

Can Syria's Parliament Allocate Funding for Its Own Staff?

In Brief

The People's Assembly may enact a special law providing MPs with personal staff and establishing the committee, administrative, legal, and research support needed for Parliament to function. That said, it likely cannot release new public funds merely by enacting that law. Permanent posts, salaries, contracts, and procurement require a valid appropriation from the yearly budget, which will be submitted by the Ministry of Finance at the end of the year and approved by the Assembly.

Comparative practice supports a two-track approach. Parliament should establish the institution and prepare a staffing budget now in order to best ensure a distinct parliamentary appropriation in the 2027 budget. In the meantime, it could create an interim unit using an existing lawful allocation, supplementary funding, or carefully structured in-kind assistance.

I. Parliament Cannot Function Through MPs Alone

The work required to sustain a functioning parliament extends far beyond its elected members. Legislatures around the world rely on professional staff, committee secretariats, legislative counsel, research services, budget analysts, constituency offices, and more.

Syria's new legislative Assembly currently lacks much of this capacity. Though neither the government nor the Assembly has

publicly disclosed Parliament's 2026 budget allocation, MPs still have no personal staff, let alone the wider research and administrative needed to perform their roles effectively.

This raises two separate questions:

1. May Parliament enact a law establishing its own staff administration and research service?
2. May Parliament itself allocate the public funds required to operate them?

II. Parliament May Enact a Special Law Governing Its Staff and Support Services

The Constitutional Declaration gives the Assembly responsibility for:

- proposing and approving laws;
- amending or repealing existing laws.

A law establishing Parliament's administrative apparatus, committee support system, legislative counsel, and research service would fall within that ordinary legislative authority.

In addition, Law No. 50, enacted in 2004 but still operative, establishes a distinct parliamentary personnel regime.

Article 15 of Law No. 50, Syria's general public-service law, recognizes the continued application of special laws governing the administrative apparatuses of the Presidency, the People's Assembly, and the Council of Ministers.

Syrian law thus already contemplates that Parliament may have a personnel regime distinct from the ordinary ministerial civil service.

That opens up the pathway to a law which could:

- establish a system of personal staff for individual MPs;
- create a nonpartisan research service;
- create committee, legal-drafting, research, budget-analysis, and translation functions;
- authorize Parliament to prepare its own annual staffing and financial estimate.

Though the law may establish the institution, define its staff structure, and assign appointment authority, it would not necessarily make funds immediately available.

III. Parliament's Constitutional Authority Does Not Include Budgetary Initiative

Article 30 of the Constitutional Declaration distinguishes between ordinary legislation and the budget. For laws, Parliament is empowered to propose and approve. For the general budget, Parliament is empowered only to approve.

The contrast suggests that Parliament has a general right of legislative initiative but was not expressly granted the right to originate the state budget.

Instead, the Ministry of Finance is currently preparing the 2027 budget and its financial projections. The draft is expected to be presented to Parliament for debate and approval during the final quarter of 2026.

Parliament has a strong argument that it may seek amendments before approving the budget, but it is not capable of independently appropriating new money outside the general budget process. The full permanent service would thus begin once the 2027 budget provides the necessary funds.

To ensure that Parliament's budget is sufficiently accounted for—and prevent protracted disagreement—Parliament could produce a budget estimate covering, among other items:

- Permanent staff and salaries;
- Legislative counsel;
- Research and budget analysis;
- Translation and interpretation;
- Library and database access;
- Office and procurement costs.

Proposed Sequence:

1. Parliament identifies any inherited personnel law, staffing establishment, and current budget allocation.
2. It enacts or amends a law establishing its administration and research service.
3. It prepares a costed staffing and operational plan.
4. Its Budget and Accounts Committee scrutinizes and approves the estimate.
5. Parliament submits the estimate to the Ministry of Finance before the 2027 draft is finalized.
6. The Ministry incorporates a distinct parliamentary appropriation into the draft general budget.
7. Parliament debates the allocation and seeks amendments where necessary.
8. Parliament approves the general budget.
9. Parliamentary authorities allocate the appropriated funds internally under the new personnel and financial framework.

VI. What Parliament Could Do Before the 2027 Budget

Though a permanent staff establishment may need to await the new budget, a smaller interim unit may still be possible.

A. Contract experts and specialists

Article 147 of Law No. 50 permits public bodies to contract with experts, specialists, and professionals. Similarly, Article 146 permits temporary, seasonal, or casual employment. And Articles 34–36 allow permanent public employees to be seconded from one public body to another when the public interest requires it and the employee meets the receiving institution's requirements.

This could plausibly include:

- Legal researchers;
- Economists;
- Legislative drafters;
- Translators;
- Budget analysts;
- Procedural advisers.

All three routes remain dependent on funding. Temporary appointments and expert contracts must fall within appropriations already available for those purposes, while Parliament would ordinarily bear the salaries and compensation of seconded employees. Their practical availability therefore depends on Parliament's undisclosed 2026 allocation and any other lawful funding arrangement.

B. Seek supplementary or transferred funding

Other possible routes include:

- reallocation within Parliament's existing

- lawful appropriation;
- a supplementary budget or additional appropriation;
- access to a central reserve;
- temporary support financed from an existing executive allocation.

These possibilities are governed by the Basic Financial Law, the detailed 2026 budget, and any special financial rules applicable to Parliament, not by Law No. 50.

C. Receive carefully structured in-kind assistance

External institutions could provide:

- Training;
- Databases;
- Software;
- Equipment;
- Temporary technical advisers;
- Research and drafting support.

Any such arrangement should be transparent, nonpartisan, available across Parliament, and designed to avoid donor control over legislative priorities. External assistance could bridge the gap before a publicly funded parliamentary service.

Conclusion

The People's Assembly does not need to wait for the 2027 budget before enacting a law providing MPs with personal staff and establishing committee, administrative, legal, and research support for Parliament. Its general legislative authority, reinforced by Law No. 50's recognition of a special parliamentary personnel regime, gives it a credible basis for creating an independent administration and nonpartisan research service now.

What Parliament probably cannot do is treat that law as a self-executing appropriation. Permanent positions, salaries, contracts, and procurement require funding appropriated from the annual budget allocation for the Assembly.

The strongest course is therefore to establish the institution now, determine and defend its financial needs, secure a distinct appropriation in the 2027 budget, and explore one of the three interim arrangements in the meantime.