

Safety

GUIDANCE NOTE
Last update: November 2021

The criterion of safety would be satisfied where there is no well-founded fear of persecution or real risk of serious harm, or where protection is available.

Figure 6. IPA: examination of under the safety criterion.



Absence of persecution or serious harm

The assessment should take into account:

► general security situation in relation to indiscriminate violence

The general security situation in Damascus City should be assessed in accordance with the analysis under the section on [Article 15\(c\) QD](#). In this regard, it has been concluded that in the governorate of Damascus, there is, in general, no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD.

► actor of persecution or serious harm and their reach

In case where the person fears persecution or serious harm by **State actors**, internal protection in Damascus would in general not be considered safe. This would also include State-affiliated actors, such as foreign allies and pro-regime

militias.

With regard to persecution or serious harm by **SDF, YPG, ISIL, HTS or other anti-GoS armed groups**, it should be noted that these groups are active within certain regions and their operational capacity in Damascus City is currently limited. Therefore, the criterion of safety may be considered satisfied in most cases. However, particular consideration should be given to the individual circumstances of the applicant and whether they are perceived by the actor as a priority target.

In some cases, where the applicant faces persecution or serious harm for reasons related to the prevalent social norms in Syria and the actor of persecution or serious harm can be the **Syrian society** at large (e.g. for [2.14. LGBTIQ persons](#) and [2.12. Women](#)), IPA would in general not be safe. It should also be underlined that it cannot be reasonably expected that the applicant abstains from practices fundamental to his or her identity, such as those related to their religion or sexual orientation, in order to avoid the risk of persecution or serious harm.

For certain particularly vulnerable individuals, such as women and children, if the actor of persecution or serious harm is the **family or community** (e.g. forced marriage, honour crime), taking into account the lack of State protection and their vulnerability to potential new forms of persecution or serious harm, IPA would in general not be safe.

See also [1. Actors of persecution or serious harm](#).

► **whether the profile of the applicant is considered a priority target and/or a threat by the actor of persecution or serious harm**

The profile of the applicant could make them a priority target, increasing the likelihood that the actor of persecution or serious harm would attempt to trace them in Damascus City.

► **other risk-enhancing circumstances**

The information under the section [2. Refugee status](#) should be used to assist in this assessment.

Availability of protection against persecution or serious harm

Alternatively, it may be determined that the requirement of safety is satisfied if the applicant would have access to protection against persecution or serious harm, as defined in [Article 7 QD](#), in the area where IPA is considered. However, in light of the analysis in the chapter [4. Actors of protection](#), the possibility to consider the criterion of safety satisfied in relation to availability of protection would be limited to very exceptional cases.



The requirement of safety may be satisfied in Damascus City, depending on the profile and the individual circumstances of the applicant. For those who have a well-founded fear of persecution by the GoS and/or by society at large, IPA in Damascus will generally not meet the criterion of safety.



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