



info@acsyria.org

1 Thomas Cir NW, Ste 700
Washington, DC 20005

www.ACSyria.org

Coalition Demands USG Provide Sanctions Relief for Syria

Washington, D.C. – January 29, 2025 This week, the American Coalition for Syria (ACS), along with 160 other American, Syrian, and international organizations, sent a [joint letter](#) to the Trump Administration and Members of Congress, urging immediate action to ease sanctions on Syria following the fall of the Assad regime, to address the country's dire humanitarian and economic crisis. After 54 years of authoritarian rule, Syrians are now at a critical, historic–yet fragile–turning point as they strive to rebuild Syria and its infrastructure and economy, stabilize and maintain security, ensure the success of Syria's democratic transition, and preserve its territorial integrity and unity. However, existing U.S. sanctions—imposed initially to target the Assad regime's behavior—now hinder Syria's recovery and path to progress.

The joint letter calls for a reassessment of U.S. sanctions policy to support Syria's stabilization and reconstruction. While the issuance of [General License 24](#) was a positive step, it remains insufficient to meet Syria's pressing needs. The organizations urge the Trump Administration to implement the following immediate measures:

- **Expand Existing OFAC General Licenses** to cover all of Syria, authorize a broader range of activities, and run indefinitely or for at least two years.
- **Resolve Compliance Contradictions** that mute or stymie the effectiveness of OFAC general licenses by clarifying the legality of engagement with the caretaker Syrian government and reassuring that it will not be misclassified as material support for terrorism.
- **Lift the Ban on U.S. Investments and Services** in Executive Order 13582 to allow U.S. businesses, including the Syrian American diaspora, to contribute to Syria's reconstruction.
- **Issue a Broad Export License Exception** to facilitate exporting a wider range of U.S. goods and technology to Syria, including equipment needed to rebuild houses and clear rubble and unexploded landmines, without requiring tedious, individual export license applications.
- **Temporarily Suspend Caesar Act Sanctions** for 180 days to facilitate foreign assistance to Syria.

These interim measures address emergency needs and facilitate Syria's stabilization and recovery while allowing for lengthier discussions by decision-makers on a roadmap for lifting all U.S. sanctions. However, Sally Shobut, Senior Advocacy Officer at Syrian Forum USA, an ACS member organization, stressed that "sanctions imposed for certain behavior should be lifted when that behavior ends, and should not be repurposed for other goals."

"Continuing broad sanctions on a free Syria is counterproductive, disproportionately punishing an entire population for a regime no longer in power while impeding economic recovery. The U.S. has other tools

to leverage and should instead engage diplomatically with the new Syrian government to ensure its interest,” said Sameer Saboungi, Staff Attorney and Policy Officer at the Syrian American Council, an ACS Member Organization. “Sanctions relief is a smart move that makes America safer and stronger. It will prevent Russia, China, and Iran from exploiting the dynamics in Syria and the country’s dire need for cash and economic renewal,” Saboungi added.

Easing or lifting sanctions removes a significant barrier to early recovery and economic stability in Syria, an essential precursor for a stable, inclusive political transition. 160 other humanitarian, civil society, advocacy, human rights, multifaith, professional, and community organizations and groups agree—that Syrians deserve the chance to rebuild their country and livelihoods free from the burden of sanctions.

###

For press inquiries, please contact: alaa@sacouncil.com

The American Coalition for Syria is a coalition of specialized, multi-faith, US-based organizations that support a principled US policy based on democratic reform, human rights, accountability, and women's empowerment in Syria.

For more information about ACS, please visit <https://acsyria.org/about-us>.