

# Syria: Country Focus



# **Syria: Country Focus**

## **Country of Origin Information Report**

**March 2025**



Manuscript completed in March 2025

Neither the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) nor any person acting on behalf of the EUAA is responsible for the use that might be made of the information contained within this publication.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2025

PDF ISBN 978-92-9410-621-6 doi: 10.2847/7507398 BZ-01-25-020-EN-N

© European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), 2025

Cover photo: First Friday Prayer In Damascus Since Rebel Forces Deposed Assad Regime, Chris McGrath ©Gettyimages, 2024

Please cite as: EUAA, COI Report – Syria: Country Focus, March 2025,  
[https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2025\\_03\\_EUAA\\_COI\\_Report\\_Syria\\_Country\\_Focus.pdf](https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2025_03_EUAA_COI_Report_Syria_Country_Focus.pdf)

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged. For any use or reproduction of photos or other material that is not under the EUAA copyright, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holders.



# Acknowledgements

This report was jointly drafted by the EUAA COI Sector together with:

- Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD)

The following departments and organisations reviewed this report:

- Denmark, Danish Immigration Service
- France, Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA), Information, Documentation and Research Division
- Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency, Country of Origin Information, Section for Information Analysis.

The review carried out by the mentioned departments, experts or organisations contributes to the overall quality of the report, but does not necessarily imply their formal endorsement of the final report, which is the full responsibility of the EUAA.





# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Contents</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Disclaimer</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Glossary and abbreviations</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Methodology.....	9
Defining the terms of reference.....	9
Collecting information.....	9
Quality control.....	9
Sources.....	10
Sources on security incidents.....	10
Sources on civilian casualties.....	12
<b>Map</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>1. Political and human rights developments</b> .....	<b>15</b>
1.1. Overview of conflicts.....	16
1.2. Political developments.....	19
1.2.1. Fall of the Assad government.....	19
1.2.2. Governance under the Transitional Administration.....	20
1.3. Treatment of certain profiles and groups of the population.....	26
1.3.1. Persons affiliated with the government of Bashar Al-Assad.....	26
1.3.2. Alawites.....	29
1.3.3. Kurds.....	31
1.3.4. Other religious and ethnic minorities.....	32
1.3.5. Women.....	33
1.3.6. Children.....	38
1.3.7. LGBTIQ persons.....	41
<b>2. Armed actors</b> .....	<b>43</b>
2.1.1. Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and allied groups.....	43
2.1.2. Syrian National Army (SNA).....	45
2.1.3. Other armed groups.....	47





2.1.4. Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) .....	50
2.1.5. ISIL.....	52
<b>3. International involvement .....</b>	<b>54</b>
3.1.1. Türkiye .....	54
3.1.2. Russia .....	56
3.1.3. Iran and pro-Iranian militias.....	57
3.1.4. US-led coalition .....	58
3.1.5. Israel .....	59
<b>4. Recent security trends.....</b>	<b>61</b>
4.1. Areas under the control of the Transitional Administration.....	62
4.1.1. Criminality, lawlessness and sectarian violence .....	63
4.1.2. Coastal areas .....	65
4.1.3. ISIL insurgency .....	67
4.1.4. Afrin area.....	67
4.1.5. Southern Syria .....	68
4.2. Areas under the control of the Syrian National Army (SNA).....	69
4.3. Areas under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) .....	73
4.4. Impact of the Israel-Hamas war on the security in Syria.....	76
4.5. Impact of violence on the civilian population .....	79
4.5.1. Security incidents.....	79
4.5.2. Tactics and weapons used.....	82
4.5.3. Civilian fatalities.....	85
4.5.4. Conflict related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war 87	
4.5.5. Displacement and return .....	89
4.5.6. Returns from abroad .....	91
<b>Annex 1: Bibliography .....</b>	<b>93</b>
Public sources.....	93
<b>Annex 2: Terms of Reference.....</b>	<b>145</b>





## Disclaimer

This report was written according to the [EUAA COI Report Methodology \(2023\)](#). The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular application for international protection. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

'Refugee', 'risk' and similar terminology are used as generic terminology and not in the legal sense as applied in the EU Asylum Acquis, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Neither the EUAA, nor any person acting on its behalf, may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

On 19 January 2022, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) became the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). All references to EASO, EASO products and bodies should be understood as references to the EUAA.

The drafting of this report was finalised on 11 March 2025. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this report. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the methodology section of the [Introduction](#).





## Glossary and abbreviations

Term	Definition
<b>ACLED</b>	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
<b>DAANES</b>	Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria
<b>ERW</b>	Explosive remnants of war
<b>HTS</b>	Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IRGC</b>	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
<b>ISIL</b>	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant; also known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Islamic State (IS), or Daesh
<b>MOA</b>	Military Operations Administration
<b>NDF</b>	National Defence Forces
<b>NLF</b>	National Liberation Front
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights
<b>PKK</b>	Kurdistan Workers' Party
<b>SAA</b>	Syrian Arab Army
<b>SDF</b>	Syrian Democratic Forces
<b>SNA</b>	Syrian National Army
<b>SNHR</b>	Syrian Network for Human Rights
<b>SOHR</b>	Syrian Observatory of Human Rights
<b>SSG</b>	Syrian Salvation Government
<b>TWI</b>	Washington Institute for Near East Policy
<b>UCDP</b>	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
<b>UNOCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs





Term	Definition
<b>USDOD</b>	United States Department of Defense
<b>UXO</b>	Unexploded ordnance
<b>YPG</b>	Kurdish People's Protection Units





# Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant information for the assessment of applications for international protection, and in particular for use in updating EUAA's country guidance on Syria.

The report covers the period of November 2024 – February 2025, and should be read in conjunction the EUAA COI reports: [Syria - Country Focus \(October 2024\)](#) and [Syria - Security situation \(October 2024\)](#).

## Methodology

This report was jointly drafted by EUAA and ACCORD and reviewed by EUAA and national COI departments in EU+ countries, as mentioned in the [Acknowledgements](#) section.

This report is produced in line with the EUAA COI Report Methodology (2023)<sup>1</sup> and the EUAA COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide (2023).<sup>2</sup>

## Defining the terms of reference

The terms of reference (ToR) of this report were defined by EUAA based on discussions held and input received from COI experts in the EUAA COI specialist network on Syria and from policy experts in EU+ countries within the framework of a Country Guidance development on Syria. The ToR also build on previous EUAA COI reports on Syria covering the same topics. The Terms of Reference for this report can be found in [Annex 2: Terms of Reference](#) of this report.

## Collecting information

The information gathered is a result of research using public, specialised paper-based and electronic sources until 25 February 2025. Some limited additional information was added during the finalisation of this report in response to feedback received during the quality control process, until 11 March 2025.

## Quality control

To ensure that the authors respected the EUAA COI Report Methodology and that the Terms of Reference were comprehensively addressed, a review was carried out by COI specialists from the countries and organisations listed as reviewers in the [Acknowledgements](#) section. All comments made by the reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were

---

<sup>1</sup> EUAA, EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, February 2023, [url](#)

<sup>2</sup> EUAA, Writing and Referencing Guide for EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Reports, February 2023, [url](#)



implemented in the final draft of this report, which was finalised on 11 March 2025. EUAA also performed the final quality review and editing of the text.

## Sources

In accordance with EUAA COI methodology, a range of different published documentary sources have been consulted on relevant topics for this report. These include: COI reports by governments; information from civil society, advocacy groups, humanitarian organisations, and NGOs; international and NGO human rights reports; reports produced by various bodies of the United Nations; Syrian and regionally-based media; academic publications and think tank reports and specialised sources covering Syria. All information from these sources was consulted within time constraints.

### Sources on security incidents

For data on violent incidents, publicly available curated datasets from the organisation [Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project \(ACLED\)](#) have been used. ACLED is a project collecting, analysing and mapping information on crisis and conflict in Africa, south and south-east Asia and Middle East and provides datasets on conflict incidents. It collects data on violent incidents in Syria, coding each incident with the time and place, type of violent incident, the parties involved and the number of fatalities. The information is collected in a database that is openly accessible, searchable and kept continuously up to date. The data primarily come from secondary sources such as traditional media reports, but also from reports by international institutions and non-governmental organisations, targeted new media platforms, and data provided by local partners of ACLED.<sup>3</sup> On Syria, ACLED incorporates data from a number of partners, including the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), Airwars, the Carter Center, Liveuamap, Syria Direct, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), the London School of Economics' Conflict and Civil Society Research Unit, the International Security and Development Center and Clingendael Institute.<sup>4</sup>

ACLED codes security incidents as follows:

- **Battles:** violent clashes between at least two armed groups. Battles can occur between armed and organised state, non-state, and external groups, and in any combination therein. Sub-events of battles are armed clashes, government regaining territory and non-state actor overtaking territory.
- **Violence against civilians:** violent events where an organised armed group deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants. It includes violent attacks on unarmed civilians such as sexual violence, attacks, abduction/forced disappearance.
- **Explosions/remote violence:** events where an explosion, bomb or other explosive device was used to engage in conflict. They include one-sided violent events in

---

<sup>3</sup> ACLED, Methodology, April 2019, [url](#); ACLED, FAQs: ACLED Sourcing Methodology, March 2023, [url](#)

<sup>4</sup> ACLED, Syria Partner Network, April 2019, [url](#); ACLED, ACLED Integrates New Partner Data on the War in Syria, 5 April 2019, [url](#)



which the tool for engaging in conflict creates asymmetry by taking away the ability of the targets to engage or defend themselves and their location. They include air/drone strikes, suicide bombs, shelling/artillery/missile attacks, remote explosives/landmines/IEDs, grenades, chemical weapons.

- **Riots:** are a violent demonstration, often involving a spontaneous action by unorganised, unaffiliated members of society. They include violent demonstration, mob violence.
- **Protests:** public demonstration in which the participants do not engage in violence, though violence may be used against them. It includes peaceful protests, protests with intervention, excessive force against protesters.
- **Strategic developments:** information regarding the activities of violent groups that is not itself recorded as political violence, yet may trigger future events or contribute to political dynamics within and across states. It includes agreements, changes to group/activity, non-violent transfers of territory, arrests.<sup>5</sup>

For the purpose of providing information for the assessment of serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict (Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive), only the following type of events have been included in the analysis: battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians.

Additionally, ACLED codes actors involved in security incidents as follows: Actor1 is the 'named actor involved in the event' and Actor2 is the 'named actor involved in the event, while "[i]n most cases, an event requires two actors, noted in columns 'ACTOR1' and 'ACTOR2'". However, event types 'Explosions/Remote violence', 'Riots', 'Protests', and 'Strategic developments' can include 'one-sided events'.<sup>6</sup> The ACLED coding of Actor1 and Actor2 does not necessarily indicate that one is the aggressor (e.g Actor1) and the other one (e.g Actor2) the target or victim.<sup>7</sup> When focusing on the involvement of specific actors within certain regions, the drafters based their analysis on all those incidents, where ACLED coded the relevant actor either as 'Actor1' or as 'Actor2'. This approach aims to illustrate the general level of involvement of the respective actors in the conflict without distinguishing between Actor1 and Actor2, as these categories, according to ACLED's methodology, do not indicate any differentiation in terms of content/semantics.

Characteristics and potential limits for COI use of ACLED data are:

- Data primarily come from secondary sources such as media reports. Lack of or underreporting might critically affect the depiction and the assessment of the situation on the ground.
- Geographical precision is variable: the provincial capital will represent the region if no further precisions are available and may be over-represented.

<sup>5</sup> ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 7 October 2024, [url](#), pp. 10-20

<sup>6</sup> ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 7 October 2024, [url](#), p. 22

<sup>7</sup> ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 7 October 2024, [url](#), p. 4





Security incidents numbers and associated graphs/maps at country and governorate level are based on a publicly available ACLED dataset for Middle East.<sup>8</sup> Whenever other sources on security incidents were available over the reference period, ACLED's data have been corroborated/contrasted with other data.

## Sources on civilian casualties

The main source on civilian fatalities in Syria used in this report is the Syrian Network of Human Rights (SNHR). The [Syrian Network of Human Rights \(SNHR\)](#) is a non-profit human rights organisation founded in 2011 which works on documenting human rights violations in Syria. SNHR relies on a network of volunteers in each governorate to compile lists of civilian fatalities and verify victims' identities by photo or video and by speaking with family members, witnesses, and hospitals. SNHR reports fatalities by gender, age, perpetrator, governorate, and other classifications. It only records civilian fatalities – with the exception of the death toll among victims who died due to torture, which includes armed combatants and civilians.<sup>9</sup> Where available, information from other sources documenting civilian casualties in the Syrian conflict (Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, the Syrian Human Rights Committee, Action on Armed Violence, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, Uppsala Conflict Data Program) has been included.

Additionally, data on civilian deaths collected by the [Uppsala Conflict Data Program \(UCDP\)](#) has been also included. UCDP is a 'data collection project for civil war'.<sup>10</sup> UCDP provided EUAA with a Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) covering the reference period of the report. UCDP's methodology is explained on its website as well as its GED Codebook.<sup>11</sup> The unit of analysis of UCDP is the 'event'<sup>12</sup> which is defined as '[a]n incident where armed force was used by an organised actor against another organized actor, or against civilians, resulting in at least 1 direct death at a specific location and a specific date'.<sup>13</sup> This leads, among other things, to 'seemingly low estimates' because 'a number of factors can preclude a potential conflict event from inclusion in the UCDP GED', for example, unclear actors or uncertainty about whether fatalities occurred.<sup>14</sup> UCDP provides three estimates for fatalities for each event – a low estimate, a best estimate, and a high estimate. In addition, UCDP provides an estimate of the number of civilian deaths.<sup>15</sup> According to UCDP, 'it is quite likely that there are more fatalities than given in the best estimate, but it is very unlikely that there are fewer'.<sup>16</sup>

The stricter definition of an event of UCDP excludes violent incidents that are recorded by ACLED. This includes ACLED's option to assign violent events to 'unidentified armed groups'. The difference in definitions is one explanatory factor to why the number of events recorded

---

<sup>8</sup> ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East (12 August 2022), [url](#)

<sup>9</sup> For detailed information on SNHR's methodology see [url](#); SNHR, Extrajudicial Killing Claims the Lives of 1,734 Civilians in Syria in 2020, Including 99 in December, 1 January 2021, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>10</sup> UCDP, About UCDP, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>11</sup> UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#); UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>12</sup> UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>13</sup> UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>14</sup> UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>15</sup> UCDP, UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Codebook (Version 21.1), 2021, [url](#), pp. 5, 11, 24

<sup>16</sup> UCDP, UCDP Methodology, n.d., [url](#)





by ACLED can be significantly higher than events recorded by UCDP.<sup>17</sup> In this report, UCDP data have been used to contrast ACLED data and to provide figures on civilian deaths. To reflect the security dynamic in Syria, where the actor behind many security incidents is unknown, EUAA not only includes events that meet all UCDP's set criteria (codified as 'clear' events in the UCDP dataset), but also include events codified as 'unclear' and 'not applicable'.

---

<sup>17</sup> ACLED, Comparing Conflict Data, Similarities and Differences Across Conflict Datasets, August 2019, [url](#), pp. 5–7



# Map

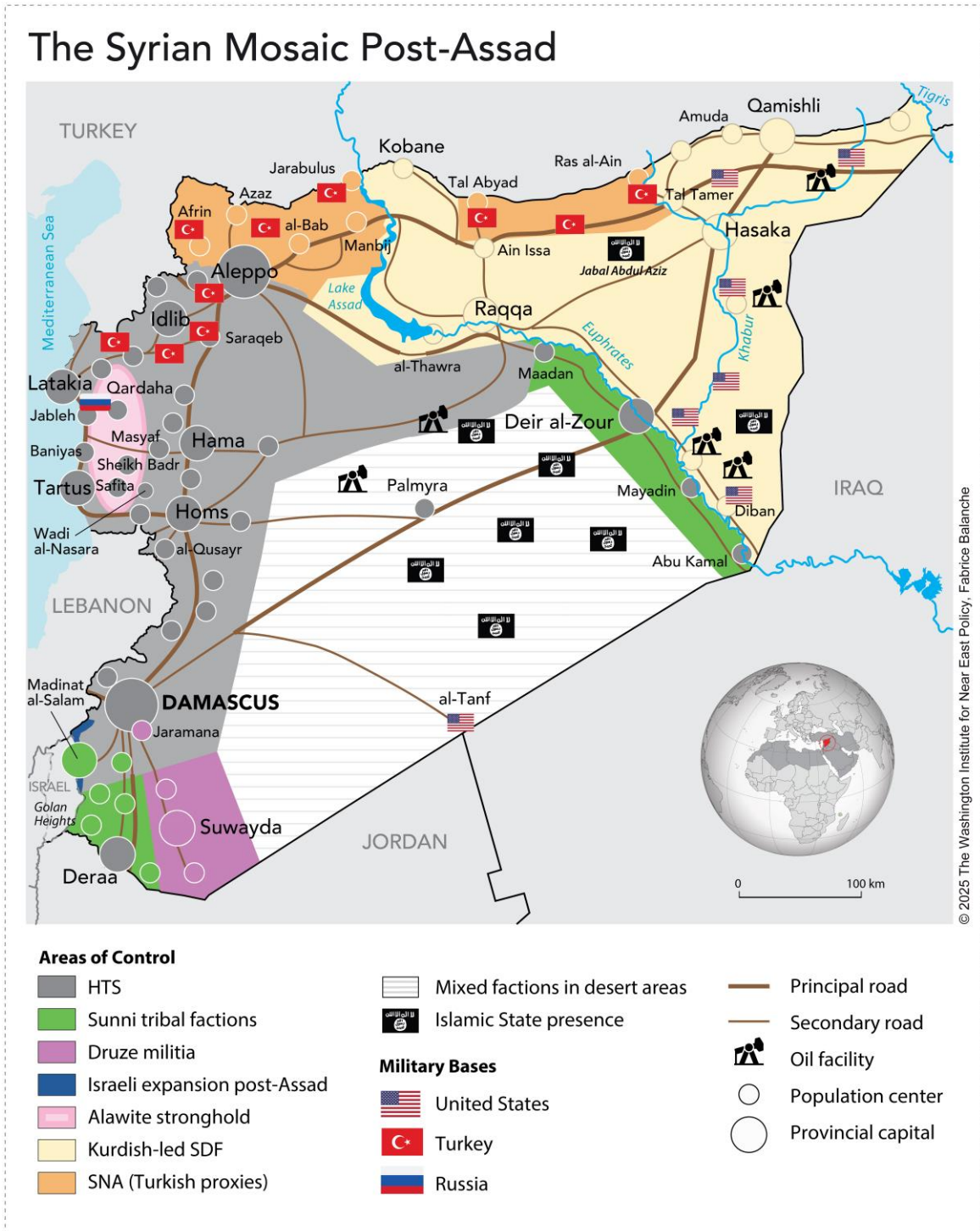


Map 1: Syrian Arab Republic, © United Nations<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> UN Geospatial, Syrian Arab Republic, Map No. 4204 Rev. 4, August 2022, [url](#)



# 1. Political and human rights developments



Map 2: The Syrian Mosaic Post-Assad, © The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Fabrice Balanche<sup>19</sup>



## 1.1. Overview of conflicts

On 27 November 2024, forces opposed to the rule of Bashar Al-Assad, led by the armed group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), launched an offensive<sup>20</sup> starting from the northwestern province of Idlib.<sup>21</sup> The HTS, which is designated as a terrorist organisation by the UN, the EU, the US and the UK,<sup>22</sup> advanced on government-held cities<sup>23</sup> and within days had taken control of the north of the country,<sup>24</sup> including Aleppo,<sup>25</sup> and was heading towards Hama and Homs.<sup>26</sup> On 8 December 2024, they reached Damascus and assumed control of the capital as President Assad left the country on the same day.<sup>27</sup> Subsequently, HTS effectively took control as the ruling party and established an interim government.<sup>28</sup> HTS leader Ahmad Al-Sharaa, who had previously gone by the nom de guerre Abu Mohammed Al-Jolani,<sup>29</sup> started acting as the de-facto leader of Syria in early December<sup>30</sup> and was appointed transitional president of Syria on 29 January 2025.<sup>31</sup> The independent non-profit-organisation International Crisis Group<sup>32</sup> reported on 30 January 2025 that the situation in Damascus remained mostly secure. In regions outside the capital, however, the new leadership in Damascus faces significant challenges as the country emerges from civil war.<sup>33</sup> Establishing law and order remains a major challenge<sup>34</sup> and priority<sup>35</sup> for the transitional administration, which, three months after taking power, is still grappling with increasing retaliatory violence and armed group activity.<sup>36</sup>

Etana, an independent organisation<sup>37</sup> focused on reporting on the ground in Syria,<sup>38</sup> notes, as of 3 February 2025, that in northern Syria, indications of increasing lawlessness and violence are becoming more evident across a region extending from Homs to Latakia on the coast and further east to Aleppo, with almost daily reports of killings and militant activity in recent weeks. The security situation in this area is a centre of instability driven by revenge killings and communal violence. The area is home to several Alawite and mixed sectarian communities.<sup>39</sup> The International Crisis Group reports that in central and western Syria 'less disciplined armed

---

<sup>19</sup> Balanche, F., Rebuilding Syria May Require Federalism, TWI, 28 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>20</sup> Al Jazeera, What happened in Syria? How did al-Assad fall?, 8 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>21</sup> Al Jazeera, Bashar al-Assad releases first statement since he fled Syria, 16 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>22</sup> BBC News, Ahmed al-Sharaa named Syria's transitional president, 31 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>23</sup> Al Jazeera, Bashar al-Assad releases first statement since he fled Syria, 16 December 2024, [url](#); KAS, Syriens große Chance [Syria's big chance], 10 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>24</sup> KAS, Syriens große Chance [Syria's big chance], 10 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>25</sup> BBC News, Russian strikes hit Aleppo as rebels take control, 30 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>26</sup> KAS, Syriens große Chance [Syria's big chance], 10 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>27</sup> Al Jazeera, Bashar al-Assad releases first statement since he fled Syria, 16 December 2024, [url](#); France24, Assad-era minister turns himself in to new Syria authorities: statement, 4 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>28</sup> Al Jazeera, Syria's Ahmed al-Sharaa named president for transitional period, 29 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>29</sup> BBC News, Assad says he didn't intend to leave Syria, statement claims, 16 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>30</sup> Guardian (The), Rebel leader Ahmed al-Sharaa made transitional president of Syria, 29 January 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>31</sup> Guardian (The), Rebel leader Ahmed al-Sharaa made transitional president of Syria, 29 January 2025, [url](#); BBC News, Ahmed al-Sharaa named Syria's transitional president, 31 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>32</sup> International Crisis Group, We are the International Crisis Group, 14 November 2012, [url](#)

<sup>33</sup> International Crisis Group, Promoting a Stable, Peaceful Transition in Syria, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>34</sup> Etana, Syria Update #12: 20 December, 20 December 2025, [url](#)

<sup>35</sup> MEE, Syria's leader Ahmed al-Sharaa is now officially interim president, 29 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>36</sup> Etana, Syria Update #17: 8 February 2025, 8 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>37</sup> Etana, About us, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>38</sup> MEI, ETANA Syria, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>39</sup> Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#)



factions and unaffiliated gunmen' have begun taking advantage of weaknesses in HTS policing to engage in looting and instil fear. These groups loot and seek revenge on persons viewed as being associated with the Assad government. They have targeted members of minority groups, Alawites in particular.<sup>40</sup> Sectarian-based murders have peaked in the provinces of Homs, Hama, and Latakia.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, former and now unemployed members of the army of the ousted regime are reportedly unwilling to lay down their arms for reasons of self-protection and pose a security threat.<sup>42</sup> According to Etana 'some of the violence is likely being fomented by formerly regime-backed gangs [...] suspected of being behind a slew of attacks'.<sup>43</sup> As of 20 February, security forces continued to face increased threats as they tried to stabilise the country, including kidnappings, sectarian violence and threats from remnants of Assad's forces.<sup>44</sup> In early March, coordinated attacks by pro-Assad groups on security forces, particularly in the coastal areas, led to a significant escalation which resulted in large numbers of civilian casualties, mostly from the Alawite community.<sup>45</sup> For more information see section [4.1.2](#).

In the north of the country, various factions are struggling for influence and control.<sup>46</sup> Clashes between Turkish-backed militias operating under the umbrella of the Syrian National Army (SNA)<sup>47</sup> and the US-backed<sup>48</sup> Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) continued during the reporting period. When the HTS-led opposition forces captured Aleppo in late November, the SNA simultaneously launched an offensive in the province<sup>49</sup> targeting the territories controlled by the SDF,<sup>50</sup> causing the displacement of tens of thousands of civilians.<sup>51</sup> The SDF was driven out of several towns<sup>52</sup> in Aleppo's countryside and the SNA captured the strategically important cities of Manbij<sup>53</sup> and Tal Rifat<sup>54</sup>. The clashes between the SDF and the SNA escalated<sup>55</sup> at the end of December 2024<sup>56</sup> near the Tishreen Dam on the Euphrates River in the countryside of Manbij, eastern Aleppo, a vital source of water and electricity for SDF-controlled areas.<sup>57</sup> Türkiye, which considers the SDF to be closely linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK),<sup>58</sup> has continued air and drone strikes in northern Syria, hitting SDF

---

<sup>40</sup> International Crisis Group, Promoting a Stable, Peaceful Transition in Syria, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>41</sup> SOHR, 91 attacks in 2025 | 190 people killed in retaliatory actions and assassinations in different areas across Syria, 26 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>42</sup> International Crisis Group, Promoting a Stable, Peaceful Transition in Syria, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>43</sup> Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>44</sup> Etana, Syria Update #19: 22 February 2025, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>45</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>46</sup> Security Council Report, February 2025 Monthly Forecast, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>47</sup> International Crisis Group, Promoting a Stable, Peaceful Transition in Syria, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>48</sup> Security Council Report, February 2025 Monthly Forecast, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>49</sup> Iddon, P., Why fighting is raging in north Syria between the Turkish-backed SNA and Kurdish-led SDF, The New Arab, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>50</sup> Levy, I., Supporting the SDF in Post-Assad Syria, TWI, 13 December 2024, [url](#), pp.1, 3

<sup>51</sup> Iddon, P., Why fighting is raging in north Syria between the Turkish-backed SNA and Kurdish-led SDF, The New Arab, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>52</sup> International Crisis Group, Promoting a Stable, Peaceful Transition in Syria, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>53</sup> New Arab (The), Clashes erupt near Syria's Tishrin Dam as Turkish-backed SNA and Kurdish-led SDF battle for control, 26 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>54</sup> Security Council Report, February 2025 Monthly Forecast, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>55</sup> Security Council Report, February 2025 Monthly Forecast, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>56</sup> New Arab (The), Clashes erupt near Syria's Tishrin Dam as Turkish-backed SNA and Kurdish-led SDF battle for control, 26 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>57</sup> Security Council Report, February 2025 Monthly Forecast, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>58</sup> Security Council Report, January 2025 Monthly Forecast, 30 December 2024, [url](#)



targets<sup>59</sup> as well as civilians<sup>60</sup> and critical civilian infrastructure<sup>61</sup> during the reporting period. As of 28 February 2025, clashes between the SDF and the SNA were still ongoing.<sup>62</sup> In addition to the conflict with the SNA and Türkiye, the SDF also faces a long-running conflict with tribal militias in Deir Ez-Zor as well as attacks by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).<sup>63</sup> In March 2025, SDF leaders signed an agreement to integrate their armed forces and civilian institutions into the new Syrian government. The deal mandates a full cessation of hostilities and requires the SDF to relinquish control of border posts, the airport, and key oil and gas fields.<sup>64</sup> The practical implementation of this agreement could not be monitored within the scope of this report.

ISIL appears to have largely withdrawn from<sup>65</sup> the vast central desert region of Badia,<sup>66</sup> the former rear base of ISIL-operations in Syria.<sup>67</sup> However, according to a report by the UN Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL to international peace and security, published in January 2025, 'the Syrian Badia region continued to serve as a centre for external operational planning of Da'esh [ISIL] and remained a critical region for its activities'.<sup>68</sup> ISIL has turned its focus to the northeast in recent months, challenging the US-backed SDF, following setbacks in central Syria since the summer, heavy Assad forces operations and US airstrikes against ISIL in September and October.<sup>69</sup> As of 20 February, Etana reported ISIL attacks against the SDF.<sup>70</sup>

The situation in southern Syria was volatile during the reporting period.<sup>71</sup> Shortly after it was known that Al-Assad had been ousted, the Israeli military moved into the UN-patrolled buffer zone<sup>72</sup> in the Golan Heights border highlands,<sup>73</sup> an area it had been breaching since at least early November<sup>74</sup> and beyond into Syrian territory,<sup>75</sup> into areas of southern Quneitra and south-west Dar'a.<sup>76</sup> Also, Israel carried out hundreds of airstrikes in early December aimed at

---

<sup>59</sup> New York Times (The), With Syria in Flux, Turkish Forces Attack U.S.-Backed Forces, 8 December 2024, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>60</sup> Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>61</sup> BBC News, Turkish strikes in Syria cut water to one million people, 19 November 2024, [url](#); ANHA, Turkish attacks plunge 100 villages into darkness, 13 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>62</sup> Etana, Syria Update #20: 2 March 2025, 28 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>63</sup> Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>64</sup> BBC News, Kurdish-led SDF agrees to integrate with Syrian government forces, 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>65</sup> Spiegel International, Searching for Islamic State in Syria, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>66</sup> Lister, C., The growing threat of ISIS in Syria's Badia, MEI, 17 April 2020, [url](#)

<sup>67</sup> International Crisis Group, Containing a Resilient ISIS in Central and North-eastern Syria, 18 July 2022, [url](#)

<sup>68</sup> UNSG, Twentieth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat, S/2025/72, 31 January 2025, [url](#), para. 6

<sup>69</sup> Waters, G., ISIS Redux: The Central Syria Insurgency, Special Edition, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>70</sup> Etana, Syria Update #19: 22 February 2025, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>71</sup> Kurdistan 24, Israel Strikes Military Targets in Southern Syria Amid Calls for Demilitarization, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>72</sup> Washington Post (The), Israel is building outposts in Syria, raising local fears of occupation, 2 February 2025, [url](#);

Al Jazeera, Satellite images show Israel building military bases in Syria buffer zone, 3 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>73</sup> NPR, In Syria's Golan Heights buffer zone, residents fear Israel is making a land grab, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>74</sup> CNN, UN sounds alarm at Israel's 'severe violations' at key buffer zone with Syria, 14 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>75</sup> Washington Post (The), Israel is building outposts in Syria, raising local fears of occupation, 2 February 2025, [url](#);

Al Jazeera, Satellite images show Israel building military bases in Syria buffer zone, 3 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>76</sup> Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#)



destroying weapon sites across Syria,<sup>77</sup> more than half of which took place in Dar'a, Damascus, Rural Damascus and Latakia governorates.<sup>78</sup> As of 20 February 2025 Israeli incursions into and beyond the buffer zone were ongoing.<sup>79</sup>

## 1.2. Political developments

### 1.2.1. Fall of the Assad government

On 27 November 2024, the militant Islamist group HTS, led by Ahmad Al-Sharaa,<sup>80</sup> led a large-scale offensive<sup>81</sup> in northwestern Syria.<sup>82</sup> Until then, the HTS's influence had been limited to parts of the governorates of Aleppo and Idlib.<sup>83</sup> The initial assault aimed at separating the opposition-controlled 'Greater Idlib pocket' from the majority of Aleppo governorate controlled by pro-GoS forces. The operation involved a coalition of rebel factions, which included amongst others the Turkish-backed SNA.<sup>84</sup> From the east, the Kurdish-led SDF deployed their fighters to territories in areas west of the Euphrates river in the governorate of Deir Ez-Zor that had previously been under the control of the Syrian army.<sup>85</sup> By 1 December, HTS and its allied factions had captured Aleppo, Syria's second-largest city, followed by the seizure of Hama on 5 December and Homs, the third-largest city, on 7 December.<sup>86</sup>

Meanwhile, rebel forces from southern Syria advanced into Dar'a, achieving control of over 90 % of the governorate as government forces withdrew.<sup>87</sup> In Sweida, Druze factions assumed control.<sup>88</sup> Factions from the South formed the Southern Operations Room to support the uprising and were the first to enter Damascus,<sup>89</sup> though they withdrew to Dar'a upon HTS' arrival in the capital.<sup>90</sup> On 8 December 2024, the rebels declared victory in the capital. Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad fled the country that day, seeking refuge in Russia, where he was granted asylum.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> Washington Post (The), Israel expands airstrikes across Syria amid widening power vacuum, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>78</sup> ACLED, Syria: Israeli airstrikes reach an all-time high after Assad regime falls, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>79</sup> Etana, Syria Update #19: 22 February 2025, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>80</sup> Standard (Der), Situation in Syrien: Was wir bisher wissen [Situation in Syrian: What we know so far], 8 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>81</sup> BBC News, What just happened in Syria and who's in charge?, 9 December 2024, [url](#); Al Jazeera, What happened in Syria? How did al-Assad fall?, 8 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>82</sup> BBC News, What just happened in Syria and who's in charge?, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>83</sup> BBC News, What just happened in Syria and who's in charge?, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>84</sup> Al Jazeera, What happened in Syria? How did al-Assad fall?, 8 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>85</sup> Rudaw, Syrian rebels announce capturing southern city of Daraa, 7 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>86</sup> BBC News, What just happened in Syria and who's in charge?, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>87</sup> SOHR, After local factions advanced to Daraa Al-Balad I Regime forces nearly lose all control over the province, 6 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>88</sup> Al Jazeera, How al-Assad's regime fell: Key moments in the fall of Syria's 'tyrant', 10 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>89</sup> Guardian (The), Who are the main actors in the fall of the regime in Syria?, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>90</sup> France24, South Syria fighters reluctant to give up weapons: spokesman, 8 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>91</sup> Tagesschau, Wie Assad gestürzt wurde - und was das bedeutet [How Assad was overthrown - and what that means], 8 December 2024, [url](#)



The opposition faced minimal resistance throughout their campaign, as Syrian army forces abandoned their positions,<sup>92</sup> allowing rebels to enter the capital with little resistance.<sup>93</sup> Contributing factors to the fast downfall of the previous Syrian government included war fatigue, corruption, a neglected army and weakened allies.<sup>94</sup> The collapse of the Syrian army sparked widespread demonstrations in the rural areas surrounding Damascus, with civilians dismantling Assad's symbols and targeting military sites.<sup>95</sup>

Despite its long-standing alliance with Assad, Russia was unable to counter the rapid advance of opposition forces, while Iran's involvement was similarly ineffective. Although Russian warplanes initially launched strikes against the militants<sup>96</sup> as well as against civilians, including some who were celebrating the oppositions' advances,<sup>97</sup> Moscow's military support diminished as the rebels' swift progression outpaced its response.<sup>98</sup>

## 1.2.2. Governance under the Transitional Administration

### (a) Political transition

Following the fall of Bashar Al-Assad's government on 8 December 2024, a transitional administration was created. Former Prime Minister Mohammed Al-Jalali formally transferred power to Mohammed al-Bashir, the newly appointed transitional prime minister,<sup>99</sup> in order to ensure the continuation of state functions, as explained by Al-Jalali, including the payment of public-sector salaries.<sup>100</sup>

Al-Sharaa stated that the organisation of national elections could take up to five years due to the necessity of reconstructing the electoral infrastructure. He further asserted that Syria would be structured as 'a republic with a parliament and an executive government.'<sup>101</sup>

On 29 December, Ahmad al-Sharaa outlined a multi-year roadmap involving the drafting of a new constitution within three years and subsequent elections, alongside plans for a National Dialogue Conference to promote reconciliation and inclusivity. As part of the transition process, Al-Sharaa emphasised the importance of preserving national unity, rejecting federalism.<sup>102</sup> Initial negotiations were held with the SDF and Kurdish National Council (KNC) to involve Kurdish factions in the political process.<sup>103</sup> But the National Dialogue Conference, initially planned for early January was later postponed to establish a broader preparatory committee representing all segments of Syrian society.<sup>104</sup> It eventually took place on 25

---

<sup>92</sup> France24, Why the Assad regime collapsed in Syria – and why so fast, 8 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>93</sup> France24, Why the Assad regime collapsed in Syria – and why so fast, 8 December 2024, [url](#); Tagesschau, Wie Assad gestürzt wurde - und was das bedeutet [How Assad was overthrown - and what that means], 8 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>94</sup> France24, Why the Assad regime collapsed in Syria – and why so fast, 8 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>95</sup> Al Jazeera, How al-Assad's regime fell: Key moments in the fall of Syria's 'tyrant', 10 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>96</sup> Reuters, How Assad's government in Syria fell, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>97</sup> SNHR, 149 Civilians Killed, Including 35 Children and 16 Women, in Northern Syria Since November 27, 2024, Up Until December 3, 2024, 4 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>98</sup> Reuters, How Assad's government in Syria fell, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>99</sup> Al Jazeera, Syria's new rulers must not repeat the past mistakes of Lebanon and Iraq, 16 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>100</sup> Syrian Observer (The), Al-Jalali: Employees' Salaries Secured by the Central Bank, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>101</sup> France24, Syria's interim president says organising elections could take up to five years, 3 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>102</sup> L24, Al-Sharaa Outlines Vision for Syria's Future, 29 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>103</sup> Rudaw, Syrian government to engage SDF, ENKS in national dialogue conference, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>104</sup> Al Mayadeen, Syrian Christians cannot afford to keep turning the other cheek, 23 January 2025, [url](#)



February 2025, preceded by preparatory workshops at a local level.<sup>105</sup> It convened in Damascus with around 600 participants, with its closing statement emphasising Syria's territorial integrity, condemning Israeli incursions, and calling for a withdrawal. It further set out the adoption of a temporary constitutional declaration, the formation of an interim legislative council, and the preparation of a draft permanent constitution focused on human rights and freedom. The closing statement further mentioned the importance of women's participation, peaceful coexistence, and the establishment of ongoing national dialogue mechanisms.<sup>106</sup> The conference, however, faced criticism for being hastily organised and insufficiently representative.<sup>107</sup>

At the end of January, the transitional administration declared the annulment of Syria's 2012 constitution and the disbandment of the former government's parliament, military, and security agencies. Al-Sharaa stated that he would establish an interim legislative council to assist in governance until the adoption of a new constitution.<sup>108</sup>

### **(b) Government formation**

Following the assumption of power in Damascus, the HTS established a caretaker government primarily composed of officials from the former Syrian Salvation Government (SSG) in Idlib, which Al-Sharaa described as a temporary measure to maintain stability and restore essential services.<sup>109</sup> Initially, ministers from the SSG assumed national ministerial posts,<sup>110</sup> with some officials and civil servants from the former government remaining in their positions to ensure continuity.<sup>111</sup>

On 10 December 2024, Mohammed Al-Bashir, an engineer from Idlib governorate and former leader of the SSG in northwestern Syria, which was created with HTS, was appointed as interim prime minister. His tenure and that of the interim government was set to end on 1 March 2025,<sup>112</sup> but as of late January 2025 there was no date for elections to be held in Syria.<sup>113</sup> Meanwhile, Ahmad Al-Sharaa, leader of HTS, emerged as Syria's de facto leader.<sup>114</sup> On 29 January 2025, Al-Sharaa was named president for the transitional period.<sup>115</sup>

On 21 December, the interim government appointed Asaad Hassan Al-Shibani as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Murhaf Abu Qasra as Minister of Defense, both of whom were known allies of Al-Sharaa.<sup>116</sup> Other appointments included Mohamed Abdel Rahman as Minister of Interior, Mohammed Yaqoub Al-Omar as Minister of Information, Mohamed Taha Al-Ahmad as Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, Nazir Mohammed Al-Qadri as Minister of Education, and Shadi

---

<sup>105</sup> Enab Baladi, With 18 points... National Dialogue Conference concludes its work, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>106</sup> UNHCR, Regional Flash Update #16, Syria situation crisis, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>107</sup> Reuters, Syria to hold dialogue conference amid criticism over inclusivity, 24 February 2025, [url](#); Etana Syria, BLOG: Syrian National Dialogue Conference falls short of expectations, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>108</sup> BBC News, Ahmed al-Sharaa named Syria's transitional president, 31 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>109</sup> International Crisis Group, Key Decision Loom as Syria Enters a New Era, 14 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>110</sup> Al Jazeera, What to know about Syria's new caretaker government, 15 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>111</sup> CRS, Syria: Regime Change, Transition, and U.S. Policy, 13 December 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>112</sup> MEE, Mohammed al-Bashir: Who is Syria's new interim prime minister?, 10 December 2024, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Syrian fighters name Mohammed al-Bashir as caretaker prime minister, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>113</sup> Al Jazeera, President al-Sharaa and no more Baath party: What else has Syria announced?, 29 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>114</sup> Al Arabiya, Syria's new elections and draft constitution: Al-Sharaa outlines timeline, 29 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>115</sup> Al Jazeera, President al-Sharaa and no more Baath party: What else has Syria announced?, 29 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>116</sup> Al Jazeera, Syrian authorities appoint HTS figures as foreign, defence ministers, 21 December 2024, [url](#)



Mohammed Al-Waisi as Minister of Justice, all of whom had previously held positions within the Salvation Government. Additionally, Fadi Al-Qassem, Mohamed Abdel Rahman Muslim, Hossam Hussein, and Basil Abdul Aziz took up their respective roles as Minister of Development, Minister of Local Administration and Services, Minister of Endowments, and Minister of Economy.<sup>117</sup> Anas Khattab (also known by his nom de guerre Abu Ahmad Hudood), a previous leader of the Nusra Front, was appointed head of the General Intelligence Service. The appointment of Maher Al-Sharaa as Minister of Health sparked controversy, as he is the brother of Al-Sharaa. The new administration also included one woman, Aisha Al-Debs, as Director of the Women's Affairs Office.<sup>118</sup>

In January, the transitional administration conducted its first major cabinet reshuffle, replacing Mohammad Abdul Rahman with Ali Kidda as Minister of Interior. Kidda was reportedly a close associate of Al-Sharaa.<sup>119</sup>

According to BBC News, there was no transparent mechanism for selecting individuals for ministerial positions, and it remained unclear whether these appointments were made through consultation or solely by Al-Sharaa. This uncertainty fuelled discussions about potentially expanding the government to include members of the opposition abroad and domestic experts.<sup>120</sup>

### (c) Military reforms

Prior to their entry into Damascus on December 8, the HTS pledged to maintain Syria's institutional framework, later declaring a general amnesty for Syrian army soldiers.<sup>121</sup> The transitional government consequently initiated a settlement process (for more information see section 1.3.1), which facilitated the reintegration of large numbers of former government and military personnel, including high-ranking officials, some of whom were involved in significant wartime abuses, such as Fadi Saqr. Next to the voluntary settlement procedures taking place, the Military Operations Administration (MOA), the umbrella command centre<sup>122</sup> of the new HTS-led transitional administration, tracked down individuals evading settlement.<sup>123</sup> As part of these campaigns previous officers were arrested, while others were released after it was established that they had not participated in abuses. According to Etana, concerns arose over a lack of process, as reports suggest executions of low-level militiamen, which authorities are framing as isolated acts of community revenge.<sup>124</sup> The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a UK-based monitoring organisation, reported in mid-January that 8 000 individuals struck reconciliation deals at the MOA centers in Sallamiyah, Hama within a few days. The number of officers and members of the previous government's forces in prisons such as Adra,

<sup>117</sup> Al Jazeera, [تشيكلية الوزراء في حكومة تصريف الأعمال السورية بعد خلع الأسد](#) [The lineup of ministers in the Syrian caretaker government after the ouster of Assad], 25 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>118</sup> BBC News, [أنس خطاب، من مُدرج على قائمة العقوبات إلى رئيس لجهاز الاستخبارات في سوريا](#) [Anas Khattab, from Sanctions Listed to Head of Intelligence in Syria], 24 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>119</sup> Syrian Observer (The), [Syria Appoints Ali Kidda as Minister of Interior in a Significant Reshuffle](#), 20 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>120</sup> BBC News, [أنس خطاب، من مُدرج على قائمة العقوبات إلى رئيس لجهاز الاستخبارات في سوريا](#) [Anas Khattab, from Sanctions Listed to Head of Intelligence in Syria], 24 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>121</sup> Al Jazeera, [Syria's new rulers must not repeat the past mistakes of Lebanon and Iraq](#), 16 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>122</sup> Waters, G., [Security in Alawite regions in post-Assad Syria](#), MEI, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>123</sup> Etana Syria, [Syria Update #13: 10 January, 9 January 2025](#), [url](#)

<sup>124</sup> Etana Syria, [Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025](#), [url](#)



Hama, and Harim increased to over 9 000, including 2 000 who were returned from Iraq. Most were arrested after being caught in raids or checkpoints.<sup>125</sup>

The transitional government further abolished conscription,<sup>126</sup> except in situations such as national emergencies.<sup>127</sup> According to Samir Saleh, member of the military command in Damascus countryside, the Syrian army is going to be an army of volunteers in which the population will be encouraged to participate, with the aim to secure the country's borders.<sup>128</sup> Previous defectors, such as officers from the Free Syrian Army (FSA) will be given a special status within the structure of the Ministry of Defense, depending on their expertise.<sup>129</sup> On December 29, a list of 49 new military commanders was published, including members of HTS, defected officers from the Syrian army, and at least six non-Syrians, with the seven highest-ranking positions reportedly filled by HTS members.<sup>130</sup>

Finally, the transitional government committed to integrating all rebel factions into the Ministry of Defense.<sup>131</sup> Between January and February 2025, the interim ministries of Defense and Interior undertook efforts to unify all armed factions into a single military and police force. The Ministry of Defence reported that over 70 factions across six regions had agreed to integrate, and a Supreme Committee was established to regulate military assets, including personnel, bases, and weaponry. On 29 January, the interim government formally announced the dissolution of all opposition parties and military groups, though the extent to which this applied to the SDF remained unclear. The SDF initially resisted integration, particularly after its proposal to join as a semi-autonomous entity was rejected by the Defence Ministry, which accused it of delaying negotiations,<sup>132</sup> but in early March it was announced that the SDF signed a deal to integrate their armed forces and civilian institutions into the new Syrian government.<sup>133</sup> By mid-February, the transitional administration had successfully integrated around 100 armed factions, including the U.S.-backed Syrian Free Army, into a new Syrian military and Ministry of Defense. However, some factions, such as the one of Ahmad al-Awda in southern Syria and various Druze military groups, remained resistant.<sup>134</sup> The armed factions of Sweida governorate remained fully intact, with two new military bodies emerging in January.<sup>135</sup>

#### (d) Public sector reforms

In the early stages of the transition, the new administration intended to keep and reactivate key state institutions in order to maintain basic services. As a result, many important state

<sup>125</sup> SOHR, Hama | 8,000 people settle security situations in centres of Military Operations Administration in Sallamiyah in ten days, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>126</sup> New Arab (The), Why Al-Sharaa's scrapping of conscription for Syrians matters, 16 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>127</sup> New Arab (The), Why Al-Sharaa's scrapping of conscription for Syrians matters, 16 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>128</sup> Memri TV, Military Command Member In Damascus Countryside: We Are Ending Mandatory Military Conscription – The New Syrian Army Will Be An Army Of Volunteers, 11 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>129</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat, Syrian Defense Ministry to Restructure Army with Volunteer Force, 14 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>130</sup> France24, 'Foreign jihadists' in Syria leader's pick for army officers: monitor, experts, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>131</sup> Guardian (The), Syrian HTS leader says rebel factions that overthrew Assad will be 'disbanded', 17 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>132</sup> New Arab (The), Forging a united front: The challenges of building Syria's new army, 3 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>133</sup> BBC News, Kurdish-led SDF agrees to integrate with Syrian government forces, 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>134</sup> Zelin, A.Y., The Status of Syria's Transition After Two Months, TWI, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>135</sup> Syria Direct, Can Suwayda's factions enforce security and stop the spread of weapons?, 6 February 2025, [url](#)





institutions continued to function.<sup>136</sup> During the reporting period the new administration initiated some institutional reforms. Upon assuming control, the transitional administration reinstated public sector employees previously dismissed for their involvement in the Syrian revolution<sup>137</sup> while simultaneously dismissing hundreds of employees from a single directorate as part of a restructuring effort with the declared aim of downsizing institutions and removing ineffective personnel.<sup>138</sup> While the transitional administration is stating economic reasons for the dismissals, some former employees accuse the new administration of basing their dismissals on sectarian and political grounds.<sup>139</sup> Qatar announced its intention to help fund a 400 % increase in public sector wages, which had been pledged by the interim government. The foreign funding was not yet confirmed at the time of writing.<sup>140</sup>

In order to remove members of the bar association who had been appointed by the Baath Party, the transitional administration replaced the council of Syria's Central Bar Association with members of the Free Bar Association from Idlib.<sup>141</sup> Khitam Haddad, Deputy Minister of Justice since 2023, retained her position and announced at the beginning of January that criminal and civil cases would resume under the transitional authorities, but that crimes committed during the previous regime would not yet be addressed. Some lawyers criticised the transitional authorities' unelected Bar Association council as authoritarian, while Assad-era legal structures, including the terrorism law, remained intact.<sup>142</sup>

Further steps by the new administration included the transfer of control over border crossings with Türkiye — such as Bab Al-Salama, Al-Rai, and Jarablus — to the transitional administration, as well as the integration of educational institutions like the University of Aleppo under the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Damascus.<sup>143</sup> Finally, NGOs were required by the Ministry of Social and Labour Affairs to go through a process of re-registration, which according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) has impeded the restoration of numerous health and protection facilities, limiting their ability to sustain the provision of medical and social services.<sup>144</sup>

### **(e) Economic reforms and sanctions**

The transitional administration started to initiate economic reforms, with HTS announcing its intention to implement a free-market system.<sup>145</sup> Institutional reforms included the layoffs of state employees to downsize state institutions, with plans to dismiss a third of all public sector employees – including so called 'ghost employees' – and to move to a free-market economy.<sup>146</sup> Maysaa Sabrine was appointed governor of the Central Bank, and transitional Finance Minister Mohammed Abazeed introduced plans to restructure government ministries

---

<sup>136</sup> Al Jazeera, What to know about Syria's new caretaker government, 15 December 2024, [url](#); Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (The), A Post-Assad Syria: Navigating the Transition Ahead, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>137</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria's new administration reinstates dismissed workers to their jobs, 23 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>138</sup> ARK News, Protests in Daraa Over Dismissal of 700 Health Directorate Employees, 9 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>139</sup> Le Monde, En Syrie, climat de purge dans le secteur public, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>140</sup> Reuters, Exclusive: Qatar plans to help boost Syrian government salaries, sources say, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>141</sup> Le Monde, In Syria, lawyers worry about the new regime's stranglehold on the bar, 20 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>142</sup> BBC News, Calls for justice and accountability in Syria grow after Assad's fall, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>143</sup> Syria TV, Syrian Interim Government: No Contact with New Damascus Government, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>144</sup> UNFPA, Situation Report #1 Humanitarian Needs in Syria, 15 January 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>145</sup> Al Jazeera, Rebuilding Syria's economy: Can stability return after war?, 8 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>146</sup> Reuters, Syria's new Islamist rulers to roll back state with privatizations, public sector layoffs, 31 January 2025, [url](#)





for improved efficiency and accountability, though specific modernisation measures remained unclear. Abazeed also proposed an overhaul of the tax system. To mitigate potential shortages in goods, the government reopened the Nasib border crossing with Jordan, a key trade route, and directed the state-owned Syrian Petroleum Company to resume operations. Meanwhile, Türkiye signalled its willingness to invest in Syria's economy.<sup>147</sup>

In early January, the United States issued a six-month sanctions exemption, effective until 7 July, to facilitate humanitarian aid following Assad's departure. The exemption allowed specific transactions with governing institutions at all levels, including hospitals, schools, and utilities, as well as entities affiliated with HTS across Syria. While the sanctions themselves were to remain in place, the exemption permitted activities related to the sale, supply, and storage of energy, including petroleum and electricity, and enabled personal remittances and certain energy-related transactions aimed at supporting economic recovery.<sup>148</sup> On 24 February, the EU Council decided to lift various restrictive measures, including those affecting the energy and transport sectors. It also excluded four banks and Syrian Arab Airlines from the list subject to asset freezes and permitted the Syrian Central Bank access to financial resources. Furthermore, exceptions were made to allow banking relations between Syrian banks and financial institutions within member states. The existing humanitarian exemption was extended indefinitely, and a new exception was introduced for personal use concerning the export ban on luxury goods to Syria.<sup>149</sup>

#### **(f) Political transition in accordance with UN Resolution 2254**

Ahmad Al-Sharaa has criticised international organisations, particularly the United Nations, for their perceived ineffectiveness in addressing Syria's humanitarian crises. He highlighted the UN's failure to secure the release of detainees and facilitate the return of refugees over the past 14 years.<sup>150</sup> Emphasising the need for domestic solutions, Al-Sharaa called for updates to UN Resolution 2254, originally adopted in December 2015 to guide Syria's political transition, arguing that its framework was no longer fully applicable to the situation since the fall of Bashar Al-Assad.<sup>151</sup> In an interview with Al Arabiya, Al-Sharaa reiterated his criticism of the UN and advocated for an alternative transition process. He proposed delaying elections for up to four years to allow for the development of a revised political framework. During a meeting with UN Special Envoy Geir Pedersen, he rejected the rigid adherence to what he called outdated resolutions and outlined his vision for a transition process that reflects Syria's current realities.<sup>152</sup> Despite his criticisms, Al-Sharaa affirmed that Syria is prepared to accept the deployment of UN forces within the United Nations-established buffer zone along the Israeli border.<sup>153</sup>

---

<sup>147</sup> Al Jazeera, Rebuilding Syria's economy: Can stability return after war?, 8 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>148</sup> Reuters, US allows transactions with governing institutions in Syria despite sanctions, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>149</sup> European Council, Syria: EU suspends restrictive measures on key economic sectors, 24 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>150</sup> Levant24, Al-Sharaa Outlines Vision for Syria's Future, 29 December 2024, [url](#); Guardian (The), The UN wants to influence a pluralist Syria – but will the country listen?, 8 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>151</sup> Enab Baladi, "2254"..Uncertain presence in Syria's future, 4 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>152</sup> Guardian (The), The UN wants to influence a pluralist Syria – but will the country listen?, 8 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>153</sup> Reuters, Syria's de facto leader says country ready to welcome UN forces in buffer zone with Israel, 16 January 2025, [url](#)



On 6 February, the transitional administration prolonged the UN's authorisation to deliver humanitarian aid via the Bab al-Hawa crossing for an extra six months, until 7 August.<sup>154</sup>

## 1.3. Treatment of certain profiles and groups of the population

### 1.3.1. Persons affiliated with the government of Bashar Al-Assad

Upon its takeover of power, the transitional administration did not pursue a sweeping de-Baathification process akin to Iraq's post-war policies and the offices of the Baath Party were not systematically targeted. In December, the Baath Party leadership suspended activities.<sup>155</sup> At the end of January, it was announced that the party had been dissolved.<sup>156</sup>

From the outset, the new authorities announced that soldiers who had been recruited under compulsory service were safe, and it was forbidden to assault them. On 9 December, the MOA issued a general amnesty for all military personnel conscripted under compulsory service.<sup>157</sup> The new administration subsequently established so-called 'reconciliation centres' to provide temporary civilian identity cards to former members of the police, military, intelligence services, and pro-Assad militias who surrender their weapons.<sup>158</sup> These reconciliation centres oversee the process by which former regime affiliates surrender their weapons and register their personal information in exchange for temporary identification cards. These cards grant limited legal protection and safe passage, but the process lacks transparency, follows inconsistent criteria, and is influenced by security agencies, with many applicants facing complex bureaucratic hurdles.<sup>159</sup> In late December, the BBC reported significant participation, with hundreds of individuals queuing at a reconciliation centre in Damascus.<sup>160</sup>

In January and February, local media and organisations following the events in Syria reported that the new administration granted amnesty to some high level figures associated with the Assad government, such as Fadi Saqr, previous leader of the National Defence Forces.<sup>161</sup> The MOA was further said to have granted reconciliation to collaborators of Maher Al-Assad, such as businessmen who sponsored his activities,<sup>162</sup> as well as Major General Talal Makhlof,

---

<sup>154</sup> Security Council Report, Syria: Briefing and Consultations, 11 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>155</sup> Al Jazeera, Syria's new rulers must not repeat the past mistakes of Lebanon and Iraq, 16 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>156</sup> Al Jazeera, President al-Sharaa and no more Baath party: What else has Syria announced?, 29 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>157</sup> Enab Baladi, إدارة العمليات تصدر عفواً عن المجندين [The Operations Administration issues amnesty for conscripts], 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>158</sup> BBC News, Inside a Syrian 'reconciliation centre' where Assad's soldiers give up their weapons, 29 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>159</sup> ISPI, Coming to Terms with the past in Syria: The First, Fragile, Steps of "Transitional Justice", 7 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>160</sup> BBC News, Inside a Syrian 'reconciliation centre' where Assad's soldiers give up their weapons, 29 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>161</sup> New Arab (The), Fury in Syria as reconciled 'war criminal' from Assad regime visits site of Tadamon massacre, 8 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>162</sup> SOHR, Military Operations Administration keeps imprisoning over 9,000 combatants and reconcile figures of corruption of former regime, 13 January 2025, [url](#)



leader in the Assad government's Republican Guard.<sup>163</sup> Concurrently, the collapse of Bashar Al-Assad's government prompted numerous senior officials and associates of the ruling family to flee to Lebanon. However, Lebanese authorities expelled Syrian officers and soldiers who had entered illegally, returning them to Syria, where they were detained by the new administration.<sup>164</sup>

By the end of December, the transitional administration intensified efforts to apprehend individuals associated with the ousted government.<sup>165</sup> Authorities claimed their arrest campaigns target only individuals who committed crimes on behalf of the Assad regime.<sup>166</sup> Campaigns in Deir Ez-Zor, Aleppo, and Tartous focused on confiscating illegal weapons and apprehending suspects involved in illegal activities.<sup>167</sup> Nearly 300 individuals were detained in one week alone across Damascus, Latakia, Tartous, Homs, Hama, and Deir Ez-Zor, including former regime informants, pro-Iranian fighters, and lower-ranking military officers. According to SOHR, some detainees accused of having provided intelligence to the Assad government were reportedly executed immediately after their arrest.<sup>168</sup> On 10 January, SOHR reported that fighters associated with the transitional administration publicly executed Mazen Kneneh, a local official accused of serving as an informant for the ousted president Assad.<sup>169</sup> In February, further extrajudicial killings of former affiliates of militias supportive of Bashar Al-Assad were reported, such as the assassination of four members of the Meido family, who were part of a local militia, which had fought alongside the previous government. According to SOHR, extrajudicial and revenge killings resulted in the deaths of 287 individuals between the start of 2025 and middle of February 2025.<sup>170</sup>

Operations continued throughout January, with members of the general security administration inspecting houses, looking for weapons and individuals who had not reconciled with the transitional administration.<sup>171</sup> Extensive military and security operations across key regions, such as the coastal cities, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, and Damascus involved raids, weapons searches, and the further detention of hundreds of individuals.<sup>172</sup> The operations focused on former military fighters and ex-government personnel and resulted in significant amounts of weapons and ammunition seized. The arrested individuals were transported to Homs Central Prison, Hama Central Prison, and Adra Prison in the Rural Damascus area. Additionally, videos posted online showed detainees, apprehended during these operations, enduring physical and verbal mistreatment, including assaults and humiliating treatment.<sup>173</sup> According to the Syria Justice and Accountability Center, these security operations resulted in various human rights violations, including the reported death of detainees in custody and the

---

<sup>163</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, Human Rights Violations in Syria, December 2024 – January 2025, 22 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>164</sup> Reuters, Lebanon returns 70 officers and soldiers to Syria, security official says, 28 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>165</sup> New York Times (The), Syria's New Government Steps Up Pursuit of Assad Loyalists, 28 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>166</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>167</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria: Ongoing security campaigns against former regime elements, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>168</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat, Syria: Nearly 300 Arrested in Crackdown on Assad Loyalists, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>169</sup> Al Arabiya, Syria monitor says alleged al-Assad loyalist 'executed' in public, 10 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>170</sup> New Arab (The), Syria: String of extrajudicial killings targets ex-regime affiliates, 17 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>171</sup> SOHR, Ongoing security campaigns | General security administration launches new arrest campaign in Qatna residences, 28 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>172</sup> Enab Baladi, How effective are security campaigns against remnants of Assad's regime?, 22 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>173</sup> SNHR, Legal Regulations and Judicial Process Must be Properly Implemented in All Detentions Carried Out as Part of Security Operations, 4 February 2025, [url](#)





arrest of relatives of wanted individuals, affecting both former Assad government affiliates and unrelated civilians.<sup>174</sup> By mid-January, the SOHR reported that over 9 000 combatants and officers remained detained, amid allegations of torture and restricted communication with families.<sup>175</sup> Information by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) match the allegations of torture, as reported by families who had bodies of family members returned after their detention by the General Security Directorate.<sup>176</sup> Concurrently, SOHR reported that 275 detainees from the Central Homs Prison were released following a determination of their innocence in war crimes committed against the Syrian population.<sup>177</sup> In January 2025, the transitional administration freed around 641 individuals, mainly from the governorates of Homs, Hama, and Latakia, who had been held in detention for durations spanning a few days to a month, with the majority being released in small groups from Homs Central Prison.<sup>178</sup>

At the beginning of February, the Ministry of Information imposed a prohibition on conducting interviews with or disseminating statements attributed to individuals affiliated with the former government.<sup>179</sup>

Since the takeover by the transitional administration, remnant pro-Assad groups have conducted small-scale, targeted hit-and-run attacks against its security forces across Syria.<sup>180</sup> These attacks have prompted the authorities to launch operations to capture the culprits which at times resulted in civilian casualties.<sup>181</sup> In early March, coordinated attacks by pro-Assad groups on security forces, particularly in the coastal areas, led to a significant escalation which resulted in large numbers of civilian casualties, mostly from the Alawite community.<sup>182</sup> For more information see section [4.1.2](#).

Next to the transitional administration's operations, incidents of suspected revenge acts, including killings, kidnappings, and arson, by unidentified groups have been documented, though their scale remains unclear. At the end of December, three Alawite judges in Masyaf, responsible for property disputes, were killed, an act condemned by the transitional administration.<sup>183</sup> In January, SOHR reported the execution of 15 people, including officers of

---

<sup>174</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Center, Two Months After Assad's Fall, Assad-Like Violations Are Still Being Committed in Syria, 13 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>175</sup> SOHR, Military Operations Administration keeps imprisoning over 9,000 combatants and reconcile figures of corruption of former regime, 13 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>176</sup> SNHR, SNHR Condemns Torture, Death of Three Detainees at the Hands of the Transitional Government's General Security Directorate, 3 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>177</sup> SOHR, Ongoing security campaigns | General security administration launches new arrest campaign in Qatna residences, 28 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>178</sup> SNHR, At least 229 Arbitrary Detentions Documented in January 2025, 4 February, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>179</sup> Enab Baladi, Syrian Ministry of Information prohibits interviews with figures of previous regime, 7 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>180</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #21, 8 March 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>181</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #21, 8 March 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>182</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>183</sup> BBC News, Inside a Syrian 'reconciliation centre' where Assad's soldiers give up their weapons, 29 December 2024, [url](#)





the former government, by unidentified gunmen in Homs governorate. Furthermore, 53 people were arrested and brought to unknown locations.<sup>184</sup>

### 1.3.2. Alawites

Following its assumption of power, HTS emphasised its commitment to integrating Alawites into Syria's governance and engaged in discussions with local Alawite representatives. HTS officials reiterated that accountability for crimes committed under the Assad government would be pursued through the formal judicial system.<sup>185</sup> Despite these assurances, Alawites remain largely excluded from the new political and military structures, with no plan for integrating discharged soldiers into the new army due to lingering wartime divisions. Public distrust toward former regime officers and officials further hinders their reintegration. Economic insecurity is a major challenge, with mass public-sector layoffs particularly affecting Alawites, including former security officers and their families, many of whom have also lost state-provided housing.<sup>186</sup>

Significant concerns persist regarding the treatment of Alawite communities, particularly in regions such as Homs, Hama, and the coastal governorates. In the city of Homs, men in military uniforms established checkpoints at the entrances to Alawite-majority neighbourhoods, heightening fears among residents. Reports indicate that young men, including former soldiers and conscripts who had surrendered their weapons, were detained. Men at one checkpoint allegedly engaged in sectarian profiling before the checkpoint was dismantled following complaints. Shihadi Mayhoub, a former lawmaker, said he documented over 600 arrests in the Zahra district (Homs governorate) by January 2025 and more than 1 380 across Homs city, with the majority of detainees reported to be civilians and conscripts, alongside retired military officers. The SOHR estimated that at least 1 800 individuals, predominantly Alawites, had been detained in Homs city and its governorate. Furthermore, violence targeting Alawites increased nationwide, with 150 killings reported, particularly in Homs and Hama.<sup>187</sup>

Meanwhile, unidentified extremist factions exacerbated fears by circulating calls for violence against Alawites, including videos advocating indiscriminate attacks. Targeted killings of Alawites linked to the former government were reported in coastal regions, while armed groups wearing military uniforms resembling those of HTS or other opposition factions raided over 20 Alawite villages in rural Hama, causing displacement, theft, and fatalities.<sup>188</sup>

Reports of harassment, abductions, and killings of Alawites increased after Assad's fall, with social media content, albeit unverified, accusing HTS fighters of the violence. A former Syrian soldier reported being detained and beaten at an HTS checkpoint near Khirbet al-Ma'zah, Tartous governorate, while traveling to seek amnesty, claiming he was specifically targeted for his Alawite background and subjected to five hours of physical abuse before being released.

---

<sup>184</sup> SOHR, Primary death toll | 15 people including officers of former regime killed in Fahil massacre, 25 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>185</sup> Balanche, F., Alawites Under Threat in Syria?, TWI, 31 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>186</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>187</sup> France24, Fear grips Alawites in Syria's Homs as Assad 'remnants' targeted, 10 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>188</sup> Shahin, K., The Challenges Facing Syria's Alawites, New Lines Magazine, 13 January 2025, [url](#)



The UN worked to verify such claims in an effort to prevent further sectarian escalation, while SOHR estimated 150 Alawite killings within a month by unnamed perpetrators.<sup>189</sup>

Zahra, a neighbourhood in Homs with a significant Alawite population, saw increased insecurity, with residents adhering to an informal curfew due to the presence of HTS forces. The HTS implemented security measures in the area, including checkpoints and house-to-house raids targeting individuals it identified as remnants of the former government. Reports from residents described forced evacuations, profiling based on identification documents, and instances of violence, arrests, physical assaults and gunfire.<sup>190</sup>

At the end of January, SOHR reported several instances of groups of gunmen, some of whom claimed to be affiliated with the MOA, attacking and killing civilians for political and sectarian reasons.<sup>191</sup> Particularly, communities in the Homs countryside with predominantly Alawite and Shiite populations experienced a sharp escalation in abuses, criminal acts, and extrajudicial killings of civilians.<sup>192</sup> Gunmen shot and killed civilians in a village in the north west of Hama governorate, which is primarily inhabited by Alawites.<sup>193</sup> According to the authorities, among those killed in the attack were former officers and soldiers.<sup>194</sup>

At the beginning of February, further attacks against Alawites were reported. The new authorities launched investigations into unlawful killings, while concurrently announcing security operations against loyalists of the previous government. Interim President Ahmad Al-Sharaa emphasised the need to maintain civil peace, warning of the dangers of deepening sectarian divisions.<sup>195</sup>

Expert on Syrian security issues Gregory Waters highlighted considerable variation in conditions across former government strongholds such as Tartous, Latakia, Homs, and Hama. While instances of sectarian intimidation and harassment by security forces were reported, some Alawites in these regions described interactions with authorities as polite and respectful. According to Waters, documented violations appeared to stem more from unprofessional conduct during arrests than from explicit sectarian targeting, with many of the committed crimes being attributed to gangs and civilians with no affiliation to the transitional administration. He further noted that human rights violations were sometimes taking place in the context of volatile security situation or a security vacuum as well as in response to specific incidents, such as when former government militia fighters launched an ambush against security forces in the rural areas of Tartous at the end of December. The forces consequently started an operation – including home raids, the erecting of checkpoints and shoot-outs, against villages suspected of hosting the fighters, such as Khirbet Maazah, which was home to numerous former government militia fighters and a high-ranking prison official accused of

---

<sup>189</sup> France24, 'Syrian above all': The Alawite community refuses to pay for Assad's crimes, 13 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>190</sup> MEE, HTS raids and forced disappearances fuel fear in Syria's Alawi heartlands, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>191</sup> SOHR, 91 attacks in 2025 | 190 people killed in retaliatory actions and assassinations in different areas across Syria, 26 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Worrying escalation | 46 civilians killed by gunmen participating in security operations in Homs countryside in a week, 28 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Security chaos | Gunmen execute a massacre in a village in Hama countryside, 31 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>192</sup> SOHR, Worrying escalation | 46 civilians killed by gunmen participating in security operations in Homs countryside in a week, 28 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>193</sup> SOHR, Security chaos | Gunmen execute a massacre in a village in Hama countryside, 31 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>194</sup> New Arab (The), 15 people killed in 'sectarian' massacre in Alawi village in Syria, 1 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>195</sup> France24, Syria's Alawites mourn their dead after revenge attacks, 5 February 2025, [url](#)



involvement in the killing of hundreds of detainees. Waters considers that numerous crimes were perpetrated by gangs and civilians unaffiliated with the new administration, while certain lower-ranking soldiers and local leaders took part in sectarian-motivated intimidation and abductions of Alawite civilians.<sup>196</sup>

In early March, clashes between pro-Assad groups and security forces in Latakia, Tartous and Hama governorate, led to hundreds of civilians being killed, most of whom were Alawites.<sup>197</sup> This included summary executions carried out by forces linked to the caretaker government.<sup>198</sup> For more information see section [4.1.2](#).

### 1.3.3. Kurds

With regards to the Kurdish community, upon taking control, Al-Sharaa held an initial meeting with a senior SDF delegation to establish the basis for future discussions. His remarks implied that the transitional administration did not align with the Turkish-backed SNA's anti-SDF approach. Nevertheless, Mohammed A. Salih, a scholar specialising in Kurdish and regional issues, described his remarks as unclear and unsupportive of Kurdish goals. Following the rapid capture of Aleppo by the HTS-led offensive in late November, SNA forces forced thousands of Kurdish civilians to flee west of the Euphrates River. In Aleppo, the Kurds primarily interacted with HTS, which has exhibited moderation and openness to dialogue. In contrast, the SNA consistently engaged in conflict with the SDF in Manbij.<sup>199</sup> The continuous existence of the SDF was stated by organisers of the National Dialogue Conference as the reason for the exclusion of the semi-autonomous Kurdish administration and its related bodies from the conference.<sup>200</sup>

Housing and property violations continued throughout January as displaced Kurdish residents attempted to return to Afrin, a Kurdish-majority region in the Aleppo countryside, and its surrounding areas. SNA factions reportedly forced them to pay up to 10 000 USD to reclaim their homes. Concurrently SNA factions detained at least 10 Kurds in Afrin in January, with ransom demands for release rising above 1 000 USD per person.<sup>201</sup> By mid-February, there had been minimal change for the Kurds in Afrin despite the deployment of Damascus' security forces in the city on February 7. Abuses by various factions in Afrin reportedly continued. Returning residents discovered that their homes were occupied by fighters or civilians, who demanded substantial sums of money for their departure, despite the previous residents having received formal assurances from the transitional administration to return.<sup>202</sup> Towards the end of February Al-Sharaa visited Afrin and convened with local Kurdish representatives who conveyed their grievances; in response, he committed to substituting the factions in the city with official security forces and addressing the abuses directed at the Kurdish community.<sup>203</sup>

<sup>196</sup> Waters G., Security in Alawite regions in post-Assad Syria, MEI, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>197</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>198</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#); HRW, Syria: End Coastal Killing Spree, Protect Civilians, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>199</sup> New Arab (The), What Kurds fear and hope for in the 'new Syria', 6 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>200</sup> France24, Syria conference lays out post-Assad priorities, but Kurds not invited, 25 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>201</sup> Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, Human Rights Violations in Syria, December 2024 – January 2025, 22 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>202</sup> Syria Direct, Waning hopes: Will Damascus help Afrin's Kurds reclaim their homes?, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>203</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #19: 22 February 2025, 20 February 2025, [url](#)



### 1.3.4. Other religious and ethnic minorities

The new Syrian leadership has pledged to uphold minority rights and promote national unity amid concerns of marginalisation under Islamist rule.<sup>204</sup>

As part of efforts to reassure minority communities, Ahmad Al-Sharaa met with Lebanese Druze leader Walid Jumblatt on 22 December.<sup>205</sup> He later convened with Christian leaders, including Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican clerics, following a series of attacks targeting religious minorities.<sup>206</sup> This engagement took place after protests triggered by the 23 December burning of a Christmas tree by foreign fighters affiliated with HTS<sup>207</sup> in a predominantly Christian town in Hama, alongside additional reports of harassment.<sup>208</sup> Following the attack on the Christmas tree, the transitional government apprehended the foreign fighters it identified as responsible for what it characterised as an isolated incident. Furthermore, government offices were closed for the Christmas holiday and the following day, 23 December.<sup>209</sup> Meanwhile, France24 reported that while Christmas celebrations took place in Damascus, Christian residents kept a low profile, with some refraining from purchasing alcohol due to fear and uncertainty.<sup>210</sup>

Reports indicate a rise in targeted incidents against Christian communities, including an attack by unidentified gunmen on a Greek Orthodox church in Hama on 18 December and increased tensions in Christian areas of Damascus due to threatening actions, such as jihadist songs broadcasted in public and a menacing message displayed on an armoured vehicle.<sup>211</sup>

Human rights organisations have documented various restrictions on religious freedoms. Richard Ghazal, executive director of In Defense of Christians, highlighted measures such as alcohol bans, and the presence of Islamic State flags in areas near Damascus. Similarly, Nadine Maenza from the Washington-based International Religious Freedom Secretariat documented at least a dozen eyewitness accounts of attacks against religious and ethnic minorities in the Shehba region, near Aleppo, in late December. However, Rafif Jouejati, a scholar at the Middle East Institute, suggested that these incidents should be viewed as isolated cases rather than evidence of a broader pattern of systematic intolerance.<sup>212</sup>

In Damascus' Al-Qassaa district, armed individuals distributed flyers imposing restrictions on women's attire, smoking, and social interactions. HTS deployed patrols in response, attributing the incidents to unidentified individuals and denying endorsement. However, concerns remain over the frequency of such actions.<sup>213</sup>

---

<sup>204</sup> New Arab (The), Syria govt plans 'expanded' committee to prepare national dialogue, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>205</sup> Reuters, Syria's de facto ruler reassures minorities, meets Lebanese Druze leader, 22 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>206</sup> VOA, What future awaits Syria's Christian minority?, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>207</sup> Memri, Reports Claim Perpetrators Who Burned Christmas Tree In Hama, Syria, Are Uzbek Jihadi Fighters; Syrian Jihadi Cleric: Raising The Cross Should Be Forbidden, 24 December 2025, [url](#)

<sup>208</sup> VOA, What future awaits Syria's Christian minority?, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>209</sup> Al-Monitor, Christians in Syria hopeful but wary of Sharaa's intentions, February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>210</sup> France24, Christmas in post-Assad Syria tainted by fears for minority's future, 24 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>211</sup> Reuters, Syria's Christians fearful of new Islamist leaders as Christmas approaches, 23 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>212</sup> VOA, What future awaits Syria's Christian minority?, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>213</sup> Syriac Press, Rising "Individual Acts" threaten Christians in Syria, 18 January 2025, [url](#)



The new administration underscored its commitment to inclusivity through the promise of the National Dialogue Conference, which aimed to engage various communities, including Christians, Kurds, artists, and intellectuals, in shaping Syria's future.<sup>214</sup> When the National Dialogue Conference took place, it failed to alleviate concerns regarding inclusivity. Of the seven individuals appointed to the preparatory committee, only one was from a religious minority, Syrian Christian activist Hind Kabawat, while the others were Sunni Muslims, with some having close ties to Sharaa or HTS. Kurdish-led authorities from the northeast were entirely omitted from the conference. Some Christians stated that they are withholding judgment until a new constitution is drafted and general elections take place. The transitional government lacks Christian representation and is primarily composed of ministers who previously served in the Idlib government.<sup>215</sup>

Further scepticism has persisted, particularly following the unilateral reform of the national curriculum.<sup>216</sup> The new education minister, Nazir Mohammad Al-Qadri, assured that both Islam and Christianity would remain part of the school curriculum as subjects of study.<sup>217</sup> However in early January, the transitional administration's education ministry announced curriculum changes that reflect a more Islamic perspective while eliminating references to the Assad era. Proposed changes include the removal of evolution and the Big Bang theory from science lessons, the omission of pre-Islamic deities and their statues from history courses, and a diminished emphasis on Queen Zenobia of Palmyra. Civil society activists have expressed concerns that these changes indicate a disregard for diverse perspectives and could undermine the administration's stated commitment to inclusivity.<sup>218</sup> The ministry, however, denied these interpretations of the changes, emphasising that the only changes made pertained 'to the removal of symbols of the previous regime and its glorification, and the adoption of images of the new Syrian flag (the flag of the revolution) instead of the previous flag, on all school books'. The minister explained that the adjustments included correcting 'incorrect' information that the previous government relied on in explaining some Quranic verses, adopting what is found in exegesis books for all educational stages.<sup>219</sup>

### 1.3.5. Women

For detailed information on women in Syria, see section 13. Women of the [EUAA COI report Syria: Targeting of individuals \(September 2022\)](#).

#### (a) General overview of violations against women

According to a SNHR, at least 29 064 women have been killed in Syria between March 2011 and November 2024, and 11 268 women were held in detention or forcibly disappeared when the report was released.<sup>220</sup> In the period of 1 January to 27 December 2024, the Office of the

<sup>214</sup> BBC News, New Syrian government's school curriculum changes spark concern, 2 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>215</sup> Al-Monitor, Christians in Syria hopeful but wary of Sharaa's intentions, February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>216</sup> BBC News, New Syrian government's school curriculum changes spark concern, 2 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>217</sup> Reuters, Syrian girls' right to schooling unrestricted, new education minister says, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>218</sup> BBC News, New Syrian government's school curriculum changes spark concern, 2 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>219</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria's Education Ministry clarifies curriculum amendment decision, 2 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>220</sup> SNHR, On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women: SNHR's 13th Annual Report on Violations Against Females in Syria, 25 November 2024, [url](#)



High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) documented conflict-related incidents having killed 92 women across Syria.<sup>221</sup> Reports of killing of women by armed actors continued in the reference period<sup>222</sup> and women also continued to be victims of other violations including deaths by unexploded ordnance<sup>223</sup> and killings by unknown perpetrators.<sup>224</sup> In February 2025, SOHR reported on an increased number of kidnapping cases of women and girls.<sup>225</sup>

The crisis in Syria has had a disproportionate impact on women leading to risks of violence, negative coping mechanisms, limited access to services,<sup>226</sup> an increased vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV),<sup>227</sup> discrimination, and limited access to medical care and legal redress.<sup>228</sup> Women and girls were disadvantaged when accessing humanitarian aid<sup>229</sup> and disproportionately affected by food insecurity.<sup>230</sup>

## **(b) Legislative developments and policies affecting women**

Sources indicate that there is no clarity yet on the situation of women in Syria under the HTS authorities at the time of drafting of this report.<sup>231</sup> New foreign minister Assaad al-Shibani claimed that the authorities would ‘fully support’ women’s rights<sup>232</sup> and Ahmed al-Sharaa’s promised to continue women’s education.<sup>233</sup> As of 1 January 2025, three women have been

---

<sup>221</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>222</sup> IPS, What Does the End of Assad’s Regime Mean for Syria and the Middle East?, 19 December 2024, [url](#); SHRC, Monthly Report on Human Rights Victims for November 2024, 1 December 2024, [url](#); SNHR, 236 Civilian Deaths, Including 32 Children and 18 Women, as well as One Woman’s Death due to Torture, Documented in Syria in January 2025, 21 Civilians Were Killed by SDF, 1 February 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>223</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance | Woman and two children kil\*led in different areas of Syria, 2 February 2025, [url](#); SNHR, 236 Civilian Deaths, Including 32 Children and 18 Women, as well as One Woman’s Death due to Torture, Documented in Syria in January 2025, 21 Civilians Were Killed by SDF, 1 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>224</sup> SOHR, In less than seven days | Ten people, including three women, killed in different areas in Syria, 5 February 2025, [url](#); SOHR, In ten days | 14 individuals, including four women, killed in different areas in Syria, 10 February 2025, [url](#); SOHR, New crimes | Woman di\*es affected by wounds she sustained in Idlib and another woman kil\*led in Deir Ezzor, 4 February 2025, [url](#); AP (The), Another car bomb in a northern Syria city kills at least 19, mostly women, 3 February 2025, [url](#); SHRC, Terrorist Bombing in Eastern Rural Aleppo Targets Female Workers, 4 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>225</sup> SOHR, Security vacuum | Kidnapping of women and girls escalate dramatically in February, 16 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>226</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>227</sup> Health Cluster and WHO, Whole of Syrian Arab Republic: Public Health Situation Analysis, 14 October 2024, [url](#), p. 5; PAX, War and Water Security Challenges along the Orontes River in Syria, Thirst for Peace, November 2024, [url](#), p. 47

<sup>228</sup> PAX, War and Water Security Challenges along the Orontes River in Syria, Thirst for Peace, November 2024, [url](#), p. 47

<sup>229</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025, 28 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 14, 37

<sup>230</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 37

<sup>231</sup> Guardian (The), ‘We’ve proved we can do anything’: the Syrian women who want a say in running the country, 5 January 2025, [url](#); Tagesschau, Syrische Regierung vergibt Posten an Frauen, 31 December 2024, [url](#); OHCHR, Syria: Experts advocate for sovereignty, democratic reconstruction and respect for human rights, 20 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>232</sup> New Arab, Syria official’s comments on women spark uproar, 29 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>233</sup> Telegraph (The), Syrian rebel leader says women’s education will continue – but refuses to be drawn on alcohol, 19 December 2024, [url](#)



appointed to official positions under the new government in Syria.<sup>234</sup> The first woman to be appointed was Aisha al-Dibs as the head of the Women's Affairs Office.<sup>235</sup> On 30 December 2024, the new authorities appointed the first female governor of the Syrian central bank, Maysaa Sabrine, previously working as the bank's deputy governor.<sup>236</sup> On 31 December 2024, Muhsina al-Mahithawi, from the Druze minority, was appointed as the first female governor for the province of Sweida.<sup>237</sup>

At the national level, the governance approach of the transitional administration remains unclear, particularly regarding women's rights and representation. Obaida Arnout, a government spokesperson, suggested that women's inherent characteristics make them unsuitable for certain roles in governance, while Aisha al-Dibs, the newly appointed Minister for Women, voiced opposition to working with civil society organisations that disagree with her views. Al-Dibs further attributed rising divorce rates to a previous government program and pledged to avoid similar initiatives.<sup>238</sup>

Policies targeting women's public engagement have extended to plans for gender segregation on public and private buses in Damascus. In January, the General Company for Internal Transport, 'Zajal Transport,' announced that gender-segregated transportation would be implemented in the capital within days, following earlier trials in Idlib, Aleppo, Hama, and Homs.<sup>239</sup>

Concerning the work of female judges, Obaida Arnout stated that this needs to be studied 'by experts',<sup>240</sup> leaving the situation of female judges unclear.<sup>241</sup> In January 2025, it was reported that Shadi al-Waisi, the Minister of Justice in the current administration, was seen in two videos overseeing the execution of two women sentenced for 'corruption and prostitution' in the Idlib area<sup>242</sup> in 2015.<sup>243</sup> In Homs, visual signs promoting gender segregation appeared on buses.<sup>244</sup> In Damascus, posters displaying 'conditions of the Shariah-compliant hijab' were seen in public spaces.<sup>245</sup> According to Al-Dibs, however, the government will not impose any dress code on Syrian women.<sup>246</sup> In an interview from 25 December 2024, Ahmed al-Sharaa stated

<sup>234</sup> New Arab, New Syrian gov't taps Druze woman as governor of southern province, 1 January 2025, [url](#)  
Tagesschau, Syrische Regierung vergibt Posten an Frauen, 31 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>235</sup> New Arab, Who is Maysaa Sabrine, the first woman to head Syria's central bank?, 31 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>236</sup> Al Jazeera, Maysaa Sabrine becomes first woman to lead Syria's central bank, 30 December 2024, [url](#); Reuters, Syria appoints Maysaa Sabrine as first woman to lead central bank, official says, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>237</sup> New Arab, New Syrian gov't taps Druze woman as governor of southern province, 1 January 2025, [url](#)  
Tagesschau, Syrische Regierung vergibt Posten an Frauen, 31 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>238</sup> Guardian (The), 'We've proved we can do anything': the Syrian women who want a say in running the country, 5 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>239</sup> Watan, Damascus to Enforce Gender Segregation on Public and Private Buses, 11 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>240</sup> RFE/RL, Syrian Islamist Rulers Shun The Taliban Governance Model, 25 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>241</sup> New Arab, 'What I achieved will be destroyed overnight': Syrian women judges face uncertain future under new leadership, 2 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>242</sup> NBC News, He oversaw the public executions of two women. Now he's Syria's new justice minister, 19 January 2025, [url](#); Verify-sy, Did the current Minister of Justice appear in a video documenting the execution of a woman in the Idlib countryside?, 4 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>243</sup> NBC News, He oversaw the public executions of two women. Now he's Syria's new justice minister, 19 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>244</sup> Etana, Syria Update #14: 17 January, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>245</sup> New Arab, Why Syrian women's political participation is crucial in building the new Syria, 11 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>246</sup> Al Jazeera, Syria's gov't pledges greater women's inclusion in social and political spheres, 31 January 2025, [url](#)



that ‘Christian women would not be forced to observe the veil’ while not mentioning the Muslim women.<sup>247</sup>

### (c) Women without male support (female-headed household/single/widowed)

The conflict in Syria has led to a demographic change leading to a bigger number of female heads of households<sup>248</sup> and women entering the workforce.<sup>249</sup> The number of female-headed households has additionally increased because of displacement.<sup>250</sup> According to an analysis of the World Health Organization (WHO) dated October 2024, in the whole of Syria, ‘almost every third family is headed by a woman.’<sup>251</sup> Female-headed households belong to vulnerable groups who were disproportionately affected by the conflict<sup>252</sup> and whose basic needs such as healthcare, food, and education were not met.<sup>253</sup> Women faced harassment and discrimination at the workplace, especially women without husbands, including widows.<sup>254</sup> Female unemployment rate in Syria reached 62.2 % in 2024, according to the Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics.<sup>255</sup> Children of women heads of households were at an increased risk of statelessness due to inability to register their births.<sup>256</sup> Divorced women and widows were at a risk of forced marriages.<sup>257</sup> Difficulties when reclaiming properties were reported concerning widows,<sup>258</sup> returning women from Lebanon (more than half of such households were female-headed),<sup>259</sup> and displaced women in north-eastern Syria.<sup>260</sup> Divorced women in north-western Syria faced societal stigma, social exclusion, and lack of support.<sup>261</sup>

As of January 2025, some 40 000 people were held in the al-Hol camp in north-eastern Syria, reportedly mostly women and children, family members of ISIL members, including thousands of foreign nationals.<sup>262</sup> The conditions of the camps have been described as ‘inhumane’<sup>263</sup> and ‘life-threatening’.<sup>264</sup> On 27 January, the US government ordered to pause ‘foreign

<sup>247</sup> RFE/RL, Syrian Islamist Rulers Shun The Taliban Governance Model, 25 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>248</sup> Atlantic Council, What will minority and women’s rights look like in the new Syria?, 20 December 2024, [url](#); UNCOI, Gendered Impact of the Conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic on Women and Girls, 12 June 2023, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>249</sup> Atlantic Council, What will minority and women’s rights look like in the new Syria?, 20 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>250</sup> UNFPA in Arab States, Regional Quarterly Report on the Syria Crisis / Q4 2024, 26 January 2025, [url](#), p. 13

<sup>251</sup> Health Cluster and WHO, Whole of Syrian Arab Republic: Public Health Situation Analysis, 14 October 2024, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>252</sup> UNDP, The Impact of the Conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#), p. 33

<sup>253</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>254</sup> PAX, War and Water Security Challenges along the Orontes River in Syria, Thirst for Peace, November 2024, [url](#), p. 46

<sup>255</sup> UNDP, The Impact of the Conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>256</sup> HRW, World Report 2025 - Syria, 16 January 2025, [url](#); UN, Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, Gendered Impact of the Conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic on Women and Girls, 12 June 2023, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>257</sup> Health Cluster and WHO, Whole of Syrian Arab Republic: Public Health Situation Analysis, 14 October 2024, [url](#), p. 12

<sup>258</sup> Health Cluster and WHO, Whole of Syrian Arab Republic: Public Health Situation Analysis, 14 October 2024, [url](#), p. 12

<sup>259</sup> Bahar Organization, New Displacement from Lebanon Post September 2024, 21 October 2024, [url](#), p. 17

<sup>260</sup> STJ, “My Entire Life Savings Vanished Overnight”: Housing, Land, and Property Rights Violations in “Peace Spring” Strip, October 2024, [url](#), p. 26

<sup>261</sup> GPC, Youth Report; Protection barriers and risks; North-West Syria; Nov 2024, 19 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 4, 10

<sup>262</sup> HRW, Northeast Syria: Camp Detainees Face Uncertain Future, 7 February 2025, [url](#); Reuters, Syria’s al-Hol camp readies first return of Syrian detainees, director says, 24 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>263</sup> Mercator, What’s to be done with ISIS children in Syria?, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>264</sup> HRW, Northeast Syria: Camp Detainees Face Uncertain Future, 7 February 2025, [url](#)



development assistance',<sup>265</sup> which was followed by issuing a temporary waiver concerning 'life-saving humanitarian assistance' the next day.<sup>266</sup> Sources reported that the freeze on humanitarian aid has further worsened the living conditions in the al-Hol camp.<sup>267</sup>

#### (d) Sexual and gender-based violence

SNHR's annual report released in November 2024 recorded 11 553 cases of sexual violence against women since March 2011.<sup>268</sup> The main perpetrators of sexual violence documented by the SNHR were identified as the former Syrian regime (8 024 incidents) and ISIL (3 487 incidents), while HTS was found responsible for two incidents.<sup>269</sup> OHCHR reported a rise in 'all types of sexual violence and other gender-based violence' in Syria during the conflict.<sup>270</sup> Abuses against women were underreported,<sup>271</sup> including because of societal stigma and fear.<sup>272</sup> Conflict in Syria has led to increased cases of early and forced marriages, including as a coping mechanism.<sup>273</sup> A study by the international organisation PAX indicated that shifting gender roles had contributed to a rise in domestic and gender-based violence.<sup>274</sup>

In January 2025, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reported that women and girls in Syria faced 'pervasive forms' of SGBV in both public and private life, due to institutionalised gender inequality and patriarchy. The situation has been characterised by a lack of support services, safe spaces, and legal protection.<sup>275</sup> According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), out of some 8.5 million people requiring GBV assistance in Syria, 93 % are women and girls. They faced a variety of abuses including 'intimate partner violence, domestic violence, economic and emotional violence as well as sexual violence, including rape and sexual harassment.'<sup>276</sup> As of January 2025, in north-western Syria, 67 safe spaces for women and girls providing SGBV services were functional. In Idlib, health care facilities including a maternity hospital were significantly damaged at the end of 2024.<sup>277</sup> Women and girls in Aleppo faced 'significant difficulties' when accessing services

<sup>265</sup> HRW, US: Order Halting Foreign Aid Work Puts Lives at Risk, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>266</sup> HRW, Northeast Syria: Camp Detainees Face Uncertain Future, 7 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>267</sup> AP (The), Trump's aid freeze shocks a Syria camp holding families linked to the Islamic State group, 4 February 2025, [url](#); HRW, Northeast Syria: Camp Detainees Face Uncertain Future, 7 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>268</sup> SNHR, On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women: SNHR's 13th Annual Report on Violations Against Females in Syria, 25 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>269</sup> SNHR, On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women: SNHR's 13th Annual Report on Violations Against Females in Syria, 25 November 2024, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>270</sup> UNCOI, Gendered Impact of the Conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic on Women and Girls, 12 June 2023, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>271</sup> STJ, Silenced and Defamed: Women's Organizations in North-Western Syria Under Many Layers of Oppression, 12 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>272</sup> SNHR, On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women: SNHR's 13th Annual Report on Violations Against Females in Syria, 25 November 2024, [url](#), p. 24

<sup>273</sup> UNFPA in Arab States, Regional Quarterly Report on the Syria Crisis/Q4 2024, 26 January 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>274</sup> PAX, War and Water Security Challenges along the Orontes River in Syria, Thirst for Peace, November 2024, [url](#), p. 46

<sup>275</sup> UNFPA in Arab States, Regional Quarterly Report on the Syria Crisis/Q4 2024, 26 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 4

<sup>276</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 22

<sup>277</sup> UNFPA in Arab States, Situation Report #1 Humanitarian needs in Syria, 19 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 3-4





for victims of the SGBV, including those concerning transportation and a lack of female staff.<sup>278</sup> Risk of SGBV was reportedly higher for women in IDP camps<sup>279</sup> and in the shelters.<sup>280</sup>

### 1.3.6. Children

For detailed information on children in Syria, see section 1.4. Children of the [EUAA COI report Syria: Country Focus \(October 2023\)](#).

#### (a) Impact of violence on children

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), some 25 500 violations against children were recorded during the 13 years of the conflict, including killing and maiming of children and child recruitment.<sup>281</sup> SNHR stated that 30 293 children were killed in the period of March 2011-10 November 2024, and as of 20 November 2024, 5 298 children were arrested, detained, or forcibly disappeared.<sup>282</sup> In the period from 1 January to 27 December 2024, OHCHR documented incidents killing 212 children across Syria.<sup>283</sup> Following the change of regime, reports on killing of children by armed actors persisted.<sup>284</sup> Children also continued to be harmed by unexploded ordnance that killed or injured at least 116 in December<sup>285</sup> and 136 in the period of 1 January to 17 February.<sup>286</sup> In January 2025, UNOCHA warned that 'grave violations against children remain a major concern, including the risk of being killed, injured, recruited, and used in hostilities.'<sup>287</sup>

As of December 2024, an estimated 7.5 million children in Syria were in need of humanitarian assistance<sup>288</sup> and around 6.4 million in need of psychological help.<sup>289</sup> The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reported that food insecurity and malnutrition among

<sup>278</sup> UNFPA, Situation Report #1 Humanitarian needs in Syria, 15 January 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>279</sup> PAX, War and Water Security Challenges along the Orontes River in Syria, Thirst for Peace, November 2024, [url](#) p. 47; UNFPA in Arab States, Situation Report #1 Humanitarian needs in Syria, 19 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>280</sup> UNFPA, Syrian Arab Republic, Updated 10 January 2025, [url](#); UNFPA, Situation Report #1 Humanitarian needs in Syria, 15 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2; UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 22

<sup>281</sup> UNICEF, Paving the road to a hopeful and inclusive future in Syria, free from violence and hardship, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>282</sup> SNHR, On World Children's Day: SNHR's 13th Annual Report on Violations Against Children in Syria, 20 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 5, 8

<sup>283</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>284</sup> SNHR, 236 Civilian Deaths, Including 32 Children and 18 Women, as well as One Woman's Death due to Torture, Documented in Syria in January 2025, 21 Civilians Were Killed by SDF, 1 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 2, 6, 7; SHRC, Monthly Report on Human Rights Victims for November 2024, 1 December 2024, [url](#); SNHR, 149 Civilians Killed, Including 35 Children and 16 Women, in Northern Syria Since November 27, 2024, Up Until December 3, 2024, 4 December 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>285</sup> SNHR, 149 Civilians Killed, Including 35 Children and 16 Women, in Northern Syria Since November 27, 2024, Up Until December 3, 2024, 4 December 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>286</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance | Four sibling children killed and wounded by explosion in Deir Ezzor countryside, 17 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>287</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>288</sup> France24, More than half of Syrian children out of school: Save the Children to AFP, 30 December 2024, [url](#); UNICEF, Paving the road to a hopeful and inclusive future in Syria, free from violence and hardship, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>289</sup> France24, More than half of Syrian children out of school: Save the Children to AFP, 30 December 2024, [url](#)





children increased health risks.<sup>290</sup> Some 506 000 children younger than five years old in Idlib and Aleppo were suffering from acute malnutrition and over 609 000 from stunting.<sup>291</sup> The WHO found that in some governorates, stunting has reached ‘alarmingly high levels’.<sup>292</sup> UNOCHA reported that hospitals were overcrowded and that psychological distress among children was widespread.<sup>293</sup>

### **(b) Negative coping mechanisms**

According to UNOCHA, child labour and child marriage remained ‘widely accepted’ coping mechanisms for Syrian families and their scope remains underreported. Children in street situations were exposed to exploitation and were ‘in contact with the law for petty and grave crimes’.<sup>294</sup>

An UNOCHA report released in January 2025 indicated that the economic crisis in Syria has further increased risks of GBV among vulnerable population, including among adolescent girls, as well as risks of child labour, child marriage, and sexual exploitation.<sup>295</sup>

A report by the international NGO Welthungerhilfe about the Aleppo and Idlib governorates assessing the protection needs, based on data collected in August 2024, found that instances of sexual violence against children, particularly adolescent girls, occurred in various settings including at home, at school, at workplace, and in IDP camps. The report found that child marriages remained ‘prevalent’ both in IDP camps and host communities, the main reasons being primarily poverty in Aleppo and customs and traditions in Idlib.<sup>296</sup>

According to the USDOS, under the Assad government, there were shelters for orphaned children.<sup>297</sup> There were 1.2 million orphans estimated in Syria, and according to a governmental decree, children were assumed ‘Muslim unless proven otherwise’ and they could be adopted only ‘if the couple and the child share the same religion.’<sup>298</sup> A report by the Global Protection Cluster (GPC), a network of NGOs, international organisations and UN agencies, released in December 2024 found that children were particularly affected by a lack of civil documentation.<sup>299</sup>

---

<sup>290</sup> UNDP, The Impact of the Conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>291</sup> IPS, Syrian Displaced Children Go Hungry, Stunting Their Growth, 23 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>292</sup> Health Cluster and WHO, Whole of Syrian Arab Republic: Public Health Situation Analysis, 14 October 2024, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>293</sup> IPS, What Does the End of Assad’s Regime Mean for Syria and the Middle East?, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>294</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: 2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview (February 2024) [EN/AR], 3 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 26, 64

<sup>295</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>296</sup> Welthungerhilfe, Multisectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) Aleppo and Idlib Governorates Northwest Syria (NWS), September 2024, 5 November 2024, [url](#), pp. 55-56

<sup>297</sup> USDOS, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Syria, 24 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>298</sup> USDOS, 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Syria, 26 June 2024, [url](#), p. 18

<sup>299</sup> GPC, Escalation of Hostilities. Flash Report #2; December 4, 2024, 4 December 2024, [url](#), p. 3



### (c) Forced recruitment by armed groups

In a report published on 20 November 2024, SNHR stated that 2 395 children were forcibly conscripted in Syria in the period of March 2011-10 November 2024.<sup>300</sup> In June 2024, the United Nations Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict signed an action plan to 'to end and prevent the recruitment and use and the killing and maiming of children' with the SNA and aligned factions.<sup>301</sup> Additionally, a road map to implement a 2019 action plan between the UN, SDF, and the administrations in northern and eastern Syria, prohibiting recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, was adopted.<sup>302</sup> Nevertheless, instances of recruitment of children continued to be reported, including by SDF<sup>303</sup> and by a Kurdish youth movement in the north-eastern Syria.<sup>304</sup> At the end of November 2024, SNHR documented operations by the former regime aimed at conscripting young men and boys with a goal of deploying them to northern Syria.<sup>305</sup>

### (d) Access to education

As of January 2025, there were some 2.4 million children out of school in Syria and an additional million at a risk of dropping out.<sup>306</sup> Since the end of November 2024, schooling for around 230 000 children was interrupted in northeast Syria due to ongoing conflict.<sup>307</sup> Out of school children were at increased risk of child labour and child marriage,<sup>308</sup> as well as trafficking and recruitment.<sup>309</sup> A report by UNOCHA of January 2025 states that over 5 200 schools are damaged and lack equipment. While the education is free, some families have prioritised negative coping mechanism affecting children's school attendance.<sup>310</sup> In December 2024, the UN reported that while schools have reopened across Syria, 'volatile security situation' affected school attendance in some areas.<sup>311</sup> Access to schools was hindered by unexploded remnants of war.<sup>312</sup> Some schools have become shelters for newly displaced people after the offensive that defeated the president Bashar al-Assad on 8 December

---

<sup>300</sup> SNHR, On World Children's Day: SNHR's 13th Annual Report on Violations Against Children in Syria, 20 November 2024, [url](#), p. 15

<sup>301</sup> Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, The opposition Syrian National Army, including Ahrar al-Sham and Army of Islam, and their aligned legions and factions, Sign Action Plan to End and Prevent the Recruitment and Use and Killing and Maiming of Children, 3 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>302</sup> UNSG, Children and armed conflict Report of the Secretary-General, 3 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>303</sup> HRW, World Report 2025 - Syria, 16 January 2025, [url](#); SHRC, SDF militia increases kidnapping and recruiting children in areas under its control in NE Syria, 3 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>304</sup> Al-Mustafa, Muhsen, ACCORD and Balanche, Fabrice, Syria: Humanitarian situation; Questions related to military service, especially in the Syrian Arab Army (SAA); Documentation of the COI Webinar with Fabrice Balanche und Muhsen Al-Mustafa on 24 October 2024, 19 December 2024, [url](#), p. 22; HRW, Northeast Syria: Military Recruitment of Children Persists, 2 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>305</sup> SNHR, SNHR Condemns the Syrian Regime Over Arresting Hundreds of Individuals, Including Children, for Military Conscripting and Deploying Them to the Frontlines in Northern Syria, 5 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>306</sup> UNICEF, Paving the road to a hopeful and inclusive future in Syria, free from violence and hardship, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>307</sup> UNICEF, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Situation Report (Year End) - 01 January to 31 December 2024, 3 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>308</sup> UNDP, The Impact of the Conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, [url](#), p. 35; UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 30

<sup>309</sup> UNICEF, Peace must prevail for Syria's children, 18 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>310</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025, 28 January 2025, [url](#), p. 30

<sup>311</sup> UN News, UN support continues in Syria and Lebanon, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>312</sup> UNICEF, Peace must prevail for Syria's children, 18 December 2024, [url](#)



2024.<sup>313</sup> Approximately 68 000 children in Aleppo and other governorates were unable to attend school, as many schools were being used as collective shelters for displaced persons.<sup>314</sup>

According to International Crisis Group, 'interim officials rushed through changes to the Islamic education curriculum.'<sup>315</sup> In January 2025, sources indicated that the authorities introduced changes in the school curriculum without involving the society in the process, replacing references to the Assad regime with religious texts in some instances.<sup>316</sup>

### 1.3.7. LGBTIQ persons

For detailed information on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTIQ) persons in Syria, see section 14. LGBTIQ persons of the [EUAA COI report Syria: Targeting of individuals \(September 2022\)](#).

#### (a) Legislative framework

According to the article 520 of the 1949 Penal Code, 'Unnatural Sexual Intercourse' is a crime punishable for up to three years in prison and it is applicable to men as well as women.<sup>317</sup> At the time of drafting this report, sources indicate that it is not yet clear what the position of the new authorities on same-sex relations is.<sup>318</sup> In a meeting with journalists in December 2024, Mohamed Khaled from the HTS' political office indicated that the treatment of LGBTIQ persons is one of the topics that will be discussed by the new government.<sup>319</sup> BBC News reported that the new authorities 'have been implicated in violence and persecution against gay people'<sup>320</sup> and ILGA indicated that 'consensual same-sex sexual acts continue to be criminalized' in 2025.<sup>321</sup>

#### (b) Treatment by state authorities, family and society

Sources have documented abuses against LGBTIQ individuals during the Syrian conflict by state<sup>322</sup> and non-state actors.<sup>323</sup> Additionally, according to Freedom House, persons suspected

<sup>313</sup> France24, More than half of Syrian children out of school: Save the Children to AFP, 30 Dec 2024, [url](#)

<sup>314</sup> UNICEF, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Situation Report (Year End) - 01 January to 31 December 2024, 3 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>315</sup> International Crisis Group, Key Decisions Loom as Syria Enters a New Era, 14 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>316</sup> BBC News, New Syrian government's school curriculum changes spark concern, 2 January 2025, [url](#); DW, Syria: Nationalist education dropped, but what comes next?, 18 January 2025, [url](#); New Arab, How Syria's post-Assad curriculum reforms reveal political and educational tensions, 8 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>317</sup> GEM, We Are Here, We Are Syrian, We Are Queer, Get Used to It, 2024, [url](#), p. 14; Human Dignity Trust, Syria, last updated 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>318</sup> Human Dignity Trust, Syria, last updated 7 January 2025, [url](#); Metro, 'I was tortured in Syria for being gay — now I'm terrified what the future will bring', updated 10 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>319</sup> Modern Diplomacy, Syria's new government priorities: address LGBT, alcohol and women's dress code, 24 December 2024, [url](#); TO BHMA International Edition, Syria's Rebel Leaders Have Control of the Country. Now What?, 24 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>320</sup> BBC News, 'I was raped by Assad's thugs - but I'm no longer afraid to show my face', 23 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>321</sup> ILGA, Syria, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>322</sup> BBC News, 'I was raped by Assad's thugs - but I'm no longer afraid to show my face', 23 December 2024, [url](#); GEM (Guardians of Equality Movement), We Are Here, We Are Syrian, We Are Queer, Get Used to It, 2024, [url](#), pp. 17-20

<sup>323</sup> GEM, We Are Here, We Are Syrian, We Are Queer, Get Used to It, 2024, [url](#), pp. 17-20





of same-sex relations ‘are at risk of execution in areas held by extremist groups.’<sup>324</sup> Sources indicate that homophobia is prevalent in Syrian society,<sup>325</sup> including from family members, religious groups, and society at large.<sup>326</sup>

In 2024, a Syrian transgender woman was deported from Türkiye to north-western Syria and killed by Turkish-backed armed groups in collaboration with her family.<sup>327</sup> In February 2025, sources reported on attacks targeting transgender individuals in Syria.<sup>328</sup> Videos circulating online were reportedly showing a campaign by the Syrian authorities targeting transgender individuals for arrests.<sup>329</sup> According to ‘an anonymous security source in the Damascus government’ interviewed by the Jerusalem Post, the goal of the operation was to ‘send a message to these people that they should not appear freely in the area and stop their activities in front of the people.’<sup>330</sup> According to an article by the Guardians of Equality Movement (GEM), the first Syrian LGBTIQ organisation,<sup>331</sup> since December 2025, armed groups linked to the new authorities as well as non-state actors were implicated in serious violations against LGBTIQ individuals including ‘entrapment through dating apps, home raids, abductions, arbitrary arrests, torture, humiliation, threats of physical violence and disfigurement, as well as other dangerous practices such as forced filming and public shaming.’<sup>332</sup> GEM also indicated that ‘society has become a major source of violence against LGBTQIA+ individuals’, while the authorities have not shown support for them.<sup>333</sup>

---

<sup>324</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2024 - Syria, 2024, [url](#)

<sup>325</sup> GEM, We Are Here, We Are Syrian, We Are Queer, Get Used to It, 2024, [url](#), p. 21; Metro, ‘I was tortured in Syria for being gay — now I’m terrified what the future will bring’, updated 10 January 2025, [url](#); MSN, As Syria Faces New Divides, LGBTQ+ Hate Remains The Most Reliable Consensus, 22 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>326</sup> GEM, We Are Here, We Are Syrian, We Are Queer, Get Used to It, 2024, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>327</sup> GEM, HIV: discrimination prevents LGBTQ Syrians from accessing treatment, 1 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>328</sup> ILGA, Syria, n.d., [url](#); Jerusalem Post (The), Syrian security forces beat, insult transgender woman after series of anti-LGBT arrests, 7 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>329</sup> MSN, As Syria Faces New Divides, LGBTQ+ Hate Remains The Most Reliable Consensus, 22 February 2025, [url](#); MSN, Syria: Syrian Authorities Launch Arrest Campaign Targeting Transgender Individuals, 6 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>330</sup> Jerusalem Post (The), Syrian security forces beat, insult transgender woman after series of anti-LGBT arrests, 7 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>331</sup> GEM, Who We Are?, n.d., [url](#); Now Lebanon, The West and the Syrians: prioritizing policy and asylum freezes over humanitarian and civil society efforts, 26 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>332</sup> GEM, Urgent Statement on The Campaign of Violations of Torture and Arrest, Against Sexual and Gender Minorities in Syria, 11 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>333</sup> GEM, Statement on the Fall of the Assad Regime and The Syrian LGBTQIA+ Post-Assad Regime, 6 January 2025, [url](#)





## 2. Armed actors

### 2.1.1. Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and allied groups

HTS was the largest component of the operation 'Deterrence of Aggression'<sup>334</sup> with an estimated 30 000 fighters.<sup>335</sup> A Syrian economist gave a lower figure of 10 000 for the number of HTS fighters.<sup>336</sup> HTS was reportedly divided into six brigades, special forces and an elite force known as the 'Red Bands'.<sup>337</sup> The International Crisis Group assessed HTS forces to be stretched thin following their offensive to overthrow the government, being in urgent need of more personnel and resources.<sup>338</sup> A notable allied faction joining the offensive was the Türkiye-backed National Liberation Front (NLF), a component of the SNA.<sup>339</sup> For more information on the SNA, see section [2.1.2](#). Jaish Al-Izza, an opposition group present in northern Hama and parts of Latakia, with 2 000 to 5 000 fighters according to 2019 estimates, also reportedly joined the push into government territory.<sup>340</sup> The pan-Arab daily Al-Quds Al-Arabi estimated the overall size of HTS and its allied factions to be about 43 000, with more than half of those troops maintaining their presence in their original areas of operation after pushing the government troops out, especially in northern Hama countryside, southern Idlib countryside, and western and southern Aleppo countryside.<sup>341</sup>

HTS and its allied factions, who had previously coordinated in Idlib under the Fateh Al-Mubin Operations room, formed the Military Operations Administration (MOA)<sup>342</sup> in light of operation Deterrence of Aggression.<sup>343</sup> It is made up of high-ranking members of the SSG that previously operated in Idlib.<sup>344</sup> Following the overthrow of Bashar Al-Assad, troops comprising the MOA became the primary military force on the ground.<sup>345</sup> On 24 December 2024, the MOA announced the dissolution of all military factions and their integration under the Ministry of Defence.<sup>346</sup> HTS itself announced that it would lead by example, dissolve as an armed group and integrate into the armed forces.<sup>347</sup> Among the first steps of establishing a new army was to

<sup>334</sup> Al Jazeera, Who are Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and the Syrian groups that took Aleppo?, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>335</sup> Al Jazeera, Who are Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and the Syrian groups that took Aleppo?, 2 December 2024, [url](#);

International Crisis Group, Promoting a Stable, Peaceful Transition in Syria, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>336</sup> Al-Estiklal, SDF's Dilemma: Autonomy or Integration in a New Syria?, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>337</sup> Al-Quds Al-Arabi, سبعة جيوش وجماعة: تحديات الشرح في بناء الجيش السوري [Seven armies and a group: the challenges for Al-Shara in building a Syrian army], 11 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>338</sup> International Crisis Group, Promoting a Stable, Peaceful Transition in Syria, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>339</sup> MEE, The Syrian National Army: Rebels, thugs or Turkish proxies?, 7 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>340</sup> Al Jazeera, Who are Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and the Syrian groups that took Aleppo?, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>341</sup> Al-Quds Al-Arabi, سبعة جيوش وجماعة: تحديات الشرح في بناء الجيش السوري [Seven armies and a group: the challenges for Al-Shara in building a Syrian army], 11 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>342</sup> Some sources also refer to this entity as the Department of Military Operations (DMO), see Waters, G., Security in Alawite regions in post-Assad Syria, MEI, 21 January 2025, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly: Jan 14-21, 2025, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>343</sup> Al Jazeera, إدارة العمليات العسكرية.. قادت عملية ردع العدوان التي أسقطت بشار الأسد [The Military Operations Administration – leaders of the Deterrence of Aggression that overthrew Bashar Al-Asad], 31 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>344</sup> Enab Baladi, Damascus – SDF negotiations await the "deal", 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>345</sup> Enab Baladi, Factionalism threatens unification of Syrian army, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>346</sup> Enab Baladi, Military Operations Administration announces dissolving of opposition factions in Syria, 24 December 2024, [url](#); Shafaq News, Syrian factions to integrate into Ministry of Defense under new deal, 24 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>347</sup> AFP, Syria ex-rebel military chief says to dissolve armed wing, 18 December 2024, [url](#)



promote some leaders of the individual factions as well as some defected officers into certain military ranks.<sup>348</sup> Among those promoted were purportedly several foreign Islamist fighters of Albanian, Tajik and Uyghur origin.<sup>349</sup> Following the ouster of Bashar Al-Assad, most soldiers as well as policemen either fled or were suspended.<sup>350</sup> HTS has relied on its General Security units formerly active under its administration in Idlib as well as units under the MOA to support and supplement local police forces.<sup>351</sup> Furthermore, recruitment centres were opened in provinces formerly under Assad's control to rebuild the police force.<sup>352</sup>

As of January 2025, the HTS-led coalition was in control of most areas previously held by the Assad government until early December 2024,<sup>353</sup> amounting to just over 60% of Syrian territory.<sup>354</sup> During its December offensive, the HTS further took control of the city of Deir Ez-Zor previously held by the SDF.<sup>355</sup> At the end of January 2025, the MOA seized a strategically important area near Zamla oil field south of Raqqa in the Syrian desert, a deployment that was assessed to aim at containing ISIL activity while also putting pressure on SDF troops stationed on the southwestern bank of Lake Assad.<sup>356</sup> In the country's south, the MOA as of mid-January was still in talks with the former Fifth Corps and specifically its Eighth Brigade regarding their dissolution (see section [2.1.3](#)), but managed to deploy its own troops in Jadal, Mseika, Mismiyeh and Lajat.<sup>357</sup> In Afrin city in northern Aleppo governorate, troops from the Syrian Transitional Administration at the beginning of February 2025 arrived to take over control from the SNA.<sup>358</sup>

Since the fall of Assad, HTS has relied on its own units and close allies to secure governorates predominantly populated by minorities. Thus, unlike in other areas such as Homs, the SNA has been largely absent from coastal areas with Alawite populations<sup>359</sup> where support for Assad has reportedly been strong.<sup>360</sup> Etana noted that Idlib's security landscape in particular had considerably changed following Assad's fall, with much of the military presence relocated to key strategic areas in Aleppo, Homs, Damascus, Latakia and Tartous.<sup>361</sup>

During operation 'Deterrence of Aggression', HTS reportedly took over weapon depots and armoured vehicles from the Syrian Arab Army.<sup>362</sup> Following Al-Assad's ouster, hundreds of Israeli airstrikes reportedly resulted in the destruction of the country's military stocks and defence

---

<sup>348</sup> Enab Baladi, Factionalism threatens unification of Syrian army, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>349</sup> RFE/RL, Foreign Fighters Promoted In Syria's New Army Have Their Governments Concerned, 8 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>350</sup> France24, Syria's new HTS-led regime reinforces police force with the help of its fighters, 19 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>351</sup> Waters, G., Security in Alawite regions in post-Assad Syria, MEI, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>352</sup> Rudaw, Syria's new government recruits more policemen amid security challenges, 25 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>353</sup> Carter Center (The), Exploring Historical Control in Syria [Map], n.d., [url](#). Set filters to January 2025

<sup>354</sup> Sharifa, A., Will Syria's myriad militias unite under one national army?, Al Majalla, 4 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>355</sup> DW, Fighting in Syrian Kurdish-held areas: What you need to know, 13 December 2024, [url](#); Rudaw, Syrian rebels claim control of oil-rich Deir ez-Zor from SDF, 11 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>356</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 23, 2025, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>357</sup> Etana, Syria Update #14: 17 January, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>358</sup> Kurdistan 24, Uncertain Future in Rojava: Syrian Public Security Forces Assume Control of Afrin, 6 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>359</sup> Waters, G., Security in Alawite regions in post-Assad Syria, MEI, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>360</sup> Al Jazeera, مقتل قيادي عسكري باشباكات مع "فلول النظام" بالانذقية [Military leader killed in clashes with "regime remnants" in Latakia], 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>361</sup> Etana, Syria Update #14: 17 January, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>362</sup> Al Jazeera, Dozens killed as armed groups attack Syrian military in northern Aleppo, 28 November 2024, [url](#)



infrastructure, as well as most of its missile systems and tanks.<sup>363</sup> The newly appointed interim Defence Minister Murhaf Abu Qasra in an interview recounted how HTS had established its own military industry in Idlib, building drones for reconnaissance, drones armed with explosives and suicide drones as well as manufacturing armoured vehicles. They further developed their own artillery systems.<sup>364</sup>

During its offensive, HTS reportedly made efforts to avoid harming the civilian population.<sup>365</sup> Furthermore, some areas that were previously held by the SDF were taken over based on agreements.<sup>366</sup> Even so, six students were killed by rockets fired by the rebels which landed on a student dormitory in Aleppo city.<sup>367</sup> Following its takeover of power, there were several reports of abuse being committed by HTS forces during security operations in Alawite areas, such as individuals killed in raids<sup>368</sup> and detainees being held incommunicado.<sup>369</sup> Especially foreign fighter groups under the MOA as well as the HTS elite forces 'Red Bands' were accused of committing violations during raids such as harassment and intimidation and in a few instances killings.<sup>370</sup>

### 2.1.2. Syrian National Army (SNA)

For information on the structure, factions and command of the Turkish-backed SNA, see section 1.4.2 of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

Statements regarding the troop size of the SNA vary, with Middle East Eye (MEE) estimating a range between 30 000 and 80 000,<sup>371</sup> while the Turkish Foreign Minister puts them at over 80 000.<sup>372</sup> According to MEE, the SNA played a 'decisive role' in the HTS-led rebel offensive, for example when fighters from the SNA faction Levant Front (Jabhat Al-Shamiya) advanced 200 km south from their areas of control in A'zaz in northern Aleppo countryside.<sup>373</sup>

The National Liberation Front (NLF), the result of a 2018 merger of 11 rebel groups,<sup>374</sup> in turn merged with the SNA in 2019 and consists of various armed groups, such as Faylaq al-Sham, Ahrar al-Sham, the Free Idlib Army and Harakat Nour Al-Din Al-Zenki, mostly fighting under the Free Syrian Army label.<sup>375</sup> The NLF altogether was estimated to comprise about 25 000

<sup>363</sup> Etana, Syria Update #10: 12 December, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>364</sup> Al Majalla, Syria defence chief Murhaf Abu Qasra on the plan to oust Assad, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>365</sup> Le Monde, Syria: Turkey wants to extend its buffer zone by pushing back Kurdish forces, 12 December 2024, [url](#);

VOA, Rights groups cautious about Islamist rebels' pledges to protect Syrian minorities, 6 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>366</sup> Enab Baladi, Thousands return to Afrin after Assad regime's fall, 28 January 2025, [url](#); Le Monde, Syria: Turkey

wants to extend its buffer zone by pushing back Kurdish forces, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>367</sup> SOHR, Dramatic escalation | Six students killed and wounded in rocket fire by rebels on university student dormitory in Aleppo city, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>368</sup> National (The), HTS forces kill two people in former regime loyalist areas of Syria, 5 January 2025, [url](#), SOHR, Security vacuum | Alawite sheikh and his wife killed in Al-Salamiyah countryside and goldsmith killed in Deir Ezzor countryside, 9 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>369</sup> MEE, HTS raids and forced disappearances fuel fear in Syria's Alawi heartlands, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>370</sup> Waters, G., Security in Alawite regions in post-Assad Syria, MEI, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>371</sup> MEE, The Syrian National Army: Rebels, thugs or Turkish proxies?, 7 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>372</sup> Asharq News, وزير الخارجية التركي لـ"الشرق": تصرفات إسرائيل في سوريا خطيرة وغير مقبولة [Turkish foreign minister to Asharq: The actions of Israel in Syria are dangerous and unacceptable], 27 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>373</sup> MEE, The Syrian National Army: Rebels, thugs or Turkish proxies?, 7 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>374</sup> Sharifa, A., Will Syria's myriad militias unite under one national army?, Al Majalla, 4 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>375</sup> MEE, The Syrian National Army: Rebels, thugs or Turkish proxies?, 7 December 2024, [url](#)





fighters.<sup>376</sup> Of those, Ahrar Al-Sham, a group that as of 2015 estimates had about 15 000 fighters, was mostly active in Aleppo and Idlib governorates.<sup>377</sup> As of mid-January 2025, the NLF was largely in charge of securing control in Idlib.<sup>378</sup>

On 30 November 2024, shortly after HTS and allied SNA factions had made significant territorial gains in Aleppo countryside and eastern Idlib, the SNA announced the launch of operation 'Dawn of Freedom', capturing areas around Al-Bab east of Aleppo city.<sup>379</sup> The stated aim of the operation was to liberate the area from Assad troops and Iranian militias.<sup>380</sup> The MOA reportedly sent reinforcements to support the SNA in their operations against the SDF in eastern Aleppo.<sup>381</sup>

Meanwhile, tensions between the SNA and the MOA were reported following a demand made by the latter for the SNA factions to disband and surrender their arms, with some factions rejecting and others voicing acceptance of the order.<sup>382</sup> Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan at the end of January 2025 called on the SNA to integrate into the forces of the new Transitional Administration.<sup>383</sup> On 29 January 2025, the Transitional Administration announced the dissolution of former rebel groups, among which the SNA.<sup>384</sup> However, several sources indicated that this dissolution had not yet been fully implemented<sup>385</sup> as some SNA groups appeared to have been integrated in name only,<sup>386</sup> continuing to fight the SDF along the Euphrates river<sup>387</sup> and operating as SNA in northwest Syria where they were only gradually handing over tasks to the MOA.<sup>388</sup> Some SNA faction leaders reportedly showed reluctance to integrate into the Ministry of Defence, fearing they might be held accountable for past human rights abuses or losing their political clout.<sup>389</sup>

The advances by the SNA in the north of the country reportedly caused fear among the Kurdish population,<sup>390</sup> with an estimated 120 000 people fleeing from areas in northern Aleppo captured by the SNA at the start of December.<sup>391</sup> The SNA reportedly employed

<sup>376</sup> Sharifa, A., Will Syria's myriad militias unite under one national army?, Al Majalla, 4 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>377</sup> Al Jazeera, Who are Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and the Syrian groups that took Aleppo?, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>378</sup> Etana, Syria Update #14: 17 January, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>379</sup> NPA, SNA announces launch of "Dawn of Freedom" offensive in Aleppo, 30 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>380</sup> L24, SNA Launches 'Dawn of Freedom' Operation, 30 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>381</sup> Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>382</sup> NPA, Tensions rise in Syria's Manbij amid calls to disband armed factions, 28 January 2025, [url](#), Le Monde,

Syria's new government negotiates the disbanding of armed groups, 26 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>383</sup> Arabi21, الجيش الوطني السوري "للانضمام إلى الإدارة الجديدة بدمشق" [Türkiye directs SNA factions to join new administration in Damascus], 28 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>384</sup> Aldoughli, R., Syria's New Rulers Are Working To Unify Military Power, New Lines Magazine, 25 February 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 6, 2025, 6 February 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>385</sup> Aldoughli, R., Syria's New Rulers Are Working To Unify Military Power, New Lines Magazine, 25 February 2025, [url](#); National (The), Steep uphill battle: The many challenges in building Syria's new army, 21 February 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 6, 2025, 6 February 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>386</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 27, 2025, 27 February 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 6, 2025, 6 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>387</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 6, 2025, 6 February 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>388</sup> National (The), Steep uphill battle: The many challenges in building Syria's new army, 21 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>389</sup> Aldoughli, R., Syria's New Rulers Are Working To Unify Military Power, New Lines Magazine, 25 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>390</sup> MEE, The Syrian National Army: Rebels, thugs or Turkish proxies?, 7 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>391</sup> Syria Direct, Afrin's displaced torn between another exile and danger in northern Aleppo, 4 December 2024, [url](#)





indiscriminate shelling of civilian areas.<sup>392</sup> Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported on an SNA drone strike that hit a Kurdish Red Crescent ambulance transporting a wounded civilian near Tishreen Dam on 18 January. The organisation further mentioned attacks carried out by the SNA with support from Türkiye on protesters gathering near the dam, leading to deaths and injuries according to the SDF.<sup>393</sup>

### 2.1.3. Other armed groups

#### (a) Dar'a factions

After the launch of operation 'Deterrence of Aggression' in northern Syria at the end of November 2024, armed opposition factions in Dar'a, Quneitra and Sweida formed the Southern Operations Room, which expelled the former government from these areas and marched on the capital.<sup>394</sup> The Eighth Brigade under Ahmad Al-Awda, which had previously been part of the Russia-sponsored Fifth Corps of the SAA,<sup>395</sup> notably joined the HTS-led offensive and marched on Damascus from the south, reaching the capital even before HTS fighters from the north.<sup>396</sup> Following several meetings between factions from Dar'a and the MOA, in mid-December a convoy belonging to the latter arrived in Dar'a and reportedly took over police forces, customs and the Nassib border crossing with Jordan.<sup>397</sup> Local armed factions were still acting as the de facto security forces in many areas in the south, and AP journalists visiting the western countryside of Dar'a in January 2025 reported not to have seen any visible presence of HTS forces there.<sup>398</sup>

At the beginning of January 2025, a spokesperson for the Southern Operations Room stated that the armed factions commanded by Al-Awda would hold on to their weapons despite the decision of the Transitional Administration to dissolve all factions, while being open to being integrated as a military body under the Ministry of Defence.<sup>399</sup> While Al-Awda has not publicly challenged Al-Sharaa, he has maintained a distance from the Islamist rebel groups in the past and according to some reports wants to maintain autonomy in the south.<sup>400</sup> The former Eighth Brigade is estimated to comprise about 800 fighters deployed in Busra Al-Sham, Al-Hirak, Khirbet Ghazaleh and in areas bordering Sweida governorate.<sup>401</sup> Further smaller, well organised and heavily armed factions were active in western Dar'a and as of the beginning of February 2025 in negotiations with the Syrian Transitional Administration.<sup>402</sup> In mid-February 2025, talks were being held between the Transitional Administration and the southern factions to form a 'Southern Division', also incorporating Al-Awda's groups.<sup>403</sup> This division

<sup>392</sup> RIC, Explainer: Turkish and SNA offensive on Manbij, 7 December 2024, [url](#); SNHR, Four civilians injured in a ground SNA attack in N. Aleppo, November 24, 2024, 26 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>393</sup> HRW, Northeast Syria: Apparent War Crime by Türkiye-Backed Forces, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>394</sup> Enab Baladi, Factionalism threatens unification of Syrian army, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>395</sup> Enab Baladi, Factionalism threatens unification of Syrian army, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>396</sup> RFE/RL, Who Is Ahmed Al-Awda, The Man Who Could Be A Threat To Syria's New Rulers?, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>397</sup> Enab Baladi, Factionalism threatens unification of Syrian army, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>398</sup> AP, Syria's southern rebels loom large as the country's new rulers try to form a national army, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>399</sup> AFP, South Syria fighters reluctant to give up weapons: spokesman, 8 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>400</sup> RFE/RL, Who Is Ahmed Al-Awda, The Man Who Could Be A Threat To Syria's New Rulers?, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>401</sup> Sharifa, A., Will Syria's myriad militias unite under one national army?, Al Majalla, 4 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>402</sup> Sharifa, A., Will Syria's myriad militias unite under one national army?, Al Majalla, 4 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>403</sup> Etana, Syria Update #18: 15 February 2025, 14 February 2025, [url](#)





within the new army, comprising opposition groups from Dar'a and Quneitra, was established on 17 February.<sup>404</sup> Etana assessed the subsequent agreement to establish the Southern Division to be a temporary fix to alleviate tensions between the two negotiating parties.<sup>405</sup> As of 21 February 2025, the Southern Division was still in talks with local commanders, including of the Eighth Brigade, about the makeup of the Southern Division and its tasks, while sources within the Eighth Brigade signalled steps being taken to facilitate a merger with the armed forces.<sup>406</sup>

### (b) Syrian Free Army

The small US-supported rebel faction at Al-Tanf near the Iraqi border remained deployed there, reportedly waiting for developments on the US political scene before deciding on a merger with the MOA.<sup>407</sup> At the end of January 2025, the group's commander reportedly attended a meeting with Al-Sharaa to discuss merging into the security forces.<sup>408</sup> According to Aaron Zelin, expert on Syrian armed groups, the group had joined the Defence Ministry by mid-February 2025.<sup>409</sup> With the fall of the Assad government, the faction expanded its areas of operation, reaching 40 kilometres west and northwest to Palmyra,<sup>410</sup> filling the security vacuum left by the retreating Assad army.<sup>411</sup>

### (c) Sweida factions

The Men of Dignity (Rijal Al-Karama) and the Mountain Brigade (Liwa Al-Jabal) are among the most prominent armed factions in Sweida.<sup>412</sup> The latter group, led by local strongman Chekib Azzam,<sup>413</sup> reportedly comprised about 7 000 fighters.<sup>414</sup> As the military operation against the former Syrian government was ongoing in the north, local factions in Sweida, including Men of Dignity, Mountain Brigade and Sheikh Al-Karama, decided to form a joint operations room to push out the former government forces, which was achieved on 8 December 2024.<sup>415</sup> Initially, these Druze factions showed reluctance to surrender their arms to the country's new leadership,<sup>416</sup> arguing that they were needed to secure the community's safety before a

<sup>404</sup> Etana, EXPLAINER: Political & Military Dynamics in Suwayda Province, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>405</sup> Etana, Syria Update #19: 22 February 2025, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>406</sup> Syria Direct, Why the delay in merging Daraa's factions into a new Syrian army?, 21 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>407</sup> Al-Quds Al-Arabi, سبعة جيوش وجماعة: تحديات الشرع في بناء الجيش السوري [Seven armies and a group: the challenges for Al-Shara in building a Syrian army], 11 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>408</sup> FDD's Long War Journal, US-backed Syrian Free Army continues to patrol Tanf area in southern Syria, 10 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>409</sup> Zelin, A.Y, The Status of Syria's Transition After Two Months, TWI, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>410</sup> USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve And Other U.S. Government Activities Related to Iraq & Syria: Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024, 19 February 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>411</sup> FDD's Long War Journal, US-backed Syrian Free Army continues to patrol Tanf area in southern Syria, 10 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>412</sup> Enab Baladi, Factionalism threatens unification of Syrian army, 17 January 2025, [url](#); Al-Quds Al-Arabi, سبعة جيوش السوري [Seven armies and a group: the challenges for Al-Shara in building a Syrian army], 11 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>413</sup> Asharq News, دروز السويداء ينتظرون تشكيل جيش سوري موحد قبل تسليم أسلحتهم [Druze of Sweida wait for the establishment of a unified Syrian army before surrendering their weapons], 12 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>414</sup> Rudaw, Syria's Druze refuse to lay down arms amid uncertain future, 4 January 2025, [url](#); France24, Syrian Druze brigade reluctant to give up their arms in uncertain times, 24 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>415</sup> Syria Direct, Suwayda's movement endures post-Assad, 31 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>416</sup> Rudaw, Syria's Druze refuse to lay down arms amid uncertain future, 4 January 2025, [url](#); France24, Syrian Druze brigade reluctant to give up their arms in uncertain times, 24 December 2024, [url](#)





permanent government has been formed.<sup>417</sup> On New Year's Eve, Druze factions in Sweida city reportedly even blocked the advance of HTS forces into the town.<sup>418</sup> In January 2025, the Men of Dignity and the Mountain Brigade announced that they were ready to join a new Syrian army, provided that it would not be based on sectarian principles.<sup>419</sup> Druze spiritual authority Sheikh Al-Hijri<sup>420</sup> even linked the surrender of arms to the drafting of a new constitution,<sup>421</sup> assurances of political representation and protection from external threats such as ISIL.<sup>422</sup> All but one of Sweida's armed factions invited to attend Al-Sharaa's 'victory conference' in Damascus at the end of January 2025 chose not to attend.<sup>423</sup> On 24 February 2025, a new military formation announced its inception, calling itself Sweida Military Council.<sup>424</sup> According to the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), it comprised fighters previously aligned with the Assad government, but Sheikh Al-Hijri rejected this formation as 'separatists' who do not represent the Druze community.<sup>425</sup> Questions were raised about the plans of this group, as its interest seemingly coincides with Israel's interest to demilitarise southern Syria under the guise of protecting the Druze community there.<sup>426</sup>

#### (d) Assad-aligned militias

Since the takeover by the transitional administration, remnant pro-Assad groups have conducted small-scale, targeted hit-and-run attacks against its forces across Syria.<sup>427</sup> At the beginning of February 2025, a former commander of the Republican Guard announced the formation of a group named the Coastal Shield Brigade in the mountains of Latakia, threatening attacks on forces of the Transitional Administration in retaliation for alleged attacks on members of the Alawite community.<sup>428</sup> A video published on 23 February signalled the inception of another new armed group loyal to the former government, calling itself the Special Units Company and aligning itself with the Coastal Shield Brigade.<sup>429</sup> In early March, a new armed group called Military Council for the Liberation of Syria and led by former military officers of the Assad regime claimed responsibility for large scale attacks against General

<sup>417</sup> Cradle (The), Violent clashes continue in north Syria as Damascus seeks to disarm US-backed Kurds, 20 January 2025, [url](#); Syria TV, عشائر عربية في السويداء تعلن دعمها الإدارية الجديدة واستعدادها لتسليم أسلحتها [Arab tribes in Sweida announce their support for the new administration and their readiness to surrender their arms], 26 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>418</sup> AP, Syria's southern rebels loom large as the country's new rulers try to form a national army, 23 January 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Syria's Druze refuse to lay down arms amid uncertain future, 4 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>419</sup> New Arab (The), Hope and uncertainty for the Druze community in Syria, 14 January 2025, [url](#); Asharq News, دروز السويداء ينتظرون تشكيل جيش سوري موحد قبل تسليم أسلحتهم [Druze of Sweida wait for the establishment of a unified Syrian army before surrendering their weapons], 12 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>420</sup> Welat TV, Military Operations Room Official in Suwayda to "Welat TV": Disarming Hinges on Achieving Our Legitimate Demands, 8 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>421</sup> Al-Quds Al-Arabi, سبعة جيوش وجماعة: تحديات الشرح في بناء الجيش السوري [Seven armies and a group: the challenges for Al-Shara in building a Syrian army], 11 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>422</sup> Aldoughli, R., Syria's New Rulers Are Working To Unify Military Power, New Lines Magazine, 25 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>423</sup> Etana, EXPLAINER: Political & Military Dynamics in Suwayda Province, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>424</sup> New Arab (The), Suweida Military Council - what does it want and who is behind it?, 28 February 2025, [url](#); Cradle (The), Syrian Druze form military council 'distinct' from HTS-led Syrian army, 24 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>425</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 26, 2025, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>426</sup> New Arab (The), Suweida Military Council - what does it want and who is behind it?, 28 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>427</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #21, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>428</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 6, 2025, 6 February 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Transitional justice in Syria: Steps to diffuse tension, 19 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>429</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: Feb 18-25, 2025, 25 February 2025, [url](#)



Security forces in Latakia governorate.<sup>430</sup> It further announced as its objective the ‘full liberation of Syrian territory from all occupying and terrorist forces’.<sup>431</sup>

These insurgent groups have been linked to the clashes with the government’s security forces which took place in early March, particularly in the coastal areas (see section 4.1.2). However, ISW assessed that it is unlikely that a single, cohesive insurgent organisation has emerged to coordinate and execute the majority of targeted attacks against government forces.<sup>432</sup>

#### 2.1.4. Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)

The SDF according to its commander Mazloum Abdi comprise about 100 000 members.<sup>433</sup> They are a military alliance in which the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) has an prominent component. Alongside the YPG there are regional military councils such as the Deir Ez-Zor Military Council, Manbij Council, and Raqqa Council, whose primary task is to protect their own areas.<sup>434</sup> For more information on the structure of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), see section 1.4.3 of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

As HTS-led factions captured Aleppo in late November 2024, the SNA launched a simultaneous operation in Aleppo province, leading to clashes with the SDF west of the Euphrates River.<sup>435</sup> Meanwhile, the SDF took the withdrawal of Syrian government forces and their pro-Iran allies as an opportunity to expand its territories in Deir Ez-Zor.<sup>436</sup> Facing military pressure from Turkish-backed forces and forces allied with the new authorities in Damascus, the SDF withdrew from several towns on the Euphrates in Raqqa and Deir Ez-Zor governorates. According to an SDF spokesperson, the aim was to preserve Kurdish areas further east and prevent an SNA breakthrough at the Tishreen Dam.<sup>437</sup> This resulted in the loss of control of several cities to the SNA, such as Manbij and Tall Rifaat.<sup>438</sup> Apart from direct clashes, the SDF also launched drone attacks on SNA positions,<sup>439</sup> described as a newly emerging capability.<sup>440</sup>

During the reference period, the SDF were faced with defections from Arab SDF members.<sup>441</sup> A conscript from a base in the Al-Shaddadi area cited by Syria TV reported that the SDF had halted the discharge of military service recruits as about 80 recruits had fled the base, while a

<sup>430</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #21, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>431</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #21, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>432</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>433</sup> Enab Baladi, Damascus – SDF negotiations await the “deal”, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>434</sup> Enab Baladi, What is SDF’s military structure and why does it insist on a “one block” demand?, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>435</sup> Iddon, P., Why fighting is raging in north Syria between the Turkish-backed SNA and Kurdish-led SDF, The New Arab, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>436</sup> Rudaw, Syrian rebels claim control of oil-rich Deir ez-Zor from SDF, 11 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>437</sup> National (The), US-backed SDF ‘withdraws from parts of eastern Syria’, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>438</sup> Enab Baladi, Battles of Tishrin Dam: A pressure tool in negotiations with SDF, 20 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>439</sup> Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#); Iddon, P., Kurdish Drones Are Fending Off Turkish-Backed Militia Attacks In Syria, Forbes, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>440</sup> Iddon, P., Kurdish Drones Are Fending Off Turkish-Backed Militia Attacks In Syria, Forbes, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>441</sup> Al-Ahmed, S., Will Damascus-SDF negotiations lead to agreement or escalation?, MEI, 24 January 2025, [url](#); Syria TV, [قصد توقف تسريح مجنديها بسبب استمرار حالات الفرار والانشقاق](#) [SDF halt discharge of recruits due to continued cases of flight and defection], 16 January 2025, [url](#); Syria Direct, Protests and SDF defections: Discontent simmers in eastern Deir e-Zor, 13 December 2024, [url](#)



source close to the SDF stated that the desertion rate of military service conscripts following the ouster of Bashar Al-Assad had reached more than 90% in some areas of southern Hasaka governorate and rural Deir Ez-Zor.<sup>442</sup> Furthermore, several commanders from the Deir Ez-Zor Military Council defected and crossed the Euphrates to flee to areas under the control of the MOA.<sup>443</sup> Several sources reported of clashes between tribal militias and SDF in Deir Ez-Zor governorate,<sup>444</sup> with tribal fighters driving the SDF out of several locations along the Euphrates river in eastern Deir Ez-Zor.<sup>445</sup>

Mazloum Abdi in January 2025 stated that one of their main demands was a decentralised administration, allowing the SDF to integrate into the Defence Ministry as a unified military bloc. However, interim defence minister Murhaf Abu Qasra rejected this proposal.<sup>446</sup> As of the end of January 2025, the negotiations between the SDF and the Transitional Administration seemed to be stalled,<sup>447</sup> one reason being the uncertain stance of the new US administration.<sup>448</sup> The one day National Dialogue conference organised by the Transitional Administration on 25 February,<sup>449</sup> while assembling 600 people from across Syria did not extend invitations to SDF figures.<sup>450</sup> Moreover, Türkiye reportedly disrupted negotiations between the Ministry of Defence and the SDF, insisting on a complete dismantling of the SDF and rejecting attempts at compromise, such as a proposed relocation of PKK-affiliated fighters to Iraq or Iran.<sup>451</sup> In March 2025, however, SDF leaders signed a deal with the government to integrate their armed forces and civilian institutions into the new Syrian government. The agreement mandates a complete cessation of hostilities and requires the SDF to cede control of border posts, the airport, and key oil and gas fields. It also acknowledges the Kurdish minority as an integral part of Syria and ensures their political representation and participation.<sup>452</sup> The agreement emerged amid increasing uncertainty over the U.S. role in the region<sup>453</sup> and diplomatic efforts by several Western countries advocating for the SDF's integration into the new Syrian state<sup>454</sup>, with experts suggesting the SDF likely recognized its

<sup>442</sup> Syria TV, [\[SDF halt discharge of recruits due to continued cases of flight and defection\]](#), 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>443</sup> Syria Direct, [Protests and SDF defections: Discontent simmers in eastern Deir e-Zor](#), 13 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>444</sup> Etana, [Syria Update #16: 3 February](#), 1 February 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, [دِير الزور.. ضحايا باشتباكات بين قوات العشائر](#) [Deir Ez-Zor: casualties resulting from clashes between tribal forces and SDF], 21 January 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), [مقاتلو العشائر يسيطرون على مواقع لقوات "قسد" شرق دير الزور](#) [Tribal fighters take control of SDF positions in eastern Deir Ez-Zor], 20 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>445</sup> New Arab (The), [مقاتلو العشائر يسيطرون على مواقع لقوات "قسد" شرق دير الزور](#) [Tribal fighters take control of SDF positions in eastern Deir Ez-Zor], 20 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>446</sup> Reuters, [Syrian defence minister rejects Kurdish proposal for its own military bloc](#), 19 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>447</sup> Enab Baladi, [Damascus – SDF negotiations await the “deal”](#), 30 January 2025, [url](#); Al-Ahmed, S., [Will Damascus-SDF negotiations lead to agreement or escalation?](#), MEI, 24 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>448</sup> Al-Ahmed, S., [Will Damascus-SDF negotiations lead to agreement or escalation?](#), MEI, 24 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>449</sup> Al Jazeera, [Key takeaways from Syria's National Dialogue conference](#), 26 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>450</sup> AP, [Syria's national dialogue conference held as the battered country seeks to rebuild](#), 25 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>451</sup> Aldoughli, R., [Syria's New Rulers Are Working To Unify Military Power](#), New Lines Magazine, 25 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>452</sup> BBC News, [Kurdish-led SDF agrees to integrate with Syrian government forces](#), 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>453</sup> New York Times (The), [Syrian Government Signs Breakthrough Deal With Kurdish-Led Forces](#), 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>454</sup> MEE, [Landmark SDF deal hailed as positive step for Syria and Kurds](#), 11 March 2025, [url](#)





weakening negotiating position.<sup>455</sup> The practical implementation of this agreement could not be monitored within the scope of this report.

### 2.1.5. ISIL

As the former government was overthrown in early December 2024, ISIL reportedly utilised the power vacuum to attack former government forces<sup>456</sup>, expanding its presence in Homs and Hama governorates into areas of the Syrian desert vacated by Assad's forces.<sup>457</sup> The UN Secretary-General reported that the Syrian desert region was still a 'centre for external operational planning' for ISIL and remained crucial for its operations.<sup>458</sup> According to a Kurdish officer, ISIL managed to seize large amounts of weapons left by former government troops.<sup>459</sup> Meanwhile, the US expanded its airstrikes on ISIL camps and operatives, likely weakening the group.<sup>460</sup> The US Defense Intelligence Agency reported for the time period October to December 2024, that ISIL 'had shown no significant improvement in operational capabilities or attack sophistication' in Syria, the group's capabilities having reportedly been diminished due to targeted strikes and the capture or killing of many ISIL leaders.<sup>461</sup>

During the reference period, ISIL operations were mainly recorded in SDF-held areas,<sup>462</sup> with SOHR documenting 17 ISIL operations for the month of January 2025.<sup>463</sup> The group's operations involved ISIL cells attacking SDF patrols<sup>464</sup> and checkpoints,<sup>465</sup> with some of these attacks involving IEDs,<sup>466</sup> hand grenades<sup>467</sup> and rocket-propelled grenades (RPG).<sup>468</sup> On 11 January 2025, the intelligence agency of the Transitional Administration<sup>469</sup> stated that a

---

<sup>455</sup> New York Times (The). Syrian Government Signs Breakthrough Deal With Kurdish-Led Forces, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>456</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>457</sup> Waters, G., ISIL Redux: The Central Syria Insurgency, Special Edition, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>458</sup> UNSG, Twentieth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat, S/2025/72, 31 January 2025, [url](#), para.6

<sup>459</sup> Reuters, Exclusive: Syrian Kurdish forces oppose handing jihadist jails to Islamist rulers, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>460</sup> Waters, G., ISIL Redux: The Central Syria Insurgency, Special Edition, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>461</sup> USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve And Other U.S. Government Activities Related to Iraq & Syria: Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024, 19 February 2025, [url](#), p. 11

<sup>462</sup> Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#); SOHR, ISIS resurgence | Member of ISIS cell killed and another injured in two separate attacks in Al-Hasakah countryside, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>463</sup> SOHR, IED attack | ISIS members attack military vehicle of Self-Defence in Deir Ezzor countryside, 2 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>464</sup> SOHR, IED attack | ISIS members attack military vehicle of Self-Defence in Deir Ezzor countryside, 2 February 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#); SOHR, ISIS resurgence | Members of ISIS clash with members of "Asayish" in Al-Hasakah, 26 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>465</sup> SOHR, Al-Hasakah | Member of Asayish Forces killed in ISIS attack on security checkpoint, 29 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Sneak attack | ISIS cells clash with Internal Security Forces in Al-Hasakah, 20 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>466</sup> SOHR, IED attack | ISIS members attack military vehicle of Self-Defence in Deir Ezzor countryside, 2 February 2025, [url](#); SOHR, IED attack | ISIS kills member of 25th Division and injures four others in Syrian desert, 21 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>467</sup> SOHR, ISIS resurgence | Members of ISIS clash with members of "Asayish" in Al-Hasakah, 26 January 2025, [url](#); Lister, C., Syria Weekly: Dec 30 2024 -Jan 7, 2025, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>468</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: Dec 30 2024 -Jan 7, 2025, 7 January 2025, [url](#); ANHA, 2 fighters martyred in ISIS attacks in Deir ez-Zor, 27 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>469</sup> Al Jazeera, Syrian intelligence says it thwarted ISIL attempt to blow up Shia shrine, 11 January 2025, [url](#)





bombing planned by ISIL at the Shia Sayyida Zaynab shrine near Damascus had been foiled.<sup>470</sup>

According to assessments made by British intelligence, the weakening of the SDF might lead to ISIL seizing an opportunity to facilitate the escape of about 9 000 ISIL members in SDF custody, while the group already had about 2 000 active members staging a resurgence on the ground.<sup>471</sup> The SDF reported to have about 10 000 ISIL fighters in their custody, further stating that, since the fall of Assad's government, ISIL had already attempted two attacks on prisons in order to free its members.<sup>472</sup>

Christoph Reuter, journalist for the German news magazine Der Spiegel, in mid-February filed a report on ISIL activities in areas under control of the Transitional Administration, after having traversed the Syrian desert. Statements received from soldiers stationed in the area as well as some remaining locals indicated that they perceived no ISIL activity, rather there were signs that former government soldiers as well as criminals had used ISIL disguises when perpetrating attacks against rival groups as well as civilians. A local journalist mentioned that many ISIL operatives have crossed the Euphrates into SDF-held territories.<sup>473</sup>

---

<sup>470</sup> Al Jazeera, Syrian intelligence says it thwarted ISIL attempt to blow up Shia shrine, 11 January 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #14: 17 January, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>471</sup> Guardian (The), IS fighters in Syria could break free amid Trump aid cut, terrorism expert warns, 28 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>472</sup> Reuters, Exclusive: Syrian Kurdish forces oppose handing jihadist jails to Islamist rulers, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>473</sup> Reuter, C., The Phantom Terrorists - Searching for Islamic State in Syria, Der Spiegel, 12 February 2025, [url](#)



## 3. International involvement

### 3.1.1. Türkiye

Türkiye was known to be the most important<sup>474</sup> and ‘most steadfast’ external supporter of the Syrian opposition during the years of conflict that led up to the fall of the Bashar Al-Assad government.<sup>475</sup> The Turkish government has maintained long-standing ties with HTS,<sup>476</sup> the main armed opposition group.<sup>477</sup> However, unlike with the SNA that is funded, trained and equipped by Türkiye,<sup>478</sup> no patron-client relationship existed between Türkiye and HTS.<sup>479</sup> For more information regarding Türkiye’s involvement in Syria prior to November 2024, see section 1.3.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

The exact role of Türkiye in the operation that led to the downfall of Assad has been unclear.<sup>480</sup> While Turkish authorities denied any involvement in the operation,<sup>481</sup> observers suggested that the Turkish government, though unlikely to have been involved in the planning and timing of the operation,<sup>482</sup> must have approved the campaign<sup>483</sup> at least tacitly, given that the opposition forces likely could not have consolidated their armed capabilities and prepared the operation without Ankara becoming aware.<sup>484</sup> At the same time, Steven A. Cook, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations (USA), noted that Ankara intended the operation to be of limited scope as it primarily pursued the aim of negotiating a normalisation of relations with Damascus. According to this source, it was only after the collapse of Assad’s forces that Türkiye revised its policy, embracing the victorious HTS and claiming that Türkiye had long planned to end Assad’s rule.<sup>485</sup>

Following the fall of Assad, Türkiye declared its support for the new Syrian Transitional Administration.<sup>486</sup> The demise of Assad’s rule and the decline of Russian and Iranian influence

---

<sup>474</sup> Barkey, H.J., What Role Is Turkey Playing in Syria’s Civil War?, CFR, 6 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>475</sup> Dalay, G., Turkey has emerged as a winner in Syria but must now use its influence to help build peace, Chatham House, 13 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>476</sup> Al Jazeera, Türkiye threatens military action against Kurdish forces in Syria, 8 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>477</sup> Suleymanov, R., Rebel Gains in Syria Put Russia on the Back Foot, Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, 6 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>478</sup> VOA, Future uncertain for Syria’s Kurds amid potential Turkish offensive, 18 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>479</sup> Coşkun, A., Türkiye Has a Wish List in Syria. It Should Tread Lightly. [Commentary], Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>480</sup> Suleymanov, R., Rebel Gains in Syria Put Russia on the Back Foot, Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, 6 December 2024, [url](#); Özkizilcik, Ö., What does Turkey gain from the rebel offensive in Syria?, Atlantic Council, 5 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>481</sup> Coşkun, A., Türkiye Has a Wish List in Syria. It Should Tread Lightly. [Commentary], Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 19 December 2024, [url](#); Shahbazov, F., What Turkey Hopes to Gain From the HTS Offensive in Syria, Stimson Center, 5 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>482</sup> Barkey, H.J., What Role Is Turkey Playing in Syria’s Civil War?, CFR, 6 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>483</sup> Cook, S.A., Turkey Hasn’t Won Anything Yet in Syria, FP, 13 January 2025, [url](#); Coşkun, A., Türkiye Has a Wish List in Syria. It Should Tread Lightly. [Commentary], Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 19 December 2024, [url](#); Özkizilcik, Ö., What does Turkey gain from the rebel offensive in Syria?, Atlantic Council, 5 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>484</sup> Coşkun, A., Türkiye Has a Wish List in Syria. It Should Tread Lightly. [Commentary], Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>485</sup> Cook, S.A., Turkey Hasn’t Won Anything Yet in Syria, FP, 13 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>486</sup> Al Jazeera, Analysis: Türkiye’s road ahead in a post-Assad Syria, 7 January 2025, [url](#)



was reported to have been perceived by Türkiye as an opportunity to advance its strategic interests and acquire an edge over Iran for regional domination.<sup>487</sup>

The presence of the People's Protection Units (YPG), a force affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and a core component of the US-supported SDF, remained a primary concern within Türkiye's security strategy<sup>488</sup> which has been aiming for a stable state that did not pose a threat.<sup>489</sup> Indeed, simultaneously with the launch of the Syrian opposition's military campaign against the Assad government on 27 November 2024, Turkish-backed armed factions in northern Syria resumed their fight against Kurdish forces.<sup>490</sup> Turkish forces conducted artillery bombardments and airstrikes against SDF positions in areas of Aleppo,<sup>491</sup> Raqqa<sup>492</sup> and Hasaka<sup>493</sup> while repeated Turkish strikes reportedly targeted civilians,<sup>494</sup> villages<sup>495</sup> and infrastructure<sup>496</sup> in these regions. At the end of February, PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan urged the organisation to disarm and dissolve, prompting the militant group to declare an immediate ceasefire. Despite this call, Türkiye continued operations against SDF in Syria<sup>497</sup>, albeit at lower levels.<sup>498</sup> The PKK ceasefire does not seem to extend to SDF.<sup>499</sup> YPG on its part 'has said Ocalan's message does not apply to them'.<sup>500</sup>

For information on activities of Turkish-backed armed factions, see section [4.2](#) of this report.

Another critical issue of concern for Türkiye has been Israel's involvement on Syrian territory,<sup>501</sup> including its escalating airstrikes against Syrian military installations<sup>502</sup> and its seizure of the buffer zone that used to separate the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights from Syria.<sup>503</sup> However, it was held that Türkiye had no interest in a military conflict with Israel. Thus, the Turkish authorities have reportedly made initial steps to set up a deconfliction mechanism with the Israeli armed forces. The Middle East Eye (MEE) also pointed to regular engagements

<sup>487</sup> Coşkun, A., Türkiye Has a Wish List in Syria. It Should Tread Lightly. [Commentary], Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>488</sup> Al Jazeera, Analysis: Türkiye's road ahead in a post-Assad Syria, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>489</sup> MEE, Turkey doesn't seek conflict with Israel in Syria. Here's why, 11 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>490</sup> Al Jazeera, Türkiye threatens military action against Kurdish forces in Syria, 8 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>491</sup> SOHR, Amid Turkish artillery fire and clashes on different frontlines | SDF foil attack and shoot down kamikaze drone in Aleppo countryside, 23 February 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #18: 15 February 2025, 14 February 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>492</sup> Etana, Syria Update #18: 15 February 2025, 14 February 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>493</sup> Etana, Syria Update #18: 15 February 2025, 14 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>494</sup> See, for example, Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, New attack | Nearly 25 civilians injured and killed under Turkish shelling near Teshrin Dam, 22 January 2025, [url](#); NPA, Turkish drone strikes kill 3 journalists, injure 8 in northern Syria, 19 February 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>495</sup> SOHR, Artillery fire | Turkish forces bombard villages in rural Al-Hasakah and SDF attack Turkish base, 9 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>496</sup> SOHR, Attacking infrastructure | Turkish forces shell a town and electricity station in Al-Raqqa, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>497</sup> Reuters, Turkey continues operations on PKK in Iraq, Syria despite Ocalan call, 6 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>498</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>499</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>500</sup> Reuters, Turkey continues operations on PKK in Iraq, Syria despite Ocalan call, 6 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>501</sup> Al Jazeera, Analysis: Türkiye's road ahead in a post-Assad Syria, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>502</sup> Badi, E., and Al-Jabassini, A., Turkey's Syria and Libya strategies add up to a Mediterranean power play, Atlantic Council, 13 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>503</sup> Coşkun, A., Türkiye Has a Wish List in Syria. It Should Tread Lightly. [Commentary], Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 19 December 2024, [url](#)



between the two countries' intelligence agencies and to sources indicating that the Turkish government encouraged HTS leaders to advocate calm with Israel.<sup>504</sup>

### 3.1.2. Russia

For information regarding Russia's involvement in Syria prior to November 2024, see section 1.3.3. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

When the government of Bashar Al-Assad was toppled, Russia, with its primary focus on the Ukraine war, had limited resources at its disposal for Syria.<sup>505</sup> As a result, Russia was unable to offer substantial military support to the Assad government apart from some airstrikes.<sup>506</sup>

Following the fall of Assad's government, which reportedly came unexpectedly for Russia, Moscow engaged in actions that were described as 'largely reactive'.<sup>507</sup> While granting asylum to the former president, Russia shifted to a more balanced,<sup>508</sup> albeit cautious, stance towards the country's new rulers.<sup>509</sup> Ahmad Al-Sharaa, the leader of the transitional administration, for his part emphasised that he did not want Russia to exit from Syria in a way that undermined Russia-Syria relations,<sup>510</sup> describing them as 'strategic'<sup>511</sup>. Agreements were reached to guarantee the safety of Russian diplomatic staff and to reduce Russian military personnel.<sup>512</sup> Later in December 2024, Russia reportedly withdrew its forces from all positions in the country's interior, including Qamishli<sup>513</sup> and the frontlines in northern Syria,<sup>514</sup> as well as from sites in the Alawite Mountains.<sup>515</sup>

As of early 2025, Russia still operated two military bases in Syria, namely Hmeimim Airport<sup>516</sup> and the Tartous Port in western Syria.<sup>517</sup> These bases had not been damaged during the advance of the opposition factions.<sup>518</sup> The new Syrian Transitional Administration provided guarantees to avoid any harm to these bases,<sup>519</sup> its leader Al-Sharaa initially stating that he

---

<sup>504</sup> MEE, Turkey doesn't seek conflict with Israel in Syria. Here's why, 11 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>505</sup> AP, Turkey and Russia engage in delicate maneuvers over Syria after Assad's downfall, 20 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>506</sup> Shahbazov, F., What Turkey Hopes to Gain From the HTS Offensive in Syria, Stimson Center, 5 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>507</sup> Melkonian, S., The Syria Fiasco As Seen From Moscow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center, 24 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>508</sup> Enab Baladi, Has Russia's and Iran's role in new Syria come to an end?, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>509</sup> BBC News, Syrians hope for a future without Russia, but it may not be easy, 13 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>510</sup> Enab Baladi, Has Russia's and Iran's role in new Syria come to an end?, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>511</sup> BBC News, Syrians hope for a future without Russia, but it may not be easy, 13 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>512</sup> Melkonian, S., The Syria Fiasco As Seen From Moscow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center, 24 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>513</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 23, 2024, 23 December 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>514</sup> Reuters, Exclusive: Russia pulling back but not out of Syria, sources say, 15 December 2024, [url](#); New Arab (The), Russia to seek 'long-term and strategic ties' with post-Assad Syria, 26 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>515</sup> Reuters, Exclusive: Russia pulling back but not out of Syria, sources say, 15 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>516</sup> Moscow Times (The), Russian Air Base in Syria Attacked by Drones – Reports, 18 February 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Has Russia's and Iran's role in new Syria come to an end?, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>517</sup> Meduza, Russia removes military equipment from Syria's Tartus, its only naval base in the Mediterranean, 28 January 2025, [url](#); Enab Baladi, Has Russia's and Iran's role in new Syria come to an end?, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>518</sup> Melkonian, S., The Syria Fiasco As Seen From Moscow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center, 24 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>519</sup> Enab Baladi, Has Russia's and Iran's role in new Syria come to an end?, 7 January 2025, [url](#)



would not rule out permitting the Russians to remain.<sup>520</sup> As of late January 2025, the transitional authorities have not forced a full exit of Russian forces from Syria.<sup>521</sup>

However, around mid-December 2024, there were media reports of satellite images suggesting that Russia was preparing to withdraw large amounts of military gear and personnel from Syria.<sup>522</sup> Since mid-December 2024, Russian Antonov AN-124 cargo planes and Ilyushin IL-76 aircraft have made regular flights from Hmeimim to al-Khadim, a base in Libya.<sup>523</sup> Moreover, in late January 2025, Russian cargo have begun to transport military equipment out of the port of Tartous.<sup>524</sup>

### 3.1.3. Iran and pro-Iranian militias

Since the killing of high-ranking members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in Israeli strikes in Damascus in 2023 and 2024<sup>525</sup> and the elimination of Hezbollah's top leadership and the bulk of its infrastructure in Israel's invasion and aerial strikes in Lebanon, the influence of Iran and its Lebanese Hezbollah allies in Syria has waned significantly.<sup>526</sup> For more information regarding the involvement of Iran and pro-Iranian militias in Syria prior to November 2024, see section 1.3.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

Iran, like Russia, was reportedly caught off-guard by the advance of armed opposition forces that led to the collapse of Assad's rule.<sup>527</sup> Initially, Iran expressed firm support for Assad's forces and government.<sup>528</sup> Dozens of Iran-backed Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) crossed into Syria near Deir Ez-Zor's Al-Bukamal in early December 2024 to reinforce beleaguered SAA troops at the frontlines in northern Syria.<sup>529</sup> Iran-backed forces eventually gave up control of the strategic Qa'im border crossing in Al-Bukamal, with IRGC and Iran-backed Iraqi fighters pulling out of the Deir Ez-Zor before Kurdish forces captured the crossing.<sup>530</sup> Most members of the Fatemiyoun and Zainebiyoun Brigades, pro-Iranian Syria-based militias created to defend the Assad government, were reported to have abandoned their positions and fled. Some members were possibly evacuated to Iran along with IRGC personnel, while others may have crossed into Iraq or moved to Lebanon, alongside fleeing Lebanese Hezbollah.<sup>531</sup> Thousands

<sup>520</sup> BBC News, Syrians hope for a future without Russia, but it may not be easy, 13 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>521</sup> AP, Russian government delegation makes first official visit to Syria since Assad's fall, 29 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>522</sup> CNN, Russian military has begun large-scale withdrawal from Syria, US and Western officials say, 16 December 2024, [url](#); Reuters, Exclusive: Russia pulling back but not out of Syria, sources say, 15 December 2024, [url](#); NBC News, Images appear to show Russia dismantling military equipment in Syria, 14 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>523</sup> CNN, Spike in Russian flights from Syria to Libyan desert base as Moscow eyes new Mediterranean hub, 31 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>524</sup> Meduza, Russia removes military equipment from Syria's Tartus, its only naval base in the Mediterranean, 28 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>525</sup> Grajewski, N., Why Did Iran Allow Bashar al-Assad's Downfall?, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>526</sup> Shahbazov, F., What Turkey Hopes to Gain From the HTS Offensive in Syria, Stimson Center, 5 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>527</sup> Al Jazeera, Analysis: Russia, Iran strengthen alliance after Syria setback, 18 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>528</sup> NBC News, Iran throws its support behind Assad as rebels expand their shock offensive in Syria, 1 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>529</sup> Reuters, Pro-Iranian militias enter Syria from Iraq to aid beleaguered Syrian army, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>530</sup> Grajewski, N., Why Did Iran Allow Bashar al-Assad's Downfall?, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>531</sup> VOA, What happened to Iranian proxies in Syria?, 13 December 2024, [url](#)





of Iranian troops and Iran-backed militia fighters were reported to have fled Syria after Assad's downfall,<sup>532</sup> with the US Department of Defense (USDOD) concluding that Iran had withdrawn all its forces from the country within ten days.<sup>533</sup> On 14 December 2024, HTS leader Al-Sharaa declared the end of Iran's presence in Syria.<sup>534</sup>

Sources noted that the demise of Assad's rule represented a significant loss for Iran,<sup>535</sup> which saw its ability to maintain military and logistical supply lines to Hezbollah in Lebanon and other groups of its so-called 'Axis of Resistance' significantly compromised.<sup>536</sup>

### 3.1.4. US-led coalition

For information regarding the involvement of the US-led coalition forces in Syria prior to November 2024, see section 1.3.4. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

Soon after the downfall of the Assad government, the US administration of former President Joe Biden held initial meetings with the country de facto leader, Ahmad Al-Sharaa,<sup>537</sup> and the newly appointed Syrian de facto foreign minister, Asaad Al-Shibani.<sup>538</sup> As a result of these talks, the bounty on Al-Sharaa was removed<sup>539</sup> but not his designation as a terrorist.<sup>540</sup>

According to the US Department of Defense, as of December 2024, there were around 2 000 US troops in the country.<sup>541</sup> The US administration of former President Joe Biden maintained that the US would continue its deployment in northeastern Syria, where they act in support of the SDF as part of a mission to defeat ISIL.<sup>542</sup> As the United States viewed a possible ISIL resurgence as a challenge to US interests in Syria, US forces conducted multiple strikes on 8 December 2024 as a signal of continuing determination to prevent such a resurgence.<sup>543</sup> Further individual strikes by the US-led coalition on ISIL targets continued well into the second half of December 2024.<sup>544</sup>

In December 2024 and January 2025, there were also multiple reports of forces of the US-led Global Coalition transporting troops or military and other equipment to reinforce their military

<sup>532</sup> WSJ, Iran Pulls Most Forces From Syria, in Blow to Tehran's Regional Ambitions, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>533</sup> USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve And Other U.S. Government Activities Related to Iraq & Syria: Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024, 19 February 2025, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>534</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 17, 2024, 17 December 2024, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>535</sup> Enab Baladi, Has Russia's and Iran's role in new Syria come to an end?, 7 January 2025, [url](#); INSS, A New Era in Syria: Winners, Losers, and Implications for Israel, 12 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>536</sup> Abbas, S.A., The Fall of Syria and Iran's Strategy of Relying on Allies, Manara Magazine, 13 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>537</sup> INSS, A New Era in Syria: Winners, Losers, and Implications for Israel, 12 January 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, What is behind US strategy of keeping troops in post-Assad Syria?, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>538</sup> Al Jazeera, What is behind US strategy of keeping troops in post-Assad Syria?, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>539</sup> INSS, A New Era in Syria: Winners, Losers, and Implications for Israel, 12 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>540</sup> NPR, Turkey expected to play a major role in Syria following fall of the Assad regime, 27 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>541</sup> USDOD, DOD Announces 2,000 Troops in Syria, Department Prepared for Government Shutdown, 19 December 2024, [url](#); Al Jazeera, US says it has 2,000 troops in Syria, not 900 as previously declared, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>542</sup> Al Jazeera, What is behind US strategy of keeping troops in post-Assad Syria?, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>543</sup> USIP, Assad is Gone – But the Fight for Syria May Have Just Begun, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>544</sup> USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve And Other U.S. Government Activities Related to Iraq & Syria: Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024, 19 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 12-13





bases in Hasaka (including those in Qasrik,<sup>545</sup> Al-Shaddadi,<sup>546</sup> Kharab Al-Jeir,<sup>547</sup> Tal Baydar<sup>548</sup>), Raqqa,<sup>549</sup> and Deir Ez-Zor (Koniko Gas Field and Al-Omar Oil Field)<sup>550</sup> and as part of their efforts to strengthen existing bases and to set up a new base in the Ain Al-Arab area (Aleppo governorate).<sup>551</sup> Moreover, the US-led Global Coalition and the SDF conducted joint military exercises at the Koniko Gas Field base (Deir Ez-Zor) and Qasrik base<sup>552</sup> and intensified military patrols in Deir Ez-Zor and Raqqa.<sup>553</sup>

However, current President Donald Trump and government officials close to him have since voiced their interest in pulling US forces out of Syria, with two US defence officials quoted as saying by NBC News in early February 2025 that the Pentagon had started to design plans for a complete withdraw of US troops from Syria.<sup>554</sup>

### 3.1.5. Israel

For information regarding Israel's involvement in Syria prior to November 2024, see section 1.3.5. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

Israel, while celebrating the fall of Assad as a 'historic' turn of events<sup>555</sup> that removed a keystone of Iran's arc of proxy and allied militias that enabled it to threaten Israel, has shown scepticism towards the insurgents who ousted Assad<sup>556</sup> whose ranks included jihadi fighters.<sup>557</sup> By early March 2025, Israeli defence minister went as far as referring to the transitional administration as a 'terrorist regime of radical Islam'.<sup>558</sup>

<sup>545</sup> SOHR, Ground reinforcements | "International Coalition" brings military equipment to base in Al-Hasakah, 18 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, New reinforcement | US forces continue to reinforce their bases in Al-Hasakah countryside and Ain Al-Arab, 4 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>546</sup> SOHR, Ground reinforcements | "International Coalition" brings military equipment to base in Al-Hasakah, 18 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Boosting military bases | Three cargo planes lands in Coalition base in Al-Shaddadi, 16 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, New reinforcement | US forces continue to reinforce their bases in Al-Hasakah countryside and Ain Al-Arab, 4 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>547</sup> SOHR, Carrying advanced weapons | US cargo plane lands in Kharab Al-Jeir base in Al-Hasakah, 19 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Boosting military bases | Three cargo planes lands in Coalition base in Al-Shaddadi, 16 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, New reinforcement | International Coalition bring in military supplies to Al-Hasakah countryside, 19 December 2024, [url](#); SOHR, New reinforcements | US cargo plane lands in "Kharab Al-Jeir" base in Ramilan in Al-Hasakah, 14 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>548</sup> SOHR, New reinforcement | US forces continue to reinforce their bases in Al-Hasakah countryside and Ain Al-Arab, 4 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>549</sup> SOHR, New reinforcements | "International Coalition" Forces bring military equipment to bases in Syria, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>550</sup> SOHR, New reinforcements | "International Coalition" Forces bring military materials to Deir Ezzor and bases in Al-Hasakah, 22 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>551</sup> SOHR, Preparations for establishing new base | US forces bring in cement blocks to Ain Al-Arab (Kobani), 2 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>552</sup> SOHR, To raise combat readiness | "International Coalition" and "SDF" conduct military exercises in Deir Ezzor, 15 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>553</sup> SOHR, Deir Ezzor | US patrol roams in villages on eastern countryside, 23 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>554</sup> NBC News, Defense Department drafting plans to withdraw all U.S. troops from Syria after recent Trump comments, 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>555</sup> AP, Analysis: Collapse of Syria's Assad is a blow to Iran's 'Axis of Resistance', 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>556</sup> USIP, What Assad's Fall Means for Israel and Its Regional Relations, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>557</sup> AP, Analysis: Collapse of Syria's Assad is a blow to Iran's 'Axis of Resistance', 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>558</sup> AP, Israel's military is told to prepare to defend a Druze community outside Syria's capital, 1 March 2025, [url](#)



Following the fall of the Assad government, Syria witnessed an escalation of Israeli airstrikes that targeted numerous facilities, destroying radar systems, missile sites, and aircraft.<sup>559</sup> Simultaneously, Israeli ground forces seized control of the demilitarised buffer zone between the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights and Syria<sup>560</sup> and conducted ground incursions on southern Syrian territory beyond the buffer zone (mainly in Quneitra,<sup>561</sup> but also in Dar'a), seizing villages<sup>562</sup> and strategic positions and carrying out efforts to disarm local residents.<sup>563</sup> Meanwhile, Israeli forces continued to launch air strikes on former SAA sites in southern Syria,<sup>564</sup> near Damascus city<sup>565</sup> and on the coast<sup>566</sup>. While the Israeli government initially emphasised the temporary nature of the seizure of the buffer zone,<sup>567</sup> in late January 2025, Defence Minister Israel Katz declared that the Israeli forces would remain in that zone 'indefinitely'.<sup>568</sup> In late February, members of the Israeli government announced that Israel would not allow the transitional administration to establish control over Syria's south, demanding its full demilitarisation.<sup>569</sup>

Initially, Israel appeared to avoid targeting HTS,<sup>570</sup> but a mid-January 2025 drone strike killed two HTS fighters in Quneitra.<sup>571</sup> However, as of early March 2025, 'no major clashes' have been reported between Israeli forces and Syria's new security forces.<sup>572</sup>

For further information on Israel's involvement in Syria since November 2024, see section [4.4](#) of this report.

---

<sup>559</sup> Badi, E., and Al-Jabassini, A., Turkey's Syria and Libya strategies add up to a Mediterranean power play, Atlantic Council, 13 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>560</sup> AP, As Israel advances on a Syrian buffer zone, it sees peril and opportunity, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>561</sup> Badi, E., and Al-Jabassini, A., Turkey's Syria and Libya strategies add up to a Mediterranean power play, Atlantic Council, 13 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>562</sup> AA, Occupying Israeli forces open fire on Syrians protesting seizure of 2 villages in Daraa province, 21 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>563</sup> International Crisis Group, Promoting a Stable, Peaceful Transition in Syria, 30 January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>564</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 26, 2025, 26 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 6-7; Guardian (The), Israel strikes targets in southern Syria after demanding demilitarization, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>565</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 26, 2025, 26 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 6-7; Guardian (The), Israel strikes targets in southern Syria after demanding demilitarization, 26 February 2025, [url](#); New York Times (The), Talks on Syria's Future Fall Short of Promises, Participants Say, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>566</sup> New York Times (The), Israel Strikes Syria Again as Tensions Rise, 4 March 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Israel launches air attacks near Syria's Tartous, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>567</sup> USIP, What Assad's Fall Means for Israel and Its Regional Relations, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>568</sup> Security Council Report, Syria: Briefing and Consultations, 11 February 2025, [url](#)

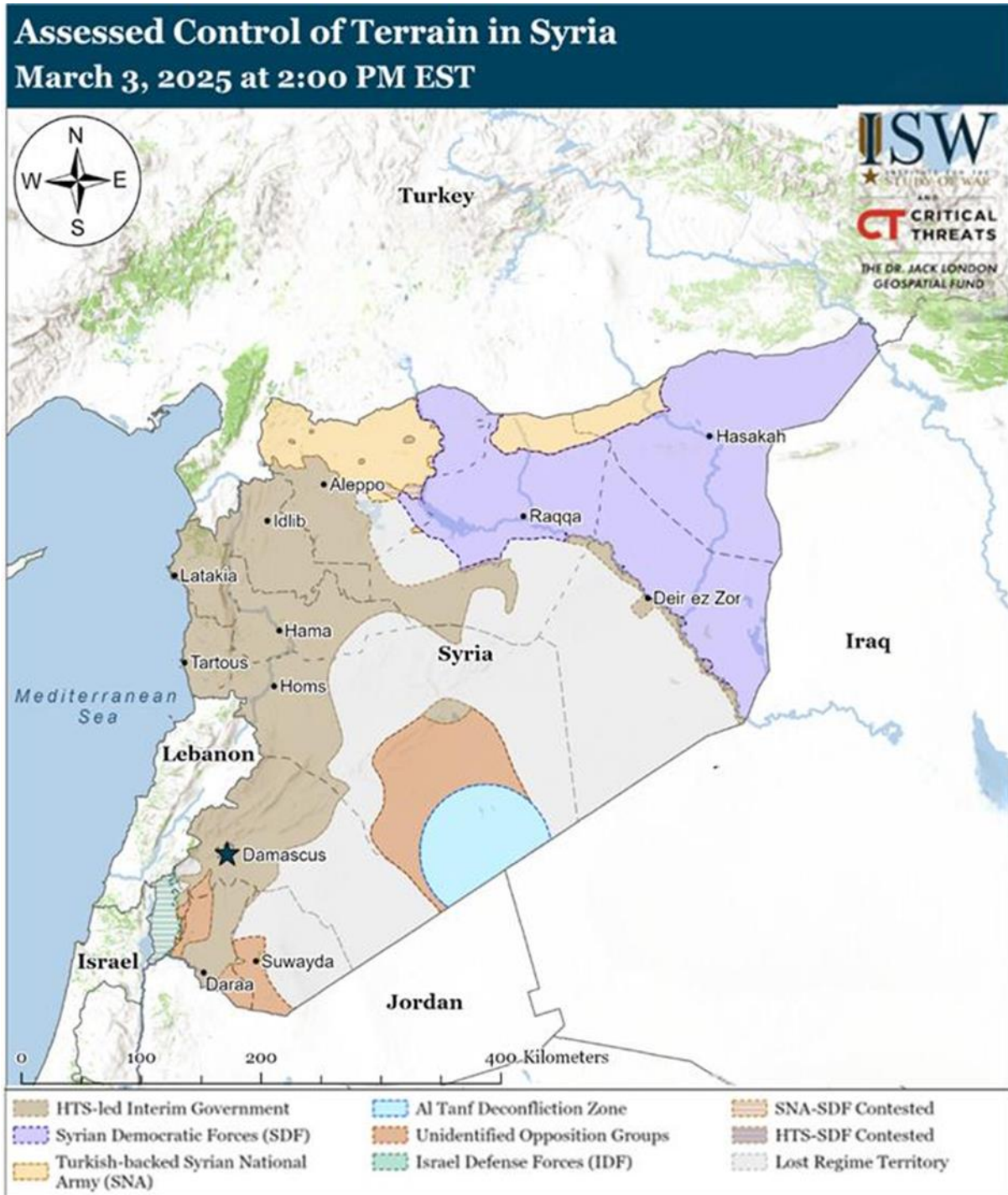
<sup>569</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 26, 2025, 26 February 2025, [url](#), p. 6; Al-Monitor, Jordan's king hosts Sharaa amid Israeli escalation in Syria, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>570</sup> MEE, Turkey doesn't seek conflict with Israel in Syria. Here's why, 11 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>571</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>572</sup> AP, Israel's military is told to prepare to defend a Druze community outside Syria's capital, 1 March 2025, [url](#)

## 4. Recent security trends



Map 3: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria, © Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project, 3 March 2025<sup>573</sup>

<sup>573</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

## 4.1. Areas under the control of the Transitional Administration

On 27 November 2024, HTS and allied Türkiye-backed factions started a lightning military offensive in northwestern Syria that eventually led to the collapse of Assad's rule. This operation followed a marked intensification of attacks by troops of the Assad government<sup>574</sup> and Russian forces, with ACLED recording 684 aerial and artillery strikes across in opposition-held territories in northern Syria between 1 October and 26 November. These strikes reportedly caused at least 39 deaths among militants and civilians.<sup>575</sup>

Concurrently with the HTS-led offensive launched on 27 November, assassinations, Israeli strikes, ISIL attacks, and indiscriminate gunfire in the areas formerly controlled by the Assad government led to multiple deaths of civilians.<sup>576</sup> Aerial strikes by pro-Assad forces, including by Russian aircraft, killed dozens of civilians in Idlib city between 27 November and 2 December 2024,<sup>577</sup> including 22 civilians in a series of strikes that hit a market and five residential areas on 1 December,<sup>578</sup> as well as in strikes targeting a hospital in Aleppo city (1 December)<sup>579</sup> and areas in Aleppo's western countryside (between 27 and 30 November).<sup>580</sup> Meanwhile, four students were killed when a HTS rocket hit their Aleppo dormitory (29 November 2024).<sup>581</sup> By 12 December 2024, more than 1.1 million people had been newly displaced due to the escalation in hostilities since the beginning of the offensive.<sup>582</sup>

As of February and early March 2025, the territories controlled by the Military Operations Administration (MOA), the umbrella command centre<sup>583</sup> of the new HTS-led transitional administration, encompassed most of western, central and southern Syria as well as the western Euphrates bank in Deir Ez-Zor. These areas included the cities of Damascus, Idlib, Aleppo, Hama, Homs, as well as the coastal cities of Latakia and Tartous.<sup>584</sup> Sources noted that the control of the new authorities remained fragmented in certain areas.<sup>585</sup> While their

---

<sup>574</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>575</sup> ACLED, Syria: HTS-led rebel forces capture over 200 locations, while Syrian and Russian airstrikes increase, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>576</sup> SOHR, Regime-controlled areas in November 2024 | 381 fatalities in acts of violence and regime forces collapse and losing Aleppo and Idlib provinces top the events, 6 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>577</sup> SOHR, By previous Russian aerial shelling | Two children die affected by wounds they sustained, 17 December 2024, [url](#); SOHR, Military escalation | Russian fighter jets escalate their attacks on Aleppo and Idlib cities, 2 December 2024, [url](#); Reuters, At least 25 killed as Russian, Syrian jets intensify bombing of Syrian rebel territory, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

SOHR, Death toll update | 71 civilians killed and injured under Russian airstrikes on centre in Idlib, 1 December 2024, [url](#);

<sup>578</sup> OHCHR, Syria: Tragic escalation in hostilities, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>579</sup> SOHR, Two massacres by Russian forces | 49 people killed including 17 members of the regime under airstrikes, 1 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>580</sup> SOHR, "Putin-Erdogan" area collapses in November 2024 | 351 fatalities in acts of violence and over 200 airstrikes by fighter jets, 1 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>581</sup> OHCHR, Syria: Tragic escalation in hostilities, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>582</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 5 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 12 December 2024), 12 December 2024, [url](#), pp. 1-2

<sup>583</sup> Waters, G., Security in Alawite regions in post-Assad Syria, MEI, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>584</sup> ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria [Map], last updated 3 March 2025, [url](#); Carter Center (The), Exploring Historical Control in Syria [Map], n.d., [url](#). Set filters to February 2025.

<sup>585</sup> Balanche, F., Rebuilding Syria May Require Federalism, TWI, 28 February 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)



control in the cities of Damascus, Aleppo and Hama was reportedly effective,<sup>586</sup> in areas of Homs, rural Hama and southern Syria (Dar'a and Sweida governorates)<sup>587</sup> the MOA forces are overstretched and competing with other autonomous armed factions.<sup>588</sup> The coastal areas of Latakia and Tartous have been prone to attacks on security forces<sup>589</sup> and sectarian violence<sup>590</sup> in the aftermath of Assad's fall (for more information see section [4.1.2](#)).

According to ACLED data, the districts most affected by security incidents (battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) during the reporting period were the districts of Ain Al Arab/Kobane (401 incidents) and Jebel Saman (307 incidents) (both Aleppo governorate) and Deir Ez-Zor district (258 incidents) of Deir Ez-Zor governorate.<sup>591</sup> Meanwhile, among all governorates, the fewest security incidents were recorded in Tartous (40 incidents).<sup>592</sup> In the coastal areas, the highest number of security incidents was recorded in the district of Latakia (47 incidents).<sup>593</sup> The highest number of security incidents in southern Syria was recorded in the districts of Dar'a (75 incidents), Izra (66) and Quneitra (57 incidents).<sup>594</sup>

#### 4.1.1. Criminology, lawlessness and sectarian violence

Insecurity and volatility of the security situation due to criminality and lawlessness were reported to be prevalent in various regions.<sup>595</sup> The coastal areas have been affected by incidents of assault, targeted attacks<sup>596</sup> and killings of civilians,<sup>597</sup> attacks at checkpoints, robberies, looting and kidnapping.<sup>598</sup> Instances of killings by unidentified men/armed groups,<sup>599</sup> kidnappings and looting were similarly reported in Rural Damascus.<sup>600</sup> Deadly attacks on civilians were further recorded in Idlib,<sup>601</sup> Hama, and Yarmouk camp in Damascus.<sup>602</sup> According to Civil Peace Group in Syria, a civil society organisation, Homs city witnessed 64 kidnappings between 9 December 2024 and mid-February 2025, including at least 13 civilians. These kidnappings gradually increased over December 2024, peaking on 27

<sup>586</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>587</sup> Balanche, F., Rebuilding Syria May Require Federalism, TWI, 28 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>588</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>589</sup> ACLED, Regional Overview Middle East – February 2025, 7 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>590</sup> AP, Syria's worst violence in months reopens wounds of the civil war, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>591</sup> ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East (28 February 2025), [url](#)

<sup>592</sup> ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East (28 February 2025), [url](#)

<sup>593</sup> ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East (28 February 2025), [url](#)

<sup>594</sup> ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East (28 February 2025), [url](#)

<sup>595</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1 (As of 12 February 2025), 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 2; Etana, Syria Update #19: 22 February 2025, 20 February 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>596</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria: Ongoing security campaigns against former regime elements, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>597</sup> SOHR, Security chaos | Gunmen murder two civilians in Idlib and Latakia, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>598</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1 (As of 12 February 2025), 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>599</sup> SOHR, Retaliatory actions | Three persons eliminated in different areas across Syria in hours, 18 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Two separate incidents | Three young men killed in Douma in Rif Dimashq, 17 January 2025, [url](#);

International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>600</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>601</sup> SOHR, Security chaos | Gunmen murder two civilians in Idlib and Latakia, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>602</sup> SOHR, Retaliatory actions | Three persons eliminated in different areas across Syria in hours, 18 January 2025, [url](#)





December until they declined to zero in January before surging again. 19 of these abductees were killed.<sup>603</sup>

As Gregory Waters assessed, most of these crimes were committed by civilians and gangs not linked to the transitional administration, although some local commanders and rank-and-file soldiers have been involved in kidnappings of Alawite civilians on sectarian grounds.<sup>604</sup> Areas such as Damascus, Latakia and Tartous further remained prone to sectarian tensions amid an absence of formalised security mechanisms.<sup>605</sup>

According to the SOHR, in January 2025, assassinations and retaliatory attacks, including on sectarian and politically grounds, increased significantly in the areas controlled by the transitional administration, with the highest rates recorded in Homs (91 fatalities, including 59 sectarian killings), Hama (46 fatalities, including 28 sectarian killings) and Latakia (15 fatalities, including 13 sectarian killings).<sup>606</sup> In January, ACLED recorded that over 176 civilians, including some former fighters of the Assad government, had been killed by unidentified gunmen.<sup>607</sup>

In Homs city and the rural areas of Homs and Hama, security forces have reportedly been overstretched and relied on minimally trained recruits, allowing unrest to persist since Assad's fall.<sup>608</sup> In Homs and some parts of Hama, cases of local sectarian retribution by Sunnis against Alawites have been reported to be a serious issue.<sup>609</sup> There was a proliferation of unverified reports of punitive raids, disappearances and murders on social media, allegedly showing HTS fighters beating<sup>610</sup> or inciting violence against Alawites.<sup>611</sup> As Gregory Waters noted, the more serious attacks against Assad remnants tended to occur in rural areas characterised by high concentrations of former '*shabiha*'<sup>612</sup> (armed gangs that supported Assad)<sup>613</sup> and limited presence of security forces.<sup>614</sup> However, such targeting of former Assad loyalism has also been reported in Damascus.<sup>615</sup> In some of these cases, which continued to February 2025,<sup>616</sup> the perpetrators remained unidentified.<sup>617</sup>

---

<sup>603</sup> Civil Peace Group in Syria [Instagram], posted on: 18 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>604</sup> Waters, G., Security in Alawite regions in post-Assad Syria, MEI, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>605</sup> Al Jazeera, Analysis: Turkiye's road ahead in a post-Assad Syria, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>606</sup> SOHR, 91 attacks in 2025 | 190 people killed in retaliatory actions and assassinations in different areas across Syria, 26 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>607</sup> ACLED, Regional Overview Middle East – February 2025, 7 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>608</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>609</sup> Waters, G., Security in Alawite regions in post-Assad Syria, MEI, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>610</sup> France24, 'Syrian above all': The Alawite community refuses to pay for Assad's crimes, 13 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>611</sup> Al Jazeera, Iran says Syria's future unclear after foreign minister hits back, 25 December 2024, [url](#); France24,

'Syrian above all': The Alawite community refuses to pay for Assad's crimes, 13 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>612</sup> Waters, G., Security in Alawite regions in post-Assad Syria, MEI, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>613</sup> Waters, G., Security in Alawite regions in post-Assad Syria, MEI, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>614</sup> Waters, G., Security in Alawite regions in post-Assad Syria, MEI, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>615</sup> Al Jazeera, Iran says Syria's future unclear after foreign minister hits back, 25 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>616</sup> New Arab (The), Syria: String of extrajudicial killings targets ex-regime affiliates, 17 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>617</sup> New Arab (The), Syria: String of extrajudicial killings targets ex-regime affiliates, 17 February 2025, [url](#); SOHR, New assassination | Former commander of Iranian militias and former member of Military Intelligence killed by unidentified gunmen in Deir Ezzor, 22 December 2025, [url](#)





#### 4.1.2. Coastal areas

Alleged remnants of the Assad government conducted deadly ambushes against the security forces of the new transitional administration,<sup>618</sup> including in Tartous governorate in what was noted as the first direct challenge to the power of the new rulers<sup>619</sup> on 24 December 2024 (leaving 14 police dead)<sup>620</sup> and in Latakia city on 5 January 2025 (killing at least two members of the security forces).<sup>621</sup> Tartous, Latakia and parts of Rural Damascus and Homs, all assessed by ACLED to be areas where the transitional administration has ‘not gained a decisive victory’ as of early February 2025, witnessed the emergence of new militias opposed to the transitional administration.<sup>622</sup> These groups, which may arise as Assad-affiliated fighters merge into armed gangs and minorities form self-defence groups,<sup>623</sup> attacked police and military forces to destabilise the new administration.<sup>624</sup> Such attacks and clashes were reported well into February 2025 in Homs, the coastal region<sup>625</sup> (including near Hmeimim base in Latakia), eastern Dar’a, and Rural Damascus.<sup>626</sup>

Following clashes in southern rural Tartous, the MOA launched a security campaign in late December 2024, searching for local remnants of the Assad government.<sup>627</sup> This three-day operation saw the deployment of special forces known as the ‘Red Bands’ in the suspect villages (Khirbet Maazah, Yahmour and Zarqat) and witnessed shootouts, home raids, and checkpoints being set up. Several civilians were wounded in clashes.<sup>628</sup> Since then, further sweeping security campaigns have been launched against remnants of the former Assad government in various governorates, including Latakia,<sup>629</sup> Deir Ez-Zor,<sup>630</sup> Dar’a,<sup>631</sup> Homs,<sup>632</sup> Hama, Aleppo and Damascus, resulting in hundreds of arrests.<sup>633</sup> As of mid-January 2025, HTS was reportedly ‘confronting small pockets of locally organized fighter cells in areas under its control’, deploying tanks, attack helicopters and drones against pro-Assad groups.<sup>634</sup> In late

<sup>618</sup> Waters, G., Security in Alawite regions in post-Assad Syria, MEI, 21 January 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>619</sup> BBC News, Assad loyalists kill 14 in clash with Syria's new ruling forces – authorities, 27 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>620</sup> Al Jazeera, Syria says 14 policemen killed in ambush by forces loyal to al-Assad, 26 December 2024, [url](#); BBC News, Assad loyalists kill 14 in clash with Syria's new ruling forces – authorities, 27 December 2024, [url](#);

International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>621</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 6, 2025, 6 January 2025 [url](#), pp. 1-2; Al Jazeera, مقتل قيادي عسكري باشتباكات مع "بقول النظام" باللاذقية [Military leader killed in clashes with "regime remnants" in Latakia], 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>622</sup> ACLED, Regional Overview Middle East – February 2025, 7 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>623</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>624</sup> ACLED, Regional Overview Middle East – February 2025, 7 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>625</sup> New Arab (The), 15 people killed in 'sectarian' massacre in Alawi village in Syria, 1 February 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #19: 22 February 2025, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>626</sup> Etana, Syria Update #19: 22 February 2025, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>627</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria: Ongoing security campaigns against former regime elements, 30 December 2024, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Syria says 14 policemen killed in ambush by forces loyal to al-Assad, 26 December 2024, [url](#); MEMO, Syria launches operation to pursue ‘remnants of Assad's militias’, 27 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>628</sup> Waters, G., Security in Alawite regions in post-Assad Syria, MEI, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>629</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria: Ongoing security campaigns against former regime elements, 30 December 2024, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Syrian authorities crack down on ‘remnants’ of Bashar al-Assad’s rule, 28 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>630</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria: Ongoing security campaigns against former regime elements, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>631</sup> SOHR, Targeting regime affiliates and drug and arms dealers | General security service launches new security campaign in Daraa countryside, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>632</sup> SOHR, Targeting head of general intelligence service | General security forces prepare to launch new security campaign in Homs, 14 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>633</sup> Enab Baladi, How effective are security campaigns against remnants of Assad’s regime?, 22 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>634</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 14, 2025, 14 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1



January, fighters affiliated to the new administration reportedly carried out 35 summary executions, killing mostly Assad-era officers.<sup>635</sup>

In early March, a significant escalation in hostilities was reported in Latakia, Tartous<sup>636</sup> and to a lesser extent in Homs, and Hama governorates.<sup>637</sup> Following a series of attacks by pro-Assad remnants on general security forces in Baniyas, Tartous and Jableh, Latakia<sup>638</sup> which led to more than 100 members of security forces and 15 civilians killed in the latter,<sup>639</sup> government security forces and affiliated armed actors 'apparently operating outside of Damascus control' initiated a general mobilisation and launched retaliatory attacks against insurgents and civilians.<sup>640</sup> Reports indicate summary executions along sectarian lines by unidentified perpetrators, members of the caretaker authorities' security forces, and elements linked to the former government.<sup>641</sup>

According to SOHR, 1 454 individuals were killed in the clashes, including 973 civilians.<sup>642</sup> Most of the civilians killed were reportedly members of the Alawite community particularly from Latakia and Tartous governorates.<sup>643</sup> According to SOHR there were 545 civilians killed in Latakia, 262 in Tartous, 156 in Hama and 10 in Homs.<sup>644</sup> SNHR documented 803 individuals killed between 6-10 March. At least 211 civilians were killed by pro-Assad armed groups, while at least 420 civilians and disarmed combatants were killed by security forces and affiliated armed groups. The highest number of civilians and disarmed combatants was recorded in Latakia (185) and Tartous (183) governorates, with smaller numbers in Hama (29) and Homs (3). The violence involved extrajudicial killings, field executions, and systematic mass killings driven by revenge and sectarian motives.<sup>645</sup>

The OHCHR has documented 111 civilian deaths as of 11 March, but verification is ongoing, and the actual toll is believed to be significantly higher.<sup>646</sup>

---

<sup>635</sup> Arab Weekly (The), Summary executions in Syria as chaos, score-settling overtake new rulers, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>636</sup> AP, Syria's worst violence in months reopens wounds of the civil war, 10 March 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>637</sup> UNOCHA, Joint Statement by UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria, Adam Abdelmoula, and Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis, Ramanathan Balakrishnan, on the recent hostilities in Syria, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>638</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>639</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #21, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>640</sup> International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>641</sup> OHCHR, Syria: Distressing scale of violence in coastal areas, 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>642</sup> SOHR, Genocide in Syrian coastline and Latakia mountains 72 hours on | Military and security forces commit nearly 40 massacres, killing 973 civilians, 9 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>643</sup> AP, Syria's worst violence in months reopens wounds of the civil war, 10 March 2025, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>644</sup> SOHR, Genocide in Syrian coastline and Latakia mountains 72 hours on | Military and security forces commit nearly 40 massacres, killing 973 civilians, 9 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>645</sup> SNHR, Preliminary Report on the Violations that Took Place in the Wake of the Attacks Carried Out by Non-State Armed Groups Linked to the Assad Regime, Mostly in the Governorates of Latakia, Tartus, and Hama, 11 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 5-10

<sup>646</sup> OHCHR, Syria: Distressing scale of violence in coastal areas, 11 March 2025, [url](#)



Thousands of people were reportedly displaced in the coastal areas<sup>647</sup> with an estimated 16 000 having crossed into Lebanon due to the hostilities.<sup>648</sup> On 10 March, the transitional administration announced the end of the military operation in the coastal areas.<sup>649</sup> President Al-Shaara issued a decision to form an independent national committee to investigate the events<sup>650</sup> and authorities reportedly begun prosecuting individuals accused of committing crimes during the insurgent activity in western Syria between 6 and 10 March.<sup>651</sup>

### 4.1.3. ISIL insurgency

In Homs and Hama governorates, ISIL expanded its presence as the lines of Assad's forces collapsed and security forces retreated to the main cities.<sup>652</sup> Exploiting this power vacuum,<sup>653</sup> the group has seized large weapons stockpiles from Assad's bases in the Syrian desert<sup>654</sup> and its cells entered or attempted to enter several towns in eastern Homs towns. In Hama, returning formerly displaced 'Bedouins', some of whose community formed the core of local ISIL supporters in east Hama in the past, reportedly robbed and looted Ismaili and Alawite villages in the Salamiyah countryside. At the same time, the departure of Assad's army and Russian forces from central Syria has enabled the US-led Global Coalition to strike ISIL camps without hindrance. Amongst others, US forces on 8 December 2025 hit more than 75 ISIL camps that were reported to have played a key role in the group's recruitment and training.<sup>655</sup>

### 4.1.4. Afrin area

The Afrin area, previously occupied by the SNA until control was transferred to the transitional administration in early February 2025,<sup>656</sup> witnessed during the reference period numerous instances of civilians being subjected to killing,<sup>657</sup> kidnapping,<sup>658</sup> beating,<sup>659</sup> threats<sup>660</sup> and

<sup>647</sup> UNOCHA, Joint Statement by UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Syria, Adam Abdelmoula, and Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis, Ramanathan Balakrishnan, on the recent hostilities in Syria, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>648</sup> ECHO, ECHO Daily Flash, 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>649</sup> AP, Syria announces the end of a military operation against Assad-linked gunmen in a coastal region, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>650</sup> France24, Syria opens probe into killings targeting Alawite minority group, 9 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>651</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>652</sup> Waters, G., ISIL Redux: The Central Syria Insurgency, Special Edition, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>653</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>654</sup> ISW and CTP, The Islamic State's Global Long Game and Resurgence in Syria Poses an Evolved Threat to the West, 9 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>655</sup> Waters, G., ISIL Redux: The Central Syria Insurgency, Special Edition, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>656</sup> FDD, Syrian government forces enter Afrin, signaling a change in control, 6 February 2025, [url](#); BasNews, Syrian Forces Take Control of Afrin From Turkish-Backed SNA, 6 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>657</sup> SOHR, Six gunshots | Members of "Al-Sultan Murad" kills a civilian after exiting a mosque in Afrin, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>658</sup> Rudaw, 87 people 'kidnapped' in Afrin since start of 2025: local watchdog, 8 February 2025, [url](#); ANHA, Turkish occupation mercenaries continue to commit crimes in Afrin, 17 February 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Ongoing violations | Turkish-backed factions kidnap six women and arrest five young men in north Aleppo countryside, 11 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Ongoing violations in Afrin | "National Army" factions continue kidnaps, arbitrary arrests and looting of civilian properties, 28 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>659</sup> SOHR, Ongoing violations in Afrin | Turkish-backed factions brutally beat civilians, loot civilian properties and fell fruit-bearing trees, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>660</sup> SOHR, Ongoing violations | Turkish-backed "Suleiman Shah" Faction storms houses in Afrin and impose extra royalties, 14 January 2025, [url](#)



intimidation,<sup>661</sup> as well as armed robbery/looting<sup>662</sup> by members of militias, including SNA-affiliated factions such as the Sultan Murad Division,<sup>663</sup> the Al-Hamzat Division,<sup>664</sup> and the Suleiman Shah faction.<sup>665</sup> Rudaw quoted the human rights monitor Violations Documentation Center (VDC) as saying that 87 people had reportedly been kidnapped between 1 January and 8 February 2025.<sup>666</sup> At least one child was killed during gunfights involving theft and robbery.<sup>667</sup>

#### 4.1.5. Southern Syria

The security situation in southern Syria has been characterised by a high degree of complexity as it lacked cohesive military structures.<sup>668</sup> While the transitional administration has made some efforts to collect illegal weapons in a region which has seen a large proliferation of arms,<sup>669</sup> armed factions in Dar'a and Sweida in particular have shown little interest to disarm and integrate into the structures of the new unified national army without assurances of protection against external attacks (e.g., from ISIL) and political representation.<sup>670</sup> Even though local factions leaders in February 2025 agreed to form a 'Southern Division' as part of the new Syrian army, it was expected that factional and regional disunity would continue to exist in the new division.<sup>671</sup> The situation in this region has been further complicated by Israeli military interventions since the fall of Assad, including hundreds of aerial strikes on military targets (e.g., a strike on weapons storages at Sweida military airport, targeted drone strikes in Dar'a, and along the border between Syria and Lebanon) and the seizure of new territory in the Golan Heights.<sup>672</sup>

For further information on Israel's involvement in southern Syria since November 2024, see section [4.4.](#) of this report.

---

<sup>661</sup> SOHR, Ongoing violations in Afrin | Turkish-backed factions brutally beat civilians, loot civilian properties and fell fruit-bearing trees, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>662</sup> ANHA, Turkish occupation mercenaries continue to commit crimes in Afrin, 17 February 2025, [url](#); Rudaw, Armed thieves rob elderly man as crime increases in Afrin: Monitor, 14 February 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Ongoing violations in Afrin | Turkish-backed factions brutally beat civilians, loot civilian properties and fell fruit-bearing trees, 23 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Ongoing violations in Afrin | "National Army" factions continue kidnaps, arbitrary arrests and looting of civilian properties, 28 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>663</sup> SOHR, Six gunshots | Members of "Al-Sultan Murad" kills a civilian after exiting a mosque in Efrin, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>664</sup> SOHR, Ongoing violations in Afrin | Turkish-backed factions brutally beat civilians, loot civilian properties and fell fruit-bearing trees, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>665</sup> SOHR, Ongoing violations | Turkish-backed "Suleiman Shah" Faction storms houses in Efrin and impose extra royalties, 14 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>666</sup> Rudaw, 87 people 'kidnapped' in Afrin since start of 2025: local watchdog, 8 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>667</sup> SOHR, Stray bullet | Girl killed during clashes between "Mohamed Al-Fateh" Faction and thieves in Efrin, 15 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>668</sup> Aldoughli, A., Syria's New Rulers Are Working To Unify Military Power, New Lines Magazine, 25 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>669</sup> SOHR, Targeting regime affiliates and drug and arms dealers | General security service launches new security campaign in Daraa countryside, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>670</sup> Aldoughli, A., Syria's New Rulers Are Working To Unify Military Power, New Lines Magazine, 25 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>671</sup> Etana, Syria Update #19: 22 February 2025, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>672</sup> Aldoughli, A., Syria's New Rulers Are Working To Unify Military Power, New Lines Magazine, 25 February 2025, [url](#)



## 4.2. Areas under the control of the Syrian National Army (SNA)

For information regarding security trends in the areas controlled by Turkish-backed forces prior to November 2024, see sections 2.2., 2.7., 2.8. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

As of February and early March 2025, the Turkish-backed militias (i.e the Syrian National Army - SNA) controlled northern and eastern rural Aleppo, including the area between A'zaz, Al-Bab and Jarablus (operation Euphrates Shield area). The SNA also controlled a stretch of territory further east<sup>673</sup> that is known as the operation Peace Spring area, roughly delimited by the Tall Abyad area (Raqqqa) in the west and Ras Al-Ain (Hasaka) in the east, with some SNA presence mapped as far east as Tall al-Amir (Hasaka).<sup>674</sup> Meanwhile, control of northwestern Aleppo's Afrin area, previously occupied by SNA factions since 2018, was transferred to the transitional administration as its security forces entered Afrin city in early February 2025.<sup>675</sup>

### (a) Operation Dawn of Freedom and Euphrates shield areas

Amid the Syrian armed opposition's military offensive,<sup>676</sup> the SNA on 30 November 2024 launched its own concurrent Operation Dawn of Freedom<sup>677</sup> in northern and eastern rural Aleppo.<sup>678</sup> Its immediate aim was to push the SDF troops east of the Euphrates River.<sup>679</sup> The SNA took several towns in northern Aleppo<sup>680</sup> and conquered the city of Tall Rifaat,<sup>681</sup> areas located south of A'zaz and Al-Bab, as well as the city of Manbij and its surroundings. Meanwhile, mapping resources disagreed on whether Aleppo city and its eastern surroundings were under HTS control<sup>682</sup> or partly controlled by the SNA.<sup>683</sup>

<sup>673</sup> ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria [Map], last updated 3 March 2025, [url](#); Carter Center (The), Exploring Historical Control in Syria [Map], n.d., [url](#). Set filters to February 2025.

<sup>674</sup> Carter Center (The), Exploring Historical Control in Syria [Map], n.d., [url](#). Set filters to February 2025.

<sup>675</sup> FDD, Syrian government forces enter Afrin, signaling a change in control, 6 February 2025, [url](#); BasNews, Syrian Forces Take Control of Afrin From Turkish-Backed SNA, 6 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>676</sup> Barkey, H.J., What Role Is Turkey Playing in Syria's Civil War?, CFR, 6 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>677</sup> ACLED, Regional Overview Middle East November 2024, 6 December 2024, [url](#); Levant 24, SNA Launches 'Dawn of Freedom' Operation, 30 November 2024, [url](#); NPA, SNA announces launch of "Dawn of Freedom" offensive in Aleppo, 30 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>678</sup> L24, SNA Launches 'Dawn of Freedom' Operation, 30 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>679</sup> Barkey, H.J., What Role Is Turkey Playing in Syria's Civil War?, CFR, 6 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>680</sup> Salih, M.A., Post-Assad Syria: Challenges, Opportunities, and the US Role in Shaping its Future, FPRI, 14 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>681</sup> Syria Report (The), HTS Takes Over Aleppo While Making Advances Towards Hama (Open access), 4 December 2024, [url](#);

NPA, SNA announces full control over Tel Rifaat town in Aleppo, 1 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>682</sup> ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria [Map], last updated 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>683</sup> Carter Center (The), Exploring Historical Control in Syria [Map], n.d., [url](#). Set filters to February 2025.



After capturing the city of Tall Rifaat (northern Aleppo)<sup>684</sup> and then seizing Manbij<sup>685</sup> following a US-brokered temporary ceasefire that allowed for a withdrawal of the SDF from the city,<sup>686</sup> the SNA advanced towards the Kurdish-majority border city of Kobane<sup>687</sup> on the eastern Euphrates riverbank.<sup>688</sup> On 24 December 2024, the SDF announced a counteroffensive aiming to retake territory lost to the SNA<sup>689</sup> as it made some territorial gains in eastern rural Aleppo.<sup>690</sup>

Heavy clashes between the SNA and the SDF were reported in January and February 2025 at the frontlines around the strategic Tishreen Dam and Qara Qozak Bridge on the Euphrates River,<sup>691</sup> in villages in rural Manbij<sup>692</sup> and around the city of Kobane.<sup>693</sup> The violent clashes using medium and heavy weapons, among which rocket-propelled grenades, in the area around the dam, lead to 116 fighters and 20 civilians killed within 15 days. Clashes around the Tishreen Dam and in Manbij countryside continued throughout January 2025.<sup>694</sup> Besides combatants, dozens of civilians were killed or injured during exchanges of artillery and rocket fire between Turkish/Türkiye-backed forces and SDF/Kurdish forces.<sup>695</sup>

The area around Manbij city witnessed continued violence in the months following the fall of Assad.<sup>696</sup> As of late December 2024, amid clashes following SDF attempts to retake Manbij

---

<sup>684</sup> Shafaq News, Türkiye-aligned factions seize Tel Rifaat in Syria's Aleppo, 2 December 2024, [url](#); NPA, SNA announces full control over Tel Rifaat town in Aleppo, 1 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>685</sup> Reuters, Rebels take Syrian city from U.S.-backed group after U.S.-Turkey deal, source says, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>686</sup> SOHR, More than eight years of SDF control of Manbij | US-mediated agreement leads to withdrawal of SDF from Manbij city for the benefit of Turkish-backed factions, 11 December 2024, [url](#); Kurdistan 24, US: Manbij Ceasefire Extended, 18 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>687</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>688</sup> Iddon, P., Why fighting is raging in north Syria between the Turkish-backed SNA and Kurdish-led SDF, The New Arab, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>689</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>690</sup> SOHR, Military escalation | “SDF” advances and takes control over four villages in Manbij as Turkish-backed factions shell Kobani villages, 23 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>691</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 26, 2025, 26 February 2025, [url](#), p. 5; SOHR, Amid Turkish artillery fire and clashes on different frontlines | SDF foil attack and shoot down kamikaze drone in Aleppo countryside, 23 February 2025, [url](#); Guardian (The), ‘We are part of Syria’: Kurdish-led SDF fights for place in post-Assad future, 21 February 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #19: 22 February 2025, 20 February 2025, [url](#); UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1 (As of 12 February 2025), 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 2; Iddon, P., Why fighting is raging in north Syria between the Turkish-backed SNA and Kurdish-led SDF, The New Arab, 21 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, After a delegation of Red Crescent left | Clashes renew near Sad Teshrin (Dam) in Manbij countryside, 7 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Following two simultaneous attacks | Fierce clashes erupt between Turkish-backed factions and SDF on two frontlines in eastern Aleppo, 23 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>692</sup> SOHR, Military escalation | Clashes renew between “SDF” and “National Army” in Sad Teshrin, 3 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Military escalation | SDF infiltrates and shells positions in Manbij countryside, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>693</sup> Iddon, P., Why fighting is raging in north Syria between the Turkish-backed SNA and Kurdish-led SDF, The New Arab, 21 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Military escalation | “SDF” and Turkish forces exchange shelling in Aleppo countryside, 1 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, In ten days of battles | 110 civilians and combatants killed and injured in eastern Aleppo countryside, 21 December 2024, [url](#)

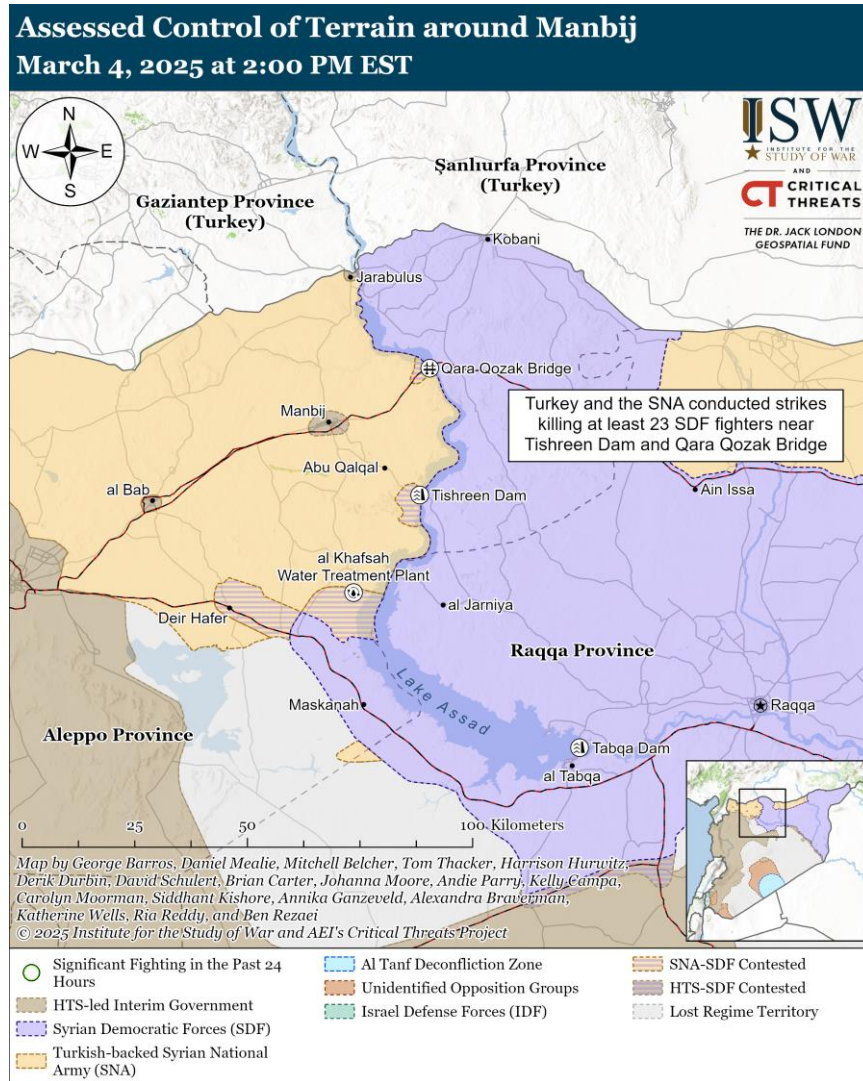
<sup>694</sup> Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #13: 10 January, 9 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>695</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#); SOHR, Week of escalation | 54 civilians and combatants killed and injured in confrontations between Turkish-backed factions and SDF and Kurdish Forces, 25 November 2024, [url](#); New Arab (The), Five killed in fighting around Syria's Tishreen dam as Germany calls for Russian withdrawal, 17 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, “Euphrates Shield” areas | Eight civilians killed and injured under shelling by Manbij Military Council, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>696</sup> VOA, Another car bomb in a northern Syria city kills at least 19, mostly women, 3 February 2025, [url](#)



city, the security situation was described as ‘very tense’ and lacking clarity.<sup>697</sup> Between late December/early January 2025 and early February 2025, the Manbij area was struck by seven car bombings.<sup>698</sup> These included two unclaimed car bomb explosions reported on 1 February (causing four civilian deaths)<sup>699</sup> and 3 February (hitting a vehicle transporting women agricultural workers and resulting in at least 19 civilian deaths).<sup>700</sup>



**Map 4: Assessed Control of Terrain around Manbij, © Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project, 4 March 2025<sup>701</sup>**

<sup>697</sup> Al Jazeera, Syria says 14 policemen killed in ambush by forces loyal to al-Assad, 26 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>698</sup> VOA, Another car bomb in a northern Syria city kills at least 19, mostly women, 3 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>699</sup> SNHR, 222 Civilian Deaths, Including 17 Children and 37 Women, as well as Nine Deaths due to Torture, Recorded in February 2025 in Syria, 1 March 2025, [url](#), p. 11; UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1 (As of 12 February 2025), 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>700</sup> SNHR, 222 Civilian Deaths, Including 17 Children and 37 Women, as well as Nine Deaths due to Torture, Recorded in February 2025 in Syria, 1 March 2025, [url](#), p. 12; Reuters, Car bomb kills 20 in northern Syria, deadliest since Assad toppled, 3 February 2025, [url](#); UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1 (As of 12 February 2025), 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>701</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 4 March 2025, [url](#)





Amid what SOHR refers to as ‘escalating security chaos’ in areas controlled by Türkiye and its proxy groups,<sup>702</sup> further civilians were killed by unidentified gunmen in Manbij city<sup>703</sup> and its countryside,<sup>704</sup> as well as in eastern Aleppo’s Jarablus countryside.<sup>705</sup> In late December 2024 and early January 2025, there were also several explosions of booby-trapped motorbikes in northern and eastern Aleppo (including one in Tall Rifaat and two in Manbij city), some of which caused civilian casualties.<sup>706</sup> SNA factions were also reported to have subjected civilians to kidnapping, beating, and looting in the Al-Bab countryside (eastern Aleppo).<sup>707</sup>

According to ACLED data, the areas under the control of SNA/disputed in Aleppo governorate which were the most affected by security incidents (battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) during the reporting period were Ain Al Arab/Kobane (401 incidents) and Manbij districts (212 incidents), amounting to around 49 % of the total number of security incidents recorded in Aleppo governorate.<sup>708</sup>

### **(b) Operation Peace Spring area**

Localities in northern Syria that are part of the Operation Peace Spring area, including in western Raqqa<sup>709</sup> (e.g., the Ain Issa and Tall Abyad areas)<sup>710</sup> and Hasaka (Ras Al-Ain)<sup>711</sup> witnessed heavy clashes between the Turkish forces/SNA and the SDF, involving the use of heavy weaponry,<sup>712</sup> rocket fire,<sup>713</sup> drone warfare,<sup>714</sup> and infiltrations,<sup>715</sup> as well as Turkish forces and Türkiye-backed SNA factions bombarding villages.<sup>716</sup>

Civilian casualties in the Operation Peace Spring area included two women who were shot dead by Military Police (Sulouk area in the Raqqa countryside), a girl injured by a shell fired by Turkish forces (western rural Tall Abyad in northern Raqqa)<sup>717</sup> and the killing and wounding of

<sup>702</sup> SOHR, Horrific crime | Family of five executed by unidentified gunmen in village in Manbij countryside, 20 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>703</sup> SOHR, Security chaos | Two civilians shot dead in Manbij and its countryside, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>704</sup> SOHR, Security chaos | Child killed and two injured in an armed attack in Manbij countryside, 24 December 2024, [url](#); SOHR, Horrific crime | Family of five executed by unidentified gunmen in village in Manbij countryside, 20 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>705</sup> SOHR, Horrific crime | Family of five executed by unidentified gunmen in village in Manbij countryside, 20 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>706</sup> SOHR, Fourth time in a week | Motorbike explodes in areas of Turkish-backed factions in Aleppo, 1 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>707</sup> SOHR, Surprise raid | Turkish-backed factions kidnap seven young men and assault elderly people in eastern Aleppo, 15 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>708</sup> ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East (28 February 2025), [url](#)

<sup>709</sup> Etana, Syria Update #19: 22 February 2025, 20 February 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 26, 2025, 26 February 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>710</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 26, 2025, 26 February 2025, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>711</sup> SOHR, Injuring three Turkish soldiers | SDF attack Turkish base in Ras Al-Ain countryside, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>712</sup> SOHR, Military escalation | Fierce clashes between SDF and Turkish-backed factions leave four militiamen injured in Al-Hasakah countryside, 29 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>713</sup> SOHR, Injuring three Turkish soldiers | SDF attack Turkish base in Ras Al-Ain countryside, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>714</sup> SOHR, Amid bombardment on Al-Hasakah and Al-Raqqa countryside | Drone attack leaves Turkish soldier dead and another injured in Ras Al-Ain, 9 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>715</sup> SOHR, Infiltration operation | SDF sneak into positions of Turkish-backed factions in Tel Abyad countryside, injuring three militiamen, 28 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>716</sup> SOHR, Amid bombardment on Al-Hasakah and Al-Raqqa countryside | Drone attack leaves Turkish soldier dead and another injured in Ras Al-Ain, 9 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Infiltration operation | SDF sneak into positions of Turkish-backed factions in Tel Abyad countryside, injuring three militiamen, 28 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>717</sup> SOHR, “Peace Spring” area | Two women shot dead by the Military Police, 15 January 2025, [url](#)





seven civilians in an explosion at a military headquarters in the Ras Al-Ain countryside following an infiltration by SDF special forces.<sup>718</sup> The Ras Al-Ain area also experienced growing ‘security chaos’, including thefts, robberies, and infighting between armed factions<sup>719</sup> linked to militiamen intending to leave the Operation Peace Spring area<sup>720</sup> (such relocations into SDF territory have been facilitated by SDF).<sup>721</sup> Turkish-backed Military Police and militias conducted security campaigns targeting individuals attempting to leave the area.<sup>722</sup> Several members of Turkish-backed militias have been killed in this context.<sup>723</sup>

According to ACLED data, the areas under the control of SNA/disputed in Raqqa and Hasaka governorates which were the most affected by security incidents (battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) during the reporting period were Raqqa’s Tall Abyad (193 incidents), and Hasaka’s Ras Al Ain (111) districts, amounting to around 51 % and 27 % of all security incidents recorded in Raqqa and Hasaka governorates, respectively.<sup>724</sup>

### 4.3. Areas under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)

For information regarding security trends in the Kurdish-controlled areas prior to November 2024, see sections 2.2., 2.7., 2.8. and 2.9. of the [EUAA COI Report Syria – Security Situation \(October 2024\)](#).

The SDF control a large swath of territory in northeastern Syria that accounts for almost one-third of the country’s overall area.<sup>725</sup> These territories comprised about 70 percent of Syria’s oil and gas fields.<sup>726</sup> As of February and March 2025, the territories controlled, occupied, or seized by the SDF encompassed most of Hasaka, approximately half of Raqqa (including Raqqa city), and the portions of Deir Ez-Zor and Aleppo that are located east of the Euphrates River, as well as a narrow salient on Aleppo’s western Euphrates bank,<sup>727</sup> situated south of Lake Assad and near the Tishreen Dam.<sup>728</sup> According to the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) some small areas west of the Euphrates, located south of

<sup>718</sup> SOHR, Infiltration operation | Special forces of “SDF” kill and injure 12 members of Turkish-backed factions and seven civilians, 25 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>719</sup> SOHR, Wishing to return to their areas | Number of people arrested in the searching campaign by Military Police has risen to 20 people, 17 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Second attack in hours | Turkish-backed militiaman shot dead in “Peace Spring” area, 3 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>720</sup> SOHR, Wishing to return to their areas | Number of people arrested in the searching campaign by Military Police has risen to 20 people, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>721</sup> SOHR, Turkish intelligence assigns task of pursuing militiamen seeking to return to their areas to “Al-Rahman Corps” in Ras Al-Ain in northern Al-Hasakah, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>722</sup> SOHR, Wishing to return to their areas | Number of people arrested in the searching campaign by Military Police has risen to 20 people, 17 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Turkish intelligence assigns task of pursuing militiamen seeking to return to their areas to “Al-Rahman Corps” in Ras Al-Ain in northern Al-Hasakah, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>723</sup> SOHR, Turkish intelligence assigns task of pursuing militiamen seeking to return to their areas to “Al-Rahman Corps” in Ras Al-Ain in northern Al-Hasakah, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>724</sup> ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East (28 February 2025), [url](#)

<sup>725</sup> Al Jazeera, What is behind US strategy of keeping troops in post-Assad Syria?, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>726</sup> Al Jazeera, What is behind US strategy of keeping troops in post-Assad Syria?, 6 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>727</sup> ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria [Map], last updated 3 March 2025, [url](#); Carter Center (The), Exploring Historical Control in Syria [Map], n.d., [url](#). Set filters to January 2025.

<sup>728</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 7, 2025, 7 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2



Al-Bab and Manbij, were contested between the SDF and the SNA.<sup>729</sup> At least in the immediate aftermath of the takeover of Aleppo city by the armed opposition, the SDF remained in control of the city's two Kurdish-majority neighbourhoods Ashrafiyah and Sheikh Maqsoud.<sup>730</sup>

On 6 December 2024, the former Assad government withdrew from Deir Ez-Zor city and its environs and the SDF advanced into these areas, seeking to fill this vacuum.<sup>731</sup> As Assad's troops started to hand over territory to the SDF,<sup>732</sup> the SNA, launching its own Operation Dawn of Freedom<sup>733</sup> in northern and eastern rural Aleppo,<sup>734</sup> expelled the Kurdish forces from key points on the western bank,<sup>735</sup> seizing Tall Rifaat<sup>736</sup> and the strategic city of Manbij on 10 December 2024.<sup>737</sup> However, the SDF made some territorial gains in eastern rural Aleppo in late December 2024<sup>738</sup> and by January 2025 was again sending units deep into former Assad areas in Deir Ez-Zor, Raqqa and Aleppo.<sup>739</sup>

As of late February 2025, Turkish forces/the SNA and the SDF continued to engage in heavy fighting in northern Syria near the Qara Qozak Bridge and the Tishreen Dam,<sup>740</sup> with ISW and CTP suggesting that Türkiye was possibly attempting to cut the SDF's supply lines to the dam, located on the eastern Euphrates bank in Aleppo governorate.<sup>741</sup> For more information on the clashes in northern Syria, see section 4.2 of this report. Moreover, during the reference period, Türkiye has been shelling SDF sites throughout northeastern Syria.<sup>742</sup> As of January 2025, it was noted that the SDF, weakened by its loss of territory and retreat east of the Euphrates,<sup>743</sup> was facing an existential threat<sup>744</sup> as it fought to safeguard its autonomous territory.<sup>745</sup> At the same time, the reference period saw forces of the US-led Global Coalition intensifying military

<sup>729</sup> ISW and CTP, Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria [Map], last updated 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>730</sup> Syria Report (The), HTS Takes Over Aleppo While Making Advances Towards Hama (Open access), 4 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>731</sup> MEE, Assad forces withdraw in Daraa and Deir Ezzor as Syrian rebels advance on Homs, 6 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>732</sup> Özkızılcık, Ö., What does Turkey gain from the rebel offensive in Syria?, Atlantic Council, 5 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>733</sup> ACLED, Regional Overview Middle East November 2024, 6 December 2024, [url](#); Levant 24, SNA Launches

'Dawn of Freedom' Operation, 30 November 2024, [url](#); NPA, SNA announces launch of "Dawn of Freedom"

offensive in Aleppo, 30 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>734</sup> L24, SNA Launches 'Dawn of Freedom' Operation, 30 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>735</sup> INSS, A New Era in Syria: Winners, Losers, and Implications for Israel, 12 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>736</sup> Syria Report (The), HTS Takes Over Aleppo While Making Advances Towards Hama (Open access), 4 December 2024, [url](#);

NPA, SNA announces full control over Tel Rifaat town in Aleppo, 1 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>737</sup> Etana, Syria Update #9: 10 December 2024, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>738</sup> SOHR, Military escalation | "SDF" advances and takes control over four villages in Manbij as Turkish-backed factions shell Kobani villages, 23 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>739</sup> Waters, G., ISIS Redux: The Central Syria Insurgency, Special Edition, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>740</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 26, 2025, 26 February 2025, [url](#), p. 5; SOHR, Amid Turkish artillery fire and clashes on different frontlines | SDF foil attack and shoot down kamikaze drone in Aleppo countryside, 23 February 2025, [url](#); Guardian (The), 'We are part of Syria': Kurdish-led SDF fights for place in post-Assad future, 21 February 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #19: 22 February 2025, 20 February 2025, [url](#); UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic

Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1 (As of 12 February 2025), 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 2; ISW and CTP, Iran

Update, January 6, 2025, 6 January 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>741</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 7, 2025, 7 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>742</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 6, 2025, 6 January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>743</sup> Coşkun, A., Türkiye Has a Wish List in Syria. It Should Tread Lightly. [Commentary], Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>744</sup> Ciddi, S., Turkey Is Preparing to Invade Syria, Then Israel?, FDD, 8 January 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #10: 12 December, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>745</sup> Ciddi, S., Turkey Is Preparing to Invade Syria, Then Israel?, FDD, 8 January 2025, [url](#)



patrols<sup>746</sup> and bringing in military equipment to reinforce its bases.<sup>747</sup> For more information on the reinforcement of coalition bases in the region, see section [3.1.4](#) of this report.

While the conflict between the SDF and the SNA remained central in northeastern Syria,<sup>748</sup> SDF has been facing dissent from some Arab tribal factions in Deir E-Zor<sup>749</sup> and these long-standing conflicts also continued during the reference period.<sup>750</sup> Armed men linked to Sheikh Ibrahim al-Hafel,<sup>751</sup> a tribal leader known for mobilising tribes in Deir Ez-Zor against the SDF,<sup>752</sup> attacked security headquarters and patrolling SDF troops. In January 2025, several civilians were injured as the SDF shot at young men in the aftermath of a series of such attacks,<sup>753</sup> while dozens of suspected Assad loyalists, National Defence Forces (NDF) militiamen and Sheikh Ibrahim al-Hafel supporters were arrested in a sweeping security campaign in the Deir Ez-Zor countryside.<sup>754</sup>

SDF-controlled areas witnessed civilians being killed or injured in a variety of incidents, including assassinations,<sup>755</sup> tribal<sup>756</sup> and family disputes,<sup>757</sup> multiple attacks by Turkish forces,<sup>758</sup> SDF members shooting at protesters,<sup>759</sup> and (alleged) ISIL attacks.<sup>760</sup> Dozens of civilians were killed or injured in multiple Turkish drone strikes allegedly launched against civilian targets in the vicinity of the Tishreen Dam (eastern Aleppo).<sup>761</sup>

<sup>746</sup> SOHR, Deir Ezzor | US patrol roams in villages on eastern countryside, 23 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>747</sup> SOHR, Boosting military bases | Three cargo planes lands in Coalition base in Al-Shaddadi, 16 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, New reinforcements | “International Coalition” Forces bring military materials to Deir Ezzor and bases in Al-Hasakah, 22 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>748</sup> Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>749</sup> USDOD, Operation Inherent Resolve And Other U.S. Government Activities Related to Iraq & Syria: Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024, 19 February 2025, [url](#), p. 26

<sup>750</sup> Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>751</sup> SOHR, Deir Ezzor | Civilians injured in gunfire by SDF near Suwaydan crossing in eastern countryside, 24 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>752</sup> Al-Modon, Sheikh Ibrahim al-Hafel's Recent Appearance in Damascus Sparks Speculation About Tribal Movement's Ties to the Syrian Regime, The Syrian Observer, 13 February 2024, [url](#)

<sup>753</sup> SOHR, Deir Ezzor | Civilians injured in gunfire by SDF near Suwaydan crossing in eastern countryside, 24 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>754</sup> SOHR, Large-scale security campaign | Tens of regime affiliates and gunmen affiliate with “Al-Hafal” arrested in Deir Ezzor countryside, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>755</sup> SOHR, Ongoing security chaos | Civilian killed in eastern Deir Ezzor, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>756</sup> SOHR, Including two women | Tribal infighting erupt in western Al-Raqqah, leaving three persons dead, 20 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>757</sup> SOHR, Deir Ezzor | Civilian killed in family disputes and clashes in SDF-held areas, 21 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Deir Ezzor | Civilian killed in infighting between cousins in eastern countryside, 4 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>758</sup> See, for example: SOHR, Ongoing military escalation | Turkish drone attacks village in Al-Qamishly countryside, 20 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Military escalation | Three children injured and a civilian convoy attacked, 17 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, New attack | Three civilians killed and injured by Turkish drone in Al-Hasakah, 12 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Military escalation | Woman and her daughter killed under direct shelling on houses of civilians in Ain Al-Arab (Kobani), 22 December 2024, [url](#); SOHR, Dramatic escalation | 52 people killed in attacks by Turkish drones in NE Syria since early December, 13 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>759</sup> Etana, Syria Update #10: 12 December, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>760</sup> SOHR, SDF-held areas in November 2024 | 43 fatalities in acts of violence...nearly ten infightings and murder crimes...deteriorating security situation, 4 December 2024, [url](#); NPA, Unknown gunmen kill 2 civilians in Deir ez-Zor, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>761</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#); SOHR, New attack | Nearly 25 civilians injured and killed under Turkish shelling near Teshrin Dam, 22 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Death toll update | Three civilians die affected by their injuries, bringing the number of deaths due to Turkish airstrikes on



ISIL cells conducted attacks on SDF positions and military patrols in northeastern Syria, causing a number of casualties among SDF troops.<sup>762</sup> SOHR recorded 27 ISIL operations in November 2024 (including 22 in Deir Ez-Zor and 3 in Hasaka) and a further 13 ISIL operations during the first three weeks of January 2025 in the SDF-controlled areas (10 in Deir Ez-Zor and 3 in Hasaka). ISIL attacks resulted in a number of deaths or injuries among civilians<sup>763</sup> and members of Kurdish security forces.<sup>764</sup> In early February 2025, following large-scale aerial operations against ISIL across Syria in December 2024, the US-led coalition and the SDF launched a new campaign against the group in southern areas of Hasaka, killing two ISIL operatives.<sup>765</sup>

According to ACLED data, the areas under the control of SDF/disputed most affected by security incidents (battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians) during the reference period were Deir Ez-Zor (258 incidents) and Hasaka districts (229 incidents), amounting to around 56 % and 57 % of all security incidents recorded in Deir Ez-Zor and Hasaka governorate, respectively.<sup>766</sup>

In March 2025, SDF leaders signed an agreement to integrate their armed forces and civilian institutions into the new Syrian government. The deal mandates a full cessation of hostilities and requires the SDF to relinquish control of border posts, the airport, and key oil and gas fields.<sup>767</sup>

## 4.4. Impact of the Israel-Hamas war on the security in Syria

Immediately following the fall of the Assad government, Israel launched hundreds of airstrikes across Syria,<sup>768</sup> aimed at preventing the new HTS-led authorities from accessing the former Assad government's arsenal.<sup>769</sup> This campaign came after Israel targeted multiple airstrikes on

---

Teshreen dam to six, including woman, 19 January 2025, [url](#); New Arab (The), Five killed in fighting around Syria's Tishreen dam as Germany calls for Russian withdrawal, 17 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Death toll update | Five civilians killed and nearly 40 others injured in Turkish airstrikes near Teshreen dam, 16 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Military escalation | Five civilians including a woman killed in Turkish airstrike targeting public convoy near Teshrin Dam, 8 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>762</sup> Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#); SOHR, IED attack | ISIS members attack military vehicle of Self-Defence in Deir Ezzor countryside, 2 February 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>763</sup> SOHR, ISIS in November 2024 | Ongoing escalation with 27 attacks in SDF-controlled areas and nearly 20 combatants killed in attacks in Syrian desert, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>764</sup> Etana, Syria Update #19: 22 February 2025, 20 February 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, New attack | ISIS members open fire on SDF military vehicle in Deir Ezzor countryside, injuring several fighters, 12 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, New attack | Two members of "Al-Asayish" injures by ISIS cells in Al-Hasakah, 22 December 2024, [url](#); SOHR, Al-Raqqa | Member of "Al-Asayish" killed and others injured in an attack by ISIS cells on checkpoint of Internal Security Forces, 17 December 2024, [url](#); SOHR, New attack | ISIS cells kill member of "SDF" in Deir Ezzor, 17 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>765</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>766</sup> ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East (28 February 2025), [url](#)

<sup>767</sup> BBC News, Kurdish-led SDF agrees to integrate with Syrian government forces, 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>768</sup> Etana, Syria Update #10: 12 December, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>769</sup> ACLED, Syria: Israeli airstrikes reach an all-time high after Assad regime falls, 19 December 2024, [url](#)



sites of Hezbollah and Iran-backed militias in November 2024<sup>770</sup> that according to SOHR resulted in the deaths of 16 civilians.<sup>771</sup>

The December 2024 airstrikes mainly targeted airbases linked to the former Assad forces and their contents, including aircraft, military signal stations and radar systems, scientific research facilities and weapons and ammunitions warehouses. Between the fall of Assad and 18 December 2024, SOHR documented 498 airstrikes launched by Israeli aircraft in various governorates (mostly affecting Damascus, Dar'a, Latakia, and Rural Damascus).<sup>772</sup> These airstrikes resulted in the destruction of the country's military stocks and defence infrastructure, as well as most of its missile systems and tanks.<sup>773</sup> The Israeli armed forces were quoted as saying that during the very first wave of bombardments that occurred within a 48-hour timespan and hit about 320 targets, some 80 % of the Syria's military capabilities had been destroyed,<sup>774</sup> although this figure has not been verified independently.<sup>775</sup> The aerial campaign reportedly resulted in dozens of deaths.<sup>776</sup>

Responding to the demise of Assad's rule, Israel's prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that his country no longer recognised the Israel-Syria Disengagement Agreement of 1974.<sup>777</sup> Israel's armed forces subsequently occupied the UN-patrolled<sup>778</sup> demilitarised zone<sup>779</sup> between the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and Syrian-controlled areas of Quneitra governorate.<sup>780</sup> Moreover, they further entered Syrian territory beyond the demilitarised zone<sup>781</sup> (mainly into Quneitra,<sup>782</sup> but also into Dar'a), seizing villages<sup>783</sup> and strategic positions.<sup>784</sup>

As of 19 December 2024, ACLED noted that Israeli forces were controlling eight villages in the governorates of Quneitra, Dar'a, and Rural Damascus.<sup>785</sup> They warned villagers to 'stay home',<sup>786</sup> created outposts and raided some homes claiming to search for weapons and

<sup>770</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#); SOHR, Iran's presence in Syria in November 2024 | Nearly 180 fatalities in aerial and ground attacks...evacuation of positions, withdrawals and redeployments in different positions across Syria, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>771</sup> SOHR, Iran's presence in Syria in November 2024 | Nearly 180 fatalities in aerial and ground attacks...evacuation of positions, withdrawals and redeployments in different positions across Syria, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>772</sup> SOHR, Since fall of Al-Assad's regime | Nearly 500 Israeli airstrikes destroy the remaining weapons of army of future Syria, 18 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>773</sup> Etana, Syria Update #10: 12 December, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>774</sup> Le Monde, Syrian military's arsenal destroyed by Israeli bombardments, 16 December 2024, [url](#); BBC News, Syria in maps: Who controls the country now Assad has gone?, 13 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>775</sup> BBC News, Syria in maps: Who controls the country now Assad has gone?, 13 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>776</sup> Al Jazeera, Israel has declared war on the promise of a strong, democratic Syria, 15 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>777</sup> Etana, Syria Update #9: 10 December 2024, 10 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>778</sup> New Arab (The), Syrians protest Israeli occupation in southwestern Quneitra governorate, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>779</sup> Etana, Syria Update #11: 17 December, 17 December 2024, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>780</sup> Etana, Syria Update #11: 17 December, 17 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>781</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>782</sup> Badi, E., and Al-Jabassini, A., Turkey's Syria and Libya strategies add up to a Mediterranean power play, Atlantic Council, 13 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>783</sup> AA, Occupying Israeli forces open fire on Syrians protesting seizure of 2 villages in Daraa province, 21 December 2024, [url](#)

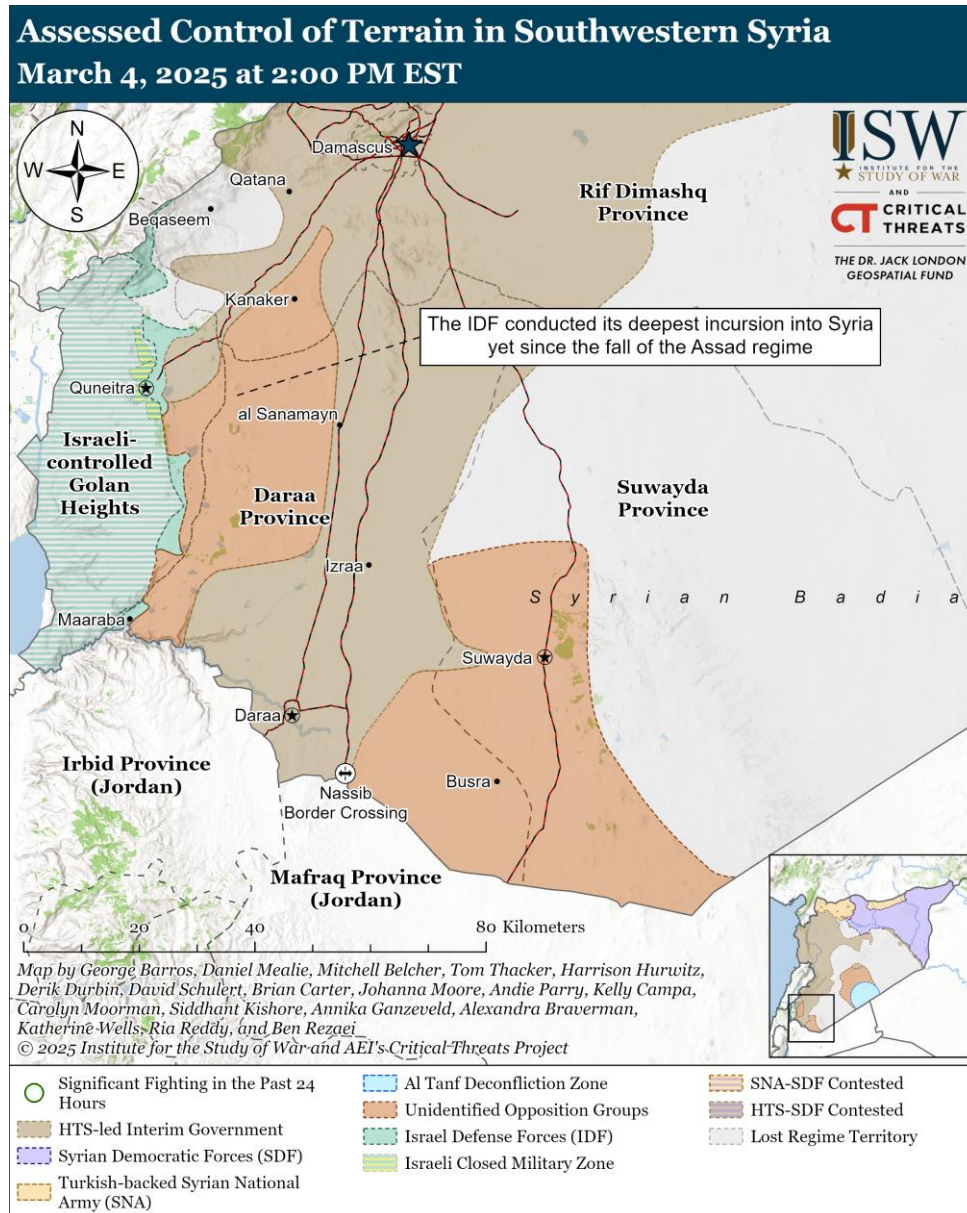
<sup>784</sup> International Crisis Group, Promoting a Stable, Peaceful Transition in Syria, 30 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>785</sup> ACLED, Syria: Israeli airstrikes reach an all-time high after Assad regime falls, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>786</sup> Al Jazeera, Israel grabs land in Syria's Golan Heights, warns villagers to stay home, 8 December 2024, [url](#)



Hezbollah members.<sup>787</sup> Between 19 December 2024 and 1 February 2025, satellite imagery showed that Israel was constructing six military sites in the buffer zone and another site outside it within Syrian territory.<sup>788</sup>



**Map 5: Assessed Control of Terrain in Southwestern Syria, © Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project, 4 March 2025<sup>789</sup>**

As Al Jazeera reported, Israeli forces expelled hundreds of residents from their villages and towns.<sup>790</sup> Local residents were quoted as saying that Israeli forces had demolished homes<sup>791</sup>

<sup>787</sup> New Arab (The), Israeli forces raid Syrian city in Quneitra and Daraa amid further incursions, 22 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>788</sup> Al Jazeera, Satellite images show Israel building military bases in Syria buffer zone, 3 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>789</sup> ISW and CT, Iran Update, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>790</sup> Al Jazeera, Israel has declared war on the promise of a strong, democratic Syria, 15 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>791</sup> New Arab (The), Syrians protest Israeli occupation in southwestern Quneitra governorate, 27 January 2025, [url](#)



and there were reports of some farmers being prevented from going to their fields.<sup>792</sup> On at least two occasions, Israeli soldiers reportedly opened fire on protesters,<sup>793</sup> including during a 20 December 2024 protest in the village of Maariya (Dar'a governorate) decrying Israeli military activities in the area, when Israeli forces were reported to have shot and injured a Syrian protester.<sup>794</sup>

Meanwhile, Israeli forces continued to launch air strikes on former SAA sites in southern Syria,<sup>795</sup> near Damascus city,<sup>796</sup> and on the coast.<sup>797</sup> While, according to sources, Israel was initially avoiding attacks on HTS targets,<sup>798</sup> at least one Israeli drone attack in mid-January 2025 killed two HTS fighters as it targeted a convoy of the new transitional administration in Quneitra<sup>799</sup> that had been sent de-escalate local clashes in a village.<sup>800</sup> Further Israeli airstrikes were reported in late February and early March on military facilities and other targets in Homs, Tartous, Latakia, and Rural Damascus governorates. Meanwhile, Israeli soldiers continued near-daily operations in Quneitra and southwest Dar'a, conducting patrols, raiding farms, and blocking local routes.<sup>801</sup>

Syrian authorities have reportedly refrained from military retaliation to Israeli attacks.<sup>802</sup> According to reports, there have been 'no major clashes' between Israeli forces and Syria's new security forces as of early March 2025.<sup>803</sup>

## 4.5. Impact of violence on the civilian population

### 4.5.1. Security incidents

According to ACLED data, 3 941 security incidents occurred in Syria between 1 November 2024 and 28 February 2025: 1 035 of these were coded as battles, 2 048 as explosions/remote violence, and 858 as violence against civilians. Most security incidents recorded by ACLED during this period took place in the governorates of Aleppo (1 254), Deir Ez-Zor (463), Hasaka (407), Raqqqa (375), and Idlib (325). The lowest security incidents figures

<sup>792</sup> New Arab (The), Syrians protest Israeli occupation in southwestern Quneitra governorate, 27 January 2025, [url](#); AP, Syrian villagers near the Golan Heights say Israeli forces are banning them from their fields, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>793</sup> New Arab (The), Syrians protest Israeli occupation in southwestern Quneitra governorate, 27 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>794</sup> AFP, Israel army says troops shot Syrian protester in leg, 20 December 2024; Al Jazeera, Israeli forces fire at Syrian protesters in Deraa, wounding one, 20 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>795</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 26, 2025, 26 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 6-7; Guardian (The), Israel strikes targets in southern Syria after demanding demilitarization, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>796</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, February 26, 2025, 26 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 6-7; Guardian (The), Israel strikes targets in southern Syria after demanding demilitarization, 26 February 2025, [url](#); New York Times (The), Talks on Syria's Future Fall Short of Promises, Participants Say, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>797</sup> New York Times (The), Israel Strikes Syria Again as Tensions Rise, 4 March 2025, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Israel launches air attacks near Syria's Tartous, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>798</sup> MEE, Turkey doesn't seek conflict with Israel in Syria. Here's why, 11 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>799</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>800</sup> International Crisis Group, Promoting a Stable, Peaceful Transition in Syria, 30 January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>801</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #21, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>802</sup> Etana Syria, Syria Update #21, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

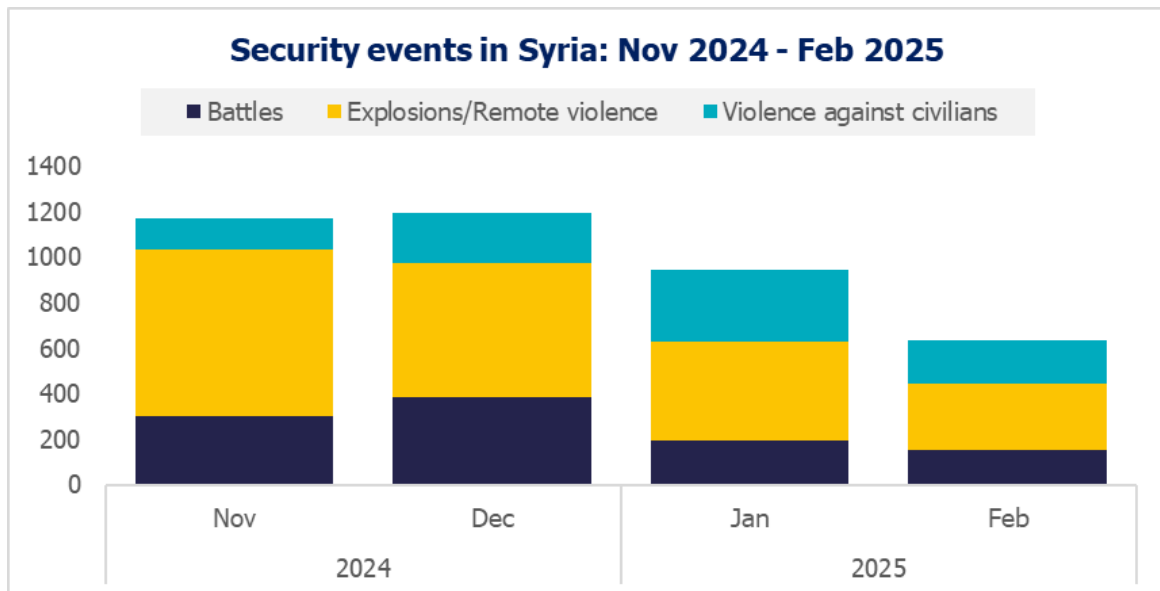
<sup>803</sup> AP, Israel's military is told to prepare to defend a Druze community outside Syria's capital, 1 March 2025, [url](#)



were recorded in Tartous (40), Damascus (42), Quneitra (57), Sweida (58) and Latakia (103) governorates.<sup>804</sup>

Idlib governorate witnessed a peak of 257 security incidents in November 2024 before numbers dramatically declined over the following months (38 in December, 17 in January and 13 in February). In Aleppo governorate, incidents similarly peaked in November 2024 (420 incidents) before numbers declined to around 300 in December and January, followed by a further decline. In Hasaka and Raqqa, security incidents rose to a peak in January (168 and 125 incidents, respectively) before declining in February.<sup>805</sup>

Between the immediate aftermath of the fall of Assad (9 December 2024) and 28 February 2025, the number of security incidents recorded by ACLED has increased significantly in some governorates such as Rural Damascus (89 % of all security incidents recorded during the reference period), Tartous (86 %), Latakia (85 %), Hasaka (81 %), Raqqa (79 %) and Homs (61 %). Conversely, there has been a significant decrease observed in the governorates of Idlib (13 % of all security incidents recorded during the reference period) and Hama (16 %).<sup>806</sup>



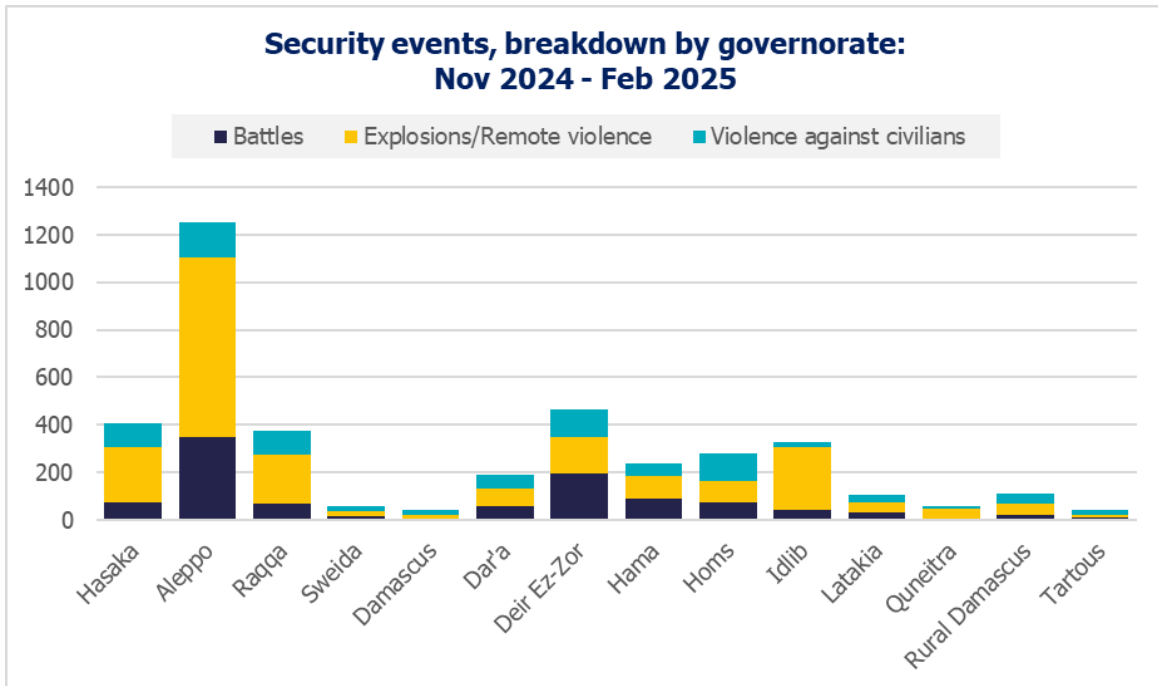
**Figure 1. Evolution of ACLED security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ between 1 November 2024 and 28 February 2025<sup>807</sup>**

<sup>804</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East (28 February 2025), [url](#)

<sup>805</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East (28 February 2025), [url](#)

<sup>806</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East (28 February 2025), [url](#)

<sup>807</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East (28 February 2025), [url](#)



**Figure 2. ACLED security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ on governorate level between 1 November 2024 and 28 February 2025<sup>808</sup>**

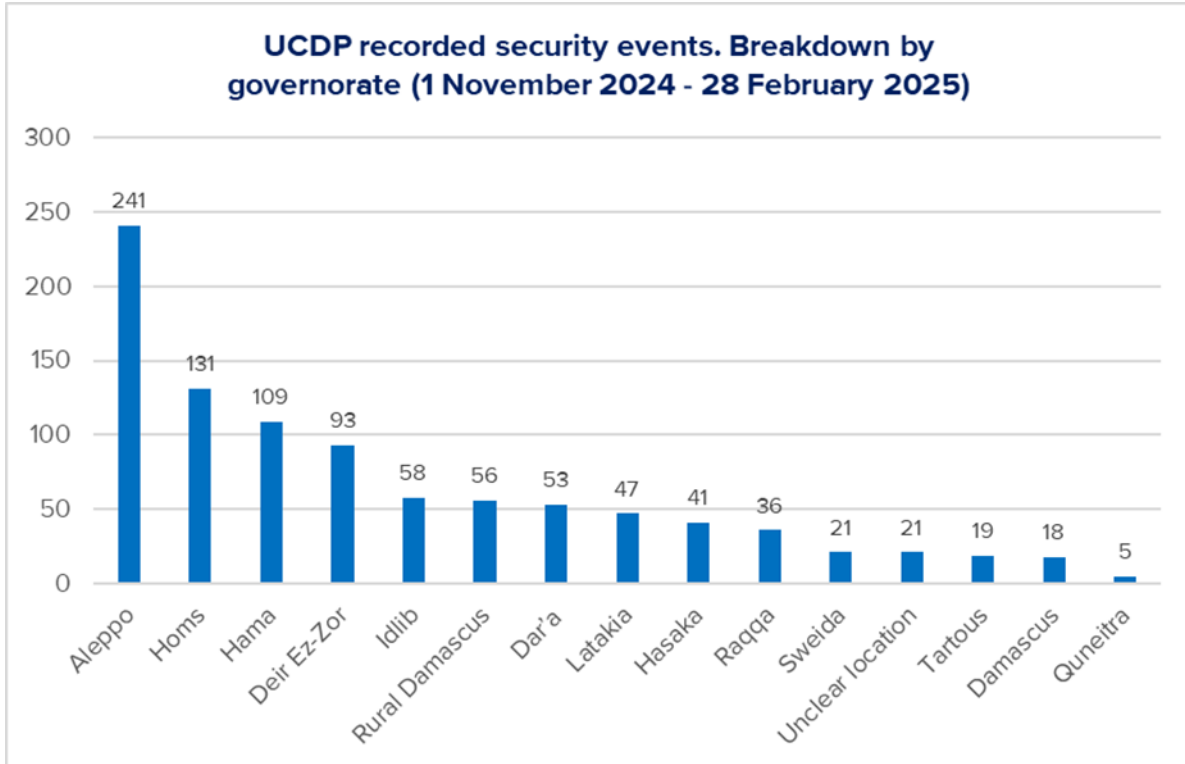
A significant concentration of security incidents during the reference period was observed in specific districts within some governorates. In Aleppo governorate, approximately 73 % of recorded incidents occurred in Jebel Saman, Ain Al Arab/Kobane, and Menbij districts. In Hasaka governorate, 83 % of security incidents were concentrated in Hasaka and Ras Al Ain districts. Around 56 % of incidents in Deir Ez-Zor governorate took place in Deir Ez-Zor district, while Tall Abyad in Raqqa governorate accounted for 51 % of recorded incidents. Additionally, 41 % of security incidents in Hama governorate occurred in Hama district, and 40 % of security incidents in Homs governorate were reported in Homs district.<sup>809</sup>

UCDP recorded 949 security events leading to fatalities during the reference period. The highest number of events was recorded in the governorates of Aleppo (241), Homs (131), Hama (109) and Deir Ez-Zor (93). The lowest number of security events were recorded in Quneitra (5), Damascus (18) and Tartous (19) governorates. For 21 of the events recorded by UCDP the exact location within a governorate was not specified. A high number of security events leading to fatalities recorded by UCDP (39 % of all security incidents) were events in which the parties responsible could not be identified.<sup>810</sup>

<sup>808</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East (28 February 2025), [url](#)

<sup>809</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Middle East (28 February 2025), [url](#)

<sup>810</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 November 2024 to 28 February 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 7 March 2025.



**Figure 3. UCDP security events leading to fatalities at governorate level between 1 November 2024 and 28 February 2025<sup>811</sup>**

#### 4.5.2. Tactics and weapons used

During the course of the large-scale military offensive (“Operation Deterrence of Aggression”) that was launched in November 2024 by HTS<sup>812</sup> and several HTS-led armed opposition groups and was supported by Türkiye-backed factions,<sup>813</sup> opposition forces carried out attacks using medium and heavy weaponry,<sup>814</sup> as well as drones developed by the HTS’s own drone unit.<sup>815</sup> Multiple ground-based strikes<sup>816</sup> by HTS left four civilians dead in Aleppo city.<sup>817</sup>

On the other hand, forces of the Assad government and affiliated militia carried out large-scale ground-based rocket and artillery strikes and airstrikes,<sup>818</sup> while Russian forces resumed airstrikes, causing dozens of civilian deaths, including in Idlib city and western rural Aleppo’s Al-Atareb and Darat Izza towns.<sup>819</sup> Assad’s forces, known for their random use of drones

<sup>811</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 November 2024 to 28 February 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 7 March 2025.

<sup>812</sup> SOHR, “Putin-Erdogan” area collapses in November 2024 | 351 fatalities in acts of violence and over 200 airstrikes by fighter jets, 1 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>813</sup> Al Jazeera, What happened in Syria? How did al-Assad fall?, 8 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>814</sup> Al Jazeera, Dozens killed as armed groups attack Syrian military in northern Aleppo, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>815</sup> Guardian (The), Syrian rebels reveal year-long plot that brought down Assad regime, 13 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>816</sup> OHCHR, Syria: Tragic escalation in hostilities, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>817</sup> OHCHR, Syria: Tragic escalation in hostilities, 3 December 2024, [url](#); SOHR, “Putin-Erdogan” area collapses in November 2024 | 351 fatalities in acts of violence and over 200 airstrikes by fighter jets, 1 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>818</sup> SOHR, “Putin-Erdogan” area collapses in November 2024 | 351 fatalities in acts of violence and over 200 airstrikes by fighter jets, 1 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>819</sup> SOHR, “Putin-Erdogan” area collapses in November 2024 | 351 fatalities in acts of violence and over 200 airstrikes by fighter jets, 1 December 2024, [url](#)



mainly targeting civilians,<sup>820</sup> had already escalated their suicide drone attacks against opposition-held areas in southern Idlib and western Aleppo in November 2024.<sup>821</sup> According to UN figures, multiple aerial strikes by pro-Assad forces in Idlib city killed 22 civilians on 1 December 2024 as they struck a local market and five of the city's residential areas.<sup>822</sup> According to SOHR, Iran-backed militias in Syria and Iraq conducted seven attacks on three bases of the US-led Global Coalition on Syrian territory in November 2024 (Koniko gas field, Al-Tanf garrison, and Al-Shaddadi).<sup>823</sup> For more information, see section [4.1](#) of this report.

Meanwhile, airstrikes conducted by the US-led Global coalition and Israeli forces the same month resulted in the deaths of dozens of Iran-backed militiamen, while also killing some Lebanese Hezbollah fighters and unidentified individuals. Attacks targeting Iran-backed militias in Deir Ez-Zor in November 2024 further involved unidentified aircraft and drone usage. According to SOHR, airstrikes launched by Israeli forces in November 2024 left 16 civilians dead.<sup>824</sup> For more information, see sections [3.1.4.](#), [3.1.5.](#), [4.3.](#) and [4.4](#) of this report.

Following the ouster of Assad in December 2024, HTS operations targeting loyalists of the former government saw the deployment of tanks, attack helicopters,<sup>825</sup> drones<sup>826</sup> and long-range rockets<sup>827</sup> and took the form of raids<sup>828</sup> and combing operations. Meanwhile, the cities on the coast witnessed assaults and targeted attacks by remnants of the former Assad government.<sup>829</sup> Likely former pro-Assad gangs (*shabiha*) were suspected of carrying out ambushes against HTS-led security forces.<sup>830</sup> Attacks targeting the HTS/MOA involved the use of explosives<sup>831</sup> and small firearms.<sup>832</sup> Unknown armed men reportedly dressed in military fatigues and impersonating security forces in one instance committed over a dozen killings in Fahl (Homs) in retaliation for the new transitional administration's violent crackdown on *shabiha*.<sup>833</sup> For more information, see section [4.1](#) of this report.

Turkish-backed SNA factions and SDF units continued to engage in armed confrontations and attacks using remote violence.<sup>834</sup> The Turkish armed forces launched multiple air and drone attacks against SDF troops in the countryside of Aleppo, Raqqa, and Hasaka, including in eastern rural Aleppo's Tishreen Dam area. These aerial attacks were carried out alongside

<sup>820</sup> Enab Baladi, Increasing interest in drones in northern Syria, 26 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>821</sup> Lister, C., Syria Weekly: Regime suicide drone use in NW Syria: Nov 3-9, 2024, 11 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>822</sup> OHCHR, Syria: Tragic escalation in hostilities, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>823</sup> SOHR, Iran's presence in Syria in November 2024 | Nearly 180 fatalities in aerial and ground attacks...evacuation of positions, withdrawals and redeployments in different positions across Syria, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>824</sup> SOHR, Iran's presence in Syria in November 2024 | Nearly 180 fatalities in aerial and ground attacks...evacuation of positions, withdrawals and redeployments in different positions across Syria, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>825</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 14, 2025, 14 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>826</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, January 14, 2025, 14 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1; ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 27, 2024, 27 December 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>827</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 27, 2024, 27 December 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>828</sup> Enab Baladi, How effective are security campaigns against remnants of Assad's regime?, 22 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>829</sup> Enab Baladi, Syria: Ongoing security campaigns against former regime elements, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>830</sup> Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>831</sup> Al Jazeera, مقتل قيادي عسكري باشنباكات مع "فلول النظام" باللاذقية [Military leader killed in clashes with "regime remnants" in Latakia], 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>832</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 21, 2024, 21 December 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>833</sup> Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>834</sup> ACLED, Syria: Which groups have been fighting each other and where?, 11 December 2024, [url](#)



artillery attacks on SDF positions by ground-based SNA fighters.<sup>835</sup> Turkish artillery shelling,<sup>836</sup> drone strikes<sup>837</sup> and airstrikes<sup>838</sup> reportedly left dozens of civilians dead,<sup>839</sup> including in attacks targeting protesters who had gathered near the Tishreen Dam. As part of the ongoing skirmishes in the Tishreen Dam area, the SDF in turn carried out ambushes,<sup>840</sup> artillery strikes<sup>841</sup> and drone strikes.<sup>842</sup> There were reports of dozens of casualties both among the SNA<sup>843</sup> and Kurdish forces.<sup>844</sup> The Manbij area further witnessed a series of unclaimed car bombings,<sup>845</sup> which in total left over a dozen civilians dead.<sup>846</sup> For more information, see sections [4.2](#) and [4.3](#) of this report.

Following the fall of Assad, Israeli airstrikes saw a significant escalation, reaching nearly 500 attacks by 18 December 2024, according to SOHR records. Launched across multiple governorates,<sup>847</sup> these strikes targeted military assets<sup>848</sup> and caused a number of civilian deaths.<sup>849</sup> After Assad's fall, Israel deployed tanks and bulldozers in its ground incursions into parts of Quneitra and Dar'a, while Israeli airstrikes targeted an HTS-led convoy, killing a town mayor.<sup>850</sup> Meanwhile, US airstrikes on 8 December 2024 hit over 75 ISIL targets<sup>851</sup> and aerial

---

<sup>835</sup> Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>836</sup> SOHR, Military escalation | Ten civilians killed under Turkish ground shelling on Manbij, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>837</sup> Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#); Kurdistan 24, Turkey Escalates Drone Operations in Rojava, Targets Critical Infrastructure, 11 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>838</sup> Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>839</sup> Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, [url](#); Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#); Kurdistan 24, Turkey Escalates Drone Operations in Rojava, Targets Critical Infrastructure, 11 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Military escalation | Ten civilians killed under Turkish ground shelling on Manbij, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>840</sup> Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>841</sup> ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 21, 2024, 21 December 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>842</sup> Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 24, 2024, 24 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>843</sup> Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Leaving 11 militiamen dead and wounded | Clashes erupt between SDF and "National Army" factions in Manbij and frontline of Teshreen dam, 30 December 2024, [url](#); NPA, [قسد تعلن مقتل 17 مسلحاً موالياً لتركيا في محيط سد تشرين](#) [SDF announces the killing of 17 pro-Turkish militants in the vicinity of Tishreen Dam], 28 December 2024, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 24, 2024, 24 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>844</sup> SOHR, Leaving 11 militiamen dead and wounded | Clashes erupt between SDF and "National Army" factions in Manbij and frontline of Teshreen dam, 30 December 2024, [url](#); ISW and CTP, Iran Update, December 24, 2024, 24 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>845</sup> UN News, Deadly attacks in eastern Aleppo highlight Syria's vulnerability, 4 February 2025, [url](#); MEE, Syria: Manbij car bomb attack suspends SDF-Damascus talks, 4 February 2025, [url](#); UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 13 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 29 January 2025), 30 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>846</sup> MEE, Syria: Manbij car bomb attack suspends SDF-Damascus talks, 4 February 2025, [url](#); DW, Syria car bomb explosion kills at least 20, 3 February 2025, [url](#); UN News, Deadly attacks in eastern Aleppo highlight Syria's vulnerability, 4 February 2025, [url](#); UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 13 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 29 January 2025), 30 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>847</sup> SOHR, Since fall of Al-Assad's regime | Nearly 500 Israeli airstrikes destroy the remaining weapons of army of future Syria, 18 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>848</sup> SOHR, Since fall of Al-Assad's regime | Nearly 500 Israeli airstrikes destroy the remaining weapons of army of future Syria, 18 December 2024, [url](#); UN News, Syria: UN chief calls for urgent de-escalation by Israeli forces, withdrawal from Golan buffer zone, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>849</sup> AP, Syria's de facto leader says it could take up to 4 years to hold elections, 29 December 2024, [url](#); SOHR, Since fall of Al-Assad's regime | Nearly 500 Israeli airstrikes destroy the remaining weapons of army of future Syria, 18 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>850</sup> Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>851</sup> USCENTCOM, U.S. Central Command conducts dozens of airstrikes to eliminate ISIS camps in central Syria, 8 December 2024, [url](#)



strikes by the Global Coalition continued into early 2025.<sup>852</sup> For more information on Israeli operations during the reference period, see section [4.4](#) of this report.

At communal level, exchanges of gunfire were reported between tribal groups in Al-Bukamal city (early November 2024), resulting in injuries among several tribesmen. Further armed clashes were reported between Lebanese Hezbollah/Lebanese tribesmen and local villagers in the countryside of Al-Qusayr city<sup>853</sup> in southwestern Homs,<sup>854</sup> resulting in several deaths among villagers.<sup>855</sup>

### 4.5.3. Civilian fatalities

Between November 2024 and February 2025, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR) recorded a total of 1 032 civilian fatalities (including 165 children and 110 women). 71 civilians were killed in November 2024, followed by 503 in December 2024, 236 in January 2025, and 222 in February 2025. During this four-month period, most civilian fatalities were recorded in Aleppo (374), Hama (150) and Idlib (132).<sup>856</sup>

The number of civilian fatalities recorded by the SNHR during this four-month period surpassed the total number recorded during the first ten months of 2024 (690 deaths) and amounted to 395 % of the number of civilian deaths recorded during the four-month period immediately preceding the reference period of this report (261 fatalities). The main parties responsible were unidentified parties, including landmines of unidentified sources and gunfire/bombings/killings by unidentified parties (causing 543 civilian fatalities between November 2024 and February 2025), (former) Assad government forces (causing 243 civilian fatalities between November 2024 and January 2025, including 223 in December), the SDF (causing 145 fatalities between November 2024 and February 2025, including 108 in December), and the SNA (causing 15 fatalities across the four-month period).<sup>857</sup>

<sup>852</sup> SOHR, Second attack in 2025 | Strikes by Coalition drone leave three people dead and wounded in Idlib countryside, 15 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>853</sup> SOHR, Iran's presence in Syria in November 2024 | Nearly 180 fatalities in aerial and ground attacks...evacuation of positions, withdrawals and redeployments in different positions across Syria, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

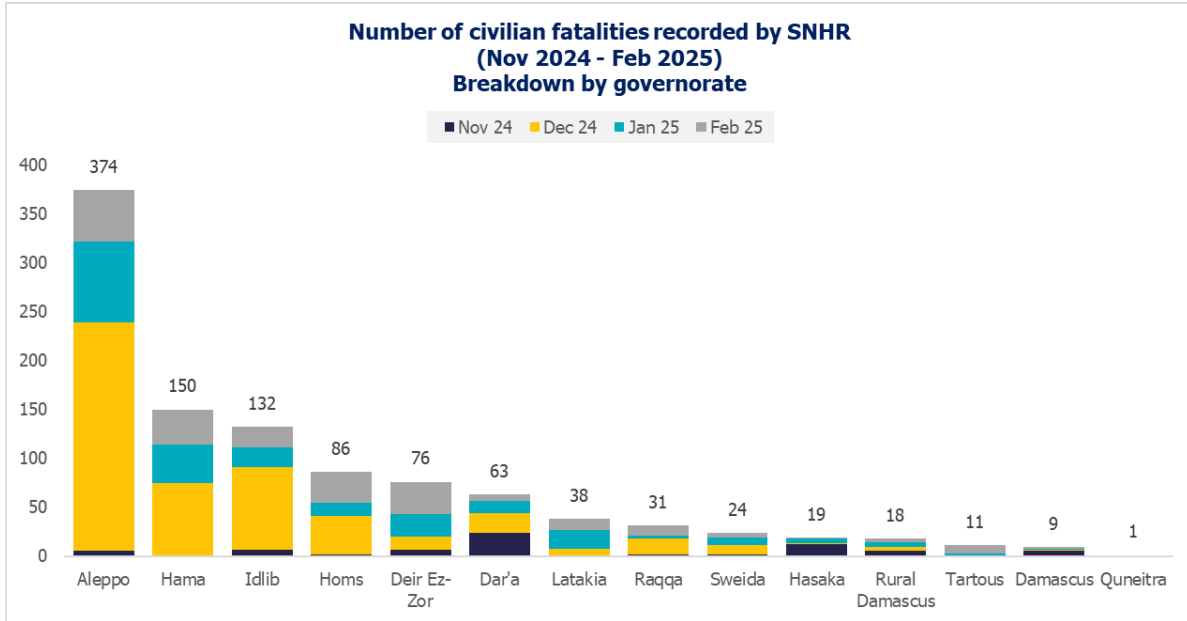
<sup>854</sup> SOHR, Mostly civilians | 12 killed and nine injured by Israeli airstrikes on Al-Qaseer near borders between Syria and Lebanon, 1 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>855</sup> SOHR, Iran's presence in Syria in November 2024 | Nearly 180 fatalities in aerial and ground attacks...evacuation of positions, withdrawals and redeployments in different positions across Syria, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>856</sup> SNHR, 222 Civilian Deaths, Including 17 Children and 37 Women, as well as Nine Deaths due to Torture, Recorded in February 2025 in Syria, 1 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9; SNHR, 236 Civilian Deaths, Including 32 Children and 18 Women, as well as One Woman's Death due to Torture, Documented in Syria in January 2025, 21 Civilians Were Killed by SDF, 1 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 6-7; SNHR, 1,264 Civilian Deaths, Including 242 Children and 118 Women, as well as 86 Deaths due to Torture, Documented in Syria in 2024, 2 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9; SNHR, 71 Civilian Deaths, Documented in Syria in November 2024, Including of 20 Children and Six Women, With Three Dying due to Torture, 1 December 2024, [url](#), pp. 6-7

<sup>857</sup> EUAA analysis based on: SNHR, 222 Civilian Deaths, Including 17 Children and 37 Women, as well as Nine Deaths due to Torture, Recorded in February 2025 in Syria, 1 March 2025, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, 236 Civilian Deaths, Including 32 Children and 18 Women, as well as One Woman's Death due to Torture, Documented in Syria in January 2025, 21 Civilians Were Killed by SDF, 1 February 2025, [url](#), p. 6; SNHR, 1,264 Civilian Deaths, Including 242 Children and 118 Women, as well as 86 Deaths due to Torture, Documented in Syria in 2024, 2 January 2025, [url](#), p. 8; SNHR, 71 Civilian Deaths, Documented in Syria in November 2024, Including of 20 Children and Six Women, With Three Dying due to Torture, 1 December 2024, [url](#), p. 6



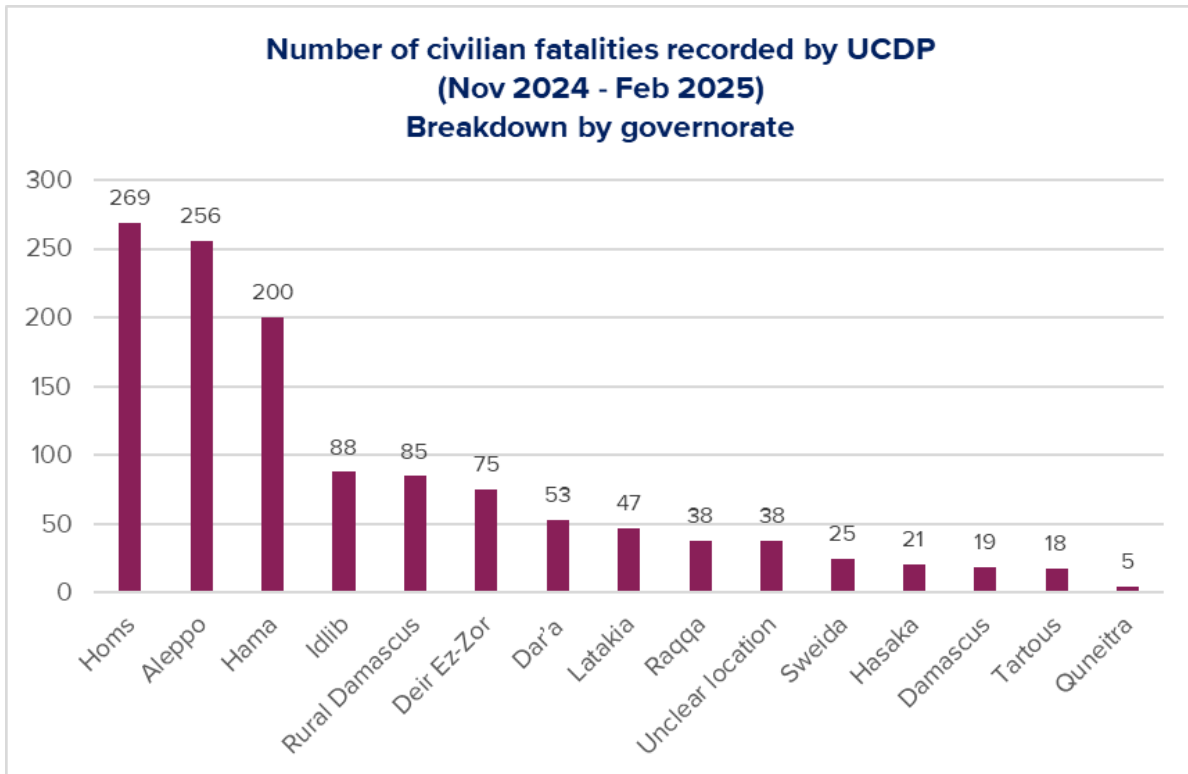


**Figure 4. Number of civilian fatalities recorded by SNHR (November 2024-February 2025). Breakdown by governorate<sup>858</sup>**

For the same period, UCDP recorded 949 security events leading to 3 350 fatalities in Syria, out of which 1 237 were civilian fatalities. The largest number of civilian fatalities were recorded in Homs (269), Aleppo (256), and Hama governorates (200). The lowest numbers of security events were recorded in Quneitra (5), Tartous (18), and Damascus (19) governorates.<sup>859</sup>

<sup>858</sup> EUAA analysis based on: SNHR, 236 Civilian Deaths, Including 32 Children and 18 Women, as well as One Woman’s Death due to Torture, Documented in Syria in January 2025, 21 Civilians Were Killed by SDF, 1 February 2025, [url](#), p. 7; SNHR, 1,264 Civilian Deaths, Including 242 Children and 118 Women, as well as 86 Deaths due to Torture, Documented in Syria in 2024, 2 January 2025, [url](#), p. 9; SNHR, 71 Civilian Deaths, Documented in Syria in November 2024, Including of 20 Children and Six Women, With Three Dying due to Torture, 1 December 2024, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>859</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 November 2024 to 28 February 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 7 March 2025.



**Figure 5. Number of civilian fatalities recorded by UCDP (1 November 2024 – 28 February 2025). Breakdown by governorate<sup>860</sup>**

#### 4.5.4. Conflict related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war

During the escalation of hostilities that began in northwestern Syria on 27 November 2024, OHCHR noted that attacks by both HTS and pro-Assad forces caused destruction and damage to healthcare facilities, educational institutions, food markets and other civilian structures such as houses, shops and a mosque, including in Idlib city.<sup>861</sup> Clashes reported in Idlib governorate on 1 and 2 December 2024 affected four schools, two IDP camps, a water station,<sup>862</sup> several healthcare facilities<sup>863</sup> and residential areas.<sup>864</sup>

After the fall of the Assad government, ongoing hostilities, including in southern Syria as well as Homs, Tartous and Latakia governorates, continued to cause damage to residential houses, healthcare facilities, bridges,<sup>865</sup> markets, businesses<sup>866</sup>/shops, and other civilian

<sup>860</sup> EUAA analysis based on UCDP data. UCDP, data covering from 1 November 2024 to 28 February 2025 provided by courtesy of UCDP in an email, 7 March 2025.

<sup>861</sup> OHCHR, Syria: Tragic escalation in hostilities, 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>862</sup> UNOCHA, North-west Syria: Escalation of Hostilities - Flash Update No. 2, 2 December 2024, [url](#), pp. 1-2

<sup>863</sup> UNOCHA, North-west Syria: Escalation of Hostilities - Flash Update No. 2, 2 December 2024, [url](#), p. 2; Guardian (The), Airstrikes hit hospitals in Syria's Idlib region as insurgents fight Assad forces, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>864</sup> Guardian (The), Airstrikes hit hospitals in Syria's Idlib region as insurgents fight Assad forces, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>865</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 6 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 16 December 2024), 16 December 2024, [url](#), pp. 1-2

<sup>866</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 13 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 29 January 2025), 30 January 2025, [url](#), p. 3

infrastructure.<sup>867</sup> Damage inflicted to the Tishreen Dam on 10 December 2024 left the facility non-operational as of late January 2025, depriving some 413 000 people around Manbij and Kobane of water and electricity, according to UNOCHA.<sup>868</sup> There were also reports of destruction of civilian properties in Quneitra governorate,<sup>869</sup> while water stations were damaged by hostilities in Aleppo,<sup>870</sup> Raqqqa, Hasaka, Deir Ez-Zor.<sup>871</sup>

Unexploded remnants of war continued to have a deadly impact on civilians.<sup>872</sup> Areas most at risk include former front lines and areas that witnessed intense hostilities, while ongoing fighting in parts of northeastern Syria has added further layers of contamination. The UN noted that deaths and injuries by contamination with explosive remnants were being reported on a weekly<sup>873</sup>/near-daily basis across the country, pointing to more than 430 reported deaths and injuries between December 2024 and mid-February 2025.<sup>874</sup> Based on its monitoring work, the HALO Trust, a UK-based NGO specialised in the disposal of unexploded ordnance, estimated that between 8 December 2024 and 2 March 2025, 640 persons had been killed or injured by landmines and other explosive remnants. However, the source pointed out that this was likely an underestimate given that Syria lacked a central record of accidents occurring across the country.<sup>875</sup> Meanwhile, statistics from the Syrian Civil Defence consulted by Enab Baladi held that 40 people had been killed by war remnants between the launch of ‘Operation Deterrence of Aggression’ and 19 January 2025, while another 65 civilians had been injured.<sup>876</sup>

SOHR reported that explosions of remnants of war (which based on its definition include old landmines and unexploded bombs, IEDs, shells, grenades, and projectiles)<sup>877</sup> had caused 143 deaths and 172 injuries among civilians between 1 January and 7 February 2025. Broken down by area of control, 106 of these 143 civilian deaths (74 %) occurred in regions controlled by the new transitional administration, while areas controlled by the SDF and by SNA factions accounted for 10 (7 %) and 27 deaths (19 %), respectively.<sup>878</sup> While SOHR has published no such data on December 2024, it recorded nine civilian deaths and 23 civilian injuries from unexploded war remnants during November 2024. Seven of these nine fatalities were

---

<sup>867</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 12 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 21 January 2025), 22 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 1-2

<sup>868</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 13 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 29 January 2025), 30 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 7

<sup>869</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 8 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 23 December 2024), 23 December 2024, [url](#), pp. 1-2

<sup>870</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 10 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 7 January 2025), 7 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>871</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 12 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 21 January 2025), 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>872</sup> UNHCR, Regional Flash Update #7 – Syria situation crisis, 27 December 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>873</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 12 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 21 January 2025), 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>874</sup> UN News, Syria: Mine casualties persist as UN partners scale up clearance operations, 17 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>875</sup> HALO Trust (The), Syria, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>876</sup> Enab Baladi, War remnants kill 40 Syrians in less than two months, 20 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>877</sup> SOHR, War ordnance casualties in November 2024 | 32 civilians killed and injured in explosions of war ordnance across Syria, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>878</sup> SOHR, Old ordnance | Five civilians killed and two others injured in western Manbij countryside, 7 February 2025, [url](#)



recorded in areas that were under the control of the Assad government at the time, while the remaining two were recorded in HTS-held areas.<sup>879</sup>

As UNOCHA reported at the end of January 2025, since November 2024, a total of 136 minefields and points of mine presence have been newly identified across Idlib, Aleppo, Hama, Deir Ez-Zor, and Latakia.<sup>880</sup>

#### 4.5.5. Displacement and return

The number of individuals newly displaced by conflict since 27 November 2024 saw an initial large wave that peaked at 1.1 million people on 12 December.<sup>881</sup> These initial displacements, driven by fear of the escalating armed conflict,<sup>882</sup> were mainly recorded in Hama and Aleppo,<sup>883</sup> including in Aleppo city, western Aleppo<sup>884</sup> and notably Tall Rifaat<sup>885</sup> and Manbij,<sup>886</sup> following the takeover of the two cities by Türkiye-backed armed factions.<sup>887</sup>

UN sources subsequently estimated the number of newly displaced since late November 2024 who remained in displacement at 859 460 as of 18 December 2024,<sup>888</sup> around 627 000 on 10 January 2025,<sup>889</sup> and 650 000 as of 5 February 2025.<sup>890</sup> In early 2025, UNOCHA noted additional waves of conflict-related displacements from the Manbij area, with up to 15 000 displacements in mid-January 2025,<sup>891</sup> followed by more than 25 000 later the same month.<sup>892</sup> Sources estimated the number of people who had fled the SNA offensive in northern Syria in early December 2024 at between 100 000<sup>893</sup> and 120 000.<sup>894</sup>

<sup>879</sup> SOHR, War ordnance casualties in November 2024 | 32 civilians killed and injured in explosions of war ordnance across Syria, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>880</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 13 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 29 January 2025), 30 January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>881</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 10 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 7 January 2025), 7 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>882</sup> ACAPS, Syria: Humanitarian impact overview (October–December 2024), 6 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>883</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 10 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 7 January 2025), 7 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>884</sup> TNH, Russian jets pound Idlib after Syrian rebels' Aleppo gains, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>885</sup> Al Jazeera, Returning home to Tal Rifaat, Syrians find ruins and rubble, 10 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>886</sup> SOHR, Military escalation | Ten civilians killed under Turkish ground shelling on Manbij, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>887</sup> Al Jazeera, Returning home to Tal Rifaat, Syrians find ruins and rubble, 10 February 2025, [url](#); SOHR, Military escalation | Ten civilians killed under Turkish ground shelling on Manbij, 9 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>888</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic: Internal displacement within Syria as of 18 December 2024, 23 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>889</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 11 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 13 January 2025), 14 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>890</sup> UNHCR, Regional Flash Update #13 - Syria situation crisis, 7 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>891</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 12 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 21 January 2025), 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

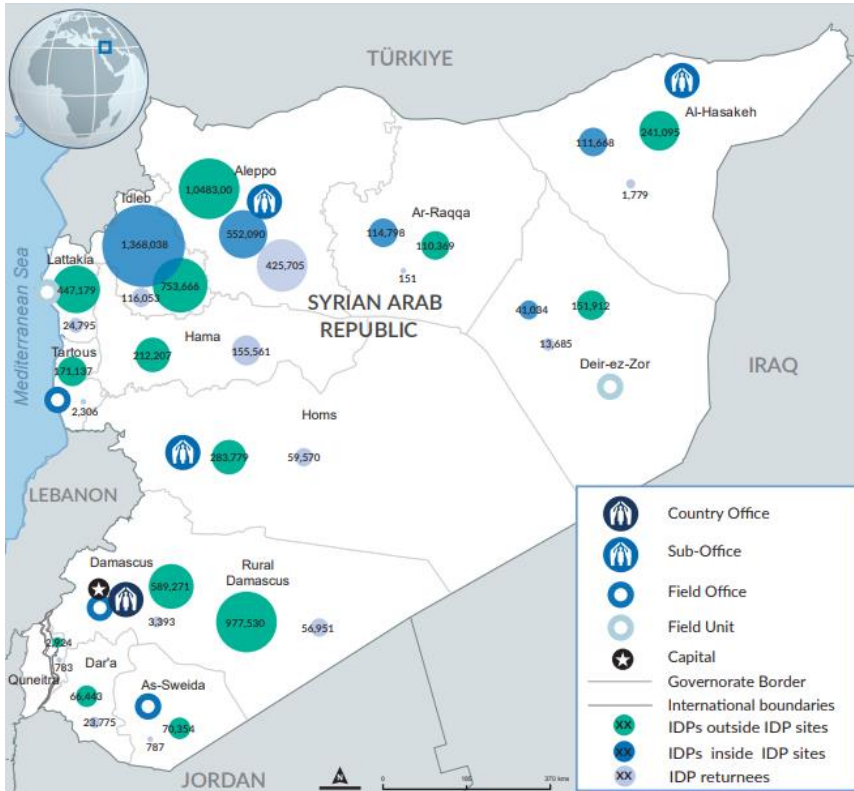
<sup>892</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 13 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 29 January 2025), 30 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>893</sup> Le Monde, In northeastern Syria, 'the war is not over', 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>894</sup> Syria Direct, Afrin's displaced torn between another exile and danger in northern Aleppo, 4 December 2024, [url](#)



Following the downfall of Assad, returning IDPs moved to reach areas previously controlled by the former government, including in Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and Damascus.<sup>895</sup> UN sources estimated that the number of newly displaced people returning to their home bases had increased to more than 522 000 by 10 January 2025.<sup>896</sup> At the same time, return movements from IDP camps remained ‘steady but minimal’, with the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster quoted as saying in late January 2025 that around 57 000 people had departed from camps since 3 December 2024. These returnees were mainly comprised of individual families or men returning to reunite with their families or assess the condition of their homes.<sup>897</sup>



**Map 6: Overview of IDPs and IDP returnees by governorate**<sup>898</sup>

According to UNHCR estimations, by 26 February 2025, an estimated 885 294 IDPs had returned, while about 7.4 million remained internally displaced. The governorates that saw the largest share of IDP returns were Aleppo with 425 705 IDP returns, followed by Hama with 155 561 and Idlib with 116 053 IDP returns.<sup>899</sup>

As UNOCHA noted, reported concerns influencing IDPs’ return decisions included destruction of property, inadequate infrastructure, insecurity, as well as access to civil documentation and judicial services, including documents regarding housing, land, and property rights (not all civil

<sup>895</sup> ACAPS, Syria: Humanitarian impact overview (October–December 2024), 6 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>896</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 11 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 13 January 2025), 14 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>897</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 13 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 29 January 2025), 30 January 2025, [url](#), p. 3

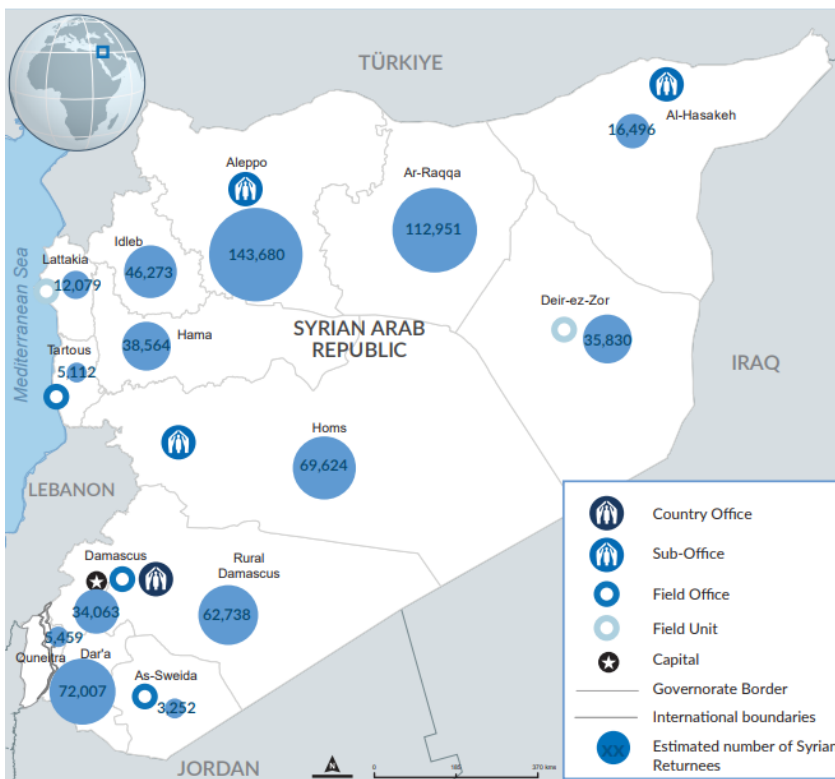
<sup>898</sup> UNHCR, Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview, 2 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>899</sup> UNHCR, Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview, 2 March 2025, [url](#)

registries and courts were operational as of the end of January 2025).<sup>900</sup> Another critical concern that has been raised was contamination with unexploded war remnants.<sup>901</sup>

#### 4.5.6. Returns from abroad

According to UNHCR estimates, between 8 December 2024 and late February 2025, some 297 292 Syrians returned to Syria from abroad. Of these refugees, 53 % returned from Lebanon, 25 % from Türkiye and 14 % from Jordan.<sup>902</sup> Voluntary returns from Türkiye, amounting to 35 114 as of 30 December 2024 according to Turkish government figures,<sup>903</sup> mainly involved Syrians returning alone, including persons seeking to assess the situation in Syria prior to reuniting with their families.<sup>904</sup>



**Map 7: Overview of returns by governorate**<sup>905</sup>

UNHCR indicated that, from the beginning of 2024 until late February 2025, the governorates where returnees from abroad mainly returned were Aleppo (with an estimated 143 680

<sup>900</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 13 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 29 January 2025), 30 January 2025, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>901</sup> UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 13 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 29 January 2025), 30 January 2025, [url](#), p. 4; Enab Baladi, War remnants kill 40 Syrians in less than two months, 20 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>902</sup> UNHCR, Syria governorates of return overview- 27 February 2025, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>903</sup> UNHCR, Regional Flash Update #8 - Syria situation crisis, 2 January 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>904</sup> UNHCR, Regional Flash Update #11 - Syria situation crisis, 23 January 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>905</sup> UNHCR, Syria governorates of return overview- 27 February 2025, 27 February 2025, [url](#)



returnees) and Raqqa (112 951 returnees), followed by Dar'a (72 007), Homs (69 624), Rural Damascus (62 738) and Idlib (46 273).<sup>906</sup>

It is not clear if all the returns are permanent. According to a Refugees International report, many Syrians return to inspect their land, evaluate security and economic conditions following the Assad regime's collapse, or reunite with family. For others, returning is a necessity rather than a choice, as deteriorating conditions in host countries - marked by economic hardship, rising living costs, and limited opportunities - have made life increasingly unsustainable.<sup>907</sup>

Information on the treatment of returnees from abroad could not be found within the time constraints of this report.

---

<sup>906</sup> UNHCR, Syria governorates of return overview- 27 February 2025, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>907</sup> Refugees International, Foreign Affairs: Syria's Biggest Problem: How to Resettle Millions of Refugees and Displaced People, 11 February 2025, [url](#)





# Annex 1: Bibliography

## Public sources

AA (Anadolu Ajansı), Occupying Israeli forces open fire on Syrians protesting seizure of 2 villages in Daraa province, 21 December 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/occupying-israeli-forces-open-fire-on-syrians-protesting-seizure-of-2-villages-in-daraa-province/3430418>, accessed 7 March 2025

Abbas, S.A., The Fall of Syria and Iran's Strategy of Relying on Allies, Manara Magazine, 13 January 2025, <https://manaramagazine.org/2025/01/the-fall-of-syria-and-irans-strategy-of-relying-on-allies/>, accessed 21 February 2025

ACAPS, Syria: Humanitarian impact overview (October–December 2024), 6 January 2025, [https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data\\_Product/Main\\_media/20250106\\_ACAPS\\_thematic\\_reports\\_Syria\\_humanitarian\\_impact\\_overview\\_q4\\_2024\\_.pdf](https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20250106_ACAPS_thematic_reports_Syria_humanitarian_impact_overview_q4_2024_.pdf), accessed 21 February 2025

ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project), Curated Data Files, Middle East (28 February 2025), <https://acleddata.com/data-export-tool/>, accessed 7 March 2025

ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project), Regional Overview Middle East – February 2025, 7 February 2025, <https://acleddata.com/2025/02/07/middle-east-overview-february-2025/>, accessed 21 February 2025

ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project), Regional Overview Middle East November 2024, 6 December 2024, <https://acleddata.com/2024/12/06/middle-east-overview-november-2024/>, accessed 7 March 2025

ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project), Syria: HTS-led rebel forces capture over 200 locations, while Syrian and Russian airstrikes increase, 2 December 2024, <https://acleddata.com/2024/12/02/syrian-hts-led-forces-capture-over-200-locations-from-assad-forces-in-aleppo-idlib-and-hama/>, accessed 7 March 2025

ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project), Syria: Israeli airstrikes reach an all-time high after Assad regime falls, 19 December 2024, <https://acleddata.com/2024/12/19/syria-israeli-airstrikes-reach-an-all-time-high-after-assad-regime-falls/>, accessed 21 February 2025

ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project), Syria: Which groups have been fighting each other and where?, 11 December 2024, <https://acleddata.com/2024/12/11/syria-which-groups-have-been-fighting-each-other-and-where/>, accessed 21 February 2025

AFP (Agence France-Presse), Israel army says troops shot Syrian protester in leg, 20 December 2024, available by subscription at: <https://www.dowjones.com/professional/factiva/>, accessed 21 February 2025





AFP (Agence France-Presse), South Syria fighters reluctant to give up weapons: spokesman, 8 January 2025, available by subscription at: <https://www.dowjones.com/professional/factiva/>, accessed 21 February 2025

AFP (Agence France-Presse), Syria ex-rebel military chief says to dissolve armed wing, 18 December 2024, , available by subscription at: <https://www.dowjones.com/professional/factiva/>, accessed 3 March 2025

Al Arabiya, Syria monitor says alleged al-Assad loyalist 'executed' in public, 10 January 2025, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2025/01/10/syria-monitor-says-alleged-al-assad-loyalist-executed-in-public->, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Arabiya, Syria's new elections and draft constitution: Al-Sharaa outlines timeline, 29 December 2024, <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2024/12/29/syria-s-new-elections-and-draft-constitution-al-sharaa-outlines-timeline>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, "إدارة العمليات العسكرية" .. قادت عملية ردع العدوان التي أسقطت بشار الأسد [The Military Operations Administration – leaders of the Deterrence of Aggression that overthrew Bashar Al-Asad], 31 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2024/11/30/%D8%BA%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%AA%D8%AD-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%B9%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Analysis: Russia, Iran strengthen alliance after Syria setback, 18 January 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/18/iran-russia-analysis-syria-setback>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Analysis: Turkiye's road ahead in a post-Assad Syria, 7 January 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/7/turkiyes-road-ahead-in-a-post-assad-syria>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Bashar al-Assad releases first statement since he fled Syria, 16 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/16/bashar-al-assad-releases-first-statement-since-he-fled-syria>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Dozens killed as armed groups attack Syrian military in northern Aleppo, 28 November 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/28/dozen-killed-as-armed-groups-attack-syrian-military-in-northern-aleppo>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, How al-Assad's regime fell: Key moments in the fall of Syria's 'tyrant', 10 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/10/syria>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Iran says Syria's future unclear after foreign minister hits back, 25 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/25/iran-says-syrias-future-unclear-after-foreign-minister-hits-back>, accessed 21 February 2025





Al Jazeera, Israel grabs land in Syria's Golan Heights, warns villagers to stay home, 8 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/8/israel-seizes-buffer-zone-in-syrias-golan-heights-after-al-assad-falls>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Israel has declared war on the promise of a strong, democratic Syria, 15 January 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2025/1/15/israel-has-declared-war-on-the-promise-of-a-strong-democratic-syria>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Israel launches air attacks near Syria's Tartous, 3 March 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/3/israel-launches-air-attacks-near-syrias-tartous>, accessed 7 March 2025

Al Jazeera, Israeli forces fire at Syrian protesters in Deraa, wounding one, 20 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/20/israeli-forces-fire-at-syrian-protesters-in-deraa-wounding-one>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Key takeaways from Syria's National Dialogue conference, 26 February 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/26/key-takeaways-from-syrias-national-dialogue-conference>, accessed 3 March 2025

Al Jazeera, Maysaa Sabrine becomes first woman to lead Syria's central bank, 30 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/30/maysaa-sabrine-becomes-first-syrian-woman-to-lead-central-bank>, accessed 10 February 2025

Al Jazeera, President al-Sharaa and no more Baath party: What else has Syria announced?, 29 January 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/29/president-al-sharaa-and-no-more-baath-party-what-else-has-syria-announced>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Rebuilding Syria's economy: Can stability return after war?, 8 January 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2025/1/8/rebuilding-syrias-economy-can-stability-return-after-war>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Returning home to Tal Rifaat, Syrians find ruins and rubble, 10 February 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2025/2/10/returning-home-to-tal-rifaat-syrians-find-ruins-and-rubble>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Satellite images show Israel building military bases in Syria buffer zone, 3 February 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/3/satellite-images-show-israel-building-military-bases-in-syria-buffer-zone>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Syria says 14 policemen killed in ambush by forces loyal to al-Assad, 26 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/26/syrian-security-personnel-killed-in-ambush-by-former-regime-forces>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Syria's Ahmed al-Sharaa named president for transitional period, 29 January 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/29/syrias-ahmed-al-sharaa-named-president-for-transitional-period>, accessed 21 February 2025





Al Jazeera, Syria's new rulers must not repeat the past mistakes of Lebanon and Iraq, 16 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/12/16/syrias-new-rulers-must-not-repeat-the-past-mistakes-of-lebanon-and-iraq>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Syrian authorities appoint HTS figures as foreign, defence ministers, 21 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/21/syrias-new-rulers-appoint-hts-figures-as-foreign-defence-ministers>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Syrian authorities crack down on 'remnants' of Bashar al-Assad's rule, 28 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/28/syrian-authorities-crack-down-on-remnants-of-bashar-al-assads-rule>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Syrian fighters name Mohammed al-Bashir as caretaker prime minister, 10 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/10/rebel-backed-mohamed-al-bashir-appointed-syrias-caretaker-prime-minister>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Syria's govt pledges greater women's inclusion in social and political spheres, 31 January 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYPo1foloBM>, accessed 3 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Syrian intelligence says it thwarted ISIL attempt to blow up Shia shrine, 11 January 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/11/syrian-intelligence-says-it-thwarted-isil-attempt-to-blow-up-shia-shrine>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, Turkiye threatens military action against Kurdish forces in Syria, 8 January 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/8/turkiye-threatens-military-action-against-kurdish-forces-in-syria>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, US says it has 2,000 troops in Syria, not 900 as previously declared, 19 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/19/us-says-it-has-two-thousand-troops-in-syria-not-nine-hundred-as-previously-declared>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, What happened in Syria? How did al-Assad fall?, 8 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/8/what-happened-in-syria-has-al-assad-really-fallen>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, What is behind US strategy of keeping troops in post-Assad Syria?, 6 January 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/6/what-is-behind-us-strategy-of-keeping-troops-in-post-assad-syria>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, What to know about Syria's new caretaker government, 15 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/15/what-to-know-about-syrias-new-caretaker-government>, accessed 7 March 2025

Al Jazeera, Who are Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and the Syrian groups that took Aleppo?, 2 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/2/hayat-tahrir-al-sham-and-the-other-syrian-opposition-groups-in-aleppo>, accessed 21 February 2025





Al Jazeera, تشكيلة الوزراء في حكومة تصريف الأعمال السورية بعد خلع الأسد [The lineup of ministers in the Syrian caretaker government after the ouster of Assad], 25 December 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2024/12/25/%D8%AA%D8%B4%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%84>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, مصادر للجزيرة نت: قسد رفضت عرضا من الإدارة السورية الجديدة [Al Jazeera sources: SDF rejected an offer from the new Syrian administration], 27 January 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2025/1/26/%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D9%86%D8%AA-%D9%82%D8%B3%D8%AF-%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B6%D8%AA-%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A7-%D9%85%D9%86>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Jazeera, مقتل قيادي عسكري باشتباكات مع "فلول النظام" باللاذقية [Military leader killed in clashes with "regime remnants" in Latakia], 7 January 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2025/1/6/%D9%85%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B3%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Majalla, Syria defence chief Murhaf Abu Qasra on the plan to oust Assad, 23 January 2025, <https://en.majalla.com/node/324007/politics/syria-defence-chief-murhaf-abu-qasra-plan-oust-assad>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al Mayadeen, Syrian Christians cannot afford to keep turning the other cheek, 23 January 2025, <https://english.almayadeen.net/articles/blog/syrian-christians-cannot-afford-to-keep-turning-the-other-ch>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al-Mustafa, Muhsen, ACCORD (Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation) and Balanche, Fabrice, Syria: Humanitarian situation; Questions related to military service, especially in the Syrian Arab Army (SAA); Documentation of the COI Webinar with Fabrice Balanche und Muhsen Al-Mustafa on 24 October 2024, 19 December 2024, available at: [https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2119280/ACCORD\\_COI\\_Webinar\\_Syria\\_October\\_2024.pdf](https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2119280/ACCORD_COI_Webinar_Syria_October_2024.pdf), accessed 29 January 2025

Al-Ahmed, S., Will Damascus-SDF negotiations lead to agreement or escalation?, MEI (Middle East Institute), 24 January 2025, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/will-damascus-sdf-negotiations-lead-agreement-or-escalation>, accessed 21 February 2025

Aldoughli, R., Syria's New Rulers Are Working To Unify Military Power, New Lines Magazine, 25 February 2025, <https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/syrias-new-rulers-are-working-to-unify-military-power/>, accessed 3 March 2025



Al-Estiklal, SDF's Dilemma: Autonomy or Integration in a New Syria?, 6 January 2025, <https://alestiklal.net/en/article/sdf-s-dilemma-autonomy-or-integration-in-a-new-syria>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al-Modon, Sheikh Ibrahim al-Hafel's Recent Appearance in Damascus Sparks Speculation About Tribal Movement's Ties to the Syrian Regime, The Syrian Observer, 13 February 2024, <https://syrianobserver.com/foreign-actors/sheikh-ibrahim-al-hafels-recent-appearance-in-damascus-sparks-speculation-about-tribal-movements-ties-to-the-syrian-regime.html>, accessed 21 February 2025

Al-Monitor, Christians in Syria hopeful but wary of Sharaa's intentions, February 2025, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2025/02/christians-syria-hopeful-wary-sharaas-intentions>, accessed 5 March 2025

Al-Monitor, Jordan's king hosts Sharaa amid Israeli escalation in Syria, 26 February 2025, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2025/02/jordans-king-hosts-sharaa-amid-israeli-escalation-syria>, accessed 7 March 2025

Al-Quds Al-Arabi, سبعة جيوش وجماعة: تحديات الشرع في بناء الجيش السوري [Seven armies and a group: the challenges for Al-Shara in building a Syrian army], 11 January 2025, <https://www.alquds.co.uk/%D8%B3%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%AC%D9%8A%D9%88%D8%B4-%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7/>, accessed 21 February 2025

ANHA (Hawar News Agency), 2 fighters martyred in ISIS attacks in Deir ez-Zor, 27 December 2024, <https://hawarnews.com/en/2-fighters-martyred-in-isis-attacks-in-deir-ez-zor>, accessed 21 February 2025

ANHA (Hawar News Agency), Turkish attacks plunge 100 villages into darkness, 13 February 2025, <https://hawarnews.com/en/turkish-attacks-plunge-100-villages-into-darkness>, accessed 4 March 2025

ANHA (Hawar News Agency), Turkish occupation mercenaries continue to commit crimes in Afrin, 17 February 2025, <https://hawarnews.com/en/turkish-occupation-mercenaries-continue-to-commit-crimes-in-afrin>, accessed 7 March 2025

AP (Associated Press), Analysis: Collapse of Syria's Assad is a blow to Iran's 'Axis of Resistance', 9 December 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/iran-mideast-proxy-forces-syria-analysis-c853bf613a6d6af7f6aa99b2e60984f8>, accessed 21 February 2025

AP (Associated Press), As Israel advances on a Syrian buffer zone, it sees peril and opportunity, 10 December 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/israel-syria-attack-buffer-zone-golan-assad-6ee75aca7f5d820dd623b2aba4a62407>, accessed 21 February 2025



AP (Associated Press), Israel's military is told to prepare to defend a Druze community outside Syria's capital, 1 March 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/israel-syria-druze-military-clashes-e1d6da3cc97d121de161699d1aca61e3>, accessed 7 March 2025

AP (Associated Press), Russian government delegation makes first official visit to Syria since Assad's fall, 29 January 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/syria-russia-delegation-latakia-tartus-assad-6c11639cd061e7841b79e71f39e0b033>, accessed 21 February 2025

AP (Associated Press), Syria announces the end of a military operation against Assad-linked gunmen in a coastal region, 10 March 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/syria-hts-clashes-alawites-sunnis-lattakia-assad-b92c8532c40a3c7105ba32307ffaef48>, accessed 11 March 2025

AP (Associated Press), Syria's national dialogue conference held as the battered country seeks to rebuild, 26 February 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/syria-national-dialogue-conference-ahmad-alsharaa-0a25799b189707a500c3e5fd1b8cb692>, accessed 5 March 2025

Associated Press (The), Another car bomb in a northern Syria city kills at least 19, mostly women, 3 February 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/syria-manbij-bombing-assad-c75d54d0361f6a474b69c6d813eb5c70>, accessed 19 February 2025

AP (Associated Press), Syria's worst violence in months reopens wounds of the civil war, 10 March 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/syria-assad-hts-alawites-sunnis-clashes-228a2c6c6378e0eaf4bd8ba058310fdf>, accessed 11 March 2025

AP (Associated Press), Syria's de facto leader says it could take up to 4 years to hold elections, 29 December 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/syria-damascus-israel-airstrike-assad-dcf827005877ab76e3fd075252fd3544>, accessed 21 February 2025

AP (Associated Press), Syria's national dialogue conference held as the battered country seeks to rebuild, 25 February 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/syria-national-dialogue-conference-ahmad-alsharaa-0a25799b189707a500c3e5fd1b8cb692>, accessed 3 March 2025

AP (Associated Press), Syrian villagers near the Golan Heights say Israeli forces are banning them from their fields, 19 December 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/syria-golan-heights-israel-daraa-maariyah-occupied-d3404840f0d47ff88714938f1aa8a683>, accessed 21 February 2025

AP (Associated Press), Syria's southern rebels loom large as the country's new rulers try to form a national army, 23 January 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/syria-hts-security-fighters-assad-damascus-c65efc166f2642e0f0993a6f2d002090>, accessed 21 February 2025

AP (Associated Press), Turkey and Russia engage in delicate maneuvers over Syria after Assad's downfall, 20 December 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-turkey-putin-erdogan-syria-assad-afbfc5a271438c0c61142f8cb9fcb6f4>, accessed 21 February 2025



Associated Press, Trump's aid freeze shocks a Syria camp holding families linked to the Islamic State group, 4 February 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/us-aid-syria-camp-islamic-state-blumont-0bba169162033977c4ede5d2f31468d>, accessed 3 February 2025

Arab Weekly (The), Summary executions in Syria as chaos, score-settling overtake new rulers, 27 January 2025, <https://thearabweekly.com/summary-executions-syria-chaos-score-settling-overtake-new-rulers>, accessed 7 March 2025

Arab Weekly (The), Syria's new education minister's curriculum changes prove controversial, betray slant, 3 January 2025, <https://thearabweekly.com/syrias-new-education-ministers-curriculum-changes-prove-controversial-betray-slant>, accessed 21 February 2025

Arabi21, تركيا توجه فصائل "الجيش الوطني السوري" للانضمام إلى الإدارة الجديدة بدمشق [Türkiye directs SNA factions to join new administration in Damascus], 28 January 2025, <https://arabi21.com/story/1657502/%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%87-%D9%81%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B6%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A5%D9%84%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%AF%D9%85%D8%B4%D9%82>, accessed 21 February 2025

ARK News, Protests in Daraa Over Dismissal of 700 Health Directorate Employees, 9 January 2025, <https://www.arknews.net/en/node/57469>, accessed 21 February 2025

Asharq Al-Awsat, Syria: Nearly 300 Arrested in Crackdown on Assad Loyalists, 30 December 2024, <https://english.aawsat.com/arab-world/5096371-syria-nearly-300-arrested-crackdown-assad-loyalists>, accessed 21 February 2025

Asharq Al-Awsat, Syrian Defense Ministry to Restructure Army with Volunteer Force, 14 January 2025, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2025/02/christians-syria-hopeful-wary-sharaas-intentions>, accessed 3 March 2025

Asharq News, دروز السويداء ينتظرون تشكيل جيش سوري موحد قبل تسليم أسلحتهم [Druze of Sweida wait for the establishment of a unified Syrian army before surrendering their weapons], 12 January 2025, <https://asharq.com/politics/112716/%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B2-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D9%8A%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%B4%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D9%85%D9%88%D8%AD%D8%AF-%D9%82%D8%A8%D9%84-%D8%AA%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Asharq News, وزير الخارجية التركي لـ"الشرق": تصرفات إسرائيل في سوريا خطيرة وغير مقبولة [Turkish foreign minister to Asharq: The actions of Israel in Syria are dangerous and unacceptable], 27 January 2025, <https://asharq.com/politics/114182/%D9%88%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%B1->



[%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A9/](#), accessed 21 February 2025

Atlantic Council, What will minority and women's rights look like in the new Syria?, 20 December 2024, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/syria-minority-and-womens-rights/>, accessed 24 January 2025

Badi, E., and Al-Jabassini, A., Turkey's Syria and Libya strategies add up to a Mediterranean power play, Atlantic Council, 13 January 2025, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/turkey-syria-libya-strategy-mediterranean-power-play/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Bahar Organization, New Displacement from Lebanon Post September 2024, 21 October 2024, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/71fc4341-2ba8-452d-a318-7cd26a7c9bc6/New%20Displacement%20from%20Lebanon%20Post%20September%202024%20.pdf>, accessed 20 February 2025

Balanche, F., Alawites Under Threat in Syria?, TWI (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy), 31 December 2024, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/alawites-under-threat-syria>, accessed 21 February 2025

Balanche, F., Rebuilding Syria May Require Federalism, TWI (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy), 28 February 2025, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/rebuilding-syria-may-require-federalism>, accessed 2 March 2025

Barkey, H.J., What Role Is Turkey Playing in Syria's Civil War?, CFR (Council on Foreign Relations), 6 December 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/expert-brief/what-role-turkey-playing-syrias-civil-war>, accessed 21 February 2025

BasNews, Syrian Forces Take Control of Afrin From Turkish-Backed SNA, 6 February 2025, <https://www.basnews.com/en/babat/874486>, accessed 7 March 2025

BBC News, Ahmed al-Sharaa named Syria's transitional president, 31 January 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c8d9r0vg6v7o>, accessed 21 February 2025

BBC News, Assad loyalists kill 14 in clash with Syria's new ruling forces – authorities, 27 December 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c0ew5g3vzreo>, accessed 21 February 2025

BBC News, Assad says he didn't intend to leave Syria, statement claims, 16 December 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5yd0zz5edqo>, accessed 21 February 2025

BBC News, Calls for justice and accountability in Syria grow after Assad's fall, 6 January 2025, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn7r4gxjzyeo>, accessed 21 February 2025





BBC News, Fear of a reckoning simmers in Assad's Alawite heartland, 16 December 2024, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ce8nzjkye42o>, accessed 21 February 2025

BBC News, Inside a Syrian 'reconciliation centre' where Assad's soldiers give up their weapons, 29 December 2024, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx2n35j5340o>, accessed 21 February 2025

BBC News, Kurdish-led SDF agrees to integrate with Syrian government forces, 11 March 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cedlx0511w7o>, accessed 11 March 2025

BBC News, New Syrian government's school curriculum changes spark concern, 2 January 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1ln12056ppo>, accessed 21 February 2025

BBC News, Russian strikes hit Aleppo as rebels take control, 30 November 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cly27r5p0yno>, accessed 21 February 2025

BBC News, Syria in maps: Who controls the country now Assad has gone?, 13 December 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c2ex7ek9pyeo>, accessed 21 February 2025

BBC News, Syrians hope for a future without Russia, but it may not be easy, 13 January 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/czx5xx7ne2wo>, accessed 21 February 2025

BBC News, Turkish strikes in Syria cut water to one million people, 19 November 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c79zj7rz3l4o>, accessed 21 February 2025

BBC News, What just happened in Syria and who's in charge?, 9 December 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c99x01d432o>, accessed 7 March 2025

BBC News, سوريا في الاستخبارات لجهاز رئيس إلى العقوبات قائمة على مُدرج من ،خطاب أنس [Anas Khattab, from Sanctions Listed to Head of Intelligence in Syria], 24 December 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/articles/cvqmry05930o>, accessed 21 February 2025

BBC News, 'I was raped by Assad's thugs - but I'm no longer afraid to show my face', 23 December 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c89xgdyk597o>, accessed 21 February 2025

Carter Center (The), Exploring Historical Control in Syria [Map], n.d., <https://www.cartercenter.org/news/multimedia/map/exploring-historical-control-in-syria.html>, accessed 7 March 2025

Ciddi, S., Turkey Is Preparing to Invade Syria, Then Israel?, FDD (Foundation for Defense of Democracies), 8 January 2025, <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2025/01/08/turkey-is-preparing-to-invade-syria-then-israel/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Civil Peace Group in Syria [Instagram], posted on: 18 February 2025, [https://www.instagram.com/p/DGOYY0Btlqj/?img\\_index=1](https://www.instagram.com/p/DGOYY0Btlqj/?img_index=1), accessed 7 March 2025





CNN, Russian military has begun large-scale withdrawal from Syria, US and Western officials say, 16 December 2024, <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/12/16/politics/russia-military-syria-withdrawal/index.html>, accessed 21 February 2025

CNN, Spike in Russian flights from Syria to Libyan desert base as Moscow eyes new Mediterranean hub, 31 December 2024, <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/12/31/middleeast/spike-russian-flights-libya-desert-base-intl/index.html>, accessed 21 February 2025

CNN, UN sounds alarm at Israel's 'severe violations' at key buffer zone with Syria, 14 November 2024, <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/11/13/middleeast/un-israel-violation-golan-heights-syria-intl/index.html>, accessed 4 March 2025

Cook, S.A., Turkey Hasn't Won Anything Yet in Syria, FP (Foreign Policy), 13 January 2025, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/01/13/turkey-hasnt-won-anything-yet-in-syria/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Coşkun, A., Türkiye Has a Wish List in Syria. It Should Tread Lightly. [Commentary], Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 19 December 2024, <https://carnegieendowment.org/emissary/2024/12/turkey-syria-goals-pkk-refugees-rivals-tread-lightly?lang=en>, accessed 21 February 2025

Cradle (The), Syrian Druze form military council 'distinct' from HTS-led Syrian army, 24 February 2025, <https://thecradle.co/articles/syrian-druze-form-military-council-distinct-from-hts-led-syrian-army>, accessed 3 March 2025

Cradle (The), Violent clashes continue in north Syria as Damascus seeks to disarm US-backed Kurds, 20 January 2025, <https://thecradle.co/articles/violent-clashes-continue-in-north-syria-as-damascus-seeks-to-disarm-us-backed-kurds>, accessed 21 February 2025

CRS (Congressional Research Service), Syria: Regime Change, Transition, and U.S. Policy, 13 December 2024, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN12469>, accessed 21 February 2025

Dalay, G., Turkey has emerged as a winner in Syria but must now use its influence to help build peace, Chatham House, 13 December 2024, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/12/turkey-has-emerged-winner-syria-must-now-use-its-influence-help-build-peace>, accessed 21 February 2025

DW (Deutsche Welle), Fighting in Syrian Kurdish-held areas: What you need to know, 13 December 2024, <https://www.dw.com/en/fighting-in-syrias-kurdish-held-areas-what-you-need-to-know/a-71051390>, accessed 21 February 2025

DW (Deutsche Welle), Syria car bomb explosion kills at least 20, 3 February 2025, <https://www.dw.com/en/syria-car-bomb-explosion-kills-at-least-20/a-71489683>, accessed 21 February 2025



DW (Deutsche Welle), Syria: Nationalist education dropped, but what comes next?, 18 January 2025, <https://www.dw.com/en/syria-nationalist-education-dropped-but-what-comes-next/a-71325772>, accessed 10 February 2025

ECHO (European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations), ECHO Daily Flash, 11 March 2025, <https://erccportal.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ECHO-Products/Echo-Flash#/daily-flash-archive/5295>, accessed 11 March 2025

Enab Baladi, “2254”.. Uncertain presence in Syria’s future, 4 January 2025, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2025/01/2254-uncertain-presence-in-syrias-future/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Enab Baladi, Battles of Tishrin Dam: A pressure tool in negotiations with SDF, 20 January 2025, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2025/01/battles-of-tishrin-dam-a-pressure-tool-in-negotiations-with-sdf/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Enab Baladi, Damascus – SDF negotiations await the “deal”, 30 January 2025, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2025/01/damascus-sdf-negotiations-await-the-deal/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Enab Baladi, Factionalism threatens unification of Syrian army, 17 January 2025, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2025/01/factionalism-threatens-unification-of-syrian-army/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Enab Baladi, Has Russia’s and Iran’s role in new Syria come to an end?, 7 January 2025, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2025/01/has-russias-and-irans-role-in-new-syria-come-to-an-end/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Enab Baladi, How effective are security campaigns against remnants of Assad’s regime?, 22 January 2025, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2025/01/how-effective-are-security-campaigns-against-remnants-of-assads-regime/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Enab Baladi, Increasing interest in drones in northern Syria, 26 November 2024, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2024/11/increasing-interest-in-drones-in-northern-syria/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Enab Baladi, Military Operations Administration announces dissolving of opposition factions in Syria, 24 December 2024, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2024/12/military-operations-administration-announces-dissolving-of-opposition-factions-in-syria/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Enab Baladi, SDF decides to merge with Syrian army, 18 February 2025, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2025/02/sdf-decides-to-merge-with-syrian-army/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Enab Baladi, Syria: Ongoing security campaigns against former regime elements, 30 December 2024, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2024/12/syria-ongoing-security-campaigns-against-former-regime-elements/?so=related>, accessed 21 February 2025



Enab Baladi, Syria's Education Ministry clarifies curriculum amendment decision, 2 January 2025, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2025/01/syrias-education-ministry-clarifies-curriculum-amendment-decision/>, accessed 4 March 2025

Enab Baladi, Syria's new administration reinstates dismissed workers to their jobs, 23 December 2024, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2024/12/syrias-new-administration-reinstates-dismissed-workers-to-their-jobs/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Enab Baladi, Syrian Ministry of Information prohibits interviews with figures of previous regime, 7 February 2025, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2025/02/syrian-ministry-of-information-prohibits-interviews-with-figures-of-previous-regime/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Enab Baladi, Thousands return to Afrin after Assad regime's fall, 28 January 2025, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2025/01/thousands-return-to-afrin-after-assad-regimes-fall/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Enab Baladi, Transitional justice in Syria: Steps to diffuse tension, 19 February 2025, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2025/02/transitional-justice-in-syria-steps-to-diffuse-tension/>, accessed 3 March 2025

Enab Baladi, War remnants kill 40 Syrians in less than two months, 20 January 2025, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2025/01/war-remnants-kill-40-syrians-in-less-than-two-months/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Enab Baladi, What is SDF's military structure and why does it insist on a "one block" demand?, 23 January 2025, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2025/01/what-is-sdfs-military-structure-and-why-does-it-insist-on-a-one-block-demand/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Enab Baladi, With 18 points... National Dialogue Conference concludes its work, 26 February 2025, <https://english.enabbaladi.net/archives/2025/02/with-18-points-national-dialogue-conference-concludes-its-work/>, accessed 5 March 2025

Enab Baladi, إدارة العمليات تصدر عفواً عن المجندين [The Operations Department issues amnesty for conscripts], 9 December 2024, <https://www.enabbaladi.net/728242/%d8%a5%d8%af%d8%a7%d8%b1%d8%a9-%d8%a7d9%84%d8%b9d9%85d9%84d9%8a%d8%a7d8%aa-%d8%aa%d8%b5%d8%af%d8%b1-%d8%b9d9%81d9%88d9%8bd8%a7-%d8%b9d9%86-%d8%a7d9%84d9%85d8%ac%d9%86d8%af%d9%8a/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Enab Baladi, دير الزور.. ضحايا باشتباكات بين قوات العشائر وقسد [Deir Ez-Zor: casualties resulting from clashes between tribal forces and SDF], 21 January 2025, <https://www.enabbaladi.net/735116/%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7D9%84%D8%B2D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%B6%D8%AD%D8%A7D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%A8D8%A7D8%B4D8%AA%D8%A8D8%A7D9%83D8%A7D8%AA-%D8%A8D9%8AD9%86-%D9%82D9%88%D8%A7D8%AA-%D8%A7D9%84/>, accessed 21 February 2025





Etana, About us, n.d., <https://etanasyria.org/about-us/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Etana Syria, BLOG: Syrian National Dialogue Conference falls short of expectations, 3 March 2025, <https://etanasyria.org/blog-syrian-national-dialogue-conference-falls-short-of-expectations/>, accessed 9 March 2025

Etana, EXPLAINER: Political & Military Dynamics in Suwayda Province, 20 February 2025, <https://etanasyria.org/explainer-political-military-dynamics-in-suwayda-province/>, accessed 3 March 2025

Etana Syria, Syria Update #19: 22 February 2025, 20 February 2025, <https://etanasyria.org/syria-update-19-22-february-2025/>, accessed 6 March 2025

Etana Syria, Syria Update #21, 8 March 2025, <https://etanasyria.org/syria-update-21-8-march-2025/>, accessed 11 March 2025

Etana, Syria Update #10: 12 December, 12 December 2024, <https://etanasyria.org/syria-update-10-12-december/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Etana, Syria Update #11: 17 December, 17 December 2024, <https://etanasyria.org/syria-update-11-17-december/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Etana, Syria Update #12: 20 December, 20 December 2025, <https://etanasyria.org/syria-update-12-20-december/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Etana, Syria Update #13: 10 January, 9 January 2025, <https://etanasyria.org/syria-update-13-10-january/>, accessed 7 March 2025

Etana, Syria Update #14: 17 January, 16 January 2025, <https://etanasyria.org/syria-update-14-17-january/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Etana, Syria Update #15: 28 January, 24 January 2025, <https://etanasyria.org/syria-update-15-28-january/>, accessed 7 March 2025

Etana, Syria Update #16: 3 February, 1 February 2025, <https://etanasyria.org/syria-update-16-3-february/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Etana, Syria Update #17: 8 February 2025, 8 February 2025, <https://etanasyria.org/syria-update-17-8-february-2025/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Etana, Syria Update #18: 15 February 2025, 14 February 2025, <https://etanasyria.org/syria-update-18-15-february-2025/>, accessed 7 March 2025

Etana, Syria Update #20: 2 March 2025, 28 February 2025, <https://etanasyria.org/syria-update-20-2-march-2025/>, accessed 5 March 2025

Etana, Syria Update #9: 10 December 2024, 10 December 2024, <https://etanasyria.org/syria-update-9-10-december-2024/>, accessed 21 February 2025





European Council, Syria: EU suspends restrictive measures on key economic sectors, 24 February 2025, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/02/24/syria-eu-suspends-restrictive-measures-on-key-economic-sectors/>, accessed 4 March 2025

FDD (Foundation for Defense of Democracies), Syrian government forces enter Afrin, signaling a change in control, 6 February 2025, [https://www.fdd.org/analysis/op\\_ed/2025/02/06/syrian-government-forces-enter-afrin-signaling-a-change-in-control/](https://www.fdd.org/analysis/op_ed/2025/02/06/syrian-government-forces-enter-afrin-signaling-a-change-in-control/), accessed 7 March 2025

FDD (Foundation for Defense of Democracies), Syria's National Dialogue Conference: A Missed Opportunity, 28 February 2025, [https://www.fdd.org/analysis/policy\\_briefs/2025/02/28/syrias-national-dialogue-conference-a-missed-opportunity/](https://www.fdd.org/analysis/policy_briefs/2025/02/28/syrias-national-dialogue-conference-a-missed-opportunity/), accessed 5 March 2025

FDD's Long War Journal, US-backed Syrian Free Army continues to patrol Tanf area in southern Syria, 10 February 2025, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2025/02/us-backed-syrian-free-army-continues-to-patrol-tanf-in-southern-syria.php>, accessed 3 March 2025

France24, Assad-era minister turns himself in to new Syria authorities: statement, 4 February 2025, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20250204-assad-era-minister-turns-himself-in-to-new-syria-authorities-statement>, accessed 21 February 2025

France24, Christmas in post-Assad Syria tainted by fears for minority's future, 24 December 2024, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20241224-christmas-in-post-assad-syria-tainted-by-fears-for-minority-s-future>, accessed 21 February 2025

France24, Fear grips Alawites in Syria's Homs as Assad 'remnants' targeted, 10 January 2025, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20250110-fear-grips-alawites-in-syria-s-homs-as-assad-remnants-targeted>, accessed 21 February 2025

France24, 'Foreign jihadists' in Syria leader's pick for army officers: monitor, experts, 30 December 2024, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20241230-foreign-jihadists-in-syria-leader-s-pick-for-army-officers-monitor-experts>, accessed 21 February 2025

France24, More than half of Syrian children out of school: Save the Children to AFP, 30 Dec 2024, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20241230-more-than-half-of-syrian-children-out-of-school-save-the-children-to-afp>, accessed 22 January 2025

France24, South Syria fighters reluctant to give up weapons: spokesman, 8 January 2025, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20250108-south-syria-fighters-reluctant-to-give-up-weapons-spokesman>, accessed 21 February 2025

France24, Syria conference lays out post-Assad priorities, but Kurds not invited, 25 February 2025, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20250225-new-syria-leader-vows-state-monopoly-on-weapons>, accessed 6 March 2025





France24, Syria's new HTS-led regime reinforces police force with the help of its fighters, 19 January 2025, <https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20250119-syria-s-new-hts-led-regime-reorganises-police-force-with-the-help-of-its-fighters>, accessed 21 February 2025

France24, 'Syrian above all': The Alawite community refuses to pay for Assad's crimes, 13 January 2025, <https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20250113-syrian-above-all-the-alawite-community-refuses-to-pay-for-assad-crimes>, accessed 21 February 2025

France24, Syrian Druze brigade reluctant to give up their arms in uncertain times, 24 December 2024, <https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20241224-syrian-druze-brigade-reluctant-to-give-up-their-arms-in-uncertain-times>, accessed 21 February 2025

France24, Syria's Alawites mourn their dead after revenge attacks, 5 February 2025, <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20250205-syria-s-alawites-mourn-their-dead-after-revenge-attacks>, accessed 21 February 2025

France24, Syria's interim president says organising elections could take up to five years, 3 February 2025, <https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20250203-syria-s-interim-president-says-organising-elections-could-take-up-to-five-years>, accessed 21 February 2025

France24, Syria opens probe into killings targeting Alawite minority group, 9 March 2025, <https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20250309-syria-s-sharaa-calls-for-probe-into-killings-of-alawite-minority>, accessed 11 March 2025

France24, Why the Assad regime collapsed in Syria – and why so fast, 8 December 2024, <https://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20241208-why-the-assad-regime-collapsed-in-syria-and-why-so-fast>, accessed 21 February 2025

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2024 - Syria, 2024, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/syria/freedom-world/2024>, accessed 21 February 2025

GEM (Guardians of Equality Movement), Urgent Statement on The Campaign of Violations of Torture and Arrest, Against Sexual and Gender Minorities in Syria, 11 February 2025, <https://guardiansgem.org/urgent-statement-on-the-campaign-of-violations-of-torture-and-arrest-against-sexual-and-gender-minorities-in-syria/>, accessed 21 February 2025

GEM (Guardians of Equality Movement), Statement on the Fall of the Assad Regime and The Syrian LGBTQIA+ Post-Assad Regime, 6 January 2025, <https://guardiansgem.org/statement-on-the-fall-of-the-assad-regime-and-the-syrian-lgbtqia-post-assad-regime/>, accessed 21 February 2025

GEM (Guardians of Equality Movement), HIV: discrimination prevents LGBTQ Syrians from accessing treatment, 1 December 2024, <https://guardiansgem.org/%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%80-hiv-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%aa%d9%85%d9%8a%d9%8a%d8%b2-%d9%81%d9%8a-%d8%a7%d9%84%d9%88%d8%b5%d9%88%d9%84-%d8%a5%d9%84%d9%89-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%b9%d9%84%d8%a7%d8%ac-%d8%a3%d9%88-%d8%a7%d9%84/>, accessed 21 February 2025





GEM (Guardians of Equality Movement), We Are Here, We Are Syrian, We Are Queer, Get Used to It, 2024, <https://guardiansgem.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Report-2.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2025

GEM (Guardians of Equality Movement), Who We Are?, n.d., <https://guardiansgem.org/who-are-we/>, accessed 21 February 2025

GPC (Global Protection Cluster), Escalation of Hostilities. Flash Report #2; December 4, 2024, 4 December 2024, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/5cd23d14-25f4-4eda-9894-1db64309cf2d/NWS%20Protection%20Cluster.%20Flash%20Report%20%232.%202024.pdf>, accessed 29 January 2025

GPC (Global Protection Cluster), Youth Report; Protection barriers and risks; North-West Syria; Nov 2024, 19 November 2024, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/4c5b464d-c458-4d8b-ba44-cc34813fda56/NWS%20PC.%20Youth%20Protection%20Risks%20and%20Impacts%20Report.%202024.pdf>, accessed 29 January 2025

GPC (The Global Protection Cluster), Description, n.d., available at: <https://reliefweb.int/organization/protection-cluster>, accessed 5 March 2025

Grajewski, N., Why Did Iran Allow Bashar al-Assad's Downfall?, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 9 December 2024, <https://carnegieendowment.org/middle-east/diwan/2024/12/why-did-iran-allow-assads-downfall?lang=en>, accessed 21 February 2025

Guardian (The), 'We are part of Syria': Kurdish-led SDF fights for place in post-Assad future, 21 February 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/21/drones-are-above-our-heads-kurdish-led-sdf-fights-for-survival-in-syria>, accessed 7 March 2025

Guardian (The), 'We've proved we can do anything': the Syrian women who want a say in running the country, 5 January 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/05/weve-proved-we-can-do-anything-the-syrian-women-who-want-a-say-in-running-the-country>, accessed 21 February 2025

Guardian (The), Airstrikes hit hospitals in Syria's Idlib region as insurgents fight Assad forces, 2 December 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/dec/02/iran-backed-iraqi-militias-join-fight-in-syria-after-militants-seize-aleppo>, accessed 21 February 2025

Guardian (The), IS fighters in Syria could break free amid Trump aid cut, terrorism expert warns, 28 January 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jan/28/is-fighters-in-syria-could-break-free-amid-trump-aid-cut-terrorism-expert-warns>, accessed 21 February 2025

Guardian (The), Israel strikes targets in southern Syria after demanding demilitarization, 26 February 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/25/israel-strikes-targets-in-southern-syria-after-demanding-demilitarisation>, accessed 7 March 2025





Guardian (The), Rebel leader Ahmed al-Sharaa made transitional president of Syria, 29 January 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/29/rebel-leader-ahmad-al-sharaa-made-transitional-president-of-syria>, accessed 21 February 2025

Guardian (The), Syrian HTS leader says rebel factions that overthrew Assad will be 'disbanded', 17 December 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/dec/17/ahmed-al-sharaa-syria-hts-rebel-group-leader-factions-disbanded>, accessed 21 February 2025

Guardian (The), Syrian rebels reveal year-long plot that brought down Assad regime, 13 December 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/dec/13/syrian-rebels-reveal-year-long-plot-that-brought-down-assad-regime>, accessed 21 February 2025

Guardian (The), The UN wants to influence a pluralist Syria – but will the country listen?, 8 January 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/08/un-influence-pluralist-syria-assad>, accessed 21 February 2025

Guardian (The), Who are the main actors in the fall of the regime in Syria?, 9 December 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/dec/09/explainer-main-actors-fall-of-regime-syria-rebel-alliance>, accessed 21 February 2025

HALO Trust (The), Syria, n.d., <https://www.halotrust.org/where-we-work/middle-east/syria/>, accessed 21 February 2025

HRW (Human Rights Watch), Northeast Syria: Apparent War Crime by Türkiye-Backed Forces, 30 January 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/01/30/northeast-syria-apparent-war-crime-turkiye-backed-forces>, accessed 21 February 2025

HRW (Human Rights Watch), US: Order Halting Foreign Aid Work Puts Lives at Risk, 27 January 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/01/27/us-order-halting-foreign-aid-work-puts-lives-risk>, accessed 5 March 2025

HRW (Human Rights Watch), World Report 2025 - Syria, 16 January 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/syria>, accessed 29 January 2025

HRW (Human Rights Watch), Northeast Syria: Military Recruitment of Children Persists, 2 October 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/10/02/northeast-syria-military-recruitment-children-persists>, accessed 21 January 2025

HRW (Human Rights Watch), Syria: End Coastal Killing Spree, Protect Civilians, 10 March 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/03/10/syria-end-coastal-killing-spree-protect-civilians>, accessed 11 March 2025

Human Dignity Trust, Syria, last updated 7 January 2025, <https://www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/syria/#:~:text=Syria%20criminalises%20same%2Dsex%20sexual,subjected%20to%20discrimination%20and%20violence.>, accessed 19 February 2025





Iddon, P., Kurdish Drones Are Fending Off Turkish-Backed Militia Attacks In Syria, Forbes, 17 January 2025, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/pauliddon/2025/01/17/kurdish-drones-are-fending-off-turkish-backed-militia-attacks-in-syria/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Iddon, P., Why fighting is raging in north Syria between the Turkish-backed SNA and Kurdish-led SDF, The New Arab, 21 January 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/analysis/why-fighting-raging-north-syria-between-sna-and-sdf>, accessed 21 February 2025

ILGA (The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association), Syria, n.d., <https://database.ilga.org/syria-lgbti>, accessed 21 February 2025

INSS (The Institute for National Security Studies), A New Era in Syria: Winners, Losers, and Implications for Israel, 12 January 2025, <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/syria-new-era/>, accessed 21 February 2025

International Crisis Group, Containing a Resilient ISIS in Central and North-eastern Syria, 18 July 2022, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/syria/containing-resilient-isis-central-and-north>, accessed 4 March 2025

International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Syria: November 2024 – February 2025, n.d., [https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?location%5B%5D=83&crisis\\_state=&created=custom&from\\_month=11&from\\_year=2024&to\\_month=2&to\\_year=2025](https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?location%5B%5D=83&crisis_state=&created=custom&from_month=11&from_year=2024&to_month=2&to_year=2025), accessed 7 March 2025

International Crisis Group, Finding a Path through a Perilous Moment for Post-Assad Syria, 10 March 2025, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/syria/finding-path-through-perilous-moment-post>, accessed 11 March 2025

International Crisis Group, Key Decision Loom as Syria Enters a New Era, 14 January 2025, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/syria/key-decisions-loom-syria-enters-new-era>, accessed 21 February 2025

International Crisis Group, Promoting a Stable, Peaceful Transition in Syria, 30 January 2025, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/syria/promoting-stable-peaceful-transition-syria>, accessed 21 February 2025

International Crisis Group, We are the International Crisis Group, 14 November 2012, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/we-are-international-crisis-group>, accessed 21 February 2025

IPS (Inter Press Service), What Does the End of Assad's Regime Mean for Syria and the Middle East?, 19 December 2024, [https://www.ipsnews.net/2024/12/end-assads-regime-mean-syria-middle-east/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=end-assads-regime-mean-syria-middle-east](https://www.ipsnews.net/2024/12/end-assads-regime-mean-syria-middle-east/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=end-assads-regime-mean-syria-middle-east), accessed 29 January 2025





IPS (Inter Press Service), Syrian Displaced Children Go Hungry, Stunting Their Growth, 23 October 2024, [https://www.ipsnews.net/2024/10/syrian-displaced-children-go-hungry-stunting-their-growth/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=syrian-displaced-children-go-hungry-stunting-their-growth](https://www.ipsnews.net/2024/10/syrian-displaced-children-go-hungry-stunting-their-growth/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=syrian-displaced-children-go-hungry-stunting-their-growth), accessed 29 January 2025

ISPI (Italian Institute for International Political Studies), Coming to Terms with the past in Syria: The First, Fragile, Steps of “Transitional Justice”, 7 February 2025, <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/coming-to-terms-with-the-past-in-syria-the-first-fragile-steps-of-transitional-justice-199922>, accessed 5 March 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Interactive Map: Assessed Control of Terrain in Syria [Map], last updated 3 March 2025, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/1933cb1d315f4db3a4f4dcc5ef40753a>, accessed 6 March 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, 7 March 2025, <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-march-7-2025>, accessed 9 March 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, 4 March 2025, <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-march-4-2025>, accessed 10 March 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, 11 March 2025, <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-march-11-2025>, accessed 11 March 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, 3 March 2025, <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-march-3-2025>, accessed 8 March 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, 19 February 2025, [https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Iran\\_Update%2C\\_February\\_19%2C\\_2025\\_%28PDF%29.pdf](https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Iran_Update%2C_February_19%2C_2025_%28PDF%29.pdf), accessed 21 February 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, December 17, 2024, 17 December 2024, [https://understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Iran\\_Update%2C\\_December\\_17%2C\\_2024\\_%28PDF%29.pdf](https://understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Iran_Update%2C_December_17%2C_2024_%28PDF%29.pdf), accessed 21 February 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, December 21, 2024, 21 December 2024, [https://understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Iran\\_Update%2C\\_December\\_21%2C\\_2024\\_PDF.pdf](https://understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Iran_Update%2C_December_21%2C_2024_PDF.pdf), accessed 21 February 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, December 23, 2024, 23 December 2024, [https://understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Iran\\_Update%2C\\_December\\_23%2C\\_2024\\_PDF.pdf](https://understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Iran_Update%2C_December_23%2C_2024_PDF.pdf), accessed 21 February 2025





ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, December 24, 2024, 24 December 2024, <https://understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Iran Update%2C December 24%2C 2024 PDF.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, December 27, 2024, 27 December 2024, <https://understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Iran Update%2C December 27%2C 2024 %28PDF%29.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, January 14, 2025, 14 January 2025, <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Iran Update%2C January 14%2C 2025 PDF.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, January 23, 2025, 23 January 2025, <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-january-23-2025>, accessed 21 February 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, January 6, 2025, 6 January 2025, <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Iran Update%2C January 6%2C 2025 PDF.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, January 7, 2025, 7 January 2025, <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Iran Update%2C January 7%2C 2025 PDF.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), The Islamic State's Global Long Game and Resurgence in Syria Poses an Evolved Threat to the West, 9 January 2025, <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/islamic-state%E2%80%99s-global-long-game-and-resurgence-syria-poses-evolved-threat-west>, accessed 21 February 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, February 6, 2025, 6 February 2025, <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Iran%20Update%2C%20February%206%2C%202025%20%28PDF%29.pdf>, accessed 3 March 2025

ISW (Institute for the Study of War) and CTP (Critical Threats Project), Iran Update, February 26, 2025, 26 February 2025, <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-february-26-2025>, accessed 3 March 2025

Jerusalem Post (The), Syrian security forces beat, insult transgender woman after series of anti-LGBT arrests, 7 February 2025, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-841074>, accessed 21 February 2025

KAS (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung), Syriens große Chance [Syria's big chance], 10 December 2024, <https://www.kas.de/documents/252038/29447862/Syriens+gro%C3%9Fe+Chance.pdf/c61358c0-6f0e-99f2-d503-d33df274cb35?version=2.0&t=1734016221391>, accessed 21 February 2025





Kurdistan 24, Israel Strikes Military Targets in Southern Syria Amid Calls for Demilitarization, 26 February 2025, <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/story/826935/israel-strikes-military-targets-in-southern-syria-amid-calls-for-demilitarization>, accessed 4 March 2025

Kurdistan 24, Turkey Escalates Drone Operations in Rojava, Targets Critical Infrastructure, 11 January 2025, <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/story/819253/turkey-escalates-drone-operations-in-rojava-targets-critical-infrastructure>, accessed 21 February 2025

Kurdistan 24, Uncertain Future in Rojava: Syrian Public Security Forces Assume Control of Afrin, 6 February 2025, <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/story/823481/uncertain-future-in-rojava-syrian-public-security-forces-assume-control-of-afrin>, accessed 21 February 2025

Kurdistan 24, US: Manbij Ceasefire Extended, 18 December 2024, <https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/story/815871/us-manbij-ceasefire-extended>, accessed 21 February 2025

L24, Al-Sharaa Outlines Vision for Syria's Future, 29 December 2024, <https://levant24.com/news/2024/12/al-sharaa-outlines-vision-for-syrias-future/>, accessed 21 February 2025

L24, SNA Launches 'Dawn of Freedom' Operation, 30 November 2024, <https://levant24.com/news/national/2024/11/sna-launches-dawn-of-freedom-operation/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Le Monde, En Syrie, climat de purge dans le secteur public, 20 February 2025, [https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2025/02/20/en-syrie-climat-de-purge-dans-le-secteur-public\\_6556009\\_3210.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2025/02/20/en-syrie-climat-de-purge-dans-le-secteur-public_6556009_3210.html), accessed 3 March 2025

Le Monde, In northeastern Syria, 'the war is not over', 16 January 2025, [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/middle-east-crisis/article/2025/01/16/in-northeastern-syria-the-war-is-not-over\\_6737089\\_368.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/middle-east-crisis/article/2025/01/16/in-northeastern-syria-the-war-is-not-over_6737089_368.html), accessed 21 February 2025, accessed 21 February 2025

Le Monde, In Syria, lawyers worry about the new regime's stranglehold on the bar, 20 January 2025, [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2025/01/20/in-syria-lawyers-worry-about-the-new-regime-s-stranglehold-on-the-bar\\_6737203\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2025/01/20/in-syria-lawyers-worry-about-the-new-regime-s-stranglehold-on-the-bar_6737203_4.html), accessed 21 February 2025

Le Monde, Netanyahu says Israeli troops will occupy a buffer zone inside Syria for the foreseeable future, 18 December 2024, [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/12/17/netanyahu-says-israeli-troops-will-occupy-a-buffer-zone-inside-syria-for-the-foreseeable-future\\_6736199\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/12/17/netanyahu-says-israeli-troops-will-occupy-a-buffer-zone-inside-syria-for-the-foreseeable-future_6736199_4.html), accessed 21 February 2025

Le Monde, Syria: Turkey wants to extend its buffer zone by pushing back Kurdish forces, 12 December 2024, [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/12/12/syria-turkey-wants-to-extend-its-buffer-zone-by-pushing-back-kurdish-forces\\_6735985\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/12/12/syria-turkey-wants-to-extend-its-buffer-zone-by-pushing-back-kurdish-forces_6735985_4.html), accessed 21 February 2025





Le Monde, Syrian military's arsenal destroyed by Israeli bombardments, 16 December 2024, [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/12/16/syrian-military-arsenal-destroyed-by-israeli-bombardments\\_6736140\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/12/16/syrian-military-arsenal-destroyed-by-israeli-bombardments_6736140_4.html), accessed 21 February 2025

Le Monde, Syria's new government is grappling with Southern armed factions, 11 January 2025, [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2025/01/11/in-syria-the-new-government-is-grappling-with-southern-armed-factions\\_6736925\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2025/01/11/in-syria-the-new-government-is-grappling-with-southern-armed-factions_6736925_4.html), accessed 21 February 2025

Le Monde, Syria's new government negotiates the disbanding of armed groups, 26 December 2024, [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/12/26/syria-s-new-government-negotiates-the-disbanding-of-armed-groups\\_6736461\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/12/26/syria-s-new-government-negotiates-the-disbanding-of-armed-groups_6736461_4.html), accessed 3 March 2025

Levy, I., Supporting the SDF in Post-Assad Syria, TWI (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy), 13 December 2024, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/pdf/view/19100/en>, accessed 3 March 2025

Lister, C., Syria Weekly: Dec 30 2024 -Jan 7, 2025, 7 January 2025, <https://www.syriaweekly.com/p/syria-weekly-dec-30-2024-jan-7-2025>, accessed 21 February 2025

Lister, C., Syria Weekly: Feb 11-18, 2025, 18 February 2025, <https://www.syriaweekly.com/p/syria-weekly-feb-11-18-2025>, accessed 21 February 2025

Lister, C., Syria Weekly: Feb 18-25, 2025, 25 February 2025, <https://www.syriaweekly.com/p/syria-weekly-feb-18-25-2025>, accessed 3 March 2025

Lister, C., Syria Weekly: Jan 14-21, 2025, 21 January 2025, <https://www.syriaweekly.com/p/syria-weekly-jan-14-21-2025>, accessed 21 February 2025

Lister, C., Syria Weekly: Regime suicide drone use in NW Syria: Nov 3-9, 2024, 11 November 2024, <https://www.syriaweekly.com/p/regime-suicide-drone-use-in-nw-syria-584>, accessed 21 February 2025

Lister, C., The growing threat of ISIS in Syria's Badia, MEI, 17 April 2020, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/growing-threat-isis-syrias-badia>, accessed 4 March 2025

Meduza, Russia removes military equipment from Syria's Tartus, its only naval base in the Mediterranean, 28 January 2025, <https://meduza.io/en/news/2025/01/28/russia-removes-military-equipment-from-syria-s-tartus-its-only-naval-base-in-the-mediterranean>, accessed 21 February 2025

MEE (Middle East Eye), Assad forces withdraw in Daraa and Deir Ezzor as Syrian rebels advance on Homs, 6 December 2024, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/syria-assad-withdraw-daraa-deir-ezzor-rebel-homs>, accessed 21 February 2025

MEE (Middle East Eye), HTS raids and forced disappearances fuel fear in Syria's Alawi heartlands, 17 January 2025, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/syria-hts-raids-forced-disappearances-fuel-alawi-fear>, accessed 21 February 2025





MEE (Middle East Eye), Landmark SDF deal hailed as positive step for Syria and Kurds, 11 March 2025, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/landmark-sdf-deal-hailed-positive-step-syria-kurds>, accessed 11 March 2025

MEE (Middle East Eye), Mohammed al-Bashir: Who is Syria's new interim prime minister?, 10 December 2024, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/mohammed-al-bashir-who-syria-new-interim-prime-minister>, accessed 21 February 2025

MEE (Middle East Eye), Syria: Manbij car bomb attack suspends SDF-Damascus talks, 4 February 2025, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/syria-manbij-car-bomb-attack-suspends-sdf-damascus-talks>, accessed 21 February 2025

MEE (Middle East Eye), The Syrian National Army: Rebels, thugs or Turkish proxies?, 7 December 2024, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/who-are-syrian-national-army>, accessed 21 February 2025

MEE (Middle East Eye), Turkey doesn't seek conflict with Israel in Syria. Here's why, 11 January 2025, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/turkey-doesnt-seek-conflict-israel-syria-heres-why>, accessed 21 February 2025

MEE, Syria's leader Ahmed al-Sharaa is now officially interim president, 29 January 2025, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/syrias-leader-ahmed-al-sharaa-now-officially-president>, accessed 21 February 2025

MEI (Middle East Institute), ETANA Syria, n.d., <https://www.mei.edu/profile/etana-syria>, accessed 21 February 2025

Melkonian, S., The Syria Fiasco As Seen From Moscow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center, 24 December 2024, <https://carnegieendowment.org/middle-east/diwan/2024/12/the-syria-fiasco-as-seen-from-moscow?lang=en>, accessed 21 February 2025

MEMO (Middle East Monitor), Syria launches operation to pursue 'remnants of Assad's militias', 27 December 2024, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20241227-syria-launches-operation-to-pursue-remnants-of-assads-militias/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Memri TV, Military Command Member In Damascus Countryside: We Are Ending Mandatory Military Conscription – The New Syrian Army Will Be An Army Of Volunteers, 11 January 2025, <https://www.memri.org/tv/samir-saleh-military-command-ending-conscription-new-syria-army-volunteer>, accessed 4 March 2025

Memri, Reports Claim Perpetrators Who Burned Christmas Tree In Hama, Syria, Are Uzbek Jihadi Fighters; Syrian Jihadi Cleric: Raising The Cross Should Be Forbidden, 24 December 2025, <https://www.memri.org/jttm/reports-claim-perpetrators-who-burned-christmas-tree-hama-syria-are-uzbek-jihadi-fighters>, accessed 5 March 2025





Moscow Times (The), Russian Air Base in Syria Attacked by Drones – Reports, 18 February 2025, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/02/18/russian-air-base-in-syria-attacked-by-drones-reports-a88057>, accessed 21 February 2025

MSN, As Syria Faces New Divides, LGBTQ+ Hate Remains The Most Reliable Consensus, 22 February 2025, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/as-syria-faces-new-divides-lgbtq-hate-remains-the-most-reliable-consensus/ar-AA1zzdYQ>, accessed 24 February 2025

Mercator, What's to be done with ISIS children in Syria?, 6 January 2025, [https://www.mercatornet.com/isis\\_is\\_almost\\_dead\\_should\\_its\\_children\\_suffer\\_for\\_the\\_sins\\_of\\_their\\_parents](https://www.mercatornet.com/isis_is_almost_dead_should_its_children_suffer_for_the_sins_of_their_parents), accessed 21 January 2025

Metro, 'I was tortured in Syria for being gay – now I'm terrified what the future will bring', updated 10 January 2025, <https://metro.co.uk/2024/12/22/i-tortured-syria-gay-now-im-terrified-future-will-bring-22214880/#>, accessed 21 February 2025

Modern Diplomacy, Syria's new government priorities: address LGBT, alcohol and women's dress code, 24 December 2024, <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2024/12/24/syrias-new-government-priorities-address-lgbt-alcohol-and-womens-dress-code/>, accessed 21 February 2025

MSN, Syria: Syrian Authorities Launch Arrest Campaign Targeting Transgender Individuals, 6 February 2025, <https://www.msn.com/en-xl/news/other/syria-syrian-authorities-launch-arrest-campaign-targeting-transgender-individuals/vi-AA1yvJ6J#details>, accessed 21 February 2025

National (The), HTS forces kill two people in former regime loyalist areas of Syria, 5 January 2025, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/news/mena/2025/01/05/rebel-forces-kill-two-people-in-regime-loyalist-areas-of-syria/>, accessed 21 February 2025

National (The), Steep uphill battle: The many challenges in building Syria's new army, 21 February 2025, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/news/mena/2025/02/21/steep-uphill-battle-the-many-challenges-in-building-syrias-new-army/>, accessed 3 March 2025

National (The), US-backed SDF 'withdraws from parts of eastern Syria', 21 January 2025, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/news/mena/2025/01/21/us-backed-sdf-withdraws-from-parts-of-eastern-syria-sources-say/>, accessed 21 February 2025

NBC News, Defense Department drafting plans to withdraw all U.S. troops from Syria after recent Trump comments, 5 February 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/dod-drafting-plans-withdraw-us-troops-syria-recent-trump-comments-rcna190726>, accessed 21 February 2025

NBC News, Images appear to show Russia dismantling military equipment in Syria, 14 December 2024, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/russia-syria-military-dismantling-equipment-rcna184236>, accessed 21 February 2025





NBC News, Iran throws its support behind Assad as rebels expand their shock offensive in Syria, 1 December 2024, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/syria-civil-war-rebels-aleppo-iran-bashar-assad-offensive-airport-hama-rcna182325>, accessed 21 February 2025

New Arab (The), 15 people killed in 'sectarian' massacre in Alawi village in Syria, 1 February 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/news/15-killed-sectarian-massacre-alawi-village-syria>, accessed 7 March 2025

New Arab (The), Clashes erupt near Syria's Tishrin Dam as Turkish-backed SNA and Kurdish-led SDF battle for control, 26 December 2024, <https://www.newarab.com/news/syrias-tishrin-dam-sees-fierce-clashes-between-sna-and-sdf>, accessed 21 February 2025

New Arab (The), Five killed in fighting around Syria's Tishreen dam as Germany calls for Russian withdrawal, 17 January 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/news/5-killed-syria-clashes-germany-calls-russia-withdrawal>, accessed 21 February 2025

New Arab (The), Forging a united front: The challenges of building Syria's new army, 3 February 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/analysis/united-front-challenges-building-syrias-new-army>, accessed 21 February 2025

New Arab (The), Fury in Syria as reconciled 'war criminal' from Assad regime visits site of Tadamon massacre, 8 February 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/news/fury-syria-reconciled-war-criminal-visits-massacre-site>, accessed 3 March 2025

New Arab (The), Hope and uncertainty for the Druze community in Syria, 14 January 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/analysis/hope-and-uncertainty-druze-community-syria>, accessed 21 February 2025

New Arab (The), How Syria's post-Assad curriculum reforms reveal political and educational tensions, 8 January 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/features/inside-debate-over-curriculum-reforms-post-assad-syria>, accessed 10 February 2025

New Arab (The), Israeli forces raid Syrian city in Quneitra and Daraa amid further incursions, 22 December 2024, <https://www.newarab.com/news/israeli-forces-raid-syrian-city-quneitra-amid-incursions>, accessed 21 February 2025

New Arab (The), Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces agree to integrate forces into Syrian army, 18 February 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/news/kurdish-led-sdf-agree-integrate-forces-syrian-army>, accessed 7 March 2025

New Arab (The), Russia to seek 'long-term and strategic ties' with post-Assad Syria, 26 December 2024, <https://www.newarab.com/news/russia-build-strategic-ties-post-assad-syria>, accessed 21 February 2025

New Arab (The), Suweida Military Council - what does it want and who is behind it?, 28 February 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/news/what-suweida-military-council-and-why-did-it-appear-now>, accessed 3 March 2025





New Arab (The), Syria govt plans 'expanded' committee to prepare national dialogue, 7 January 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/news/syria-govt-plans-expanded-committee-national-dialogue>, accessed 21 February 2025

New Arab (The), Syria: String of extrajudicial killings targets ex-regime affiliates, 17 February 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/news/syria-string-extrajudicial-killings-targets-assad-affiliates>, accessed 7 March 2025

New Arab (The), Syrians protest Israeli occupation in southwestern Quneitra governorate, 27 January 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/news/syrians-protest-israeli-occupation-expansion-quneitra>, accessed 21 February 2025

New Arab (The), What Kurds fear and hope for in the 'new Syria', 6 January 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/analysis/what-kurds-fear-and-hope-new-syria>, accessed 6 March 2025

New Arab (The), Why Al-Sharaa's scrapping of conscription for Syrians matters, 16 December 2024, <https://www.newarab.com/news/why-al-sharaas-scrapping-conscription-syrians-matters>, accessed 21 February 2025

New Arab (The), Why Syrian women's political participation is crucial in building the new Syria, 11 February 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/features/syrian-women-fight-equal-political-representation-post-assad>, accessed 19 February 2025

New Arab (The), 'What I achieved will be destroyed overnight': Syrian women judges face uncertain future under new leadership, 2 January 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/features/uncertainty-looms-female-judges-post-assad-syria>, accessed 19 February 2025

New Arab (The), New Syrian gov't taps Druze woman as governor of southern province, 1 January 2025, <https://www.newarab.com/news/new-syrian-govt-taps-druze-woman-governor-suwaida>, accessed 10 February 2025

New Arab (The), Who is Maysaa Sabrine, the first woman to head Syria's central bank?, 31 December 2024, <https://www.newarab.com/news/maysaa-sabrine-first-woman-head-syrias-central-bank>, accessed 10 February 2025

New Arab (The), Syria appoints Maysaa Sabrine as first woman to lead central bank, 30 December 2024, <https://www.newarab.com/news/syria-appoints-first-woman-lead-central-bank>, accessed 10 February 2025

New Arab (The), Syria official's comments on women spark uproar, 29 December 2024, <https://www.newarab.com/news/syria-officials-comments-women-spark-uproar>, accessed 10 February 2025

New Arab (The), مقاتلو العشائر يسيطرون على مواقع لقوات "قسد" شرق دير الزور [Tribal fighters take control of SDF positions in eastern Deir Ez-Zor], 20 January 2025, <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/%D9%85%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%84%D9%88->





[%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B1-%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%89-%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B9-%D9%84%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%82%D8%B3%D8%AF-%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82-%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%88%D8%B1](#), accessed 21 February 2025

New York Times (The), Israel Strikes Syria Again as Tensions Rise, 4 March 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/04/world/middleeast/israel-syria-strikes.html>, accessed 7 March 2025

New York Times (The). Syrian Government Signs Breakthrough Deal With Kurdish-Led Forces, 10 March 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/10/world/middleeast/syria-kurds-agreement.html>, accessed 11 March 2025

New York Times (The), Syria's New Government Steps Up Pursuit of Assad Loyalists, 28 December 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/28/world/middleeast/syria-government-arrests-human-rights.html>, accessed 21 February 2025

New York Times (The), Talks on Syria's Future Fall Short of Promises, Participants Say, 26 February 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/26/world/middleeast/syria-national-dialogue-conference.html>, accessed 7 March 2025

New York Times (The), With Syria in Flux, Turkish Forces Attack U.S.-Backed Forces, 8 December 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/08/world/middleeast/syria-turkey-kurds.html>, accessed 21 February 2025

NBC News, He oversaw the public executions of two women. Now he's Syria's new justice minister, 19 January 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/syria-justice-minister-execution-video-adultery-assad-regime-rcna186523>, accessed 31 January 2025

Now Lebanon, The West and the Syrians: prioritizing policy and asylum freezes over humanitarian and civil society efforts, 26 December 2024, <https://nowlebanon.com/the-west-and-the-syrians-prioritizing-policy-and-asylum-freezes-over-humanitarian-and-civil-society-efforts/>, accessed 21 February 2025

NPA (North Press Agency), SNA announces full control over Tel Rifaat town in Aleppo, 1 December 2024, <https://npasyria.com/en/118927/>, accessed 21 February 2025

NPA (North Press Agency), SNA announces launch of "Dawn of Freedom" offensive in Aleppo, 30 November 2024, <https://npasyria.com/en/118846/>, accessed 21 February 2025

NPA (North Press Agency), Tensions rise in Syria's Manbij amid calls to disband armed factions, 28 January 2025, <https://npasyria.com/en/121508/>, accessed 21 February 2025

NPA (North Press Agency), Turkish drone strikes kill 3 journalists, injure 8 in northern Syria, 19 February 2025, <https://npasyria.com/en/122283/>, accessed 21 February 2025





NPA (North Press Agency), Unknown gunmen kill 2 civilians in Deir ez-Zor, 10 December 2024, <https://npasyria.com/en/119549/>, accessed 7 March 2025

NPA (North Press Agency), [SDF announces the killing of 17 pro-Turkish militants in the vicinity of Tishreen Dam], 28 December 2024, <https://npasyria.com/201474/>, accessed 21 February 2025

NPR (National Public Radio), In Syria's Golan Heights buffer zone, residents fear Israel is making a land grab, 23 January 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/01/23/g-s1-43325/syria-golan-heights-israel>, accessed 21 February 2025

NPR (National Public Radio), Turkey expected to play a major role in Syria following fall of the Assad regime, 27 December 2024, <https://www.npr.org/2024/12/27/nx-s1-5238277/turkey-expected-to-play-a-major-role-in-syria-following-fall-of-the-assad-regime>, accessed 21 February 2025

OHCHR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), Syria: Experts advocate for sovereignty, democratic reconstruction and respect for human rights, 20 December 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/12/syria-experts-advocate-sovereignty-democratic-reconstruction-and-respect>, accessed 20 February 2025

OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights), Syria: Tragic escalation in hostilities, 3 December 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2024/12/syria-tragic-escalation-hostilities>, accessed 21 February 2025

Özkizilcik, Ö., What does Turkey gain from the rebel offensive in Syria?, Atlantic Council, 5 December 2024, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/syria-turkey-rebel-offensive/>, accessed 21 February 2025

PAX, War and Water Security Challenges along the Orontes River in Syria, Thirst for Peace, November 2024, [https://paxforpeace.nl/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/11/PAX\\_report\\_Thirst-for-Peace\\_2024.pdf](https://paxforpeace.nl/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/11/PAX_report_Thirst-for-Peace_2024.pdf), accessed 28 January 2025

Refugees International, Foreign Affairs: Syria's Biggest Problem: How to Resettle Millions of Refugees and Displaced People, 11 February 2025, <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/foreign-affairs-syrias-biggest-problem-how-to-resettle-millions-of-refugees-and-displaced-people/>, accessed 9 March 2025

Reuter, C., The Phantom Terrorists - Searching for Islamic State in Syria, Der Spiegel, 12 February 2025, [https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-phantom-terrorists-searching-for-islamic-state-in-syria-a-40b2f920-079b-40e3-b1d3-80fc0a1ea1b0?sara\\_ref=re-so-tw-sh](https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-phantom-terrorists-searching-for-islamic-state-in-syria-a-40b2f920-079b-40e3-b1d3-80fc0a1ea1b0?sara_ref=re-so-tw-sh), accessed 3 March 2025

Reuters, At least 25 killed as Russian, Syrian jets intensify bombing of Syrian rebel territory, 2 December 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/least-25-killed-russian-syrian-jets-intensify-bombing-syrian-rebel-territory-2024-12-02/>, accessed 7 March 2025





Reuters, Car bomb kills 20 in northern Syria, deadliest since Assad toppled, 3 February 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/15-killed-car-bomb-explosion-outskirts-syrias-manbij-syrian-civil-defense-says-2025-02-03/>, accessed 7 March 2025

Reuters, Exclusive: Qatar plans to help boost Syrian government salaries, sources say, 7 January 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/qatar-plans-help-boost-syrian-government-salaries-sources-say-2025-01-07/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Reuters, Exclusive: Russia pulling back but not out of Syria, sources say, 15 December 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/russia-pulling-back-not-out-syria-sources-say-2024-12-14/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Reuters, Exclusive: Syrian Kurdish forces oppose handing jihadist jails to Islamist rulers, 21 January 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/syrian-kurdish-forces-oppose-handing-jihadist-jails-islamist-rulers-2025-01-21/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Reuters, How Assad's government in Syria fell, 10 December 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/graphics/SYRIA-SECURITY/MAPS/myvmbxdqwpr/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Reuters, Lebanon returns 70 officers and soldiers to Syria, security official says, 28 December 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanon-returns-70-officers-soldiers-syria-security-official-says-2024-12-28/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Reuters, Pro-Iranian militias enter Syria from Iraq to aid beleaguered Syrian army, 2 December 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/pro-iranian-militias-enter-syria-iraq-aid-beleaguered-syrian-army-2024-12-02/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Reuters, Rebels take Syrian city from U.S.-backed group after U.S.-Turkey deal, source says, 9 December 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/rebels-take-north-syria-town-us-backed-group-turkish-source-says-2024-12-09/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Reuters, Syria's al-Hol camp readies first return of Syrian detainees, director says, 24 January 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/syrias-al-hol-camp-readies-first-return-syrian-detainees-director-says-2025-01-24/>, accessed 11 February 2025

Reuters, Syrian defence minister rejects Kurdish proposal for its own military bloc, 19 January 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/syrian-defence-minister-rejects-kurdish-proposal-its-own-military-bloc-2025-01-19/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Reuters, Syrian girls' right to schooling unrestricted, new education minister says, 19 December 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/syrian-girls-right-schooling-unrestricted-new-education-minister-says-2024-12-19/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Reuters, Syria's Christians fearful of new Islamist leaders as Christmas approaches, 23 December 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/syrias-christians-fearful-new-islamist-leaders-christmas-approaches-2024-12-23/>, accessed 21 February 2025





Reuters, Syria's de facto leader says country ready to welcome UN forces in buffer zone with Israel, 16 January 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/syrias-de-facto-leader-says-country-ready-welcome-un-forces-buffer-zone-with-2025-01-16/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Reuters, Syria's de facto ruler reassures minorities, meets Lebanese Druze leader, 22 December 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/syrias-de-facto-ruler-reassures-minorities-meets-lebanese-druze-leader-2024-12-22/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Reuters, Syria's new Islamist rulers to roll back state with privatizations, public sector layoffs, 31 January 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/syrias-islamist-rulers-overhaul-economy-with-firings-privatization-state-firms-2025-01-31/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Reuters, Syria to hold dialogue conference amid criticism over inclusivity, 24 February 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/syria-hold-dialogue-conference-amid-criticism-over-inclusivity-2025-02-24/>, accessed 9 March 2025

Reuters, Turkey continues operations on PKK in Iraq, Syria despite Ocalan call, 6 March 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkey-continues-strikes-pkk-iraq-syria-despite-ocalan-call-2025-03-06/>, accessed 8 March 2025

Reuters, US allows transactions with governing institutions in Syria despite sanctions, 6 January 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us-ease-aid-restrictions-syria-limited-show-support-new-government-wsj-reports-2025-01-06/>, accessed 21 February 2025

RFE/RL (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty), Foreign Fighters Promoted In Syria's New Army Have Their Governments Concerned, 8 January 2025, <https://www.rferl.org/a/foreign-fighters-syria-military-hts-blowback-concerns/33266542.html>, accessed 21 February 2025

RFE/RL (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty), Who Is Ahmed Al-Awda, The Man Who Could Be A Threat To Syria's New Rulers?, 17 January 2025, <https://www.rferl.org/a/ahmad-al-awda-syria-leadership-threat-islamists-uae-ties/33279067.html>, accessed 21 February 2025

RFE/RL (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty), Syrian Islamist Rulers Shun The Taliban Governance Model, 25 December 2024, <https://www.rferl.org/a/syrian-islamist-government-women-taliban-sharaa-hts/33250490.html>, accessed 3 February 2025

RIC (Rojava Information Center), Explainer: The Syrian Democratic Council – A proposal for a democratic Syria, 30 June 2020, <https://rojvainformationcenter.org/2020/06/explainer-the-syrian-democratic-council-a-proposal-for-a-democratic-syria/>, accessed 21 February 2025

RIC (Rojava Information Center), Explainer: Turkish and SNA offensive on Manbij, 7 December 2024, <https://rojvainformationcenter.org/2024/12/explainer-turkish-and-sna-offensive-on-manbij/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Rudaw, 87 people 'kidnapped' in Afrin since start of 2025: local watchdog, 8 February 2025, <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/080220253>, accessed 7 March 2025





Rudaw, Armed thieves rob elderly man as crime increases in Afrin: Monitor, 14 February 2025, <https://manage.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/140220251>, accessed 7 March 2025

Rudaw, Syria's Druze refuse to lay down arms amid uncertain future, 4 January 2025, <https://manage.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/04012025>, accessed 21 February 2025

Rudaw, Syria's new government recruits more policemen amid security challenges, 25 December 2024, <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/251220242>, accessed 21 February 2025

Rudaw, Syrian government to engage SDF, ENKS in national dialogue conference, 30 December 2024, <https://manage.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/301220243>, accessed 21 February 2025

Rudaw, Syrian rebels announce capturing southern city of Daraa, 7 December 2024, <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/061220246>, accessed 21 February 2025

Rudaw, Syrian rebels claim control of oil-rich Deir ez-Zor from SDF, 11 December 2024, <https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/111220241>, accessed 21 February 2025

Salih, M.A., Post-Assad Syria: Challenges, Opportunities, and the US Role in Shaping its Future, FPRI (Foreign Policy Research Institute), 14 January 2025, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2025/01/post-assad-syria-challenges-opportunities-and-the-us-role-in-shaping-its-future/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Security Council Report, February 2025 Monthly Forecast, 30 January 2025, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2025-02/syria-76.php>, accessed 21 February 2025

Security Council Report, January 2025 Monthly Forecast, 30 December 2024, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2025-01/syria-75.php>, accessed 4 March 2025

Security Council Report, Syria: Briefing and Consultations, 11 February 2025, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2025/02/syria-briefing-and-consultations-10.php>, accessed 3 March 2025

Shafaq News, SDF leader: We Will Be Part of the New Syrian Army, 10 January 2025, <https://shafaq.com/en/World/SDF-leader-We-Will-Be-Part-of-the-New-Syrian-Army>, accessed 21 February 2025

Shafaq News, Syrian factions to integrate into Ministry of Defense under new deal, 24 December 2024, <https://shafaq.com/en/World/Syrian-factions-to-integrate-into-Ministry-of-Defense-under-new-deal>, accessed 21 February 2025

Shafaq News, Turkiye-aligned factions seize Tel Rifaat in Syria's Aleppo, 2 December 2024, <https://shafaq.com/en/World/Turkiye-aligned-factions-seize-Tel-Rifaat-in-Syria-s-Aleppo>, accessed 21 February 2025





Shahbazov, F., What Turkey Hopes to Gain From the HTS Offensive in Syria, Stimson Center, 5 December 2024, <https://www.stimson.org/2024/what-turkey-hopes-to-gain-from-the-hts-offensive-in-syria/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Shahin, K., The Challenges Facing Syria's Alawites, New Lines Magazine, 13 January 2025, <https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/the-challenges-facing-syrias-alawites/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Sharifa, A., Will Syria's myriad militias unite under one national army?, Al Majalla, 4 February 2025, <https://en.majalla.com/node/324177/politics/will-syrias-myriad-militias-unite-under-one-national-army>, accessed 21 February 2025

SHRC (The Syrian Human Rights Committee), Terrorist Bombing in Eastern Rural Aleppo Targets Female Workers, 4 February 2025, <https://www.shrc.org/en/?p=34360>, accessed 10 February 2025

SHRC (The Syrian Human Rights Committee), Monthly Report on Human Rights Victims for November 2024, 1 December 2024, <https://www.shrc.org/en/?p=34331>, accessed 10 February 2025

SHRC (The Syrian Human Rights Committee), SDF militia increases kidnapping and recruiting children in areas under its control in NE Syria, 3 September 2024, <https://www.shrc.org/en/?p=34307>, accessed 18 February 2025

SNHR (Syrian Network for Human Rights), 1,264 Civilian Deaths, Including 242 Children and 118 Women, as well as 86 Deaths due to Torture, Documented in Syria in 2024, 2 January 2025, <https://snhr.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/M251101E.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2025

SNHR (Syrian Network for Human Rights), 149 Civilians Killed, Including 35 Children and 16 Women, in Northern Syria Since November 27, 2024, Up Until December 3, 2024, 4 December 2024, <https://snhr.org/blog/2024/12/04/149-civilians-killed-including-35-children-and-16-women-in-northern-syria-since-november-27-2024-up-until-december-3-2024/>, accessed 4 March 2025

SNHR (Syrian Network for Human Rights), 222 Civilian Deaths, Including 17 Children and 37 Women, as well as Nine Deaths due to Torture, Recorded in February 2025 in Syria, 1 March 2025, <https://snhr.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/M250301E.pdf>, accessed 7 March 2025

SNHR (Syrian Network for Human Rights), 236 Civilian Deaths, Including 32 Children and 18 Women, as well as One Woman's Death due to Torture, Documented in Syria in January 2025, 21 Civilians Were Killed by SDF, 1 February 2025, <https://snhr.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/M250201E.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2025

SNHR (Syrian Network for Human Rights), 71 Civilian Deaths, Documented in Syria in November 2024, Including of 20 Children and Six Women, With Three Dying due to Torture, 1 December 2024, <https://snhr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/M241201E-1.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2025



SNHR (Syrian Network for Human Rights), At least 229 Arbitrary Detentions Documented in January 2025, 4 February, <https://snhr.org/blog/2025/02/04/at-least-229-arbitrary-detentions-documented-in-january-2025/>, accessed 5 March 2025

SNHR (Syrian Network for Human Rights), SNHR Condemns the Syrian Regime Over Arresting Hundreds of Individuals, Including Children, for Military Conscription and Deploying Them to the Frontlines in Northern Syria, 5 December 2024, <https://snhr.org/blog/2024/12/05/snhr-condemns-the-syrian-regime-over-arresting-hundreds-of-individuals-including-children-for-military-conscription-and-deploying-them-to-the-frontlines-in-northern-syria/>, accessed 22 January 2025

SNHR (Syrian Network for Human Rights), Four civilians injured in a ground SNA attack in N. Aleppo, November 24, 2024, 26 November 2024, <https://news.snhr.org/2024/11/26/four-civilians-injured-in-a-ground-sna-attack-in-n-aleppo-november-24-2024/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SNHR (Syrian Network for Human Rights), Legal Regulations and Judicial Process Must be Properly Implemented in All Detentions Carried Out as Part of Security Operations, 4 February 2025, <https://snhr.org/blog/2025/02/04/at-least-229-arbitrary-detentions-documented-in-january-2025/>, accessed 3 March 2025

SNHR (Syrian Network for Human Rights), On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women: SNHR's 13th Annual Report on Violations Against Females in Syria, 25 November 2024, <https://snhr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/R241106E.pdf>, accessed 5 February 2025

SNHR (Syrian Network for Human Rights), Preliminary Report on the Violations that Took Place in the Wake of the Attacks Carried Out by Non-State Armed Groups Linked to the Assad Regime, Mostly in the Governorates of Latakia, Tartus, and Hama, 11 March 2025, <https://snhr.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/R250305E-1.pdf>, accessed 11 March 2025

SNHR (Syrian Network for Human Rights), SNHR Condemns Torture, Death of Three Detainees at the Hands of the Transitional Government's General Security Directorate, 3 February 2025, <https://snhr.org/blog/2025/02/03/snhr-condemns-torture-death-of-three-detainees-at-the-hands-of-the-transitional-governments-general-security-directorate/>, accessed 4 March 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), "Euphrates Shield" areas | Eight civilians killed and injured under shelling by Manbij Military Council, 3 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/350541/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Genocide in Syrian coastline and Latakia mountains 72 hours on | Military and security forces commit nearly 40 massacres, killing 973 civilians, 9 March 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/357479/>, accessed 11 March 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), "Peace Spring" area | Two women shot dead by the Military Police, 15 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353733/>, accessed 21 February 2025



SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), “Putin-Erdogan” area collapses in November 2024 | 351 fatalities in acts of violence and over 200 airstrikes by fighter jets, 1 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/350636/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), 91 attacks in 2025 | 190 people killed in retaliatory actions and assassinations in different areas across Syria, 26 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354501/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), After a delegation of Red Crescent left | Clashes renew near Sad Teshrin (Dam) in Manbij countryside, 7 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353212/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), After local factions advanced to Daraa Al-Balad | Regime forces nearly lose all control over the province, 6 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/350789/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Al-Hasakah | Member of Asayish Forces killed in ISIS attack on security checkpoint, 29 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354677/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Al-Raqqa | Member of “Al-Asayish” killed and others injured in an attack by ISIS cells on checkpoint of Internal Security Forces, 17 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/351725/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Amid bombardment on Al-Hasakah and Al-Raqqa countryside | Drone attack leaves Turkish soldier dead and another injured in Ras Al-Ain, 9 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353365/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Amid Turkish artillery fire and clashes on different frontlines | SDF foil attack and shoot down kamikaze drone in Aleppo countryside, 23 February 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/356601/>, accessed 7 March 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Artillery fire | Turkish forces bombard villages in rural Al-Hasakah and SDF attack Turkish base, 9 February 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/355458/>, accessed 7 March 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Boosting military bases | Three cargo planes lands in Coalition base in Al-Shaddadi, 16 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353762/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), By previous Russian aerial shelling | Two children die affected by wounds they sustained, 17 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/351706/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Carrying advanced weapons | US cargo plane lands in Kharab Al-Jeir base in Al-Hasakah, 19 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354021/>, accessed 21 February 2025





SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Death toll update | 71 civilians killed and injured under Russian airstrikes on centre in Idlib, 1 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/350332/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Death toll update | Five civilians killed and nearly 40 others injured in Turkish airstrikes near Teshreen dam, 16 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353835/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Old ordnance | Four sibling children killed and wounded by explosion in Deir Ezzor countryside, 17 February 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/356131/>, accessed 17 February 2025

SOHR (The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Security vacuum | Kidnapping of women and girls escalate dramatically in February, 16 February 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/356046/>, accessed 10 February 2025

SOHR (The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), In ten days | 14 individuals, including four women, killed in different areas in Syria, 10 February 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/355627/>, accessed 10 February 2025

SOHR (The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), In less than seven days | Ten people, including three women, killed in different areas in Syria, 5 February 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/355165/>, accessed 10 February 2025

SOHR (The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), New crimes | Woman dies affected by wounds she sustained in Idlib and another woman killed in Deir Ezzor, 4 February 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/355117/>, accessed 10 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Death toll update | Three civilians die affected by their injuries, bringing the number of deaths due to Turkish airstrikes on Teshreen dam to six, including woman, 19 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354003/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Deir Ezzor | Civilian killed in family disputes and clashes in SDF-held areas, 21 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354241/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Deir Ezzor | Civilian killed in infighting between cousins in eastern countryside, 4 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352952/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Deir Ezzor | Civilians injured in gunfire by SDF near Suwaydan crossing in eastern countryside, 24 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354368/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Deir Ezzor | US patrol roams in villages on eastern countryside, 23 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352070/>, accessed 21 February 2025





SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Dramatic escalation | 52 people killed in attacks by Turkish drones in NE Syria since early December, 13 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/351483/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Dramatic escalation | Six students killed and wounded in rocket fire by rebels on university student dormitory in Aleppo city, 29 November 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/350140/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Following two simultaneous attacks | Fierce clashes erupt between Turkish-backed factions and SDF on two frontlines in eastern Aleppo, 23 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352034/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Fourth time in a week | Motorbike explodes in areas of Turkish-backed factions in Aleppo, 1 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352655/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Ground reinforcements | “International Coalition” brings military equipment to base in Al-Hasakah, 18 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353963/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Highest monthly death toll ever in nearly 60 months | 176 civilians among 746 people killed in November 2024, 1 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/350268/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Horrific crime | Family of five executed by unidentified gunmen in village in Manbij countryside, 20 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352554/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), IED attack | ISIS kills member of 25th Division and injures four others in Syrian desert, 21 November 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/349589/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), IED attack | ISIS members attack military vehicle of Self-Defence in Deir Ezzor countryside, 2 February 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354959/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), In ten days of battles | 110 civilians and combatants killed and injured in eastern Aleppo countryside, 21 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/351921/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Including two women | Tribal infighting erupt in western Al-Raqqah, leaving three persons dead, 20 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354032/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Infiltration operation | SDF sneak into positions of Turkish-backed factions in Tel Abyad countryside, injuring three militiamen, 28 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352396/>, accessed 21 February 2025



SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Infiltration operation | Special forces of “SDF” kill and injure 12 members of Turkish-backed factions and seven civilians, 25 November 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/349913/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Injuring three Turkish soldiers | SDF attack Turkish base in Ras Al-Ain countryside, 21 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354181/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Iran’s presence in Syria in November 2024 | Nearly 180 fatalities in aerial and ground attacks...evacuation of positions, withdrawals and redeployments in different positions across Syria, 3 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/351056/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), ISIS in November 2024 | Ongoing escalation with 27 attacks in SDF-controlled areas and nearly 20 combatants killed in attacks in Syrian desert, 29 November 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/350197/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), ISIS resurgence | Member of ISIS cell killed and another injured in two separate attacks in Al-Hasakah countryside, 21 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354180/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), ISIS resurgence | Members of ISIS clash with members of “Asayish” in Al-Hasakah, 26 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354491/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Large-scale security campaign | Tens of regime affiliates and gunmen affiliate with “Al-Hafal” arrested in Deir Ezzor countryside, 23 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354348/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Leaving 11 militiamen dead and wounded | Clashes erupt between SDF and “National Army” factions in Manbij and frontline of Teshreen dam, 30 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352506/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Military escalation | “SDF” advances and takes control over four villages in Manbij as Turkish-backed factions shell Kobani villages, 23 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352069/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Military escalation | “SDF” and Turkish forces exchange shelling in Aleppo countryside, 1 January 2025, [https://www.syriahr.com/en/352677/?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1737896424.3225979804992675781250](https://www.syriahr.com/en/352677/?doing_wp_cron=1737896424.3225979804992675781250), accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Military escalation | Clashes renew between “SDF” and “National Army” in Sad Teshrin, 3 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352875/>, accessed 21 February 2025



SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Military escalation | Fierce clashes between SDF and Turkish-backed factions leave four militiamen injured in Al-Hasakah countryside, 29 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352440/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Military escalation | Five civilians including a woman killed in Turkish airstrike targeting public convoy near Teshrin Dam, 8 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353315/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Military escalation | Russian fighter jets escalate their attacks on Aleppo and Idlib cities, 2 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/350381/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Military escalation | SDF infiltrates and shells positions in Manbij countryside, 30 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352564/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Military escalation | Ten civilians killed under Turkish ground shelling on Manbij, 9 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/351062/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Military escalation | Three children injured and a civilian convoy attacked, 17 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353915/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Military escalation | Woman and her daughter killed under direct shelling on houses of civilians in Ain Al-Arab (Kobani), 22 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/351974/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Military Operations Administration keeps imprisoning over 9,000 combatants and reconcile figures of corruption of former regime, 13 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353595/>, accessed 7 March 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Mostly civilians | 12 killed and nine injured by Israeli airstrikes on Al-Qaseer near borders between Syria and Lebanon, 1 November 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/348172/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), New assassination | Former commander of Iranian militias and former member of Military Intelligence killed by unidentified gunmen in Deir Ezzor, 22 December 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352009/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), New attack | ISIS cells kill member of "SDF" in Deir Ezzor, 17 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/351692/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), New attack | ISIS members open fire on SDF military vehicle in Deir Ezzor countryside, injuring several fighters, 12 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353510/>, accessed 21 February 2025





SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), New attack | Nearly 25 civilians injured and killed under Turkish shelling near Teshrin Dam, 22 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354302/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), New attack | Three civilians killed and injured by Turkish drone in Al-Hasakah, 12 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353548/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), New attack | Two members of “Al-Asayish” injures by ISIS cells in Al-Hasakah, 22 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352000/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), New reinforcement | International Coalition bring in military supplies to Al-Hasakah countryside, 19 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/351857/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), New reinforcement | US forces continue to reinforce their bases in Al-Hasakah countryside and Ain Al-Arab, 4 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352934/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), New reinforcements | “International Coalition” Forces bring military equipment to bases in Syria, 30 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352531/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), New reinforcements | “International Coalition” Forces bring military materials to Deir Ezzor and bases in Al-Hasakah, 22 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/351979/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), New reinforcements | US cargo plane lands in “Kharab Al-Jeir” base in Ramilan in Al-Hasakah, 14 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/351513/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Old ordnance | Five civilians killed and two others injured in western Manbij countryside, 7 February 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/355314/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Ongoing military escalation | Turkish drone attacks village in Al-Qamishly countryside, 20 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354067/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Ongoing security campaigns | General security administration launches new arrest campaign in Qatna residences, 28 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354580/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Ongoing security chaos | Civilian killed in eastern Deir Ezzor, 16 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353752/>, accessed 21 February 2025





SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Ongoing violations | Turkish-backed “Suleiman Shah” Faction storms houses in Efrin and impose extra royalties, 14 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353659/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Ongoing violations | Turkish-backed factions kidnap six women and arrest five young men in north Aleppo countryside, 11 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353559/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Ongoing violations in Afrin | “National Army” factions continue kidnaps, arbitrary arrests and looting of civilian properties, 28 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352380/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Ongoing violations in Afrin | Turkish-backed factions brutally beat civilians, loot civilian properties and fell fruit-bearing trees, 23 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354326/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Preparations for establishing new base | US forces bring in cement blocks to Ain Al-Arab (Kobani), 2 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352729/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Primary death toll | 15 people including officers of former regime killed in Fahil massacre, 25 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354462/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Regime-controlled areas in November 2024 | 381 fatalities in acts of violence and regime forces collapse and losing Aleppo and Idlib provinces top the events, 6 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/351585/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Retaliatory actions | Three persons eliminated in different areas across Syria in hours, 18 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353934/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), SDF-held areas in November 2024 | 43 fatalities in acts of violence...nearly ten infightings and murder crimes...deteriorating security situation, 4 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/351081/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Second attack in 2025 | Strikes by Coalition drone leave three people dead and wounded in Idlib countryside, 15 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353694/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Second attack in hours | Turkish-backed militiaman shot dead in “Peace Spring” area, 3 January 2025, [https://www.syriahr.com/en/352805/?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1737905317.3583490848541259765625](https://www.syriahr.com/en/352805/?doing_wp_cron=1737905317.3583490848541259765625), accessed 21 February 2025



SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Security chaos | Child killed and two injured in an armed attack in Manbij countryside, 24 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352125/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Security chaos | Gunmen execute a massacre in a village in Hama countryside, 31 January 2025, [https://www.syriahr.com/en/354859/?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1738407547.5439989566802978515625](https://www.syriahr.com/en/354859/?doing_wp_cron=1738407547.5439989566802978515625), accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Security chaos | Gunmen murder two civilians in Idlib and Lattakia, 30 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/352547/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Security chaos | Two civilians shot dead in Manbij and its countryside, 7 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353216/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Security vacuum | Alawite sheikh and his wife killed in Al-Salamiyah countryside and goldsmith killed in Deir Ezzor countryside, 9 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353378/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Since fall of Al-Assad's regime | Nearly 500 Israeli airstrikes destroy the remaining weapons of army of future Syria, 18 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/351742/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Six gunshots | Members of "Al-Sultan Murad" kills a civilian after exiting a mosque in Efrin, 7 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353236/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Sneak attack | ISIS cells clash with Internal Security Forces in Al-Hasakah, 20 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354165/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Stray bullet | Girl killed during clashes between "Mohamed Al-Fateh" Faction and thieves in Efrin, 15 November 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/349203/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Surprise raid | Turkish-backed factions kidnap seven young men and assault elderly people in eastern Aleppo, 15 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353695/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Targeting head of general intelligence service | General security forces prepare to launch new security campaign in Homs, 14 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353627/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Targeting regime affiliates and drug and arms dealers | General security service launches new security campaign in Daraa countryside, 20 February 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/356378/>, accessed 7 March 2025



SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), To raise combat readiness | “International Coalition” and “SDF” conduct military exercises in Deir Ezzor, 15 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353735/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Turkish intelligence assigns task of pursuing militiamen seeking to return to their areas to “Al-Rahman Corps” in Ras Al-Ain in northern Al-Hasakah, 6 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353093/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Two massacres by Russian forces | 49 people killed including 17 members of the regime under airstrikes, 1 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/350337/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Two separate incidents | Three young men killed in Douma in Rif Dimashq, 17 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353874/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), War ordnance casualties in November 2024 | 32 civilians killed and injured in explosions of war ordnance across Syria, 2 December 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/350363/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Week of escalation | 54 civilians and combatants killed and injured in confrontations between Turkish-backed factions and SDF and Kurdish Forces, 25 November 2024, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/349831/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Wishing to return to their areas | Number of people arrested in the searching campaign by Military Police has risen to 20 people, 17 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/353918/>, accessed 21 February 2025

SOHR (Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), Worrying escalation | 46 civilians killed by gunmen participating in security operations in Homs countryside in a week, 28 January 2025, <https://www.syriahr.com/en/354579/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Spiegel International, Searching for Islamic State in Syria, 12 February 2025, [https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-phantom-terrorists-searching-for-islamic-state-in-syria-a-40b2f920-079b-40e3-b1d3-80fc0a1ea1b0?sara\\_ref=re-so-tw-sh](https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-phantom-terrorists-searching-for-islamic-state-in-syria-a-40b2f920-079b-40e3-b1d3-80fc0a1ea1b0?sara_ref=re-so-tw-sh), accessed 5 March 2025

Standard (Der), Situation in Syrien: Was wir bisher wissen [Situation in Syrian: What we know so far], 8 December 2024, <https://www.derstandard.at/story/3000000248344/situation-in-syrien-was-wir-bisher-wissen>, accessed 21 February 2025

STJ (Syrians for Truth and Justice), “My Entire Life Savings Vanished Overnight”: Housing, Land, and Property Rights Violations in “Peace Spring” Strip, October 2024, [https://stj-sy.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Housing-Land-and-Property-Rights-Violations-in-Peace-Spring-Strip\\_DRL-J.pdf](https://stj-sy.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Housing-Land-and-Property-Rights-Violations-in-Peace-Spring-Strip_DRL-J.pdf), accessed 28 January 2025





STJ (Syrians for Truth and Justice), Silenced and Defamed: Women's Organizations in North-Western Syria Under Many Layers of Oppression, 12 January 2024, <https://stj-sy.org/en/silenced-and-defamed-womens-organizations-in-north-western-syria-under-many-layers-of-oppression/>, accessed 28 January 2025

Suleymanov, R., Rebel Gains in Syria Put Russia on the Back Foot, Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, 6 December 2024, <https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2024/12/russia-syria-uprising-problems?lang=en>, accessed 21 February 2025

Syria Direct, Afrin's displaced torn between another exile and danger in northern Aleppo, 4 December 2024, <https://syriadirect.org/afrins-displaced-torn-between-another-exile-and-danger-in-northern-aleppo/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Syria Direct, Can Suwayda's factions enforce security and stop the spread of weapons?, 6 February 2025, <https://syriadirect.org/can-suwaydas-factions-enforce-security-stop-spread-of-weapons/>, accessed 3 March 2025

Syria Direct, Protests and SDF defections: Discontent simmers in eastern Deir e-Zor, 13 December 2024, <https://syriadirect.org/protests-and-sdf-defections-discontent-simmers-in-eastern-deir-e-zor/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Syria Direct, Suwayda's movement endures post-Assad, 31 December 2024, <https://syriadirect.org/suwaydas-movement-endures-post-assad/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Syria Direct, Waning hopes: Will Damascus help Afrin's Kurds reclaim their homes?, 12 February 2025, <https://syriadirect.org/will-damascus-help-afrins-kurds-reclaim-their-homes/>, accessed 6 March 2025

Syria Direct, Why the delay in merging Daraa's factions into a new Syrian army?, 21 February 2025, <https://syriadirect.org/why-the-delay-in-merging-daraas-factions-into-a-new-syrian-army/>, accessed 3 March 2025

Syria Direct, Women delegates weigh in on Syria's national dialogue conference, 27 February 2025, <https://syriadirect.org/women-delegates-weigh-in-on-syrias-national-dialogue-conference/>, accessed 5 March 2025

Syria Justice and Accountability Center, Two Months After Assad's Fall, Assad-Like Violations Are Still Being Committed in Syria, 13 February 2025, <https://syriaaccountability.org/two-months-after-assads-fall-assad-like-violations-are-still-being-committed-in-syria/>, accessed 3 March 2025

Syria Justice and Accountability Centre, Human Rights Violations in Syria, December 2024 – January 2025, 22 January 2025, <https://syriaaccountability.org/human-rights-violations-in-syria-december-2024-january-2025/>, accessed 6 March 2025

Syria Report (The), HTS Takes Over Aleppo While Making Advances Towards Hama (Open access), 4 December 2024, <https://syria-report.com/hts-takes-over-aleppo-while-making-advances-towards-hama/>, accessed 7 March 2025





Syria TV, Syrian Interim Government: No Contact with New Damascus Government, 16 January 2025, <https://syrianobserver.com/syrian-actors/syrian-interim-government-no-contact-with-new-damascus-government.html>, accessed 21 February 2025

Syria TV, عشائر عربية في السويداء تعلن دعمها الإدارة الجديدة واستعدادها لتسليم أسلحتها [Arab tribes in Sweida announce their support for the new administration and their readiness to surrender their arms], 26 January 2025, <https://www.syria.tv/%D8%B9%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B1-%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%87%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7>, accessed 21 February 2025

Syria TV, قسد توقف تسريح مجنديها بسبب استمرار حالات الفرار والانشقاق [SDF halt discharge of recruits due to continued cases of flight and defection], 16 January 2025, <https://www.syria.tv/%D9%82%D8%B3%D8%AF-%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%82%D9%81-%D8%AA%D8%B3%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%AD-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%87%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%B3%D8%A8%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B4%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%82>, accessed 21 February 2025

Syriac Press, Rising “Individual Acts” threaten Christians in Syria, 18 January 2025, <https://syriacpress.com/blog/2025/01/18/rising-individual-acts-threaten-christians-in-syria/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Syrian Observer (The), Al-Jalali: Employees’ Salaries Secured by the Central Bank, 12 December 2024, <https://syrianobserver.com/syrian-actors/al-jalali-employees-salaries-secured-by-the-central-bank.html>, accessed 21 February 2025

Syrian Observer (The), Syria Appoints Ali Kidda as Minister of Interior in a Significant Reshuffle, 20 January 2025, <https://syrianobserver.com/syrian-actors/syria-appoints-ali-kidda-as-minister-of-interior-in-a-significant-reshuffle.html>, accessed 21 February 2025

Tagesschau, Wie Assad gestürzt wurde - und was das bedeutet [How Assad was overthrown - and what that means], 8 December 2024, <https://www.tagesschau.de/syrien-sieg-rebellen-entwicklung-100.html>, accessed 21 February 2025

Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (The), A Post-Assad Syria: Navigating the Transition Ahead, 19 December 2024, <https://timep.org/2024/12/19/a-post-assad-syria-navigating-the-transition-ahead/>, accessed 5 March 2025





Telegraph (The), Syrian rebel leader says women's education will continue – but refuses to be drawn on alcohol, 19 December 2024, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2024/12/19/syria-rebel-leader-womens-education-alcohol/>, accessed 3 February 2025

TNH (The New Humanitarian), Russian jets pound Idlib after Syrian rebels' Aleppo gains, 2 December 2024, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2024/12/02/russian-jets-pound-idlib-after-syrian-rebels-aleppo-gains>, accessed 21 February 2025

UCL (University College London), Analysis: Syria's new government is already oppressing women, posing a dire threat to their future, 21 January 2025, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2025/jan/analysis-syrias-new-government-already-oppressing-women-posing-dire-threat-their-future>, accessed 21 February 2025

UN (United Nations), Health Cluster and WHO (World Health Organization), Whole of Syrian Arab Republic: Public Health Situation Analysis (PHSA) (14 October 2024), 14 October 2024, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/ae0d4fd-129e-40e6-a755-2d31d095fddd/Whole%20of%20Syria%20PHSA%20141024.pdf>, accessed 29 January 2025

UN (United Nations), Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, Gendered Impact of the Conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic on Women and Girls, 12 June 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/coisyria/policypapers/iesges29aywar/2023-06-12-Gendered-impact-women-girls-%20Syria.pdf>, accessed 20 February 2025

UN News, UN support continues in Syria and Lebanon, 30 December 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/12/1158626>, accessed 21 January 2025

UN News, Deadly attacks in eastern Aleppo highlight Syria's vulnerability, 4 February 2025, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/02/1159776>, accessed 21 February 2025

UN News, Syria: Mine casualties persist as UN partners scale up clearance operations, 17 February 2025, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/02/1160211>, accessed 21 February 2025

UN News, Syria: UN chief calls for urgent de-escalation by Israeli forces, withdrawal from Golan buffer zone, 12 December 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/12/1158131>, accessed 21 February 2025

UN (United Nations), Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, The opposition Syrian National Army, including Ahrar al-Sham and Army of Islam, and their aligned legions and factions, Sign Action Plan to End and Prevent the Recruitment and Use and Killing and Maiming of Children, 3 June 2024, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2024/06/the-opposition-syrian-national-army-including-ahrar-al-sham-and-army-of-islam-and-their-aligned-legions-and-factions-sign-action-plan-to-end-and-prevent-the-recruitment-and-use-and-killing-and-maim/>, accessed 24 January 2025





UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), The Impact of the Conflict in Syria, 20 February 2025, <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2025-02/undp-sy-seia-final.pdf>, accessed 24 February 2025

UNFPA (The United Nations Population Fund) in Arab States, Regional Quarterly Report on the Syria Crisis / Q4 2024, 26 January 2025, <https://arabstates.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2025-01/Q4%202024%20Report%20-%20Web%20%28F1%29.pdf>, accessed 24 February 2025

UNFPA (The United Nations Population Fund) in Arab States, Situation Report #1 Humanitarian needs in Syria, 19 January 2025, <https://arabstates.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2025-01/Situation%20Report-01-%20Syria.pdf>, accessed 24 February 2025

UNFPA (The United Nations Population Fund), Syrian Arab Republic, updated 10 January 2025, <https://www.unfpa.org/syrian-arab-republic>, accessed 31 January 2025

UNFPA (The United Nations Population Fund), Situation Report #1 Humanitarian needs in Syria, 15 January 2025, <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Syria%20-%20Situation%20Report%201.pdf>, accessed 22 January 2025

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), Regional Flash Update #11 - Syria situation crisis, 23 January 2025, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/syria-situation-crisis-regional-flash-update-11>, accessed 21 February 2025

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), Regional Flash Update #13 - Syria situation crisis, 7 February 2025, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/10299>, accessed 21 February 2025

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), Regional Flash Update #7 – Syria situation crisis, 27 December 2024, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/syria-situation-crisis-regional-flash-update-7>, accessed 21 February 2025

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), Regional Flash Update #8 - Syria situation crisis, 2 January 2025, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/syria-situation-crisis-regional-flash-update-8>, accessed 21 February 2025

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), Regional Flash Update #16, Syria situation crisis, 27 February 2025, [https://reliefweb.int/attachments/4e40af51-ae11-48d6-b468-f3376d886bd7/16-Syria\\_situation\\_crisis.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/attachments/4e40af51-ae11-48d6-b468-f3376d886bd7/16-Syria_situation_crisis.pdf), accessed 5 March 2025

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), Regional Flash Update #15 - Syria situation crisis, 20 February 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/114903>, accessed 7 March 2025

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), Syria governorates of return overview (As of 06 February 2025), 10 February 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/114277>, accessed 21 February 2025





UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), Syria governorates of return overview- 27 February 2025, 27 February 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/114783>, accessed 7 March 2025

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), Syria governorates IDPs and IDP returnees overview, 2 March 2025, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/114787>, accessed 7 March 2025

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), Syrian Arab Republic: Internal displacement within Syria as of 18 December 2024, 23 December 2024, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/113401>, accessed 21 February 2025

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Situation Report (Year End) - 01 January to 31 December 2024, 3 March 2025, <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/bdb3edcc-32f2-473a-9bcf-03918bcdac31/UNICEF%20Syrian%20Arab%20Republic%20Humanitarian%20Situation%20Report%20%28Year%20End%29%2C%2001%20January%20to%2031%20December%202024.pdf>, accessed 7 March 2025

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), Paving the road to a hopeful and inclusive future in Syria, free from violence and hardship, 23 January 2025, <https://www.unicef.org/syria/press-releases/paving-road-hopeful-and-inclusive-future-syria-free-violence-and-hardship>, accessed 28 January 2025

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), Peace must prevail for Syria's children, 18 December 2024, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/peace-must-prevail-syrias-children>, accessed 21 January 2025

UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), North-west Syria: Escalation of Hostilities - Flash Update No. 2, 2 December 2024, <https://www.unocha.org/attachments/553cd6f7-07f8-4ff5-a24c-9d331aa124ab/North-west Syria - Escalation of Hostilities - Flash Update No. 2 %282 December 2024%29.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2025

UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 10 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 7 January 2025), 7 January 2025, <https://www.unocha.org/attachments/359a26e2-5270-432f-8250-e9f29811b4d6/Syria-FlashUpdate10-vfin.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2025

UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 11 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 13 January 2025), 14 January 2025, <https://www.unocha.org/attachments/26609854-4fbc-4326-9884-83605e99b432/Syria-FlashUpdate11-vfin.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2025

UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 12 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 21 January 2025), 22 January 2025, <https://www.unocha.org/attachments/9698c92f-421d-465a-8f29-85d57fda1da2/Syria-FlashUpdate12-vfin.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2025





UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 13 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 29 January 2025), 30 January 2025, <https://www.unocha.org/attachments/3b20e0c3-9c1a-4679-92da-c9fa9772e57a/Syria-FlashUpdate13-vfin.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2025

UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 6 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 16 December 2024), 16 December 2024, [https://www.unocha.org/attachments/5052f0b8-21b7-4d44-8286-1e824e2b8483/Syrian Arab Republic --- Flash Update No. 6 on the Recent Developments in Syria %28as of 16 December 2024%29.pdf](https://www.unocha.org/attachments/5052f0b8-21b7-4d44-8286-1e824e2b8483/Syrian%20Arab%20Republic%20---%20Flash%20Update%20No.%206%20on%20the%20Recent%20Developments%20in%20Syria%20as%20of%2016%20December%202024%29.pdf), accessed 21 February 2025

UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 8 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 23 December 2024), 23 December 2024, <https://www.unocha.org/attachments/81dbf82a-9f8e-484a-8394-33f64b99ecfb/Syria-FlashUpdate8-v-fin.pdf>, accessed 21 February 2025

UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Syrian Arab Republic: Flash Update No. 5 on the recent developments in Syria (As of 12 December 2024), 12 December 2024, <https://www.unocha.org/attachments/0d860486-da8c-4d01-a78f-7126e0c4a1e9/Syria-FlashUpdate-vfin.pdf>, accessed 7 March 2025

UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1 (As of 12 February 2025), 12 February 2025, <https://www.unocha.org/attachments/da4ce655-84c1-4e64-8d83-309906a9faab/Situation%20Report1-Syria-EN.pdf>, accessed 7 March 2025

UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Response Priorities - January to March 2025 (Issued January 2025), 28 January 2025, [https://reliefweb.int/attachments/f52c8967-2d37-4d7e-9137-6123313b2c24/Humanitarian%20Response%20Priorities\\_Jan%20-%20Mar%202025%20-%20Syrian%20Arab%20Republic%20%281%29.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/attachments/f52c8967-2d37-4d7e-9137-6123313b2c24/Humanitarian%20Response%20Priorities_Jan%20-%20Mar%202025%20-%20Syrian%20Arab%20Republic%20%281%29.pdf), accessed 28 January 2025

UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Syrian Arab Republic: 2024 Humanitarian Needs Overview (February 2024) [EN/AR], 3 March 2024, [https://reliefweb.int/attachments/5eef8c1a-fe65-4961-9d6e-a8bec0578724/Syria%20HNO%202024\\_EN.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/attachments/5eef8c1a-fe65-4961-9d6e-a8bec0578724/Syria%20HNO%202024_EN.pdf), accessed 28 January 2025

UNSG (United Nations Secretary-General), Children and armed conflict Report of the Secretary-General, 3 June 2024, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/095/07/pdf/n2409507.pdf>, accessed 21 January 2025

UNSG (United Nations Secretary-General), Twentieth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat, S/2025/72, 31 January 2025, [https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4075119/files/S\\_2025\\_72-EN.pdf?ln=en](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4075119/files/S_2025_72-EN.pdf?ln=en), accessed 21 February 2025





USCENTCOM (United States Central Command), U.S. Central Command conducts dozens of airstrikes to eliminate ISIS camps in central Syria, 8 December 2024, <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/3989696/us-central-command-conducts-dozens-of-airstrikes-to-eliminate-isis-camps-in-cen/>, accessed 21 February 2025

USDOD (United States Department of Defence), DOD Announces 2,000 Troops in Syria, Department Prepared for Government Shutdown, 19 December 2024, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4013726/dod-announces-2000-troops-in-syria-department-prepared-for-government-shutdown/>, accessed 21 February 2025

USDOD (United States Department of Defense), Operation Inherent Resolve And Other U.S. Government Activities Related to Iraq & Syria: Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024, 19 February 2025, [https://media.defense.gov/2025/Feb/20/2003649130/-1/-1/OIR\\_Q1\\_DEC2024\\_FINAL\\_508.PDF](https://media.defense.gov/2025/Feb/20/2003649130/-1/-1/OIR_Q1_DEC2024_FINAL_508.PDF), accessed 3 March 2025

USDOS (US Department of State), 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Syria, 24 June 2024, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2024-trafficking-in-persons-report/syria/>, accessed 29 January 2025

USDOS (US Department of State), 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Syria, 26 June 2024, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/547499-SYRIA-2023-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf>, accessed 29 January 2025

USIP (United States Institute of Peace), What Assad's Fall Means for Israel and Its Regional Relations, 19 December 2024, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2024/12/what-assads-fall-means-israel-and-its-regional-relations>, accessed 21 February 2025

USIP, Assad is Gone – But the Fight for Syria May Have Just Begun, 9 December 2024, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2024/12/assad-gone-fight-syria-may-have-just-begun>, accessed 21 February 2025

VOA (Voice of America), Another car bomb in a northern Syria city kills at least 19, mostly women, 3 February 2025, <https://www.voanews.com/a/at-least-15-killed-in-car-bomb-explosion-in-northern-syria-7960711.html>, accessed 21 February 2025

VOA (Voice of America), Future uncertain for Syria's Kurds amid potential Turkish offensive, 18 December 2024, <https://www.voanews.com/a/future-uncertain-for-syria-kurds-amid-potential-turkish-offensive/7906014.html>, accessed 21 February 2025

VOA (Voice of America), Rights groups cautious about Islamist rebels' pledges to protect Syrian minorities, 6 December 2024, <https://www.voanews.com/a/rights-groups-cautious-about-islamist-rebels-pledges-to-protect-syrian-minorities/7890287.html>, accessed 21 February 2025





VOA (Voice of America), What future awaits Syria's Christian minority?, 7 January 2025, <https://www.voanews.com/a/what-future-awaits-syria-s-christian-minority-/7926961.html>, accessed 21 February 2025

VOA (Voice of America), What happened to Iranian proxies in Syria?, 13 December 2024, <https://www.voanews.com/a/what-happened-to-iranian-proxies-in-syria-/7901149.html>, accessed 21 February 2025

Verify-sy, Did the current Minister of Justice appear in a video documenting the execution of a woman in the Idlib countryside?, 4 January 2025,

<https://verify-sy.com/en/details/10597/Did-the-current-Minister-of-Justice-appear-in-a-video-documenting-the-execution-of-a-woman-in-the-Idlib-countryside->, accessed 24 January 2025

Washington Post (The), Israel expands airstrikes across Syria amid widening power vacuum, 10 December 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/12/10/israel-syria-strikes-damascus-assad/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Washington Post (The), Israel is building outposts in Syria, raising local fears of occupation, 2 February 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2025/02/02/israel-syria-golan-ceasefire-line/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Watan, Damascus to Enforce Gender Segregation on Public and Private Buses, 11 January 2025, <https://www.watanserb.com/en/2025/01/11/damascus-to-enforce-gender-segregation-on-public-and-private-buses/>, accessed 21 February 2025

Waters, G., ISIS Redux: The Central Syria Insurgency, Special Edition, 27 January 2025, <https://www.counterextremism.com/blog/isis-redux-central-syria-insurgency-special-edition>, accessed 7 March 2025

Waters, G., Security in Alawite regions in post-Assad Syria, MEI, 21 January 2025, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/security-alawite-regions-post-assad-syria>, accessed 21 February 2025

Welat TV, Military Operations Room Official in Suwayda to "Welat TV": Disarming Hinges on Achieving Our Legitimate Demands, 8 January 2025, <https://www.welatv.net/en/node/8670>, accessed 21 February 2025

Welthungerhilfe, Multisectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA) Aleppo and Idleb Governorates Northwest Syria (NWS), September 2024, 5 November 2024, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/7c3d0dfa-4106-42d7-81ce-c9f711f51ed1/WHH-MSNA%20Report-092024-cleaned.pdf>, accessed 29 January 2025

WSJ (The Wall Street Journal), Iran Pulls Most Forces From Syria, in Blow to Tehran's Regional Ambitions, 7 January 2025, <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/iran-pulls-most-forces-from-syria-in-blow-to-tehrans-regional-ambitions-38fab226>, accessed 21 February 2025





Zelin, A.Y, The Status of Syria's Transition After Two Months, TWI (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy), 12 February 2025, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/status-syrias-transition-after-two-months>, accessed 3 March 2025





## Annex 2: Terms of Reference

The research should focus on the period between November 2024 – February 2025. Limited relevant information covering March 2025 to be added where available.

### **Political and human rights developments**

- Overview of current conflicts
- Political developments
- Governance under the Transitional Administration
- Treatment of certain profiles and groups of the population
  - Persons affiliated with the government of Bashar Al-Assad
  - Alawites
  - Kurds
  - Other ethno-religious minorities
  - Women
  - Children
  - LGBTIQ persons

### **Armed actors**

- Brief description and capacity
- Presence and areas of control/influence of the different actors
- Conduct during the reference period (tactics, weapons used, potential involvement in human rights violations)

### **International involvement**

### **Recent security trends**

- Security trends by area of control
- Impact of the security situation on civilian population
  - Security incidents
  - Type of weapons and tactics used





- Civilian casualties
- Conflict related infrastructure damage and explosive remnants of war
- Conflict-induced displacement and return
- Returns from abroad





Publications Office  
of the European Union

