1.3. Security institutions

Upon assuming power, the transitional government announced the dissolution of the former regime's army and security agencies,[61] including the police force.[62] At the same time, it initiated the formation of a new unified Syrian army through the integration of former opposition factions[63] as well as building a new police force through rapid recruitment drives.[64]

Security operations are managed by both the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Ministry of Interior (MoI).[65] The MoD manages the Syrian Armed Forces[66], and is tasked with overseeing conventional military operations.[67] The December 2024 agreement to dissolve former opposition factions and integrate them into the MoD was framed as ending militia rule, but in practice groups were largely absorbed intact, retaining their command structures. The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) described this arrangement as 'reflagging' rather than genuine dissolution. It has resulted in uneven discipline and weak command and control, with factions, particularly Turkish-backed SNA groups, remaining formally subordinate while maintaining significant autonomy.[68] As of September 2025, the new Syrian army was estimated to comprise 20 active divisions; however, the transitional government's aim of having 10 000 troops per division was assessed by ISW as unfeasible to sustain in the near term.[69] HTS and SNA factions constitute much of the new Syrian army's officer corps and manpower.[70]

On 30 January 2026, the transitional government and SDF agreed on the establishing of a new army division comprising three SDF brigades and a Kobane/Ayn al-Arab brigade within an unspecified division in Aleppo governorate,[71] alongside additional brigades that would operate jointly across the northeast.[72] In early May, it was announced that four SDF brigades had officially been integrated.[73]

The MoI oversees security forces tasked with law enforcement functions,[74] including the civil police force[75] and the General Security Service[76] (GSS, known as Internal Security Forces - ISF from 25 May 2025),[77] which was the main policing force of HTS in northwestern Syria, and since the overthrow of Assad became the transitional government's gendarmerie.[78] The MoI's two armed branches, the GSS (ISF) and the civil police, are largely composed of Sunnis, primarily former opposition fighters and personnel who had served in the opposition administration in Idlib prior to Assad's fall.[79] The GSS (ISF) draws heavily from the former HTS forces in Idlib[80] although it has also expanded with large numbers of new recruits.[81] New recruits reportedly initially underwent two weeks of training.[82] In early November 2025, an MoI spokesperson stated that 'tens of thousands' had joined the GSS (ISF), expanding it far beyond its original 8 000 personnel, though authorities indicated the force still needs to triple in size.[83] As part of the agreement to integrate SDF-controlled civilian and military structures into the Syrian state, the SDF-affiliated internal security forces - Asayish are envisaged to join the MoI.[84] In early June,

authorities announced that more than 9 000 Asayish members, including 1 000 women, would undergo interviews as part of the process of integration into the state security forces in Hasaka governorate.85

Prominent HTS figures have been appointed as Minister of Defence,86 Minister of Interior and head of the General Intelligence Directorate.87

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