to persons with **perceived** links to ISIL, such as family members of ISIL fighters, or individuals who have resided in territory previously controlled by ISIL. **These individuals are not ISIL members, but because of the perception that they are, many, including a vast number of women and children, have been subjected to violent acts, such as killings and arbitrary detentions.** In such cases, there could be grounds for granting international protection subject, as always, to an individual examination of applications by Member States' responsible asylum authorities.

Persons perceived to be linked to ISIL should be clearly differentiated **from individuals with actual links to ISIL**. In that regard, the Guidance also includes a full chapter on 'Exclusion' whereby it is stated that **those with actual affiliations to ISIL, and of course ISIL members themselves, should have their applications**

**examined very carefully since their involvement in various crimes would make them non-eligible for international protection**.

Lastly, the Country Guidance on Syria does note that in the recent past, **several incidents targeting Christian symbols and places of worship have taken place in Syria**. It is fortunate, however, that since the change of regime, such acts would amount to persecution only on an exceptional basis. The Guidance nonetheless **lists Christians among the religious groups who may have international protection needs.**

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