



## 2.1.1. Former soldiers and security personnel

After taking power, the transitional government ordered security personnel including police, security officers, and soldiers who served under the Assad regime to undergo a formal demobilisation process known as ‘reconciliation’/clearance (*taswiya*).[200](#) Individuals were required to surrender their weapons, hand over their military identification, and pledge not to take up arms against the new authorities. In return, they were to receive documentation confirming their demobilisation, assurances of safety, and the prospect of an investigative process. Individuals cleared of involvement in war crimes were reportedly to be issued civilian identification documents and have their case files closed.[201](#)

In the initial weeks following the fall of the Assad government tens of thousands of former SAA soldiers and conscripts, by some accounts around 120 000 in Latakia and Tartous alone,[202](#) surrendered their weapons and were demobilised.[203](#) Others refused to disarm, citing the fragile security environment and an ongoing need for self-defence.[204](#) Many individuals feared that participation in the ‘reconciliation’/clearance’ process could constitute a trap leading to imprisonment, execution, or attacks while travelling to clearance centres. Identification cards issued to Assad-era security personnel indicated their former jobs, reportedly exposing holders to the risk of detention or other forms of harm during encounters with the new authorities. After surrendering their weapons, dismissed security personnel would receive a *taswiya* document confirming that they were no longer active, which was intended to permit freedom of movement.[205](#)

While sources assessed that, generally, ordinary SAA soldiers cleared of involvement in war crimes have not been targeted by transitional government forces,[206](#) reports indicate that *taswiya* (clearance) documentation has, at times, exposed former regime personnel to risks rather than ensuring freedom of movement. Checkpoint guards reportedly interpreted such documents as evidence of involvement in crimes under the former regime, leading to incidents of arrest, harassment, kidnapping, or even killing, prompting thousands of dismissed personnel to avoid the clearance process altogether and remain in their home villages while retaining their weapons.[207](#) In the months immediately following Assad’s fall, some former soldiers reportedly experienced sectarian harassment, physical assault and detention at checkpoints solely for possessing a *taswiya* card. While most were subsequently released, some reported experiencing physical abuse during detention by security forces.[208](#) While many Sunni holders of *taswiya* documents reportedly resumed civilian life, activists and local residents indicated that many Alawite former soldiers continued to experience fear and uncertainty,[209](#) their documents being colloquially referred to as ‘death cards’ due to perceived risks at checkpoints.[210](#) These fears

have confined many individuals to their local communities, limiting their ability to seek employment and contributing to a widespread perception of lacking future prospects.[211](#) By the end of 2025, authorities began replacing temporary *taswiya* documents with civilian identity cards,[212](#) although their distribution was reportedly slow and limited.[213](#)

Authorities have barred former regime figures from joining the new military, although a limited number of lower-ranking personnel with valuable technical or logistical skills have reportedly been admitted to the army or police following vetting.[214](#) Rehiring of some former Assad-era Alawite police officers has been reported, particularly in Tartous and Latakia governorates.[215](#) According to Syrian columnist and researcher Haid Haid, under the current arrangements, former Assad forces remain economically inactive, politically marginalised, and socially isolated, conditions that are considered to increase the risk of future unrest.[216](#)

Arrests targeting former security personnel and individuals perceived to be affiliated with the former government, mainly Alawites, including those who had undergone the reconciliation/clearance process, occurred particularly in the period between December 2024 and February 2025 and during and after the March 2025 violence in the coastal areas.[217](#) Between 8 December 2024 and 31 January 2026, the UNCOI documented testimonies from former detainees alleging severe beatings, violence and torture in 18 official detention facilities across Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Latakia, Tartous, Idlib, Rural Damascus, and Dar'a, as well as in 12 makeshift facilities and at checkpoints in several governorates. Most documented cases of torture and ill-treatment reportedly involved Alawite men, including former (reconciled) security personnel[218](#) many of whom were subsequently released.[219](#) UNCOI documented eight accounts of enforced disappearances carried out by government security forces including of former SAA Alawite officers and former conscripts who underwent reconciliation.[220](#)

During the reference period, transitional government authorities continued to arrest individuals over alleged links to the Assad regime,[221](#) including former senior military officials[222](#) and persons wanted for war crimes committed under the Assad regime,[223](#) former militia commanders[224](#) and military judges.[225](#) Between 8 December 2024 and January 2026, the government reported arresting 6 331 former Syrian Arab Army (SAA) personnel, of whom 1 158 were subsequently released due to insufficient evidence. Most detainees were reportedly held in dilapidated detention facilities from Assad era requiring renovation, amid limited resources and pending judicial reforms and related legal proceedings.[226](#)

SNHR documented the arrest of 948 persons in 2025 by transitional government security forces, mainly targeting former military personnel and government employees accused of committing human rights violations during the Assad regime, as well as individuals suspected of being linked to remnants of the former regime which carried out attacks against security forces in March 2025.[227](#) Most reported arrests occurred in Latakia,[228](#) Tartous, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Damascus and Idlib governorates.[229](#) According to SNHR, arrests were carried out within security campaigns, and the source was not able to verify whether they were in accordance with legal arrest warrants issued by relevant judicial authorities.[230](#) According to SNHR, the reasons for these arrests are often not communicated or unclear, and detention locations and names of those arrested are rarely disclosed. The security forces' lack of transparency makes it difficult to identify patterns or determine the legal basis for these detentions.[231](#) The Syrian non-

governmental group The Day After (TDA) stated that there is no consistent pattern in prosecutions, suggesting that decisions may be shaped by personal interests and political considerations rather than clear legal standards.[232](#)

Since December 2024, the government has issued two waves of amnesties for former government-affiliated detainees. The first, in June 2025, was issued by the Supreme Committee for Preserving Civil Peace and led to the release of around 300 former Assad-era military and security personnel. Authorities justified the releases on the basis that detainees were not proven guilty of serious war crimes and that their release would ease tensions following violence in Latakia and Tartous. However, the process lacked transparency, with unclear arrest procedures and no evident legal framework for assessing innocence. The releases were reportedly brokered by Fadi Saqr, a controversial militia leader and member of the Committee. A second wave of amnesty was issued in March 2026 by presidential decree, granting a general amnesty for crimes committed prior to its enactment, reducing or eliminating prison sentences. The measure aimed to ease pressure on the prison system and promote national reconciliation, while formally excluding those accused of serious crimes such as torture, human trafficking, and embezzlement of public funds. In addition, some former Assad-era detainees were released on an ad hoc basis through varied legal mechanisms. [233](#)

The transitional government has also pursued reconciliation arrangements with Assad-era figures, exchanging leniency for assets, information, and intelligence cooperation, including temporarily refraining from action against some former security officials to help contain insurgent activity by Assad loyalists on the coast.[234](#)

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