

YOUR PRAYER GUIDE FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

2025 WORLD WATCH LIST



Marking 70 years
of Strengthening
Persecuted Christians

OpenDoors[®]

STRENGTHENING CHRISTIANS WHERE FAITH COSTS THE MOST



WE SERVE THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Since 1955, Open Doors has been strengthening Christians where faith costs the most. We partner with the local church in more than 70 countries to help them advance the gospel in their nation even in the face of persecution.

For more than 30 years, Open Doors has been publishing the World Watch List, an indexed ranking of the top 50 countries where it's most dangerous to be a Christian. This prayer guide is perfect for anyone wanting insight into the pressure Christians face for following Jesus.

Wake up and strengthen what remains and is about to die.

Revelation 3:2

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GLOBAL TRENDS

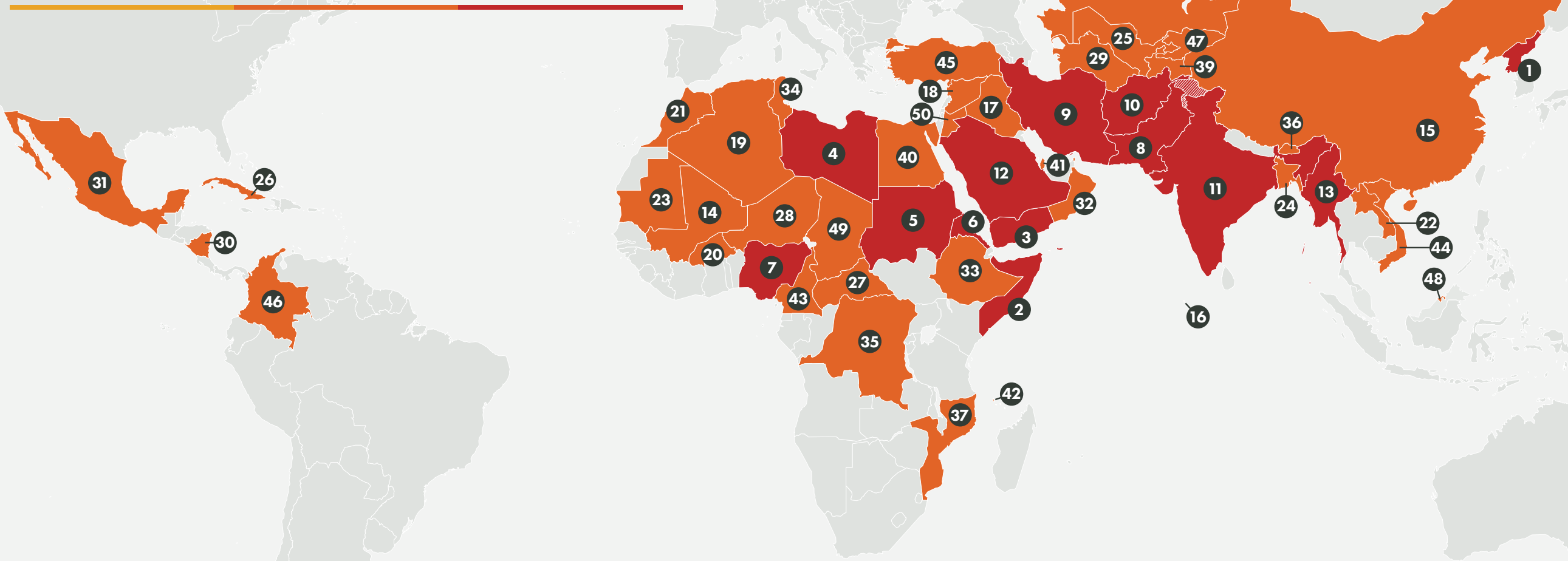
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WORLD WATCH LIST 2025

OPEN DOORS' VISION IS THAT NO CHRISTIAN SUFFERS PERSECUTION ALONE



PERSECUTION LEVELS

- HIGH
- VERY HIGH
- EXTREME

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 North Korea | 11 India | 21 Morocco | 31 Mexico | 41 Qatar |
| 2 Somalia | 12 Saudi Arabia | 22 Laos | 32 Oman | 42 Comoros |
| 3 Yemen | 13 Myanmar | 23 Mauritania | 33 Ethiopia | 43 Cameroon |
| 4 Libya | 14 Mali | 24 Bangladesh | 34 Tunisia | 44 Vietnam |
| 5 Sudan | 15 China | 25 Uzbekistan | 35 Democratic Republic of Congo | 45 Türkiye |
| 6 Eritrea | 16 Maldives | 26 Cuba | 36 Bhutan | 46 Colombia |
| 7 Nigeria | 17 Iraq | 27 Central African Republic | 37 Mozambique | 47 Kyrgyzstan |
| 8 Pakistan | 18 Syria | 28 Niger | 38 Kazakhstan | 48 Brunei |
| 9 Iran | 19 Algeria | 29 Turkmenistan | 39 Tajikistan | 49 Chad |
| 10 Afghanistan | 20 Burkina Faso | 30 Nicaragua | 40 Egypt | 50 Jordan |

WHAT IS THE WORLD WATCH LIST?

The Open Doors World Watch List is a unique, reliable, comprehensive ranking of the countries where the persecution of Christians is most extreme.

UNIQUE Because, as far as possible, our data is gathered at a grassroots level, using in-country networks and local partners on the ground.

RELIABLE Because over three decades, the list has gained a reputation for credible, dependable information. Our approach and analysis are independently audited by the International Institute for Religious Freedom.

COMPREHENSIVE Because it measures persecution in all its forms: not only violence, but also the level of freedom Christians have to practice their faith in their private, family, community, national and church life.

This data is converted into a persecution score, which is then ranked into categories:

- High 41-60 points
- Very high 61-80 points
- Extreme 81-100 points

You can find more details on our methodology and research at www.opendoorscanada.org.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY PERSECUTION?

Persecution takes many forms, from insults and abuse, to discrimination in education and the workplace, to outright violence. We might characterize these different forms as “smash” and “squeeze.”

The “smash” represents overt violence against Christians because of their faith: bombing, arson, shooting, rapes, kidnappings, forcible evictions.

The “squeeze” represents the suffocating restrictions faced by many Christians in daily life: red tape and legal restrictions, an inability to publicly display your faith, and discrimination woven into the fabric of society.

“Smash” is physical, visible, violent.
“Squeeze” is insidious, structural, suffocating.

But both have the same aim: the erasure of Christianity in their country, region, tribe or family.



VIOLENCE

Violence is defined as the deprivation of physical freedom or as serious bodily or mental harm to Christians or serious damage to their property and can occur in all spheres of life.



CHURCH LIFE

The collective exercise by Christians of worship, life, service, and public expression of faith without undue interference. Persecution could involve requiring church registration, monitoring preaching material, harassment of leaders and their families, or restricting the printing or distribution of religious materials.



NATIONAL LIFE

The interaction between Christians and the nation they live in, including rights and laws, the justice system, and public life. Persecution in this sphere could look like blasphemy accusations, unequal treatment in court, toleration of public disrespect, travel restrictions, or discrimination by authorities.



COMMUNITY LIFE

Involves the workplace, business, health care, education, and local public life and civic order. Persecution in this sphere could include dress codes, monitoring, abduction, restricted access to community resources and/or health care, and employment or education discrimination or disadvantages.



FAMILY LIFE

How much freedom has been restricted to live out Christian convictions within the family circle. Persecution in this sphere could involve forced allocations of religious identity, weddings, baptisms, burials, adoptions, child rearing, separation of families, pressure to divorce, or inheritance rights.



PRIVATE LIFE

How much freedom is restricted when relating to God one-on-one in their own private space. Persecution in this sphere could restrict private worship, possession of religious material, or freedom of expression.

TOTAL PERSECUTION SCORE = VIOLENCE + PRESSURE

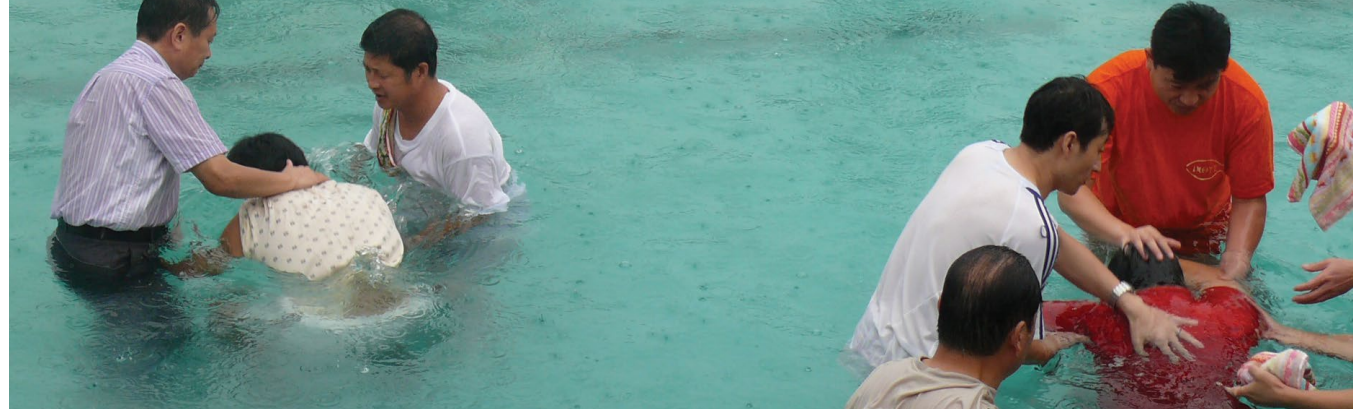
Each of these six types of persecution receive equal weighting and are added together to give a total score out of 100 (rounded to the nearest whole number after ranking).

PERSECUTION IN NUMBERS

During the research period* of the **World Watch List 2025**

Worldwide, more than **380 million Christians** suffer high levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith. In Open Doors' World Watch List top 50 alone, 310 million Christians face very high or extreme levels.

Approximately **1 in every 7 Christians** around the world is persecuted because of their faith.



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



The booklet you hold is a summary of the World Watch List research, published each January to inform us of the state of

Christian persecution globally. It is a ranking of the top 50 countries where Christians suffer the most for their faith in Christ, and a reminder of the enormous scale of Christian persecution in our world today. The research shows that persecution is growing at an alarming rate.

Persecution, while distressing, has been part of the Christian experience from the beginning. It grows our faith, and mysteriously is the fertilizer for the growth of the church. Paul says in Romans 5:3-4, "We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces

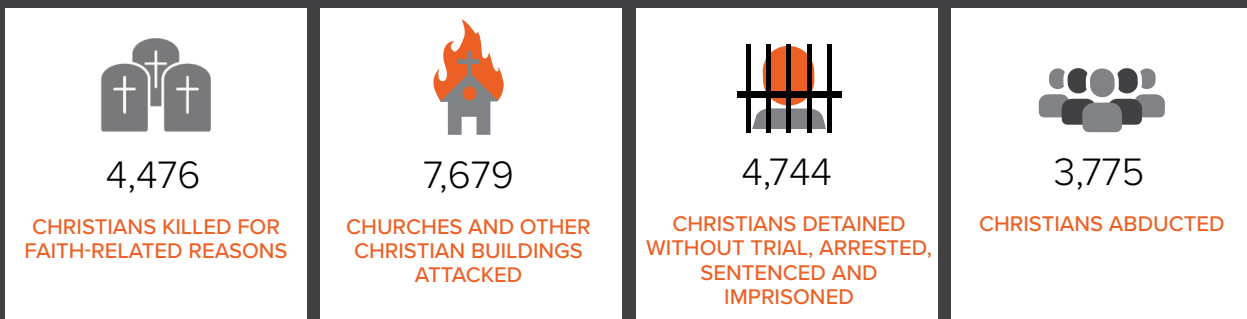
perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." In the book of Acts, after the stoning of Stephen, great persecution broke out causing Christians to disperse from Jerusalem. As they scattered, they preached the Gospel wherever they went, rapidly spreading Christianity throughout the Roman Empire. As Christians face growing persecution today, they take comfort knowing that God uses it to refine His people and to expand His kingdom.

For us in the west, it is hard to fully grasp the intense persecution faced by Christians living in these 50 countries and so we unconsciously compartmentalize them, creating an artificial barrier. God sees their suffering as our suffering and their victories as our victories (1 Corinthians 12:26) and vice versa. To Him, there are no barriers, and we are all positioned to learn from

each other. That means we all experience persecution together but with faith, joy and love, holding fast to the promise of eternal life and God's ultimate victory.

Lists and numbers can be cold and impersonal. My prayer is that the 2025 World Watch List will be more than just statistics and figures, but rather a point of interconnection with brothers and sisters who have so much to teach us about growing faith and evangelism. As you pray through this guide, may you grasp a greater understanding of where you fit into the body of Christ and what we all mean to each other.

Rev. Gary Stagg
Executive Director
Open Doors Canada



Numbers reflected here are of incidences that were reported and are likely far below actual numbers.

*Research period: 10/1/2023-09/30/2024

1. NORTH KOREA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

400,000 (1%)

MAIN RELIGION

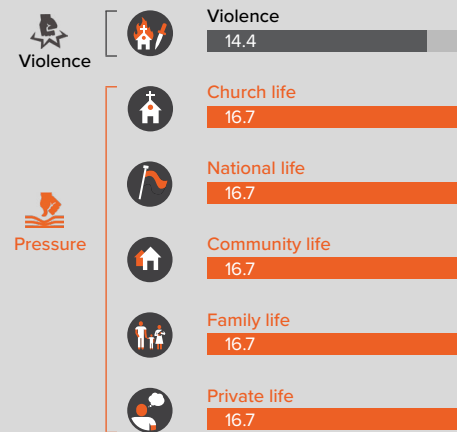
Agnosticism

LEADER

Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **98**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Dictatorial paranoia, Communist and post-Communist oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN NORTH KOREA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/northkorea

It is impossible for Christians to live freely in North Korea.

If your Christian faith is discovered in North Korea, you could be killed on the spot. If you aren't killed, you will be deported to a labour camp and treated as a political criminal. You will be punished with years of hard labour that few survive. And it's not only you who will be punished: North Korean authorities are likely to round up your extended family and punish them too.

There is no church life in North Korea. It's impossible to gather for worship or prayer, and even secret worship and prayer is at great risk. Official spies could inform on you and so could your neighbours or teachers.

Recognizing any deity beyond the Kim family is considered a threat to the country's leadership. "Anti-reactionary thought laws" were enacted in December 2020. These made it even clearer that being a Christian or owning a Bible is a serious crime and will be severely punished.

PRAY WITH US

- Please pray that God will give North Korean Christians eyes to see His light amid the darkness.
- Pray that God would make a way for the estimated 400,000 secret believers in North Korea to worship with other Christians.
- Pray that God will refresh courageous believers with His peace.

2. SOMALIA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

Hundreds (less than 1%)

MAIN RELIGION

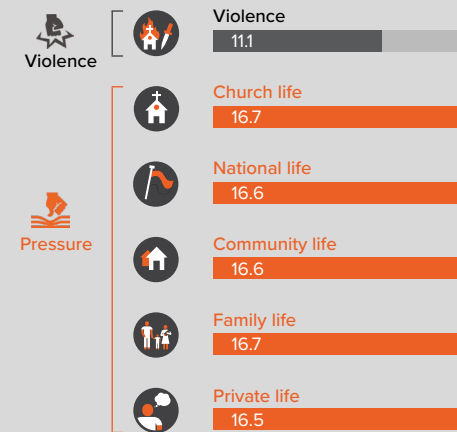
Islam

LEADER

Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre
President Hassan Sheik Mohamud

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **94**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Clan oppression, Organized corruption and crime

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN SOMALIA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/somalia

Christians risk violent attacks from extremist groups and family members.

In Somalia, following Jesus is a matter of life and death. Al-Shabab, a violent Islamist militant group, is at war with the government and controls large swathes of the country. This group enforces a strict form of Sharia and is committed to eradicating Christianity from Somalia. They have often killed Somali Christians on the spot. The dangers have increased over the years, as the militants have increasingly focused on finding and eliminating Christian leaders.

But persecution for Christians also comes from within their own families and communities. Being Muslim is a huge part of Somali identity, and to reject this is seen as a major betrayal that affects the whole family. Even a suspicion that you might have converted can put your life in great danger from your community. You could face house arrest, forced marriage, forced Islamic rituals or even threats to your life.

PRAY WITH US

- Ask God to help secret Christians know they aren't alone.
- Pray that God will protect anyone in danger of attacks from Islamist extremists al-Shabab.
- Pray for secret believers who have children. These parents need wisdom as they teach their children about Jesus and how to follow Him.

3. YEMEN

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

Hundreds (less than 1%)

MAIN RELIGION

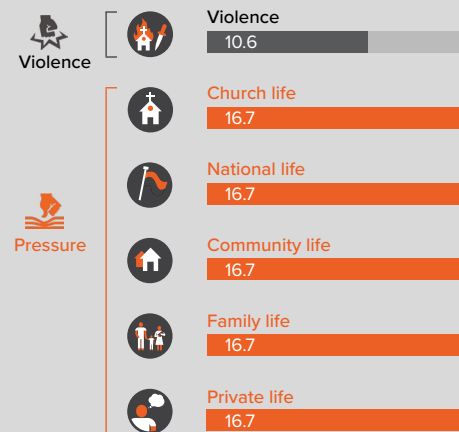
Islam

LEADER

Chairperson, Presidential Leadership Council Rashad Muhammad al-Alimi

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **94**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Clan oppression, Islamic oppression, Dictatorial paranoia

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN YEMEN:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/yemen

Torn apart by civil war, life is very hard for everybody and even harder for Christians.

None of the powers controlling different areas of the country are sympathetic to Christians. Yemenis from minority religions are severely marginalized. Relief aid is mostly distributed through local Muslim groups and mosques, which are alleged to be discriminating against anyone not considered a devout Muslim.

If someone is reported to be a Christian they could face severe monitoring, arbitrary detention, torture, ill-treatment and even murder. In Houthi-controlled areas, it's dangerous to possess a Bible or other Christian books. Leaving Islam to follow Christ is seen as a huge betrayal of your native tribe and can lead to being disowned, disinherited, divorced and losing custody of your children, being banished or even murdered.

Persecution has increased recently as the Houthis have gained more power. Dozens of house churches can no longer meet. But Yemenis disillusioned with Islam are searching for truth and finding out about Christ through online chats with secret Christians.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray that God will bring peace and justice to Yemen, and that the cries of His people will not be forgotten.
- Ask God to protect Yemeni Christians living in places where they could be attacked by Islamic extremists.
- Pray that God would help the underground church in Yemen flourish, and believers would be able to live as salt and light.

4. LIBYA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

35,500 (less than 1%)

MAIN RELIGION

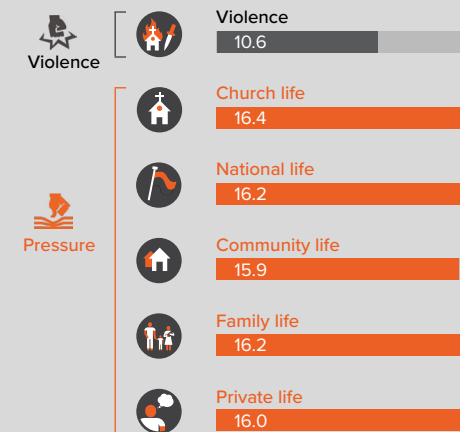
Islam

LEADER

President, Presidential Council, Mohammed Al Menfi

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **91**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Clan oppression, Organized corruption and crime

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN LIBYA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/libya

Libya remains a deeply dangerous and unstable place for followers of Jesus.

In Libya, following Jesus is a huge risk for anyone. Libyan Christians with a Muslim background face violent pressure from their families and communities to renounce their faith. Foreign Christians, especially those from sub-Saharan Africa, are targeted by Islamist militant and criminal groups. These groups kidnap and sometimes brutally kill Christians. Even if they avoid such a fate, sub-Saharan Christians face harassment and threats from radical Muslims.

Christians who openly express their faith or try to share it with others risk arrest and violent opposition. The lack of a central government to enforce law and order makes the situation even more precarious.

PRAY WITH US

- Libya remains a country divided, with two groups grappling for control. Pray this tension will not boil into civil war.
- Christian migrant workers in Libya are at risk from extremist groups. Ask God to protect them.
- There are few churches in Libya, and some believers must follow Jesus in secret. Pray that believers find community and grow in their walk with Christ.



5. SUDAN

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

2,028,000 (4%)

MAIN RELIGION

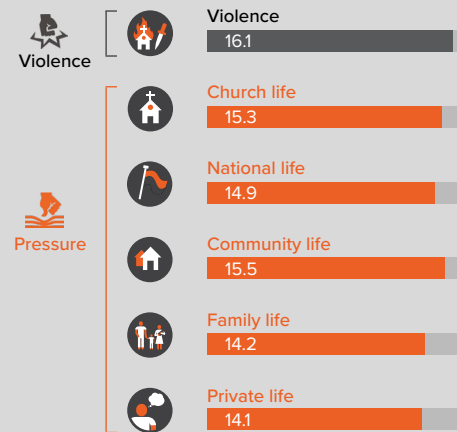
Islam

LEADER

Lt. Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **90**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Dictatorial paranoia, Clan oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN SUDAN:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/sudan

The ongoing war in Sudan has intensified the vulnerability of Sudanese Christians.

Sudan was on a path toward religious freedom, but a coup and devastating war dashed these hopes. Christians are once again in danger.

With the ongoing war, Sudan is now home to both the world's largest displacement and largest hunger crisis, with nearly nine million people having been forced to flee their homes. Neither side is sympathetic to Christians, and the conflict has given Islamist extremists more opportunity to target them. More than 100 churches have been damaged, and Christians have been abducted and killed. Converts face severe backlash from their families and communities. These believers tend to keep their faith secret, even from their children.

Christians are also experiencing exceptional hardship in the hunger crisis because local communities discriminate against them and won't give them support. Much of the church in Sudan, which might have been able to help with aid distribution, is on the run.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray for peace and that believers will not be targeted.
- Thank God for the Christians who continue to serve the vulnerable during the war. Pray that God will preserve and protect their brave witness.
- Ask God to be with believers displaced by the violence in Sudan. Pray that He will hear the cries of the suffering and deliver them.



6. ERITREA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

1,687,000 (44%)

MAIN RELIGION

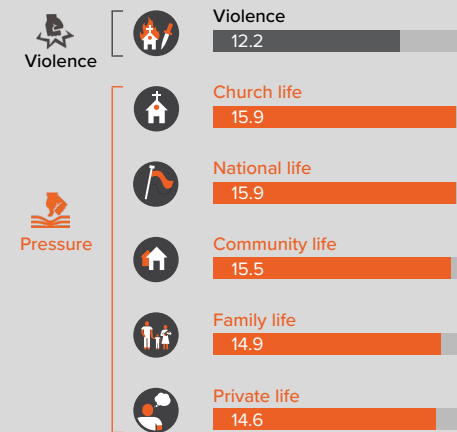
Islam

LEADER

President Isaias Afwerki

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **89**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Dictatorial paranoia, Christian denominational protectionism, Organized corruption and crime

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN ERITREA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/eritrea

Eritrea remains one of the most dangerous places in the world for followers of Christ.

Eritrea's persecution landscape is complex. On the church front, the government recognizes only the Eritrean Orthodox Church (EOC), Catholic and Lutheran churches. Converts from Islam or Orthodoxy to Protestantism risk severe mistreatment from their families and communities. Non-traditional churches face the harshest violations from both the government and the EOC. For many years, government security forces have conducted house-to-house raids, arresting hundreds of Christians.

In Eritrea, daily life is heavily monitored, with phone calls and internet usage under constant scrutiny. Eritrea is often called the "North Korea of Africa" due to extreme state control. Christians, especially those not recognized by the state, suffer the most. Extreme pressure, state-sanctioned violence and conscription are forcing some Christians to flee the country. Conscription presses young Christians into indefinite military service without the right to conscientious objection.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray for those believers who are forced into military service against their will. Pray God will protect them and guide them.
- Pray for the families of those arrested. Pray that God will provide for all their needs.
- Eritrea has one of the most notorious prison networks in the world. Pray for imprisoned believers. Pray for encouragement and their immediate release.

CONTINUED VIOLENCE ACROSS SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

7. NIGERIA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

106,608,000 (47%)

MAIN RELIGION

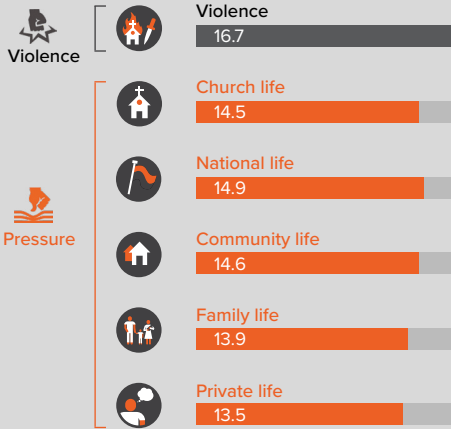
Christianity

LEADER

President Bola Ahmed Adekunle Tinubu

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **88**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Ethno-religious hostility, Islamic oppression, Religious nationalism

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN NIGERIA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/nigeria

On average, eight Christians are killed in Nigeria every day for their faith in Christ.

Christians are particularly at risk from targeted attacks by Islamist militants. The former government's failure to protect Christians and punish perpetrators has only strengthened the militants' influence.

While Christians used to be vulnerable only in the Muslim-majority northern states, this violence continues to spread into the Middle Belt and even further south. Many believers are killed, particularly men, while women are often kidnapped and targeted for sexual violence. More believers are killed for their faith in Nigeria than anywhere else in the world. These militants also destroy homes, churches and livelihoods. Millions now live in displacement camps.

The 2023 election resulted in a better representation for the two faiths. It was hoped this would lead to acknowledging the human rights violations against Christians, and to more effective intervention by security forces to protect Christians. However, this did not happen to a tangible extent during the 2025 World Watch List reporting period.

PRAY WITH US

- Please pray for Christians whose loved ones have been killed or abducted.
- Pray that God will work in the hearts of Nigerian leaders to protect Christian citizens and communities.
- Pray for the millions of Christians and others who have been displaced by violence.



Sub-Saharan Africa has the world's largest Christian population, yet it faces persistent violence. Since the 2023 World Watch List, violence scores for the 15 sub-Saharan countries included among the top 50 have risen by an average of one point, with 13 rated "extremely high" for violence, including Burkina Faso, Mali, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Sudan's civil war, which began in 2023, drove its World Watch List score up 3 points, the fourth-highest increase globally. Research registered increases in the number of Christians killed and sexually assaulted, as well as the number of Christian homes and businesses attacked. Churches were shelled, looted, and occupied, pushing Sudan to 5th place on the list.

Chad also saw its score rise for the fourth consecutive year. Political instability and groups like Boko Haram have fueled anti-Christian violence. Christians face killings, forced displacements, and social discrimination, particularly in rural areas where radical groups dominate.

Nigeria remains one of the most dangerous countries for Christians, ranking 7th. Fulani militants, Boko Haram, and other jihadist groups target Christians with killings, abductions, and raids. The new president Bola Ahmed Tinubu's efforts to balance religious representation in government have yet to yield noticeable security improvements.

The Open Doors Arise Africa campaign is a multi-year response to this persistent reality. Its aim — to stand with the African church, to help it be salt and light where persecution is most extreme, to live out their faith and renew the next generation — relies upon the prayers and material support of Christians around the world. Learn more at www.opendoorscanada.org/ariseafrica.

PLEASE PRAY

- Pray for governments to stand against extremism and to protect their citizens.
- Pray for the persecutors. May God open their eyes to the realities of what they are doing and call them to Himself.
- Pray for supernatural protection for our sub-Saharan brothers and sisters.

8. PAKISTAN

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

4,526,000 (2%)

MAIN RELIGION

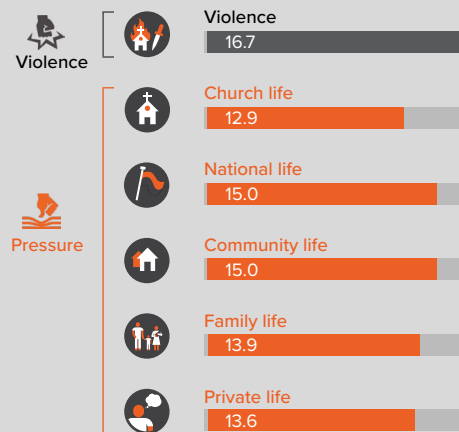
Islam

LEADER

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif
President Asif Ali Zardari

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **87**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Dictatorial paranoia,
Organized corruption and crime

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN PAKISTAN:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/pakistan

Christians are second-class citizens and blasphemy laws can send you to prison.

Pakistan's notorious blasphemy laws are often used to target minority groups, but Christians are disproportionately affected. Indeed, roughly a quarter of all blasphemy accusations target Christians, who make up just 1.8% of the population. Blasphemy laws carry a death sentence. While this is seldom carried out, people accused of blasphemy are vulnerable to attack or murder by mobs. In June 2024, an elderly man was killed by mob violence after being accused of desecrating the Quran. The 2023 attack on Christian homes and buildings in Jaranwala continues to contribute to a climate of fear.

The number of Christian girls abducted, abused and forcefully converted to Islam is growing. All Christians suffer institutionalized discrimination. Occupations that are deemed low, dirty and degrading, such as cleaning sewers or working in brick kilns, are reserved for Christians by the authorities. Christians are also vulnerable to being trapped in bonded labour.

PRAY WITH US

- Ask God to change the hearts and minds of decision-makers in Pakistan regarding blasphemy laws.
- Please pray that Christians will find joy in their daily lives, knowing they are not second-class citizens in God's eyes.
- Ask God to protect and preserve Christian women in Pakistan who can be forced into marriage with Muslims.

9. IRAN

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

800,000 (1%)

MAIN RELIGION

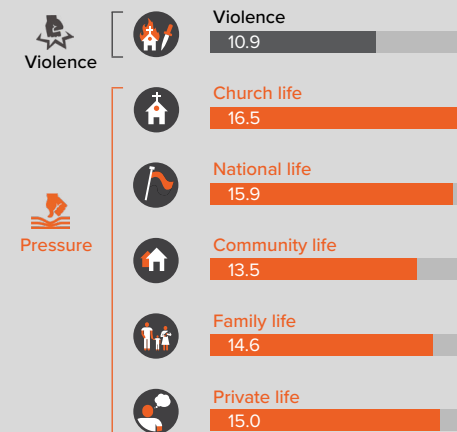
Islam

LEADER

Supreme Leader Ali Hoseini-Khamenei

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **86**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Dictatorial paranoia

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN IRAN:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/iran

Christians converts from Islam are most vulnerable to persecution in Iran.

Unrecognized converts from Islam to Christianity face severe religious freedom violations, primarily from the government and, to a lesser extent, from society and their families. The government views these converts as a threat, believing they are influenced by Western countries to undermine Islam and the regime. Both leaders and ordinary members of Christian groups are often arrested, prosecuted and given long prison sentences for 'crimes against national security'.

Recognized historical communities such as Armenian and Assyrian Christians are state-protected but treated as second-class citizens. They face many discriminatory legal provisions and are not allowed to worship in Persian or interact with Christian converts. Those who support converts can also face imprisonment.

PRAY WITH US

- Ask God to guide Iran's new president, that he will pursue an openness to religious freedom for all minorities, including Christians.
- Pray for secret house churches, that God will protect these networks of underground believers and give them a spirit of wisdom and courage.
- Pray for the mental and physical wellbeing of Christian prisoners. Pray also for their families.



Photo: © Farid Ershad, UNSPLASH

10. AFGHANISTAN

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

Thousands (less than 1%)

MAIN RELIGION

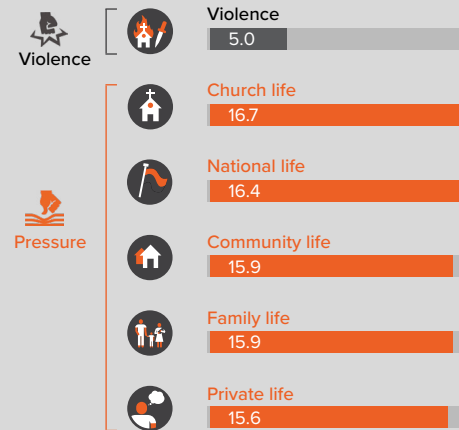
Islam

LEADER

Supreme Leader Haybatullah Akhundzada

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: 85

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Clan oppression, Dictatorial paranoia

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN AFGHANISTAN:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/afghanistan

Faith in Jesus can be a death sentence.

Most Afghan Christians are converts from Islam; practicing their faith openly is basically impossible. In Afghanistan, leaving Islam is considered shameful by family and community, and conversion is punishable by death under Islamic law. This has been increasingly enforced since the Taliban took control of the country in 2021. If converts are discovered, the family, clan or tribe may try to preserve its 'honour' and deal with the convert through pressure, violence or even murder. If a convert's faith is discovered by the government, many have no other option but to try to flee. Women and ethnic minorities experience additional oppression, so Christians among these groups live under unthinkable pressure.

PRAY WITH US

- Ask God to protect secret Christians, that the Lord will preserve His people.
- Pray that even as the Taliban's brutal regime remains in power, God will touch their hearts and change them. Pray they will see the truth of Jesus' love.
- Pray for the thousands of Afghan refugees, many of whom live in countries where it's still dangerous to follow Jesus.

SIGNS OF THE CHURCH GOING UNDERGROUND

How do you measure persecution when there's no visible church left to target?

In Algeria, all Protestant churches have been forcibly closed, causing a drop in violence scores for the 2025 World Watch List. Yet, other forms of pressure intensified. Christians face record-high trials, strict regulations on non-Muslim practices, and increased surveillance of online activities, forcing many into isolation.

The small Christian community in Libya is extremely careful to avoid a repeat of the March 2023 crackdown that swept up numerous Christians for arrest.

The church in Afghanistan is deeply underground, and for that reason there are fewer visible expressions of Christianity for the Taliban authorities to crack down on. On the other hand, the same isolation of the church makes it very difficult to get verified accounts of faith-related attacks.

China's open Christian presence continues to vanish. Unregistered churches are illegal, pastors face ideological indoctrination, and children are banned from religious

education. Smaller congregations are either forced to merge to make a larger church that is easier to control, or to take their fellowships underground, into isolated home groups.

China is the world's most advanced surveillance state, but it is not alone, and Christians in autocratic states face heightened surveillance, both online and in real life. World Watch List researchers report they detect a growing caution among Christians to be open with their faith.

As the Church becomes less visible in many regions, Open Doors remains committed to strengthening what remains (Rev. 3:2) so the global Church can continue to shine Christ's light despite the shadows of persecution.

PLEASE PRAY

- Pray for wisdom for underground Christians to know with whom they can share their faith and be salt and light for Jesus.
- Pray for young people living in places where the church has to be underground. May they grow in the Lord and find community with other believers their age.



Photo: © Avin, UNSPLASH

11. INDIA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

73,233,000 (5%)

MAIN RELIGION

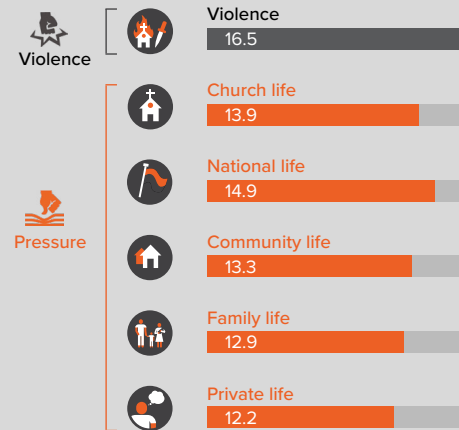
Hinduism

LEADER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **84**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Religious nationalism, Ethno-religious hostility, Clan oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN INDIA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/india

In India, converts from Hinduism to Christianity face the harshest persecution.

In India, Hindu extremists view all Christians as outsiders and aim to cleanse the nation of Islam and Christianity, often using extensive violence. This hostility is often driven by Hindutva, an ongoing Hindu nationalist belief among some extremists that Indians ought to be Hindu and no other faith will be tolerated. This mindset has led to violent attacks across the country and impunity for the people who perpetrate them, especially where the authorities are also Hindu hardliners. In such places, Christians who attend house churches risk attack by extremist mobs who target services.

Additionally, 12 states have passed anti-conversion laws, which threaten religious freedom for individual believers.

PRAY WITH US

- Ask God to help the new coalition government protect the rights of all Indians, including Christians.
- As Christians in Manipur State continue to recover after the 2023 violence, pray for a spirit of peace and reconciliation.
- Pray with church leaders who are falsely accused under anti-conversion laws. Ask God to protect them.

Photo: © totksami, PEXELS

12. SAUDI ARABIA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

2,274,000 (6%)

MAIN RELIGION

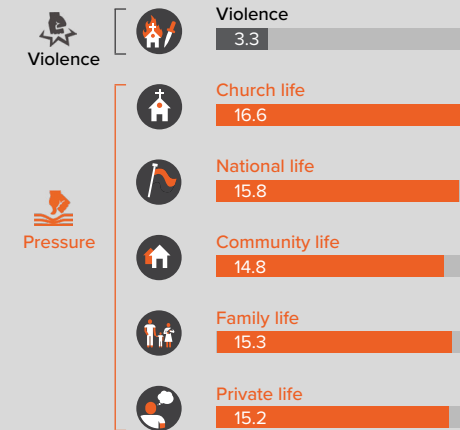
Islam

LEADER

Crown Prince and Prime Minister Muhammad Bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **81**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Clan oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN SAUDI ARABIA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/saudiArabia

Converts are most in danger of persecution from both authorities and the people around them.

It is illegal to leave the Islamic faith, and new believers will face intense opposition from their families and communities. Disgracing the family in this way is considered the worst thing a person can do. They can be pressured, disowned, locked away, beaten, or even killed.

Therefore, most Saudi Christians tend to follow their faith quietly. This can extend to not even telling their spouse or children about their faith, for fear that extended family members or school staff could discover they have left Islam. There are no legal church buildings or meetings. But secret believers have become bolder in recent times, sharing their faith with others through technology. But those caught doing this have faced serious repercussions.

Most Christians living in Saudi Arabia are temporary workers from other countries. They are forbidden from sharing their faith with local Saudis, and gathering for worship is restricted. Breaking these rules can get them detained and deported.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray that believers here will find a place to worship and grow in their knowledge of the Lord.
- Pray for immigrant Christians who meet secretly to receive God's protection and wisdom.
- Pray for God to bless all those who reach out to share the gospel in Saudi Arabia.



Photo: © tonywuphotography, PEXELS

13. MYANMAR

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

4,760,000 (9%)

MAIN RELIGION

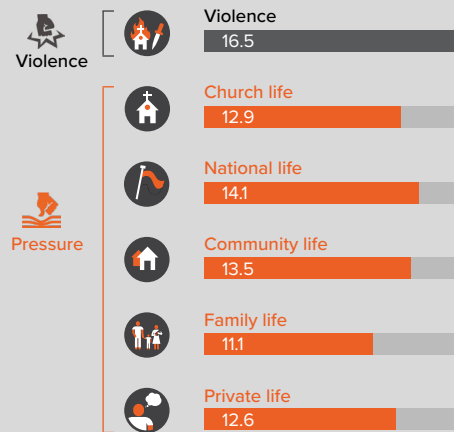
Buddhism

LEADER

Prime Minister, Sr. Gen. Min Aung Hlaing

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **81**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Dictatorial paranoia, Religious nationalism, Ethno-religious hostility

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN MYANMAR:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/myanmar

Myanmar's civil war has become entrenched in areas with a significant Christian presence.

As Myanmar enters the fifth year of an increasingly violent conflict, solutions are nowhere in sight and the violence is having a devastating impact on the country's Christian minority, who are among those bearing the brunt of the attacks.

Believers have been killed and churches have been indiscriminately attacked. More Christians than ever have been driven out of their homes and have found refuge in churches or displacement camps. Some are even forced to flee to the jungle where they are often deprived of access to food and health care. Government forces have continued to disproportionately attack Christian villages and churches. They have also killed Christian aid workers and pastors.

Beyond the conflict, converts find themselves persecuted by their families because they have left their former faith. Churches also experience opposition, especially those located in rural areas and those known for their evangelistic activities.

PRAY WITH US

- Please pray that God will enable Christians to endure the ongoing, long-term consequences of the coup.
- Pray that Christians caught in the conflict between the ruling military junta and rebel groups will be peacemakers.
- Pray that the leaders of Myanmar's military will see that Jesus is the true source of peace and joy.



14. MALI

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

542,000 (2%)

MAIN RELIGION

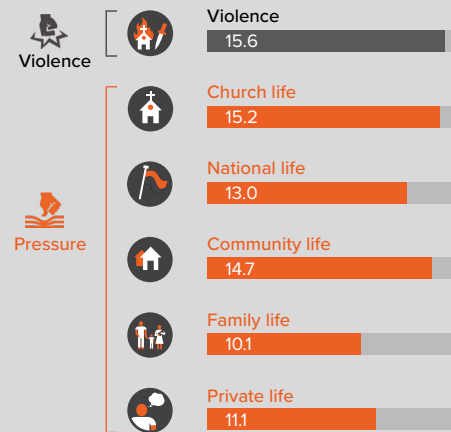
Islam

LEADER

Transition President Assimi Goita

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **80**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Organized corruption and crime

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN MALI:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/mali

Christians experience most opposition for their faith in the north of the country.

The Islamic extremist insurgency that devastated the north of Mali in 2012 continues to have huge repercussions for the country's small number of Christians. Churches were burned down and many Christians lost their homes and had to flee the region. Although some Christians and congregations have returned under police protection, they still live under the threat of attack. Those living in areas controlled by militants have been denied access to water and land to grow crops. Believers who engage in evangelistic activities in the north are especially vulnerable to violence, while Christian missionaries live under the constant threat of abduction. Those who leave Islam to follow Jesus risk violence and pressure from their relatives and communities if their new faith is discovered.

Jihadist violence is spreading southward, and the country's institutions are rapidly breaking apart. The country has also become a geopolitical battleground between the West and East, making Christians vulnerable to government-related persecution.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray that God will protect believers who are targeted for violence by Islamic extremist groups.
- Pray for Open Doors partners in Mali as they seek to help strengthen believers who have lost so much due to extremist attacks.
- Pray that God will provide political stability for all Malians and that the authorities will work toward religious freedom.



Photo: © darrylin, PEXELS

15. CHINA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

96,700,000 (7%)

MAIN RELIGION

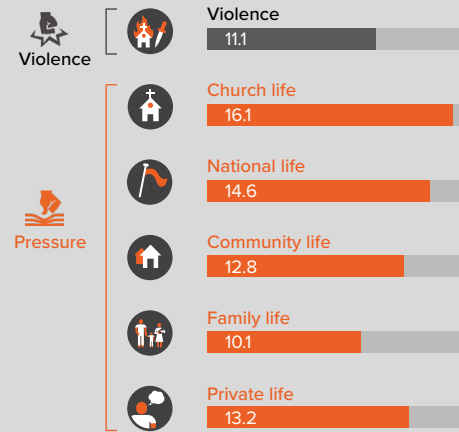
Agnosticism

LEADER

President Xi Jinping

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **78**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Communist and post-Communist oppression, Dictatorial paranoia

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN CHINA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/china

Regulations in China continue to be more tightly enforced.

In recent years, the government has aggressively tried to ensure all religious expression is brought into line with official Chinese Communist philosophy. Any church or church leader stepping beyond that can face heavy restrictions. Unregistered churches, even those once tolerated, are considered illegal and increasingly put under pressure, as authorities seek to enforce regulations and tighten policies. State-approved churches come under strong ideological pressure, and smaller congregations are often forced to merge to make a larger church that is easier for the state to control.

Children under 18 are forbidden from attending church. Surveillance and monitoring of all suspected church leaders are consequences of following Jesus in China.

In regions where Islam or Tibetan Buddhism are majority faiths, Christian converts can face additional scrutiny and pressure, and sometimes violence, from their families and communities.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray that believers will experience growth in their faith even as persecution and pressure rises.
- Converts from Islam or Buddhism can encounter overt persecution from their families and communities, pray God's protection over them.
- Church leaders are often monitored and regarded with suspicion by Chinese authorities. Pray these leaders will feel the presence of Christ.



Photo: © abohaphiez, PEXELS

16. MALDIVES

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

Hundreds (less than 1%)

MAIN RELIGION

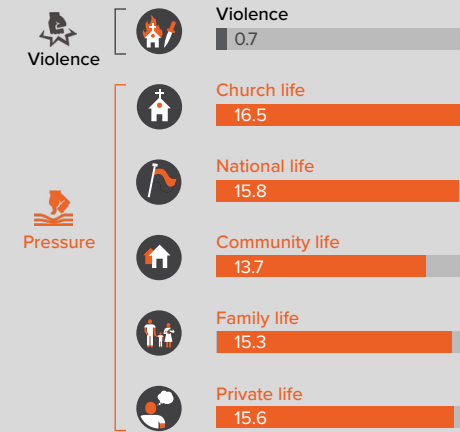
Islam

LEADER

President Mohamed Muizzu

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **78**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Dictatorial paranoia

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN MALDIVES:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/maldives

Every Maldivian is required to be a Muslim and leaving Islam may cost believers their citizenship.

The Maldives is an island paradise popular for welcoming tourists from around the world, but the welcome sadly doesn't extend to Maldivians who choose to follow Jesus.

This nation of more than 1,000 islands declares itself to be 100% Muslim, so being a citizen of the Maldives means being a Muslim. Within the country's close-knit communities, any deviation from Islamic values is easily spotted and reported to the authorities or Muslim leaders. Those who leave Islam must keep their faith secret. It's so dangerous that husbands, wives and children may even hide their faith from one another. If discovered, believers may be stripped of their citizenship, isolated from society and lose their state benefits.

While foreign Christians have slightly more freedom than converts, their gatherings are strictly monitored and controlled by the authorities. They are strictly forbidden from sharing their faith with Maldivians.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray that secret believers will be able to access the Bible in their own language.
- Pray for Christians, both Maldivians and migrant believers, to find opportunities to meet, pray and worship with one another.
- Pray that the Lord will open the eyes of tourists and travellers to the situation facing Christians in the Maldives.



Photo: © PEXELS

17. IRAQ

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

187,000 (less than 1%)

MAIN RELIGION

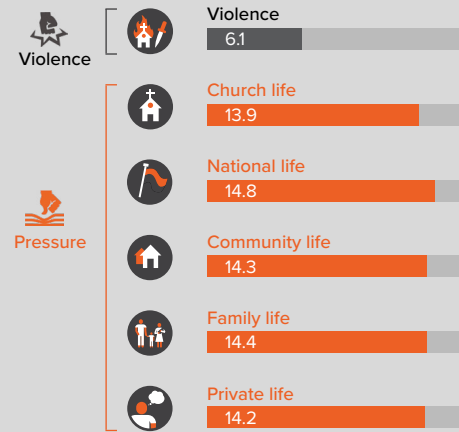
Islam

LEADER

Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **78**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Clan oppression, Organized corruption and crime

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN IRAQ:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/iraq

The pressure on Christians remains extreme in Iraq.

Iraqi Christians face increasing pressure from various groups, especially since the rise of Iran-backed Shia militias following the Islamic State group's territorial losses. While Islamic State still poses a threat, attacks from Turkey and Iran (airstrikes and ground operations) have devastated predominantly Christian villages, forcing many to flee and leaving communities empty.

Different Christian denominations, such as the Assyrian and Chaldean churches, are all seriously affected by discrimination and violence from militant groups and government authorities. In central and southern Iraq, many Christians avoid displaying religious symbols due to fear of harassment.

Pressure on converts from Islam is intense, often forcing them to hide their faith. In 2023, two converts faced severe backlash after sharing their beliefs online. And recently, after a decision of the Iraqi government, the Kurdish Regional Government cut parliamentary seats for religious minorities, diminishing their representation.

PRAY WITH US

- Ten years after the Islamic State took over parts of Iraq, Christians are slowly returning home. Pray for them as they rebuild and recover.
- Many Iraqi Christians suffer from the trauma of Islamic State attacks. Open Doors supports trauma care programs in the country. Pray that God will bless this work.
- Pray for believers who are converts from Islam, they can experience significant pressure.

18. SYRIA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

579,000 (2%)

MAIN RELIGION

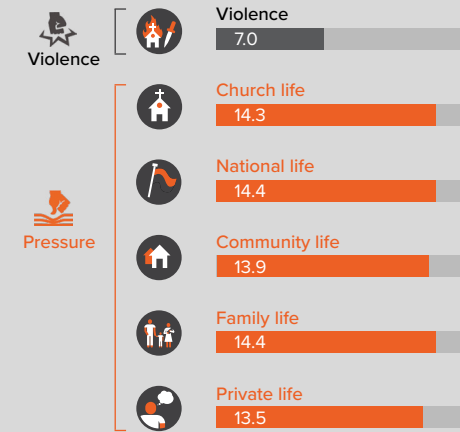
Islam

LEADER

President Bashar al-Assad (now removed)

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **78**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Dictatorial paranoia, Islamic oppression, Clan oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN SYRIA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/syria

Church leaders and Christians from Muslim backgrounds are most at risk of violence in Syria.

Note: The World Watch List research period was from October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024. These findings may not reflect the reality of life in Syria after the fall of the Assad regime on December 8, 2024.

All Christians face harsh and pervasive security restrictions (as do all Syrians), leading to self-censorship. But Christians from other denominations, and especially those from Muslim backgrounds, face great danger. They are treated with suspicion by the authorities, and risk being disowned or even killed for bringing 'shame' on their families.

There are many rebel groups that are composed of Islamist extremists. They forbid public expressions of the Christian faith and have demolished or taken over most church buildings and monasteries, even those belonging to the traditional Christian community. Large numbers of Christians left their place of origin to go to other majority Christian areas as internally displaced people or have left the country. While some believers have returned to rebuild their lives and communities, there are still far fewer than there used to be.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray that God will bring about peace in Syria as only He can.
- Ask God to give hope and healing to converts from Islam who have been rejected and expelled from their families and communities.
- Pray for the churches in Syria, that they will be given refreshment to continue serving God's people.



Photo: © BruX Photos, UNSPLASH

19. ALGERIA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

144,000 (less than 1%)

MAIN RELIGION

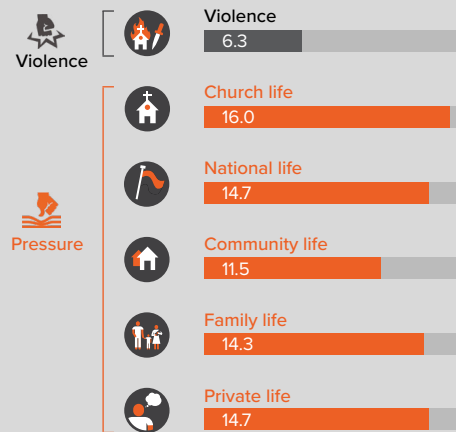
Islam

LEADER

President Abdelmadjid Tebboune

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **77**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Dictatorial paranoia

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN ALGERIA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/algeria

All Protestant churches have been forced to close in Algeria.

The sharp increase of government pressure against the Algerian Protestant church continued into 2024. In 2023, almost all Algeria's Protestant churches had been ordered to close. In 2024, all remaining churches have been closed or forced to stop regular services, driving Protestants into isolation. The country has laws that regulate non-Muslim worship, including legal restrictions prohibiting anything that would 'shake the faith of a Muslim' or be used as a 'means of seduction intending to convert a Muslim to another religion'.

Other major drivers of religious freedom violations in Algeria are family and community members and radical Islamic teachers, along with state officials who adopt the views of those teachers. Algerian Christians, most of whom are converts from Islam, risk opposition from family members and extended family. The pressure and danger Christian's face is particularly high in Arab, rural and religiously conservative parts of the country.

PRAY WITH US

- Every Protestant church in Algeria has essentially been closed. Pray that God gives wisdom to pastors and leaders to find creative ways to gather for worship.
- In Algeria, sharing your faith in Jesus is risky. Ask that God would protect His people and give them wisdom, boldness as they share their faith.
- Pray that believers will have a Christian community where they can enjoy fellowship.



20. BURKINA FASO

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

6,169,000 (26%)

MAIN RELIGION

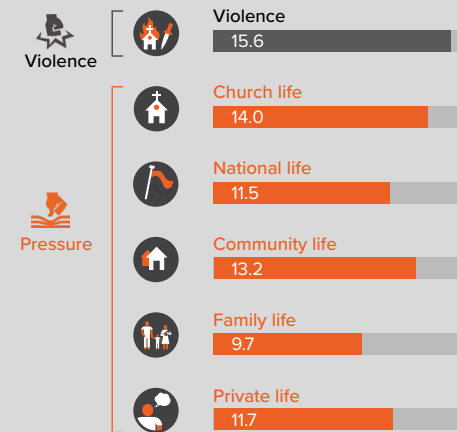
Islam

LEADER

Transitional President Ibrahim Traore

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **76**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Organized corruption and crime, Dictatorial paranoia

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN BURKINA FASO:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/burkinafaso

Violence in Burkina Faso has led to a massive displacement crisis.

Over the last few years, Burkina Faso has risen sharply on the World Watch List owing to a spike in violence against followers of Jesus. The rise of violent Islamist extremists has forced Christians to flee, and even cities that used to be safe are now at risk of attack. Believers living in areas where militant groups are active risk being kidnapped, displaced or worse. Christians have been targeted and killed and churches destroyed. Because of jihadist activity, hundreds of churches have been closed.

Additionally, converts from Islam can face more general pressure. Family and community members reject converts and attempt to force them to renounce their faith.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray for believers who are displaced by Islamist militants. Ask God to bring them hope and healing.
- Pray for believers who have endured violence. Ask God to bind up their wounds.
- Pray for church leaders who have been forced to flee their homes and villages yet still hope to minister to their flocks. Pray that God will encourage and strengthen these shepherds.



Photo: © Joa heftiba, UNSPLASH

21. MOROCCO

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

33,000 (less than 1%)

MAIN RELIGION

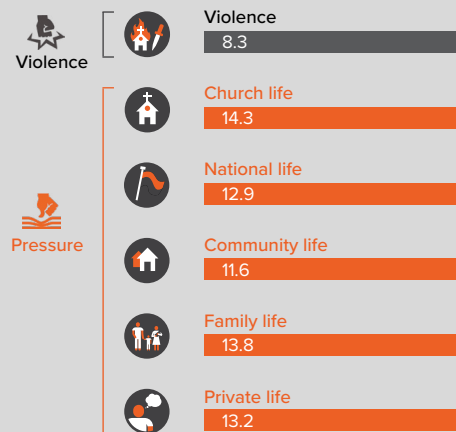
Islam

LEADER

King Muhammed VI

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **74**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Dictatorial paranoia

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN MOROCCO:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/morocco

Converts risk being arrested and interrogated by the government.

In Morocco, 99% of the population are Muslim and the country remains socially conservative. This can make life challenging for Christians, particularly those who convert from Islam. They are likely to encounter severe pressure to recant their faith from their family and local community. Furthermore, they must meet in house churches because they cannot gain permission to gather in public.

Converts risk being arrested and the country's strong and well-informed security services make it difficult for believers to express their faith. It is illegal to 'shake the faith of a Muslim', meaning that Christians who talk about their faith risk arrest and criminal prosecution. Distribution of Bibles in Arabic is also restricted. Even on social media, believers must be careful in what they post.

Immigrant Christians are relatively free to meet and worship, although they are often under surveillance and risk deportation if they are found to be sharing their faith with Muslims.

PRAY WITH US

- Please pray that God will help the Moroccan church be salt and light.
- Pray that Christians will be wise and courageous as they live for Jesus and work out how to share their faith.
- Pray that converts facing pressure from their families and communities will find hope and peace.



Photo: © c/botha, UNSPLASH

22. LAOS

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

224,000 (3%)

MAIN RELIGION

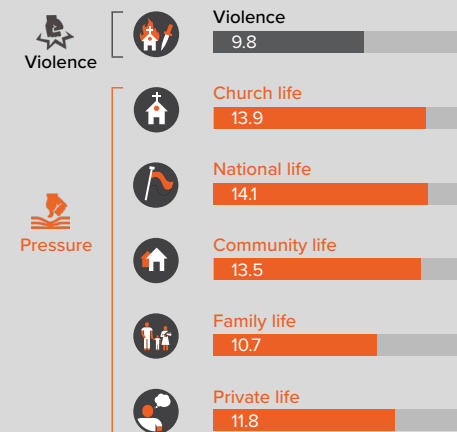
Buddhism

LEADER

President Thongloun Sisoulith

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **74**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Communist and post-Communist oppression, Clan oppression, Dictatorial paranoia

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN LAOS:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/laos

Troubling violence continues to impact believers in Laos.

In Laos, Communist authorities heavily monitor all religious activities, even those of registered churches. All gatherings must be reported to the administration, forcing house churches to operate secretly as they are deemed illegal gatherings. About 75% of government-approved Lao Evangelical Church (LEC) congregations lack permanent structures and hold services in homes.

Converts to Christianity face severe rights violations. They are seen as outsiders to the Buddhist-animist community and face pressure and violence from their families and the local authorities. In rural areas, families often consist of three generations under one roof, intensifying the pressure. Local authorities and religious leaders may incite the community against converts, leading to their expulsion from their villages.

PRAY WITH US

- In tribal areas, Christians can be expelled from their villages because of their faith. Pray that God will help these believers find a safe place to live and worship Him.
- Pray for the families of pastors and other church leaders who have been killed.
- Pray for the Lord's protection over Christians who are monitored and forced to meet under the watchful eye of authorities.



23. MAURITANIA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

11,000 (less than 1%)

MAIN RELIGION

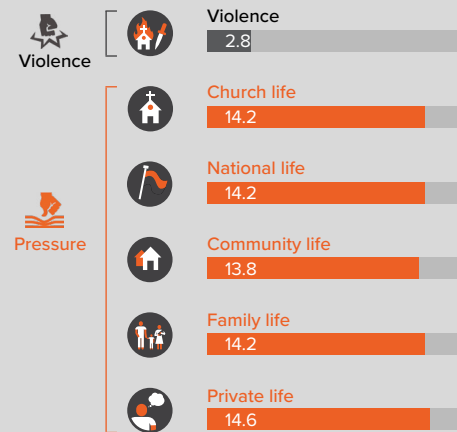
Islam

LEADER

President Mohamed Ould Cheikh el Ghazouani

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **74**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Clan oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN MAURITANIA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/mauritania

Christian converts face severe hostility both from the authorities and from their families.

Mauritania is staunchly Islamic and Christian activities are severely restricted, making it difficult for Christians to express their faith. For those who convert from Islam, it's almost impossible.

Apostasy is legally punishable by death. Although there are no known cases of this in recent years, the threat remains. Converts risk expulsion from the family home and loss of livelihood; they may even be forced to leave the country. The presence of Islamist extremist groups also constitutes a threat to those who leave Islam. Baptisms can only be carried out secretly, but many converts are reluctant to do this, fearing the awful consequences of being discovered. Evangelism is strictly forbidden and can lead to prosecution.

Although the growth of the internet and social media helps converts to connect with other Christians, this is still fraught with difficulty due to slow technological development in many regions as well as a lack of privacy within families.

PRAY WITH US

- Please pray for believers to find ways to meet together and grow in faith with a Christian community.
- Pray that God will overturn laws that forbid conversion from Islam so that all people will be able to follow the religion of their choosing.
- Ask God to protect His people from extremist groups and maintain political stability in Mauritania.



Photo: © Sagor Bormon, PEXELS

24. BANGLADESH

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

950,000 (less than 1%)

MAIN RELIGION

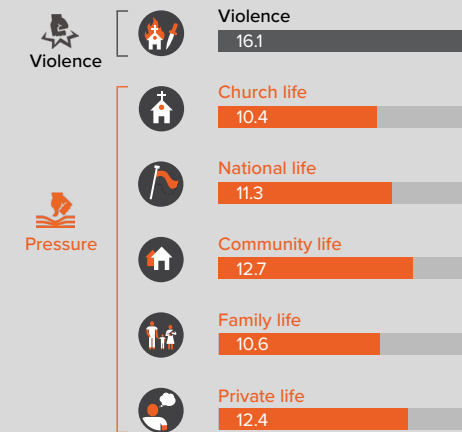
Islam

LEADER

President Mohammad Shahabuddin Chuppi

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **74**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Dictatorial paranoia, Islamic oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN BANGLADESH:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/bangladesh

Life as a Christian in Bangladesh can be fraught with danger.

Converts, whether from a Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or an ethnic/tribal background, face the most severe restrictions, discrimination and attacks in Bangladesh. Fearing attack from extremists, they often gather in small house churches or secret groups. Churches that evangelize among the Muslim majority face persecution, but even traditional churches such as the Roman Catholic Church may experience attacks or threats made to their clergy. This reporting period saw significant political turmoil in the country, as violent riots led to the resignation of the prime minister. Amidst the instability there was an increase in extremist attacks on Christians, especially converts. Volatile times are always a special challenge for religious minorities. Christians who belong to ethnic minorities can experience double persecution – first for their ethnicity, second for their faith. Caught up in a complex conflict between the military and rival armed groups, members of the majority-Christian Bawm ethnic group have been killed, and others forced to flee.

PRAY WITH US

- Last year's riots and the breakdown of law and order led to many believers being attacked. Ask God to protect every Christian in Bangladesh.
- Many believers were impacted by a cyclone in May 2024. Pray that they will be able to find hope.
- Praise God for the Bangladeshi believers who continue to live as salt and light even though it puts them at risk.



25. UZBEKISTAN

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

406,000 (1%)

MAIN RELIGION

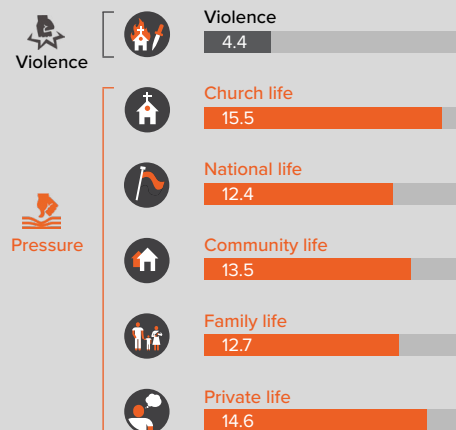
Islam

LEADER

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **73**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Dictatorial paranoia, Islamic oppression, Clan oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN UZBEKISTAN:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/uzbekistan

Converts face pressure from family and friends while the government closely monitors churches.

Uzbekistan is ruled by an authoritarian government that heavily monitors the population, especially religious groups. A country expert shared that in one part of Uzbekistan, “every pastor and his family were surveilled by about 30 people. Practically every step was watched.”

The historic Russian Orthodox churches experience the least persecution from the government, but they are not permitted to share their faith with the rest of the Uzbek population. All other Christian communities face some sort of monitoring and pressure. Churches that are not registered by the state are often raided by the police, with people arrested, threatened and fined for having an illegal meeting.

Converts from Muslim families bear the brunt of persecution from both the state and also from their own families and communities. It’s perceived as a betrayal to leave Islam and brings great shame on the family. These new believers may be threatened, locked away, divorced, disowned or physically abused.

PRAY WITH US

- As the government continues to target Christians and churches for abuse, ask God to help them persevere and be witnesses to Christ’s love.
- Pray that unregistered churches will not be targeted or harassed by authorities.
- Ask God to be with converts from Islam, who can experience pressure from their families and communities.



26. CUBA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

6,843,000 (61%)

MAIN RELIGION

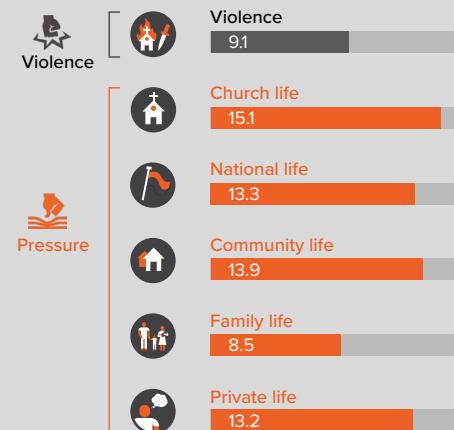
Christianity

LEADER

President Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermudez

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **73**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Dictatorial paranoia, Communist and post-Communist oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN CUBA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/cuba

The government has targeted church leaders and Christian activists who speak out against human rights abuses.

Since 1959, Cuba has been ruled by the Communist Party, which tries to control the church. The government reacts harshly to anyone who opposes it. Church leaders and Christian activists who criticize the regime can face interrogation, arrest and imprisonment. They also suffer smear campaigns, travel restrictions, and harassment (which can include physical violence and damage to church buildings).

These leaders’ family members also face threats, including losing custody of their children. The government often refuses to register new churches, forcing many to operate illegally. These churches are vulnerable to fines, property confiscation and even demolition.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray for church leaders who can be targeted for surveillance and abuse from state authorities. Ask God to provide strength and wisdom.
- Pray that all churches will be allowed to remain open and that the authorities who monitor them will be touched by the message they hear.
- Ask God to provide strength and encouragement to Cuban believers.



27. CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

4,433,000 (75%)

MAIN RELIGION

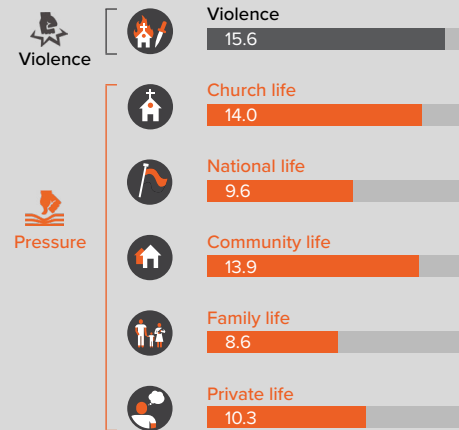
Christianity

LEADER

President Faustin-Archange Touadéra

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **72**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Organized corruption and crime

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN CAR:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/CAR

The Central African Republic is a highly dangerous and violent place for followers of Jesus.

Life in the Central African Republic (CAR) has been dangerous for more than ten years. A civil war engulfing much of the country began in 2013, with violence along both ethnic and religious lines. Christians are often caught in the middle: if they speak out against the atrocities committed by any of the warring factions, they can be targeted, their churches burned and entire communities displaced. Some of the armed groups specifically target Christians, so followers of Christ are caught up in conflict simply because of their faith.

Additionally, converts from Islam can face persecution from family members and the surrounding community. New believers can be ostracized, and violence has been used to pressure Christians to recant their faith.

PRAY WITH US

- The civil war in CAR has lasted more than a decade, pray that God will bring peace.
- Political unrest in CAR has led to Christians being targeted by extremists. Pray that God would protect His people.
- Rebel groups often use sexual violence to persecute Christian women and girls. Pray that God would bring emotional, spiritual and physical healing to these survivors.

28. NIGER

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

69,200 (less than 1%)

MAIN RELIGION

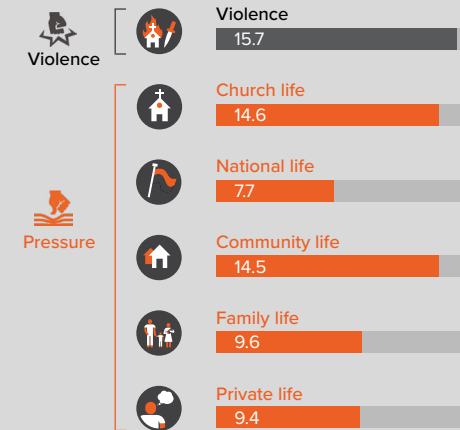
Islam

LEADER

Gen. Abdourahmane Tchiani

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **72**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Organized corruption and crime

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN NIGER:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/niger

Islamist insurgents are gaining power and influence, exacerbating violence and targeting Christians.

The situation for Christians worsened after the July 2023 coup, when General Abdourahmane Tiani declared himself Niger's new leader. There were fears this would open the country to further attacks from Islamist extremists. The impact of this continued throughout 2024.

In areas under militant control, church services are at risk for potential violence or physical attack. The safety and freedom of Christians has been significantly limited by frequent attacks and kidnappings. There has also been a rise in attacks on Christian property, such as churches, schools and healthcare centres.

Those who leave Islam to follow Jesus face pressure from their families to renounce their new faith. Pressure also comes from the authorities, and this is likely to increase in the near future. The legal process for registering a church is arduous and has been used to prevent Christians from gathering. This impacts their sense of community. Believers can also face discrimination in the public sector.

PRAY WITH US

- Please pray that God will bring order to the political chaos and prevent extremists from taking power or territory.
- Pray that God will protect Christians from extremist attacks.
- Pray for converts from Islam, especially young people, who face rejection and oppression from their families and communities.



Photo: © tonkolnik/Shutterstock.com

29. TURKMENISTAN

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

164,000 (2%)

MAIN RELIGION

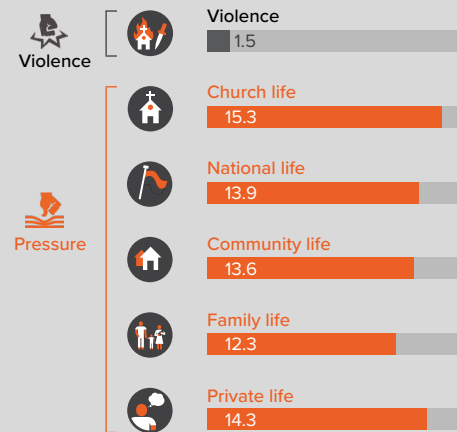
Islam

LEADER

President Serdar Berdimuhamedov

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **71**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Dictatorial paranoia, Islamic oppression, Clan oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN TURKMENISTAN:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/turkmenistan

The state violates the rights of all Christians but monitors church leaders especially heavily.

Turkmenistan is a former soviet state, and it is still ruled by an authoritarian government that heavily monitors the population, especially religious groups. There are many restrictions to how Christians can live out their faith in Turkmenistan. Printing or importing Christian materials, holding unofficial meetings, or even downloading Christian songs can result in a fine or a worse punishment. Christian leaders are the most closely observed. Even the country's historical Russian Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic churches can find their Sunday services being monitored.

The majority of people in Turkmenistan are Muslims. People who become Christians from this background are at risk of being shamed, harassed, disinherited or even beaten by their family, friends or community. Even if other family members are Christians, women and girls can be targeted to intimidate their Christian husbands and the wider Christian community.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray that God will soften the hearts of the leadership in Turkmenistan, and that they will find the hope of Jesus.
- Ask God to make a way for His Word and other Christian materials to reach believers hungry for Scripture.
- Many church leaders in Turkmenistan are monitored by the authorities. Pray they will be protected and that they will lead with grace and peace.



Photo: © Austin Curtis, UNSPLASH

30. NICARAGUA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

6,775,000 (95%)

MAIN RELIGION

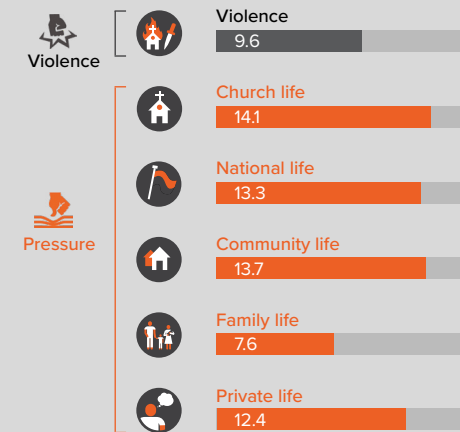
Christianity

LEADER

President Jose Daniel Ortega Saavedra

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **71**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Dictatorial paranoia, Communist and post-Communist oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN NICARAGUA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/nicaragua

Government repression has affected the lives and freedom of Christians in the country.

Those who speak out against President Ortega are viewed as destabilizing agents. Changes to the law in recent years means that church leaders are labelled terrorists and coup plotters. The situation has deteriorated significantly since 2018, when widespread protests broke out against the dictatorial regime. Years later, retribution continues against those perceived to have opposed the regime, even those who merely provided shelter and medical assistance during the protests.

Christians have been among those to raise their voice, but it's coming at an alarming cost. Christian leaders have been harassed and arrested, Christian properties seized, Christian schools, TV stations and charities closed, and churches monitored and intimidated. In light of these pressures, many Christians, particularly church leaders, have felt forced to flee the country. Many more have been expelled. Persecution against the church aims not just to silence the church, but to undermine their credibility and prevent their message from spreading.

PRAY WITH US

- Please pray for God's protection for church leaders who courageously continue to speak out against government injustice.
- Pray that Open Doors persecution preparedness training and discipleship seminars will help believers live as salt and light.
- Pray that believers who are monitored by the government will not be deterred from sharing the gospel.

31. MEXICO



NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

123,265,000 (95%)

MAIN RELIGION

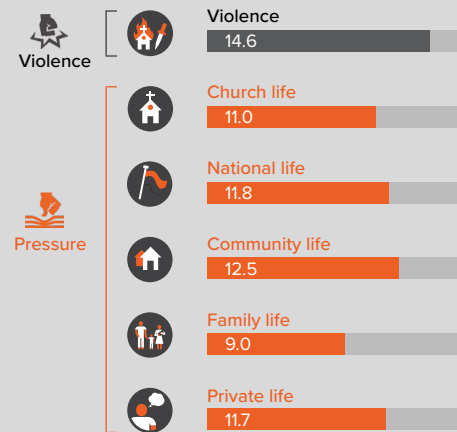
Christianity

LEADER

President Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **71**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Organized corruption and crime,
Clan oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN MEXICO:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/mexico

Persecution is a real risk for any Christian deemed a threat to cartel activity.

Although the majority of Mexico's population is Christian, many believers live in danger of persecution, particularly from criminal gangs, drug cartels and indigenous groups. In many parts of the country, the presence of criminal groups is growing. Christians who bravely speak out against their activities, or who are involved in community work or evangelism (especially with youth, drug addicts and migrants) are deemed a threat. That makes them a target. In some cases, Christian children or the children of church leaders are singled out.

In some Indigenous communities, those who decide to follow Jesus face ostracism, fines, incarceration and forced displacement. Given that indigenous leaders are those who administer justice in such areas, believers have no one to ask to investigate wrongdoing and protect their religious freedom. These families can also face harassment from the community, such as property damage, restriction of access to schools for their children, and threats.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray that God will protect His people living in areas where drug cartels and criminal gangs are present.
- Pray that God will continue to draw to Himself and care for believers from Indigenous communities.
- Pray for God to strengthen Open Doors local partners so that they would be ambassadors who help to build Jesus's kingdom of hope and peace.

32. OMAN



Photo: © tanja cotoaga, UNSPLASH

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

187,000 (4%)

MAIN RELIGION

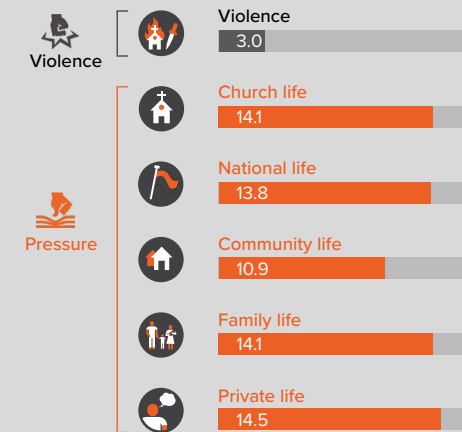
Islam

LEADER

Sultan and Prime Minister Haitham bin Tarik Al Said

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **70**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Dictatorial paranoia,
Clan oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN OMAN:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/oman

All Christians continue to be closely monitored by the government.

While most Omanis practice a moderately conservative form of Islam, there is almost no tolerance for family members who convert to Christianity due to a strong clan mentality. Omani citizens who convert are put under pressure from family and society to recant their faith. Since they can be expelled from the family home, lose their jobs and face problems over child custody and inheritance, many keep their faith hidden.

Immigrant Christian communities are tolerated, provided they avoid sharing their faith with Muslims, but their facilities are restricted. Christian meetings are monitored to record any political statements and determine if Omani nationals are attending. All religious organizations must be registered with the authorities. Immigrant Muslims converting to Christianity experience pressure similar to their home countries, as they often live within their own national or ethnic communities.

PRAY WITH US

- Please pray for church communities, that God will protect them.
- Ask that immigrant believers will have wisdom and boldness in living out their faith.
- Pray for Open Doors partners on the Arabian Peninsula to shine the light of Christ.



Photo: © Christian Alemu, PEXELS

33. ETHIOPIA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

77,509,000 (60%)

MAIN RELIGION

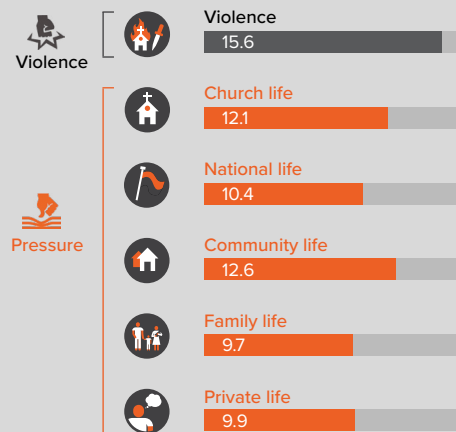
Christianity

LEADER

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **70**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Christian denominational protectionism, Islamic oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN ETHIOPIA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/ethiopia

Christian communities are facing serious religious freedom issues.

In Ethiopia, non-traditional Christians get the harshest treatment from local authorities and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC). Converts from Islam, especially in the east and southeast, and those from Orthodox backgrounds face intense family and community pressure. In other regions, Christians are attacked by Islamist mobs and often denied community resources, leading to social isolation.

The political violence over the past three years, along with recent conflicts in the Tigray, Amhara and Oromia regions, have made things worse for Christians. Many churches have been attacked and destroyed, and even those seeking refuge in churches were not safe from violence.

PRAY WITH US

- When believers leave Islam or the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and join evangelical communities, they can experience heavy pressure. Pray for them.
- Pray for believers living in unstable parts of Ethiopia where they may be targeted for following Jesus. Ask God to protect them.
- Pray for unity among all Christians in Ethiopia, that they will all remain dedicated to Jesus.



Photo: © Justachemphotographer, PEXELS

34. TUNISIA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

23,300 (less than 1%)

MAIN RELIGION

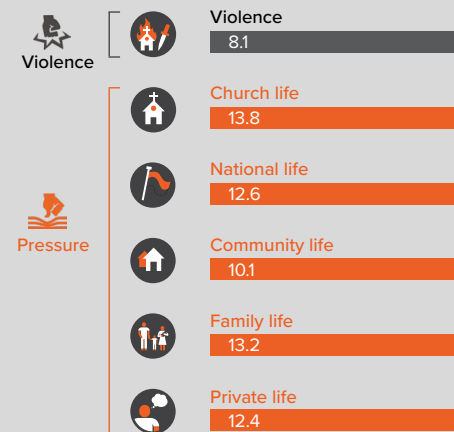
Islam

LEADER

President Kais Saied

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **70**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Dictatorial paranoia

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN TUNISIA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/tunisia

Arrests and incidents involving house churches increased this year.

Tunisian Christians face hostility from society, and most choose to worship in private. Converts from Islam whose new faith is discovered are considered to have brought shame on their families. They can face rejection and threats from their families and communities.

Christians who have migrated from other countries, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, also live in Tunisia. These believers are largely left alone as long as they don't share their faith with Tunisian Muslims. However, political rhetoric about migrants has caused such harsh racial abuse that many have fled the country.

Being known as a Christian affects a Tunisian's reputation, their job security and, in the worst cases, can result in complete rejection or abuse from their Muslim family and community. The authorities monitor church gatherings. Despite this, the church in North Africa is growing.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray that converts from Islam will be sheltered from abuse and rejection.
- Ask God to help Tunisian Christians forbidden from worshipping publicly. Pray that God will guide communities of Christians that can help them grow in faith.



Photo: © krd photographer, PEXELS



35. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

100,566,000 (95%)

MAIN RELIGION

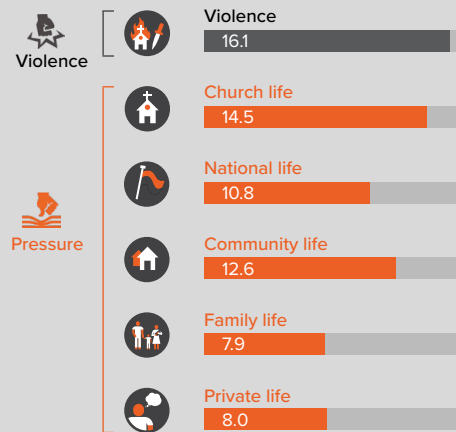
Christianity

LEADER

President Felix Tshisekedi

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: 70

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Organized corruption and crime

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN DRC:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/drc

Last year saw an escalation in attacks against Christians by the Allied Democratic Forces.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), especially in the eastern region, Christians face severe persecution and violence, frequently from Islamist militants, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). Allied with the Islamic State group, the ADF abduct and kill Christians and attack churches, leading to widespread terror, insecurity and displacement.

The M23 rebel group, reportedly supported by Rwanda, also targets Christian civilians, making the situation even worse. Converts from Islam and indigenous religions face pressure from their families to return to their old faiths. Catholic church leaders who speak out for fair elections risk harassment. This mix of militant threats, family pressures and political interference creates a dangerous and fearful environment for Christians in Eastern Congo.

PRAY WITH US

- So many Christians have lost everything and have been forced to flee their homes. Pray these displaced believers will find stability and hope.
- Despite the ongoing attacks, people continue to come to faith in the DRC. Pray for their faith to grow strong and that they will be well disciplined.
- Pray for peace, and that extremists will turn toward the Lord.

36. BHUTAN

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

18,800 (2%)

MAIN RELIGION

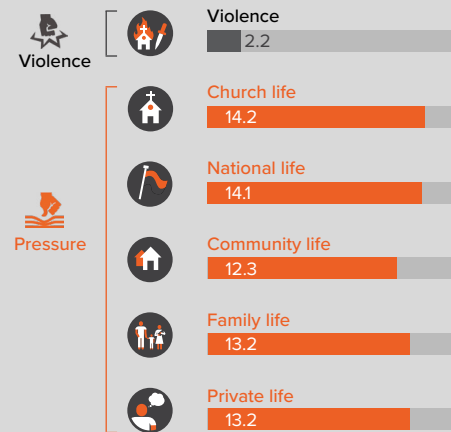
Buddhism

LEADER

King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: 69

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Religious nationalism

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN BHUTAN:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/bhutan

Converts from Buddhism are most vulnerable to persecution in Bhutan.

Everyone in Bhutan is assumed to be Buddhist. Anyone who converts to Christianity is watched with suspicion, and efforts are made to bring them back to Buddhism. Since there are no registered churches in Bhutan, Christians instead resort to gathering in homes. No churches are officially recognized by the state, which means that Christians who gather in these small fellowships are acting illegally, leaving them vulnerable to criminal penalties. In addition, local authorities often refuse to issue Christians with the right paperwork to file loan applications, property registration, job applications and ID card renewals.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray for believers who can only attend churches that exist in a legal grey area. Pray they will be able to continue gathering together.
- Ask God to protect and preserve believers who have converted from Buddhism.
- Christians can be denied citizenship and other civic rights in Bhutan. Pray that God will help these believers find their worth and citizenship in Him.



Photo: © sinamultimedia, PEXELS

37. MOZAMBIQUE

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

19,973,000 (57%)

MAIN RELIGION

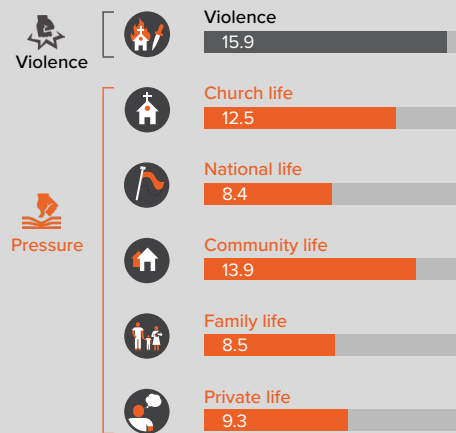
Christianity

LEADER

President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **68**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Organized corruption and crime

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN MOZAMBIQUE:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/mozambique

In 2024, extremists launched a campaign targeting Christians called *Kill Them Wherever You Find Them*.

The rise of extremism in the north of the country has had a devastating impact on the lives of believers. Churches have been burned down, pastors abducted and many killed. The objective of these groups is to establish a strict Islamic state, and Christians are often targeted as symbols of resistance to this extremist ideology.

Mozambique has also become a major hub for drug trafficking, contributing to a climate of lawlessness and violence, which indirectly affects the Christian community. Church youth workers are particularly at risk, as they are often seen as threats to the cartels for speaking out and for seeking to protect potential recruits.

Converts are vulnerable to persecution from their families. This can include divorce, forced marriage, loss of custody of children and disinheritance.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray for protection for believers in northern Mozambique as the region remains unstable and vulnerable to attacks from extremist groups.
- Please pray that God will comfort and heal Christians who are severely traumatized because of the violent attacks.
- Pray for Open Doors partners who work in Mozambique to be protected as they seek to strengthen the faith of believers.



Photo: © radis, PEXELS

38. KAZAKHSTAN

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

5,031,000 (25%)

MAIN RELIGION

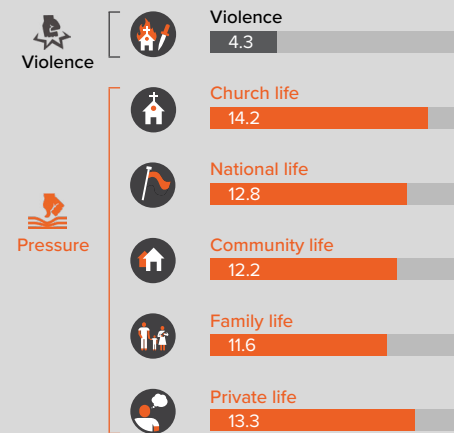
Islam

LEADER

President Kasym-Zhmart Tokayev

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **68**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Dictatorial paranoia, Islamic oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN KAZAKHSTAN:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/kazakhstan

Religious freedom in Kazakhstan is restricted by the nation's Religion Law.

In Kazakhstan, religious freedom is heavily restricted by the country's Religion Law, dating back to 2011. The government continually tightens its control over society, leading to increased surveillance, raids on meetings and arrests. They use the threat of militant Islam to justify these restrictions.

Russian Orthodox churches face fewer issues since they typically don't engage with the Kazakhstani population. Indigenous Christians with a Muslim background suffer the most. They face persecution from both the state and their own families, friends and communities. Some converts are locked up by their families, beaten and eventually expelled from their communities. Local imams also preach against them, further isolating these converts.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray for Christians who can be targeted for violations of Kazakhstan's Religion Law. Ask God to protect churches from misuse of these regulations.
- Believers in Kazakhstan have trouble getting access to Bibles. Pray that God's Word will find its way to every believer in the country.
- The government of Kazakhstan regularly monitors church leaders. Ask God to protect His servants.

39. TAJIKISTAN

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

62,600 (less than 1%)

MAIN RELIGION

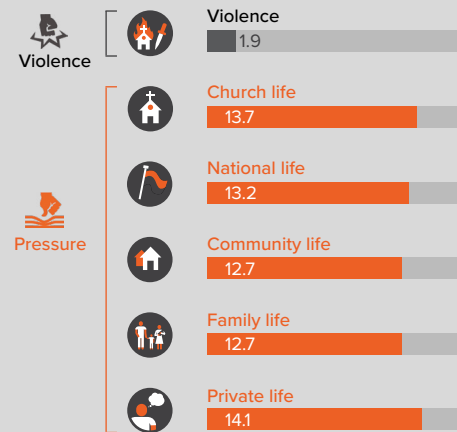
Islam

LEADER

President Emomali Rahmon

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **68**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Dictatorial paranoia, Islamic oppression, Clan oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN TAJIKISTAN:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/tajikistan

Christians face hostility from the authorities and pressure from their communities.

Despite now officially having freedom of religion, the reality is different. The state still imposes restrictions on religious activities mainly to contain Islamist extremism. But the rules and surveillance affect Christians too, and the state is becoming increasingly wary of and hostile toward them.

There are many elements to the Christian life that are illegal without a permit, from holding a religious meeting to printing religious literature. Anyone under age 18 is not allowed to attend church services, and Christians are not allowed to share their faith. In recent years, church meetings have increasingly been raided by the authorities, with church members being interrogated for hours and pressured to inform on others. They can be detained, fined or imprisoned. As a result, the risk of persecution has driven many Christians underground.

Much of the country is Muslim, and believers who come from this background face rejection, humiliation and possible violence from their families and communities.

PRAY WITH US

- Christians who meet in house churches can face monitoring from authorities and government raids. Pray that these believers can worship together without fear.
- Pray for a change in heart for government officials that they will stop infringing on religious freedom.
- Ask God to protect evangelists and other Christian workers who bring God's Word and other Christian resources to His people in Tajikistan.

40. EGYPT

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

10,084,000 (9%)

MAIN RELIGION

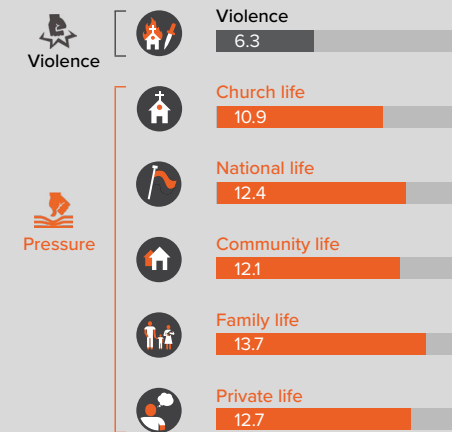
Islam

LEADER

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **68**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Dictatorial paranoia

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN EGYPT:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/egypt

Many Christians are treated as second-class citizens in Egypt.

In Egypt, Christians often face discrimination in their communities. Christian women are harassed on the streets, especially in rural areas, and Christian children are bullied at school. Sometimes Muslim mobs force Christians to leave their homes after accusations of blasphemy. These incidents mostly happen in Upper Egypt, where radical Islamist groups are active. The Salafi al-Nour party, despite being a religious party, operates legally and exerts strong influence in poor, rural areas.

Egyptian President el-Sisi speaks positively about Christians and attempts to promote unity, but local authorities often fail to protect Christians from attacks. Building new churches is difficult in certain areas of Egypt, and Christians face hostility and violence from their communities.

In addition to community pressure and discrimination, Christians who convert from Islam can also face severe pressure from their families to return to the religion.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray for new believers in Egypt as it is dangerous for someone to leave Islam to follow Jesus.
- Pray for Christians who experience discrimination and abuse because of their faith. Ask God to sustain them.
- Pray for Christians who are attacked or have loved ones who have suffered attacks. Pray that God will heal their wounds and restore their hope.



Photo: abulmuanyar, UNSPLASH

41. QATAR

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

381,000 (14%)

MAIN RELIGION

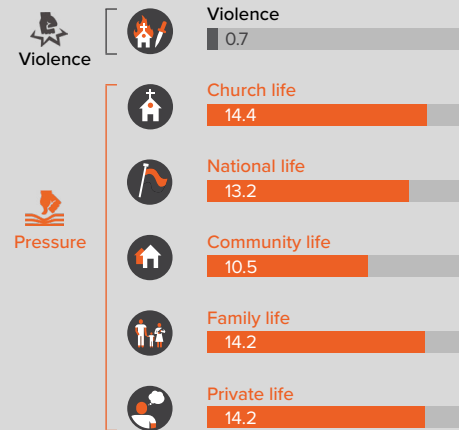
Islam

LEADER

Emir Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **67**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Clan oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN QATAR:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/qatar

Christians face restrictions and persecution from the government, society and their own families.

Christians in Qatar are either workers from non-Muslim countries or people from Muslim backgrounds and the two rarely interact. Migrant workers in Qatar are allowed to practice their faith as long as they stick to Qatar's rules. There is an official religious complex where a select number of churches have been allowed to meet. Qatari citizens are not allowed to enter, and migrant Christians must not speak about Christianity to Muslims. If they do, they may be arrested or deported.

Converts cannot openly practice Christianity and can face discrimination, harassment and police monitoring. Changing one's faith from Islam is not officially recognized, which can cause legal problems around marriage and property ownership.

Qatar is increasingly using advanced technology to monitor the populace, leading Christians in Qatar to become increasingly careful about their activities. There are few reports of Christians being physically harmed for their faith because believers from a Muslim background keep their faith secret.

PRAY WITH US

- Thank God that so many migrant Christians in Qatar can worship Him in freedom.
- Pray that native Qataris will be permitted to convert from Islam without repercussion.
- Pray for native converts in Qatar, many of whom are secret Christians. Ask God to protect their faith and help them find other believers.



42. COMOROS

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

5,500 (less than 1%)

MAIN RELIGION

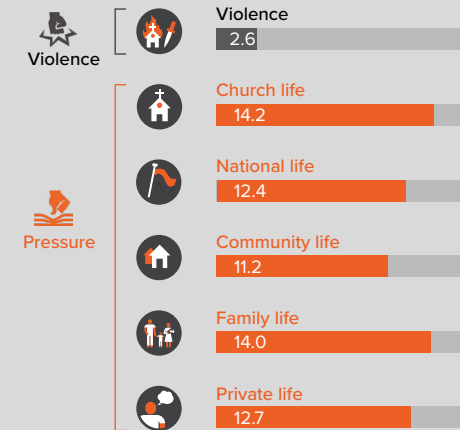
Islam

LEADER

President Azali Assoumani

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **67**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Dictatorial paranoia

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN COMOROS:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/comoros

Comoros remains a very difficult place for followers of Jesus.

Comoros' state religion is Islam, and it's illegal for a person to share about any faith other than Sunni Islam. Any foreigner suspected of proselytizing can be deported, while local Christians who preach Christianity will be prosecuted. Christian worship (and any non-Islamic form of worship) cannot be carried out in public. Christians can only legally worship in three designated churches. Converts from Islam can face significant pressure, as can anyone who is found to have Christian materials in their possession.

PRAY WITH US

- Please pray for Muslim background Christians, especially those rejected by their families and communities.
- Pray that Christians will be able to worship openly, even though Islam is the state religion.
- Ask God to change hearts and laws so that people in the Comoros islands will be able to follow Jesus legally even if they were previously Muslim.



Photo: © Messina, PEXELS

43. CAMEROON

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

17,128,000 (58%)

MAIN RELIGION

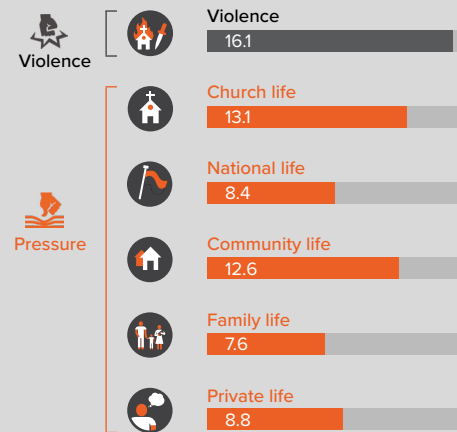
Christianity

LEADER

President Paul Biya

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **67**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Dictatorial paranoia, Organized corruption and crime

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN CAMEROON:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/cameroon

Threats from Islamic extremism have forced believers to live in fear.

Christians in Cameroon face pressure on multiple fronts. The most obvious one is violence and attack in regions of the country with a significant population of Muslim extremists. This is especially the case in the Far North. Here, Islamic militants, specifically Boko Haram and Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP), regularly attack. Christians who live in these areas are targets for violence, including abduction and murder. Converts from Islam are forced to practice their faith in secret, and owning Bibles or Christian books can be extremely dangerous. The violence has forced many churches to close, leaving some believers without a place of worship.

At the same time, all Cameroonians in affected areas suffer in the ongoing conflict between separatists and the nation's government. This violence has created a massive humanitarian crisis. Christians caught in the middle have been accused by both sides of 'harbouring the enemy', and their churches and property have been destroyed.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray for Christians who have endured unspeakable violence. Ask God to heal their wounds, both physical and emotional.
- Many Christians have experienced repeated attacks in the Far North. Pray that God will be with these hurting believers in a powerful way.
- Despite the ongoing attacks, people are coming to faith in Jesus. Pray for their faith to grow strong and that they will be well disciplined.



Photo: © quang-huy-nguy, UNSPLASH

44. VIETNAM

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

9,778,000 (10%)

MAIN RELIGION

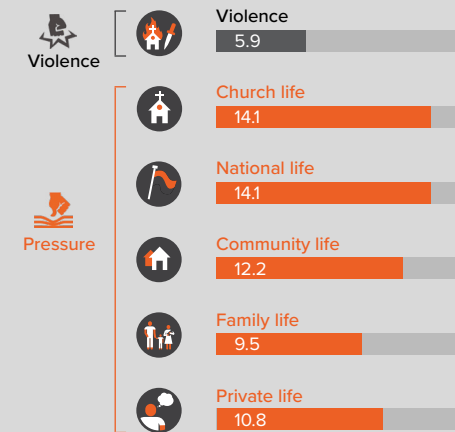
Buddhism

LEADER

General Secretary Tô Lâm
President Luong Cuong

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **67**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Communist and post-Communist oppression, Clan oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN VIETNAM:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/vietnam

There has been an increase in oppression of unregistered churches.

In Vietnam's more remote areas, villagers follow traditional ethnic-animist religions, and persecution towards anybody who becomes a Christian from this background is fierce. Believers can have their homes destroyed and be expelled from the community.

Local authorities crack down on Christian meetings, evangelism or Bible teaching. They may break up church services and detain, threaten, fine and sometimes imprison church leaders, ordering them not to speak about Jesus anymore. They are particularly suspicious of Christians from minority ethnic groups such as the Hmong. Despite this, Hmong Bible teachers bravely travel miles by motorbike into remote areas to train believers in secret Bible schools.

The historical Roman Catholic churches enjoy more freedom than other denominations and groups but can still face interference by the state. Like all Vietnamese people, these Christians are still likely to be imprisoned if they speak out on political issues.

PRAY WITH US

- Ask God to comfort Vietnamese Christians who are oppressed, abused and attacked because of their faith.
- Pray for blessing on the work of Open Doors partners as they help with Bible distribution, leadership training and more.
- Pray that the believers who gather in unregistered churches will be able to follow Jesus without impediment.



Photo: © Igor Sporynin, UNSPLASH

45. TÜRKIYE

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

257,000 (less than 1%)

MAIN RELIGION

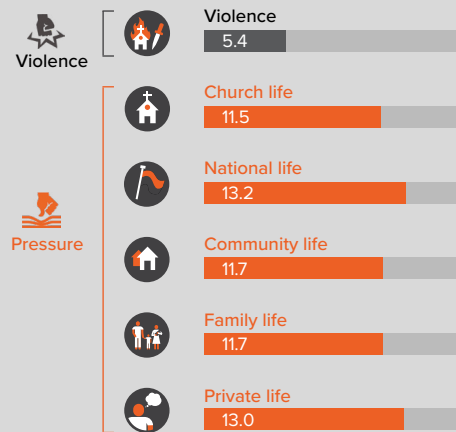
Islam

LEADER

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **67**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Religious nationalism, Dictatorial paranoia, Ethno-religious hostility

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN TÜRKIYE:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/Turkiye

Societal hatred is of serious concern for all Christians, regardless of church background.

There is a strong sense of nationalism in Türkiye today, which regards being a Muslim as necessary to being a loyal Turk. This puts considerable social pressure on Turkish Christians. Although Christianity has an extremely long history in the country, it is still seen as a negative Western influence, even by moderate Muslims and secular Turks who are proud of their national identity.

Converts face strong pressure from their families to change their minds. They may be threatened with divorce, loss of inheritance and being disowned by their family. Foreign Christians with Turkish spouses and children have been banned from entering or re-entering the country. Religion is recorded on the Turkish ID card, making it easy to discriminate against Christian job applicants. Even Greek and Armenian Christians who attend traditional churches aren't considered full members of Turkish society. Their churches struggle with legal obstacles and red tape intended to obstruct the practice of their faith.

PRAY WITH US

- There are some in Türkiye who seek to tie Turkish identity to Islam. Pray that there would be an openness to accepting people of all faiths as true Turks.
- Ask God to draw close to converts from Islam, particularly those who are rejected by their families.
- Praise God that many believers in Türkiye can worship Jesus openly and without fear.



Photo: © Johnego, PEXELS

46. COLOMBIA

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

49,693,000 (95%)

MAIN RELIGION

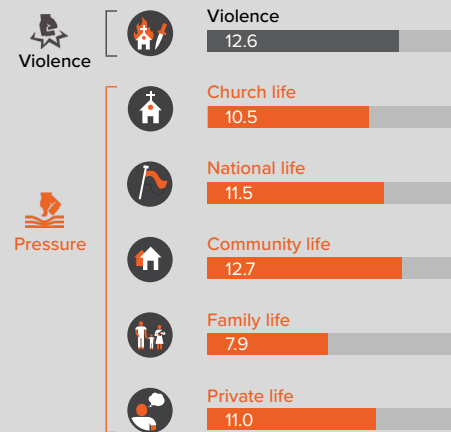
Christianity

LEADER

President Gustavo Francisco Petro Urrego

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **66**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Organized corruption and crime, Clan oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN COLOMBIA:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/colombia

Christians remain at risk if they live in areas dominated by guerrilla groups.

The fragile peace between the government and guerrilla groups has had limited impact. Although violence has receded, guerrilla groups, often linked to drug gangs, have grown more powerful and control more territory. These groups often target Christians, especially if they perceive that believers are opposing the cartels' or gangs' business. Church leaders are particularly at risk because they are seen as competing for influence over the young people who compose much of the guerrilla groups' ranks.

In some communities, Christian preachers and Indigenous converts can face hostility because they are seen as traitors to their tribe or community. These believers live at risk of expulsion from the community, imprisonment, ostracism and other punishments.

There are signs that Colombia's public sector is less committed to true pluralism. Christians speaking in public about their beliefs are sometimes targeted for supposedly being discriminatory or promoters of hate-speech.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray that God would work on the hearts of warring parties and that Christians would be strengthened and emboldened to be peacemakers.
- Praise God for believers who come to faith in Indigenous contexts.
- Pray for Christians living in areas controlled by cartels. Pray for their protection and wisdom as they seek to follow Christ.

Photo: © Irene Strong, UNSPLASH

47. KYRGYZSTAN

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

263,000 (4%)

MAIN RELIGION

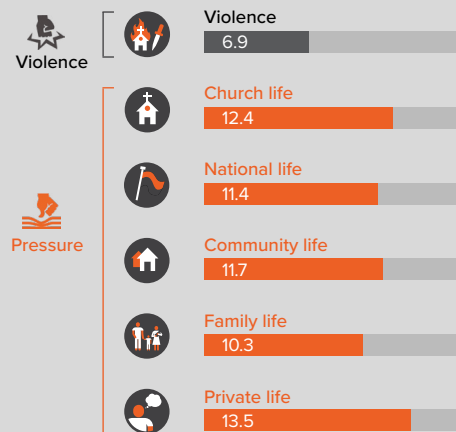
Islam

LEADER

President Sadyr Japarov

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **66**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Dictatorial paranoia, Islamic oppression, Clan oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN KYRGYZSTAN:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan enters the top 50 because of the number of violent incidents that impacted believers.

In Kyrgyzstan, local authorities have considerable power and tend to be under the influence of the local Muslim community. This has strong repercussions, especially for converts to Christianity. Russian Orthodox churches experience the fewest problems from the government as they do not usually attempt to evangelize the Kyrgyz population. Communities of believers that do reach out to share the gospel can come under pressure and even attack. Local Christians who have converted from Islam bear the brunt of persecution. Some converts are locked up for long periods by their families and beaten. Local Islamic teachers preach against conversion, leading some converts to be expelled from their communities.

PRAY WITH US

- Many Kyrgyz Christians are persecuted by their relatives, family, local government and village people. Pray for their faith and for their strength.
- Pray for all persecuted Christians in Kyrgyzstan. Some have had to flee from their villages and homes.
- Ask God to change the hearts of the Kyrgyz people toward Christians. Pray they will be accepted by their community and government.

VIOLENCE AND REPRESSION REACH NEW HEIGHTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

No country in the top 50 saw a greater increase in persecution than Kyrgyzstan, which added more than seven points to its score on the 2025 World Watch List. Ranked 61st last year, Kyrgyzstan climbed 14 spots to 47th, its first top-50 appearance since 2013. The sharp rise stems from a surge in violence against Christians.

For example, a Christian organization in Karakul experienced multiple attacks where stones were thrown at the building, trying to drive them off the property. In March, armed officials raided a church in Talas, detaining worshippers and forcing two church leaders to sign confessions of “illegal missionary activities.” Such incidents drove Kyrgyzstan’s violence score to unprecedented levels.

This occurred amid a presidency consolidating power and passing laws that restrict freedoms under the guise of cultural values. Amnesty International noted intensified crackdowns on dissent, stifling freedom of association and expression.

Neighbouring Kazakhstan also experienced a significant increase, rising nine places to 38th.

The country’s three-point score increase was primarily due to violence against Protestants, a small minority within Kazakhstan’s 25% Christian population. Reports include police raids on unregistered worship meetings and at least 20 Christian women facing sexual abuse and at least as many were forcibly married to Muslim men.

These incidents reflect a worsening climate under authoritarian governments fearful of dissent. In both countries, violence and repression have reached troubling new heights, underscoring the rising challenges for Christians in Central Asia.

PLEASE PRAY

- Pray for church meetings to go unnoticed by authorities.
- Pray for strength and encouragement for believers as they face the increasing violence.
- Pray for women and girls who are at increased risk of assault and forced marriage because they follow Jesus.

48. BRUNEI

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

55,600 (12%)

MAIN RELIGION

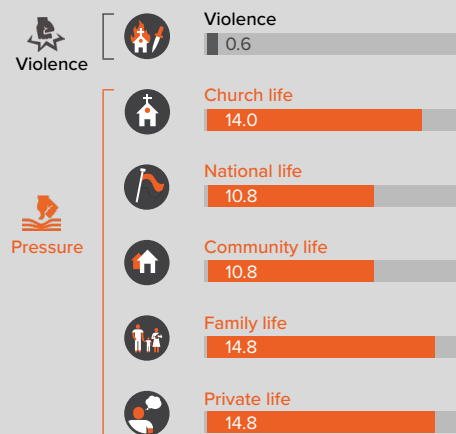
Islam

LEADER

Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **66**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Dictatorial paranoia

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN BRUNEI:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/brunei

Converts from Islam face the most intense persecution in Brunei.

Converts from Islam face considerable pressure as conversion is punishable by law and everything will be done to bring converts back to their original faith. Non-traditional Christian communities cannot be registered as churches, but must be registered as companies, societies or family centres. As such, they are treated as secular organizations and are required to submit their financial and operational reports to the government every year. The whole of society (Christians included) is affected by the continuing introduction of Sharia (Islamic law).

Young people are particularly affected by the mandatory religious education of children. Under changes announced in October 2023, children as young as three years old now have religious education incorporated into their general studies (The Star Malaysia, 25 October 2023), strengthening the teachings of the majority religion.

PRAY WITH US

- Pray for believers in Brunei who have limited access to Bibles. Pray they will be able to read and study God's Word freely.
- Thank God that some churches are able to gather for worship, even though legally their situation is precarious. Pray they will be able to stay open.
- Pray that the monarchy in Brunei will be open to the truth of Jesus.

49. CHAD

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

6,003,000 (32%)

MAIN RELIGION

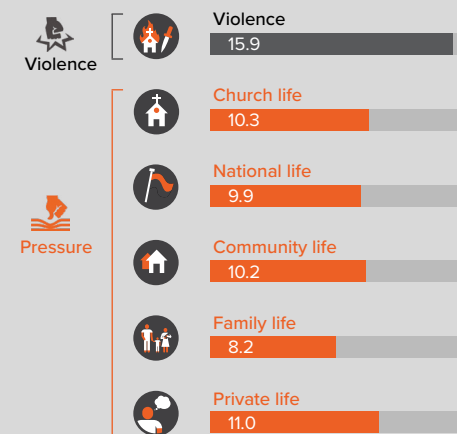
Islam

LEADER

President Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



TOTAL: **65**

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Islamic oppression, Dictatorial paranoia, Clan oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN CHAD:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/chad

New to the World Watch List due to increased violence and pressure stemming from rising Islamic radicalism.

Chad faces immense challenges due to its proximity to countries struggling with radical jihadist groups, and the presence of those groups now appearing within Chad's borders. Boko Haram and other extremist groups operate in Chad, and displacement crises from surrounding countries (especially Sudan) have contributed to its instability. In such an environment, being a Christian comes with significant risks, particularly in rural areas where fear often keeps believers from even attending church.

In regions dominated by Islam, individuals who convert to Christianity are especially vulnerable, and are often forced to practice their faith in secret to avoid violent backlash from their families or communities. Although Chad's constitution promises religious freedom, it can be difficult to convert legally and to register churches.

PRAY WITH US

- Ask God to protect Christians who live in areas where they are vulnerable to attacks from Boko Haram or other Islamic militant groups.
- Pray that God's presence will encourage Christians in Chad.
- As Chad faces displacement crises both internally and externally, ask God to help refugees and to equip His people to serve the displaced and the poor.



50. JORDAN

NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS

170,000 (1%)

MAIN RELIGION

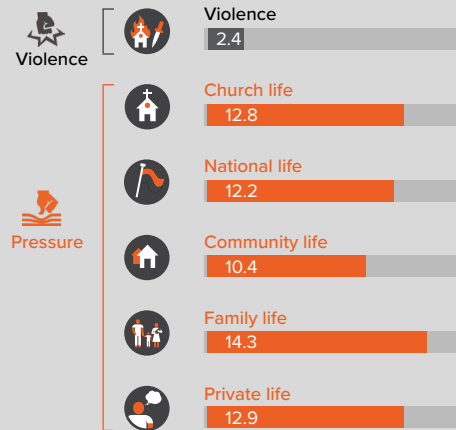
Islam

LEADER

King Abdallah II

PROFILE OF PERSECUTION

Maximum 16.7 per sphere



SOURCE OF PERSECUTION:

Clan oppression, Islamic oppression

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BEING A CHRISTIAN IN JORDAN:

www.worldwatchlist.ca/jordan

While Christians in Jordan experience significant religious freedom, converts from Islam can face pressure and persecution.

Most Christians in Jordan belong to Orthodox or Roman Catholic churches and enjoy a significant level of religious freedom. However, they can face employment discrimination and restrictions against public preaching. Converts from Islam risk beatings, arrest and sometimes death for openly sharing their faith. Christians involved in evangelism or helping converts often face threats and daily obstructions.

Compared to other Middle Eastern countries, Christians in Jordan live in relative security under King Abdallah's leadership, which tolerates and, to a degree, supports recognized churches. However, the state to some extent monitors Christian communities and can harass unrecognized churches, especially those that evangelize. Despite Jordan's image as a tolerant nation, radicalized Sunnis and returning jihadists pose a threat to Christians.

PRAY WITH US

- Thank God that many Christians in Jordan are free to worship. Ask the Lord to make their worship a sign of light and hope.
- Pray for converts from Islam in Jordan. Their faith in Jesus can make them a target for abuse and even attack.
- Ask God to bless the monarchy of Jordan and help them to see the hope of Jesus in the lives of Jordanian believers.



PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that the church would be strengthened in these countries.
- Pray for boldness and courage for believers to continue to share the gospel.
- Pray for protection for believers as they faithfully follow Him.

BEYOND THE TOP 50

More than 380 million Christians suffer high levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith. In Open Doors' World Watch List top 50 alone, 310 million Christians face very high or extreme levels.

Beyond the top 50, there are even more countries that experience high levels of persecution.

Here is a list of the countries outside the top 50 which scored at least a high level of persecution:

- 51. Malaysia
- 52. Azerbaijan
- 53. Kenya
- 54. Nepal
- 55. Tanzania
- 56. Russian Federation
- 57. Djibouti
- 58. Kuwait
- 59. Indonesia
- 60. United Arab Emirates
- 61. Sri Lanka
- 62. Palestinian Territories
- 63. Burundi
- 64. Rwanda
- 65. Honduras
- 66. Togo
- 67. Bahrain
- 68. Guinea
- 69. Ukraine
- 70. Angola
- 71. Venezuela
- 72. Uganda
- 73. Ivory Coast
- 74. Lebanon
- 75. Gambia
- 76. South Sudan
- 77. Belarus
- 78. Philippines

PRAYER RESOURCES

Open Doors produces prayer resources for you to pray for all God's people throughout the year. We invite you to join Canadians and Christians around the world in prayer for those who are persecuted for their faith.

Visit: www.opendoorscanada.org/pray

FOR CHURCHES

pause A MOMENT FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Pause is designed to help churches and families connect regularly with their persecuted family around the world through prayer.

Every month, a new toolkit in English and French is available to download for free!

Visit www.opendoorscanada.org/pause to learn more and to download the toolkit.

IDOP



International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church will take place November 2, 2025.

Free downloadable prayer resources are available in the beginning of September for church use or personal use.

For more information, visit: www.opendoorscanada.org/IDOP

ONE WITH THEM

One With Them: *A Day for Christian Captives* will take place on Sunday, June 22, 2025.

Every June, Open Doors Canada focuses on those held captive for their faith culminating on June 22, when churches across Canada will take time in their services to pray for Christian captives.

Visit www.onewiththem.ca.



Invite an Open Doors speaker or host a *Church with no Home Tour* Event at your church. These are great opportunities to hear stories of brave faith and spend time in prayer together for our persecuted family.

Email odcevents@odcan.org for more information.



FOR INDIVIDUALS

Join us online on *the first Tuesday of every month* for 45 minutes as we pray through the latest requests from our persecuted family. We meet at 7pm EST and 7pm PST.

Sign up by visiting www.opendoorscanada.org/pray

Text "PRAY" to 1-888-687-2936 to receive prayer requests by text message. Approximately 2 texts per month.

Listen to the *Open Doors Canada Podcast* on your preferred podcasting platform to learn how you can pray for your persecuted family.

Subscribe to emails at www.opendoorscanada.org and receive the monthly prayer calendar with daily prayer points.

We would love to pray for you! Send us your prayer requests and the staff at Open Doors Canada will pray for you.

Email: prayer@odcan.org

WHAT WE DO

For 70 years, Open Doors has been strengthening Christians where faith costs the most, helping them to be the Church in some of the most dangerous places on earth.

Our work is broken down into 4 main categories:

- Prayer, Advocacy and Presence Ministry
- Christian Community Development
- Leadership Training and Discipleship
- Bible and Christian Literature

When you support the persecuted church, you join the global secret network that delivers hope to persecuted Christians in more than 70 countries.

For more information, visit our website: www.opendoorscanada.org



Prayer, Advocacy and Presence Ministry

Open Doors believes that no follower of Jesus should be isolated and that through prayer, advocacy and presence ministry, we can stand with our persecuted family.



Christian Community Development

Last year, Open Doors helped more than 565,000 Christians with emergency relief, community development, education and medical care.



Leadership Training and Discipleship

Last year, Open Doors trained more than 3.6 million persecuted Christians through leadership and discipleship courses, trauma care training and persecution survival seminars.



Bibles and Christian Literature

Last year, Open Doors distributed more than 1.8 million Bibles and Christian literature.



ONE PARTNERSHIP

Our brothers and sisters around the world understand the high cost of faith in Christ. For 70 years, we've seen **their stories** as **our call to action**.

A regular monthly gift is the most effective way to ensure the needs of persecuted believers are met in a timely manner.

[JOIN THE PARTNERSHIP](#)

[WWW.OPENDOORSCANADA.ORG/
ONE-PARTNERSHIP](http://WWW.OPENDOORSCANADA.ORG/ONE-PARTNERSHIP)

HOW YOU CAN HELP

PRAY

Open Doors' founder, Brother Andrew, said, "Our prayers can go where we cannot...there are no borders, no prison walls, no doors that are closed to us when we pray." Pray for the persecuted. Find a list of resources on page 64.

SPEAK

Write letters of encouragement to believers; petition our government to stand for religious freedom around the world; and raise your voice for our persecuted family by sharing about them with your circle of influence.

TRAVEL

Open Doors offers opportunities for you to visit your persecuted family members to encourage and pray for them. Email: travel@odcan.org for more information about future trips.

GIVE

Through your giving, you are helping our persecuted family to stand strong. Give today, or make a lasting impact through a monthly donation. Thank you for your generosity.

OpenDoors®

STRENGTHENING CHRISTIANS WHERE FAITH COSTS THE MOST

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