

# Biden Unilaterally Extends 'National Emergency' Targeting Syria

Since 2004 the US has officially considered Syria an 'unusual and extraordinary threat'

By [The Cradle](#)

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*On 8 May, US President [Joe Biden](#) signed a [new](#) one-year extension for the "national emergency" declared concerning Syria, just one day after the [Arab League](#) approved Damascus' reentry to the bloc despite Washington's objections.*

Initially signed in 2004 by former president George W. Bush, Executive Order 13338 classified Syria, a nation nearly 10,000km away from Washington, as an "unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States."

"The United States will consider changes in policies and actions of the Government of Syria in determining whether to continue or terminate this national emergency in the future," Biden's letter concludes.

On Sunday, White House officials confirmed that crushing US [sanctions](#) on Syria would continue to be enforced despite an ongoing push by the Arab world to [normalize](#) ties with the war-torn country.

"We do not believe that Syria merits readmission to the Arab League at this time, and it's a point that we've made clear with all of our partners," US State Department spokesperson Vedant Patel said on 7 May.

Since 2011, Syria has been the setting of a brutal war sponsored by several members of NATO and regional nations like [Qatar](#) and Saudi Arabia. This includes the ongoing occupation of large swathes of its territory by the US and Turkiye and the [plundering](#) of its natural resources and humanitarian aid by anti-government militias.

While the CIA was tasked with arming and training extremist groups in Syria since late 2012, US troops officially entered the fray once Damascus asked for Russia's help to push back against ISIS in 2015.

Seeing the gains the Syrian and Russian armies made against ISIS and other armed groups, the US partnered with the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) to create the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), effectively starting a race for control of Syria's resource-rich Deir Ezzor and Hasakah governorates.

Around 900 US troops are still present in Syria. Their deployment is illegal under international law, as the government in Damascus did not approve it.

Moreover, former US presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump deployed the troops without congressional approval, [abusing](#) the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) passed in 2001 in the wake of the 11 September attacks.

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