

## RESEARCHED AND COMPILED BY THE REFUGEE DOCUMENTATION CENTRE OF IRELAND ON 30 APRIL 2024

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### DISCLAIMER

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. All COI Query Responses are compiled in line with the Common EU Guidelines (2008) and the EUAA Methodology (2023). This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. Please refer to all documents cited.

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### COI QUERY RESPONSE

#### SYRIA - SECURITY

In April 2024 the *European Union Agency for Asylum* notes that: “There are multiple overlapping non-international (internal) and international armed conflicts taking place in Syria...”<sup>1</sup>

This document also points out that the: “...security situation in Deir Ez-Zor governorate is described as ‘volatile’, with continuing reports of targeted killings.”<sup>2</sup>

In April 2024 the *Syria INGO Regional Forum* notes that: “An increasing number of attacks in Syria is threatening to further deteriorate the already dire humanitarian situation in the country, placing people's lives at risk, continuing to cause damage to civilian infrastructure and restricting access to essential services. Data obtained by SIRF show that over the last nine months, more than 16,000 conflict-related incidents have been reported by humanitarian partners, a 33% increase from the previous period.”<sup>3</sup>

This document also states that: “Since the beginning of the conflict in Gaza, there have been 45 airstrikes in Syria, averaging nearly two attacks per week. More than 60 civilians have been killed so far as recent strikes have taken place in densely populated urban areas and airports, including Aleppo, Damascus, Lattakia, Deir Ez-Zor, Idlib and Qamishli.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> European Union Agency for Asylum (15 April 2024) Country Guidance: Syria, p.116

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, p.133

<sup>3</sup> Syria INGO Regional Forum (9 April 2024) Escalating regional and internal conflicts are threatening the lives of people in Syria

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

In April 2024 the *Syrian Observatory for Human Rights* documented: “...the death of 514 people in March 2024.”<sup>5</sup>

The *International Crisis Group* in April 2024 released a report which summaries security issues of the previous month.<sup>6</sup>

A report published in April 2024 by the *Syrian Network for Human Rights* states that: “In March, we documented the killing of 102 civilians...”<sup>7</sup>

In April 2024 the *Syrian Human Rights Committee* states that: “The Syrian Human Rights Committee (SHRC) documented the killing of (101) individuals during the month of March 2024, including: (15) children, (16) women, and one person killed under torture.”<sup>8</sup>

The *Guardian* in March 2024 points out that: “Syria’s war began after the government repressed peaceful protests in 2011, and it escalated into a deadly conflict that pulled in jihadists and foreign armies. The war has killed more than 507,000 people, displaced millions and battered the country’s infrastructure and industry. Turkey has launched successive military offensives in Syria, most of them targeting Kurdish militants that Ankara links to the Kurdistan Workers’ party (PKK), which has waged a decades-long insurgency against the Turkish state. Turkish troops and their Syrian proxies hold swathes of the border, including several big cities and towns such as Azaz.”<sup>9</sup>

A report issued in March 2024 by the *Syrian Network for Human Rights* points out that: “In their efforts to consolidate or expand territorial control, all the various parties to the conflict and controlling forces in Syria have perpetrated human rights violations, but the Syrian regime has continued to be by far the most prolific perpetrator of violations by far, exceeding all other parties individually or collectively.”<sup>10</sup>

In March 2024 the *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* notes that: “...Syria has become a yet more dangerous place to live and we have seen the largest escalation in violence in four years, with active hostilities on multiple fronts. Following the 5 October deadly attack on the Homs Military Academy, Syrian and Russian forces bombarded opposition-controlled areas around Idlib, attacking schools, markets and IDP camps with hundreds of civilians killed and injured and 120,000 people displaced. In just a few days, Government forces used internationally banned cluster munitions in densely populated urban areas, shelled no fewer than five well-known hospitals in central Idlib and conducted direct attacks on first responders...In the same period, Turkish forces attacked areas held by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in north-east Syria in retaliation for a PKK-claimed attack in Ankara. Aerial attacks on power stations disrupted essential services to the

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<sup>5</sup> Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (8 April 2024) SOHR booklet, comprising 13 reports with infographics, summarises all key developments in Syria in March 2024, p.1

<sup>6</sup> International Crisis Group (April 2024) Crisis Watch, April 2024, Syria

<sup>7</sup> Syrian Network for Human Rights (1 April 2024) 102 Civilian Deaths, Including 11 Children and 14 Women as well as Five Deaths due to Torture, Documented in Syria in March 2024, p.3

<sup>8</sup> Syrian Human Rights Committee (1 April 2024) Monthly Report on Human Rights Violations Victims – March 2024

<sup>9</sup> Guardian (31 March 2024) Eight killed by car bomb in northern Syria, war monitor says

<sup>10</sup> Syrian Network for Human Rights (18 March 2024) On the 13th Anniversary of the Start of the Popular Uprising, 231,278 Syrian Civilians Have Been Documented Killed, Including 15,334 due to Torture, 156,757 Have Been Arrested and/or Forcibly Disappeared, While 14 Million Remain Forcibly Displaced, p.4

population and deprived nearly a million people of water for weeks. Civilians in Eastern Syria were also killed, arbitrarily detained or displaced amidst clashes between the SDF and a coalition of tribal fighters. With no prospects of settlement in sight, this in-fighting creates further instability in an area where Da'esh remains active.”<sup>11</sup>

The *Associated Press* in March 2024 states that: “For years, Syria’s civil war has been a largely frozen conflict, the country effectively carved up into areas controlled by the Damascus government of President Bashar Assad, various opposition groups and Syrian Kurdish forces.”<sup>12</sup>

This report also points out that: “The U.N.-backed body known as the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria said this week that since October, the country has seen the worst wave of violence since 2020.”<sup>13</sup>

In March 2024 *Voice of America* states that: “Despite gradually recapturing most of the territory previously held by anti-government rebels, forces loyal to the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and their Russian and Iranian allies remain engaged in several battles, particularly in the northwestern part of the country, where rebels and Turkish-backed groups still control some territories. In the northeast, U.S.-backed Kurdish-led forces control a large swath of territory, some of which they liberated from the Islamic State terror group.”<sup>14</sup>

The *Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect* in February 2024 notes that: “Throughout areas under its control, the government systematically perpetrates arbitrary arrests, torture, enforced disappearances and deaths in detention.”<sup>15</sup>

This document also states that: “Syrians continuously suffer from hostilities and unrest along multiple regional frontlines, including across southern, northwest and northeast Syria.”<sup>16</sup>

A report issued in February 2024 by the *United Nations Human Rights Council* comments on: “...increased confrontation and infighting among the various authorities and forces controlling areas in the country...”<sup>17</sup>

This document also states that: “In late August, clashes erupted between SDF and a coalition of tribal fighters in SDF-held Dayr-al-Zawr Governorate and subsequently spread to other parts of north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic, following calls for a “general mobilization” against the SDF presence, issued by tribal leaders.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (18 March 2024) Statement by Paulo S. Pinheiro Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic (March 2024), p.1).

<sup>12</sup> Associated Press (15 March 2024) Violence in Syria is on the rise while aid is flagging as the civil war enters its 14th year

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*

<sup>14</sup> Voice of America (14 March 2024) More Than A Decade on, No End in Sight for Syria's War

<sup>15</sup> Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (29 February 2024) Syria, p.1

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p.1

<sup>17</sup> United Nations Human Rights Council (9 February 2024) Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, p.2

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p.17

A report issued in February 2024 by the *United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights* states that: “From 2015 up until mid-2020, pro-government forces have gradually regained vast portions of territory in Syria, as a result of military operations often followed by “reconciliation agreements” with different non-state armed groups, sponsored and monitored by several parties to the conflict. Despite a relative decrease in large-scale military operations and civilian casualties since then, conflict and violence continue, with widespread violations of international humanitarian and human rights law documented across the country, with some of those perpetrated on a systematic scale...”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (February 2024) “We did not fear death but the life there”; *The Dire Human Rights Situation Facing Syrian Returnees*, p.4

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