Date of Submission: July 15, 2026

Fourth Cycle – Syrian Arab Republic Session : 54th Session
of the UPR Working Group.

Expected Date of Review : January / February 2027.
State under Review : Syrian Arab Republic.

United Nations Human Rights Council

Joint Submission to the Universal Periodic Review(UPR)

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Jointly submitted in partnership with the following organizations (in alphabetical order)

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- **Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND)**
- **Syrians for Truth and Justice (STJ)**
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- **Dawlaty**
- **Equity and Empowerment**
- **Huqooyat**
- **Justice for Life**
- **Syria Justice and Accountability Centre (SJAC)**
- **Syrian Legal Development Programme (SLDP)**
- **The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP)**
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Prepared in accordance with OHCHR UPR Technical Guidelines for Stakeholders' Written Submissions

I. Introduction

1. This joint stakeholders' submission evaluates the human rights situation in Syria since January 2022, with a particular focus on the post-December 2024 transitional period. Grounded in the international law principle of state continuity, this framework treats the transitional government as fully bound by the international obligations of the Syrian state. Consequently, this report addresses the current government's immediate duty to cease ongoing violations without minimizing or obscuring the systematic, institutionalized rights violations inherited from the former government.

2. To ensure evidentiary integrity, the submission relies on direct ground monitoring and rigorous verification. All unreferenced data, statistics, and cases constitute original, first-hand information documented and verified directly by the submitting organizations. Additionally, Coalition findings were triangulated wherever possible.

3. Finally, this submission anchors its thematic reviews within the accountability mechanisms of the HRC by tracking the implementation of previously supported recommendations from Syria's prior UPR cycle. To maintain institutional continuity, most recommendations in this submission are designed to directly align with, expand upon, and operationalize those prior commitments.

II. Life, Liberty, and Protection from Torture and Inhuman Treatment

4. While Syria's governing authority has changed, the institutional legacy of pre-December 2024 violations persists alongside emerging, parallel practices under the current transitional government. Though differing in centralization and scale, recurring patterns of arbitrary detention, torture, and enforced disappearance continue to compromise the rights to life and liberty.

Arbitrary Detention

5. Arbitrary detention remains a systemic concern,[1] rooted in unrepealed legal frameworks that historically legitimized prolonged detention without judicial

oversight. The fact that existing legislation remains in force, including Legislative Decree No. 55 of 2011 and other restrictive laws, continues to pose a direct threat to fair trial guarantees.[2] [Supported Recs. 133.63 and 133.122].

6. During this transitional period, security campaigns targeting political dissidents, expression-related cases, and suspected former government affiliates consistently lack clear legal bases. Security campaigns have been characterized by unidentified detaining authorities, weak judicial monitoring, absent or decentralized custody registries, delayed family notification, and restricted access to counsel [Supported Recs 133.121, 133.125]. Targeting has also expanded to peaceful activities—including activities by media personnel, HRDs,[3] and protesting students. Violations include the confiscation of equipment, forced deletion of content,[4] and weaponized non-criticism pledges. Identity-based arbitrary detentions have also emerged, such as targeting individuals preparing for Nowruz Kurdish-cultural celebrations[5] and hostage-taking for detainee swaps following the July 2025 events in Suwayda [Supported Recs 133.123, 133.168].[6]

Enforced Disappearance

7. Enforced disappearance remains a continuous crime affecting over than 130,000 missing persons and their families.,[7] compounded by legislative shortcomings mirroring a long legacy of accountability failures. As of November 2024, at least 11,268 women remained detained or forcibly disappeared [Supported Recs 133.141, 133.149].[8] Compounding this crisis, the Independent Institution on Missing Persons (IIMP) remains barred from a domestic office, denying vital support to families enduring severe psychological suffering that amounts to inhuman treatment. Furthermore, the practice of systematically registering disappeared persons as deceased within civil registries—without disclosing the date, place, or cause of death, or returning remains—continues to expose families to extortion, financial fraud, and legal gridlock.[9]

8. Post-December 2024 access to historical detention sites and suspected burial grounds has highlighted a critical vacuum: Syria lacks a centralized national framework to secure mass graves, preserve forensic evidence, and manage victim data.[10] While the establishment of the National Commission on Missing Persons (NCMP) is a positive step, United Nations Special Procedures have expressed

concerns regarding its operational independence, access to archives, forensic capacity, and the meaningful participation of victims and their families.[11]

9. Concurrently, abductions by state and non-state actors persist across multiple regions. Major incidents of violence—particularly the July 2025 Suwayda incidents[12] -have generated waves of unresolved missing person cases, exposing severe protection failures.[13] This wave of disappearances since December 2024 features clear identity-based patterns, including the abduction of minority women and girls, systemic intimidation of searching families,[14] and persistent gaps in formal accountability [Supported Recs 133.129, 133.143].[15]

10. This pattern intersects with systematic intersectional exclusion, as seen in the ongoing neglect of Yazidi female victims of ISIS, including missing women and others detained in Al-Hol camp who continue to face persistent barriers to justice, protection, and access to effective reparations [Supported Recs 133.89, 133.90].[16]

Torture and Ill-Treatment

11. As a State Party to the ICCPR and CAT, Syria is bound by an absolute, non-derogable prohibition against torture and ill-treatment [Supported Recs 133.171, 133.218, 133.42, 133.69]. Despite a binding ICJ provisional measures order mandating immediate preventative action,[17] the former government failed to implement safeguards,[18] leaving a heavy structural legacy that places heightened accountability, truth-seeking, and reparative obligations on the transitional government.[19]

12. Nevertheless, credible reporting indicates that severe physical abuse, incommunicado confinement, and deaths in custody persist under current security actors.[20] These violations include fatal custodial abuse,[21] coerced non-opposition pledges extracted from vulnerable returnees, and direct assaults on judicial personnel,[22] indicating an erosion of institutional independence [Supported Recs 133.42, 133.138].

13. Documented investigations confirm that widespread torture and extrajudicial executions carried out during security operations in the Coastal and Western Central regions may amount to war crimes.[23] Coupled with multi-party torture and identity-driven violence documented during subsequent escalations in

Suwayda,[24] these practices reflect a profound failure by the transitional government to protect religious, ethnic, and political minority communities from institutional abuse [Supported Recs 133.143, 133.144, 133.159, 133.163, 133.164].

Recommendations

- Repeal or amend Decree No. 55/2011 to mandate independent judicial review of all detentions within 48 hours.
- Operationalise a unified, public electronic registry of all detainees, ensuring immediate charge notification, access to counsel, family notification within 24 hours, and judicial oversight.
- Issue a binding administrative directive halting arbitrary arrests, hostage-taking, and forced non-criticism pledges.
- Halt ongoing arbitrary detentions while systematically reviewing past unlawful cases, releasing individuals held without legal basis, and opening transparent judicial tracks for truth and reparations.
- Establish independent civilian oversight over security forces.
- Ratify the ICPPED and Rome Statute, criminalize enforced disappearance, and empower the NCMP to investigate all disappearance cases irrespective of the perpetrator.
- Secure former security, medical, and judicial archives under strict chain-of-custody protocols to protect mass graves and equip forensic teams with centralized DNA systems.
- Require judicial review and forensic verification before modifying civil death registries, ensure family participation in searches, build reporting paths for abducted women, and coordinate with the IIMP.
- Link fate-clarification to evidence protection and accountability, deploying specialized protection mechanisms against identity-based abductions in the Coastal, Suwayda, and NES regions.
- Implement the ICJ provisional measures order and grant independent CSOs and international bodies unhindered, unannounced access to all detention facilities to document conditions.
- Amend Law No. 16/2022 to criminalise inhuman treatment, ratify OPCAT to establish a National Preventive Mechanism, withdraw the CAT reservations.
- Prosecute direct and command responsibility for custodial deaths, and ensure prompt family notification, return of remains, and accurate certification.

III. Displacement and Property Rights

14. Under the former government, Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) violations were systematically weaponized..."violations were systematically weaponized as tools of political retaliation and demographic engineering,[25] serving as a primary driver of mass displacement. Discriminatory legislative frameworks were deployed across various governorates to penalize Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and populations perceived as political opponents. Displaced persons and returnees faced arbitrary, unwritten denials of ownership verification, while their properties in areas such as Qusayr were unlawfully occupied by armed groups or affiliates of the security forces.[26]

Residence and Property

15. To date, the transitional government has failed to establish an independent national mechanism to investigate large-scale HLP violations, facilitate restitution or compensation, or provide effective remedies for unlawful expropriation [Supported Recs 133.100, 133.182, 133.270, 133.271]. While Decree No. 16 of May 2025 nominally cancelled select security seizure orders between 2012 and 2024, it does not effectively address the full legal structure that enabled such seizures to occur, and the legislative framework governing property expropriation — particularly Decree No. 66/2012 and Law No. 10/2018—remain fully active, forcing impossible and burdensome documentation requirements on displaced populations [Supported Rec 133.182]. This legislative continuity triggered widespread popular protests in May 2026 across different cities against the State's expropriation of private property for urban redevelopment projects that disproportionately benefited elites, carried out without fair compensation or adequate safeguards for affected communities.[27]

16. Barriers in accessing civil documentation and in establishing proof of ownership constitute key obstacles to accessing HLP rights. Many Syrians face considerable obstacles in obtaining or renewing documentation. Bureaucratic procedures related to HLP claims are often complex, costly, time-consuming and unclear, frequently requiring legal assistance that is not accessible to many displaced populations. The loss of documentation has been compounded by the destruction and targeting of HLP administration offices, which has further

undermined owners' claims and created further barriers to restitution and return. Even individuals who retain valid ownership documents often face difficulties in having them recognised by the current Syrian authorities due to lengthy and unclear administrative procedures [Supported Rec 133.182].

17. Concurrently, displaced women and widows face additional barriers in reclaiming their HLP rights. Discriminatory property registration practices, under which housing and land are often registered in the names of male relatives, create significant obstacles for female heads of household seeking to reclaim or regularize ownership following the death or enforced disappearance of male family members [Supported Rec 133.182].

18. Consequently, these factors collectively prevent sustainable local integration, creating a destabilising cycle that triggers secondary displacement.

Refugees and Returnees

19. The conditions required for safe, voluntary, and dignified returns for Syrian refugees are yet to be met, leaving refugees trapped between deportation threats abroad and stability and security risks in Syria.[28] In 2025, some returning refugees faced arbitrary detention by armed groups, enforced disappearance, and deaths in custody bearing distinct signs of torture.[29] These protection risks are further compounded by Syria's severe socio-economic conditions. The World Bank estimated reconstruction needs at US$216 billion in October 2025, underscoring the scale of the country's recovery challenges.[30].

20. This massive funding deficit has driven transitional authorities to rely heavily on unregulated private and foreign investors whose commercial projects in Damascus and Raqqa prioritize profitable gentrification over the basic shelter needs of returnees [Supported Recs 133.270, 133.26]. Despite the Ministry of Public Works and Housing launching a phased National Housing Strategy (2025–2030), no comprehensive national consultations have been held. Returnees are systematically excluded from socio-economic rights, facing infrastructure collapse, prohibitive title regularization fees, and unexecuted Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) clearance, which drives renewed displacement. According to UNHCR data, 68% of refugees returned from Lebanon between June and December explicitly barring 2025 had previously reported that they did not

intend to return within the following twelve months, indicating a significant shift in return intentions that warrants further examination. .[31]

Recommendations

- Enact legislation to form a comprehensive, accessible national framework and an independent judicial mechanism explicitly tasked to investigate, document, and adjudicate conflict-era property claims, facilitating restitution or financial compensation in full compliance with the Pinheiro Principles.
- Repeal Laws No. 66 of 2012 and No. 10 of 2018 to eliminate clauses that permit arbitrary property seizures, expropriation, or restrictive deadlines that penalize displaced populations.
- Mandate the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and local municipalities to simplify civil and land registry processes, reducing administrative fees and creating flexible alternative documentation pathways for refugees, IDPs, and families of the disappeared to restore lost title deeds and identity records.
- Enact statutory amendments to domestic inheritance and property registries to guarantee that widows and female heads of household can inherit, register, manage, and reclaim housing, land, and property independently, while eliminating discriminatory administrative fees.
- Allocate specific municipal budgets and launch targeted state-led operational plans to clear ERWs, mediate local community land disputes, and rebuild damaged water, electricity, and sewage infrastructure in primary areas of return.
- Establish permanent, structured consultation seats for refugee representatives, internally displaced persons, and victim associations within all national reconstruction and restitution planning committees.

IV. Rule of Law and Administration of Justice

21. Under the former government, judicial institutions and state media were weaponized to suppress dissent and entrench rights violations, with exceptional courts operating entirely outside fair trial guarantees and official narratives stigmatizing local communities.

Judicial Reform, Fair Trial Guarantees, and the Rule of Law

22. While the transitional period has seen positive initial steps, such as halting the operations of exceptional courts, severe institutional gaps and retrogressive executive practices continue to undermine judicial independence and subvert fair trial guarantees.

23. The MoJ has executed mass terminations and dismissals of judges under the vague administrative justification of "public interest requirements", failing to provide objective and individualized factual grounds for these decisions or ensuring effective avenues for review and appeal [Supported Rec, 133.161].[32]

24. This overreach is sustained by the ongoing application of the Judicial Authority Law of 1961, which structurally subordinates the judiciary by seating the President as the head of the Supreme Judicial Council and the Minister of Justice as his deputy. Furthermore, Article 47 of the Constitutional Declaration concentrates authority by granting the President exclusive power to appoint members of the Supreme Constitutional Court [Supported Recs 133.161, 133.88].

25. The separation of powers faces severe degradation through executive decrees that unilaterally override enacted legislation. Examples include Presidential Decree No. 114 of 2025 (altering, Investment Law No. 18 of 2021) and Decrees No. 112, 113, 115, 148, and 244 of 2025 which placed socio-economic state funds and corporate entities directly under the presidency, removing them from the legislative and judicial oversight.

26. In January 2025, the President of the Court of Cassation was appointed in violation of statutory legal requirements due to his lack of a law degree [33]. Concurrently, Bar Association boards remain state-appointed rather than democratically elected, and women remain near-totally excluded from senior judiciary posts [Supported Recs 133.243, 133.250, 133.253].

27. A recent Ministry of Interior (MoI) circular restricts defence attorneys to a passive "listener" role during interrogations, rendering legal representation a mere formality and violating Article 14 of the ICCPR [Supported Rec 133.63].[34] The submitting NGOs have documented systemic pre-trial detention without judicial oversight, where individuals are held without warrants in security branch facilities, denied prompt access to a judge, and subjected to torture-induced confessions.

28. Furthermore, military courts retain expansive jurisdiction over civilians, as demonstrated by the March 2025 Coastal Incidents trials. These proceedings lacked transparency, exhibited disparate treatment of defendants, restricted victim participation, and advanced a state-sanctioned narrative imposing collective sectarian blame on the Alawite community under the label of "remnants of the former regime" [Supported Rec 133.152].[35]

Combatting Hate speech and Incitement to Violence

29. The transitional environment remains highly vulnerable to identity-based polarisation, online harassment, and coordinated hate speech campaigns that undermine social cohesion and jeopardize the physical safety of marginalized groups.

30. Syria's domestic framework lacks a comprehensive legal definition of hate speech or incitement that aligns with international standard-setting benchmarks, such as the Rabat Plan of Action [Supported Rec 133.63]. This leaves victims without clear legal remedies or state protection channels.

31. This regulatory failure was demonstrated in 2025 when the viral dissemination of an unverified sectarian audio recording falsely attributed to a religious figure triggered mass sectarian mobilization and severe physical human rights violations before formal validation cleared the individual.[36] Conversely, in 2026, a visual broadcast aired on a state-linked television network deployed collective stigma and incitement against a prominent media figure and his Palestinian identity that forms a core component of Syrian society [Supported Recs 133.166, 133.165].[37]

32. Syrian women—particularly journalists, public workers, and HRDs—are targeted by pervasive, gendered cyber-harassment and smear campaigns designed to expel them from the public and political spheres. [Supported Recs 133.150, 133.165].

33. While the Ministry of Information launched a Media Code of Ethics in February 2026 advocating for objective reporting and a complaints framework,[38] the state lacks a comprehensive, codified national policy [Supported Rec 133.246]. This absence creates a dual danger: it permits widespread impunity for actual

incitement to violence while risking the future misuse of broad, vague speech restrictions to stifle legitimate media output, independent human rights documentation, and peaceful political dissent [Supported Rec 133.167].

Recommendations

- Amend the Judicial Authority Law of 1961 to ensure the full independence of the Supreme Judicial Council from executive power.
- Formulate and publish clear, merit-based criteria for all judicial appointments, promotions, transfers, and disciplinary actions, guaranteeing affected judges a transparent, statutory right of appeal to prevent arbitrary executive dismissals.
- Amend Article 47 of the Constitutional Declaration to replace the exclusive presidential appointment model with a neutral, multi-branch parliamentary and judicial confirmation mechanism for the Supreme Constitutional Court.
- Repeal the MoI's restrictive circular to legally guarantee that defence attorneys can actively represent clients, raise legal objections, and review case files from the first moment of arrest or interrogation, in full compliance with Article 14 of the ICCPR.
- Enact statutory legislation that permanently strips military tribunals of jurisdiction over civilians and human rights violations, strictly confining their mandate to purely military offenses committed by active-duty armed forces personnel.
- Pass a statutory amendment to the domestic penal framework that defines hate speech and incitement to violence in strict conformity with Articles 19, 20, and 26 of the ICCPR and the Rabat Plan of Action.
- Establish a comprehensive national policy that provides local authorities with clear guidelines to counter incitement to violence while explicitly prohibiting the use of these legal restrictions to criminalize peaceful political opposition, civil society documentation, or independent journalistic work.
- Implement an institutional protection mechanism under the MoJ to provide immediate physical security, digital protection, and accessible legal remedies to targeted individuals, with specialized protocols for female activists, HRDs, and minorities.
- Establish an independent, non-governmental monitoring body tasked with tracking, recording, and reporting trends in hate speech and digital incitement,

utilizing digital verification platforms without empowering the executive authorities to suppress media freedom.

V. Inclusivity and Transitional Justice

Political Participation during Transition

34. The post-December 2024 transition is constrained by centralized executive authority. The February 2025 National Dialogue Conference marginalised genuine public participation through compressed timelines, short notice, and low transparency.[39]

35. Subsequently, a presidentially appointed committee drafted the Constitutional Declaration,[40] establishing a five-year transitional framework concentrating unilateral executive authority, including control over the formation of the People's Assembly, as the President is empowered to form an Electoral Supreme Committee, which establishes and oversees district subcommittees tasked with forming electoral colleges to elect two-thirds of the Assembly's seats.[41] The remaining one-third of the Assembly is appointed directly by the President [Supported Recs 133.88, 133.167].[42]

36. Women remain severely underrepresented in both the People's Assembly and the government. Women hold only 22 of the 210 seats in the People's Assembly,[43] while only one woman was appointed to the 23- member cabinet -[44] a disparity untouched by the May 2026 reshuffle [Supported Recs 133.243, 133.245, 133.250, 133.252, 133.253],[45] reinforced by discriminatory rhetoric.[46]

37. Civic space is systematically constrained. In March 2025, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) established the General Secretariat for Political Affairs to oversee domestic political activity.[47] Lacking a formal decree or governing law, political parties operate in a regulatory vacuum,[48] despite dissolution rumours of the established entity.[49]

38. An October 2025 Ministry of Social Affairs directive exacerbated this containment by weaponizing the inherited Law No. 93 of 1958 (Associations Law), explicitly barring Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from accessing international funding,

donations, or global engagement without prior state approval [Supported Recs 133.167, 133.170].[50]

39. Finally, the MoI's April 2026 Assembly Directive[51] revived the Legislative Decree No. 54 of 2011, enforcing a prior authorization system for protests [Supported Recs 133.167, 133.168, 133.169].[52] This converts a fundamental freedom into a state-controlled privilege, criminalizing unauthorized peaceful assemblies as "riots" under Penal Code Articles 335 to 338.[53]

Discrimination against Women and GBV

40. The transitional domestic legal architecture perpetuates systemic gender discrimination, violating CEDAW commitments. The inherited Personal Status Code (amended by Law No. 4 of 2019) codifies structural inequality regarding marriage, divorce, custody, and inheritance, while failing to criminalize marital rape.[54]

41. This vulnerability is compounded by retaining Penal Code Articles 192 and 242 (mitigating "honour killings") and keeping core reservations to CEDAW Articles 2, 9(2), 15(4), and 16 [Supported Recs 133.70, 133.84, 133.87, 133.244, 133.248, 133.67, 133.69, 133.142, 133.178, 133.213, 133.254]. Consequently, Article 21 of the Constitutional Declaration should be read alongside Article 3, which establishes Islamic jurisprudence as the primary legislative source and restricts the presidency to Muslim men, denying women unified civil and political rights.

42. Moreover, the transitional period witnessed identity and gender-based violence during the transition. In the March 2025 Coastal incidents, transitional forces and pro-Asad remnants killed 1,400 civilians, including nearly 100 women, many of whom were targeted based on gender,[55] and abducted 38 Alawite women and girls.[56] The MoI's November 2025 report dismissed these abductions entirely as voluntary runaways or economic disappearances to preserve state impunity.[57]

43. Similarly, the July 2025 Suwayda incidents targeted minorities. State and state-affiliated forces extrajudicially executed 46 Druze individuals publicly and displaced 200,000 civilians, amidst state-aligned public incitement to abduct and enslave Druze women [Supported Recs 133.143, 133.144, 133.159, 133.163, 133.164].[58]

Transitional Justice

44. The institutionalization of transitional justice is compromised by structural flaws. Presidential Decree No. 20 (17 May 2025) established the National Transitional Justice Commission (NTJC) but restricted its scope exclusively to "former regime" violations, creating an accountability vacuum for atrocities committed by non-state, international, or transitional actors [Supported Recs 133.74, 133.136, 133.144].[59]

45. Grounded in Decree 20/2025, the draft transitional justice law available to the submitting organizations continues to discriminate among victims based on perpetrators, despite informal updates indicating the removal of the "casual-link pitfall" that attributes all violations to the former government. Furthermore, by anchoring its mandate in Islam alongside constitutional and international law, the framework compromises institutional neutrality and inclusivity. Finally, the retention of the death penalty severely blocks essential international judicial cooperation [Supported Recs 133.63, 133.88].

46. Arbitrary boundaries restrict temporal jurisdiction within the draft transitional justice law to between 16 November 1970 and 8 December 2024 [Supported Recs 133.89, 133.143]. This excludes historical injustices, like the 1962 census stripping Syrian Kurds of citizenship, and post-transition atrocities like the 2025 Coastal and Suwayda incidents.

47. Contradicting this timeline, the MoJ initiated criminal trials against 14 individuals for the 2025 Coastal violence. Mislabelling these proceedings as "transitional justice"[60] misapplies the scope of the draft law.

48. This disjointed sequencing executes criminal trials before setting a national transitional justice strategy and defining international crimes in the penal code [Supported Recs 133.152, 133.161]. Indictments of four former officials and the April 2026 trial of security chief Atef Najib proceed without statutory definitions for core international crimes, mirroring the Coastal trials that used military courts for civilians.

49. This premature process continues despite civil society pushback. In February 2026, CSOs submitted a 70-page structural critique demanding a non-discriminatory, secular approach,[61] but the NTJC had not published any revisions

responding to these concerns [Supported Recs 133.138, 133.146, 133.159, 133.194, 133.68, 133.100, 133.149, 133.151, 133.182, 133.271].

Recommendations

- Enact an independent, non-discriminatory framework for political party registration, eliminating MoFA oversight or executive filtering.
- Implement a mandatory 30% female quota across executive ministries, the People's Assembly, the judiciary (including senior leadership seats under CEDAW standards), and local councils, per UNSC Resolutions 1325 and 2799.
- Suspend Law No. 93 of 1958 provisions and revoke the October 2025 directive to permanently lift barriers on international funding and civil society cooperation.
- Overhaul the April 2026 Assembly Directive, replacing the permit system with a notification mechanism and decriminalizing non-compliance under the Penal Code.
- Withdraw reservations to CEDAW Articles 2, 9(2), 15(4), and 16, and amend Personal Status and nationality laws to grant women equal marriage, divorce, custody, inheritance, and citizenship-transfer rights.
- Enact a comprehensive domestic violence law criminalizing all forms of GBV, including marital rape, and repeal "honour" loopholes within Penal Code Articles 192 and 242.
- Establish investigation committees led by neutral parties and launch transparent victim-centred criminal investigations into the command structures behind the 2025 violence, sexual abuse, and sectarian abductions in the Coastal and Suwayda regions.
- Enact reparative laws recognising Yazidi survivors as genocide victims, reform minority personal status laws, and lift the exam embargo blocking Suwayda's students.
- Amend Presidential Decree No. 20 to expand the NTJC's mandate to investigate and prosecute all conflict actors (state, international, and non-state) without discrimination.
- Extend the transitional justice draft law's timeline from the 1961 separation to its passage, ensuring coverage for the 1962 Kurdish citizenship deprivation and the 2025 atrocities.

- Ground the transitional justice law within civilian frameworks and international human rights law, removing all specific theological references to ensure neutrality and inclusivity.
- Institute a legal moratorium on the death penalty during the transition to align with international protocols and facilitate cross-border judicial cooperation.
- Freeze criminal trials of former officials until comprehensive judicial reforms are executed, core international crimes are defined, and an inclusive transitional justice law is enacted.
- Establish a state-backed fund for compensation, rehabilitation, and restitution, designed with direct structural input from victims, survivors, and families of the disappeared.
- Permit the IIMP to establish a local office and unify scattered asset committees under a single national authority empowered to override Counter-Terrorism Court property seizures.

VI. Socio-Economic Rights and Protections

The Right to an Adequate Standard of Living

50. Environmental shocks, prolonged drought, the legacy of conflict-related destruction, structural adjustments—including subsidy cuts and trade liberalization—together with government fiscal and monetary policies, sanctions and other external restrictions, chronic aid underfunding, and weaknesses in investment and procurement governance, have severely undermined food security. By April 2026, annual food inflation reached 22%.[62] The primary driver was bread, which surged 1,398% from 267 SYP (pre-December 2024) to 4,000 SYP by June 2026 due to phased price adjustments and reduced bundle weights,[63] enacted without funded compensatory measures for vulnerable groups [Supported Recs 133.96, 133.234, 133.239, 133.240, 133.247, 133.215, 133.217].

51. Transitional pricing policies threaten strategic wheat production. In May 2026, the government set the hard wheat purchase price at 4.6 million SYP per ton[64]adding a bonus after intense farmer protests. However, this remains well below actual production costs (fuel, irrigation, transport),[65] disincentivizing domestic farming. Consequently, 14.6 million individuals suffer from food

insecurity (9.1 million acutely),[66] while the minimum expenditure basket reached 2.2 million SYP by September 2025.[67]

52. Housing and utility inflation reached 41.9% in April 2026, driven by electricity restructuring that replaced subsidized brackets with a high-tariff system.[68] Under Legislative Decrees No. 44, 45, and 46 of 2026, utilities were restructured into independent economic entities: the Syrian Mining Company, the Syrian Electricity Company, and the General Establishment for Drinking Water and Sanitation [Supported Recs 133.97, 133.99, 133.173, 133.174, 133.191, 133.193, 133.265].[69] These frameworks lack legal safeguards to protect low-income access or prevent operational costs from being shifted to consumers. Furthermore, expanding private sector partnerships lack statutory transparency, contract disclosure,[70] and human rights impact assessments, leaving the population reliant on unstable aid.

Poverty and Social Protection

53. Approximately 90% of the population lives below the poverty line, leaving millions aid-dependent.[71] In April 2026, a family's monthly extreme, minimum, and upper poverty lines reached 3.34 million, 5.26 million, and 7.26 million SYP, respectively. Conversely, standard public sector wages cover just 33.9% of the extreme and 15.6% of the upper poverty lines, failing to secure basic survival [Supported Recs 133.193, 133.266].[72]

54. Transitional fiscal policies have prioritized budget surpluses through subsidy rollbacks and indirect taxation, converting commodity subsidies into utility profit margins. This has occurred alongside stagnant economic growth (0.3%) and minimal investment (0.5% of GDP). While the 2026 budget allocated only 13% of spending to subsidies and social security, nearly 50% of revenue came from indirect taxes,[73] driving massive price hikes–such as domestic gas jumping from 19,000 SYP to $12.28 in December 2024, followed by continuous increases.[74]

55. Retirees face severe economic deprivation. Following initial pension suspensions, Decrees No. 67 and No. 135 of 2026 granted successive pension increases of 50% and 30%. However, these adjustments remain vastly inadequate against rampant food, medicine, and healthcare inflation, undermining acquired insurance rights [Supported Recs 133.192, 133.173, 133.191, 133.265].

56. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor Strategic Plan (2026–2028) targets 60% to 70% of vulnerable families by 2028 but prioritizes administrative registries over enforceable legal entitlements. It fails to establish a universal social protection floor, minimum benefits, or sustainable funding, perpetuating an aid-centric model [Supported Recs 133.97, 133.173, 133.174, 133.265]. Lacking mandatory human rights impact assessments, subsidy withdrawals proceed without legal remedies.

The Right to Decent Work

57. The domestic labour market faces a profound crisis driven by a post-2010 GDP contraction exceeding 50%. By 2024, unemployment reached 42.9%, concentrated heavily among youth and women,[75] while the economic dependency ratio rose to 6.4. The market is further strained by 16 million people requiring aid and hundreds of thousands of returning refugees in 2025 who face severe barriers to work, civil documentation, and infrastructure.[76] Informal employment exceeds 83%, leaving fewer than 20% of workers with formal social insurance [Supported Rec 133.77].[77] Concurrently, MSMEs–which comprise 92% of businesses- are restricted by inflation and credit deficits,[78] while rural livelihoods are crippled by severe water stress.[79]

58. Public sector wage frameworks fail to ensure equal pay for work of equal value. In April 2026, standard university-educated civil servants started at an average of 935,000 SYP, whereas integrated personnel from former northern regional authorities received a starting salary of 3 million SYP.[80] This disparity was reinforced by Decree No. 68 of 2026, which enacted non-transparent wage hikes for select categories without publishing eligibility criteria, while elite entities like the Syrian Petroleum Company continue to operate on separate, undisclosed luxury scales.[81]

59. The transitional authorities announced plans to reduce the public sector workforce by approximately 300,000 employees as part of a broader restructuring of the state administration.[82] Subsequent dismissals and employment exclusions were reportedly carried out without transparent criteria, individualized administrative notifications, or effective avenues for administrative review or appeal, raising concerns regarding due process and protection against arbitrary dismissal[83] [Supported Recs 133.190, 133.191, 133.192]..

Arbitrary terminations disproportionately targeted Alawite employees due to sectarian and political motivations, causing an immediate loss of pension rights and end-of-service benefits without appeal mechanisms [Supported Recs 133.63, 133.75].[84] This discriminatory pattern has spread to private firms under state or Syrian Sovereign Fund control. Furthermore, authorities have suppressed independent labour organizing by dissolving select trade unions and installing state-appointed administrative committees [Supported Recs 133.98, 133.167].[85]

Recommendations

- Enact a rights-based National Social Protection Law with a funded 2026–2028 roadmap to build a universal social protection infrastructure covering poverty, illness, unemployment, and disability; measure poverty biannually, embed human rights into fiscal planning to reduce inequality, and transition ad-hoc aid into regular cash transfers, unemployment benefits, and universal pensions.
- Protect against arbitrary dismissal, index public salaries semi-annually, extend social insurance to informal and seasonal workers, and resource the labour judiciary to fast-track disputes.
- Establish a National Strategy for Food Security with fair crop prices (specifically wheat) and input subsidies, integrated with climate and water policies to rehabilitate irrigation.
- Link pensions to inflation for parity and codify a unified compensation framework enforcing equal pay and abolishing parallel salary scales.
- Shift from indirect taxes to progressive direct taxation, maximizing domestic resources to expand budget allocations for social security and healthcare.
- Eliminate state oversight in trade union laws, securing workers' rights to form independent unions and freely elect leadership without administrative approval.
- Transition informal businesses via fiscal incentives and simplified tracks, expanding formal contracts and statutory worker coverage.
- Mandate independent social impact assessments for macroeconomic policies and track nutritional data to dynamically adjust agricultural interventions.
- Harmonize labour laws with international standards for safe work, fair pay, and tripartite dialogue within a unified, sustainable development framework, while strengthening labour inspection and enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with labour standards.

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