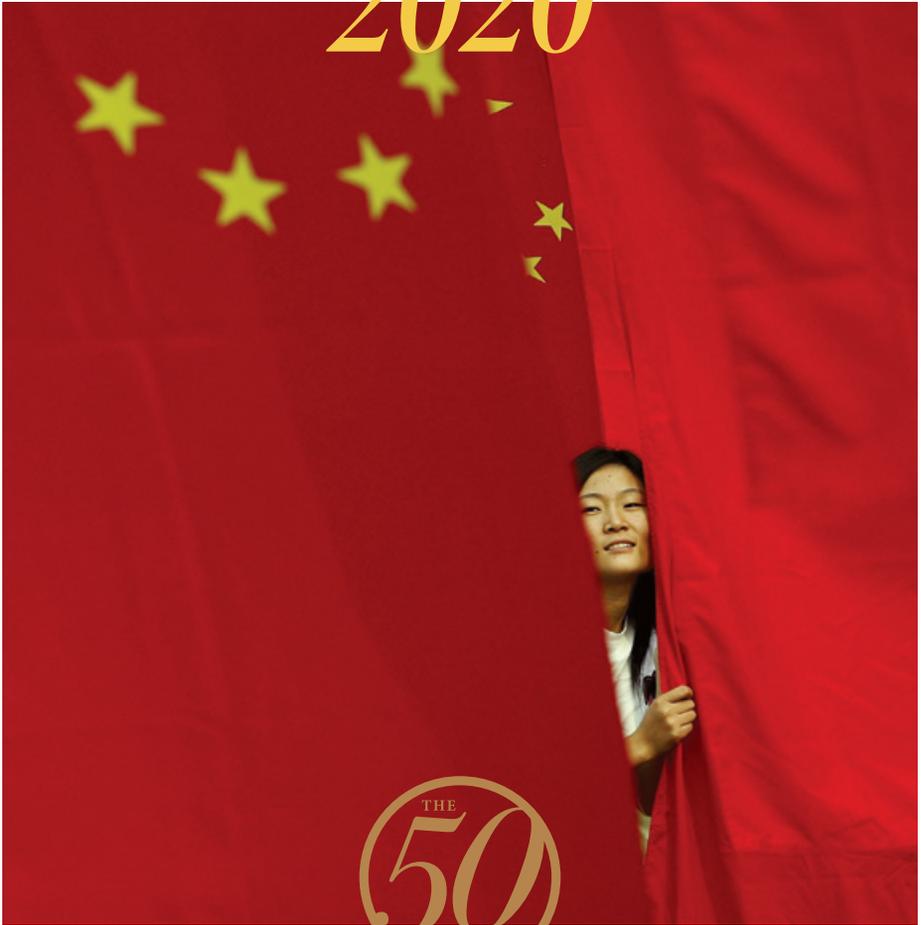




WORLD WATCH LIST 2020



where it's most dangerous
to follow Jesus



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The 50 countries where it's most dangerous to follow Jesus

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WORLD WATCH LIST 2020

A letter from David Curry, CEO Open Doors

When I visited Beijing recently, I found that I was constantly under the cold eyes of CCTV cameras. I couldn't be sure my hotel room wasn't bugged. It's what some Christians in China go through constantly: the reality that the government keeps tabs on them, making sure they don't get out of line. Making sure that Jesus doesn't ever conflict with the wishes of the state.

This is but one type of persecution we track each year in the World Watch List. We also look at brutal violence, like the Easter Sunday bombings in Sri Lanka or the spike in violent attacks in Burkina Faso. But both pressure and violence have the same aim: to destroy the Church of God.

The Bible tells us that the gates of hell will not overcome the Church of God. But the Bible also tells us that the gates of hell will try. That's what the World Watch List is about. It's about how Satan and his forces are trying to defeat God's family. But believers around the world stare Satan in the face, and say with one voice:

NO.

In the pages that follow, you'll read numbers and data that represent real Christians, like you and me, who are standing up for God—and suffering because of it. But these people are not strangers; they are our family. And we have the opportunity to stand with them.

Because through Jesus? We and every Christian living in the 50 countries on the World Watch List are one Church, one Family.



About us

For more than 60 years, Open Doors has served persecuted Christians. Now in more than 60 countries, Open Doors supports God's people with what they need—Bibles, emergency relief aid, trauma counseling, advocacy, training and much more. We're committed to those who suffer for following Jesus, and we believe the persecuted church is part of the DNA of every Christian.

We're present—on the ground—and understand the full story, not just sound bites or secondhand reports. We pull back the curtain to inspire and invite others—people like you—to be part of the amazing story God is writing for His Church. No matter where they live, we believe God's people are one Church, one Family.

ABOUT THE WORLD WATCH LIST



What is the World Watch List?

The World Watch List is an annual report on the global persecution of Christians, ranking the top 50 countries where Christians are persecuted for their faith. Released at the beginning of each year, the list uses data from Open Doors field workers and external experts to quantify and analyze persecution worldwide.

How are the countries ranked?

Countries are ranked by the severity of persecution of Christians, calculated by analyzing the level of violent persecution plus the pressure experienced in five spheres of life. For the detailed methodology, visit [ODUSA.org/WWLMethodology](https://odusa.org/WWLMethodology).

Ranking Methodology



Pressure

Degree of pressure in **five spheres** of Christian life

Max score per sphere: 16.7



Violence

Amount of violent incidents against Christians and the Church

Max score per sphere: 16.7



Church life



Community life



Private life



National life



Family life



Violence

Pressure



+

Violence



=

Rank
Number

MAX SCORE
83.3

MAX SCORE
16.7

MAX SCORE
100

TRENDS IN GLOBAL PERSECUTION



1. In the most populated countries on earth, Christians live in a surveillance state

In China (No. 23), where there are an estimated 97 million Christians, persecution against Christians has taken a technological turn. A recent report cited by CNBC estimates there are approximately 415 million surveillance cameras in China, a number only expected to grow in coming years. China has also developed widespread facial recognition software and established laws requiring facial scans to purchase a phone. When taken together, these two technological advances mean the government can track individuals like never before.

China is also rolling out a country-wide Social Credit System (SCS) by which authorities plan to reward “good” citizenship and punish “bad.” Already, one community has reportedly decided to add penalties for those who “illegally spread Christianity.” It’s easy to see how surveillance technology could be used in tandem with the SCS to make everyday life very difficult for anyone the Chinese government deems insufficiently “Chinese”—including Christians.

Similarly, in India (No. 10), the government plans to introduce a national facial recognition system. There were at least 447 verified incidents of violence and hate crimes against Christians in India in the 2020 World Watch List reporting period. There is fear that more tracking could increase these attacks.



260 M

*CHRISTIANS EXPERIENCE
HIGH LEVELS OF PERSECUTION
IN THE TOP 50 COUNTRIES
on THE WORLD WATCH LIST*

6%

INCREASE
FROM 2019

2. Violent Islamic extremism spikes in sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa is increasingly under threat from Islamic extremist groups. Particularly in countries or in regions where government control is weak or non-existent, these groups are killing, kidnapping and sowing chaos with impunity.

In Burkina Faso (No. 28, a rise of 33 spots from 2019), long-known for its religious tolerance, Christians say they are in a fight for survival. Dozens of Catholic priests have been killed, and Protestant pastors and their families have been killed or kidnapped by violent Islamic militants. In Mali (No. 29), the president said in late 2018 that his country's existence is under threat because of Islamic



9,488

*CHURCHES or
CHRISTIAN BUILDINGS
WERE ATTACKED*

2,983

*CHRISTIANS WERE KILLED for
FAITH-RELATED REASONS*

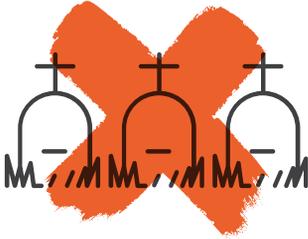
*ON AVERAGE, THAT'S 8 CHRISTIANS
KILLED EVERY DAY FOR THEIR FAITH*

jihadists. Central African Republic (No. 25) is in constant upheaval partially due to the fighting of rebel Islamic militants, many of whom target Christians. And Cameroon (No. 48) faces violence in the north—still a stronghold of Boko Haram.

Boko Haram also maintains a presence in northern Nigeria (No. 12). Nigeria is also impacted by Hausa-Fulani militant herdsman, who carry out ongoing attacks in the North and Middle Belt. Increasingly, the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP)—which has pledged to kill Christians—has also taken root in northern Nigeria.

3. Militant Islam spreads violence and fear in Southeast and South Asia

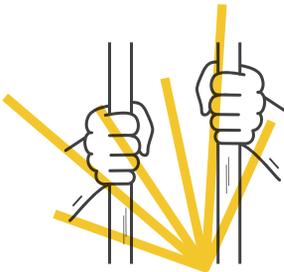
The influence of radical Islamic ideology has dispersed not only across sub-Saharan Africa, but has also emerged in completely unexpected atrocities. In Sri Lanka (No. 30, up from 46 in 2019) 250 people died and more than 500 were injured in attacks on Catholic and Protestant churches and hotels on Easter Sunday.



In Pakistan (No. 5), Muslim radical groups often are given free rein by the government. Given the strength of these groups, no relaxation of Pakistan's notorious blasphemy laws can be expected anytime soon. More than 20 Christians remain in prison either convicted of, or charged with, blasphemy.

3,711

*CHRISTIANS WERE DETAINED
WITHOUT TRIAL, ARRESTED,
SENTENCED and IMPRISONED*



4. Christianity is on the verge of disappearing in Iraq and Syria

Almost nine years of civil war in Syria (No. 11) and years of conflict in Iraq (No. 15) continue to devastate Christian communities. In Iraq, there are now around 202,000 Christians, down from 1.5 million before 2003—an 87 percent reduction in one generation. Some Christians have returned to rebuild their homes, but their return is complicated by security, education, health and employment difficulties.

Syria shows a more complex picture. Of the pre-conflict Christian population of 2.2 million, it is estimated that around 744,000 remain. In government-controlled areas, life amongst the devastation shows some semblance of normalcy, but there are shortages of basic needs, as well as poor healthcare and job options. The Syrian Christian population remains either largely displaced inside the country, or refugees outside it. In addition, the Turkish incursion into north-eastern Syria has directly affected 40,000 or more Christians in the principally Kurdish region.



IF ONE PART
SUFFERS,
every PART
SUFFERS *with* IT.

IF ONE PART
is HONORED, *every*
PART SHARES
in ITS JOY.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:26

AS YOU READ THROUGH THE 2020 WORLD WATCH LIST, YOU'LL SEE THEMES AND STORIES FROM THE 50 COUNTRIES WHERE IT IS MOST DIFFICULT TO BE A CHRISTIAN, IN ADDITION TO INFORMATION ABOUT HOW YOU CAN PRAY FOR EACH COUNTRY.

WE HOPE THESE DETAILS WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THE SITUATIONS YOUR CHRISTIAN FAMILY FACES ACROSS THE GLOBE—AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE HOPE THESE CRITICAL INSIGHTS WILL HELP FUEL YOUR PRAYERS FOR THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH. BECAUSE WE ARE ONE CHURCH, AND ONE FAMILY.

Unless otherwise indicated, all population and number of Christians stats: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds., World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2019).

1 Throughout country rankings, indicates Open Doors estimate

* Throughout, indicates name and/or photo has been changed for security reasons



1

North Korea

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Communist and post-communist oppression

POPULATION

25,727,000

CHRISTIANS

300,000¹

MAIN RELIGION

Atheism/traditional beliefs

GOVERNMENT

Single-party dictatorship

LEADER

Chairman Kim Jong-un

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 66.5%



Church life 99.9%



National life 99.9%



Community life 99.9%



Family life 99.9%



Private life 99.9%



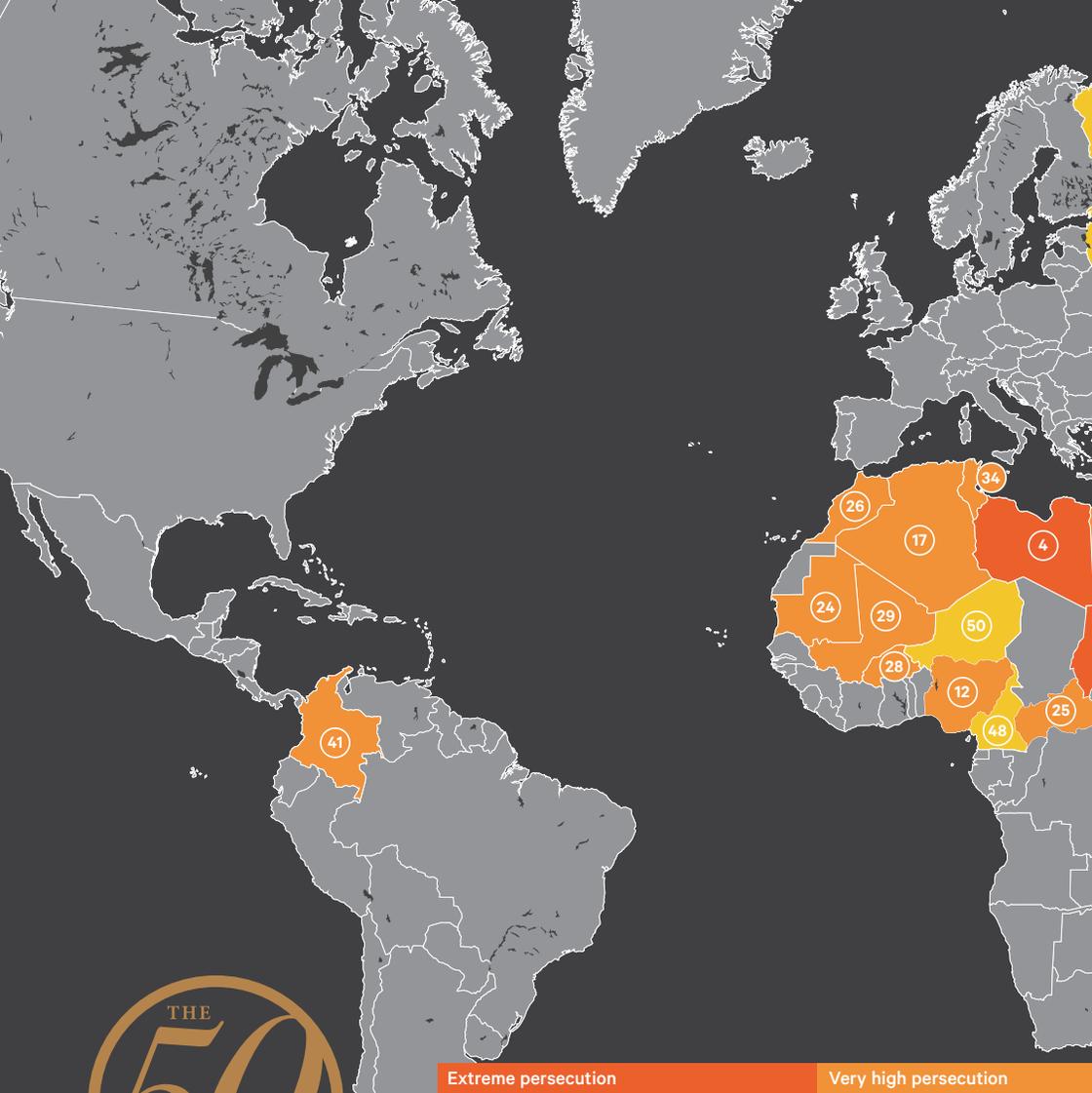
Pressure

CONSTANT STRESS, CONSTANT THREATS

If North Korean Christians are discovered, they are deported to labor camps as political criminals or even killed on the spot. Driven by the state, Christian persecution in North Korea is extreme and meeting other Christians to worship is nearly impossible unless it's done in complete secrecy. A recent increase in diplomatic activity, starting with the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea, has not changed anything for Christians in the country.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for endurance and courage for Christians who are suffering right now in labor camps across North Korea.
- Pray that continued diplomatic efforts will result in religious freedom for the underground church in North Korea.
- Pray that God will reach Kim Jong-un and the top leaders in North Korea with the power of the gospel.

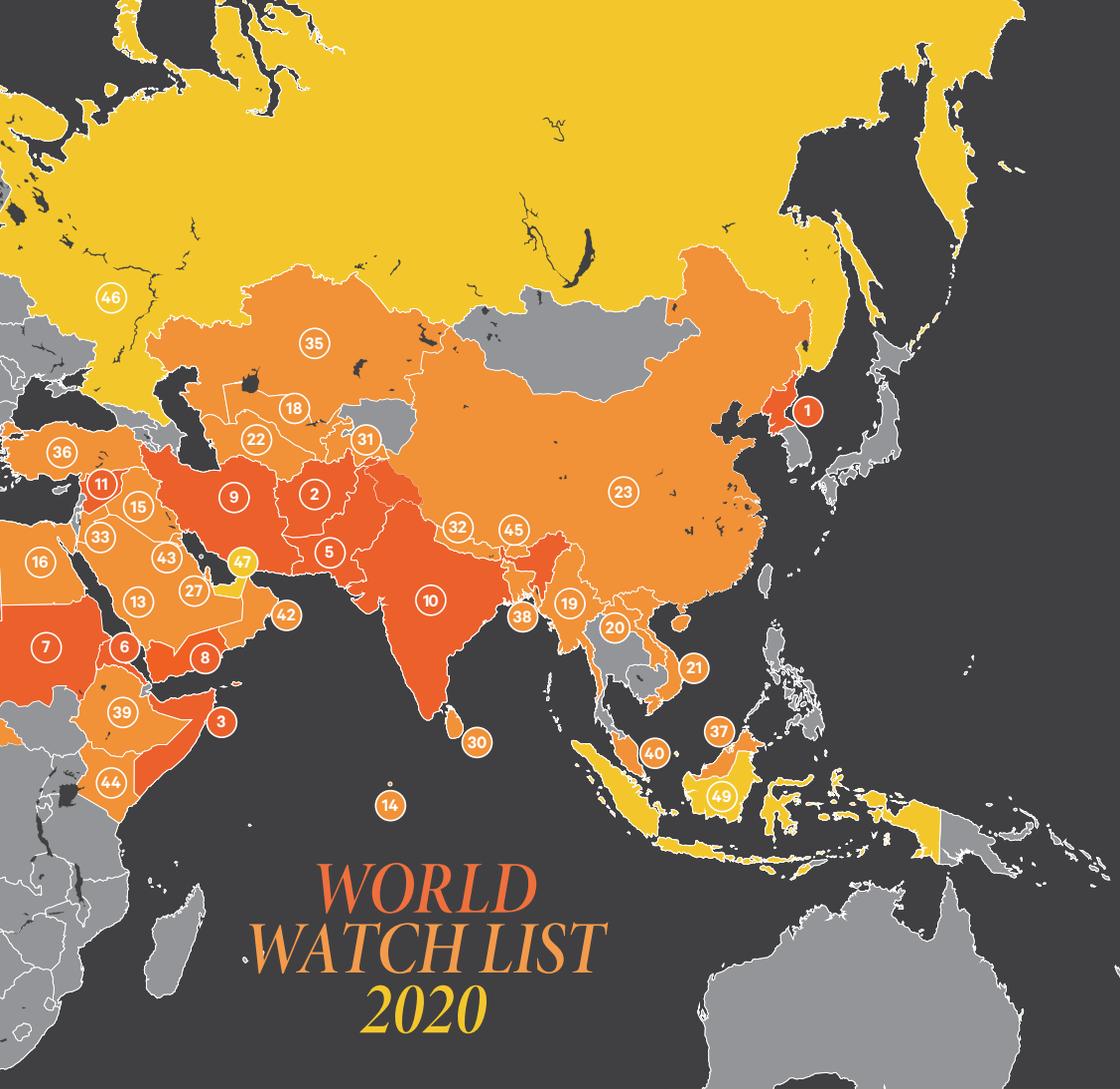


THE
50
 COUNTRIES

where it is most dangerous to follow Jesus:

Extreme persecution | Very high persecution

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 North Korea | 11 Syria |
| 2 Afghanistan | 12 Nigeria |
| 3 Somalia | 13 Saudi Arabia |
| 4 Libya | 14 Maldives |
| 5 Pakistan | 15 Iraq |
| 6 Eritrea | 16 Egypt |
| 7 Sudan | 17 Algeria |
| 8 Yemen | 18 Uzbekistan |
| 9 Iran | 19 Myanmar |
| 10 India | 20 Laos |



WORLD WATCH LIST 2020

High persecution

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| 21 Vietnam | 31 Tajikistan | 41 Colombia |
| 22 Turkmenistan | 32 Nepal | 42 Oman |
| 23 China | 33 Jordan | 43 Kuwait |
| 24 Mauritania | 34 Tunisia | 44 Kenya |
| 25 Central African Republic | 35 Kazakhstan | 45 Bhutan |
| 26 Morocco | 36 Turkey | 46 Russian Federation |
| 27 Qatar | 37 Brunei | 47 United Arab Emirates |
| 28 Burkina Faso | 38 Bangladesh | 48 Cameroon |
| 29 Mali | 39 Ethiopia | 49 Indonesia |
| 30 Sri Lanka | 40 Malaysia | 50 Niger |



2

Afghanistan

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Clan and ethnic antagonism

POPULATION
37,209,000

CHRISTIANS
Thousands¹

MAIN RELIGION
Islam

GOVERNMENT
Islamic republic

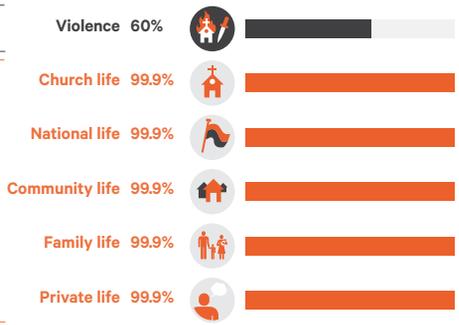
LEADER
President Ashraf Ghani

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



AN ISLAMIC SOCIETY WHERE CHRISTIANITY EXISTS IN SECRET

Afghanistan is a tribal society, and loyalty to one's family, clan and tribe are extremely important. In an Islamic society, it is illegal for an Afghan person to leave Islam. The country is increasingly challenged by Islamic militants, the Taliban controls or contests more and more areas, and an ISIS-affiliated group also targets minorities. Those who decide to follow Jesus do so in secret.

PRAYER POINTS

- Christian converts from Islam face heavy pressure from family, friends and neighbors. Pray for these believers to have courage and perseverance.
- The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan does not allow conversion from Islam. Please pray for a softening of the country's leadership and local rulers.
- Pray for the spread of the gospel in Afghanistan through secret believers and the underground church.

3

Somalia

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

15,636,000

CHRISTIANS

A few hundred¹

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Federal republic

LEADER

President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed "Farmajo"

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 56.5%



Church life 99%



National life 99.5%



Community life 99.5%



Family life 99.9%



Private life 98.5%



Pressure

VIOLENCE, CIVIL WAR AND EXTREME PERSECUTION

Somalia remains mired in civil war, tribalism and violent Islamic militancy. Conversion to Christianity is regarded as a betrayal of the Somali family and clan. If Somalis are suspected of being converts, family members and clan leaders will harass, intimidate and even kill them. Christians with a Muslim background are regarded as high-value targets by al-Shabab operatives and have often been killed on the spot when discovered.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for the government of Somalia, that its leaders will be opened to the truth of the gospel and there will be more safety and protection for Christians.
- Pray for Somali Christians who often must hide their faith to survive. Pray that they will have courage and hope in the midst of extreme persecution.
- Pray specifically for Christians who convert from Islam, that God will give them wisdom and access to a Bible and discipleship.



4

Libya

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Islamic oppression

POPULATION
6,570,000

CHRISTIANS
36,200

MAIN RELIGION
Islam

GOVERNMENT
Transitional

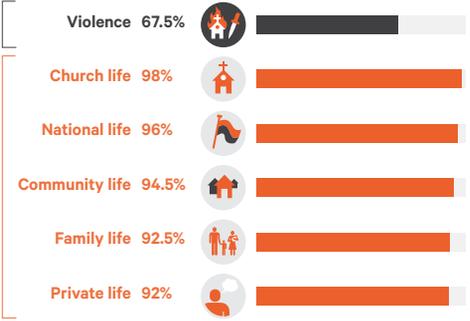
LEADER
Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



NO RECOGNITION OF THE CHURCH—NO FREEDOM FOR CHRISTIANS

The absence of a single central government to uphold law and order contributes to the extreme levels of pressure in national and church life. Libyan Christians with a Muslim background face violent and intense pressure to renounce their faith from their family and the wider community. There is no freedom of speech, no equal treatment of Christians, no recognition of the church and no churches being built.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for the protection of Christian converts from Islam and ask God to connect them with other believers so they will know they are not alone.
- Pray for the protection of migrant workers in Libya, especially for those who are Christians and face double persecution.
- Pray for a stable government to be established in Libya and ask God to provide religious freedom for Christians.



5

Pakistan

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

204,596,000

CHRISTIANS

4,015,000

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Federal republic

LEADER

Prime Minister Imran Khan

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 99.9%



Church life 82%



National life 89.5%



Pressure

Community life 90%



Family life 83.5%

Private life 83.5%



SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS AND BLASPHEMY LAWS

Historic churches have relative freedom for worship, but they are heavily monitored, and extremists regularly target them for attacks—the last one occurring in December 2017. Christian churches that are active in outreach and youthwork face more persecution. In general, Christians are regarded as second-class citizens. Also, the country’s anti-blasphemy laws are disproportionately applied against the Christian minority—making it difficult and dangerous to live out one’s faith in public.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pakistan is afflicted by numerous radical Islamic groups. Pray for the current Pakistani government to pass laws that will protect the Christians in the country.
- Pray for the protection of converts from a Muslim background who are extremely vulnerable to persecution from radical groups, family members, friends and neighbors.
- Pray for Christians who are accused under blasphemy laws. Ask God to give them strength and hope during their trials—and for justice to prevail.

INDIA



“I am confined to a small room.”

Tara’s story

Tara* is 15 years old and lives in the same house as her family—but she has been rejected by them because of her faith in Jesus. Nobody in the house talks to her or even allows her to go into the kitchen, in case she pollutes the food and water with her “unclean faith.” She’s forced to work as a day laborer, just to make ends meet.

She became a Christian after she was healed from an illness. She found a peace she hadn’t known before—but it also put her life in upheaval. “My parents told me, ‘You are a shame to the family. Our community detests us because you go to church. Either leave Jesus or forget the relationship you have with us,’” Tara remembers.

“Today, I still live in my home with my parents and the rest of my siblings, but I am totally rejected,” she continues. “I am confined to a small room. I have been warned not to talk to the rest of the people in the house.

“Nobody speaks to me. I am estranged in my own home.”

She reflects on her journey since accepting Jesus. “Because of persecution, I once tried leaving Jesus, but I felt empty,” she says. “There is a void in life which I can never fill without Him; I cannot leave Him.”

Tara is tearful as she shares more about her brother and siblings. Local Open Doors partners hope to help her get admission to a better school with hostel provisions, and to supply some of her basic daily needs.

“Please pray for my family, that they may know the Lord soon, and accept me. I really miss them,” she says. Though she seems desperate because of her challenges, she clearly has a faith that sustains her.



6

Eritrea

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Christian denominational protectionism

POPULATION
5,310,000

CHRISTIANS
2,492,000

MAIN RELIGION
Islam/Christianity

GOVERNMENT
Presidential republic

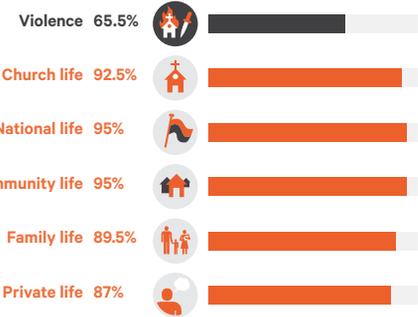
LEADER
President Isaias Afwerki

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



HUMAN RIGHTS ATROCITIES AND UNJUST IMPRISONMENT

The authoritarian regime under President Afwerki is responsible for massive human rights violations, especially toward Christians. Christians who aren't members of state-approved churches are considered agents of the West and a threat to the state. Hundreds of Christians who are members of unregistered churches are in prison; some have been held captive for over a decade. Many are forced to work long hours in commercial flower fields, and some are held in shipping containers in scorching temperatures.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for endurance for brothers and sisters detained or imprisoned in horrific conditions, and ask God to give them perseverance in their faith.
- Pray for President Afwerki and the government leaders in Eritrea, that God would work in their hearts and reveal the truth of the gospel.
- Pray for unity among Christians in Eritrea, and ask God to help them see past denominationalism and count themselves as one Church family.



7

Sudan

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Islamic oppression

POPULATION
42,514,000

CHRISTIANS
1,963,000

MAIN RELIGION
Islam

GOVERNMENT
Transitional

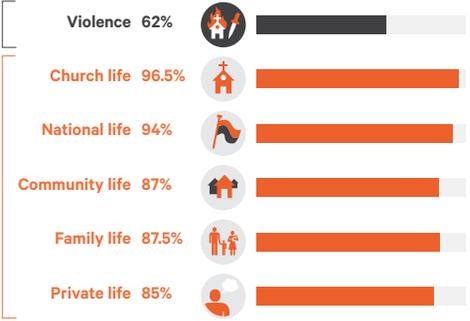
LEADER
Prime Minister
Abdalla Hamdok

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



INTIMIDATION, ARRESTS AND CHURCH DEMOLITION

Sudan's current political chaos has left Christians in limbo. The secession of South Sudan in 2011 has also made Christians more vulnerable as Islamic conservatives in Sudan push for a Shariah state. Recently, the government has arrested or intimidated many Christian leaders, and numerous churches have been demolished. Extremists have attacked Christians, especially in the Nuba Mountain region, where thousands of Christians have been killed or displaced.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for peace and expanded religious freedom in Sudan as negotiations continue between the military council and opposing forces.
- Pray for Christians to have the opportunity to worship together freely without fear of violence.
- Pray for new converts to Christianity, that they would be able to stand strong and have access to Bibles and discipleship training.



8

Yemen

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

29,580,000

CHRISTIANS

A few thousand¹

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Islamic republic

LEADER

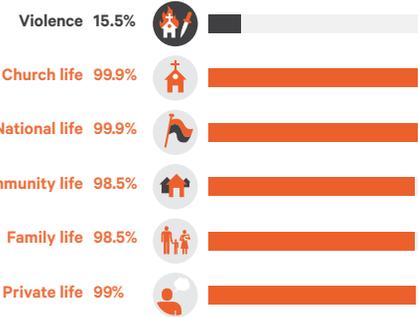
Prime Minister Maeen Abdulmalik Saeed

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



CIVIL WAR AND STRICT ISLAMIC OPPRESSION

An ongoing civil war in Yemen has created one of the worst humanitarian crises in recent memory, making an already difficult nation for Christians even harder. The war has allowed radical Islamic groups to expand their operations in certain areas, leading to Christians being abducted and killed. Open church activities are forbidden and leaving Islam is forbidden. Muslims who decide to follow Jesus could face the death penalty.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for peace in Yemen as opposing forces continue to clash and leave Christians vulnerable.
- The instability in Yemen has created a refugee, food and healthcare crisis. Ask God to help provide food, clean water and relief to the people of Yemen.
- Pray that the secret believers from Muslim backgrounds will have courage and perseverance in their faith—along with access to Bibles and discipleship materials.



9

Iran

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Islamic oppression

POPULATION
82,821,000

CHRISTIANS
800,000¹

MAIN RELIGION
Islam

GOVERNMENT
Islamic republic

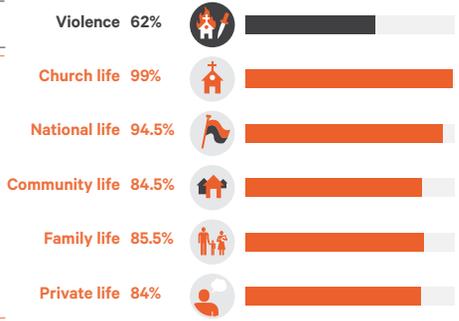
LEADER
President Hassan Rouhani

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



ILLEGAL TO CONVERT, ILLEGAL TO PREACH

Iranian society is governed by Islamic law, which means the rights and professional possibilities for Christians are heavily restricted. Christians are forbidden from sharing their faith with non-Christians in Iran, and it is illegal to produce Christian literature or hold church services in Farsi. Converts from Islam face persecution from the government. If Christians attend an underground house church, they face the constant threat of arrest.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for Iranian Christians who are in prison right now for their faith. Ask God to give them hope and encouragement in their isolation.
- Pray that God will work through the leaders in Iran to create laws that provide more religious freedom for Christians and minority religions.
- Pray for secret believers who meet in house churches, that they will be protected and will be faithful witnesses to the surrounding culture.



10

India

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Religious nationalism

POPULATION
1,368,738,000

CHRISTIANS
66,194,000

MAIN RELIGION
Hinduism

GOVERNMENT
Federal republic

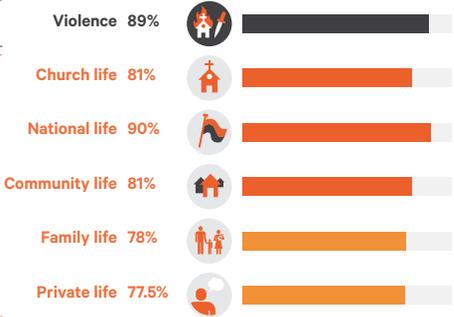
LEADER
Prime Minister
Narendra Modi

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



HINDU NATIONALISM AND ATTACKS WITH IMPUNITY

Since the current ruling party took power in 2014, incidents against Christians have increased, and Hindu radicals often attack Christians with little to no consequences. The view of the Hindu nationalists is that to be Indian is to be Hindu, so any other faith—including Christianity—is viewed as non-Indian. Also, converts to Christianity from Hindu backgrounds or tribal religions are often extremely persecuted by their family members and communities.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for Christian converts from Hinduism and tribal religions who are forcefully pressured to return to their former religion.
- Pray for God’s power and protection over Christians as they preach the gospel in places with anti-conversion laws.
- Pray for the government leaders of India, that they would change their perspective and create more room for religious freedom.



11

Syria

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

18,499,000

CHRISTIANS

744,000

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Presidential republic

LEADER

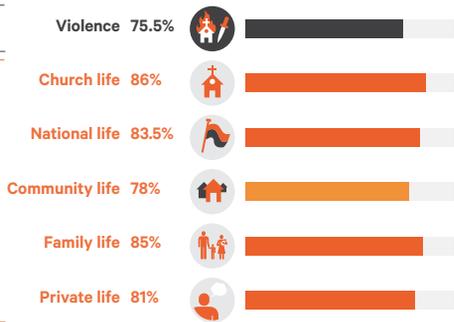
President Bashar al-Assad

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



RECOVERING FROM CHAOS, STILL IN DANGER

The country's years-long civil war has left it in turmoil, and Christians have not been spared from that suffering. Christians are caught in the crossfire between government troops and rebel forces, especially at the frontlines. Additionally, Christians are at risk if forces antagonistic to Christianity rule their home regions. Even in more secure parts of Syria, Christians who have converted from Islam face pressure and discrimination from their communities.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for peace for Syria and ask God to relieve the suffering of Christians in hostile regions held by rebel groups who oppose Christianity.
- Pray for critical relief and aid to reach Christians who have fled their homes or lack basic resources in their cities.
- Pray for Syrian church leaders to have wisdom, perseverance and discernment as they lead their people and provide hope.

CHINA



“They could lose everything they have worked for.”

Children pressured on all sides

Christian children may face the worst persecution in China. The latest regulations forbid anyone under the age of 18 from entering church buildings or participating in church activities. But according to Pastor Jacob, these restrictions on young Chinese Christians aren't crushing their faith, but actually making it grow. Here's his story:*

“From early 2018, we have been pressured from all sides. The Communist Party wants young people to believe that Christianity is a foreign religion and that western powers are attempting to infiltrate China on the back of religious teaching. Schools have been ordered to use this anti-religious narrative to educate the children.

“We know of some school teachers who warn children that if they follow Jesus, they may not be allowed to graduate. This creates a terrible struggle in young people's hearts. If they admit they follow Jesus, they could lose everything they have worked for.

“We've started to talk to the youth about persecution, about standing together in faith and about how to communicate with each other carefully.

“But our youth ministry is growing again, and the young people are excited about the possibilities. They are more determined to follow Jesus and have matured much quicker than they used to. They look for creative ways to fellowship together.

“We often tell our youth how an army of believers around the world prays for us daily, and we remind them that God moves powerfully in our lives because of this unseen global family.”

12

Nigeria

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

200,962,000

CHRISTIANS

93,791,000

MAIN RELIGION

Christianity/Islam

GOVERNMENT

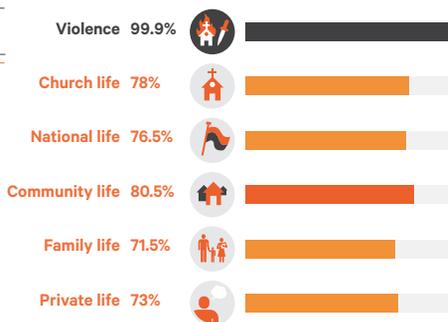
Federal presidential republic

LEADER

President Maj. Gen. (ret.)
Muhammadu Buhari

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



EXTREMIST ATTACKS AND RELIGIOUS OPPRESSION

Christians in the northern region and in the Middle Belt suffer from violence perpetrated by Islamic extremist groups such as Hausa-Fulani militant herdsmen and Boko Haram. Such violence often results in loss of life, physical injury, as well as loss of property. As a result of the violence, Christians are also being dispossessed of their land and means of livelihood—and Christians with a Muslim background also face rejection from their own families.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for Christians who live in constant threat of attacks by Islamic extremists. Ask God to protect them and give them hope and peace.
- Pray for Fulani militants and other extremist groups like Boko Haram. Pray that God will touch their hearts with the truth of the gospel.
- Pray for pastors and church leaders who are helping rebuild communities and restore their churches after violent attacks.

13

Saudi Arabia

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

34,141,000

CHRISTIANS

1,419,000¹

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Absolute monarchy

LEADER

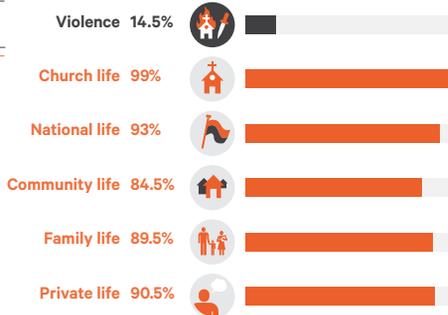
King Salman bin
Abdulaziz Al Saud

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



AN ALL-CONSUMING INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM

Saudi Arabia's strict branch of Islam governs every aspect of life for its citizens. Openly practicing other religions is illegal. All Saudi citizens are required to be Muslim, and non-citizens of other faiths are expected to worship privately. The spike in pressure from family life from the 2019 to the 2020 World Watch List reflects the brutal reality for Christians who have converted from Islam—these believers risk violence because of their decision to follow Jesus.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for isolated believers all over Saudi Arabia, who lack fellowship and community. They need discipleship and a sense of belonging.
- Pray Christian Saudis will find ways to share the truth with their own family members.
- It is forbidden to openly practice religions other than Islam—conversion is punishable by death. Please pray Muslim Saudis will come to know Jesus.

14

Maldives

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

452,000

CHRISTIANS

Thousands¹

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Presidential republic

LEADER

President Ibrahim
Mohamed Solih

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 4.5%



Church life 99%



National life 95%



Community life 84%



Family life 93.5%



Private life 92.5%



Pressure

RADICAL MUSLIMS CONTROL SOCIETY

The Maldives' constitution requires all citizens to be Muslim. Conversion from Islam means that someone can be stripped of their citizenship and punished under Shariah law. Even foreign workers who are Christians are closely watched, which makes church life extremely difficult and practically non-existent. Churches are outlawed, and openly carrying the Bible is illegal. The country is so tightly controlled by Islamic law that there is not even a Bible fully translated into the native language of most citizens of the Maldives.

PRAYER POINTS

- Official policy dictates every citizen must be Muslim. Pray that God would work in the hearts of the Maldives' leaders to change this law, and that God would be working in the hearts of Maldivian Muslims.
- Pray that God would lead secret believers to find fellowship with one another and access to the Bible.
- Local media reports that drug abuse—in an effort to find some relief from the tight restrictions in the country—has become the biggest social issue in the Maldives. Pray that Maldivians will turn to Jesus to experience true freedom.



15

Iraq

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

40,412,000

CHRISTIANS

202,000

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Federal republic

LEADER

Vacant as of publication

Profile of persecution

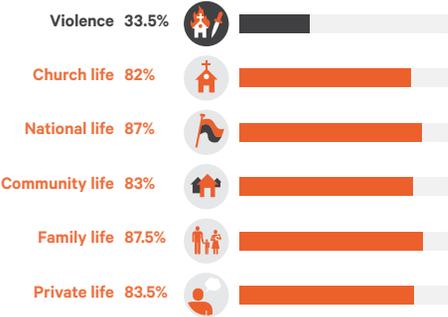
Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence



Pressure



GRAPPLING WITH TRAUMA AND REBUILDING

Many Iraqi Christians are still recovering from the brutal reign of ISIS, and for some believers, that threat has not fully diminished. ISIS still has places of safety in northern Iraq. Additionally, Christians are dealing with a drastic reduction in their population since ISIS began their attacks, along with trauma for those believers who have stayed in their country. Iraq remains very tribal, which can also mean significant pressure for believers who come from Muslim tribes—conversion to Christianity is seen as a rejection of heritage and family.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for Christians who are rebuilding their communities and churches in Iraq. Pray for trauma recovery and reconstruction efforts, that God would give peace to believers.
- Thank God that pressure and violence have both decreased slightly. Ask God to give His hope to Christians in Iraq.
- Pray priests and pastors who are leading diminished communities will find encouragement for the hard work ahead. Pray they would know they aren't alone.



16

Egypt

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

101,169,000

CHRISTIANS

16,250,000¹

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Presidential republic

LEADER

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence 96.5%



Church life 63%



National life 79%



Community life 64.5%



Family life 78.5%

Private life 72.5%



LIVING IN A PRESSURE COOKER

Many Egyptian Christians encounter substantial roadblocks to living out their faith. There are violent attacks that make news headlines around the world, but there are also quieter, more subtle forms of duress that burden Egyptian believers. Particularly in rural areas in northern Egypt, Christians have been chased from villages, and subject to mob violence and intense familial and community pressure. This is even more pronounced for Christians who are converts from Islam.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for believers who have friends or family who have been injured or killed in violent attacks. Pray for healing of hearts, minds and bodies.
- Pray for unity in the Egyptian church, that Christians of all backgrounds would see themselves as a common family of God.
- Pray that God would soften the hearts of extremists and government leaders, and Jesus' name would be known.



17

Algeria

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

42,679,000

CHRISTIANS

129,000

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Presidential republic

LEADER

Interim President
Abdelkader Bensalah

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 55.5%



Church life 79%



National life 77%



Community life 62.5%



Family life 85.5%



Private life 81%



Pressure

RIISING VIOLENCE AND PRESSURE IN NORTH AFRICA

Algeria has seen a rise in every persecution category over the last year, which is why it's risen five spots on the 2020 World Watch List. The most visible example of persecution in 2019 was the seemingly systemic closure of Protestant churches. In some of these cases, Christians were forcibly expelled by police in the middle of church services. Pressure from family also remains high, particularly for Christians who were previously Muslim. Extremist Islamist groups continue to pressure the government to restrict Christians' freedom, as well.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray with the believers who have had their churches shut down. Pray for the pastors, that they would feel God's presence.
- Pray for Christians who convert from Islam, that they would be protected, bold and wise.
- Pray with believers who are rejected by their families for their faith. Pray that God would let them know they have a global family who stands with them through prayer.



18

Uzbekistan

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Dictatorial paranoia

POPULATION
32,807,000

CHRISTIANS
349,000

MAIN RELIGION
Islam

GOVERNMENT
Presidential republic

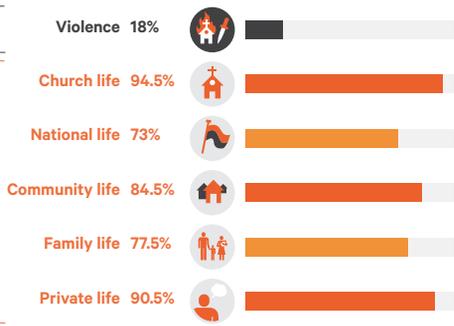
LEADER
President Shavkat Mirziyoyev

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



INTENSE CONTROL, FAMILY PRESSURE

Under the authoritarian rule of the president, the government heavily restricts religious expression, outlawing all unsanctioned religious expression. This means any non-Orthodox Christian group is illegal—and even Orthodox groups can preach only in Russian since doing so in Uzbek is against the law. Additionally, since the culture is largely Muslim, Christians who convert from Islam face pressure and potentially violence from their families and communities. Christian women who came from Islam face increased pressure through forced marriage and sexual violence.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that Christian converts from Islam would be delivered from threats of violence from their family and communities.
- Pray with Christian groups who are targeted by the government because they are not sanctioned by the state. Pray for safety and for courage.
- Pray for the isolated believers who have converted from Islam and are unable to publicly express their faith for fear of discovery. Pray they will find fellowship and peace.



19

Myanmar

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Religious nationalism

POPULATION
54,336,000

CHRISTIANS
4,322,000

MAIN RELIGION
Buddhism

GOVERNMENT
Parliamentary republic

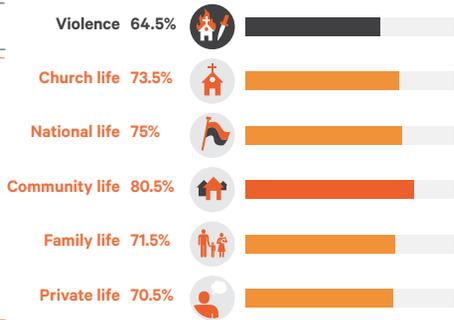
LEADER
President Win Myint

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



BUDDHIST EXTREMISM AND A DICTATORIAL MILITARY

Pressure on Christians has slowly increased and converts face strong pressure from their family and community. Rebel groups are active in Wa State, and many churches have been forcibly closed. Buddhist extremists maintain that to be Burmese—the majority ethnic group—is to be Buddhist, so there is intense pressure on all religious minorities, including Christians. The army also maintains tight control over the government in Myanmar, restricting and minimizing the rights of Christians.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for persecuted Christian minorities, that they would lovingly minister to persecuted Rohingya Muslims, especially those choosing to return from exile in Bangladesh. Pray that many hearts would be opened to the truth of Christ.
- Christians who convert from Buddhism and Islam live under intense pressure from their families and communities. Pray for them to feel connected to the Church of God around the world.

Laos

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Clan and ethnic antagonism

POPULATION

7,064,000

CHRISTIANS

227,000

MAIN RELIGION

Buddhism

GOVERNMENT

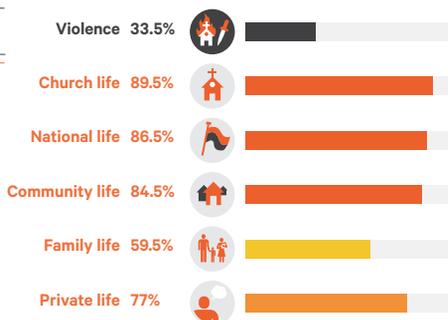
Communist state

LEADER

President Bounnhang Vorachith

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



STRICT CONTROL FROM A COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT

The communist regime tightly controls every aspect of religious life in Laos. Christian gatherings are monitored, and even registered churches are often forced to meet in homes. The government has also passed laws that make it difficult to build churches or conduct religious activities. Christians who have converted from the primary religions—Buddhism and traditional animism—are the most targeted for persecution, as they are viewed as having rejected their families and communities.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that Christians would be able to witness to their Buddhist neighbors and family members, and that they wouldn't be oppressed because of their faith.
- Pray that Christians in Laos would be able to freely access Bibles and register churches. Pray for the salvation of the communist leaders who try to restrict the church.
- Pray that Christian children in Buddhist schools would not be discriminated against and given low marks because of their faith.

KENYA



She was verbally and physically attacked by other villagers.

Esther's story

Esther* was born into a Muslim home. She had a severe allergic condition that caused her immense suffering through adolescence, adulthood and motherhood. But a pastor came to her home to pray for her. Esther experienced healing and decided to surrender her life to God.

As soon as her husband learned about her faith, he moved out. She tried to follow him, but he wanted nothing to do with her because of her Jesus. Two of her children were taken away, and Esther was left to singlehandedly fend for herself and two of her sons.

She had a small parcel of land she had inherited from her father. She tried to make the best of this barren land, putting up a dilapidated little hut. To make ends meet, Esther started doing casual work and subsistence farming.

Recently, one of her sons hit a Muslim child during a game in Esther's village. An adult saw the incident and misunderstood what had happened.

Esther was called to the scene, where she was verbally and physically attacked by other villagers. The police were called and they arrested Esther. She spent a few days in prison, humiliated and worried over the long-term consequences for her and the children.

Fortunately, Open Doors was able to quickly connect her with a local pastor trained in trauma care, to offer her the emotional support she desperately needed. Thanks to Open Doors supporters, construction of her new home is in progress.

In the meantime, she remains determined to follow Jesus. "I refuse to give up. My children and I will continue trusting Jesus. ... We are so thankful for all your support."



21

Vietnam

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Communist and post-communist oppression

POPULATION

97,429,000

CHRISTIANS

8,737,000

MAIN RELIGION

Buddhism

GOVERNMENT

Communist state

LEADER

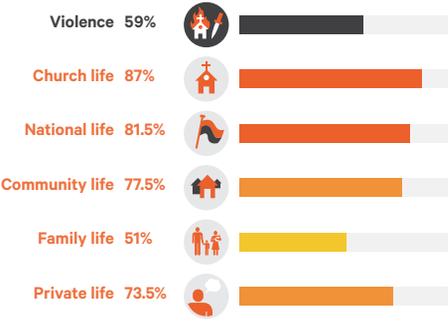
President Nguyen Phu Trong

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



COMMUNIST SUSPICION, TRIBAL TENSIONS

Christians in Vietnam are targeted by both the government and, especially in rural contexts, tribal leaders. The government has some level of tolerance for Christian groups, particularly Catholics, but if any believers are deemed to be politically active, they can be imprisoned. In places where religion and ethnic identity are closely tied, Christians who convert from traditional religions are often the victims of pressure and violence from their families and communities.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray with the pastors who travel into rural areas to minister to ethnic believers who have formed small church communities.
- Pray for believers who leave their traditional faiths to follow Jesus.
- If Christians are deemed to be politically active, they can be targeted by the government. Pray for wisdom and strength for Christians trying to navigate ever-changing regulations and expectations from the communist regime.

Turkmenistan

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Dictatorial paranoia

POPULATION

5,943,000

CHRISTIANS

70,500

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Presidential republic

LEADER

President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence 11%



Church life 94.5%



National life 79.5%



Community life 82.5%



Family life 67%

Private life 87%



A DICTATORSHIP ALWAYS WATCHES

Turkmenistan is wholly ruled by its president, who seeks to tightly control every aspect of daily life, including religious worship. While most citizens are Muslim, this is mostly cultural rather than devoutly religious—the government mostly seeks to build a cult of personality around its president. Christian gatherings are monitored, printing Christian materials is illegal, and unregistered churches risk constant raids and jail time for congregants and church leaders.

PRAYER POINTS

- The totalitarian regime in Turkmenistan is one of the strictest in Central Asia. Pray for the leaders of Turkmenistan to be humbled and to know that Jesus is Lord.
- Pray for believers who are former Muslims. Even if the surrounding culture is mostly culturally Muslim rather than devout, there is still intense pressure from families and communities.
- Pray for churches that are monitored by the government. Pray for pastors and congregants to be safe and to be able to worship with one another.



中华人民共和国万岁

23

世界人民大团结万岁

China

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Communist and post-Communist oppression

POPULATION

1,420,062,000

CHRISTIANS

97,200,000¹

MAIN RELIGION

Agnosticism

GOVERNMENT

Communist state

LEADER

President Xi Jinping

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 61%



Church life 90%



National life 77%



Community life 69.5%



Family life 50.5%



Private life 69.5%



Pressure

A RISE IN EVERY FACET OF PERSECUTION

China wants to “Sinicize” every religious ideology in the country—meaning, to make beliefs, including Christianity, fall in line with their interpretation of communism. This means a steady drip of pressure, where the government increases surveillance, control and restrictions of believers. If churches or pastors are deemed to be too outspoken or political, they can be monitored or even imprisoned. Additionally, the decision to follow Jesus comes at a high cost for Christians in western China who come from ethnic groups where Islam or Buddhism are the dominant faiths.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for the church in China, as it adjusts to constantly tightening restrictions of religious freedom.
- Pray for Christians in ethnic minorities who have followed Jesus out of Islam or Buddhism. Pray they would find strength and fellowship.
- Pray that Christ will reveal Himself to government officials who seek to control the church.



24

Mauritania

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Islamic oppression

POPULATION
4,661,000

CHRISTIANS
10,000

MAIN RELIGION
Islam

GOVERNMENT
Authoritarian

LEADER
President Mohamed Ould
Cheikh Ghazouani

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 1%



Church life 80.5%



National life 82.5%



Pressure

Community life 78%



Family life 84%

Private life 83%



FAITH AT CONSTANT RISK

For Christians in Mauritania, public worship carries a constant threat. Even churches that are largely tolerated have to be careful so they aren't accused of proselytizing Muslims, and for Christians who converted from Islam, public worship is often impossible. Baptisms must often be carried out in secret. Mauritania may be an increasingly dangerous place for Christians, as there is fear radical Islam may be on the rise.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for Christians who are converts from Islam. They face intense pressure from the government, from their families and from their communities.
- Pray for the problem of slavery in Mauritania. This heinous reality sometimes stems from religious extremism. Pray for victims of slavery.
- Pray for safety and courage for Christians who fear the rise of more Islamic extremists. Pray for the hearts of radicals to turn toward Jesus.



25

Central African Republic

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Organized corruption

POPULATION
4,826,000

CHRISTIANS
3,599,000

MAIN RELIGION
Christianity

GOVERNMENT
Presidential republic

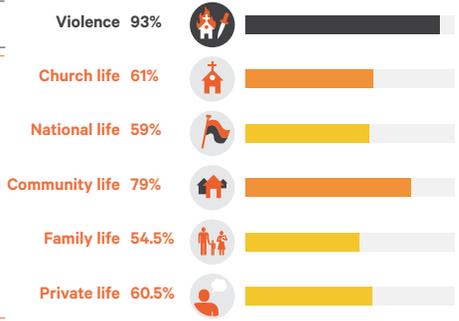
LEADER
President Faustin-Archange Touadéra

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



THREATS FROM JIHADIST AND CRIMINAL GROUPS

The Central African Republic has been embroiled in conflict since 2013. Most of the country remains occupied by armed militia groups, with numerous rebel splinter groups targeting Christians specifically. Over the last year, fighting and attacks have intensified, forcing an increase in the displacement of tens of thousands of people from their homes—the highest numbers since 2014. Christian leaders who publicly denounce the violence endure threats on their lives.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray with Christians targeted by rebel groups and Muslim terrorists. Pray that they will know God's peace and His provision in the midst of earthly chaos and loss of their homes.
- Pray for God's protection over Christian leaders and their families, as they minister to their congregations in the face of threats and conflict.
- Pray with new believers who face threats by family members and are ostracized by their communities.



26

Morocco

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Islamic oppression

POPULATION
36,635,000

CHRISTIANS
32,200

MAIN RELIGION
Islam

GOVERNMENT
Constitutional monarchy

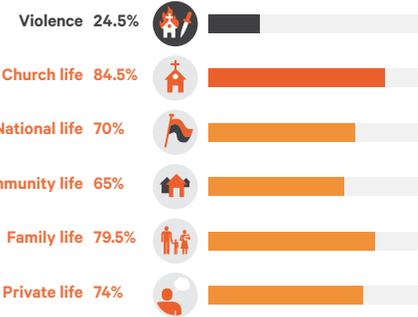
LEADER
King Mohammed VI

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



ILLEGAL TO SHARE YOUR FAITH

Although Morocco is considered to be relatively tolerant compared to other countries in the region, it is illegal to evangelize. Christians who talk to others about their faith risk criminal charges and arrest. Converts to Christianity can be punished in other ways, such as losing inheritance rights and custody of children. Restrictions imposed by Islamic authorities include the confiscation of Christian literature in Arabic (including Bibles) and serious challenges in securing places of worship for Christians with a Muslim background.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that laws would change, making it legal for Christians to share their faith.
- Pray for perseverance for new believers from a Muslim background as they encounter adversity.
- Pray with Christians who have difficulty finding a church building, that they would not be discouraged or lose their zeal.
- Pray for boldness and discernment for believers as they risk prosecution to tell others about Jesus.



27

Qatar

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

2,744,000

CHRISTIANS

367,000

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Absolute monarchy

LEADER

Amir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 13%



Church life 84%



National life 73%



Pressure

Community life 65%



Family life 80%

Private life 82%



SHARIAH LAW RULES LIFE AND COMMUNITY

Christians in Qatar, especially converts from Islam to Christianity, remain under extremely high pressure from the government and society—risking discrimination, harassment, police monitoring and intimidation. Even one's family can be dangerous in a culture that sees conversion as a betrayal. In the Persian Gulf country, Islam is seen as the only acceptable faith, and conversion remains a capital offense. As for church gatherings, while Muslims are free to worship in public, Christians can only worship in private houses or designated places.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that the church in Qatar would continue to gather together privately and be strengthened in their perseverance.
- Pray for believers imprisoned for sharing their faith. Ask God to protect and encourage them.
- Pray for Christian converts who feel they cannot share their faith with Muslim family members.



Burkina Faso

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

20,322,000

CHRISTIANS

5,157,000

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Presidential republic

LEADER

President Roch Marc
Christian Kaboré

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence 93%



Church life 71%



National life 56.5%



Community life 61%



Family life 58%



Private life 56%



ONGOING JIHADIST ATTACKS ON CHRISTIANS

Over the last year, Burkina Faso's northeastern region has seen a brutal onslaught of deadly attacks on Christian churches and villages—including several during and after worship services on church grounds in which worshippers were told to convert to Islam or die. An influx of violent Islamic extremist groups into West Africa's Sahel region has led to these attacks that killed at least 40 Christians in 2019. These groups are campaigning for attacks on believers, with some who want to create an Islamic state opposing the very existence of Christianity.

PRAYER POINTS

- Please pray for the Lord's comfort and grace to be at work in the lives of all who have lost loved ones.
- Pray that Christians would have the grace to remain firm in their faith as they face increased hostility.
- Extremist ideologies sweeping across the Sahel have brought destruction. Pray that the Lord would use these circumstances to display His glory.



29

Mali

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Islamic oppression

POPULATION
19,681,000

CHRISTIANS
461,000

MAIN RELIGION
Islam

GOVERNMENT
Semi-presidential republic

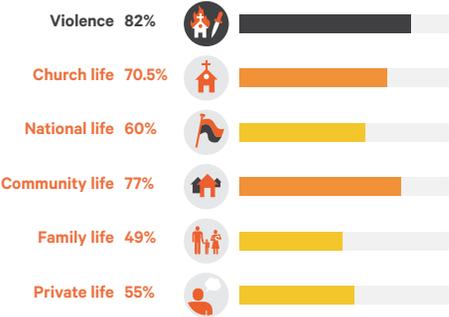
LEADER
President Ibrahim
Boubacar Keita

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



INCREASING ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION

Last year, northern Mali saw a rise in violent incidents, including attacks and kidnappings. While the majority of Malians traditionally practice a relatively tolerant version of Islam, increasing radicalization continues to pressure and physically harm the lives of Christians and their churches. This radicalization has led to intensifying violence against Christians from jihadist groups, such as Al Qaeda, and from criminal organizations that have allied themselves with radical Islamic groups.

PRAYER POINTS

- Fueled by terrorist attacks, violence against Christians in Mali has increased substantially. Pray for peace and protection.
- Pray for families who have lost loved ones in these attacks and kidnappings—that they would feel God’s presence and know His comfort.
- Pray with new believers who have left Islam to follow Jesus, for them to grow in their newfound faith and to be encouraged as they follow Jesus.

IRAN

Darya's story

What is it like to be a Christian in Iran? The following is an account from Darya, a single mother and leader in the house-church movement in Iran.*

"I am very thankful to be able to serve God here in Iran. Despite all the difficulties and challenges, God is always with us.

"Even though we experience a lot of difficulties and pressures, we are motivated every day because we see teenagers, young adults and elderly people getting to know Christ. It's amazing to see how they love the Lord from their hearts, and how enthusiastic and thirsty they are for the Lord.

"A few days ago, I visited one of the believers who was unwell. I went up and, as we started talking, the person's daughter-in-law came to visit. She wasn't a believer. Not yet. When I looked at her, I thought: 'Today, it's her turn.' She painted as I talked to her, as this is what she liked to do. Then she told me that she wanted to paint the face of Christ. She gave her heart to Jesus.

"Praise the name of the Lord, how He Himself prepares the hearts of people!

"As I went to leave, another guest came in and again I started to talk. When I was finished talking, this person said he is a descendant of Prophet Muhammad. But he started to believe in Jesus!

"There are so many of these testimonies that if I would write them down, it would take hours. I'm just thankful to God for the salvation of the people of my country, who are so in need of the redemption of Jesus Christ."



"She gave her heart to Jesus."



30

Sri Lanka

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Religious nationalism

POPULATION
21,019,000

CHRISTIANS
1,994,000

MAIN RELIGION
Buddhism

GOVERNMENT
Presidential republic

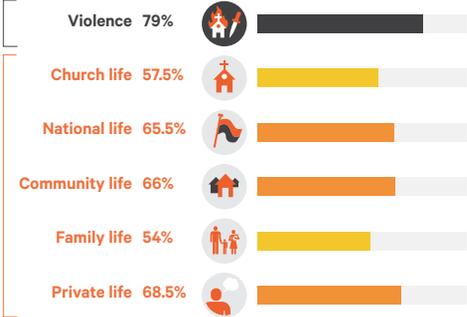
LEADER
President Gotabaya Rajapaksa

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



ISLAMIC ATTACKS ON CHURCHES

Last year, Sri Lanka saw one of the world’s largest coordinated terrorist attacks since Sept. 11, when radicals carried out eight suicide bombings at targets that included three churches on Easter Sunday, claiming almost 300 lives, most of them Christians. However, persecution in the southeast Asian country typically stems from radical Buddhist and Hindu groups that harass and discriminate against converts to Christianity. Additionally, Christian churches are frequently opposed by neighbors, and local officials sometimes demand they close their buildings.

PRAYER POINTS

- Please pray for families who lost loved ones in last year’s Easter attacks—that they would sense His comfort and lean into His strength, especially as they approach the first anniversary of the bombings.
- Pray for provision for the 176 children who lost one or both parents in the attacks.
- Pray for protection from any further attacks on churches. And pray specifically for the three churches that were bombed.



31

Tajikistan

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Dictatorial paranoia

POPULATION
9,292,000

CHRISTIANS
71,100

MAIN RELIGION
Islam

GOVERNMENT
Presidential republic

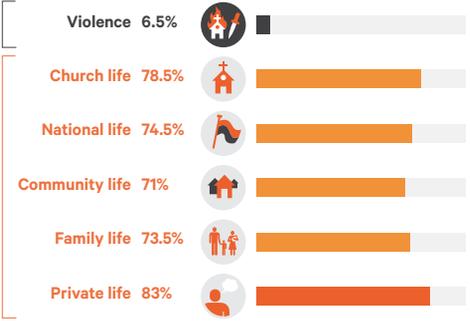
LEADER
President Emomali Rahmon

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



RESTRICTIONS AND RAIDS

In this central Asian country, no religious activities beyond state-run and state-controlled institutions are allowed. Local authorities and police monitor religious meetings, detain believers, raid church meetings and confiscate religious materials. Here, Christians bear the brunt of persecution by the central government and from family, friends and community. Some converts are locked up by their families for long periods and beaten, and may eventually be expelled from their communities. As a result, converts are often secret believers.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray with new believers who live under constant pressure to renounce their faith and return to Islam. Pray especially for new converts who are persecuted by their families.
- Pray with church leaders who face threats of raids and arrests. Ask God to give them courage, wisdom and discernment as they serve the Church.
- Pray that governmental pressure would lessen and that Christians would be able to practice their faith openly in peace.



32

Nepal

*Photo by Francisco Anzola

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Religious nationalism

POPULATION
29,942,000

CHRISTIANS
1,279,000

MAIN RELIGION
Hinduism

GOVERNMENT
Federal republic

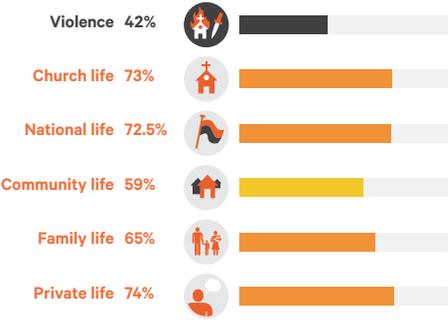
LEADER
President Bidhya
Devi Bhandari

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



HINDU NATIONALISM AND INTENSE PRESSURE

Most of the persecution of Christians in Nepal comes from Hindu radical groups whose goal is to return Nepal to a Hindu state. Seen as betraying their ancestors' faith, Christian converts from Hinduism continue to live under intense pressure, including anti-conversion laws. Nepal also saw attacks on church buildings, and reports surfaced of Christians being beaten, arrested and sentenced to prison. Christians also had to flee their homes and villages due to threats.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray with converts from Hinduism, who experience persecution from their family and community and are at risk under anti-conversion laws.
- Pray for believers' protection and discernment to know when and where to share their faith.
- Pray with churches in Nepal as they gather for worship under threat of violence.

Jordan

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

10,070,000

CHRISTIANS

180,000¹

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Parliamentary constitutional monarchy

LEADER

King Abdullah II

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence 10%



Church life 75%

National life 70%



Community life 64.5%



Family life 84.5%



Private life 79%



DISCRIMINATION AND RESTRICTIONS

Christians in Jordan enjoy a relatively high level of religious freedom but still experience discrimination in employment and restrictions against public preaching. For example, an open testimony of faith by a Christian convert can lead to physical violence, arrest and even death. Radical Islamic movements are also a source of persecution for Christians and Jordanians of other faiths. The number of Jordanians radicalized by ISIS ideology is rising, which puts Christians at greater risk in this Middle Eastern country.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray with believers who are discriminated in their jobs that they would follow Jesus' example as they respond to their persecutors.
- Pray for protection against attacks by radical Islamic groups. Ask God to confuse these persecutors' plans for violence.
- Pray for wisdom and courage for believers to be true disciples as a small minority in the Muslim-dominated culture.



34

Tunisia

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

11,783,000

CHRISTIANS

23,300

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Parliamentary republic

LEADER

President Kais Saied

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 32%



Church life 74%



National life 65%



Community life 62%



Family life 77%



Private life 72%



Pressure

FORCED TO HIDE THEIR FAITH

For Christians in Tunisia, persecution comes in various forms, including targeted discrimination that is often hidden from public view yet affects believers' daily lives. Many Christians experience job insecurity, family abandonment, and verbal, mental and physical abuse—making it dangerous to share their faith with family members, neighbors, friends or colleagues. As a result, most converts to Christianity choose to hide their faith and cannot openly worship and live their lives as Christians.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray that persecuted believers will sense God's presence in their daily lives as they navigate Islamic society.
- Pray for Christian converts to grow in their faith. Ask God to raise up leaders who will teach the Bible and plant underground churches.
- Pray for persecuted Christian youth, especially those who face pressure from non-believing family members when they want to marry.

35

Kazakhstan

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Dictatorial paranoia

POPULATION

18,593,000

CHRISTIANS

4,836,000

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Presidential republic

LEADER

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 10%



Church life 84%

National life 74.5%



Community life 64.5%



Family life 69%



Private life 79%



Pressure

SURVEILLANCE, HOUSE ARRESTS AND CHURCH RAIDS

In Kazakhstan, the government continues to work to maintain and increase its control over society. It is illegal for non-registered churches to gather, forcing them to go underground and leading to police raids during worship services. Any religious literature must be approved by the government. Christians who converted from Islam bear the brunt of the persecution from the state, families, friends and their communities—including house arrests for long periods, physical violence and excommunication from their community.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for Kazakh believers and for church leaders, especially those pastors who lead secret churches and those believers who converted from Islam. Pray for their security amid increasing restrictions and government control.
- Pray for converts under house arrest for leaving Islam and turning to Christ.
- Pray for the government authorities who seek to suppress or eradicate Christianity. Ask God to open their eyes to His truth.



36

Turkey

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

82,962,000

CHRISTIANS

173,000

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Presidential republic

LEADER

President Recep
Tayyip Erdoğan

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 22%



Church life 68%



National life 79.5%



Pressure

Community life 64.5%



Family life 70.5%

Private life 75.5%



INCREASING DICTATORIAL POWER

In Turkey, the main religion, Islam, is enmeshed with fierce, fanatical nationalism. Following an attempted coup in July 2016, the country remains in a tense situation. Fierce rhetoric from the government has left less space for other voices, including the Christian church—the general opinion is that a true Turk is a Muslim. Often pressured to return to Islam, Christian converts experience the greatest persecution from family, friends and community. Overall, suspicion toward Christians is increasing in Turkey.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray with persecuted Christians who face an increasing bias against their faith. Pray that they would not give up meeting together and studying the Word.
- Pray with believers as they look for relevant ways to share their faith with their Muslim friends and family. Ask God to give them discernment and words to minister graciously and wisely.
- Pray with church leaders for wisdom and boldness as they minister to their congregation and look for opportunities to plant churches.

37

Brunei

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Dictatorial paranoia

POPULATION

439,000

CHRISTIANS

55,300

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Sultanate

LEADER

Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 3.5%



Church life 81%

National life 62%



Community life 64%



Family life 86%

Private life 82.5%



Pressure

A VIEW OF ISLAM THAT CONSUMES EVERYTHING

Converting away from Islam to Christianity is considered illegal and punishable by law. Known converts are not recognized as official citizens and can be legally separated from their spouse and children. Some Christian groups are not permitted as churches and must submit operational reports to the government every year. Strict Shariah law regulates all of society, including Christians.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for Christians who want to share the gospel, but are not permitted to evangelize.
- Pray for Christians who must worship secretly and at the risk of legal punishment.
- Pray for churches who cannot import Christian materials and whose services are sometimes monitored.



38

Bangladesh

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

168,066,000

CHRISTIANS

887,000

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Parliamentary republic

LEADER

President Abdul Hamid

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 55.5%



Church life 53%



National life 67%



Community life 76%



Family life 59.5%



Private life 67%



Pressure

SOME GROUPS ARE DOUBLY VULNERABLE

Christians who convert away from Islamic or tribal religions must gather in small house-churches or secret groups due to fear of attack. Protestant and Catholic groups are targeted with attacks and death threats. Christians who belong to ethnic minority groups like the Rohingya are doubly vulnerable, as they are harassed because of both their religion and their ethnicity.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for secret believers who seek to share their faith despite the risks they face.
- Pray for Christians who had to flee their communities out of pressure to renounce their faith.
- Pray for Christians who are mentally and physically abused on a regular basis as they go about their daily routines.



39

Ethiopia

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Islamic oppression

POPULATION
110,136,000

CHRISTIANS
65,776,000

MAIN RELIGION
Christianity

GOVERNMENT
Federal republic

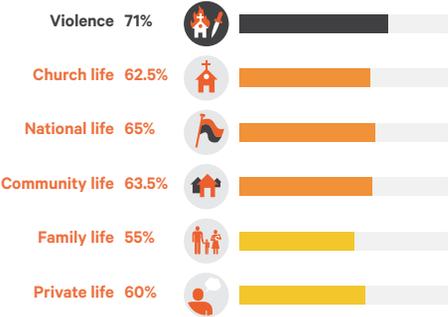
LEADER
President Sahle-Work
Zewde

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



CHRISTIANS DENIED RESOURCES

In Ethiopia, all Christian communities are targeted by radical Islamists—particularly where the Christian community is in the minority—but some denominations are more heavily targeted. In 2019, the country saw a rise in communal violence, which displaced millions of people. In some areas, Christians are denied access to community resources and/or are ostracized from society. In some regions, such as Ogaden, Islamic mobs have been known to attack churches.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for converts to Christianity who are ostracized and denied family rights.
- Pray the government will not continue to shift toward more restrictions.
- Pray God will equip the church to find ways to witness to their neighbors.

40

Malaysia

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

32,454,000

CHRISTIANS

2,951,000

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy

LEADER

Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 9%



Church life 58%



National life 72%



Community life 76%



Family life 87.5%



Private life 72.5%



Pressure

MOST PEOPLE ARE EXPECTED TO BE MUSLIM

Every ethnic Malay is expected to be Muslim. Whoever deviates from this is viewed as going against not just the constitution, but also against society at large, their family and their neighborhood. Roman Catholics and Methodists are watched by the authorities and NGOs, but non-traditional Protestant groups are more often targeted, as these tend to be more active in testifying about their faith.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for protection for secret groups of believers. Pray they would be encouraged and strengthened in their faith, despite the fear of being discovered.
- Pray for new believers who are often kicked out of their home and may be sent to re-education camps to try to reverse their conversion.
- Pray for political, social and religious stability and the provision of new religious freedoms.



41

Colombia

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Organized corruption and crime

POPULATION
49,850,000

CHRISTIANS
47,237,000

MAIN RELIGION
Christianity

GOVERNMENT
Presidential republic

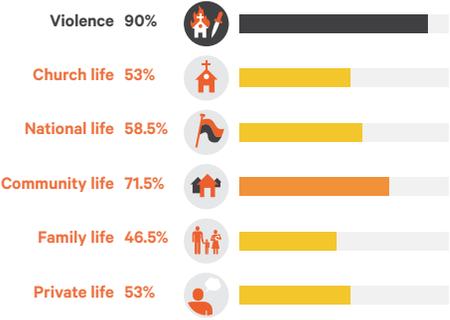
LEADER
President Ivan Duque Marquez

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



TARGETED FOR FAITHFUL RESISTANCE

Church leaders are being harassed, extorted and even murdered by guerrillas or other criminal groups. This violence is often the direct result of Christians working for the defense of human rights or supporting a peace agreement that would restrict illegal activities of militant groups. Christian missionaries and new Christian converts—particularly in areas where there is an indigenous faith system—also face imprisonment, physical abuse and the confiscation of property, among other forms of punishment.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for Christians to experience peace and remain strong in their faith despite the fears of guerrilla activity against them.
- Pray for Christians who promote human rights and peace who are often targeted in killings.
- Pray for pastors and their families to have the support and protection they need so they can continue to spread the gospel in the community.

42

Oman

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

5,002,000

CHRISTIANS

180,000

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Absolute monarchy

LEADER

Sultan Qaboos bin
Said Al Said

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 12%



Church life 76%

National life 69%



Community life 60%



Family life 78%



Private life 76%



Pressure

INCREASED MONITORING AND RESTRICTIONS

Converts from Islam to Christianity are put under pressure from family and society to recant their faith. They can be expelled from the family home and from their jobs, and face problems with the government. Expatriate Christian communities are tolerated, but their church facilities are restricted, and Christian meetings are sometimes monitored for political activity. All religious organizations must register with the government, and monitoring of Christians and their activities has intensified from the 2019 to the 2020 reporting period.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray the government will lift restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly and religion.
- Pray for new believers who are likely to face strong societal pressures.
- Pray that young people who have increasing access to education may usher in a shift in the climate toward Christians.

NORTH KOREA

Bon-Hwa's baptism

Bon-Hwa* escaped her country a few years ago in pursuit of a better life. Two years ago, she attended a secret Christian meeting for North Korean women for the first time. Eventually, she wanted to be baptized.

North Koreans like Bon-Hwa stay in China illegally. Women are often caught by human traffickers and sold into prostitution or marriage. Helping North Korean refugees is outlawed in China, and subject to heavy punishments. Open Doors operates a number of secret safe houses for North Korean Christians and supports women who are forced to marry.

Baptizing North Koreans is risky. "Of course, we couldn't do the baptism in Bon-Hwa's town," says an Open Doors worker. "Instead, we traveled to a safehouse in a remote town."

He describes Bon-Hwa's baptism as a "holy moment."

"Do you believe Jesus is the Savior of your life?" the Open Doors worker asked. The answer was a resounding "yes."

"Do you believe that only through Jesus' blood you can enter heaven after death?"

"Yes."

"Do you accept that you are sinful and you can only be saved by Jesus' name?"

"Yes."

Bon-Hwa wept as the three of them recited the Apostle's Creed. The pastor then baptized Bon-Hwa in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.



*Baptizing
North Korean
[Christians]
is risky.*



43

Kuwait

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

4,249,000

CHRISTIANS

512,000

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Constitutional monarchy

LEADER

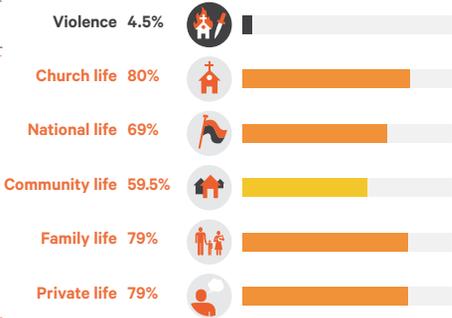
Emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data


Violence


Pressure



RESTRICTIONS AND PRESSURE FOR CONVERTS

There are very few church buildings registered for worship, and it is also difficult to obtain new buildings approved for this purpose. Converts from Islam face pressure from both family members and the local community to recant their Christian faith. Conversion from Islam to another faith is not officially recognized and is likely to lead to legal problems in personal status and property matters. Evangelism is strictly forbidden, as is Christian education and religious literature that is considered offensive to Islam.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for Christians and other minority groups who face discrimination.
- Pray for Christians who may be excluded from community activities due to being seen as foreigners or infidels because of their faith in Jesus.
- Pray for Christians who may be forced to follow strict Islamic laws or risk being legally or otherwise penalized.



44

Kenya

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

52,215,000

CHRISTIANS

42,820,000

MAIN RELIGION

Christianity

GOVERNMENT

Presidential republic

LEADER

President Uhuru
Muigai Kenyatta

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 54.5%



Church life 65.5%



National life 50%

Community life 65%



Family life 63%

Private life 70%



Pressure

A GROWING THREAT OF ISLAMIC RADICALISM

Even though Kenya is a majority-Christian country, reports have indicated that a growing al-Shabab presence in the northeast and coastal regions monitors the activities of Christians. Believers in these parts of Kenya who converted from Islam live under constant threat of attack—even from their closest relatives. Organized corruption and crime are also serious problems. Corrupt officials do not take measures against those who persecute Christians; this encourages additional acts of persecution.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for wisdom in sharing the faith and in discipling new converts amidst militant tensions.
- Pray for new believers who may not have access to resources and may be lured away from faith in Jesus by economic enticements.
- Pray for Christians who have suffered severe trauma in targeted attacks.

45

Bhutan

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION
Religious nationalism

POPULATION
826,000

CHRISTIANS
30,000¹

MAIN RELIGION
Buddhism

GOVERNMENT
Constitutional monarchy

LEADER
King Jigme Khesar
Namgyel Wangchuck

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence 0%



Church life 83.5%

National life 69.5%



Community life 70.5%



Family life 65.5%



Private life 77%



PRESSURED TO ABANDON FAITH

All Bhutanese citizens are expected to follow Buddhism. Converts to Christianity are watched with suspicion. Religious leaders, the local community and family often cooperate in trying to persuade converts to abandon their Christian faith. No churches have official recognition by the state, which means that Christians are technically worshipping illegally. Local authorities often refuse to issue Christians with a certificate needed for loans, jobs and more. Persecution in Bhutan has never been particularly violent and no violence was recorded this year.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for believers who violate the anti-conversion law by leaving the Buddhist faith. Pray that efforts to persecute Christians in Bhutan will actually strengthen and unite them.
- Pray for Christian converts who face strong pressure from family, friends and neighbors to recant their faith. Pray they might be strengthened when facing persecution.
- Pray that the Lord would soften the hearts of their communities and make them receptive to the gospel.



46

Russian Federation

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Dictatorial paranoia

POPULATION

143,896,000

CHRISTIANS

118,027,000

MAIN RELIGION

Christianity

GOVERNMENT

Semi-presidential federation

LEADER

President Vladimir Putin

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 41%



Church life 72.5%



National life 62.5%



Community life 64%



Family life 49.5%



Private life 73%



Pressure

CHRISTIAN GROUPS FACE SURVEILLANCE

In Muslim-dominated regions, Christians who have converted from Islam often bear the brunt of persecution at the hands of family, friends and community members. In some areas, believers must keep their faith secret for fear of being executed. Throughout the country, unregistered churches active in evangelism may face obstructions in the form of surveillance and interrogation by the local authorities.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray the government will cease imposing legislation that restricts religious activity.
- Pray for the safety of church members when they are arrested and interrogated by the police.
- Pray that suspicion of Protestants who receive support from foreign organizations won't hinder the process of new churches receiving their official registration from the government.

United Arab Emirates

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

9,542,000

CHRISTIANS

1,226,000

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Federation of monarchies

LEADER

President Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence 6.5%



Church life 75%



National life 67%



Community life 56.5%



Family life 78%



Private life 77.5%



UNABLE TO EXPRESS FAITH PUBLICLY

Christian expatriates are free to worship privately, but the government does not allow them to evangelize or pray in public. Because Emirati society is conservative, Christians exercise self-restraint in public. Family and community members often try to get those who convert from Islam to recant their Christian faith. Converts tend not to reveal their conversion then, which is why there are few reports of Christians being killed or harmed for their faith.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for leaders of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to have wisdom and tolerance, allowing citizens to change their faith.
- Pray that the government will be able to keep the country safe from terrorist groups and provide policies that encourage young people to work for the good of their country.
- Pray for Christian women who convert from Islam and lose their rights to possessions and their children.

48

Cameroon

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

25,313,000

CHRISTIANS

15,415,000

MAIN RELIGION

Christianity

GOVERNMENT

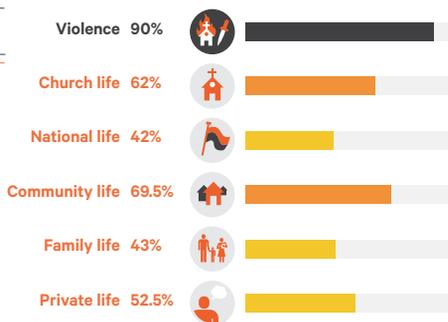
Presidential republic

LEADER

President Paul Biya

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



TARGETED IN NORTHERN CAMEROON

Though Cameroon is majority Christian, the country is divided—in parts of northern Cameroon that are dominated by Islam, Christians are a distinct minority. For believers here, converting from Islam to Christianity can carry significant risks of violence or ostracization from family and community. Additionally, northern Cameroon lies in an area subject to Boko Haram attacks. The Islamic extremist group carries out periodic attacks in the region, targeting Christians and other minority groups.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray with Christians in northern Cameroon who have converted to Christianity from Islam. These believers often face threats and violence for their choice to follow Jesus.
- Pray for Christians who oppose the dictatorship of President Paul Biya. If believers are seen to oppose the government, they can be tortured and even killed.
- Pray for the saving grace of Jesus to pierce the hearts of Boko Haram fighters, that they would see the truth of Jesus.



49

Indonesia

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

269,436,000

CHRISTIANS

32,790,000

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Presidential republic

LEADER

President Joko Widodo

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence

Violence 39%



Church life 57%



National life 61%



Pressure

Community life 69.5%



Family life 66%

Private life 65.5%



VIOLENCE AND THE INFLUENCE OF RADICAL ISLAM

The church in Indonesia has been wracked with adversity, including deadly suicide bombings and earthquakes that have left Christians reeling. While the government tightens the country's blasphemy laws, most problems for believers and churches come from confrontations with radical Islamic groups that continue to exert significant influence. In certain hot spots like West Java or Aceh, churches that evangelize often become targets of these groups.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for believers who continue to recover from the loss of family members killed in 2016's and 2018's church bombings.
- Pray for Christian converts from Islam as they live under tightening anti-conversion laws. Ask God to give them wisdom and perseverance.
- Pray that God would open the eyes of Muslim extremists and university students exploring radical Islamic ideology—drawing each one to Himself.

50

Niger

SOURCE OF PERSECUTION

Islamic oppression

POPULATION

23,177,000

CHRISTIANS

62,200

MAIN RELIGION

Islam

GOVERNMENT

Semi-presidential republic

LEADER

President Mahamadou
Issoufou

Profile of persecution

Based on World Watch List 2020 data



Violence 55.5%



Church life 66.5%



National life 43%



Community life 80%



Family life 57%



Private life 56%



STIRRED UP TO HATE CHRISTIANS

Christians are a minority in Niger, where 99 percent of citizens are Muslim. Many Christians are able to live and worship peacefully, but in some areas, radical Muslim clerics stir up animosity toward believers. Some Christians who converted from Islam also are pressured by their family and surrounding culture to stop following Jesus. Boko Haram is active in parts of southern Niger and targets Christians, and the actions of Boko Haram in surrounding nations has created a massive humanitarian crisis that has impacted believers.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for Christians who live in regions where extremist Muslim preachers are creating hatred against followers of Jesus.
- Some Christians have difficulty conducting business or building churches. Pray they would be allowed to live and worship openly.
- In parts of Niger, Christians who have converted from Islam are heavily pressured by family and community. Pray with these sisters and brothers.

BURKINA FASO

Naomi's story

Naomi, 45, is a mother of nine. Until recently, her hometown was a very peaceful town. But in April 2019, that peace was shattered when terrorists started attacking the community.*

"My husband and I were at home with my children. After preparing for his Sunday sermon, Eli [my husband] told me he was going to see his friend, another pastor.

"Some hours later, we heard gunshots. My husband wasn't far [away], and I sensed he was in trouble.

"The shooting stopped after two hours. I was standing in front of my house, hoping and praying I would see my husband. Then I saw the pastor friend Eli went to visit coming. He looked very troubled.

"As soon as the pastor caught his breath, he said, 'Naomi take heart—your husband is dead.' He told me my husband insisted that he wanted to come home to be with his family when the shooting started. He tried to stop him from exiting the house, but Eli refused. A few meters from his house, Eli was shot and killed.

"My world came to a standstill. I was speechless. My husband risked his life because of us, and now he was no more. My children and I wept bitterly together.

"Life became so tough and unbearable. As the days went by, we had to relocate to [the city of] Kaya for safety because more attacks were taking place.

"Day and night, we kept meeting in the church to cry out to God to remember us and send us help. And God has answered our prayers. He promised to never leave us or forsake us. God is a miracle-working God."

Open Doors was able to help Naomi and other Christians through emergency aid in Kaya.



"Life became so tough and unbearable."

PRAY THROUGH THE WORLD WATCH LIST

“Your support and prayers strengthen our hearts and help us to move forward with hope, to not give up. May the Lord give you a new anointing and double portion of His strength every day.”

– DARYA,

A HOUSE CHURCH LEADER IN IRAN

Your prayers are such a source of strength and hope for Christians who live in places where it's dangerous or hard to follow Jesus. As you walk through 2020, will you remember the countries on the World Watch List through prayer?

Start with North Korea, and each week pray for the next country on the list. There are specific requests for each country in this booklet, or you can go to OpenDoorsUSA.org/WWL for more detailed requests. In each country, you can also pray generally for:

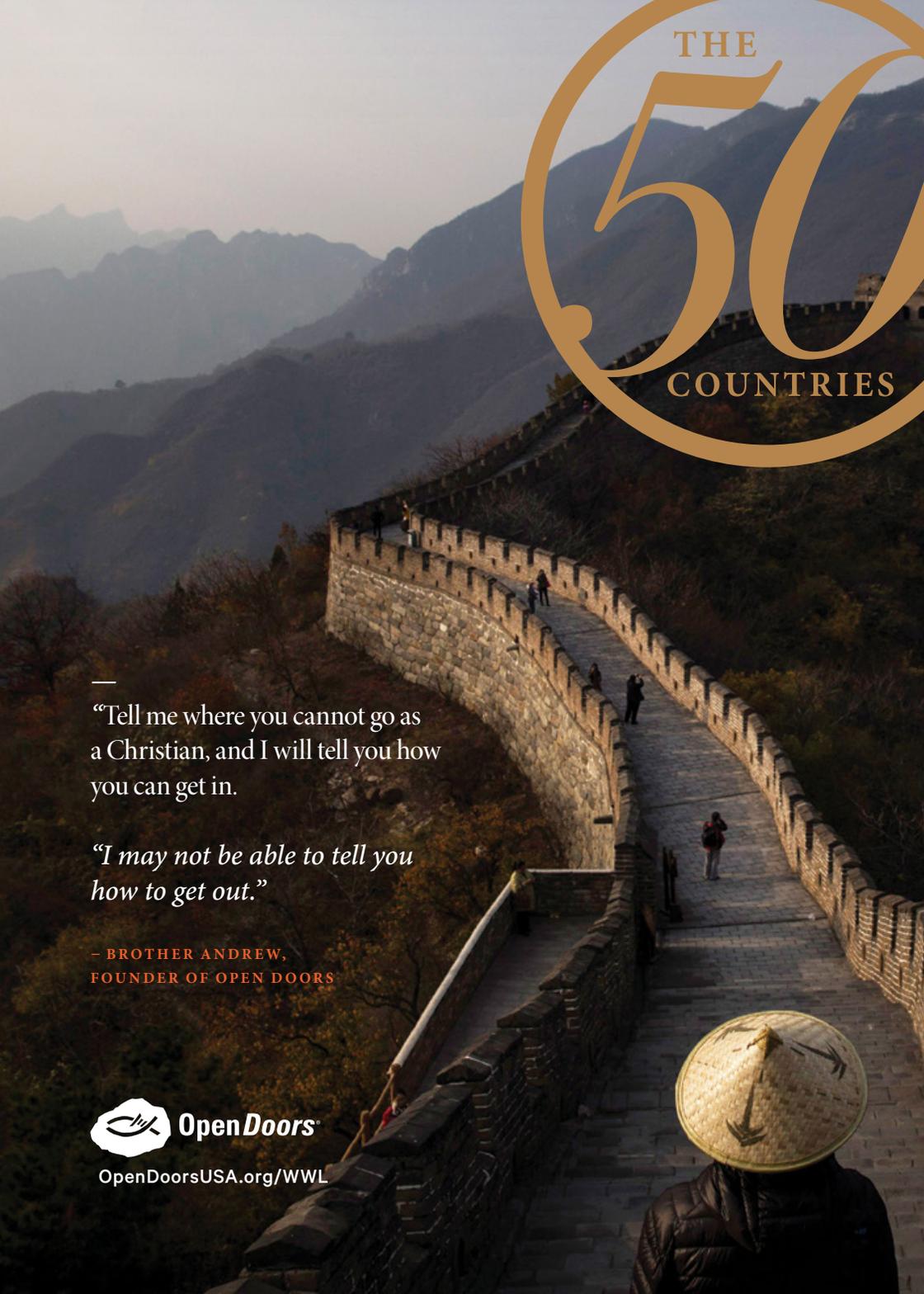
- CHURCHES AND PASTORS
- CHRISTIANS WHO CAN'T WORSHIP PUBLICLY
- BELIEVERS WHO ARE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE OR HAVE FAMILY IMPACTED BY VIOLENCE
- CHRISTIANS IN NEED—OF BIBLES, FOOD, SHELTER OR ANYTHING ELSE

Thank you for your prayers. You'll never know how much they do for your sisters and brothers.

IF YOU WILL COMMIT TO PRAYER IN 2020, TAKE THE OPEN DOORS CHALLENGE TO PRAY FOR THOSE WHO SHARE YOUR FAITH, AND NOT YOUR FREEDOM. HERE'S HOW:

1. PLEDGE TO PRAY AT OPENDOORSUSA.ORG/PRAYERPLEDGE
2. DOWNLOAD THE PRAYER APP AT OPENDOORSUSA.ORG/PRAYERAPP
3. SHARE YOUR COMMITMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA.





THE
50
COUNTRIES

—
“Tell me where you cannot go as
a Christian, and I will tell you how
you can get in.

*“I may not be able to tell you
how to get out.”*

— BROTHER ANDREW,
FOUNDER OF OPEN DOORS



OpenDoorsUSA.org/WWL