



2.4.2. Arrests of individuals with perceived affiliation to ISIL in SDF-controlled areas

Following the January 2026 loss of territorial control and agreement to integrate into state institutions, there have been scarce reports of SDF carrying out arrests of ISIL suspects⁴⁰⁷ or persons it accused of being affiliated with ISIL. The U.S. special envoy to Syria declared in January 2026 that SDF's role in fighting ISIL has ended.⁴⁰⁸

Throughout 2025 there were reports of SDF and affiliated armed groups arresting individuals under the pretext of affiliation to ISIL.⁴⁰⁹ While the SDF states that its security operations and arrests target ISIL affiliates, criminal networks, and other actors threatening local security, some residents have criticised charges of ISIL affiliation used by SDF as 'a ready-made accusation that can be pinned on anyone' which has been applied against critics and opponents of the group.⁴¹⁰ In a 2024 report, Amnesty International stated that accusations of ISIL affiliation have been used by the DAANES and SDF to intimidate and silence perceived opponents and by individuals seeking revenge in personal or clan disputes. It further noted that false allegations of ISIL affiliations have at times been employed by officials at different levels within the DAANES.⁴¹¹ According to Amnesty International, since the system in SDF-controlled areas lacked fair trial guarantees, including access to defence lawyers and protection from ill treatment, accusations of ISIL affiliation could result in prolonged arbitrary detention for years.⁴¹² Source reporting often does not provide clarity or information regarding the charges brought against arrested ISIL suspects, as well as their treatment in detention and the judicial proceedings against them.

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SOHR, Security campaign | Asayish Forces dismantle active cell and arrest two of its members in Al-Hasakah, 27 February 2026, [url](#); Rudaw, SDF arrests four suspected ISIS members in Raqqa, 1 March 2026, [url](#)

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New York Times (The), U.S. Shifts Away From Kurdish-Led Forces in Fight Against ISIS, 4 March 2026, [url](#)

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SNHR, At least 658 Cases of Arbitrary Arrest and Detention Recorded in Syria in the First Half of 2025 including 72 Cases in June, 4 July 2025, [url](#), p. 12; SNHR, At least 109 Cases of Arbitrary Arrest and Detention Recorded in July 2025, 2 August 2025, [url](#), p. 10; Arab

Weekly (The), Fear of Arab tribal revolt drives SDF crackdown in Syria's Hasakah, 2 September 2025, [url](#)

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Syria Direct, A year after Assad's fall, arbitrary arrests cast a shadow over northeastern Syria, 5 December 2025, [url](#); Syria Direct, A city apart: Raqqa residents fear 'separatism' and the 'IS card', 26 December 2024, [url](#)

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AI, Syria: Aftermath: Injustice, torture and death in detention in north-east Syria, 17 April 2024, [url](#), p. 174

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AI, Syria: Aftermath: Injustice, torture and death in detention in north-east Syria, 17 April 2024, [url](#), p. 174