



1.6. Prison conditions and treatment of detainees

Upon taking control, the transitional government released thousands of detainees from detention facilities,^{[177](#)} at times without due process or oversight.^{[178](#)} Following Assad's ousting, detention centres and prisons were left largely unprotected,^{[179](#)} with many official records containing critical information looted or destroyed.^{[180](#)} Although, according to an April 2025 report by Global Protection Cluster (GPC), torture practices in prisons have 'largely ceased', poor detention conditions persisted, with overcrowded and unsanitary makeshift facilities replacing looted or abandoned Assad-era prisons.^{[181](#)}

The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) documented at least 1 108 cases of arbitrary arrest or detention during 2025, including 73 children and 26 women, by different actors, including Syrian transitional government forces, and other armed opposition factions.^{[182](#)} Sources indicated that most arrest and detention cases were linked to security operations by the transitional government security forces, particularly in Latakia, Homs, Hama and Damascus governorates.^{[183](#)} According to the UNCOI, Alawite men and boys were arbitrarily arrested amid violence during these operations and were detained both in official and unofficial detention facilities.^{[184](#)} In some of the cases, arrests and detention by Internal Security Forces (ISF) were linked to financial motivations, including ransom extortion, as well as seizure and confiscation of property.^{[185](#)} In the first quarter of 2026, at least 210 cases of arbitrary arrest or detention, including 11 children and 3 women were recorded by SNHR.^{[186](#)}

The UNCOI noted that places of detention were 'severely overcrowded'.^{[187](#)} According to the same source, several cases in which detainees were held incommunicado were recorded.^{[188](#)} Torture and ill-treatment practices were documented in detention facilities,^{[189](#)} as well as in makeshift facilities and checkpoints in Aleppo, Dar'a, Homs, Hama, Latakia, Tartous, Idlib, and Rural Damascus governorates.^{[190](#)} The majority of these documented cases involved Alawite men, who were reportedly later released.^{[191](#)} Several cases of deaths in detention were also reported during 2025. The transitional government announced investigations into four of the cases and confirmed 21 cases in Homs, Hama and Damascus central prisons, attributing them to natural causes.^{[192](#)}

- ^{[177](#)}

UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, 19 March 2025, [url](#), para. 5

- ^{[178](#)}

GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 2

- [179](#)

AI, The State of the World's Human Rights 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 353-354

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AI, The State of the World's Human Rights 2024, 29 April 2025, [url](#), p. 354; UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, 19 March 2025, [url](#), para. 6

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GPC, Protection Landscape in Syria – A Snapshot: March 2025, 3 April 2025, [url](#), p. 6

- [182](#)

SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 3 January 2026, [url](#), p. 5

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UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 44; SNHR, Monthly Report on Arrests/Detentions in Syria, 3 January 2026, [url](#), p. 4

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UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, 12 March 2026, [url](#), paras. 44, 46

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UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I paras. 40, 41

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SNHR, Quarterly Report on Cases of Arbitrary Arrest and Detention in Syria, 5 April 2026, [url](#), p. 4

- [187](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 51

- [188](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I paras. 42-49

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UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, 12 March 2026, [url](#), para. 48; HRW, World Report 2026, Syria: Events of 2025, 4 February 2026, [url](#)

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UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, 12 March 2026, [url](#), paras. 48, 49

- [191](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, 12 March 2026, [url](#), Annex I para. 31

- [192](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, 12 March 2026, [url](#), paras. 52, 53