

## 6.2. Parties or organisations

### COMMON ANALYSIS

Last update: February 2023

Many areas in Syria are influenced by insurgent groups and some groups, in particular HTS, are currently in (contested) control of some territory. However, the Kurdish forces in northeast Syria are the only actor that may be considered to control substantial parts of the territory and could, therefore, be subject to analysis under [Article 7\(2\) QD](#).

Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria

Kurdish-controlled areas of north and east Syria

Following the retreat of the GoS forces from the northeast Syria, the predominantly Kurdish inhabited area was left abandoned. This allowed the Kurds to gain greater autonomy in 2014. In January 2014, the PYD adopted the so-called 'Social Contract' as a 'provisional constitution' for the Autonomous Administration. The Social Contract foresaw a federal, decentralised system by which the Autonomous region would remain a part of Syria, but with a regulated relationship with the central government in Damascus. The proclamation of a federal system in the Kurdish-controlled areas was rejected by the GoS, other Syrian opposition groups, the US and Türkiye. [Actors](#), 3.1.1, pp. 39-41]

SDF controlled most of Raqqa and Hasaka governorates, part of Deir Ez-Zor governorate north-east of the Euphrates, and parts of Aleppo governorate. The areas around Manbij and Ain Al-Arab (Kobane), and the area around Tal Rifaat as well as stripes of land along the Turkish border are under joint control of GoS and their allies and Kurdish forces. [[Security 2022](#), 1.5.3, p. 45 and 2.2.2, pp. 84-85]

The AANES is led by the Syrian Democratic Council (the political wing of the SDF), with the Movement for a Democratic Society as the ruling coalition. The PYD is

viewed as the dominant political actor in the Kurdish-controlled areas, where it exercises ultimate control, making decisions for the entire region. PYD's system of governance is described by sources as authoritarian, and other political parties have been marginalised. [[Actors](#), 3.1.3, pp. 42-43]

Two justice systems continue to operate along each other, the system of GoS and the one of AANES, not recognised by GoS. The AANES justice system is based on the 'Social Contract', a document that lays out the essential aspects of coexistence. This has led to confusions on which law to apply as well as to the possibility for judges to ignore written law and use social justice principles instead. It was reported that practitioners within the court system were either trained in a different legal system or completely untrained in law. Further, most cases have to pass through a locally based non-judicial committee, made up of untrained persons, before being brought to court. The court system was described as suffering from a 'fundamental lack of independence from the executive'. PYD, YPG and/or PKK reportedly interfered in the administration of justice, particularly if courts were perceived to interfere with security or military interests, as well as intervened in individual cases etc. Gaps in the legal system, which undermine due procedures and the right to a fair trial remained. [[Security 2022](#), 1.4.3, pp. 32-34; [Actors](#), 3.1.4, pp. 43-45]

In 2015, the YPG established the terrorism court - known as the 'People's Court' - to prosecute ISIL fighters and affiliates. Thousands of Syrian ISIL suspects have reportedly been tried in flawed proceedings [[Actors](#), 3.1.4, p. 4]. The YPG does not allow the right to a defence and the applicable counter-terrorism law has not been made public [[Security 2022](#), 1.4.3, p.34].

It was reported that various tribes in Hasaka as well as in eastern Deir Ez-Zor governorates agreed to reaffirm a tribal judicial system, called Madbata, to resolve inter-clan disputes, such as robberies, lootings and actions of revenge, due to lack of judicial alternatives accepted by the population. [[Security 2022](#), 1.4.3, p.34]

The SDF engaged in extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and unlawful detention of civilians. Torture leading to death was reported to continue in detention facilities [[Security 2022](#), 1.4.3, pp. 32, 33]. Cases of enforced disappearance and torture and sexual violence against women were also reported [[Targeting 2022](#), 13.4.1, pp. 117-118].

It can be concluded that AANES in the Kurdish-controlled areas in Syria does not qualify as an actor of protection who is able to provide effective, non-temporary and accessible protection.

See other topics concerning actors of protection:

- [The State](#)
- *Parties or organisations, including international organisations*

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2025 | Email: [info@euaa.europa.eu](mailto:info@euaa.europa.eu)