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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic*, **

Summary

The present report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic covers the period from 8 December 2024 to 31 January 2026.

* The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.

** The annexes to the present document are reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

I. Introduction and methodology

1. After 50 years of repression by the Assad family, institutions were not independent, genuine political pluralism was absent and the system did not allow for meaningful participation or autonomy. The Syrian conflict further resulted in one of the largest humanitarian and displacement crises in recent history. Dismantling the legacy of authoritarian rule so that human rights and accountability prevail is extremely difficult. The political transition in the Syrian Arab Republic requires the simultaneous achievement of several critical objectives: security stabilization, economic recovery, institutional reform, accountability for widespread violations, social reconciliation and assertion of sovereignty amid the presence of foreign militaries. Few countries in modern history have faced the challenge of managing all these issues at once.

2. The scale of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law violations committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since 2011 is immense. Hundreds of thousands of people have been arbitrarily detained or disappeared, and nearly every war crime and crime against humanity listed in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court was committed, instilling a deep trauma across communities. While transition demands accountability, it is important to carefully balance justice and stability. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic acknowledges the complexity inherent in the country's transition. The process of building a new justice system capable of holding perpetrators accountable, establishing a nationwide mechanism for transitional justice and preventing human rights violations is formidable and difficult.

3. The Commission recognizes several important positive steps taken by the Government towards investigation and accountability, including creating national investigative commissions to investigate violence, making public commitments to human rights reform, undertaking efforts to locate the disappeared and increasing cooperation with United Nations human rights mechanisms. Despite ongoing insecurity and fears of further displacement, local efforts aimed at social reconstruction and reconciliation are emerging. The Commission encourages the Government to support those initiatives and to recognize the vital role played by Syrian civil society, which has resisted authoritarianism for decades. Acknowledging such progress, the road ahead is nonetheless challenging. The international community must not stand by as Syrians struggle to recover from decades of lawlessness but must positively support the process. Only through such support can the Syrian Arab Republic lead its transition to a political system that fully guarantees the protection of human rights for all Syrians.

4. The present report of the Commission[1] covers the period from 8 December 2024 to 31 January 2026, in line with its mandate to investigate alleged violations of international human rights law since March 2011 in the Syrian Arab Republic and to present public reports on its findings.[2] The Commission conducted more than 500 interviews, requested information on incidents and developments[3] and analysed, authenticated and verified documents, photographs, videos and satellite imagery from multiple sources, including non-governmental organizations and the United Nations.[4] The Commission's standard of proof was met when there were reasonable grounds to believe, based on available facts and evidence, that the incidents had occurred.[5] When the Commission has reasonable grounds to believe that conduct entailing individual criminal responsibility has occurred, it attributes it

[1] The Commissioners are Monia Ammar, Fionnuala Ní Aoláin and Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro (Chair).

[2] Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 58/25, paras. 10 and 12, in which the Council extended the Commission's mandate. The period from 1 February to 31 March 2026 will be covered in a future report or reports.

[3] The Commission addressed information requests to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, which replied on 28 January 2026, as well as to other parties to the conflict and other States Members of the United Nations. It is thankful for the responses received and other exchanges.

[4] Including eight of the Government's identical periodic letters to the Secretary-General and others, sent between 8 December 2024 and 31 January 2026.

[5] For example, A/HRC/S-17/2/Add.1, paras. 7–10; and A/HRC/19/69, para. 10. See also annex I to the present report, para. 2.

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to a party to the conflict, where possible. The role played by intersectional identity factors in driving violations is reflected throughout the report.

5. In a positive development, the Commission was granted access by the Syrian authorities from December 2024, enabling it to conduct investigations inside the country – for the first time since 2011– as well as remotely. Guided by the principle of "do no harm" and considering continuing protection concerns, interviewees have not been named in the present report, but the Commission thanks all who provided information, particularly victims and witnesses.

6. The overall scale of alleged violations is greater than reflected in the report, as the information presented is limited to that which met the Commission's standard of proof and which it was able to present following reviews of protection concerns, in addition to significant constraints on time and resources related to the United Nations regular budget liquidity crisis.[6]

7. The collapse of the Assad-led Government on 8 December 2024 brought substantial changes to the domestic legal framework of the Syrian Arab Republic, including the issuance of a Constitutional Declaration that replaced the 2012 Constitution on 13 March 2025. The Commission has examined the applicable national and international legal frameworks.[7] At the time of writing, the national and international legal framework (international humanitarian, human rights and criminal law and national law, including transitional legislation) continue as set forth in that document.[8]

II. Context

8. On 8 December 2025, the Syrian Arab Republic marked the one-year anniversary of the fall of the authoritarian and repressive Assad Government.

9. Its collapse ushered in an unprecedented wave of hope and optimism that the sacrifices of the preceding 14 years would allow the Syrian people to begin the momentous task of rebuilding and re-unifying their country around a new social contract. In the days that followed, the new caretaker government[9] under Ahmad al-Sharaa began consolidating its control, while working to gain international legitimacy and confront challenges facing the country. On the economic front, the Government succeeded in its advocacy for the lifting of crippling sectoral sanctions that had been imposed by the United States of America and others on the former Government. However, economic conditions remained dire, as inflation, unemployment and declining purchasing power severely affected people's daily lives.

10. Despite notable progress in restoring order and building new institutions, the transition remained fragile, with competing visions for the future trajectory of the country. Following a one-day national dialogue conference on 25 February, preceded by consultations across governorates, President al-Sharaa signed a constitutional declaration which established a five-year transitional period and enshrined all the rights and freedoms in international human rights treaties. Shortly thereafter, a new Government was announced with key portfolios composed of former Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham leadership, while others were allocated with consideration to regional or community (ethnic or religious) representation, including one woman. In the meantime, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham dissolved itself. At the same time, the self-administration in the north-east and some leaders in Suwayda, among others,

[6] Due to the United Nations regular budget liquidity crisis, the Commission, along with other Council-mandated investigative bodies was forced to operate with only approximately half of its regular budget approved staffing and a fraction of its regular budget non-post resources during the second half of 2025, severely restricting its capacity. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptedDTbsPEU.

[7] See annex III to the conference room paper of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports.

[8] Ibid., p. 55.

[9] The "interim government" was subsequently formed on 29 March 2025. In the present report, references to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic will encompass both administrations.

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objected to the new Government and the declaration, deeming them not reflective of the aspirations of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Syrian population, or expressed concern about the consolidation of power within the executive with limited institutional oversight. Integration of the Syrian Democratic Forces has since progressed.

11. Millions of travel bans on Syrians were announced to have been lifted by the new Government.[10] Coupled with the lifting of mandatory conscription into Assad-era security forces, the pervasive fear that millions of "wanted" Syrians had of arbitrary arrest and associated detention-related violations[11] – including for evading conscription – started to dissipate,[12] as media freedoms widened. Over 3 million refugees and internally displaced persons have returned since December 2024.[13] Civil society activity has regenerated.

12. The human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2025 was also profoundly marked by two waves of large-scale violence against civilians, which erupted against the Alawi community in Homs, Hama, Latakia and Tartus Governorates in early March, following attacks on government forces on 6 March, and against the Druze and Bedouin communities in Suwayda following violence in Maqwas on 13 July.[14] The ensuing targeted killings, torture, destruction or occupation of property and hate speech spread on social media created deep mistrust of the new authorities in affected communities. Despite commitments and initial efforts by the Government to hold perpetrators accountable, these events further deepened grievances and fragmentation.

13. Meanwhile, immediately following the fall of the previous Government, Israel intensified its air operations, decimating the military capabilities of the Syrian Arab Republic, occupying additional Syrian territory and establishing military bases.

14. Among the major tasks facing the country is the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of hundreds of thousands of former government security forces, other non-State armed forces and paramilitary groups, the implementation of holistic transitional justice processes for crimes committed by these and other forces since 2011 and security sector reform and institutional reforms, including judicial reform.[15]

A. Disarmament of former government forces

15. On 9 December 2024, the Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham-led military operations command declared a general amnesty for all soldiers conscripted into the Syrian Arab Army who did not have "blood on their hands".[16] "Settlement" centres were rapidly established for those affiliated with the Army to turn in their weapons and settle their status.[17] Tens of thousands of former soldiers reportedly settled their individual status, including over 120,000 in Latakia and Tartus alone.[18] Others refrained from doing so, citing fears of retribution, particularly as attacks against Alawi communities were increasingly being reported, further exacerbated by

[10] See https://sana.sy/en/syria/2278840/.

[11] See the conference room paper of the Commission on arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment by former government forces in the Syrian Arab Republic, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session58/list-reports.

[12] See www.unhcr.org/media/ninth-regional-survey-syrian-refugees-perceptions-intentions-return-syria.

[13] See https://reliefweb.int/node/4195440.

[14] See the conference room papers of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports; and on international human rights law and international humanitarian law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session61/list-reports.

[15] See https://specialenvoysyria.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/2025-03-25_secco_un_special_envoy_for_syria_mr._geir_o._pedersen_briefing_as_delivered__0.pdf; and www.unddr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/IDDRS-2.10-The-UN-Approach-To-DDR.pdf.

[16] See https://t.me/SyrianArabNewsAgency/119101.

[17] See the conference room paper of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports.

[18] While the settlement process and the related amnesty were welcomed by many, they were also criticized by others, who feared it would lead to impunity for war-related crimes.

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documented cases in which those who had settled their status were subsequently killed or arrested in combing operations.[19]

B. New security and defence forces formed

16. Late 2024 and early 2025 was thus marked by the rapid dissolution of the former Government's Syrian Arab Army and multiple security agencies, creating a security vacuum, which is now being addressed. Former Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham[20] leaders were appointed to head the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior in December 2024 and January 2025.[21]

17. On 29 January, the military operations command announced the dissolution of the former Government's army and security agencies, and dozens of former opposition armed factions, including factions of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham and the Syrian National Army, agreed to integrate into a newly unified army under the Ministry of Defence.[22] Little publicly known human rights vetting of individual members took place, as entire former factions of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, National Liberation Front and Syrian National Army, including leaders subjected to sanctions for human rights abuses,[23] were integrated, with their membership and reporting lines largely intact, under the Ministry of Defence, while in practice still operating with a degree of autonomy and separate revenue streams.[24]

18. Similarly, beginning in December 2024, new recruits were employed in a new, countrywide "general security" force (known as the Internal Security Forces from 25 May 2025), tasked with law enforcement functions under the Ministry of the Interior. Members of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham and other former opposition armed group members were integrated into the Internal Security Forces without prior human rights vetting, and trainees reportedly initially underwent two weeks of training.

19. Shortcomings in the control, coordination, diversification, training and discipline of the nominally integrated factions contributed to violations, including in the coastal areas and in Suwayda as set out below. While the training of such forces in international human rights and humanitarian standards was initiated in mid-2025, including in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations,[25] further accountability – and specifically holistic vetting, lustration and professionalization measures – are key to preventing violations from being committed during law enforcement and military operations. The Ministry of the Interior reported initiating professionalization efforts in 2025, including issuing a code of conduct and establishing a channel for citizens' complaints, which resulted in members of the Internal Security Forces being held accountable for violence and corruption.[26]

[19] See the conference room paper of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports.

[20] A/HRC/46/54, para. 7.

[21] See the conference room paper of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports.

[22] See the conference room paper of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports.

[23] For example, commanders of Sultan Suleiman Shah Brigade, Hamza Division and Ahrar Al Sharqiya. Note verbale dated 28 January 2026 from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the Commission.

[24] See the conference room paper of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports.

[25] See https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/12/1166498.

[26] Note verbale dated 28 January 2026 from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the Commission.

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C. Areas of the country outside the control of government forces

20. Despite efforts to ensure that no armed factions would operate outside of State control, by January 2026, challenges remained. The integration of Druze-led factions in Suwayda proved protracted, after the large-scale violence there, while pro-former government fighters continued operations throughout 2025, notably in the coastal areas.

21. The resulting sense of insecurity was shared by other communities, complicating talks with the Syrian Democratic Forces aimed at its full integration into the new State's institutions. Despite an agreement of 10 March 2025 to integrate by year's end, clashes continued between former Syrian National Army factions and the Syrian Democratic Forces along the front lines in the north-east throughout 2025 (see annex I, sect. III). Shortly after the expiry of the December deadline, a military operation began in the Kurdish Asayish-controlled Sheikh Maqsoud and Ashrafieh suburbs of Aleppo, in which the Commission acknowledges the efforts by the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior to protect civilians and adhere to international human rights and humanitarian law. Subsequently, as government forces took control of broader swaths of Syrian Democratic Forces territory, a series of ceasefire agreements between the President of the Syrian Arab Republic, Ahmad Al-Sharaa, and the Syrian Democratic Forces leader, General Mazloum Abdi, were announced between 18 and 30 January, which largely halted the fighting.[27] At the time of writing, encouragingly, the ceasefire agreement was largely holding. The Commission is currently investigating these events and alleged violations of international human rights and humanitarian law[28] and will report on them in due course.

22. Da'esh and other non-State armed groups, including other United Nations-designated terrorist groups,[29] also remained a threat (see also sect. III.E.4). While Hizbullah's operations contracted sharply, factions such as the Turkistan Islamic Party and Firqat al-Ghuraba remained active in the north-west. Counter-terrorism operations by the United States-led international counter-Da'esh coalition, jointly with Syrian Democratic Forces in Dayr al-Zawr, continued, including a surge of operations in October. Syrian forces participated in some operations of the international coalition from August and were formally admitted into the coalition in November.[30]

23. Accordingly, the emerging government forces operated alongside a diverse range of armed actors with varying degrees of alignment and autonomy, including foreign fighters and external military actors (see sect. III.E below). As of 31 January 2026, government forces controlled most of the country except large parts of the Suwayda Governorate and parts of Al-Hasakah Governorate around Al-Hasakah, Qamishli and Kobani in Aleppo Governorate, as well as territory controlled by Israel (see annex II).

D. Transitional justice and accountability

24. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic undertook constructive initial steps to advance justice and accountability for past crimes, creating new national commissions: on transitional justice[31] and for missing persons.[32] Several prominent Syrian human rights defenders, including women, were appointed as initial members of these two bodies,[33] and both conducted consultations with Syrian civil society organizations and communities. A

[27] See https://dppa.un.org/en/mtg-sc-10094-asg-khiari-22-jan-2026.

[28] See www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/iici-syria/independent-international-commission, 30 January 2025.

[29] See https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/un-sc-consolidated-list#composition%20list.

[30] See https://x.com/USEmbassySyria/status/1988311812576891147?s=20s.

[31] See https://x.com/SyPresidency/status/1923841446387359791 NTJC – Presidential Decree 20 (2025) – 17 – 05 – 2025 Presidential Decree 149 (2025) – 29 – 08- 2025 - SANA' **الرئيس الشرع يصدر مرسوماً بتشكيل لجنة الهينة الوطنية للعدالة الانتقالية** https://sana.sy/presidency/2273842/.

[32] See @sana_gov on Telegram; and www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/PolicyPaperSyriasMissingAndDisappeared_17June2022_EN.pdf.

[33] See https://x.com/Sana__gov/status/1961133371465122072/photo/1?ref=syriaaccountability.org; and www.facebook.com/share/p/15eJkQz9zT/.

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draft transitional justice law was announced, while the scope of the mandate of the national commission on transitional justice's, and victims' equal access to accountability, justice (including criminal justice) and redress as recommended,[34] was not yet clear at the time of writing.[35]

25. Commendably, the Government also issued arrest warrants against the former President and former high-level army, intelligence and security officials, citing human rights violations, abuses and corruption. Overall, between 8 December 2024 and January 2026, the Government reported arresting 6,331 former Syrian Arab Army personnel (and subsequently releasing 1,158 for lack of evidence), while also arresting 620 Da'esh members. Most were held in Assad-era dilapidated detention facilities requiring renovation, for which resources were lacking, pending judicial reforms and related proceedings.[36]

26. Arresting senior former government figures was seen by many as essential to preventing their victims from taking the law into their own hands, amid reports of increasing vigilantism and significant tensions in the wake of releases perceived by victims as unjustified.

27. While the need to nominally integrate disparate armed groups who had fought against the former Government into the new Ministry of Defence forces was understandable, impunity concerns were further reinforced by the above-mentioned integration of faction members known for human rights violations, creating an enabling environment for recurrence, as illustrated by the violence that erupted in March and July.[37]

28. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic committed publicly to holding all perpetrators accountable and established, first, the national inquiry into the March coastal events,[38] and reported on its findings through a press conference on 22 July, and, second, the national inquiry into the July Suwayda violence,[39] for which work is still ongoing, since it has yet to be granted access to the Druze-controlled areas of the governorate. The Government also granted the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic access to investigate these events.[40]

29. The ensuing verbal recommendations by the national inquiry into the March coastal events and the published report and recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry were positively deemed a road map for the continued progress of the Syrian Arab Republic by the

[34] See the conference room paper of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports.

[35] While the decree establishing the national commission on transitional justice seemed to limit its remit to violations caused by the former Government, the commission informed the Commission of Inquiry that its mandate was limited temporally to the rule of the former Government. See also www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=122129857184885559&set=pcb.122129857214885559.

[36] Note verbale dated 28 January 2026 from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the Commission.

[37] See the conference room papers of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports; and on international human rights law and international humanitarian law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session61/list-reports.

[38] See https://t.me/sana_gov/124628 - 10 August 2025 - www.facebook.com/SyrMOfj/posts/pfbid03439DVTLnGfoharXnWDWP2P7ggwrZSmZAisNr7uzxyDBNHYGcnfXQm4ik3ghBjw7Xl.

[39] See www.facebook.com/SyrMOfj/posts/pfbid02T9hGH1mtQJXAQ9tStFCbyV6t2MTG3NprdkBCdR1hNK8NT6aQRKyEqgJdpSHdidCcl; and see the conference room paper of the Commission international human rights law and international humanitarian law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session61/list-reports.

[40] See the conference room papers of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports; and on international human rights law and international humanitarian law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session61/list-reports.

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Minister for Foreign Affairs, Asaad Al-Sheibani.[41] Since then, initial steps were taken to arrest and try, in public trials with independent observers present, 14 alleged perpetrators in connection with the coastal violence, alongside the arrest of initial alleged perpetrators involved in the violence in Suwayda,[42] although the responsibilities of senior officials and commanders have not yet been clarified. Steps taken also included some local inter-community dialogues and measures for increasing the diversification, training, oversight and professionalization of security forces, including in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,[43] although significant efforts are still needed to build confidence, advance trust, stop fear, holistically support intra- and inter-community dialogue and confront the deep wounds created by both waves of violence.

30. To enable accountability, the broken judicial and law enforcement system inherited from the former Government – which often served as a tool to violate rather than protect Syrians' human rights[44] – needs to be transformed, and the independence, professionalism and legal competence of the judiciary must be guaranteed.

31. Some initial steps taken raised both hopes and concerns in this regard. The Government raised the salaries of judges, to allow them to "live with dignity"[45] and combat entrenched extortion and corruption.[46] Judges who had held political roles in the Ba'ath Arab Socialist Party and the People's Assembly were dismissed,[47] and judges who sat on the (now dissolved) Counter-Terrorism Court were referred for judicial investigation.[48] A specialized judicial committee to review rulings of the Counter-Terrorism Court and other special courts was established,[49] with affected citizens invited to submit their complaints.[50] At the same time, individuals without required law degrees were reportedly appointed as new heads of courts, amid concerns that their roles lacked clarity, including impact on the independence of the judiciary.

E. New parliament and the limited inclusivity to date, including of women

32. The new parliament had, as of writing, not yet been established. In early October, indirect parliamentary elections were convened across most of the country, except in areas

[41] See annex IV to the conference room paper of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports.

[42] See the conference room paper of the Commission on international human rights law and international humanitarian law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session61/list-reports.

[43] See https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/12/1166498.

[44] See the conference room paper of the Commission on arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment by former government forces in the Syrian Arab Republic, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session58/list-reports.

[45] Presidential Decree No. 140 of 2025. See https://t.me/AlekhbariahSY/175048; and https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1D4u7neNyZ/.

[46] See the conference room paper of the Commission on arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment by former government forces in the Syrian Arab Republic, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session58/list-reports.

[47] Decision No. 120/L of 28 January 2025. See www.facebook.com/SyrMOfj/posts/pfbid0366j13xwPoDrvrJz6J9FfGBVW1LwQnZ9tjXTziBgmYq8nnfEupCmFHXAdHYS6bvzml.

[48] Decision No. 204/L of 12 February 2025. See www.facebook.com/SyrMOfj/posts/pfbid022hpXKn3uP3vHW9rxzgbtDkPkA4chwiGM6UZzxBaiS272hDGZfKXyc7FjSL8tesxnl; and www.syria.tv/-متورطون-بأحكام-إعدام-تعسفية-التحقيق-مع-87-قاضياً-سورياً-من-محكمة-الإرهاب;.

[49] See www.facebook.com/SyrMOfj/posts/pfbid028jjFq8DospnRo5EwmasEkWxiiNY5QfrzEFn1e8RZ3xUvnPUmMKvzmQy8UPkxmFVPl.

[50] See www.facebook.com/SyrMOfj/posts/pfbid0etBe14RkWAyKtMNCg8ehvuN2hWikwe5XLYdsRqHEz17yowryW9UoPXD9SCdGGYnol.

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outside the Government's control.[51] Appointments for one third of parliamentary seats, to be made by the President, remained pending, amid hopes that those appointments would better reflect the country's diversity.[52]

33. While several women were appointed to transitional justice bodies, so far, women have had a limited role in decision-making, with only one woman appointed as a minister and only six women elected to parliament to date. The protracted conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic had already deepened existing gender inequalities, exposing women and girls to heightened levels of violence and displacement, alongside the Assad-era atrocities[53] inflicted upon Syrian women and discriminatory legal frameworks that restricted their rights. In this regard, the Commission highlights specific new concerns that emerged in the past year (see annex, sect. II.C).

34. Elections in Suwayda, Hasakah and Raqqah[54] have not yet been held. The waves of violence affecting minority communities during the reporting period deeply affected trust there regarding the prospects for an inclusive political transition. At the same time, Presidential Decree No. 13 of January 2026 affirmed the linguistic, cultural and citizenship rights of Syrian Kurds, long denied by successive Assad-led Governments,[55] and raised hopes in the north-east, alongside the appointment of a Kurdish governor of Hasakah and preparations for elections there and in Raqqah.

III. Documented violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law

35. The main violations and abuses of human rights documented by the Commission during the reporting period include violations committed in the context of two large-scale waves of violence in coastal, western and central areas in March and in Suwayda in July, violations documented in the context of detention by members of government forces, violations of economic and social rights, particularly the rights to housing, land and property, violations affecting women and girls, focusing on abductions, and violations committed in the context of the continuing conflicts on Syrian territory and by foreign States, notably Israel, and by non-State actors.

A. Violations of the right to life and other human rights abuses during the large-scale waves of violence in the coastal areas and in Suwayda

36. Two waves of large-scale violence erupted against the Alawi community in the coastal and western central areas of the Syrian Arab Republic in January and March and against Druze and Bedouin communities in Suwayda in July 2025.

37. In the first wave, in the context of an initial attack by and the ensuing conflict with pro-former government fighters, members of government armed forces and private individuals operating alongside or in proximity to them, killed over 1,400 people, including approximately 100 women, predominantly Alawi civilians in Latakia, Tartus, Homs and Hama Governorates, entailing war crimes, as described by the Commission.[56] Violence

[51] Amid broad acceptance that temporary electoral arrangements were needed while operational challenges with civil registration and documentation precluded direct elections from taking place. See https://specialenvoysyria.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/2025-11/2025-10-22_secco_un_deputy_special_envoy_for_syria_ms._najat_rochdi_briefing_as_delivered.pdf.

[52] See https://press.un.org/en/2025/sc16198.doc.htm.

[53] See www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/coisyria/policypapersieges29aywar/2023-06-12-Gendered-impact-women-girls-%20Syria.pdf.

[54] Under the control of the self-administration until 18 January 2026.

[55] See https://sana.sy/en/politics/2290787/.

[56] See the conference room paper of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports.

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persisted, albeit on a smaller scale, in the coastal areas and in adjacent Homs and Hama Governorates throughout 2025 (see annex I, sect. II).

38. In the second wave of violence, over 1,500 people were killed in Suwayda Governorate in July, including both Druze and Bedouin civilians, also entailing war crimes committed by members of government armed forces, Druze armed groups and tribal fighters in the context of a conflict with Druze armed groups.[57]

39. In both waves, consistent patterns of violence, including targeting based on religious affiliation, ethnicity, age and gender, were committed by members of government armed forces and other forces; in Suwadya, this included Druze armed groups and tribal fighters. Men and boys were forcibly removed from their homes and killed, including in collective executions.[58] Women and young children were also killed during house raids. Homes and property were looted, burned and destroyed, forcibly displacing residents. Nearly all Bedouins were forcibly displaced from Druze armed group-controlled Suwayda Governorate and were still being prevented from returning by Druze armed groups at the time of writing.[59] These acts were accompanied by sectarian insults and inhuman and degrading treatment, by both members of government and other forces, as well as by civilians directly participating in the hostilities, against the Alawi, Druze and Bedouin communities.

40. Collectively, such conduct entailed violations of the rights to life, security of person and to be free from torture and ill-treatment and inhuman and degrading treatment. Civilians were also subjected to arbitrary detention and violations of their rights to housing, land and property. Cumulative and intersectional human rights violations were widespread. These acts also comprised killings and torture, in violation of the prohibitions under international human rights and humanitarian law against committing violence against the physical or mental well-being of protected persons, in particular murder of all kinds, cruel treatment and torture. The Commission has noted, with regard to the two waves of large-scale violence, such violations amount to war crimes and, should such elements be established through further investigation, may amount to crimes against humanity.[60]

41. In addition, the Commission documented isolated yet disturbing cases of Alawi and Bedouin civilians who were injured in violent events being denied their right to healthcare at hospitals in Homs, Hama, Latakia and Suwayda, on account of their community affiliation, or facing discriminatory treatment, in some cases resulting in death.

42. The Commission also documented several cases of extrajudicial killings outside these two waves of violence, particularly in Homs Governorate, in the context of combing operations. It continued to receive allegations of killings of primarily Alawi men throughout the year (see annex, sect. II.B).

43. In the wake of such violations, despite the Government's above-described efforts, many in the affected communities described a deep sense of insecurity and marginalization, leaving them feeling more vulnerable in the absence of any meaningful political representation, with tens of thousands fleeing the country or planning to do so.[61]

[57] See the conference room paper of the Commission on international human rights law and international humanitarian law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session61/list-reports.

[58] See the conference room paper of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports.

[59] The Commission documented similar patterns of violations against the Alawi community during combing operations in Homs villages before March.

[60] See the conference room papers of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports; and on international human rights law and international humanitarian law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session61/list-reports.

[61] See https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/116709.

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B. Violations in detention: torture and ill-treatment, incommunicado detention, enforced disappearance and death in custody

44. Since 2011, the former Government systematically used arbitrary detention, torture and disappearances to quash dissent, in acts constituting crimes against humanity and war crimes. [62] During the reporting period, the Commission continued its long-standing investigations into detention-related violations, most of which were documented in the context of combing operations initiated by new security forces shortly after the fall of the former Government in Alawi majority or mixed neighbourhoods in Latakia, Tartus, Homs and Hama Governorates. These operations were aimed at identifying former Syrian Arab Army members who had joined pro-former government fighters, disarming militias, curbing the proliferation of weapons and arresting high-ranking former Army officers for their alleged roles in Assad-era crimes. Between December 2024 and March 2025, Alawi men and boys were arbitrarily arrested and detained amid violence, house raids and sectarian rhetoric. The operations were often accompanied by the seizure and confiscation of property (see annex I, sect. II.D].

45. During such operations, the Commission investigated several incidents in which Alawi men and teenage boys were beaten, including with rifle butts and sticks, and forced to bark, crawl and drink from puddles.

46. Detainees were held both in unofficial locations and in official detention facilities, both security branches and prisons. They were arrested and detained without judicial warrants, without being informed of the reasons for their detention, without appearing before a judge and without being provided with lawyers or the opportunity to challenge their detention.

47. Arbitrary arrest and detention were also documented at checkpoints in Latakia, Hama, Homs and Tartus between December 2024 and July 2025 (See annex, sect. II.A).

48. Torture and ill-treatment were documented in 18 official detention facilities, in 12 makeshift facilities in Aleppo, Dara'a, Homs, Hama, Latakia, Tartus, Idlib and Rif Damascus Governorates, as well as at checkpoints in Homs and Tartus, between January and October 2025. Members of government security forces, including the Internal Security Forces, used rifle butts, sticks, pipes, bars, cables, and – in one instance – a nail-studded stick to assault them, in one case while the victim was naked. Detainees were subjected to humiliating and degrading treatment, including various forms of torture, such as mock execution, *shabeh,*[63] *dulab*,[64] *falaqa*,[65] whipping, electric shocks and sexual violence. Two detainees reported having their moustaches shaved off by prison guards.

49. Such acts of violence were inflicted on detainees for such purposes as obtaining information, punishment, intimidation, humiliation, coercion or for reasons based on discrimination. Eyewitnesses identified several alleged perpetrators from government security forces, including General Security, the former Syrian National Army's Sultan Suleiman Shah Brigade and foreign fighters, as responsible for their torture or ill-treatment in detention.

50. In 24 documented cases in government custody in Homs, Latakia, Hama, Tartus and Idlib Governorates, detainees were held incommunicado for periods of between five days and one year. In eight documented cases, ongoing as of January 2026, families reported that government forces denied holding detainees, even though they had last been seen in government custody, which amounts to enforced disappearance (see annex I, sect. II.A).

51. Places of detention were reportedly severely overcrowded, notably in Homs and Hama. Particularly cramped cells were described in the State Security Branch in Homs and

[62] See www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/iici-syria/web-agony; and www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/iici-syria/detention-report .

[63] See the conference room paper of the Commission on arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment by former government forces in the Syrian Arab Republic, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session58/list-reports.

[64] Ibid.

[65] A/HRC/54/58, para. 76.

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in the former criminal security branch in Tartus, where two or three prisoners were reportedly held together in solitary confinement cells. Some former detainees held in the military security branch in Homs, the military security and political security detention facility in Latakia and at Sahnaya police station, Rif Damascus, reported being held in solitary confinement. Released detainees also reported limited food in Hama central prison, in the political branch in Shin, Homs, in Homs military security branch and in Sahnaya police station in Rif Damascus and limited water in Tartus criminal security branch and Sahnaya police station. Most such cases were documented during the first half of 2025, with access to independent monitors granted subsequently who reported that conditions had improved.

52. The Commission also documented 11 deaths in detention likely occurring between January and October 2025 and tracked an additional 23 deaths in custody during 2025. The Government has announced investigations into four of those cases. The Government also confirmed 21 cases of death in detention in Homs central prison, Hama central prison and Damascus central prison, reporting that detainees had died of natural causes.

53. In two separate incidents documented by the Commission, in Homs city in January and February 2025, six Alawi men were arbitrarily detained by government forces during combing operations and at a checkpoint. They died violently in custody, entailing violations of their right to life. All six men were buried without their families' knowledge in mass burial sites (see annex I, sect. II.B).

54. Some families whose relatives died in detention reported not having any information about investigations or accountability efforts and being unable to recover the bodies of their loved ones or hold burial ceremonies. In two cases, families were authorized to bury their family members on the condition that they did not open the coffin, and, in one case, after the family signed a document to state that their deceased family member was a "remnant" of the former Government.

55. In the documented cases (see above and annex I), some government actors violated the right to freedom from torture and ill-treatment through the treatment of detainees during capture, holding and interrogation and through conditions of detention, including solitary confinement.[66] In this regard, the Government must ensure that it implements its obligations to take effective measures to prevent acts of torture.[67] Through failing to inform detainees of charges against them, appointing lawyers or appearing before a judge within a reasonable amount of time, the government actors violated the prohibition of arbitrary detention and fair trial rights in the cases above[68] – also raising concerns about the lack of effective remedies for violations.[69] In particular, the loss of life in custody creates a presumption of arbitrary deprivation of life, which can only be rebutted by a proper investigation that establishes the Government's compliance with its human rights obligations to protect the right to life.[70] In failing to do so, the right to life has been violated.[71]

C. Violations of economic, social and cultural rights, including to housing, land and property

56. The Government faces massive challenges with respect to ensuring the enjoyment – and progressive realization – of economic, social and cultural rights for all, having inherited a country in which multiple actors wrought large-scale deliberate destruction of civilian

[66] Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, arts. 1, 2 and 13 and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 7.

[67] Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, art. 2 and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 2.

[68] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, arts 9 and 14.

[69] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 2 (3) and Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law (General Assembly resolution 60/147).

[70] Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 36 (2018) on the right to life, para. 29.

[71] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 6.

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infrastructure, including the industrial-scale pillage of homes[72] and deliberate attacks on healthcare.[73] During the Assad era, violations of housing, land and property rights served to punish opponents and reward loyalists and to prevent returns among displaced.[74] Those violations created a situation in which local conflicts related to housing, land and property led to new violations in late 2024 and 2025 and risk fueling further violence if not addressed by fair dispute-resolution mechanisms and as part of transitional justice.[75]

57. Since the beginning of 2025, the Government has taken steps to address those challenges, signalling an intention to restore rights to victims. For instance, the General Directorate of Cadastral Affairs has undertaken efforts to restore property records damaged in several areas.

58. Initial decisions include Decree No. 16 of 2025, which lifts precautionary seizures imposed by the security agencies under Law No. 63 of 2012, but so far excludes those ordered by judicial bodies such as the Counter-Terrorism Court and permanent executive confiscations, thus excluding many owners from retrieving their assets.

59. Committees have been established to receive and address claims related to housing, land and property disputes, including administrative committees at the governorate level, particularly in Damascus, Homs and Hama. However, these bodies have hitherto operated without a unified mandate, standardized legal framework or effective central coordination. In parallel, community-based committees also received complaints and facilitated dispute resolution with the aim of expediting processes and easing the burden on the judiciary. Their decisions are not legally-binding, and practices varied in terms of membership, decision-making criteria and coordination with judicial authorities, raising concerns regarding consistency, effectiveness and the protection of rights.

60. The new authorities have progressively continued urban development projects initiated during the Assad era and launched new ones, notably in Damascus, Homs and Aleppo, despite constrained resources. While aiming at much-needed urban renewal and economic stimulus, it is not yet clear how project-related expropriations will be addressed. Local communities have reportedly not been adequately consulted, thereby risking eroding trust and raising concerns that, without careful review and appropriate safeguards, their implementation could deepen spatial exclusion, fail to meet the massive housing needs and lead to further violations.

61. Women faced particular challenges in securing housing, as property ownership is often registered solely in the husband's name. Discriminatory inheritance laws grant women heirs only a limited share of inherited assets, and, owing to societal and cultural norms, property is inherited primarily by men. This has created a significant obstacle to the return of female-headed households, the number of which increased during the conflict, and heightened protection risks.[76]

62. Since late-2024, unresolved housing, land and property violations by the former Government also fuelled retaliatory violence across Homs, Hama, Latakia, Tartus, Damascus, Rif Damascus and Suwayda Governorates, often with a sectarian dimension, by government forces, private individuals, tribal fighters and Druze armed groups.

[72] In many cases amounting to war crimes, including collective punishment, see the conference room paper of the Commission on unlawful appropriation and destruction of properties of refugees and internally displaced persons in the Syrian Arab Republic, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session58/list-reports.

[73] See. for example, A/HRC/55/64 and A/HRC/46/54. See also www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2025-02/undp-sy-seia-final-24022025_compressed.pdf.

[74] See the conference room paper of the Commission on unlawful appropriation and destruction of properties of refugees and internally displaced persons in the Syrian Arab Republic, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session58/list-reports.

[75] Ibid. See also annex I, sect. III.D.

[76] See www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/coisyria/policypapersieges 29aywar/2023-06-12-Gendered-impact-women-girls-%20Syria.pdf.

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63. Consequently, entire villages and families have been forcibly displaced, with risks of durable demographic change.[77] For instance, in the northern Hama countryside, arbitrary killings, kidnappings, enforced disappearances, death threats and sale under duress have led to the emptying of dozens of Alawi villages. Since then, returnees to nearby villages have occupied their houses and land, while authorities have failed to support their safe return (see annex I, paras. 80–82 and 90–103).

64. In the Al Somarya neighbourhood of Damascus, between December 2024 and August 2025, members of the Internal Security Forces and other armed men affiliated with the Government used violence to evict residents from military housing and adjacent informal areas within hours. Similar patterns of evictions were documented in Zahra', where, between April and October, residents of military housing were given 72 hours to leave their homes.

65. In other areas, communities or families were evicted based on their perceived affiliation to the former Government. For instance, in Idlib, entire families – such as relatives of a resident accused of participating in public auctions organized by the former Government between 2020 and 2024 – were reportedly evicted and prevented from returning.

66. Investigations indicate both insufficient protection and support from the authorities to enable the safe return of newly displaced persons, as well as the involvement of government security forces in retaliatory violence, raising serious concerns about the risk of renewed violations and physical violence related to housing, land and property disputes.

67. A selected number of cases investigated, involving the destruction of property and forced evictions, amounted to interference with the rights to privacy, family, and home under international human rights law (for more details, see annex I, sect. II.D).

D. Violations affecting women and girls, with a particular focus on abductions

68. The end of the Assad era, which was defined by systemic gender-based violence against men and women, including in places of detention,[78] offers the possibility of a transformation of the lives of Syrian women and girls; it will require addressing both discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence, which continued to emerge as a serious concern.[79]

69. Throughout 2025, women and girls, primarily from Alawi communities, were abducted, often during the daytime from streets and markets.

70. The Commission investigated 21 abductions of 17 women and four girls,most of whom were of Alawi origin and one of whom was Sunni, abducted in Damascus and Latakia, Tartous, Hama, Rif Damascus and Homs Governorates.

71. In most cases investigated by the Commission, the perpetrators were unidentified armed actors, organized crime groups or individual criminals. In one case, perpetrators were identified as foreign fighters nominally integrated into government forces under the Ministry of Defence. Credible information implicating foreign fighters in at least two further cases is under investigation.

72. During captivity, many Alawi victims were subjected to beatings and sectarian slurs. Several other abductions appear to have been motivated by monetary gain, organized by

[77] See the conference room papers of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports; and on international human rights law and international humanitarian law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session61/list-reports.

[78] See www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/coisyria/policypapersieges29aywar/2023-06-12-Gendered-impact-women-girls-%20Syria.pdf.

[79] See the conference room paper of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports.

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criminal actors who requested enormous ransoms. In other cases, the motivation for the abduction was mixed or unclear.

73. At least eight abductees were subjected to sexual violence, including gang rapes and forced marriages. Three survivors returned pregnant (see annex I, sect. II.C).

74. State authorities' response to reports of abduction varied, ranging from investigations being initiated but not followed up on, to security officials actively discouraging families from pursuing or publicizing the case, sometimes employing threats. In two cases, disturbingly, after government forces secured the release of victims, the victims themselves were subsequently arrested and investigated for morality-related crimes.

75. Acts of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence constitute serious violations of international human rights law. Such acts violate the victim's right to bodily integrity and security of person and may amount to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The use of sectarian slurs during such acts also implicates victims' rights to equality and non-discrimination.

76. Reports of abductions instilled high levels of fear, particularly among minority women and girls and their families. In some cases, women and girls stopped attending school or university or began wearing headscarves to avoid being perceived as members of a minority community.

77. Many cases have not yet been effectively investigated by law enforcement authorities as required by international human rights law. The Ministry of the Interior announced that its investigation into 42 alleged abductions for which it had received information resulted in one confirmed case, while the rest were short absences, fabricated claims on social media, voluntary elopements and women fleeing domestic violence.[80] The Government shared their findings regarding six cases, concluding that five of them did not involve abductions.[81] The Commission acknowledges the Government's willingness to engage on this issue.

78. In the context of the Suwayda violence in July 2026, the Commission documented sexual violence against Druze women, including rape, forced nudity, invasive body searches and sexual threats, during incursions and house searches. The rape of a Druze woman in May was also documented.[82] Druze and Bedouin women were taken hostage, detained or abducted by armed actors.[83]

79. Eleven Druze women and four girls were abducted and subsequently released between July and November 2025. The alleged perpetrators included tribal fighters and Internal Security Forces personnel. Three Bedouin women and a girl remained detained by the Suwayda National Guard at the time of writing.

E. Continued conflict and related violations by foreign States and non-State actors

80. In 2025, there was both an expansion of the occupation of territory in the Syrian Arab Republic by Israel and the related international armed conflict, as well as continued non-international armed conflicts involving the Syrian Democratic Forces and former Syrian National Army factions, Da'esh and Hijri-aligned Druze armed factions in Suwayda, as well as pro-former government fighters.[84] Such conflicts, in addition to activity by entrenched and

[80] See https://sana.sy/en/syria/2275515/.

[81] Note verbale dated 28 January 2026 from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the Commission.

[82] See the conference room paper of the Commission on international human rights law and international humanitarian law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session61/list-reports.

[83] Ibid.

[84] See the conference room papers of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports; and on international human

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well-armed illicit networks alongside communal and retaliatory violence as described above, underscored the limits of central authority.

81. Alongside those conflicts, several foreign armies continued military operations in Syrian territory,[85] namely France, Jordan, Türkiye, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States, but now without objection from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.

1. Violations by Israel

82. Since 8 December 2024, Israel has significantly scaled up military operations inside the Syrian Arab Republic, including through over 1,000 reported air strikes and ground operations in southern governorates, denounced by the Secretary-General and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force as violations of the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces of 1974.[86] The operations of the Israel Defense Forces, including more than 900 reported incursions in Quneitra Governorate,[87] significantly affected civilians, resulting in civilian casualties, population displacement, property damage and destruction, arbitrary detention, the transfer of detainees and the restrictions on fundamental freedoms described below (see also annex I, sect. III.A).[88]

83. As the former Government collapsed, the Israel Defense Forces entered Hamidiyah, Hurrya and Rasm Al Rawadi villages in the Quneitra countryside, searched houses and ordered residents to leave their homes. The Israel Defense Forces seized land and property in and around the villages, bulldozed forests, agricultural and grazing land and damaged roads. The Israel Defense Forces also seized, looted and damaged the Quneitra Governorate building and destroyed the court's archive.

84. While some residents returned to their homes by January, Hamidiyah residents were prevented from doing so and remained displaced. On 16 June the Israel Defense Forces demolished at least 15 buildings, including the homes of the displaced families from the village. Affected residents did not receive advance notification of their displacement, arrangements for safe alternative accommodation, compensation or remedy.

85. Such deliberate destruction of civilian homes, buildings and roads with no legitimate military aim is in violation of the principle of military necessity and is prohibited. Along with the seizure, looting and damaging of the Quneitra Governorate building, the destruction or seizure of the property of an adversary is also prohibited, unless required by imperative military necessity. Such acts may amount to pillage. In ordering the eviction of civilians from their homes in Hamadiya and Hurrya absent any civilian protection or imperative military reason, those acts may constitute forced displacement. Such acts may amount to war crimes.

86. The Commission documented several cases of Syrian men, including journalists and a boy, being detained by the Israel Defense Forces (see annex I. sect. III.A). While some were released hours or days later, others spent months in detention. Some Syrian detainees were transferred to Israel where they are still being held, and their families are unable to contact them. Overall, the Commission tracked a total of 45 Syrian men and boys still reportedly detained. Additional incidents are under investigation. The detention of Syrian men and boys, in some cases held incommunicado and transferred to Israel, is in violation of the prohibition against arbitrary detention and raises the risk of torture and ill-treatment and other violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Such acts may amount to war crimes.

rights law and international humanitarian law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session61/list-reports.

[85] See A/HRC/46/54.

[86] A/HRC/58/66, para. 27; S/2025/154, paras. 2, 6 and 7; and see https://undof.unmissions.org/undof-press-statement; https://press.un.org/en/2025/sc16042.doc.htm; A/79/687-S/2024/888; and www.israelhayom.co.il/news/Defence/article/16928916.

[87] Note verbale dated 28 January 2026 from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the Commission.

[88] See A/79/795-S/2025/96.

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87. In addition, the Commission documented several incidents in which the Israel Defense Forces injured unarmed civilian men and boys, including in the context of demonstrations against the Israeli presence (see annex I, sect. III.A). Unarmed protesters and civilians were between 15 and 500 metres away from the Israel Defense Forces when they were shot. There was no indication that any demonstrator or civilian posed any imminent threat of death or serious injury during these events. In doing so, the Israel Defense Forces used unnecessary lethal force and violated the rights to life and security of person, as well as to peaceful assembly. Those incidents may also amount to violence to life and person, which is prohibited by international humanitarian law. Such acts may also amount to war crimes.

88. Furthermore, among the hundreds of Israeli air strikes on the Syrian Arab Republic reportedly targeting military sites and weapons systems,[89] some ground and air strikes resulted in civilian casualties (see annex I, sect. III.A), including on 17 March, when air strikes on the Maysalun neighbourhood of Dara'a city killed at least 3 civilians and injured 22, including humanitarian workers who had come to assist the injured.

89. In those cases, the Israel Defense Forces carried out indiscriminate attacks causing death and injury to civilians, in violation of international humanitarian law, which may also amount to war crimes. An attack on the Ministry of Defence in Damascus on 16 July, in the context of the Suwayda escalation, that resulted in civilian casualties[90] raises concerns regarding whether all feasible precautions were taken in the attack.

2. Conduct of hostilities-related violations by the Syrian Democratic Forces and former Syrian National Army factions

90. Hostilities between the Syrian Democratic Forces and former Syrian National Army factions, backed by Turkish forces, continued in the north and north-east, particularly around the Tishreen Dam and along the front lines near Ayn al-Arab (Kobane), Manbij and the Euphrates axis.

91. The Syrian Democratic Forces conducted rocket attacks affecting villages and infrastructure near those front lines, resulting in civilian casualties and displacement. Allegations regarding the adequacy of precautions taken by the Syrian Democratic Forces and the potential placement of civilians in locations likely to be targeted are set out in annex I (see sect. III.B thereof).

92. Former Syrian National Army factions backed by Turkish armed forces also conducted drone and artillery strikes that affected civilian convoys, gatherings and homes in front-line areas, resulting in civilian deaths and injuries. Attacks also damaged civilian infrastructure, affecting access to electricity and water, and included incidents involving marked medical transports. Further documented cases are detailed in annex I (see sect. III.B thereof).

93. Directing attacks against civilians and civilian objects is prohibited under international humanitarian law. Attacks on medical transports and works containing dangerous forces require particular care. The incidents documented raise serious concerns of violations of those obligations by all parties and may amount to war crimes.

3. Unlawful deprivation of liberty and child recruitment by the Syrian Democratic Forces

94. The Commission also investigated long-standing detention-related violations by the Syrian Democratic Forces – backed by the US-led international counter-Da'esh coalition in some detention facilities – including arbitrary detention, incommunicado detention, deaths in custody and enforced disappearance. The Syrian Democratic Forces reportedly detained people on political grounds, including for celebrating the change in Government, and families in several cases were unable to obtain information regarding the fate or whereabouts of detainees. Further documented cases are described in annex I (see sect. III.B thereof).

[89] See A/79/806-S/2025/120.

[90] See https://x.com/IDF/status/1945421069487145072.

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95. At the end of 2025, some 27,000 people, more than 90 per cent of whom were women and children, remained detained in Al-Rawj and Al-Hawl camps for their alleged family affiliation with Da'esh. Separately, approximately 9,000 men and boys allegedly affiliated with Da'esh remained detained, often incommunicado, in appalling conditions in facilities across the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic. That figure included young foreign men, who were captured as children, some with life-threatening injuries.

96. This mass detention by the Syrian Democratic Forces in Al-Hawl and Al-Rawj camps, without individual or regular review of their detention, amounted to unlawful deprivation of liberty**.** The camp conditions, including the forced separation of adolescent boys from their mothers, also amounted to cruel or inhuman treatment. The form, severity, duration and intensity of the physical and mental suffering inflicted may also have amounted to the war crime of committing outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, in relation to each interned individual.[91]

97. Furthermore, by withholding adequate healthcare from men and boys allegedly affiliated with Da'esh, the Syrian Democratic Forces also violated the obligation to treat humanely all individuals who no longer take part in hostilities.[92] Such treatment constitutes a violation of the prohibition of cruel treatment and may constitute a war crime.[93]

98. In January 2026, control of Al-Hawl camp was transferred to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic under chaotic circumstances, with many residents leaving the camp. Subsequently, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees announced that the camp was practically empty, on 20 February 2026.[94] The whereabouts, safety and protection of the dispersed population remain unclear at the time of writing, while Al-Rawj camp remained under control of the Syrian Democratic Forces, creating uncertainty regarding the legal status, future processing and the number of internees still arbitrarily detained there and concerns about their treatment. Similarly, the current status and the number of men and boys still detained in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic for alleged Da'esh affiliation remains unclear at the time of writing, following announcements in February 2026 that 5,704 alleged Da'esh detainees, including 3,526 Syrians, among them 157 children from 61 States, were transferred to Iraq, raising profound concerns regarding mass refoulement.[95]

99. Child recruitment by the Syrian Democratic Forces and affiliated entities continued to be reported, despite prior commitments to prevent the recruitment of persons under 18 years of age (see annex I, sect. III.B). The recruitment and use of children under 15 years of age in hostilities is in violation of international humanitarian law and may amount to war crimes.

4. Violations by Da'esh

100. Outside of the violence in the coastal areas and in Suwayda, the two most deadly attacks on civilians in 2025 were the attacks on the Mar Elias Church in which reportedly 25 people were killed and 63 others were injured, on 22 June, and on the Ali Bin Abi Talib Mosque in Homs city in which reportedly at least eight civilians were killed, on 26 December; for both attacks, a non-State armed group, Saraya Ansar al Sunna, claimed responsibility.[96] The Government announced that those responsible had been arrested, identifying them as Da'esh members.[97]

[91] A/HRC/57/86, para. 122.
[92] Ibid., para. 123.
[93] A/HRC/40/70, para. 92; A/HRC/48/70, para. 116; A/HRC/52/69, para. 121; and A/HRC/57/86, para. 122.
[94] See https://x.com/llosa_gonzalo/status/2024788065236005127?s=20
[95] See www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/iici-syria/independent-international-commission.
[96] See S/2026/44.
[97] Speech of the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations to the Security Council, 22 January 2026; and note verbale dated 28 January 2026 from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the Commission.

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IV. Conclusions

101. One year after the fall of the repressive Assad-led Government and following 14 years of devastating conflict, the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic remains extremely challenging. In addition to the deep scars that millions of Syrians already carried from mass atrocities committed during the Assad era and by various armed groups during the civil war, new wounds have been added following large-scale violence along the coastal areas and in Suwayda in 2025. The Government has taken concrete and positive initial steps to achieve justice for the victims of abuses and to combat impunity, both past and present. Those efforts, along with the lifting of stifling Assad-era restrictions on fundamental freedoms by the new Government, has encouraged millions of Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons to return home. Expanded efforts are needed, however, towards building new State institutions that are respectful of the rule of law and human rights – areas in which Syrian civil society and the international community can advise and provide support. Syrians are clamoring for judicial and law enforcement institutions that protect all people equally, as well as for guarantees of non-recurrence and accountability. The Commission stands ready to further support such efforts, which are critical to rebuilding trust in all affected communities and to prevent renewed violence.

102. This transition is happening at a time when the country's humanitarian needs are at their greatest. Despite the recent steps taken towards the lifting of sanctions and opening of the country to new investments, daily life for Syrians is marked by poverty and insufficient access to the essential services needed for the fulfilment of basic economic and social rights. Some 16.5 million Syrians are in need of humanitarian assistance.[98] Widespread economic despair is known to fuel violence, and the Commission calls for urgent and increased support, despite the global decline in aid.

103. There is a singular opportunity to build a rights-respecting Syrian State for all, regardless of geographical origin, ethnicity, religion or belief. It must not be missed. To this end, in addition to previous recommendations,[99] the Commission offers the following urgent recommendations.

V. Recommendations

104. To emerge from over 14 years of conflict and decades of systematic international human rights and humanitarian law violations, and to honour all victims by recognizing their right to truth, justice and reparation, a clear vision based on dignity, equality, justice and access to fundamental rights is needed for the Syrian Arab Republic, integrating all communities without leaving anyone behind. Urgent action is needed to end retaliatory violence, rebuild trust with and between affected communities and allow for their safe return.

105. To accomplish this, the establishment of new institutions based on the rule of law – a representative parliament, an independent judiciary, an impartial civil service, professional law enforcement agencies and security services under civilian control acting in accordance with international standards – is crucial. As part of the process, a comprehensive and inclusive transitional justice process, encompassing truth, justice, reparation, reconciliation and guarantees of non-repetition for all victims of past violations, including those committed during decades of Assad rule, acknowledging the responsibilities of the former oppressive system, is needed. The international community must support the Government in its pursuit of the full realization of all human rights, without discrimination, with economic and social rights, to be progressively realized. The role of women in rebuilding the country is essential,

[98] See www.unocha.org/news/security-council-ocha-calls-urgent-funding-syria-crisis-stressing-civilians-cannot-endure.

[99] See the conference room papers of the Commission on violations against civilians in the coastal and western-central regions of the Syrian Arab Republic (January–March 2025), available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session59/list-reports; and on international human rights law and international humanitarian law violations committed during the July 2025 violence in Suwayda, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session61/list-reports.

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as is guaranteeing their rights without discrimination, strengthening their capacities and ensuring their appointment to decision-making positions.

106. The media and civil society organizations can play a central role in promoting national unity, tolerance, mutual acceptance, forgiveness, respect for diversity, dialogue and shared citizenship, highlighting the diversity of the Syrian Arab Republic as a source of strength for rebuilding the country.

107. **In particular, the Commission recommends the that the Government:**

(a) **Ratify outstanding treaties, particularly the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Optional Protocols to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, lift all Assad-era reservations to such treaties, accept individual complaint procedures before the human rights treaty bodies, including the Committee against Torture, and enable the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court;**

(b) **Expand efforts to advance reforms, accountability and professionalism in the security sector by promoting positive institutional change and a policy of zero tolerance of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, with support from the international community;**[100]

(c) **Expand efforts to address the situation of detainees by taking urgent decisions to avoid prolonged arbitrary pretrial detention, clarifying the legal basis for detention in each case and ensuring the regular review of its lawfulness. Release imprisoned children without delay if held unlawfully or provide them with age-appropriate rehabilitation. Consider alternative, non-criminal justice pathways for accountability for lower-level alleged perpetrators within the transitional justice framework. Strengthen efforts to stop torture, sexual and gender-based violence, incommunicado detention and enforced disappearances and guarantee all detainees the right to communicate with their families. Expand the authorities' searchable database of detainees held at Al Aqtan/Qattan prison, used by families to locate their detained relatives, to include those held at all places of detention;**[101]

(d) **Prevent all attacks on personal dignity, including particularly humiliating practices that strike at identity and honour, and ensure that such acts never recur;**

(e) **Expand efforts to prevent and respond to all forms of sexual and gender-based violence against men, boys, women and girls, including through urgent and immediate attention to the abduction of women and girls, by establishing specialized protection and investigatory mechanisms, prioritizing professional capacity-building and efforts to ensure survivors' access to support services and confidential reporting pathways;**

(f) **Address past and future housing, land and property violations in line with international standards, including the principles on housing and property restitution for refugees and displaced persons and the guidelines on human rights-compliant evictions.**[102] **At the local level, allow for and support community-level dialogues based on rule of law to advance dispute settlement over housing, land and property violations;**

[100] See https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/un_integrated_technical_guidance_notes_on_ssr_1.pdf.

[101] See https://sana.sy/list-of-al-aqtan-prison-detainees/?utm_source=sana&utm_medium=internal&utm_campaign=al_aqtan_prison_detainees.

[102] For example, see the conference room paper of the Commission on unlawful appropriation and destruction of properties of refugees and internally displaced persons in the Syrian Arab Republic, available from www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session58/list-reports, summary box 2; and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Forced evictions", fact sheet No. 25/Rev.1, available from www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/FS25.Rev.1.pdf.

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(g) **Integrate human rights education, across all sectors, with a particular focus on training for law enforcement personnel, judges and security forces, to ensure that they uphold these principles in their daily work;**

(h) **Sustain meaningful engagement with diverse civil society and community leaders, including women's organizations, through an inclusive national dialogue, ensuring that all Syrian communities are meaningfully represented, and protect the capacity and safety of civil society to function effectively.**

108. **To all warring parties, including government forces, non-State armed groups, including the Syrian Democratic Forces, the Suwayda Military Council and other Suwayda-based armed groups, and States operating in Syrian territory:**

(a) **Fully respect international human rights and humanitarian law in the planning and execution of all military operations;**

(b) **Scrupulously respect the prohibition of refoulement.**

109. **To Member States:**

(a) **Provide technical and financial support to the Government in implementing these recommendations;**

(b) **Condition support to warring parties on their effective compliance with international humanitarian law and address the obligations of Israel as an Occupying Power operating on Syrian territory to release persons transferred from occupied territory in breach of international humanitarian law, return and provide restitution for civilian property damaged by military operations;**

(c) **Increase funding for reconstruction, humanitarian response and Syrian human rights organizations documenting violations and promoting reconciliation;**

(d) **Facilitate criminal proceedings for international crimes committed in the Syrian Arab Republic, including through universal jurisdiction, in fair trials where the death penalty does not apply;**

(e) **Ensure any return to the Syrian Arab Republic is voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable;**

(f) **Facilitate the right to return to their country of citizens, including women and children recently released or still detained in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic, should they so wish, by providing the necessary consular services or enabling repatriation.**

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Annex I

Detailed investigations and factual findings

I. Overview and Methodology

1. This annex, which should be read jointly with the report above, details selected situations and cases from the Commission's investigations that are primarily focused on certain geographical areas with a particular concentration on Coastal and Western Central violence, southern Syria and the northeast that further illustrate the report's findings regarding human rights and humanitarian law violations, noting that the coastal and western central areas, between 6 and 10 March, Suwayda governorate from mid-July 2025 onwards and the north-east during specific time periods have been assessed as situations in which the nature of hostilities meet the threshold for the application of international humanitarian law applicable to internal armed conflicts, specifically common article 3. Detailed reports on specific situations are also a consequence of the time and resources constraints experienced by the Commission and related to the UN regular budget liquidity crisis. This Annex follows the same overall structure of the report and is organised according to duty-bearer.

2. As noted in the above, the report covers the period 8 December 2024 to 31 January 2026 in line with the Commission's mandate.[1] It is based on more than 500 interviews as well as information on incidents and developments received from the Syrian Arab Republic and other Member States,[2] and analysis, authentication and verification of documents, photographs, videos, and satellite imagery from multiple sources, including non-governmental organisations and the UN.[3] The standard of proof for ascribing a human rights or humanitarian law violation remained the same, and was met when there were reasonable grounds to believe that incidents occurred as described.[4] Particular incidents met this standard if the Commission obtained a reliable body of evidence, consistent with other information, indicating their occurrence. The incidents described in this report were the subject of two or more consistent and reliable primary accounts, which were often supported by additional corroborating evidence.[5] In the case of torture and ill-treatment, sexual and gender-based crimes, including rape, and other incidents where the survivor was the only available primary source for the event in question, such events were corroborated through pattern analysis or when combined with other information, such as site visits, medical records, or visible injuries. As stated in the Commission's first report, the standard of proof is that of a fact-finding body, and though it makes assessments concerning violations and abuses that may amount to crimes, the Commission itself is not a tribunal or quasi-judicial in nature.[6] The findings of the Commission should, however, be taken as a prompt for the initiation of domestic action to address the findings, including through criminal investigations and prosecutions where appropriate.

3. Due to the UN regular budget (RB) liquidity crisis, the Commission alongside other UN HRC-mandated investigative bodies was forced to operate with only approximately half of its RB approved staffing and a fraction of its RB non-post resources during the second half

[1] UN Human Rights Council resolution 58/25. See paras 10 and 12 extending the Commission's mandate.

[2] The Commission addressed information requests to the former Government of Syria, to which it received a reply on 28 January 2026, as well as to other parties to the conflict and other Member States and is thankful for the responses received and other exchanges.

[3] Including 8 of the Government's identical periodical letters to the Secretary-General and others, sent 8 December 2024–31 January 2026.

[4] A/HRC/S-17/2/Add.1, paras. 5-10; A/HRC/19/69 at para. 10, A/HRC/46/54, para. 1, A/HRC/58/CRP.3, footnote 3, and A/HRC/59/CRP.4, paras. 3–6.

[5] For further elucidation of methodological practices for human rights fact-findings, see, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/CoI_Guidance_and_Practice.pdf.

[6] A/HRC/S-17/2/Add.1, para. 5.

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of 2025, severely restricting its capacity to implement the mandate.[7] This situation has limited the Commission's ability to travel to Syria, for both Commissioners and its secretariat, as a result of limited travel funds and constraints on available resources among UN partners required to support such travel, and technical areas including limited availability of interpretation and translation services. It has also contributed to delays across the Commission's work, in particular in light of the current complexity of the transition in the Syrian Arab Republic.

4. The Commission took note of the extraordinary shift in Syria, and the complex transition that is currently underway. In this regard it is grateful for the approach taken toward the Commission, including being granted access by the Syrian authorities already from December 2024, enabling it to conduct investigations inside the country for the first time since 2011 and the active engagement and responses received from the new government in reply to requests for information. The Commission is cognizant that in many respects the human rights situation has improved following the end of decades of repressive, authoritarian rule under the former government. The Commission seeks throughout its work to both address past impunity, and to bring recent and ongoing human rights issues to the attention of the government, so that it may take appropriate steps to ensure that human rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled in the Syrian Arab Republic.

II. Documented Violations and Abuses of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in specified Government-controlled areas

5. Between 8 December 2024 and 31 January 2026, the Commission investigated and documented serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law in Syria, including acts that may amount to war crimes. The government holds primary responsibility for protecting, promoting and fulfilling human rights in its territory. Parties to an armed conflict are responsible for abiding by the rules of international humanitarian law (IHL). The Commission's findings below on the responsibility of state actors meet its standard of proof of reasonable grounds to believe.[8]

A. Arbitrary detention and torture and ill-treatment

6. The government committed arbitrary arrests and detention. Many of these occurred during combing operations initiated by security forces of the new authorities shortly after the fall of the former government, focusing primarily on Alawi majority or mixed neighbourhoods in Latakia, Tartus, Homs and Hama governorate. These arrests were often accompanied by violence, and individuals were taken to makeshift and official detention facilities. Others were arrested at checkpoints in Latakia, Hama, Homs and Tartus.

Violations committed in the context of combing operations in Homs, December–February 2025

7. Detention-related violations were documented by the Commission as occurring in the context of combing operations initiated by security forces of the new authorities in Homs city and villages in Homs countryside, in which Alawi men were arrested, including those who had undergone the reconciliation process.

8. Detainees were typically rounded up, arrested and transported to official detention facilities both security branches and prisons – in some cases having initially been held in unofficial locations.

9. In one early example from 8 December 2024, an Alawi former junior officer described his arrest as he fled from Dayr al-Zawr towards Homs with thousands of surrendered SAA

[7] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptedDTbsPEU. See also, https://press.un.org/en/2025/ga12725.doc.htm.

[8] A/HRC/61/CRP.7 para. 6.

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personnel. Armed men rounded him up in a group of approximately 25 SAA members and drove them to an abandoned house on a farm in Al-Sukhna, Homs. They were told: *"you Alawi pigs deserve to be slaughtered, you killed the innocents."* According to him, he was forced to help bury two severely disfigured dead bodies with several gunshot wounds to the head, the chest and leg outside before being detained in a central prison (from which he was subsequently released six months later).

10. As mentioned above, over one hundred thousand members of the former government's security forces settled their status during the weeks and months that followed the fall of the former government, usually at settlement centres established for that purpose. The Commission documented three cases in which former SAA members who settled their status described their treatment at these centres, all from Homs City. One former member of a SAA military security branch described being slapped and hit during questioning, made to lie on the floor, insulted and called a *nusayri* dog. Another described being forced to crawl and being hit with rifle butts when going to collect his settlement card in Homs.

11. In another case, a recently reconciled Alawi former SAA member received similar treatment when arrested at a checkpoint in Homs city at the end of December 2024. Groups of uniformed armed men, beat him, including with an iron bar and rifle butts, during questioning. A gun was placed in his mouth and a knife against his neck as he was told *"Alawis must die"* and ordered to bark and make animal noises.

Combing operations in the Karm Al Zeitoun, Wadi Al Dahab, Al Muhajereen and Al Zahra neighbourhoods of Homs city, 2–6 January 2025

12. Between 2 and 6 January 2025, government security forces conducted combing operations in the Karm Al Zeitoun, Wadi al-Dhahab, Al Muhajereen and Al Zahra neighbourhoods of Homs city, during which multiple violations occurred investigated by the Commission.[9]

Karm Al Zeitoun neighbourhood

13. In the Karm Al Zeitoun neighbourhood, an Alawi street vendor described how on 2 January, around 15 masked armed men wearing black uniforms, ammunition belts and rifles came to his home in the Karm Al Zeitoun neighbourhood and asked if he had worked with the regime. They stole jewellery and money and destroyed property in his house before covering his head with his t-shirt and detained him in Homs security branch for ten days.

14. That night, at approximately 3 a.m., a group of armed men forcibly entered the home of an Alawi family. They wore a mix of military and camouflage uniforms, with some wearing red headbands. Several others appeared to be foreign fighters. A man with a long beard, dressed in a short jalabia robe, carrying a sword accompanied them. The armed men gathered the family members, including a woman in her mid-70s and young children together and called them pagans, Alawi pigs and dogs. They threatened to kill the man and beat him with rifle butts, breaking his nose and kicked him in the sides and stepped on his back as he lay on the floor until he lost consciousness. When his mother begged them to stop, they beat the older woman with rifle butts, breaking her ribs. The armed men destroyed religious symbols and stole gold, money and cars.

Wadi Dahab neighbourhood

15. In the Wadi Dahab neighbourhood of Homs city, combing operations similarly began on the morning of 2 January.[10] A recently reconciled former SAA conscript, described how men in the neighbourhood were ordered out of their homes and houses before being searched. Armed men shouted: "*You Alawis, get out!*" A man, referred to as "the Sheikh," questioned men about their experience in the SAA. Residents reported that valuables – including mobile

[9] مراسل سانا بحمص عن مسؤول عسكري بإدارة العمليات العسكرية: وردتنا قبل أسابيع معلومات مؤكدة عن وجود فلول ميليشيات الأسد بعدد من المواقع بأحياء مدينة حمص، حيث قمنا مباشرةً بالتنسيق مع وزارة الداخلية وافتتاح مراكز تسوية بالأحياء ذاتها منعاً للتصعيد

[10] https://t.me/sana_gov/120268; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BWqIRKMz9I; https://t.me/muhaand19/952.

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phones, cash, and gold – were stolen during the operations. According to a witness, a woman offered chocolates to the armed men. One of the armed men refused: "*We don't eat from terrorist homes.*" One man was violently beaten with batons and dragged through the street and a dozen civilians, including six former SAA members, were arrested.

16. Early in the morning, an Alawi shop owner was arrested from his home and accused of being affiliated with the former government. On arrest he was beaten, called a pig and ordered to bark and crawl by masked foreign fighters carrying the flag of the revolution and ISIS banners. He was detained in Homs central prison for weeks before being released.

17. A retired Alawi SAA captain was also arrested from his home. Some weeks later, he was discovered to be detained in Homs central prison, but his family were unable to contact him for eight months.

18. An Alawi civilian affiliated with the former government who had registered for reconciliation was also arrested in the operation. At around 4.30 p.m. on 2 January, a civilian and armed government security force members arrived at a family's house in a white Santa Fe pickup with mounted weapons before kicking their door open. They told them they were from Bab Amr, Homs and were looking for regime remnants and weapons. They ordered everyone to go outside. Men were forced to bark and lick water from a puddle on the street while being accused of being *"shabiha"* or *"fulul"*.[11] After the man was taken away, his family was unable to find out where he was detained for five days, later learning that he had been transferred to a detention facility in Homs despite initial denials.

19. Another Alawi man, who had undergone the settlement process, was arrested along with two male relatives in Wadi Dahab during a weapons search operation on 8 January. Despite several attempts to discover his whereabouts, at of the time of writing the family has no information about where he is detained. Civilians arrested during the combing operations in Wadi Dahab remained in detention at the time of writing.

Al-Muhajereen neighbourhood

20. During the same period, a combing operation was conducted in the predominantly Alawi Al-Muhajereen neighbourhood. A recently reconciled Alawi man described how General Security members dressed in black and armed men in military camouflage uniforms, carrying sticks and chains arrived in white pickups and jeeps, some with heavy machine guns on their vehicles. They shot in the air and ordered all residents out of their houses. Armed men forced male residents to lie on the ground and slapped, kicked and hit them with the rifles, and insulted female residents.

21. In the same neighbourhood, masked armed men in military uniforms and white, black and red headbands, driving pick-ups with white flags with the shahada written in black, raided the home of a former SAA officer who had recently initiated the settlement process. When he showed the paper from the settlement centre one of them took the paper and forced it in his mouth. He was handcuffed and his jacket was pulled over his head and put in the back of a pickup. Along with dozens of others, both men were taken to a nearby makeshift detention facility.

22. Following the combing operation, civilians, including women and children were prevented from accessing their homes. Some people managed to return two to three days after, others didn't return at all. Some who returned found their homes occupied or looted. Shops were also looted and seized. Residents report that their homes were occupied.

Al Zahra neighbourhood

23. An Alawi woman, at home with her 17-year-old son described how at approximately 2 p.m. on 5 January, masked armed General Security in black and armed men wearing different uniforms wearing red and yellow headbands came to their house and physically assaulted her son as he opened the door, seriously injuring him in the head. They took her son outside into the street and pushed him to the floor. One security force member had his foot on his neck and one said: *"Die you infidel, die you Alawi."* Along with other men taken

[11] Remnants of Assad government forces.

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from nearby houses, the men and boy were forced to crawl on the floor and to bark. According to the witness, a long-haired man with one arm, wearing a red headband, stamped on the Alawi woman's hand, as she lay on the floor begging him not to take her son, who was then released. Other men from the neighbourhood were reportedly taken away in buses.

Arbitrary detention and treatment during and after the March violence in the coastal areas

24. Arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment were also documented in the context of the March violence as described in the Commission's detailed report. Additional cases were documented subsequent to the finalization of that report. These include one case in which General Security arrested an Alawi farmer from a village in the Hama countryside on 7 March and detained him in a deserted building for three days where he was beaten, kicked, stamped on and whipped to atone for his "sins of being Alawi." As also documented more recently by the Commission, according to a former detainee in Hama central prison, while the March violence was ongoing, prison guards in Hama central prison singled out Alawi detainees from coastal areas for physical assault, causing serious injuries. Another former detainee from that period, held in the General Security headquarters in Tartus city but since released, described a fellow detainee arrested for his alleged participation in attacks on government forces on 6 March*: "His body was so swollen, it looked blue. He [told me he] endured shabeh,*[12] *with his hands tied behind his back. It took him over a month to recover.*

25. Arbitrary detention and torture and ill-treatment of mostly Alawi men was also documented at a checkpoint near Arzouneh, Tartus, through which Alawis fleeing the area subsequent to the March violence frequently passed.

26. For instance, at the end of March, armed General Security members arrested and briefly detained a former SAA member when he showed them his settlement card. He was then beaten on his arms and body and slapped around the head and face in front of his family. He was released after he paid $500.

27. The same month, an Alawi woman, fleeing to Lebanon from Homs city described how General Security and armed men in green uniforms in charge of the checkpoint at Arzouneh had detained a group of Alawi men who were lying on the ground with their arms tied behind their back. On releasing them, they told them to run and fired lethal ammunition at them as they ran towards the river between Syria and Lebanon shouting: "*Go Alawi dogs, Syria is for us*."

28. At the same checkpoint in Arzouneh in early April, two former SAA members who had undergone reconciliation were stopped by General Security who took $400 from them. On discovering they were Alawi, General Security members took one of the men to an abandoned building and beat him with a rifle on his face, while calling him an Alawi pig. As the other man attempted to escape, four government security force members chased him and shot him several times, including at close range, killing him.[13]

Torture and ill-treatment in detention

29. As indicated above, nearly 7,000 alleged perpetrators, including alleged members of the former government's security forces and alleged members of Da'esh,[14] have been held in the sub-standard prisons and detention facilities that the new government inherited from successive Assad-led governments, pending urgently needed reforms and reconstruction.

30. During the reporting period, the Commission documented accounts from former detainees of severe beating or violence in eighteen such official detention facilities in Aleppo,

[12] A/HRC/58/CRP.3, para. 149.

[13] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On April 10, 2025, according to claims, the authorities reported the killing of a civilian at a checkpoint near Arzouneh after he was arrested by internal security forces on suspicion of being a remnant of the regime.

[14] In December 2024, a general amnesty was issued for conscripts, https://t.me/sana_gov/119101, while the President announced that hundreds of thousands of members of the previous government's security forces who were not deemed to have "blood on their hands" could instead undergo a DDR procedure. Note Verbale, 28 January 2026.

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Homs, Hama, Latakia, Tartus, Idlib and Rural Damascus as well as in twelve makeshift facilities in Homs, Hama, Latakia, Tartus, Idlib and Rural Damascus governorates and at checkpoints in Homs and Tartus, as well as facilities in Daraa. Detainees were subjected to *shabeh*, *dulab*,[15] *falaqa*,[16] whipping, electric shocks and beatings with pipes, bars, cables and rifle butts, in one case while naked, and in one instance, with a nail-studded stick.

31. Most documented cases of torture and ill-treatment were of Alawi men, who have since been released. In one such example, during interrogation in Hama central prison, a junior SAA officer was subjected to *falaqa* and repeatedly beaten with a copper whip, iron pipes and rifle butts and forced to bark like a dog while being insulted: *"we want to rape the Alawi girls, your mothers, your sisters, Alawi pigs, we will slaughter you, Alawi infidels."*

32. An Alawi civilian detained in the State security prison in Homs was beaten with rifles and fists on the back, head and face, breaking his teeth, injured with a gunshot while being interrogated about working for the former government. *"I fainted, they burnt me with cigarettes and they threw me outside, near the garbage bin, thinking I was dead."*

33. General Security detained a reconciled Alawi man in an abandoned building in the Karm Al Zeitoun neighbourhood in January. He was forced to kneel with his hands over his head and was hit with a rifle, bicycle chains and electric cables while questioned. He was called a *nusayri* and ordered to recite the *shahada* at knife and gunpoint, kicked in the face and beaten by several armed men. He was released on the condition that he would vacate his house the following day, and threatened that if he did not, they would rape his wife in front of him. A released detainee reported that two teenage boys were severely beaten in Al Houla security branch.

34. In early April, at the Al Waer checkpoint in Homs, General Security members stopped a bus of civil society activists from Suwayda and tried to remove an Alawi woman and man from the bus. On intervening to stop them, General Security members beat, kicked, slapped, strip searched and interrogated male and female activists, accusing them of being *"remnants of the regime"* and detained them in Harem prison, Idlib overnight, before they were released.

35. In documented cases in four detention facilities, detainees were forced to sign blank papers or documents that they were not allowed to read, including while they were blindfolded, or coerced to sign pledges that they would not publicize their treatment in custody, and to film videos denying their treatment.

36. In an effort to combat torture and ill treatment in detention, the Ministry of Interior issued Circular No. 57 dated 23 April 2025 which emphasises the need for all internal security personnel to ensure that no detainee shall be treated in an inappropriate, humiliating, or inhumane manner, under penalty of disciplinary and criminal prosecution.

37. Despite this positive step, four incidents of torture and ill treatment were documented in detention facilities in Homs and Damascus between May and October.[17] In one documented case, several government security forces beat a Sunni man in a detention facility in Homs causing bruising, cuts and lasting injuries. In another case, an Alawi civilian from Tartus was severely beaten under interrogation at the political branch in Shin, Homs in July. Interrogators put a rope around his neck and tried to strangle him, verbally threatening to castrate and kill him. In September, at the Sahnaya police station, rural Damascus, police officers beat a Sunni man with wooden sticks, metal rods, water pipes, electrical cables, and rifle butts, resulting in multiple injuries on his, face, ribs and back.

38. In its note verbale of 28 January 2026, the Government reports that the MoI has undertaken concerted efforts to improve medical services, food, water and hygiene standards and conducts regular inspections of all detention facilities. Furthermore, it released at least 1158 detainees in 2025, and has since April 2025 provided access to independent

[15] A/HRC/58/CRP.3, para. 153.
[16] Beating on the soles of bare feet.
[17] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026.

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international humanitarian or human rights organisations to visit prisons.[18] The MoI has also established legal offices in central prisons, operating under the supervision of the Public Prosecution's office, to evaluate prisons and assist inmates including with necessary legal advice, and initiated work to rehabilitate six correctional institutions pending the launch of broader programs to rebuild such institutions in accordance with international standards.

39. Only very few cases of women arrested and detained were documented, although some released detainees reported seeing and hearing women in detention facilities. Boys were also reportedly present in detention facilities, including in Hama central prison between December and June 2025, the military security detention facility in Latakia in February, Al Houla state security branch, Homs, in March, political security in Latakia in March, Salhab police station, Hama in March, Harem prison, Idlib in April and Sahnaya police station, Rural Damascus in September.

Extortion, theft, seizure and confiscation of property

40. In several of the above documented cases, arrests and detention by ISF seemed motivated by financial gain. These included documented cases in Damascus, Latakia, Homs and Hama, in which ISF members sought to extort ransoms from families of detainees, with several detainees released after families paid sums of money. For instance, a former detainee who spent three months in detention in multiple detention facilities was released in May after his family paid tens of thousands of dollars. In early June, ISF arrested an Alawi student at a checkpoint in the western Homs countryside. He was detained at a police station and released after his family paid millions of Syrian pounds days later.

41. In several documented cases, the arrest and detention of civilians was accompanied by looting including of jewellery and cars or seizure of entire homes and businesses. Such cases were documented in Damascus, Homs, Jableh and Latakia cities, and in villages across Latakia, Homs and Hama governorates, frequently in connection with the combing operation as described above.

Incommunicado detention and enforced disappearances

42. In addition to the documented violations related to the treatment of detainees described above, the Commission also documented multiple cases in which detainees were held incommunicado for periods ranging from weeks to one year. While contact with their families was often established after some time, some detainees remain detained incommunicado. This is despite reported MoI instructions that police officers must refer an arrest to the public prosecutor within 24 hours who must inform the detainees' family of the place of detention.

43. Detainees held in central prisons were transferred to other prisons, in some cases multiple times, making it difficult for families to make or maintain contact with their loved ones. Families of detainees paid money, in some cases, thousands of dollars to intermediaries in attempts to gain information about their relatives and to visit them in prison.

44. The Commission also documented eight accounts of continued enforced disappearances. Two cases concern former SAA Alawi officers arrested in January, one by General Security members in Latakia, and one during a combing operation in early January in a village in Homs countryside, in which tens of men were reportedly rounded up. Their families have not received any information on their whereabouts since, despite attempts to contact the authorities.

45. In a case of incommunicado detention from early February, an Alawi civilian was arrested from his home in a rural Homs village over a local property dispute. Despite multiple inquiries to local authorities, his family has no official information about his fate. On hearing from a released detainee that he was held in Homs Central Prison, the family tried but were

[18] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026. 1158 released detainees comprised members of the former government's army and security branches who were released due to a lack of evidence after review by the Public Prosecution's office, while the detention of those suspected of involvement in serious violations was extended by the Public Prosecution's Office, pending the completion of the rehabilitation of competent courts to investigate transitional justice cases.

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not allowed to visit him. They were later informed that he had been transferred to Balouni prison where he has been hitherto prohibited from receiving visits or appointing a lawyer.[19]

46. Several ongoing cases of incommunicado detention were documented in the context of the March violence, particularly in Latakia. In two separate cases in the Datour neighbourhood of Latakia city, two Alawi civilian men were arrested and detained by government forces' members. In one case, General Security acknowledged his detention however his family has not yet been able to contact him, in the other, the family has approached numerous detention facilities and authorities who have denied knowledge of the detainees' whereabouts. The family of an Alawi civilian man arrested at a checkpoint in Al-Haffeh district on 9 March also has no information about his whereabouts. Government forces' members also arrested and detained an Alawi man and a teenage boy near Jableh. They remain detained in an unknown location ever since, despite efforts by their family to locate them.

47. In early May in Hama governorate, General Security members arrested a former SAA conscript who had undergone settlement from a home near Salamiyeh. Despite reporting the case to the authorities, as of late August, the family had not received any news about his fate. The following month, two Alawi men were arrested from their house and detained in June. While the authorities the family contacted initially denied knowledge of their detention, the family was subsequently able to contact one of them months later in Tartus central prison.

48. Since most of these cases were documented, according to the Government, convicted detainees are now reportedly allowed to communicate with their families once a week to once every ten days.[20] Prison visits for pre-trial detainees are reportedly subject to the judge's discretion in coordination with the prison director to ensure the proper administration of justice, preserve evidence, and protect lives from acts of revenge, retaliation, or other situations that could affect the course of litigation.[21] The Government further states that all detainees shall be allowed to communicate with their families and relatives immediately upon their admission to the institution to inform them of their detention.[22] Furthermore, the Ministry of Interior has reportedly established an information office where families can inquire about detainees, and the Office of the Attorney General receives the families of detainees when they request information about their relatives.[23]

49. A civilian man who complained to local authorities in Idlib about the eviction of his family was detained in January 2026 and was held incommunicado at the time of writing. Investigations are ongoing.

B. Violations of the right to life and the right to security of persons

50. Between 8 December 2024 and 31 January 2026, more than 3,500 people were reportedly killed across multiple governorates in Syria – the majority in patterns of violence documented by the Commission. Most were killed in large-scale waves of violence detailed in separate reports by the Commission: A first wave in western and central Syria in January and March 2025 and a second wave in Suwayda governorate in mid-July 2025.[24] As mentioned above, the government committed publicly to holding all perpetrators accountable and established national inquiries into both waves of violence, with the inquiry on Suwayda still ongoing at the time of writing.

51. Throughout the reporting period, the Commission documented a pattern of unlawful killings targeting civilians, predominantly Alawi men, including former members of the SAA and individuals with perceived affiliation to the former government. As detailed in the

[19] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: According to the Government, it has implemented laws suspended by the former government and has allowed all detainees to seek the assistance of a lawyer and has established legal offices in prisons.
[20] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026.
[21] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026.
[22] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026.
[23] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026.
[24] A/HRC/61/CRP.7; A/HRC/59/CRP.4.

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Commission's report on the coastal violence, in an emblematic incident in Fahel village, Homs on 23 January 2025, for instance, caretaker government security forces, killed 16 Alawi men, including several former senior SAA officers during a combing operation. The same day, General Security members killed two civilians affiliated with the former SAA in Mreimin, Homs. In further combing operations in Anz village, Hama Governorate on 27 January, five men, including a 16-year-old boy and an older person were executed and in Arzet village, Hama, at least 29 civilians were killed in attacks on 31 January and 7 March.[25]

52. Between December 2024 and September 2025, the Commission also documented extrajudicial killings outside the March and July escalations, carried out by government security forces in the context of combing operations, at checkpoints and during house raids in Homs, Hama, Tartus and Latakia governorates. In one instance, two members of the government forces attacked a family gathering in Harf Benamerah village, Baniyas, Tartus on the morning of 31 March, killing six civilian men including the 80-year mukhtar and a 12-year-old boy. The alleged perpetrators were arrested by General Security and they are reportedly on trial.[26]

53. The Commission is investigating credible reports of killings of civilians in Aleppo and the north-east in January 2026.

Deaths in detention

54. As indicated above, eleven cases of deaths in detention were investigated by the Commission which occurred in government detention facilities between January and October 2025.

55. These include two separate incidents in Homs city in January and February, in which six Alawi men arrested during combing operations and at a checkpoint, were subsequently arbitrarily detained by government security forces. The families of the men subsequently discovered that they had died extremely violent deaths in custody. All six men were buried without their families' knowledge in mass burial sites which they are unable to visit, out of fear and because they were prevented from doing so by the authorities.

56. ISF arrested an Alawi kiosk owner from his house in Tartus, around July accusing him of being a former SAA member. He was beaten with rifle butts during his arrest and detained. Despite inquiries with the authorities, his family did not receive any information about his whereabouts. Two months later, the authorities informed the family that he had died. Attempts by the family to find out more information about what happened to their relative were unsuccessful.

57. In July, two Alawi civilian men were detained at a checkpoint in Tartus. Armed men affiliated with the authorities took the men to a warehouse and physically assaulted them with rifle butts, electrical cables, and sticks. They were insulted, asked to bark and to insult Imam Ali, and to renounce their religion. Later that day, they were taken to an ISF detention facility. One of the men died that evening in hospital. No investigation has been undertaken into the circumstances of the death in custody. Families whose family members died in detention or are missing report not having any information about investigations or accountability efforts.

58. The following month, a civilian man was arrested and detained in Al Kallasah police station, Aleppo city and died shortly afterwards, in August. The Ministry of Interior announced[27] that those responsible for his death had been arrested.

59. In most cases documented by the Commission, however, families whose family members died in detention or are missing reported not yet having any information about investigations or accountability efforts.

60. Families whose Alawi relatives were killed in detention could not recover the bodies of their loved ones or hold burial ceremonies. In two cases, families were authorized to bury their family members on condition that they did not open the coffin, and in one case after the

[25] A/HRC/59/CRP.4, paras. 40-47.

[26] https://t.me/TartusGov1/2472; Note Verbale, 28 January 2026.

[27] Commander of Internal Security in Aleppo Province ... – Syrian Ministry of Interior | Facebook; Telegram: View @syrianmoi.

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family signed a document to state their deceased family member was a "remnant of the former regime."

61. Several Alawi families reported not being able to obtain death certificates for their family members in Homs, Latakia and Tartus governorates.[28] In two cases, witnesses reported that death certificates would be issued if the families agree that the former SAA are responsible for their deaths, that they were a "remnant" or that they died of natural causes.

C. Abductions of women and girls

62. The Commission received scores of allegations of abductions of women and girls reported on social media or by activists throughout 2025, notably Alawi women and girls, but also women and girls of other religious identities.

63. As a result, during the reporting period, the Commission investigated 21 cases of abductions, involving four minor girls and 17 young women. The majority of cases concerned Alawi women or girls, several of whom were married with children, abducted in Latakia, Tartous, Hama, Damascus, Rural Damascus, and Homs governorates, but also included the abduction of one Sunni Muslim girl. Most women were abducted during daytime from streets and markets in towns and villages. Disturbingly, several victims were subjected to rape or other ill-treatment during captivity. In two cases, the victims were arrested and prosecuted upon release. Investigations into additional cases are ongoing.

64. These abductions have occurred within a context of violence and lawlessness in Syria, including targeting of members of the Alawi community because of their actual or perceived affiliation with the former government, or because of their religious identity. Several women or girls were subjected to sectarian slurs by their abductors, and at least five victims were interrogated on their knowledge of Islam, forced to carry out religious rites or to wear niqabs during their abduction. In addition, several abductions appear to have been motivated by monetary gain, apparently organized by criminal actors who requested enormous sums of money for the release of those captured, while for other cases, the motivation appeared mixed or unclear. Some abductions were perpetrated by private citizens. The fast spread of news of abduction cases also appears to have prompted opportunistic demands for ransom by individuals unrelated to the event.

65. In the majority of the cases investigated by the Commission, the perpetrators and their affiliation remained unidentified. In one case, however, the perpetrators were identified as foreign fighters affiliated with units nominally integrated into the interim government MoD command structure.

66. Some abductees were brought by their abductors to Idlib Governorate, while others were smuggled across an international border, including to Lebanon.

67. According to most families of victims who filed police reports of the abductions, State authorities have not yet effectively investigated the alleged crime, and in five cases families were pressured not to pursue cases. Raising further concerns, in three cases, the victim of reported kidnappings was arrested, and two victims were investigated by judges in Idlib for morality-related crimes after being released from their captors by government force in Idlib.

Abduction by foreign fighters nominally integrated into the government forces command structure

68. Foreign fighters were reported to have perpetrated several abductions of Alawi women and girls in Latakia. The involvement in abductions by foreign fighters nominally integrated into the MoD command structure was documented by the Commission in one case. Having been forced into a vehicle by armed masked men in civilian clothing, one victim reported having been beaten, told she was abducted 'because she was Alawi' and forced to wear a niqab before being released by her captors days later. The description of the

[28] A/HRC/59/CRP.4, para. 77.

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perpetrators provided by the victim is consistent with foreign fighter belonging to units operating in Latakia and Idlib, nominally integrated into the MoD.

69. The Commission continues to further investigate credible information obtained concerning other abductions of women and girls allegedly perpetrated by foreign fighters, including the brief abduction and ill-treatment in areas where foreign fighters are known to be operating.

Rape and other forms of sexual violence and impact of abductions

70. At least eight victims were subjected to sexual violence during captivity. In one case, an Alawi woman abducted by unidentified armed men was repeatedly raped, beaten and subjected to sectarian slurs. The victim recognized Alawi and Sunni accents spoken by the perpetrators, but their affiliation was not confirmed. She was eventually released. Another Alawi woman was briefly held captive outside Damascus, raped by several perpetrators and subjected to sectarian slurs targeting her Alawi identity. At least two women and one girl returned pregnant from captivity. For example, one minor Alawi girl was abducted and brought to an unknown location, where she was held captive with other victims. She was repeatedly raped and became pregnant as a result.

71. News of abductions circulated widely, and has instilled high levels of fear, in particular among minority women. In response, some women activists started organizing workshops to train women in mitigating measures, such as avoiding deserted areas or moving in groups. Ongoing abductions also led some to prevent female relatives from attending school and university. Some women opted to wear a headscarf to avoid being perceived as members of a minority community.

72. Experiences of sexual violence or the perception by the community of having been sexually violated may result in long-term psychological harm and social isolation, especially in communities where honour is linked to women's bodies. These harms, coupled with the lack of effective protection measures for women and girls, further undermine their ability to exercise their rights to safe and equal participation.

State authorities' response to reports of abductions

73. State authorities' response to reports of abduction varied widely. The authorities took steps to investigate some cases, while others were not yet followed up on. In some cases, families were actively discouraged from pursuing the case, sometimes under threats. In one case, a claimant was beaten by local police authorities when filing an official police claim.

74. Several family members reported that investigations seemed delayed and lacked meaningful efforts to identify the perpetrators or locate the missing victims – some had not received an official case number in spite of filing complaints with security forces or were not updated regarding the case. In one case where the victim identified the perpetrator and conveyed the identification to the police, no arrest was made. Disturbingly, some victims or family members were threatened not to speak to the media, advised to stop posting online appeals, or forced to record videos stating that the victim had left voluntarily.

75. In their Note Verbale of 28 January 2026, the Government shared their findings with regard to six cases of alleged abductions investigated by the Ministry of Interior.[29]

76. In some cases, law enforcement authorities were able to locate abducted victims, sometimes based on information provided by families.

77. These include two cases in which victims of abduction were rescued by State forces in Idlib. In both cases, the alleged abductors were arrested by security agencies and investigated or convicted in Idlib.

[29] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: six cases of alleged abduction investigated by Syrian Ministry of Interior. According to the findings of the Ministry, five of the cases were not situations of forcible or involuntary abductions. One case remains under investigation, and the whereabouts of the woman remains unknown.

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78. However, in two cases victims who had been found by State forces were arrested alongside their abductors and investigated or charged for adultery or morality-related conduct by judicial authorities in Idlib. Both victims were later released.

79. As during the Assad era, adultery remains a criminal offence in Syria,[30] which means that victims of rape risk being subjected to criminal investigation themselves. International expert bodies have found that such laws may lead women to refrain from reporting rape, and moreover, contribute to the societal stigmatization of women who are raped or become pregnant out of wedlock, who may also be at a risk of 'honour killings'.[31] Arresting and investigating alleged victims of abduction or sexual abuse for adultery-related conduct severely stigmatizes victims; deters them from coming forward, raises concern of the fair trial rights of victims, and promotes an environment of impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence.

D. Impact of Assad-era housing, land and property (HLP) violations and new patterns of violations

Looting, seizure and destruction of property in Hama and Idlib in the aftermath of the Assad fall

80. While investigations are ongoing, a selected number of HLP violations cases investigated hitherto by the Commission are detailed below.

81. Following the fall of the former government, villagers of dozens of Alawi villages fled their homes in northern Hama. In some villages, individuals from nearby areas – including Bedouin groups and IDPs returning from northern opposition-held areas – looted property and seized agricultural land for grazing. Villagers attempting to return reported that local authorities, including General Security, failed to facilitate their safe return, citing insufficient capacity to protect them. Their land has reportedly been seized and cultivated in their absence, without authorities taking steps to prevent this. Investigations are ongoing.

82. Residents of the Alawi village Shahba in Salamiyeh, Hama, who did not immediately flee after the fall of Assad, reported facing insults, ill-treatment and death threats in the days that followed, leading to their departure from the village. One farmer from the village reported that in December 2024, armed masked men, dressed in black and driving a General Security vehicle approached him, and called his family *Alawi dogs,* hit him with a rifle butt and electric cables and ordered him to bark. He asked where his land was and was told: "*it is now ours."* At gunpoint, they forced him to sign a contract of sale and told him: "*if we find you here [tomorrow] morning, we will slaughter you and set your house on fire*". He then fled with his family.

83. HLP violations carried out as acts of retaliation for such violations that occurred during the Assad era have also affected Sunni communities. The Commission documented the case of a Sunni village in Idlib where entire families – some of whose members were accused of having supported the former government and of having participated in its public auctions of agricultural land prior to 2024 described in prior Commission reporting – saw their properties reportedly looted, damaged, or burned. Family members who submitted complaints regarding these violations and sought support from the authorities to resolve the disputes, have reportedly received limited assistance only, and have not been able to return to their homes safely. One family member who filed a complaint with the local authorities was detained in January 2026 and was held incommunicado at the time of writing. Investigations are ongoing.

[30] Syrian Penal Code, Articles 473–474. See e.g. p.14 of www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/event/materials/syria-adjusted.pdf.

[31] E.g. the Working Group on the issue of discrimination of women in law and practice letter to Syria, www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Women/WG/AdulteryasaCriminalOffenceViolatesWomenHR.pdf, footnote 13.

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Looting, seizure and destruction of property during military operations

84. Looting, seizure and destruction of property also occurred in the context of the above-mentioned combing operations in Homs city and western Homs countryside, December 2024–March 2025 and is ongoing.

85. In the context of such combing operations, particularly between December and March, government forces and armed Sunni and Bedouin men seized and looted Alawi homes in the Karm Al Zeitoun, Al Muhajereen, Wadi Dahab neighbourhood and Armenian neighbourhoods of Homs city, and looted, confiscated, destroyed and burnt Shia homes in the Al Bayada, Haidariya, and Abbasya neighbourhoods.

86. Following the combing operations, when some residents returned, days later, they found their homes, as well as shops and businesses, seized, occupied or looted by members of government forces and affiliated armed men. In many cases, civilians then fled the area, fearing for their lives.

87. In western Homs villages where combing operations were conducted in January and February, houses and shops were damaged and ransacked, cars and motorcycles and livestock stolen. A shepherd described how on 20 February, approximately 100 masked armed men wearing black, some wearing red headbands, entered his village. Five-armed men entered his home, shot at the ceiling and destroyed furniture. They beat him and an older man with the butts of their guns while calling them Alawi pigs and dogs and telling them that all Alawis deserved to die. They took all the shepherd's livestock, as well as animals belonging to other villagers. Left without a livelihood or source of income, the witness and his family fled.

88. In several documented cases, those who were arrested and detained during combing operations had their property seized. According to an Alawi woman whose family member was later killed in custody following his arrest during a combing operation in Homs city, while in government detention, her relative signed over his property to an unknown beneficiary under duress. In several cases, properties belonging to Alawi detainees in Homs, Latakia and Rural Damascus were looted, confiscated and occupied by members of the government's security forces. Armed men from the Bedouin community came to an apartment building several times in the Wadi Al Dahab neighbourhood of Homs city in February, ordering residents to leave. On the last occasion, the armed men beat a recently released Alawi man and his wife and gave them three days to leave their home. Requests for help from General Security went unheeded and the family subsequently fled the area.

Looting, damage and destruction of property in Latakia, Tartus and Hama governorates, 7–10 March 2025

89. During the March violence, government forces' members and affiliated armed men looted and damaged and destroyed property between 7 and 10 March in fifteen documented locations in Latakia, Tartus and Hama governorates, as described in the Commission's specific report thereon.[32] Entire villages and residential areas were decimated in Hama, Homs and Latakia, including Snobar, Ain Al Arous, Al Mukhtaria, Al Qabu, Jableh and the Qusoor neighbourhood of Banias, Tartus. Survivors found villages deserted, with houses, shops and agricultural equipment burnt and destroyed and extensively looted,[33] rendering their abilities to remain or return to their communities impossible.

90. Some who returned to their homes in Alawi villages in Hama after the March violence found them were occupied by armed men and returnees from nearby Sunni villages. An Alawi farmer returning to his village near Masiaf, Hama countryside, following the March massacres reported the imposition of "protection taxes" in which residents reportedly paid $50 a week through the mukhtar to protect their properties from looting. The witness reported that he had not been able to farm or harvest olive trees, since parts of the village were turned into restricted military zones.

91. In addition, investigations indicate a pattern of lack of effective protection and support from the authorities to enable the safe return of newly displaced persons, as well as blurred

[32] A/HRC/59/CRP.4, paras 75, 87, page 28.
[33] A/HRC/CRP.4.

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lines between local security forces – into which returnees affected by HLP violations under the Assad era have been integrated – and perpetrators of retaliatory violence, raising serious concerns about the risk of further waves of HLP violations and physical violence. For instance, in February in Homs governorate, Bedouin armed men beat a recently released Alawi man and his wife and gave them three days to leave their home, while their request for help addressed to the General Security went unheeded. The family fled the area. Inhabitants of Erzet, in Hama, where at least 29 individuals were killed on 31 January and 7 March killings, fled after these events. Civilians hailing from nearby villages, including the nearby village of Khattab, as well as HTS and Ahrar Al Sham members, have occupied their homes after their flight. While a checkpoint was placed under the authority of a Khattab resident who had been displaced to Idlib in the conflict and had returned to his hometown after December 2024, security members present in the village did not take necessary measures to protect private properties.[34]

Looting, damage and destruction of property in the context of Suwayda events, July–August 2025

92. Across the northern and western villages of Suwayda that came under control of government forces or tribal fighters during the events in July, nearly every single home and business in majority Druze villages, at least 35 in total, was looted and deliberately burned. The few homes that were not burned in those locations were looted by government forces and tribal fighters. Nearly all Druze religious sites in these villages, including Majlis and Maqams were looted, burnt, and vandalized. At least four Christian churches in villages with large Druze populations were also looted and vandalized, with three of them also burnt. In Suwayda city, many homes and businesses were also set on fire, and government forces and tribal fighters also robbed residents of their belongings during homes raids. With few exceptions, vehicles carrying stolen goods out of Suwayda did not seem to be stopped nor impeded by government forces as they crossed out of the governorate.[35]

93. Though most of the looting and burning occurred between 18 and 19 July, additional homes and buildings were set on fire through July and August. Isolated homes were also burned in Sura al Kabira during the events at the end of April and beginning of May 2025.[36]

94. Following the displacement of Bedouins from Maqwas neighbourhood, Shahba, Sahwet Blatah, Ora, and other areas, their homes, businesses, livestock, and vehicles were looted, Bedouin houses were deliberately burned or destroyed, and many were subsequently occupied by Druze armed groups or civilians displaced into areas under their control.[37]

95. Four mosques in Suwayda were damaged during and after the events – either shot at, struck by explosive weapons, and vandalized, with the Haroobi mosque hit when no fighting was occurring and the Shahba mosque additionally used as an informal detention centre for over one thousand people.[38]

Violations related to military housing, including looting, destruction of property and evictions in Al-Somarya and Al-Zahryat neighbourhoods, Damascus

96. Since December 2024, social and military housing provided by the former government to public-sector employees, military personnel, and low-income households, as well as informal settlements built on expropriated land where Alawi populations had been settled as part of Hafez and Bashar al-Assad's sectarian patronage policies, have become sites of property destruction and forced evictions, including by armed men affiliated with government forces.

97. In al Somarya, social and military housing and informal settlements were reportedly built on land formerly owned by residents from Muadamiyat Al Sham whose property was seized by the Assad authorities. Similar patterns are emerging across the country, where

[34] A/HRC/59/CRP.4.
[35] See A/HRC/61/CRP.7 for detailed chronology and violations.
[36] A/HRC/61/CRP.7.
[37] A/HRC/61/CRP.7.
[38] A/HRC/61/CRP.7.

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former residents of land and property that was expropriated from them years and decades ago are seeking to reclaim what was taken from them.

98. In Al-Somarya, immediately after the fall of the former government, at least 40 shops – including supermarkets, and a pharmacy along the main road Damascus-Beirut were looted and subsequently destroyed by residents of Muadamiyat Al Sham reportedly with the assistance of heavy construction equipment provided by the municipality and armed men affiliated with government forces. In one case, an owner who subsequently attempted to rehabilitate destroyed shops was prevented from doing so even after obtaining permits from Damascus governorate.

99. Family members of former SAA members living in military housing in Al-Somarya described General Security and armed men affiliated with government forces moving into vacant apartments and harassing Alawi residents, including children, in an atmosphere of intimidation. An Alawi woman living alone with her son described how General Security came regularly to her home telling her that she had to leave since the apartment now belonged to them. Eventually, after some months, she left with her son.

100. Government security forces forcibly evicted residents from their homes with hours or days' notice. At the end of March 2025, a group of masked General Security and government security forces ordered an Alawi family to leave their apartment within three hours. Government security forces beat an Alawi woman and a man on their back, neck and arms saying: *"Get out, get out you Alawi pigs, you dogs, it is harem for you to live, we don't want to leave any Alawi dogs on the face of the earth."* The family fled.

101. In July in Al-Somarya, the threats of eviction intensified with the launching of a larger security campaign led by a commander reportedly from the Ministry of Interior's housing department. The campaign resulted in the closure of all entrances, the cutting of electricity and water, and the prevention of entry of food supplies. Confiscation and destruction of property was also reported. According to several eyewitnesses, the neighbourhood was raided a few weeks later, on 27 August, by hundreds of armed men under the same commander, who went door to door, threatened residents using sectarian insults, and delivered 24 to 72-hour notices to evacuate their homes. People were prevented from carrying their belongings at gunpoint and were only permitted to do so after paying money to armed men. While some residents were able to return, others remained unable to do so, after homes were occupied by armed men and despite informing local authorities.

102. Local notables recognized the destruction of properties, justifying them for ideological and religious reasons. One of them threatened to kill all residents of the neighbourhood if they did not leave.

103. Similar patterns of evictions were documented in Al-Zahryat, where between April and October, residents of a military housing complex were delivered 72-hour notices to evacuate their homes.

104. In addition to looting and ransacking in both Al-Zahryat and Al-Somarya, male residents, including boys as young as 12 were reportedly arrested. In Al-Somarya in August, male residents were taken to a makeshift facility where some of them were beaten, subjected to sectarian slurs, and forced to sign eviction pledges.

105. In its note verbale of 28 January 2026, the government reported that in July 2025, an evacuation notice was issued for military housing located in Al-Somarya, with a one-month deadline, as it is military housing belonging to the Syrian government. According to the government, no attacks or incidents were recorded during the evacuation of the military housing.[39]

106. The government further stated that a letter was sent to residents informing them that they were in a violation zone and that the authorities would be reviewing and discussing ways to deal with illegal buildings constructed on state property.[40] According to the government, this coincided with the intervention of unknown individuals who attacked the houses and

[39] Note verbale, 28 January 2026.
[40] Note verbale, 28 January 2026.

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attempted to assault residents. Security forces rushed to prevent the assault and contain the situation. Several armed individuals then attacked the same neighbourhood several times. The government further stated that as a result, several measures were taken to prevent any future problems, including the evacuation of some houses used for purposes that violate public security or for trafficking in contraband.

107. According to the government, residents of Al-Somarya were protected against riots or unrest, with rapid response to any emergency or complaints, without abuses being committed against residents.[41]

108. Regarding Al-Zahryat, the government stated that in July 2025, an evacuation order was issued for the military housing located in the Zahryat buildings area of Mezzeh, with a one-month deadline, as it was military housing belonging to the Syrian government, inhabited by people from the former regime who worked in the MoD.[42] The Ministry reportedly seeks to rehouse new military personnel in these homes, which are designated for its employees during their period of service. According to the government, there were no attacks or problems during the evacuation of the military housing.[43]

III. The Role of Foreign States and non-state actors

109. The Commission has extensively documented the role of foreign states and non-state actors in the Syrian conflict and the violations committed by them.[44] 2025 saw both a continuation of this internationalization as well as significant shifts. While several foreign armies continued their long-standing military presence and operations on Syrian territory,[45] most – namely Türkiye, the US, France, the UK and Jordan – now did so without objection from the Syrian government, except Israel, which continued operations in Syria without agreement from the Syrian government, committing a range of violations as set out below.

110. In 2025, non-State armed groups, namely the Syrian National Army (formally integrated into the newly formed army on 29 January 2025), and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) continued to control territory. In early 2026, as set out above, the SDF lost large swathes of the territory it controlled to government forces. The Global Coalition remained present, fighting Daesh which remained active in central Syria.

A. Violations by Israeli forces in southern Syria

111. Following the fall of the Assad government and throughout 2025, Israel expanded its operations and presence in Syria. Notably, Israel Defence Forces (IDF) conducted airstrikes in Syria as well as ground operations in areas adjacent to the occupied Syrian Golan, including parts of Quneitra, Daraa and Rif Damascus. These resulted in civilian casualties, population displacement, property damage and destruction, arrests and detention and restrictions on fundamental freedoms.[46]

112. In Quneitra and western Daraa governorates IDF established military positions in the area of separation in violation of the Disengagement Agreement and reportedly conducted hundreds of incursions into Syrian territory, significantly impacting civilians' lives in villages along the 79 km line of separation.[47] In the newly controlled areas, the IDF constructed outposts and earthworks, and established control over water resources,

[41] Note verbale, 28 January 2026.
[42] Note verbale, 28 January 2026.
[43] Note verbale, 28 January 2026.
[44] A/HRC/46/54, January 2021.
[45] A/HRC/46/54, January 2021 and A/HRC/57/86, footnote 5.
[46] A/79/795-S/2025/96.
[47] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: More than 900 ground incursions were documented in the Quneitra governorate from the beginning of the year until the end of December 2025. The incursions included all border villages along the 79 km border line, with Israeli forces crossing the 1974 disengagement line by varying distances of up to 20 km into rural Quneitra and as far as western rural Daraa. See also https://undof.unmissions.org/en/undof-press-statement.

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agricultural lands, villages, and roads through the presence of its own forces. It is the Commission's view that the IDF has placed additional territory under its authority in fact and thus extended the territorial scope of its previous occupation in Quneitra governorate.[48]

Displacement of civilians, property damage and destruction, restrictions on freedom of movement and livelihoods

113. The Commission investigated multiple incidents in which IDF operations led to displacement of civilians, damage and destruction of their property as well as restrictions on their freedom of movement, impeding their livelihoods.

114. Already starting on the morning of 8 December, the IDF, likely including the 210th Division, entered several villages in the Quneitra countryside, including with tanks, conducted search operations and ordered residents, including from Hamidiyah, Hurrya and Rasm Al Rawadi villages to leave their homes within minutes or hours, in some instances amidst threats of force. The IDF subsequently seized land and property in the vicinity of these villages, bulldozing forests, agricultural and grazing land and damaging roads. The IDF seized, looted and damaged the nearby Quneitra Governorate building and destroyed the court's archive.

115. While some residents returned to their homes by January, due to the construction of an IDF military post, Hamidiyah residents were prevented from doing so and remained displaced. The IDF subsequently bulldozed and demolished more than 15 buildings, including several homes, overnight in Hamidiyah on 16 June. Affected residents did not receive advance notification of their displacement, arrangements for safe alternative accommodation, compensation or remedy. The Commission also received credible information regarding reported house demolitions in Al Rawadi village on 6 July.[49]

116. The IDF also seized land and used heavy machinery to dig trenches and build new military instalments,[50] including in Jubbata al-Khashab and Hamidiyah. Checkpoints and military posts were erected in multiple locations restricting civilians from moving freely.

117. Swathes of fruit-bearing trees in the forest near Jubbata al-Khashab were razed between January and June[51] as well as destroying olive, fig and pine trees further impacting local livelihood opportunities in several locations. Water points were damaged, including in Kodna village, reportedly leading to water shortages for residents.[52]

118. Communities in Kuwayyah, western Daraa, Beit Jinn, Rif Damascus and Trunje, Jubbata al-Khashab and Hamidiyah in Quneitra were prevented from accessing essential services, crops and agricultural and grazing lands and their livestock – for many their only sources of income, decimating the local economy.

Detention and transfer of Syrian detainees

119. Similarly, starting since 8 December 2024, the Commission documented dozens of cases of Syrian men, including journalists and a boy arrested and detained by the IDF inside Syrian territory, from villages in Quneitra, Daraa and Rif Damascus governorates. While some were released hours and days later, others spent months in detention.

120. Arrests of Syrian men often happened during night-time raids by the IDF on villages inside Syrian territory, purportedly to arrest men accused of having links to terrorist organisations. During such a nighttime operation in Beit Jinn on 12 June [see below], the IDF killed a civilian man reportedly with a cognitive disability, and arrested seven men, accusing

[48] Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land. The Hague, 18 October 1907, Article 42. For recognition of the establishment of the ongoing occupation of the Syrian Golan, comprising much of Quineitra governorate, see United Nations Security Council resolution 497 (1981).

[49] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: […] in addition to bulldozing agricultural land on both sides of the main road from the Al-Rawadi roundabout to the destroyed Quneitra crossing[…].

[50] S/2025/154, para. 9.

[51] S/2025/154, para. 18.

[52] Note verbale, 28 January 2026: Vital water wells were targeted, most notably […] the wells of the village of Kodna located north of Tal Ahmar al-Gharbi.

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them of being Hamas members, and transferred them to Israel. Some were subsequently released, while others remain in Israeli detention. In similar operations in Suisa on 7 July and Khan Arnaba on 3 September, several men were arrested in each location, accused of having links to Hezbollah. Eight were subsequently released while at least seven remain detained. Detainees were beaten and kicked during interrogation and beaten as punishment.

121. The Commission documented several cases in which Syrian detainees transferred to Israel were still held there, without their families being able to contact them. Also prior to the fall of the former government, the IDF had detained men and boys from Syria, of whom some remain in detention and are held incommunicado. For instance, in April 2024, a 17-year-old boy was detained as he grazed his sheep near Jubbata al-Khashab, Quneitra governorate. The IDF has not acknowledged his detention or whereabouts and his family have not had direct contact with him since.

122. Overall, the Commission tracked a total of 45 Syrian men and boys still reportedly detained by the IDF.[53] Additional incidents are under investigation.

Use of force against demonstrators and other unarmed civilians

123. The IDF also opened live fire against unarmed civilians, including children, inside Syrian territory, both in the context of demonstrations and near IDF positions and checkpoints, in several incidents investigated by the Commission. On the morning of 20 December 2024, civilians demonstrated against the IDF near Ma'ariyah village, Jazira, western Daraa Governorate. The IDF positioned at a newly established military post[54] opened fire on unarmed demonstrators as they approached, from a distance of approximately 200 metres, injuring an unarmed protester in the leg.[55] The IDF acknowledged the shooting stating that they had operated in accordance with standard operating procedures without specifying what these were or whether they complied with international norms and standards on the use of force in law enforcement operations.

124. Days later, on the afternoon of 25 December, during another demonstration against the IDF by civilians in Dawiya village, near Suisa, Quneitra, the IDF shot and injured at least four young male civilians, in the legs and stomach, including a 17-year-old, as some young men and women threw stones at IDF tanks. In a separate incident, amidst reports of civilian injuries, a 13-year-old boy, grazing his family's sheep was shot in the leg as he ran away from IDF soldiers shortly before noon on 5 February, west of Rouihina approximately 500 metres from the 1974 Disengagement Agreement line.

125. The IDF shot and injured three unarmed civilians in Khan Arnaba, Quneitra on 9 December as civilians approached a temporary IDF checkpoint on the Khan Arnaba – Damascus road to protest the blocking of the road. Two men were shot in the leg and a child was reportedly shot in the face. There was no indication that any demonstrator or civilian posed any imminent threat of death or serious injury during these events.

Ground and air strikes

126. Since 8 December 2024, the IDF launched hundreds of airstrikes on Syria reportedly targeting military sites and weapons systems.[56] The Commission investigated several incidents in which such strikes resulted in civilian casualties. One entailed multiple IDF airstrikes on the Maysalun neighbourhood of Daraa city at approximately 8 p.m. on 17 March. The strikes targeted an abandoned SAA military location on Al-Dahiya road and struck both the military target and civilian houses in a nearby residential neighbourhood,

[53] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 5 December 2025, reports confirmed that Israeli forces released four detainees from Beit Jinn, Taranjeh and Quneitra after six months of detention.

[54] IDF Press Releases; Israeli at War, Defensive Operations by the Paratroopers Brigade in Syria, 5 April. Available at: https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/idf-press-releases-israel-at-war/april-25-pr/defensive-operations-by-the-paratroopers-brigade-in-syria/.

[55] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 20 December 2024, [a named individual] was shot in both legs during a demonstration in the village of Ma'ariya in Daraa. The gunfire originated from Israeli forces stationed at the Al-Jazira outpost, which opened fire directly at demonstrators. He was transferred to Tafas Hospital.

[56] A/79/806-S/2025/120.

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some 400 metres away. There was no military activity in the vicinity of the attack. Approximately 15–20 minutes later, another strike hit the same area as first responders and humanitarian workers arrived on the scene, raising concerns that the latter were deliberately targeted. At least three civilians were killed, and 22 civilians injured including humanitarian workers, four children, and one woman.

127. Following months of daily ground incursions into southern Syria, tensions escalated on the morning of 25 March when an IDF convoy reportedly crossed into Kuwayyah village, in the Yarmouk basin, western Daraa governorate. The incursion reportedly led to armed clashes with local residents on the outskirts of the village, resulting in the killing of two Syrian men.[57] Shortly afterwards, the IDF carried out artillery shelling and at least one airstrike[58] on residential areas in the village, resulting in the deaths of at least four civilians, including a woman, and injuries to seven others, including a woman and several children.[59] There was no identifiable military objectives inside the village. The shelling caused the mass displacement of civilians, primarily women and children, to neighbouring villages.

128. In the context of the July escalation in Suwayda,[60] Israeli airstrikes on official buildings in the centre of Damascus also put civilians lives at risk and resulted in casualties.[61] Starting shortly after midday on 16 July, five airstrikes targeted the MoD and General Staff buildings complex and areas close to the President Place in Damascus.[62] The first strikes targeted the MoD, hitting its entrance and the back of the building. Further strikes hit the western entrance of the MoD complex and did not cause civilian casualties. A further attack caused civilian casualties and significant property damage.[63] According to the government, three people were killed and 34 injured.[64] At least one of those killed in the attack was a civilian woman. The impact on civilians raises concerns regarding whether all feasible precautions were taken in the attack.

129. Some months later, an IDF incursion in Beit Jinn, Rif Damascus at approximately 3.30 a.m. on 28 November, to arrest Syrian men accused of belonging to a terrorist organisation,[65] resulted in clashes with armed residents, in which two Syrian men were killed, and IDF members reportedly injured. The IDF subsequently shelled the densely populated town, killing a family of six, including a woman and two children in their home and destroying it. Another woman was killed, and a man and girl injured by the IDF, reportedly they sought shelter. Civilians were also injured by shelling and gunfire as they remained inside their houses. Hostilities continued until 7 a.m. At least eleven civilians were killed and 25 were injured. The attack also caused extensive property damage including the destruction of several homes. Three Syrian men were arrested and detained by the IDF. One was released the following day and two remain detained.

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57 S/2025/350, para. 6.

58 S/2025/350, para. 6.

59 S/2025/350, Note Verbale 28 January 2026.

59 Interviews XVI - 16/298; https://t.me/syrianmofaex1/592; https://snhr.org/arabic/2025/03/26/إدانة-مقتل-مدنيين-وإصابة-آخرين-بينهم-س/; https://t.me/daraa24_org/17277; https://t.me/daraa24_org/17283; Israel kills six in southern Syria, Syrian ministry says | Reuters; https://t.me/daraa24_org/17287 Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 25 March 2025, during an attempt by Israeli patrols to enter Koya, local residents resisted due to repeated incursions in western Daraa, which resulted in violations against private property and threats to civilian lives. Intermittent clashes ensued, followed by Israeli artillery and airstrikes on Koya, killing six civilians.

60 A/HRC/61/CRP.7.

61 https://specialenvoysyria.unmissions.org/statement-attributable-united-nations-special-envoy-syria-geir-o-pedersen-1.

62 https://x.com/IDF/status/1945421069487145072.

63 Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 16 July 2025, Israeli airstrikes targeted Damascus, including the General Staff building in Umayyad Square and the Presidential Palace. The strikes killed three civilians, including a woman, and injured 34, including a child from Jabal Al Ruz. Homes and vehicles in nearby residential areas sustained significant damage.

64 Note Verbale, 28 January 2026.

65 https://x.com/IDF/status/1994301020147491025.

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B. Violations by the SDF and by former Syrian National Army (SNA) factions in the north and north-east

130. At the time of writing, the situation in north-eastern Syria remained fluid, following the government takeover of large parts of the territory formerly controlled by the SDF. Evidence of past violations by the SDF was coming to light and reports of new violations by various actors were emerging. The incidents and violations described below reflect the situation as it was in 2025 – during which similar patterns of violations were observed as in previous years[66] – and should be read as such.

131. This includes conduct of hostilities violations, as well as multiple violations related to detention including arbitrary detention, inhumane conditions which may reach the threshold of torture, forced separation of children from their families, by the SDF, including of alleged former Da'esh combatants and their families. Deaths in detention were also reported, as was recruitment of children.

132. Hostilities between the SDF and the SNA had persisted for many years prior in various locations in northern Syria before the fall of the Assad government, as presented in previous reports.[67] The situation first escalated with the change in authorities on 8 December 2024, with the involvement of SNA factions backed by Turkish forces to attack the SDF in an attempt to take territory near the Tishreen Dam area, amongst other locations. Subsequently, sporadic clashes between the SDF and former SNA factions before they formerly integrated into Syrian forces,[68] continued throughout 2025 in north-east of the country,[69] before escalating again rapidly in January 2026.

Conduct of hostilities-related violations by former SNA factions

133. The Commission documented violations committed in the course of the conduct of hostilities by SNA factions, backed by Turkish forces.

134. Throughout the reporting period, the Tishreen dam area adjacent to the frontlines was particularly affected by hostilities between the SDF and SNA, and subsequently, government forces.[70] The violence continued despite an agreement reached between the SDF and the government in April and escalated throughout the area in January 2026.[71] Alleged conduct of hostilities-related violations in January 2026 remain under investigation.

135. On 10 December 2024 for instance, explosions were reported in the immediate vicinity of the dam. The strikes reportedly damaged several of the dam's turbines causing a temporary blackout in and around Ayn al-Arab (Kobane), restricting access to electricity for over 413,000 people in Menbij and Ayn al-Arab (Kobane) for up to 20 days.

136. On 19 December 2024, two Turkish-Kurdish journalists (one woman, one man) working for Hawar News Agency (ANHA) were killed in a drone strike while driving home from reporting on hostilities at Tishreen Dam near Birk Bakar village, located between the dam and Sarrin.

137. From early January 2025, in an attempt to take control of the SDF-held Tishreen dam – including a key road connecting the eastern and western banks of the Euphrates – Turkish armed forces and the SNA conducted a series of attacks on the dam region. In response, on 7 January 2025 the self-administration called on residents to participate in a protest at the dam, as Mertalên zîndî, or human shields. Civilian convoys subsequently arrived and remained for days at the dam. Attacks impacting the sit-in organised by the self-administration at the dam began on 8 January 2025 and continued throughout the month.

[66] E.g. A/HRC/57/86, paras. 101 to 127; A/HRC/55/64, paras. 75–76, and 90–118 and A/HRC/54/58, paras. 83–102.

[67] E.g. A/HRC/57/86, paras. 79–80 and A/HRC/55/64, paras. 75–76.

[68] While these factions formally integrated into government security forces on 29 January 2025, they were not fully integrated by the month of March 2025 see e.g. A/HRC/59/CRP.4, para. 20.

[69] A/HRC/58/66, paras. 22 and 30.

[70] A/HRC/58/66, paras. 22 and 30.

[71] https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/iici-syria/independent-international-commission, 30 January 2025.

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At least 20 civilians present were killed and scores injured during several attacks during this period. The protests occurred approximately 5–7 km away from the frontlines.

138. The series of attacks began on 8 January 2025, when a civilian convoy heading to the dam was struck, including marked ambulances, approximately three kilometres from the dam in an aerial attack, most likely by Turkish-fired high explosive guided missiles. At least five civilians were killed. On 15 January 2025, at least five civilians were killed (including two medical workers driving marked ambulances) and scores injured in a series of aerial and artillery attacks by unidentified perpetrators, initially on a civilian convoy as it arrived at the dam, and then at the dam itself. On 18 January 2025, vehicles were again targeted in a drone attack at the dam, likely conducted by the SNA, killing six civilians and injuring at least 19. Later the same day, a marked ambulance carrying a woman survivor from the first attack was struck by a drone near Al Huriya village, injuring the occupants and severely damaging the ambulance. On 21 January 2025, three civilians were killed when a drone dropped two munitions onto a group of civilians dancing on the dam, where a marked ambulance was also present.

139. Civilians were also killed and injured in other adjacent parts of north-eastern Syria along the Euphrates river. Late on 1 February 2025 in Jzadat as-Samawat village (located some 25 kilometres to the northeast of Manbij city on the western bank of the Euphrates, near active frontlines), a high explosive munition launched by a drone, severely damaged a civilian house, and injured five girls, two boys, two women and two men.

140. Heavy artillery shelling by former SNA factions targeting the same village on 8 February at approximately 1pm resulted in the death of one girl and 11 civilians injured, including six boys, one girl and three women who were sitting outside their home. It also caused significant damage to civilian homes.

141. Both Turkish and SNA-operated drones were deployed in the area during the above period. Investigations into similar attacks are ongoing.

142. The Commission also investigated an incident on 16 March 2025, in which ten members of a family were killed (a man, two women – including an 18-year-old, four girls and three boys aged between 9 months and 14 years old), and the surviving daughter injured when the farm they were living in south of Kobane was struck by a likely Turkish drone – as indicated by remnants found on site. The family was found killed some 400 metres from their homes, seemingly having been targeted while fleeing.

Conduct of hostilities violations by the SDF

143. Key locations of conduct of hostilities violations documented as committed by the SDF in 2025 include the Dayr Hafer axis in Aleppo governorate.

144. The Commission investigated two conduct of hostility-related incidents which impacted civilians and civilian infrastructure along this axis close to the front lines.

145. In Al-Khafsah village, civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure, including a mosque, reportedly occurred in January and February 2025. A nearby water pumping station was reportedly damaged by SDF drones on 7 January 2025 and workers reportedly killed and injured.

146. On 15 February 2025, the same village was hit by several rockets launched by the SDF. This caused house damage and led to the deaths of one woman, and six injured (four women, two girls). There was reportedly no military presence in the area at the time.

147. Further, at around 8 p.m. on 10 September, in government-controlled nearby Al Kayariyah village, located only five kilometres south of Al-Khafsa village, one civilian man was killed, and his brother and father injured while riding a motorcycle. A witness reported that the source of fire came from the south, where SDF positions were located some 10 kilometres away, near Al Jarah (Ksheish) military airport. The SDF claimed it was forced to respond to attempted strikes on its positions.

148. Throughout the year, incidents impacting civilians also occurred in and around the then-Kurdish-majority Ashrafiyah and Sheikh Maqsoud neighbourhoods of Aleppo city, including reported sniper attacks, despite the formal withdrawal of the SDF following an

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agreement with the interim government in April. Notably, during the clashes on 6 October 2025 involving the use of mortars and heavy machine guns, two male civilians were killed: a guard was killed at the park in Seif Al Dawla neighbourhood at around 10.20 p.m. and a man was hit by a gunshot after 9:30 pm while standing on his balcony in Al Muhafada neighbourhood. Of the eleven others injured, two were women and one was a 14-year-old boy. Civilians were also displaced, and schools, universities, and workplaces temporarily closed. Mortar impacts were reported in nearby areas controlled by the government, such as Seif Al Dawla, Bustan Al Basha, and Al Meedan neighbourhoods and an ISF checkpoint. The authorities and the SDF reciprocated blame for the violence. Violence again occurred in late December 2025 and early January 2026, leading to the complete withdrawal of the SDF from Aleppo city. Conduct of hostilities violations in January 2026 remain under investigation.

149. In its note verbale from the government on 28 January 2026, the Commission received additional reports of conduct of hostilities-related incidents in the area reportedly leading to deaths, including one man in February in Baghouz[72] and a young man in July in Boqruss.[73] One further man was reportedly killed and two women injured during a raid in Dayr al-Zawr governorate in October.[74] Following the killing of a man on 27 October, the SDF issued an apology and opened an investigation.[75] A man also reportedly died after being run over by an SDF vehicle in December.[76] A woman was also reportedly injured by gunfire by the SDF in April.[77] One man was reportedly killed by the SDF in September after he was arrested for having a photo of President Ahmad Al Shar'a on his phone.[78]

150. Displacement and material damages also occurred in various places where hostilities between the SDF and government forces continued in Dayr al-Zawr governorate, for example at several times during the year in Al Qouriya,[79] and in December in Baqrās village[80] – which had previously experienced hostilities.

151. Children were also killed and injured in various conduct of hostilities incidents throughout Dayr al-Zawr governorate in 2025.[81] Two children were also reportedly severely burned following an SDF raid on a house.[82]

Detention-related violations and child recruitment by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the north-east

152. Throughout the period, the SDF continued to unlawfully deprive civilians of their liberty, with the Commission documenting cases of deaths in detention and disappearances. Arbitrarily held civilians included people reportedly detained, and in some cases enforcedly

[72] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 24 February 2025, SDF shot and killed [a named man]while he was fishing in the Euphrates River near Al Baghuz, under SDF control.

[73] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 17 July 2025, SDF shot and killed [a named man] while he was fishing.

[74] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 5 October 2025, SDF killed [a named] civilian and injured his wife and daughter during a raid.

[75] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 27 October 2025, SDF killed [a named man]in Al Kasra.

[76] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 28 December 2025, an SDF patrol ran over [a named man]in Hajin.

[77] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 6 April 2025, SDF shot and injured a woman in Gharanij.

[78] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 10 September 2025, SDF arrested and killed [a named man]on charges of collaboration with the Syrian government after finding an image of President Ahmad Al Shar'a on his mobile phone.

[79] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 7 December 2025, SDF targeted homes in Al Qouriya, causing material damage and civilian displacement.

[80] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 31 December 2025, SDF outposts on the riverbank fired at the village of Baqrās opposite their positions, causing displacement and material damage.

[81] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 26 June 2025, SDF killed [a named] child, in Abu Hardoub village; On 15 February 2025, SDF killed a [named child] by sniper fire from a school in Al Tayyana; On 12 December 2025, SDF killed three individuals from Dhiban including a girl; On 24 May 2025, SDF killed [a named] child in Al-Tayyana); On 24 May 2025, SDF killed [a named person] in Al Tayyana.

[82] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 30 December 2025, SDF raided and burned a house in Al Hraiji village, injuring two children with severe burns.

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disappeared, after having been seen celebrating the fall of the former government and the entry into power of the current government.

153. In connection with the government takeover of some parts of the country formerly controlled by the SDF, detainees including children, were reportedly released. For example, a group of 126 children were reportedly released from Aqtan prison in January 2026. The Commission had previously expressed concerned about the detention of minors, including cases of deaths in detention of children.[83] Investigations are ongoing.

Deaths in detention

154. Deaths in detention of individuals in SDF custody were reported throughout 2025, allegedly due to torture and lack of medical treatment. For example, in April 2025, two men reportedly died just days after their arrests by the SDF in eastern Aleppo and Hasakah governorates. Similarly, two men reportedly died after being injured during their arrest in a raid by the SDF in Dayr al-Zawr governorate in early November.[84] One man also reportedly died while detained by the SDF in eastern Raqqah in early December. Children are also reported to have died in detention. Investigations are ongoing.

Incommunicado detention and disappearances

155. Incommunicado detention and related disappearances were reported throughout 2025. For example, a man who celebrated the change in government was reportedly arrested in February 2025. The arresting forces were masked and did not provide any identification, but the man was subsequently reported by a former detainee held in SDF custody. As of 9 April 2025, his family remained without any news of his fate and whereabouts despite attempts to obtain information from the authorities.

156. In another example, in mid-2025, a man was invited for interrogation by the SDF intelligence and subsequently disappeared. His family remained without information as to his fate or whereabouts for months. He was reportedly subsequently released following the government's takeover of the prison where he was being detained. Detention on political grounds.

157. Arrests for celebrating the change in government occurred in December 2024 and 2025 and gatherings were banned on 7 and 8 December 2025. For example, in December 2024, a man was reportedly arrested during a house raid in Raqqah by SDF intelligence officers after he was seen celebrating the change in government. He was released after more than four months in detention, accused of terrorism. He was neither able to receive visits from his family nor appoint a lawyer.

158. The Ministry of Justice stated on 25 January 2026[85] that the cases of all detainees at Aqtan prison – Raqqah governorate's main detention facility, previously controlled by SDF, are currently under review. The review aims to distinguish between three categories of prisoners: political detainees, common criminals and Da'esh members.

Detention for suspected affiliation with Da'esh by the SDF, backed by the US-led Coalition

159. Throughout 2025 and until early 2026, some 27 000 people, more than ninety percent of whom are women and children, continued to be interned for their alleged family affiliation with Da'esh without regular review of their detention in Rawj and Al-Hawl camps, where they have been since 2019, in dire living conditions. Security remained of grave concern, with reports of multiple murders in both camps, including of a child found murdered in Rawj camp in May 2025.

[83] A/HRC/54/58, para. 87.

[84] Note Verbale, 28 January 2026: On 30 October 2025, SDF killed [two named people] during a raid in Gharanij.

[85] www.facebook.com/SyrMOfj/posts/pfbid0E2gDRcw3Mui71wUD9M9aMrggsJgpcPE4B3q7TnUP9ppvTdqZHRVA7vRMad2uoLtMl.

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160. More encouragingly, the number of internees there decreased from over 40 000 one year ago,[86] thanks to efforts made by Syria and the SDF to return families from the camps to their place of origin, as well as Iraq's repatriation of thousands of nationals, in line with Iraq's stated aim to repatriate all Iraqi nationals in 2025.[87]

161. Approximately 9 000 men and boys[88] allegedly affiliated to Da'esh continued to be detained in appalling conditions in facilities across north-eastern Syria. Young foreign men, captured as children and others forcibly separated from their mothers, with life-threatening injuries were detained in inadequate "rehabilitation centers", in limbo since turning 18. Many men were held incommunicado, with some disappeared. Reports indicated the men and boys continued to be held in overcrowded cells, with insufficient food and health care amid an ongoing tuberculosis outbreak.[89]

162. In January 2026, Al Hawl camp came under the control of the government, following the government's takeover of areas previously under the control of the SDF. Rawj camp remained under the control of the SDF at the time of writing, but its future status remained unclear, given that control of locations holding alleged ISIS detainees and their families was to come under government control according to negotiations ongoing at the time of writing. Conditions were worsened by ongoing hostilities. The Commission confirms ongoing investigations into the situation of women and children in the remaining places of detention.

163. Also following ongoing hostilities between the government and the SDF in January 2026, some 5700 alleged ISIS detainees formerly held by the SDF were transferred to Iraq,[90] to which forty-seven French men had been transferred previously in July 2025, raising concerns of mass refoulement.[91] In this regard, the Commission is particularly concerned about the situation of young men detained as minors and held in "rehabilitation centres" who have reached majority and risk being treated as adults despite having been detained as children. Investigations are ongoing.

Child recruitment and use in hostilities by the SDF and the Revolutionary Youth

164. Child recruitment by the SDF and the Revolutionary Youth reportedly continued. One 14-year-old boy was reportedly abducted by the Revolutionary Youth in October 2025 from Aleppo governorate. The Commission recalls that the SDF committed to prevent recruitment of all children under 18 in the area under its control.[92] An alleged girl fighter was killed in Aleppo in January. Investigations are ongoing.

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[86] https://media.Defence.gov/2025/Jul/31/2003767903/-1/-1/1/OIR_Q3_JUN2025_FINAL_508.PDF, p. 27.

[87] https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/sites/default/files/20250926_press_release_prr_conference_iraq.pdf On 29 December, Iraqi completed its final repatriation operation for 2025, repatriating approximately 834 nationals. It aimed to repatriate all remaining Iraqis within the next three months.

[88] https://media.Defence.gov/2025/Jul/31/2003767903/-1/-1/1/OIR_Q3_JUN2025_FINAL_508.PDF , p. 23 (as of 30 June 2025).

[89] UN experts urge end to ISIL-related arbitrary detention in North-East Syria and accountability for international crimes,7 April 2025.

[90] The United States Applauds Iraqi Leadership on Countering ISIS, 22 January 2026.

[91] https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/iici-syria/independent-international-commission, 30 January 2025.

[92] https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2019/07/syrian-democratic-forces-sign-action-plan-to-end-and-prevent-the-recruitment-and-use-of-children/.

Annex II

Map of the Syrian Arab Republic

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Annex III

Map of approximate Areas of Influence

