



2.1.3. Factors influencing targeting

The criteria for determining who is considered affiliated with the former government remain unclear, leading to inconsistent targeting.^{[243](#)} In some cases, individuals were arrested based on military records or corroborated witness testimony, while in other cases arrests followed community accusations, personal disputes, rumours, or unverified social media claims. Some of those targeted were genuinely involved in abuses against civilians, but others were detained solely because of their former political or security roles, or perceived association with the previous regime.^{[244](#)}

The transitional government's pursuit of former regime members is inconsistent,^{[245](#)} prioritising the public arrest and long-term detention of high-ranking officials while frequently releasing lower-level informants.^{[246](#)} Furthermore, disparity in treatment exists where senior figures might receive better treatment in detention, whereas lower-level detainees are more vulnerable to physical abuse.^{[247](#)} Wealthy businessmen and public figures associated with the former government have largely retained or regained their influence, while lower-ranking officials and civilians accused of loyalty to the former government have faced arrest or harassment.^{[248](#)}

Sectarian identity has been a contributing factor in targeting, particularly in cases involving Alawites targeted by government security forces and affiliated armed groups.^{[249](#)} However, affiliation with the former government is generally the primary factor driving targeting.^{[250](#)} In certain areas, such as Deir Ez-Zor, Sunni former SAA personnel are generally not targeted solely for their past military service, as the risk of tribal retaliation may discourage such actions.^{[251](#)}

- ^{[243](#)}

DK, DIS, Syria, Situation of Certain Groups, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 63, 97 [Syria Direct, SNHR]

- ^{[244](#)}

DK, DIS, Syria, Situation of Certain Groups, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 63, 97 [Syria Direct, SNHR]

- ^{[245](#)}

Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025; Koontz, K., Waters, G., Without Accountability, Syria's Sectarian Violence Will Only Worsen, TWI, 10 June 2025, [url](#)

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Koontz, K., Waters, G., Without Accountability, Syria's Sectarian Violence Will Only Worsen, TWI, 10 June 2025, [url](#)

- [247](#)

Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, online interview with EUAA, 11 June 2025

- [248](#)

DK, DIS, Syria, Situation of Certain Groups, December 2025, [url](#), p. 111 [The Day After]

- [249](#)

UN Human Rights Council, Violations against civilians in Coastal and Western Central Syria in January - March 2025, 11 August 2025, [url](#), paras 30, 62; HRW, Syrian Archive, STJ, Are you Alawi? Identity-Based Killings During Syria's Transition, September 2025, [url](#), pp. 21, 42, 44, 46; 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 44

- [250](#)

DK, DIS, Syria, Situation of Certain Groups, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 63, 70, 97 [Syria Direct, Syrian human rights organisation, SNHR]

- [251](#)

DK, DIS, Syria, Situation of Certain Groups, December 2025, [url](#), p. 75 [international organisation]