



4.8. Mobility and admittance

4.8.1. Freedom of movement at country level and in Damascus

Freedom of movement within Syria has improved since the fall of the Assad government¹⁰²⁹ and people are generally able to travel between cities such as Damascus, Aleppo, Raqqa, and Hasaka without facing restrictions.¹⁰³⁰ The collapse of SDF control in the northeast led to the removal of checkpoints, enabling relatively free movement of goods and people compared with previous years.¹⁰³¹

Geographic disparities in freedom of movement were reported, with the highest levels of movement restrictions perceived by respondents to an UNHCR survey in Sweida (36 %), followed by Tartous (29 %), Latakia (13 %) and Hasaka (11 %). These areas also reported higher perceptions of insecurity, suggesting a link between safety concerns and limitations on freedom of movement.¹⁰³² According to UNHCR, checkpoints along key routes between Sweida and Damascus continue to severely restrict movement, with travel largely limited to essential or emergency purposes.¹⁰³³ Israel's operations in southern Syria, particularly Quneitra governorate have led to restrictions on the freedom of movement of civilians¹⁰³⁴, including preventing returns¹⁰³⁵ and access to land and essential services.¹⁰³⁶

Major highways remain generally secure during daytime travel, allowing travellers arriving via Damascus International Airport, now also used by UN personnel, to travel onward within government-controlled areas without difficulty, aside from isolated security incidents such as attacks on civilian vehicles reported in summer 2025 on the road between Damascus and Sweida as part of the conflict between Bedouins and Druze.¹⁰³⁷ The road leading from Damascus airport to the city is well secured, with the government actively trying to demonstrating its presence and control.¹⁰³⁸ According to Haid Haid, travel is generally considered relatively safe in Damascus and surrounding areas, including along routes between Damascus and other cities and towards border crossings.¹⁰³⁹

Many residents limited their movement after dark, including in and around Damascus and on main travel routes between Damascus and Dar'a, Sweida and Homs¹⁰⁴⁰ due to security risks¹⁰⁴¹ such as fear of kidnappings and theft.¹⁰⁴² In Haid Haid's assessment, although criminal incidents do occur in and around Damascus, they are not considered to be at a level that significantly restricts freedom of movement.¹⁰⁴³

Since the fall of the former government, the number of checkpoints on major roads has significantly decreased and routine inspections of IDs, vehicles, and searches are no longer common, although occasional incidents occur due to manpower shortages and command gaps.

[1044](#) In areas controlled by the transitional government, internal security forces typically staffed urban checkpoints, while Syrian army soldiers were more common in rural areas, with some checkpoints included mixed personnel. Identification was not always clear due to unclear insignia, and checkpoints were generally located at major junctions, city access roads, main routes, and near government buildings.[1045](#)

Checkpoint procedures vary significantly,[1046](#) ranging from minimal oversight as documented by some sources in Latakia and Tartous to extensive inspections elsewhere.[1047](#) Checks could include questioning travellers about the purpose of their journey, identity verification, vehicle searches, and, in some locations, examination of mobile phones or inquiries into religious background. Security forces occasionally fired at vehicles that failed to stop, while particularly strict controls were reported on roads between Dar'a and Sweida and on routes toward northeast Syria.[1048](#) According to International Crisis Group, guards' behaviour at checkpoints ranged from respectful to, at times, predatory.[1049](#) According to multiple sources, non-Sunni citizens could face humiliating treatment and intrusive questioning at checkpoints.[1050](#) Personnel at checkpoints in Damascus did not systematically request identification from travellers and people do not generally report any issues.[1051](#)

Women's freedom of movement in Syria varies by region: in Damascus, many move independently with precautions, while in smaller towns and rural areas, cultural norms impose stricter limitations on freedom of movement. [1052](#) In the coastal region, fears of kidnapping have disrupted girls' education, and in Aleppo, some women cover their hair to avoid harassment, which is primarily reported from armed men or at checkpoints rather than from regular police.[1053](#) Respondents to an UNHCR study[1054](#) focused on IDP returnees and refugee returnees across all Syrian governorates indicated that safety concerns (91 %) were the main factors limiting women and girls' freedom of movement, followed by harassment and intimidation (16 %), discrimination (7 %), socio-cultural barriers (7 %) and lack of IDs (5 %).[1055](#)

Most respondents to the same UNHCR study reported being able to move freely within their area of residence, including 94 % of returnees and 82 % of host community members. The main barriers to movement were due to safety and security concerns, fear of abduction, explosive ordnance, and the presence of armed actors.[1056](#)

During the reporting period some border crossings have been either temporarily closed or reopened. The Jdeibet Yabous crossing with Lebanon which was temporarily closed on 5 April as a response to Israel's warning to evacuate the area was reopened on 9 April.[1057](#) The Yarubiyah (Rabia) border crossing between Syria and Iraq was reopened in April 2026 after more than a decade, with the aim of facilitating oil transportation and trade.[1058](#) The Akcakale crossing between Türkiye and Syria was reopened after 12 years bringing the total number of crossings open between the two countries at 12.[1059](#)

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