



2.6.2. Atheists and apostasy

Atheists and individuals who have apostatised from Islam in Syria generally refrain from openly expressing their non-religious identity beyond trusted circles, as such matters remain highly taboo.⁴⁹⁰ Most individuals never openly declare atheism or apostasy due to societal rejection and risk of ostracism.⁴⁹¹ However, several confidential sources interviewed by the Netherlands MFA in 2025 were not aware of specific cases in which atheists or apostates faced problems since the takeover by the transitional government.⁴⁹²

According to a high-profile Christian church leader in Damascus interviewed in September 2025 by DIS, in Syria, religious affiliation is recorded on national identity documents regardless of an individual's personal beliefs. Non-religious individuals generally avoid publicly expressing atheism due to social and security risks. Isolated cases of mistreatment have reportedly occurred, including incidents linked to personal appearance or clothing indicating they were not religious.⁴⁹³ Other sources assessed that in more conservative areas such as Idlib and northern Aleppo, open apostasy could lead to murder, while in Damascus it might be tolerated within closed circles.⁴⁹⁴

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Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs: General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, January 2026, [url](#), p. 107; Netherlands (The), Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Algemeen ambtsbericht Syrië [General Country Report Syria], May 2025, [url](#), p. 101

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Netherlands (The), Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Algemeen ambtsbericht Syrië [General Country Report Syria], May 2025, [url](#), p. 101

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Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs: General Country of Origin Information Report on Syria, January 2026, [url](#), p. 107; Netherlands (The), Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Algemeen ambtsbericht Syrië [General Country Report Syria], May 2025, [url](#), p. 101

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DK, DIS, Syria, Situation of Certain Groups, December 2025, [url](#), p. 127 [high-profile Christian church leader]

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Netherlands (The), Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Algemeen ambtsbericht Syrië [General Country Report Syria], May 2025, [url](#), p. 101

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