



## 1.2.3. Assad-aligned militias

Since the collapse of the Assad regime, previously senior members of the regime's military and security apparatus formed new groups and networks to fight the transitional government.<sup>[181](#)</sup> By February 2025, their operations against government troops showed a growing degree of coordination.<sup>[182](#)</sup> Groups formed in the months after the former regime's downfall included the Coastal Shield Brigade,<sup>[183](#)</sup> led by former Republican Guards commander Miqdad Fatiha,<sup>[184](#)</sup> and several outfits that emerged amid the escalation of violence in coastal Syria in March 2025.<sup>[185](#)</sup> Groups active during the reference period include the Coastal Shield Brigade<sup>[186](#)</sup> and a new group called Men of Light—Saraya Al-Jawad that emerged in August 2025.<sup>[187](#)</sup> Men of Light—Saraya Al-Jawad is associated with Suhail Al Hassan,<sup>[188](#)</sup> a former regime commander who amongst others led the former SAA's 25th Special Tasks Division/'Tiger Forces'.<sup>[189](#)</sup> On the ground, the group was led by Bashar Abdullah Abu Raqiya before he was killed in an ISC security operation in February 2026.<sup>[190](#)</sup> During the reference period, ISW and CTP mapped that Assad-aligned militias did not control any territory in Syria.<sup>[191](#)</sup> While several exiled high-ranking former regime officials were planning to build an armed insurgency from abroad to retake territory in the coastal areas, the degree to which these former officials posed a threat to the government was unclear.<sup>[192](#)</sup> Inside Syria, after March 2025, the Coastal Shield Brigade shifted its focus towards targeting Alawite civilians it suspected of collaborating with the transitional government.<sup>[193](#)</sup>

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