

Country Talk: Syria

14 January 2026



Country Guidance: Syria (December 2025)



Country Guidance: Syria
Publication date: 2 December 2025


The 'Country Guidance: Syria' represents Member States' joint assessment of the situation in the country of origin in relation to the applicable international and EU legislation on international protection. The guidance note, accompanied by the common analysis, was agreed by the Country Guidance Network of senior policy officials in October 2025 and was endorsed by the EUAA Management Board in November 2025.

In addition to this electronic publication, the 'Country Guidance: Syria' (December 2025) is available in pdf format.

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General guidance and methodological remarks



Country Guidance: explained

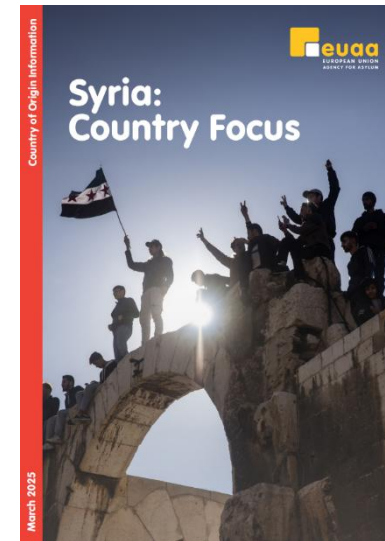
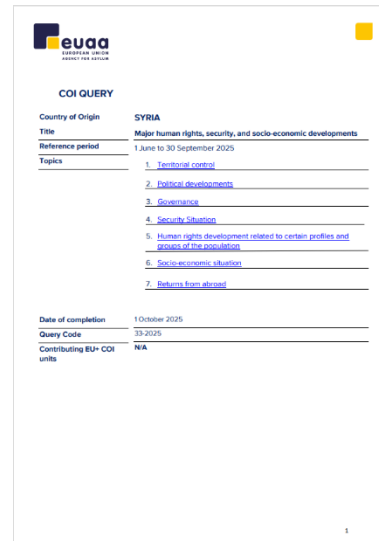
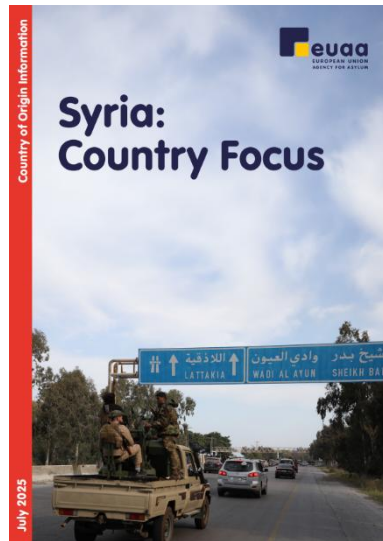
Outlines the general guidance relied upon in this analysis, as well as the methodological framework, approach and indicators used in CG docs.

<https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/country-guidance-explained-0>

Country Guidance: Syria (December 2025)

Methodology

- The current version of the guidance supersedes the ‘EUAA, *Interim Country Guidance: Syria*, June 2025’.
- This document is the first comprehensive update of the EUAA Country Guidance on Syria following the fall of the Assad regime.
- All the sections of the document have been updated, based on the most recent EUAA COI Reports and Query:



Hyperlinks between Country Guidance and Country Focus

Home / Country Guidance: Syria / 4. Refugee status
/ 4.1. Persons associated with the former Government of Syria

4.1.1. (Former) members of Assad's armed forces and pro-Assad armed groups

Table of contents

Citation 99 Share Print

COMMON ANALYSIS | Last update: December 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: COI Update [5](#); Country Focus July 2025, 1.3.1., 2.1.1., 2.1.2.; Country Focus March 2025, 1.1., 1.2., 1.3.; Country Guidance should be referred to as a source of COI

In the aftermath of regime change, the Transitional Government announced a general amnesty for military personnel conscripted under compulsory service during the Assad era. Individuals who surrendered themselves and their weapons were issued a 'security settlement certificate' and were reportedly protected from prosecution provided they were not suspected to have been involved in war crimes. Reports indicate that thousands of individuals including high level members of the armed forces of the Assad regime have gone through this process successfully. While the procedure appears to be systematically applied, there is no indication that returnees from abroad are required to undergo it. Former soldiers and security officials were permitted to reintegrate into civilian life, 'provided they had not participated in massacres or war crimes during

Home / COI Report - Syria: Country Focus
/ 1. State structure and governance / 1.3. Security institutions

1.3.1. Military reforms

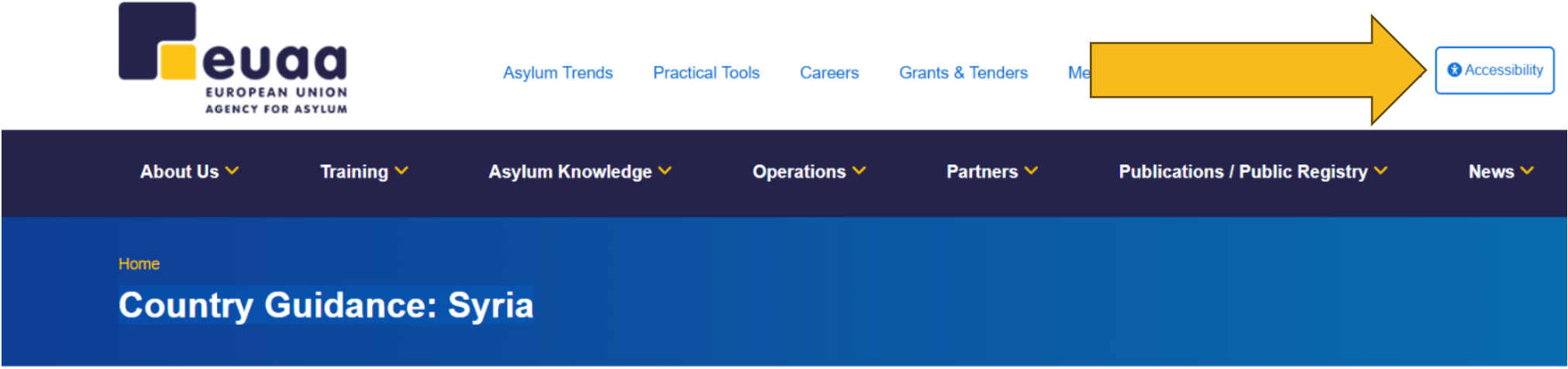
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Upon taking power, the interim government dismissed former regime soldiers and security staff⁷⁶ including the police.⁷⁷ The authorities have reportedly engaged in rapid recruitment drives for both the police and GSS, though training has been brief and units remain poorly equipped.⁷⁸ Officials stated they are rapidly training new police recruits, with classes of 800 - 1 000 individuals graduating every few weeks. Despite these efforts, a New York Times investigation from March revealed that many towns and neighbourhoods still lacked a meaningful police presence. In Homs' Zahra district, for example, residents retreated indoors by sundown, leaving the streets nearly deserted.⁷⁹ In the Christian neighbourhood of Bab Touma in Damascus, local volunteers have stepped in to compensate for the limited police presence, protecting the area from theft and proselytising by Salafist groups.⁸⁰

Although some former police officers have been reinstated⁸¹ and a May agreement between the interim government and Druze leaders provided for the reinstatement of dismissed police officers in Sweida,⁸² the government's pledge to reinstate dismissed police officers had yet to be fulfilled.⁸³ While individuals have been invited to reapply for their positions, the process lacks transparency and is reportedly discouraging to Alawite applicants.⁸⁴ According to analyst Gregory Waters, no visible progress has been made in recruiting non-Sunni locals into the local police and GSS forces. While minority communities, particularly Ismaili, but also some Christian and Alawite areas, do host armed volunteer groups, these formations have not yet been formally integrated into the police command structure, despite months of discussions on the issue. Local officials cite



Accessibility: automatic translation in EU languages



The screenshot shows the top part of the euada website. On the left is the euada logo. To its right are navigation links: Asylum Trends, Practical Tools, Careers, Grants & Tenders, and Media. A yellow arrow points from the Media link to an 'Accessibility' button. Below this is a dark blue navigation bar with dropdown menus for About Us, Training, Asylum Knowledge, Operations, Partners, Publications / Public Registry, and News. The main content area has a blue header with 'Home' and 'Country Guidance: Syria'.

Table of Contents

- List of abbreviations and glossary
- Introduction
- Guidance note
- Common analysis

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The main content area features a dark blue background. On the left, there is a vertical red bar with the text 'Country Guidance'. Next to it is a photo of a building with the text 'Country Guidance: Syria' overlaid. To the right of the photo is the euada logo. Further right, the title 'Country Guidance: Syria' is displayed in large white font, followed by the publication date '2 December 2025'. Below this, a paragraph of text begins: 'The 'Country Guidance: Syria' represents Member States' joint assessment of the situation in the country of origin in relation to the applicable international and'.



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Actors of persecution or serious harm

➤ A clear distinction between State and non-State actors may be difficult to make in some cases.

- The Transitional Government, the Syrian National Army (SNA), and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)
- The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)
- Groups and networks set up by former Assad government senior military and intelligence officials
- The Israeli military, Türkiye
- Criminal gangs, unaffiliated gunmen, other armed groups such as Saraya Ansar al-Sunnah
- The family of the applicant, and the society at large



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Refugee status profiles – Conclusions I

Profiles that would likely not qualify for refugee status:

- Profiles related to military service
- Sunni Arabs, for the mere fact of being Sunni Arab.

Profiles that would highly likely qualify for refugee status:

- Persons with diverse SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity and Expression, and Sexual Characteristics)
- Persons with perceived links to ISIL (exclusion considerations are particularly relevant for this profile)



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Refugee status profiles – Conclusions II

Further guidance is provided on the risk-impacting circumstances which may affect the probability of granting refugee status for the following profiles:

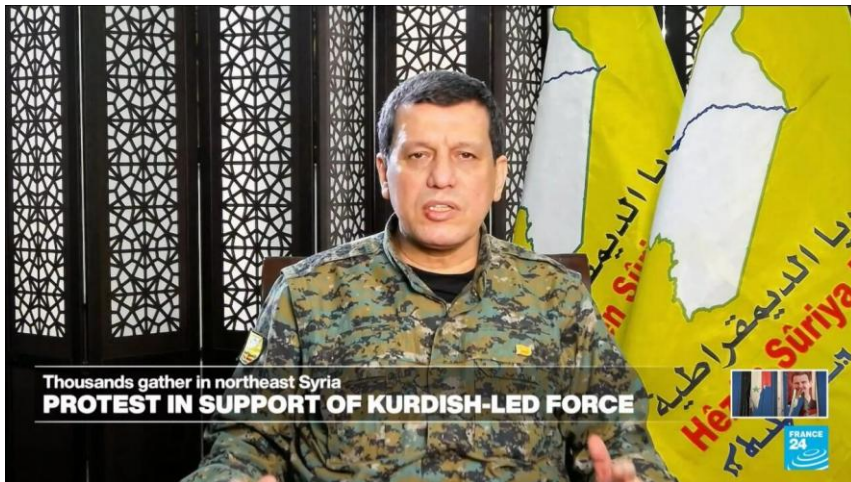
- Persons associated with the former Government of Syria
- Persons fearing forced or child recruitment by Kurdish-led forces
- Persons perceived to be opposing the SDF/YPG
(Kurdish People's Protection Units)
- Journalists and other media professionals
- Kurds
- Alawites
- Druze
- Women and girls
- Children



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Kurds

- Kurds from areas under the control of the SNA are particularly at risk, especially those returning from SDF-controlled areas.
- Kurds from areas within the reach of ISIL would face a risk when perceived to have links to the SDF



- Kurds from areas under the control of the Transitional Government would face a risk when perceived to have links to the SDF

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Women and girls – Risk impacting circumstances

- Personal status
- Socio-economic situation
- Age
- Perception of traditional gender roles
in the family and environment
- Home area
- Displacement



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Refugee status profiles – Conclusions III

- Given that acts of persecution against **Christians** and against **Individuals perceived to have transgressed religious/moral laws, norms or codes** seldom occur, well-founded fear of persecution would only be substantiated in exceptional cases under these profiles. Therefore, each case must be assessed individually taking into consideration the most recent information available.
- The available information on the situation of **Persons perceived to be opposing the Transitional Government** being limited at the time of writing, an individual assessment of such cases should be based on the most recent information available.



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Refugee status profiles – Conclusions IV



Palestinians who had previously availed themselves of the protection or assistance of UNRWA in Syria are to be granted ipso facto refugee status, provided Article 12(2) and 12(3) QD/QR do not apply.

For Palestinians who did not previously benefit from UNRWA's protection or assistance, the mere fact for an individual to be a Palestinian refugee in Syria, or a descendant of such a person, does not in itself lead to the level of risk required to establish well-founded fear of persecution.

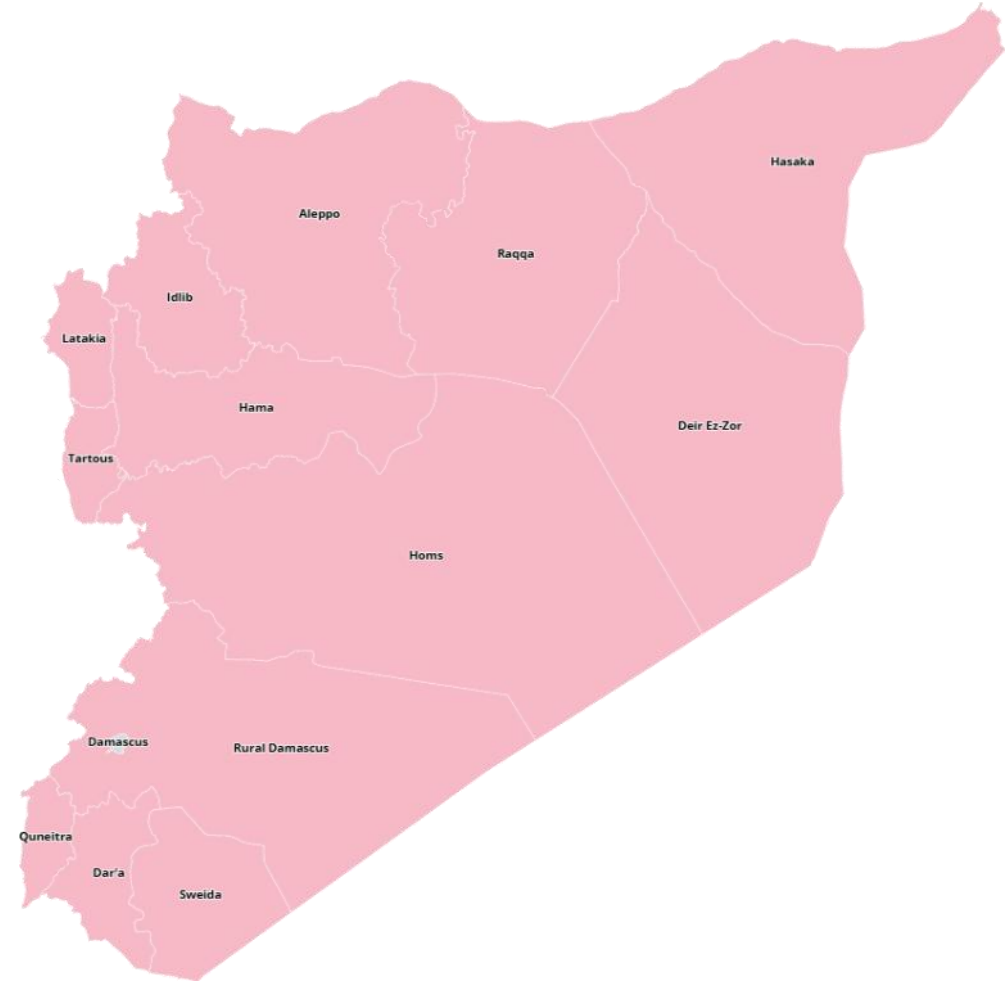


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Article 15(c) QD/QR – Conclusion I



There are **no areas in Syria** where the degree of **indiscriminate violence** reaches an **exceptionally high level** or a **high level**.



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Article 15(c) QD/QR – Conclusion II



In the governorates of **Aleppo, Dar'a, Deir Ez-Zor, Hama, Hasaka, Homs, Idlib, Latakia, Quneitra, Raqqa, Rural Damascus, Sweida** and **Tartous**, **indiscriminate violence** is taking place, however **not at a high level**. Accordingly, **a higher level of individual elements** is required to show substantial grounds for believing that a civilian, returned to these areas, would face a real risk of serious harm.

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Article 15(c) QD/QR – Conclusion II



In the governorate of **Damascus**, it is considered that there is in general **no real risk** of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.



Please note that in areas where there would be ‘no real risk’ for a civilian to be affected by indiscriminate violence within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR, depending on personal circumstances, an applicant may still be exposed to a risk of persecution or a risk of serious harm under Article 15(a) or (b) QD/QR. Hence, **this assessment of ‘no real risk’ should in no way be misconstrued as the designation of ‘safe areas’ for return or any other purposes.**



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Actors of protection - Conclusion

Despite formal control over parts of Syria and efforts to consolidate power, **the Transitional Government does not meet the criteria of an actor of protection under Article 7 QD/QR who is able to provide effective, non-temporary and accessible protection.** It lacks the institutional capacity and effective judicial mechanisms to provide protection against persecution or serious harm.

In light of the volatile security situation, the lack of an independent judiciary and the ongoing reports of human rights violations, it can be concluded that **DAANES in the Kurdish-controlled areas in Syria does not meet the criteria of an actor of protection under Article 7 QD/QR who is able to provide effective, non-temporary and accessible protection.**



Country Guidance: Syria (December 2025)

Internal Protection Alternative in Damascus city – Conclusion I

Safety

The requirement of safety may be satisfied in the city of Damascus, depending on the profile and the individual circumstances of the applicant.

In general, not when persecution or serious harm by the authorities and/or the society at large.

For the other actors -> depends on their reach

Travel and admittance

In general, a person can access the city of Damascus without risk, legally travel and settle there.



Country Guidance: Syria (December 2025)

Internal Protection Alternative in Damascus city – Conclusion II

Reasonableness to settle

IPA in the city of Damascus may be reasonable in some cases.

For adult applicants with sufficient financial or other means or who have a support network.

The economic situation, the healthcare situation and food insecurity, should also be considered.



Country Guidance: Syria (December 2025)

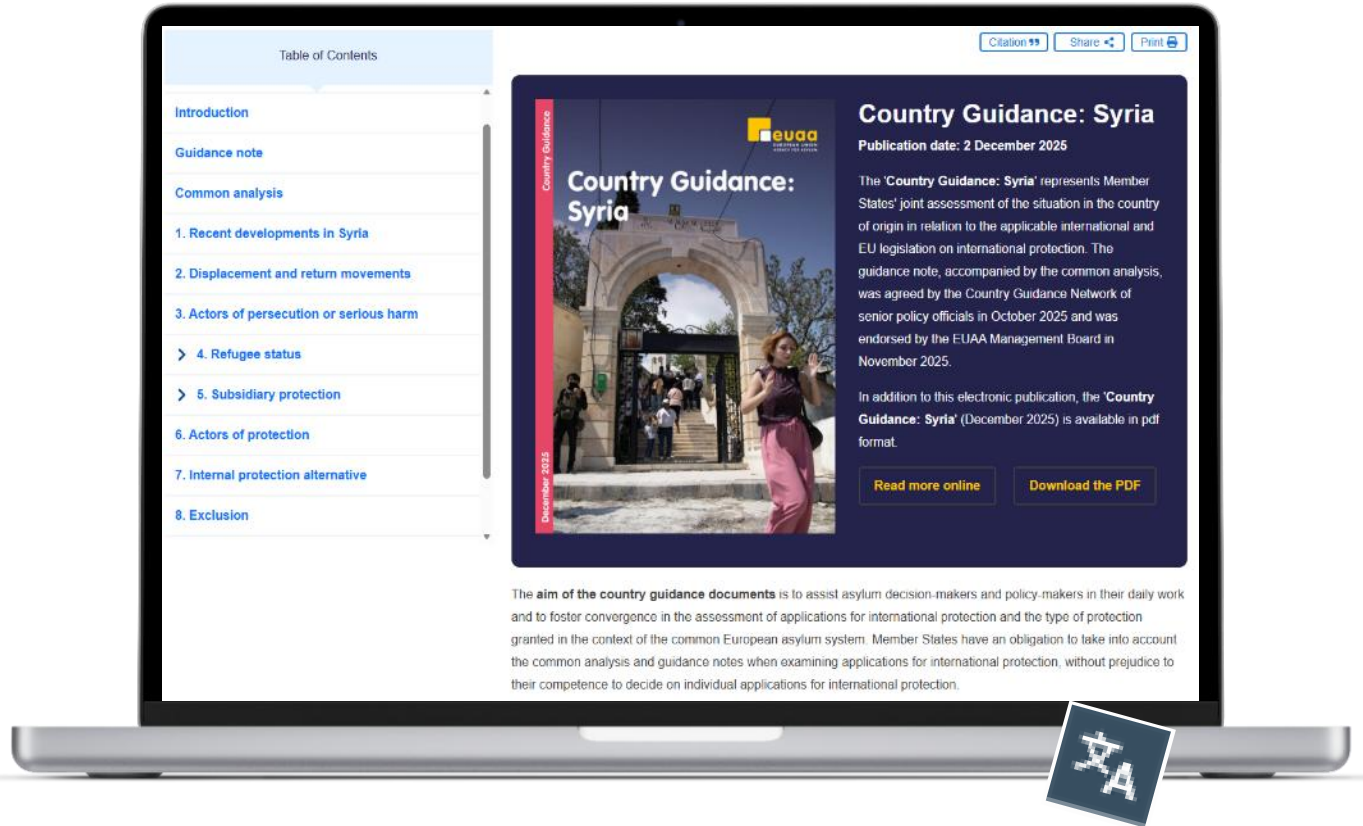
Internal Protection Alternative in Damascus city – Conclusion III

Taking into account the assessment with regard to the three criteria under Article 8 QD/QR (safety, travel and admittance, reasonableness to settle), it can be concluded that **internal protection alternative in the city of Damascus may be applicable in some cases.**


This assessment pertaining to the city of Damascus is without prejudice to the possibility to apply IPA to other places in Syria, provided that all criteria (safety, travel and admittance, reasonableness to settle) are met.



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- First instance authorities of Member States with EUAA Operational Plan -with an asylum component
- EUAA operations



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Who can ask for a CG query?



Anyone involved in assessing applications of international protection



through the relevant Country Guidance Focal Point

Ask your line manager for the name of the designated CG Focal point



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- Other Member States
- Judicial authorities



Send an email with your questions to the Country Guidance mailbox



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Thank You

