1. State structure and governance

1.1. Internal political developments

On 8 December 2024, a coalition of armed opposition groups led by Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) overthrew the government of Bashar al-Assad, bringing more than 50 years of Ba'ath Party rule in Syria to an end.[4] In January 2025, the Parliament and all political parties including the Ba'ath party were dissolved.[5] Ahmad al-Sharaa, leader of HTS, was named President for the transitional period.[6] In March 2025, the President signed a Constitutional Declaration replacing the 2012 Constitution[7] and outlining a five-year transitional period.[8] A permanent Constitution and national elections are envisaged by 2030.[9]

The Constitutional Declaration establishes a strong presidential system without a prime minister, granting the president sweeping powers with minimal oversight. The president appoints all ministers, vice presidents, and judges of the Higher Constitutional Court, and selects all members of parliament, one third by direct appointment and the rest selected by a 'high committee' he forms. The president can also issue executive orders, propose laws, declare states of emergency for up to three months (with approval from a National Security Council he appoints), and serves as head of the armed forces.[10] The broad presidential powers were justified in the Constitutional Declaration as 'necessary for Syria's transitional phase'.[11]

In March 2025, the formation of a transitional government composed of 23 ministers was announced. The cabinet was dominated by ministers associated with HTS, alongside technocrats, civil society figures and some officials from the pre-2011 administration. The cabinet included ministers from diverse ethno-religious background. However, their lack of affiliation with established political factions has prompted criticism that their inclusion is largely symbolic and does not provide meaningful representation.[12] A government cabinet reshuffle was announced in May 2026,[13] but observers noted that most new appointees worked in the former HTS-led administration in Idlib,[14] and key portfolios are still held by al-Sharaa associates.[15]

Indirect parliamentary elections were held in October 2025 across most of Syria, apart from areas outside transitional government control in Sweida, Raqqa and Hasaka.[16] Of the 199 elected members, the majority were Sunni Muslim men, with only 13 % of seats contested won by women and minority candidates (one Christian, three Ismailis, three Alawites, four Kurds and no Druze). The elections were criticised as rushed and lacking adequate representation of women and minorities.[17] Indirect elections were held in Raqqa governorate in March 2026[18] and in Hasaka governorate and Kobane/Ayn al-Arab district (Aleppo governorate) in May 2026, while Sweida remained outside of the electoral process.[19] The President is expected to appoint the remaining 70 members of parliament and formally announce its opening[20] which is

envisaged for June 2026.21

- 4

  HRW, World Report 2026; Syria, 4 February 2026, url

- 5

  Al-Jurdi, W., Syria’s First Parliament After Assad: Empty Seats and Empty Promises?, BTI, 2 December 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Syria’s Baath party dissolved: What happens next?, 30 January 2025, url

- 6

  Al Jazeera, President al-Sharaa and no more Baath party: What else has Syria announced?, 29 January 2025, url

- 7

  UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/61-62), 12 March 2026, url, para 7

- 8

  Security Council Report, April 2025 Monthly Forecast, 31 March 2025, url

- 9

  OSES, Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Claudio Cordone - Briefing to the Security Council, 18 March 2026, url

- 10

  International Crisis Group, What Lies in Store for Syria as a New Government Takes Power?, 25 April 2025, url

- 11

  HRW, World Report 2026; Syria, 4 February 2026, url

- 12

  Tabler, Andrew J., Cutting Through the Fog of War (and Peace) in Syria, TWI, 10 February 2026, url; International Crisis Group, What Lies in Store for Syria as a New Government Takes Power?, 25 April 2025, url

- 13

  New Arab (The), Syria sets first cabinet reshuffle since Assad ouster, 12 May 2026, url

- 14

Zelin, A., Syria’s New Government Appointments: More Continuity Than Change, TWI, 22 May 2026, url

- 15

  Al-Tamimi, A., New Syrian Cabinet and Governor Appointments: Translation & Overview, Middle East Forum, 11 May 2026, url

- 16

  UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (A/HRC/61-62), 12 March 2026, url, paras 32, 34

- 17

  Security Council Report, Syria November 2025 Monthly Forecast, 2 November 2025, url

- 18

  Security Council Report, Syria April 2026 Monthly Forecast, 1 April 2026, url

- 19

  New Arab (The), Syria names new lawmakers after vote in former Kurdish-held northeast, 25 May 2026, url

- 20

  Security Council Report, Syria April 2026 Monthly Forecast, 1 April 2026, url

- 21

  New Arab (The), Syria names new lawmakers after vote in former Kurdish-held northeast, 25 May 2026, url

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu