



1.4.2. Capacity and effectiveness of the judiciary

According to several sources, the legal system has functioned poorly following the fall of Assad. Many judges who served under the previous regime were dismissed and replaced by new appointees, some of whom had worked in Idlib and were trained primarily in Islamic jurisprudence rather than Syrian civil law, and in some cases reportedly lacked formal law degrees.^{[141](#)} A lawyer in Damascus interviewed by the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) assessed that, while the conduct of judges became more courteous and service-oriented, corruption and bribery remain widespread, reportedly driven in part by extremely low salaries that do not cover basic living costs.^{[142](#)}

The authorities stated that the judiciary was operating nationwide despite ongoing challenges ^{[143](#)} but it remained overstretched.^{[144](#)} The Ministry of Justice acknowledges a significant backlog of cases and slow judicial proceedings.^{[145](#)} For instance, in Homs, the central court reportedly handles nearly 2 000 administrative cases per month, including matters such as property transfers and civil status documentation while several sub-courts in the countryside remain damaged or only partially operational.^{[146](#)} Court infrastructure in cities such as Aleppo, Raqqa, Deir Ez-Zor, Idlib and Homs suffered extensive damage or destruction during the conflict, while judicial and documentation records, including case files, judgments and property records, were disrupted, destroyed or looted across large parts of the country.^{[147](#)} The Ministry of Justice has been training a new cohort of judges and lawyers throughout the second half of 2025, with the first group expected to graduate in early 2026.^{[148](#)}

Although some courts have resumed operations including criminal courts,^{[149](#)} many files remained suspended as of December 2025, particularly those related to smuggling or violations committed under the former regime.^{[150](#)}

Detention without judicial warrants persists,^{[151](#)} and referral to the public prosecution remain subject to delay.^{[152](#)} Judicial, security and police entities continue to restrict visitation, attendance, and legal representation despite the political changes.^{[153](#)} At times, detainees are not informed of the reason for their arrest.^{[154](#)} In many instances, it is not possible for witnesses to determine whether an individual is formally arrested or merely held for further investigation and later release. Detainees often disappear into the prison system, with families unable to verify their location or well-being,^{[155](#)} while information on due process, detainees' legal status, and the conduct of justice proceedings remains limited.^{[156](#)}

A lawyer interviewed by the independent Syrian media organisation Enab Baladi claimed that detention during investigation can extend to three months with no clarity on procedures or legal

fate. Lawyers are reportedly not permitted to attend interrogations conducted in security branches until detainees are transferred to court. They are also barred from obtaining power of attorney from detainees (especially those labelled as 'remnants' of former regime and held in military police and political security prisons) and denied visitation.[157](#)

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