



World Watch List 2018 Compilation Volume 1

ALL MAIN DOCUMENTS
(excluding country profile information)

January 2018



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors International / World Watch Research Unit

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WWL 2018 Compilation Volume 1: ALL MAIN DOCUMENTS

(excluding Top 50 country profile information)

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1. WWL 2018 Statistics

1.1 WWL 2018 Table and Scores

		1. Private Life	2. Family Life	3. Community Life	4. National Life	5. Church Life	6. Violence	TOTAL SCORE WWL 2018	TOTAL SCORE WWL 2017	TOTAL SCORE WWL 2016	TOTAL SCORE WWL 2015	TOTAL SCORE WWL 2014
Rank	Country	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score
1	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	10.6	94	92	92	92	90
2	Afghanistan	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	10.0	93	89	88	81	78
3	Somalia	16.0	16.2	16.1	16.3	16.4	10.4	91	91	87	90	80
4	Sudan	14.2	14.5	14.3	15.6	16.0	12.0	87	87	84	80	73
5	Pakistan	14.4	13.5	13.8	15.0	13.1	16.7	86	88	87	79	77
6	Eritrea	15.2	14.5	15.8	16.1	15.2	9.4	86	82	89	79	72
7	Libya	15.2	15.3	14.2	15.7	15.5	10.4	86	78	79	76	71
8	Iraq	14.7	14.7	14.9	14.9	15.1	11.3	86	86	90	86	78
9	Yemen	16.7	16.6	16.4	16.5	16.7	2.6	85	85	78	73	74
10	Iran	14.0	14.1	14.5	15.8	16.4	10.0	85	85	83	80	77
11	India	12.6	12.7	13.2	14.7	12.9	14.4	81	73	68	62	55
12	Saudi Arabia	14.9	13.7	14.2	15.5	16.4	4.1	79	76	76	77	78
13	Maldives	15.2	15.5	13.5	15.8	16.7	1.1	78	76	76	78	77
14	Nigeria	11.8	11.5	13.1	12.1	12.1	16.5	77	78	78	78	70
15	Syria	14.4	14.3	14.1	14.5	14.7	3.7	76	86	87	83	79
16	Uzbekistan	15.5	12.1	13.0	13.1	16.0	3.5	73	71	70	69	68
17	Egypt	11.3	12.8	12.2	11.7	9.5	12.4	70	65	64	61	61
18	Vietnam	12.4	8.4	12.7	14.2	13.8	7.4	69	71	66	68	65
19	Turkmenistan	15.2	10.3	12.9	12.8	15.2	1.9	68	67	66	63	62
20	Laos	12.9	8.6	13.6	13.9	14.9	3.5	67	64	58	58	62
21	Jordan	13.2	13.3	11.5	10.9	13.0	4.3	66	63	59	56	56
22	Tajikistan	13.3	11.3	11.8	11.8	12.9	4.3	65	58	58	50	47
23	Malaysia	12.0	14.9	12.8	12.4	9.3	3.9	65	60	58	55	49
24	Myanmar	11.6	11.1	13.2	10.4	11.0	7.8	65	62	62	60	59
25	Nepal	12.6	11.9	10.7	11.5	12.4	4.6	64	(not in WWL)			
26	Brunei	14.3	14.2	10.7	10.2	13.5	0.9	64	64	61	58	57
27	Qatar	13.4	12.9	11.7	11.3	14.1	0.0	63	66	65	64	63
28	Kazakhstan	12.8	10.0	10.2	12.2	13.7	3.7	63	56	55	51	49
29	Ethiopia	9.8	10.0	10.8	10.9	10.5	10.4	62	64	67	61	65
30	Tunisia	11.9	13.2	10.6	10.7	12.0	3.9	62	61	58	55	55
31	Turkey	12.5	9.7	9.8	11.7	9.6	8.7	62	57	55	52	(not in WWL)
32	Kenya	12.0	10.9	10.0	7.9	11.7	9.4	62	68	68	63	48
33	Bhutan	11.9	11.6	12.4	11.4	13.1	1.1	62	61	56	56	54
34	Kuwait	13.4	12.6	11.6	10.9	12.3	0.4	61	57	56	49	50
35	Central African Republic	9.0	8.1	10.1	8.9	8.8	16.1	61	58	59	67	67
36	Palestinian Territories	12.1	12.8	10.5	10.7	12.6	1.1	60	64	62	58	53
37	Mali	11.4	9.6	11.2	8.1	9.2	9.6	59	59	55	52	54
38	Indonesia	10.3	11.0	11.5	10.0	9.3	6.9	59	55	55	50	46
39	Mexico	8.3	7.6	12.1	10.7	9.7	10.4	59	57	56	55	(not in WWL)
40	United Arab Emirates	13.6	12.2	10.0	10.4	11.8	0.2	58	55	55	49	51
41	Bangladesh	10.4	8.8	11.4	9.6	7.5	10.0	58	63	57	51	46
42	Algeria	12.3	13.1	7.5	10.4	12.4	2.0	58	58	56	55	54
43	China	9.2	7.2	8.0	10.7	13.3	9.1	57	57	57	57	51
44	Sri Lanka	11.1	7.6	10.5	11.3	10.1	6.9	57	55	(not in WWL)	51	55
45	Azerbaijan	13.1	9.1	9.3	11.1	12.4	2.4	57	(not in WWL)	57	50	(not in WWL)
46	Oman	12.1	12.2	9.9	9.4	12.6	1.1	57	53	53	55	56
47	Mauritania	11.5	11.3	11.1	12.2	11.0	0.0	57	55	(not in WWL)	50	51
48	Bahrain	12.9	13.1	10.2	9.9	10.3	0.2	57	54	54	(not in WWL)	48
49	Colombia	7.9	7.6	11.9	8.6	8.5	11.9	56	53	55	55	56
50	Djibouti	12.2	12.2	10.3	9.9	11.7	0.0	56	57	58	60	46

WWL 2018 Persecution Watch Countries¹

Rank	Country	1. Private Life Score	2. Family Life Score	3. Community Life Score	4. National Life Score	5. Church Life Score	6. Violence Score	TOTAL SCORE WWL 2018
51	Comoros	11.7	11.5	9.1	9.4	13.9	0.4	56
52	Kyrgyzstan	11.7	9.5	10.0	8.1	11.6	2.8	54
53	Tanzania	10.1	10.3	10.1	9.5	9.0	3.9	53
54	Russian Federation	11.1	8.4	10.1	8.9	10.7	2.0	51
55	Morocco	10.4	11.5	7.6	8.8	12.0	0.6	51
56	Cuba	8.5	4.9	10.7	10.4	12.2	2.4	49
57	Uganda	10.9	8.7	9.5	8.7	4.8	3.9	46
58	Niger	9.9	9.7	9.0	7.0	7.1	2.6	45

¹ These countries reached a score of 41 points or more but did not receive enough points to be included in the WWL Top 50.

1.2 Country Religious Statistics – WWL 2018 Top 50 and Persecution Watch Countries

Sources:

WCD: Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed May 2017)

OD: Open Doors estimate

Country	Total population (UN figure as compiled by WCD)	Number of Christians	% Christians	Source
Afghanistan	34,169,000	thousands	Less than 1%	OD
Algeria	41,064,000	68,500	0.2	WCD
Azerbaijan	9,974,000	319,000	3.2	WCD
Bahrain	1,419,000	188,000	13.2	WCD
Bangladesh	164,828,000	866,000	0.5	WCD
Bhutan	793,000	20,000	2.5	OD
Brunei	434,000	54,800	12.6	WCD
Central African Republic	5,099,000	3,772,000	74.0	WCD
China	1,388,233,000	97,200,000	7.0	OD
Colombia	49,068,000	46,657,000	95.1	WCD
Djibouti	911,000	11,100	1.2	WCD
Egypt	95,215,000	9,521,500	10.0	OD
Eritrea	5,482,000	2,540,000	46.3	WCD
Ethiopia	104,345,000	61,956,000	59.4	WCD
India	1,342,513,000	63,970,000	4.8	WCD
Indonesia	263,510,000	31,925,000	12.1	WCD
Iran	80,946,000	800,000	1.0	OD
Iraq	38,654,000	258,000	0.7	WCD
Jordan	7,877,000	129,000	1.6	WCD
Kazakhstan	18,064,000	4,580,000	25.4	WCD
Kenya	48,467,000	39,409,000	81.3	WCD
Kuwait	4,100,000	425,000	10.4	WCD
Laos	7,038,000	225,000	3.2	WCD
Libya	6,409,000	41,700	0.7	WCD
Malaysia	31,164,000	2,865,000	9.2	WCD
Maldives	376,000	a few thousand	Less than 1%	OD
Mali	18,690,000	413,000	2.2	WCD
Mauritania	4,266,000	10,000	0.2	WCD
Mexico	130,223,000	124,869,000	95.9	WCD

Myanmar	54,836,000	4,369,000	8.0	WCD
Nepal	29,187,000	1,172,000	4.0	WCD
Nigeria	191,836,000	88,906,000	46.3	WCD
North Korea	25,405,000	300,000	1.2	OD
Oman	4,741,000	204,000	4.3	WCD
Pakistan	196,744,000	3,938,000	2.0	WCD
Palestinian Territories	4,928,000	67,700	1.4	WCD
Qatar	2,338,000	211,000	9.0	WCD
Saudi Arabia	32,743,000	1,406,000	4.3	WCD
Somalia	11,392,000	a few hundred	Less than 1%	OD
Sri Lanka	20,905,000	1,925,000	9.2	WCD
Sudan	42,166,000	1,996,000	4.7	WCD
Syria	18,907,000	794,000	4.2	OD
Tajikistan	8,858,000	62,200	0.7	WCD
Tunisia	11,495,000	23,800	0.2	WCD
Turkey	80,418,000	190,000	0.2	WCD
Turkmenistan	5,503,000	69,900	1.3	WCD
UAE	9,398,000	1,206,000	12.8	WCD
Uzbekistan	30,691,000	350,000	1.1	WCD
Vietnam	95,415,000	8,368,000	8.8	WCD
Yemen	28,120,000	a few thousand	Less than 1%	OD
Religious statistics Persecution Watch Countries (41 points or more but not in Top 50)				
Comoros	826,000	4,200	0.5	WCD
Cuba	11,390,000	7,013,000	61.6	WCD
Kyrgyzstan	6,125,000	309,000	5.0	WCD
Morocco	35,241,000	32,400	0.1	WCD
Niger	21,564,000	70,500	0.3	WCD
Russian Federation	143,375,000	117,987,000	82.3	WCD
Tanzania	56,878,000	31,739,000	55.8	WCD
Uganda	41,653,000	35,168,000	84.4	WCD

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1.3 Ranking for Pressure

		1. Private Life	2. Family Life	3. Community Life	4. National Life	5. Church Life	TOTAL SCORE FOR SQUEEZE WWL 2018
Rank SQUEEZE	Country	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score
1	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	83.3
2	Afghanistan	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	83.3
3	Yemen	16.7	16.6	16.4	16.5	16.7	82.9
4	Somalia	16.0	16.2	16.1	16.3	16.4	81.0
5	Eritrea	15.2	14.5	15.8	16.1	15.2	76.8
6	Maldives	15.2	15.5	13.5	15.8	16.7	76.7
7	Libya	15.2	15.3	14.2	15.7	15.5	75.8
8	Iran	14.0	14.1	14.5	15.8	16.4	74.8
9	Saudi Arabia	14.9	13.7	14.2	15.5	16.4	74.7
10	Sudan	14.2	14.5	14.3	15.6	16.0	74.6
11	Iraq	14.7	14.7	14.9	14.9	15.1	74.3
12	Syria	14.4	14.3	14.1	14.5	14.7	72.0
13	Pakistan	14.4	13.5	13.8	15.0	13.1	69.8
14	Uzbekistan	15.5	12.1	13.0	13.1	16.0	69.7
15	Turkmenistan	15.2	10.3	12.9	12.8	15.2	66.3
16	India	12.6	12.7	13.2	14.7	12.9	66.1
17	Laos	12.9	8.6	13.6	13.9	14.9	63.9
18	Qatar	13.4	12.9	11.7	11.3	14.1	63.4
19	Brunei	14.3	14.2	10.7	10.2	13.5	62.8
20	Jordan	13.2	13.3	11.5	10.9	13.0	61.9
21	Vietnam	12.4	8.4	12.7	14.2	13.8	61.5
22	Malaysia	12.0	14.9	12.8	12.4	9.3	61.4
23	Tajikistan	13.3	11.3	11.8	11.8	12.9	61.1
24	Kuwait	13.4	12.6	11.6	10.9	12.3	60.8
25	Nigeria	11.8	11.5	13.1	12.1	12.1	60.7
26	Bhutan	11.9	11.6	12.4	11.4	13.1	60.4
27	Nepal	12.6	11.9	10.7	11.5	12.4	59.1
28	Kazakhstan	12.8	10.0	10.2	12.2	13.7	58.9
29	Palestinian Territories	12.1	12.8	10.7	10.5	12.6	58.7
30	Tunisia	11.9	13.2	10.6	10.7	12.0	58.4
31	United Arab Emirates	13.6	12.2	10.0	10.4	11.8	58.1
32	Egypt	11.3	12.8	12.2	11.7	9.5	57.5
33	Myanmar	11.6	11.1	13.2	10.4	11.0	57.2
34	Mauritania	11.5	11.3	11.1	12.2	11.0	57.1
35	Bahrain	12.9	13.1	10.2	9.9	10.3	56.4
36	Djibouti	12.2	12.2	10.3	9.9	11.7	56.3
37	Oman	12.1	12.2	9.9	9.4	12.6	56.1
38	Algeria	12.3	13.1	7.5	10.4	12.4	55.6
39	Azerbaijan	13.1	9.1	9.3	11.1	12.4	55.0
40	Turkey	12.5	9.7	9.8	11.7	9.6	53.3
41	Kenya	12.0	10.9	10.0	7.9	11.7	52.4
42	Indonesia	10.3	11.0	11.5	10.0	9.3	52.0
43	Ethiopia	9.8	10.0	10.8	10.9	10.5	52.0
44	Sri Lanka	11.1	7.6	10.5	11.3	10.1	50.6
45	Mali	11.4	9.6	11.2	8.1	9.2	49.4
46	Mexico	8.3	7.6	12.1	10.7	9.7	48.4
47	China	9.2	7.2	8.0	10.7	13.3	48.4
48	Bangladesh	10.4	8.8	11.4	9.6	7.5	47.7
49	Central African Republic	9.0	8.1	10.1	8.9	8.8	44.8
50	Colombia	7.9	7.6	11.9	8.6	8.5	44.6

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1.4 Ranking for Violence

		6. Violence / SMASH WWL 2018
Rank SMASH	Country	Score
1	Pakistan	16.7
2	Nigeria	16.5
3	Central African Republic	16.1
4	India	14.4
5	Egypt	12.4
6	Sudan	12.0
7	Colombia	11.9
8	Iraq	11.3
9	North Korea	10.6
10	Somalia	10.4
11	Libya	10.4
12	Ethiopia	10.4
13	Mexico	10.4
14	Afghanistan	10.0
15	Iran	10.0
16	Bangladesh	10.0
17	Mali	9.6
18	Eritrea	9.4
19	Kenya	9.4
20	China	9.1
21	Turkey	8.7
22	Myanmar	7.8
23	Vietnam	7.4
24	Indonesia	6.9
25	Sri Lanka	6.9
26	Nepal	4.6
27	Jordan	4.3
28	Tajikistan	4.3
29	Saudi Arabia	4.1
30	Malaysia	3.9
31	Tunisia	3.9
32	Syria	3.7
33	Kazakhstan	3.7
34	Uzbekistan	3.5
35	Laos	3.5

36	Yemen	2.6
37	Azerbaijan	2.4
38	Algeria	2.0
39	Turkmenistan	1.9
40	Maldives	1.1
41	Bhutan	1.1
42	Palestinian Territories	1.1
43	Oman	1.1
44	Brunei	0.9
45	Kuwait	0.4
46	United Arab Emirates	0.2
47	Bahrain	0.2
48	Qatar	0.0
49	Mauritania	0.0
50	Djibouti	0.0

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1.5 The 215 Million Messaging Guidelines – Compilation version¹

1. The number of persecuted Christians is estimated for all countries that have 41 points or more, and thus belong to the categories “high”, “very high” and “extreme” levels of persecution. WWL 2018 has 58 countries in this scoring range. Only the Top 50 is usually published.
2. The best wording for stating the number of persecuted Christians in the WWL 2018 reporting period would be:

In the WWL 2018 countries with 41 points or more, the total population is 5.13 billion and the total number of Christians is estimated at 800 million (16%).

Out of these 800 million Christians, 215 million (27%) are considered to be suffering from “high” (or “very high” or “extreme”) levels of persecution, according to the levels set out in the WWL-Methodology.

Out of these 215 million Christians, Africa has 81.14 million (38%), Asia (including the Middle East) 113.31 million (53%), Latin America 20.05 million (9%) and the rest of the world (Europe*, Northern America and Oceania) 11,800 Christians (0.01%). (*Northern Caucasus in the Russian Federation)

Globally there are 2.48 billion Christians. Out of these, 215 million or 1 in every 11.5 Christians is considered to be suffering from “high” (or “very high” or “extreme”) levels of persecution, according to the levels set out in the WWL-Methodology.

In Africa there are 608 million Christians. Out of these, 81 million or 1 in every 7.5 Christians is considered to be suffering from “high” (or “very high” or “extreme”) levels of persecution, according to the levels set out in the WWL-Methodology.

In Asia (including the Middle East) there are 393 million Christians. Out of these, 113 million or 1 in every 3.5 Christians is considered to be suffering from “high” (or “very high” or “extreme”) levels of persecution, according to the levels set out in the WWL-Methodology.

¹ There is an appendix for this document showing a statistical breakdown per country. However, it contains sensitive information and is not available for publication. Details can be sent on request.

In Latin America there are 597 million Christians. Out of these, 20 million or 1 in every 30 Christians is considered to be suffering from “high” (or “very high” or “extreme”) levels of persecution, according to the levels set out in the WWL-Methodology.

In the rest of the world (Europe, Northern America and Oceania) there are 880 million Christians. Out of these, 11,800 or 1 in every 75,000 Christians (rounded number) is considered to be suffering from “high” (or “very high” or “extreme”) levels of persecution, according to the levels set out in the WWL-Methodology.

In the WWL-Methodology, “high” levels of persecution occur when the score-range is 41 to 60 points. Above this there are two other categories: “very high (61-80pts)” and “extreme (81-100pts).” Based on the WWL-questionnaire, the level of persecution was estimated for regions within a given country. If this estimate came within the range of “high” and above, the Christian population in that region would be counted, especially when all categories of Christianity were deemed to be affected one way or another.

In the WWL-Methodology, “high” is defined as “where living as a Christian means that although there may be a tolerated church which enjoys some freedom, in practice prominent Christians are targeted, churches themselves subject to significant restrictions, and the culture remains largely hostile to a Christian presence in such areas as education and employment.”

3. These are briefer options:

“Approximately 215 million Christians in the WWL 2018 countries with 41 points or more, experience ‘high’ levels of persecution for their faith.”

Or:

“More than 200 million Christians in the WWL 2018 countries with 41 points or more, experience ‘high’ levels of persecution for their faith.”

Or:

“One in every 11.5 Christians experiences ‘high’ levels of persecution for their faith.”

And:

“In Africa one in every 7.5 Christians experiences ‘high’ levels of persecution for their faith.”

“In Asia one in every 3.5 Christians experiences ‘high’ levels of persecution for their faith.”

“In Latin America one in every 30 Christians experiences ‘high’ levels of persecution for their faith.”

“In the rest of the world (Europe*, Northern America and Oceania) one in every 75,000 Christians experiences ‘high’ levels of persecution for their faith.” (*Northern Caucasus in the Russian Federation)

The qualifier “high” is crucial, since there are other definitions of persecution that would give a much higher figure.

4. Using the phrase **“more than 215 million Christians in the world experience ‘high’ levels of persecution for their faith”** would also work, because most countries that are not in the WWL 2018 countries with 41 points or more, have only minor parts of the country experiencing “high” (or “very high” or “extreme”) levels of persecution.

1.6 Persecution patterns for Top 50 countries

Contents - Listed according to ranking

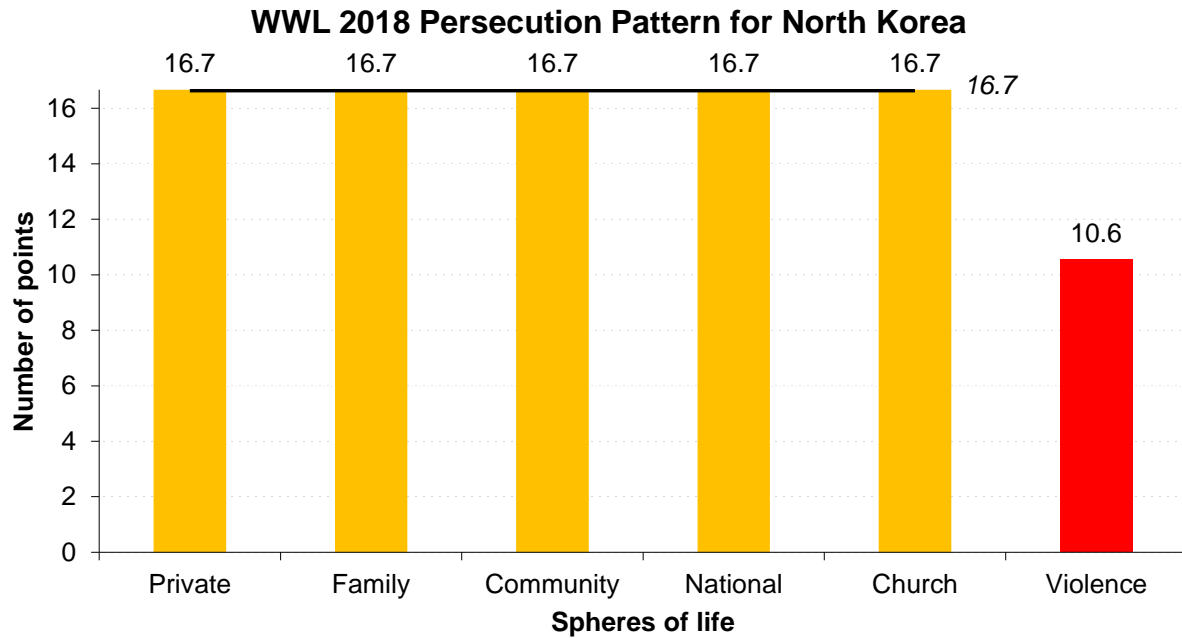
1. North Korea	14
2. Afghanistan	14
3. Somalia	15
4. Sudan	15
5. Pakistan	16
6. Eritrea	16
7. Libya	17
8. Iraq	17
9. Yemen	18
10. Iran	18
11. India	19
12. Saudi Arabia	19
13. Maldives	20
14. Nigeria	20
15. Syria	21
16. Uzbekistan	21
17. Egypt	22
18. Vietnam	22
19. Turkmenistan	23
20. Laos	23
21. Jordan	24
22. Tajikistan	24
23. Malaysia	25
24. Myanmar	25
25. Nepal	26
26. Brunei	26
27. Qatar	27

28.Kazakhstan	27
29.Ethiopia	28
30.Tunisia	28
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The Persecution Pattern shows the levels of pressure on Christians in the WWL methodology's 5 *Spheres of life* and the level of violence against Christians in each country in the WWL Top 50 in the given reporting period. The scores for each block have been rounded to one decimal place. The maximum score for each block is 16.7 (or rather: 16.667). For an explanation of each Persecution Pattern please see the long version of the Country Persecution Dynamics. For an explanation of the factors being measured in each block, please see the short and/or long version of the WWL Methodology (November 2017 edition).

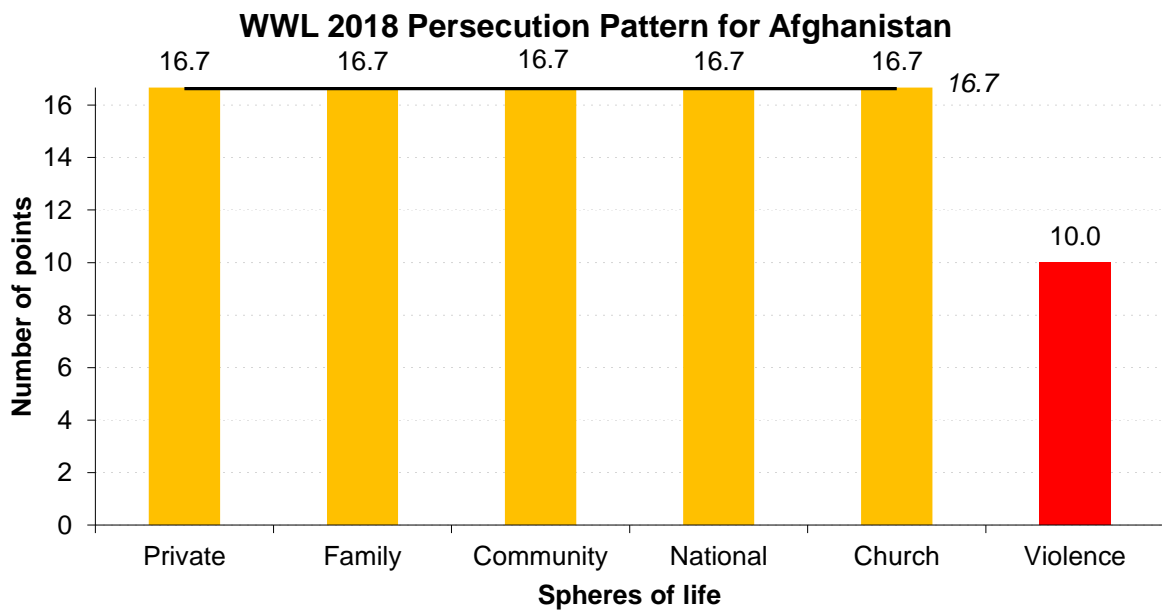
1. North Korea

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017



2. Afghanistan

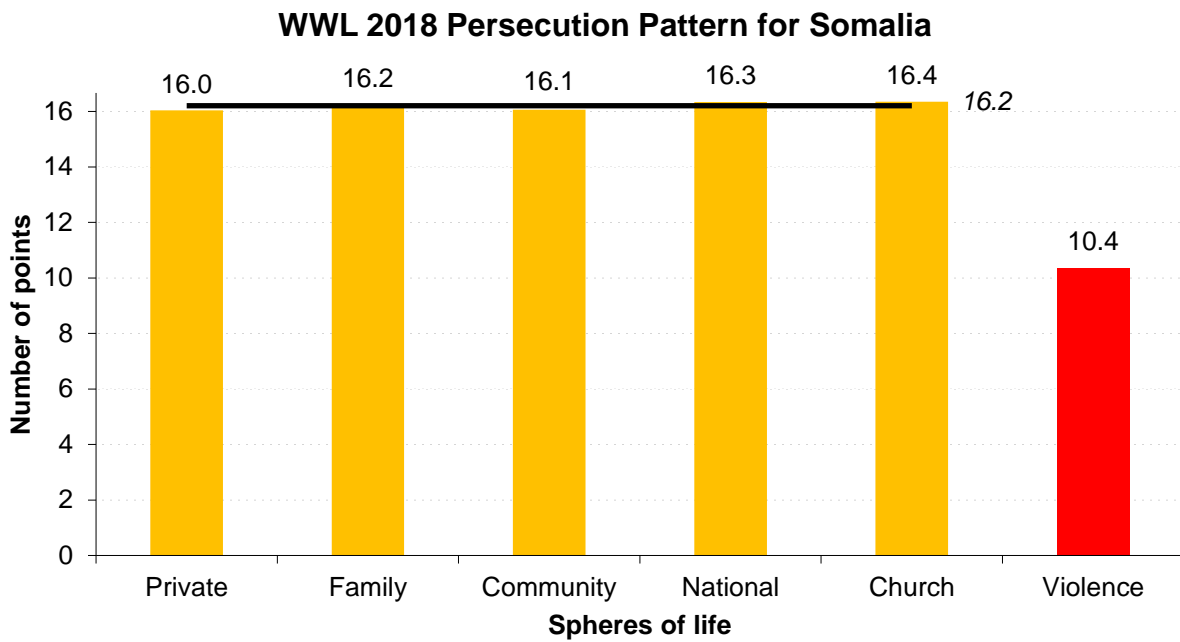
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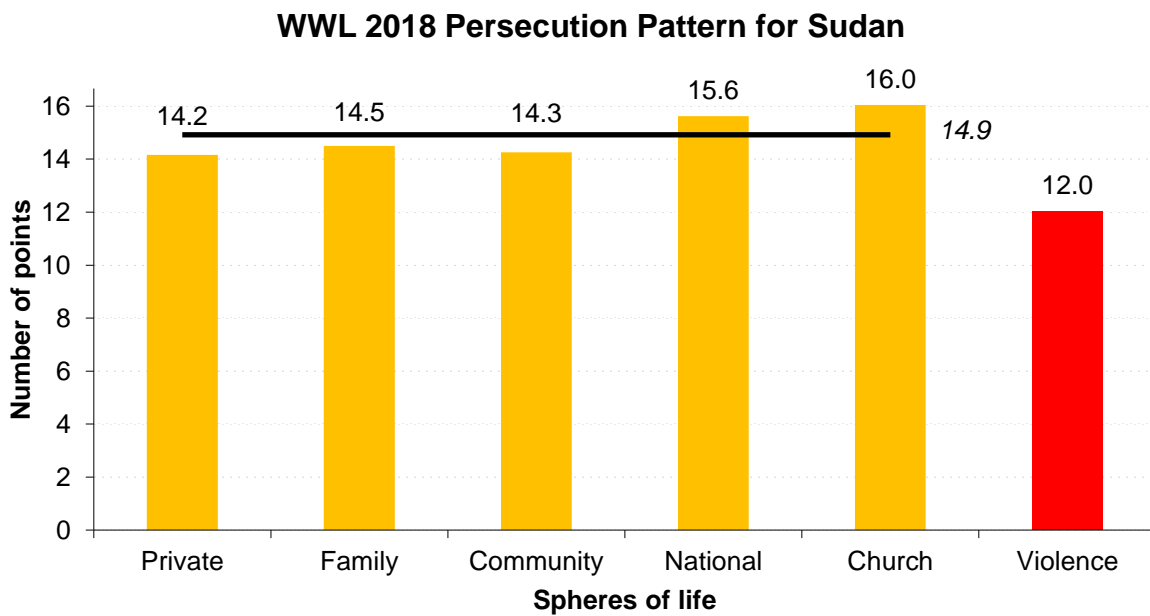
3. Somalia

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017



4. Sudan

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

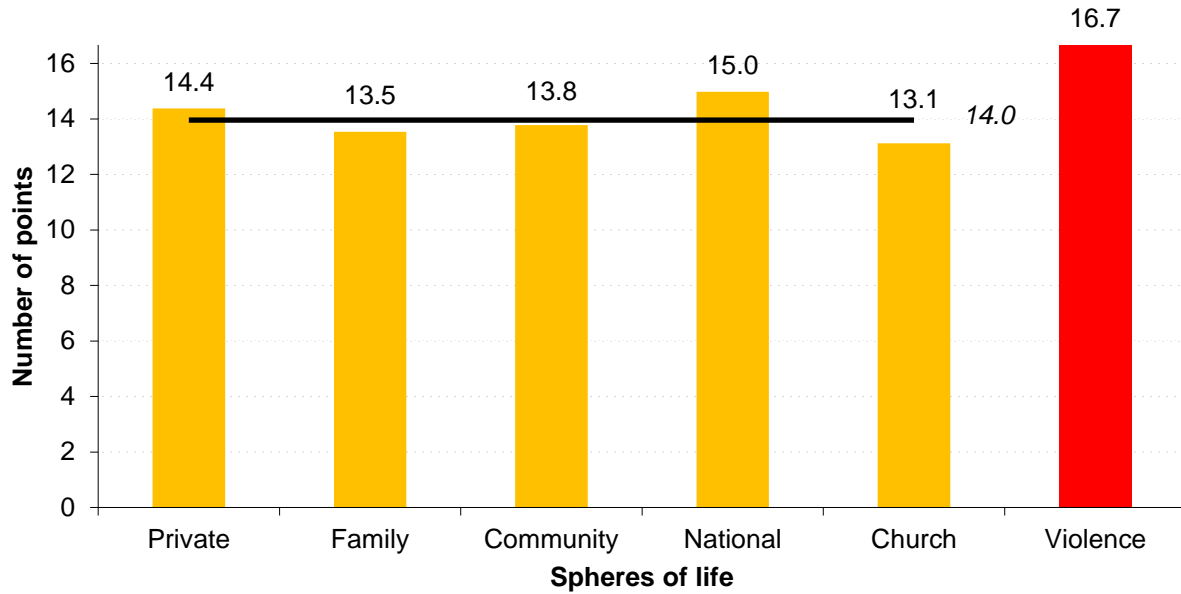


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5. Pakistan

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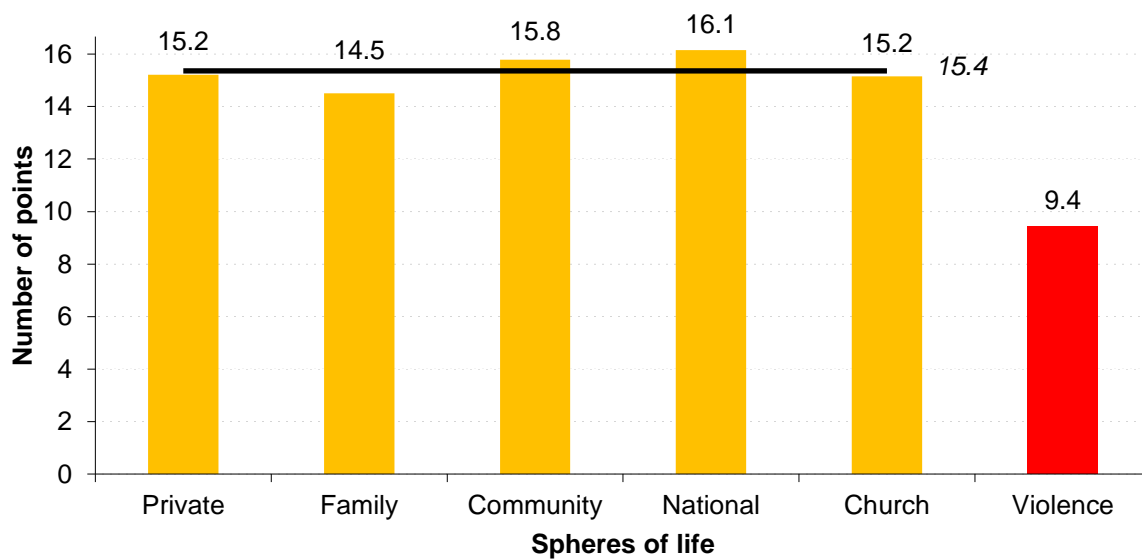
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Pakistan



6. Eritrea

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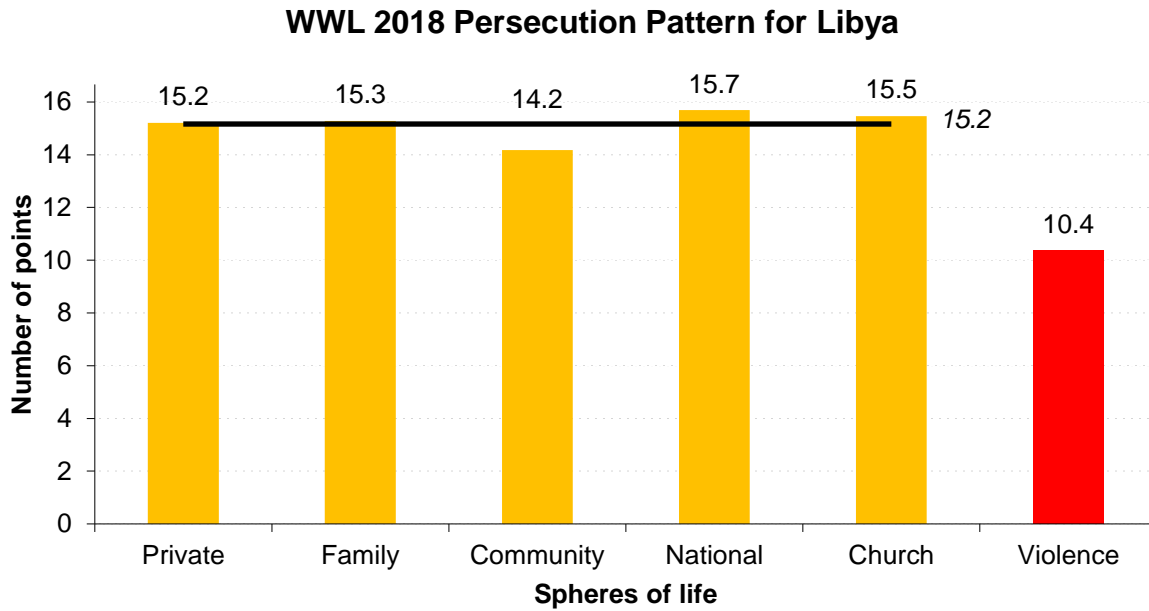
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Eritrea



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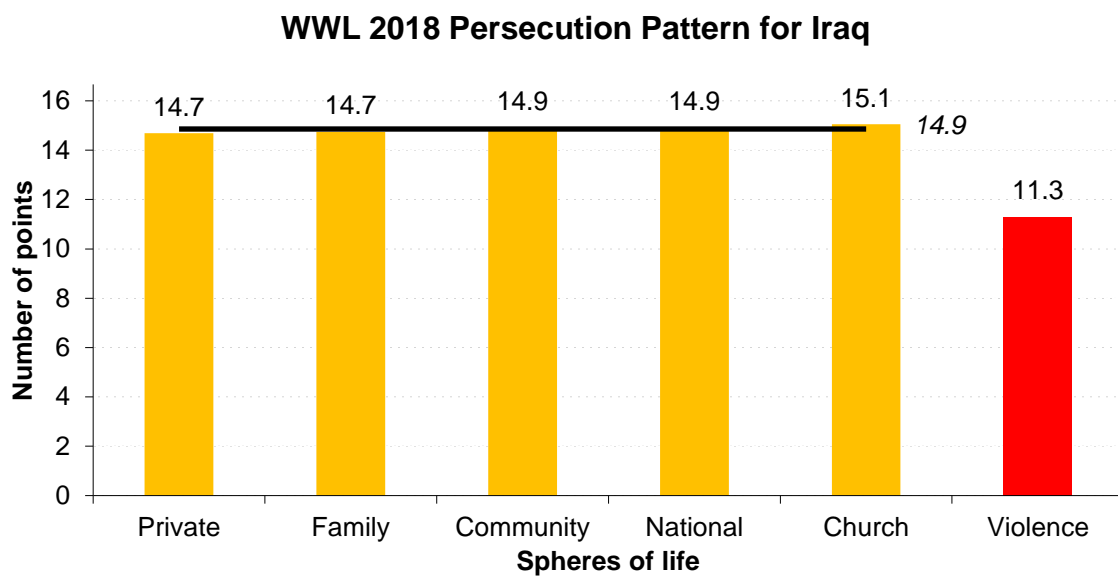
7. Libya

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017



8. Iraq

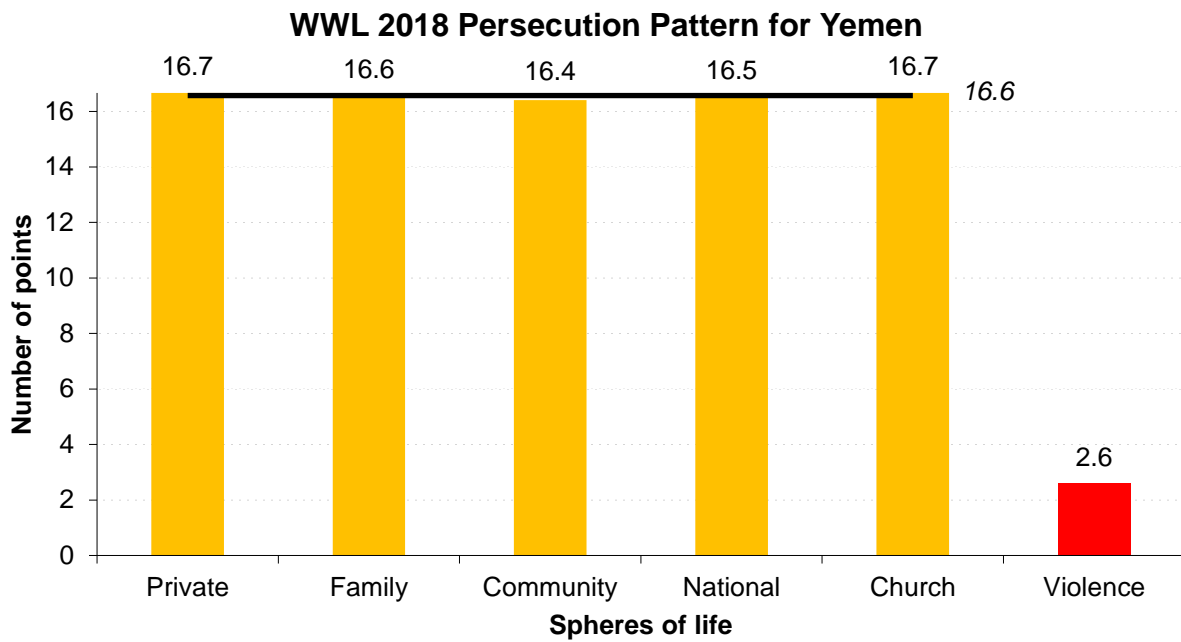
Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017



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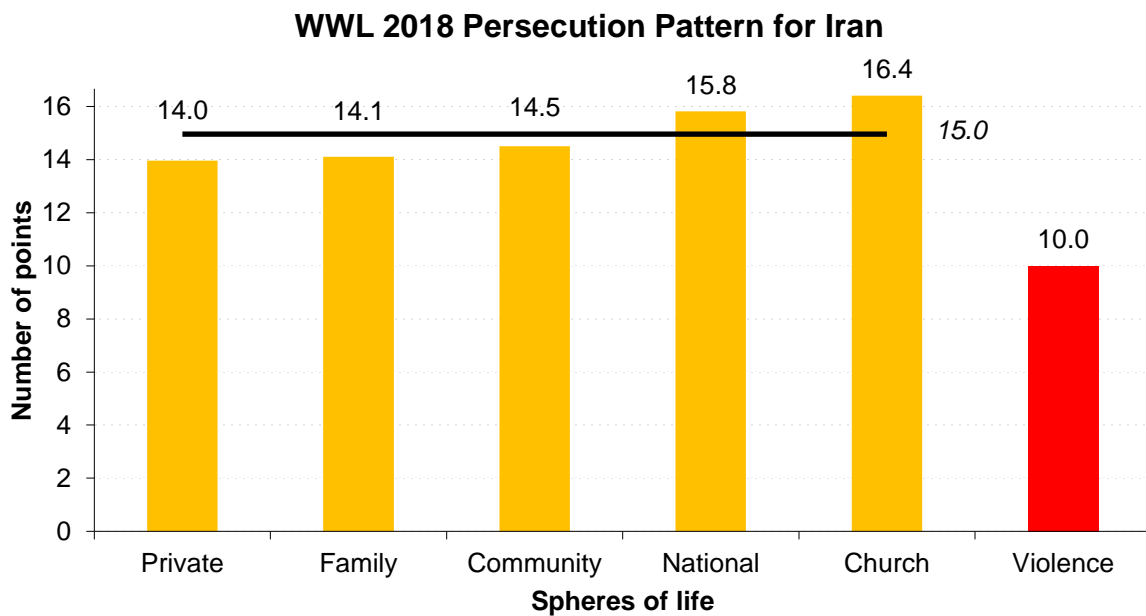
9. Yemen

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017



10. Iran

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

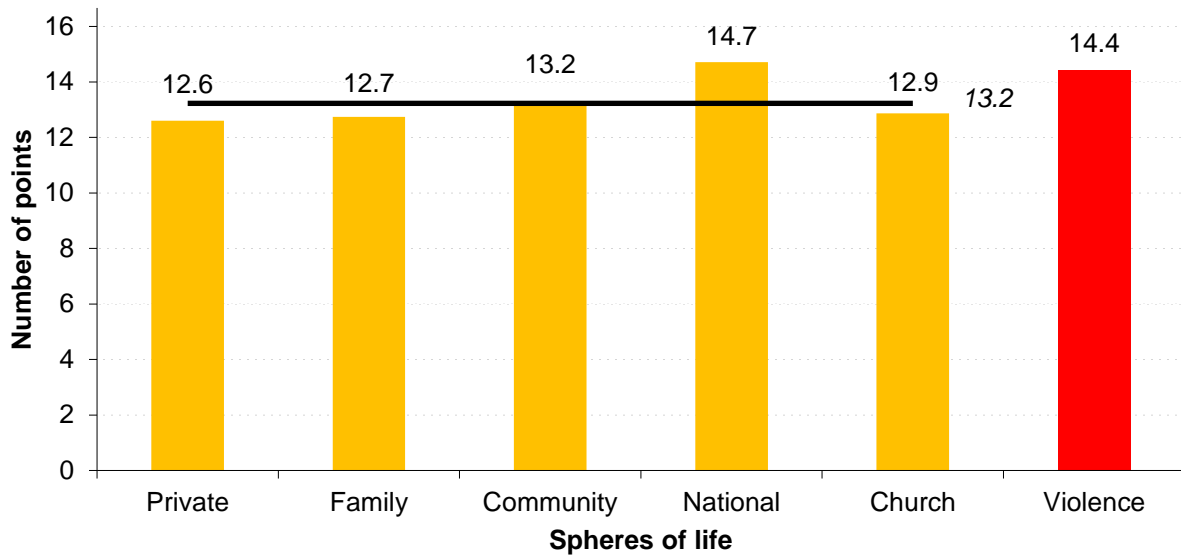


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11. India

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

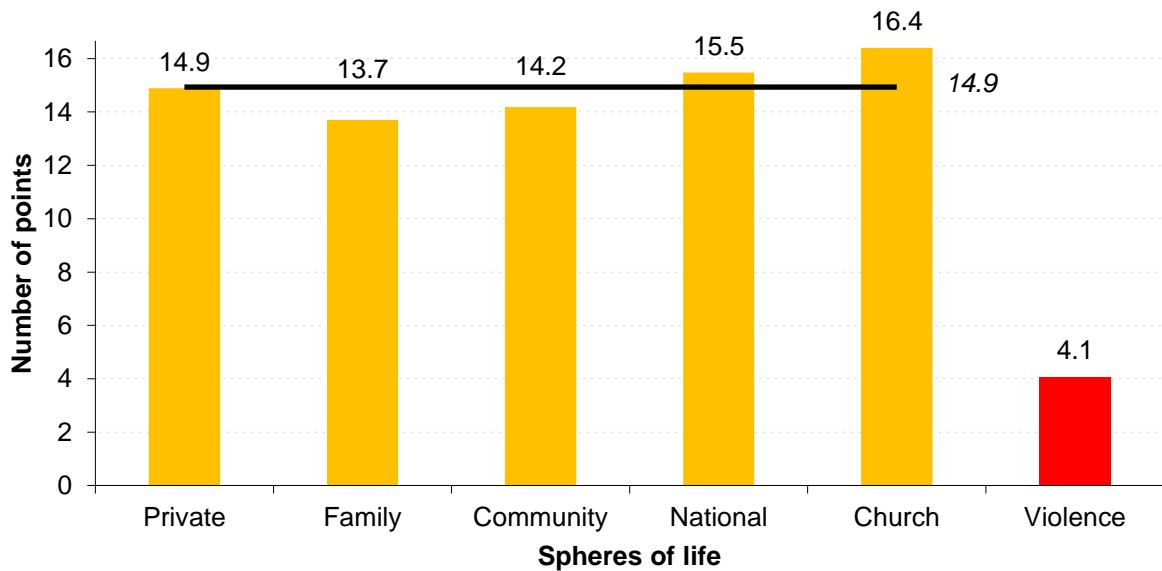
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for India



12. Saudi Arabia

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

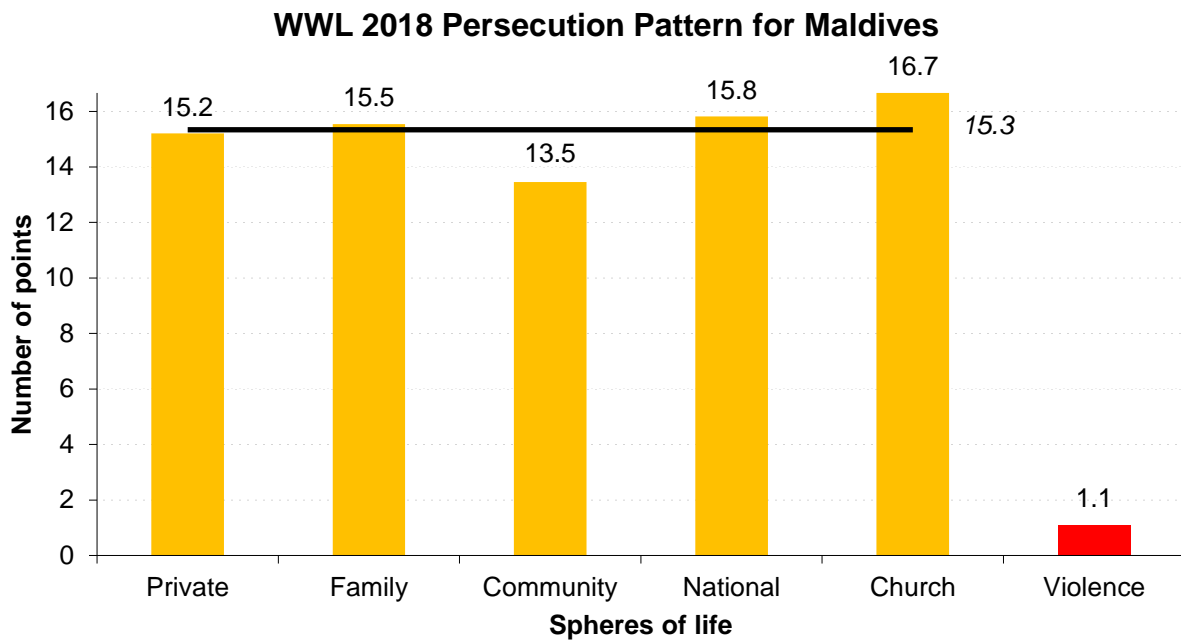
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Saudi Arabia



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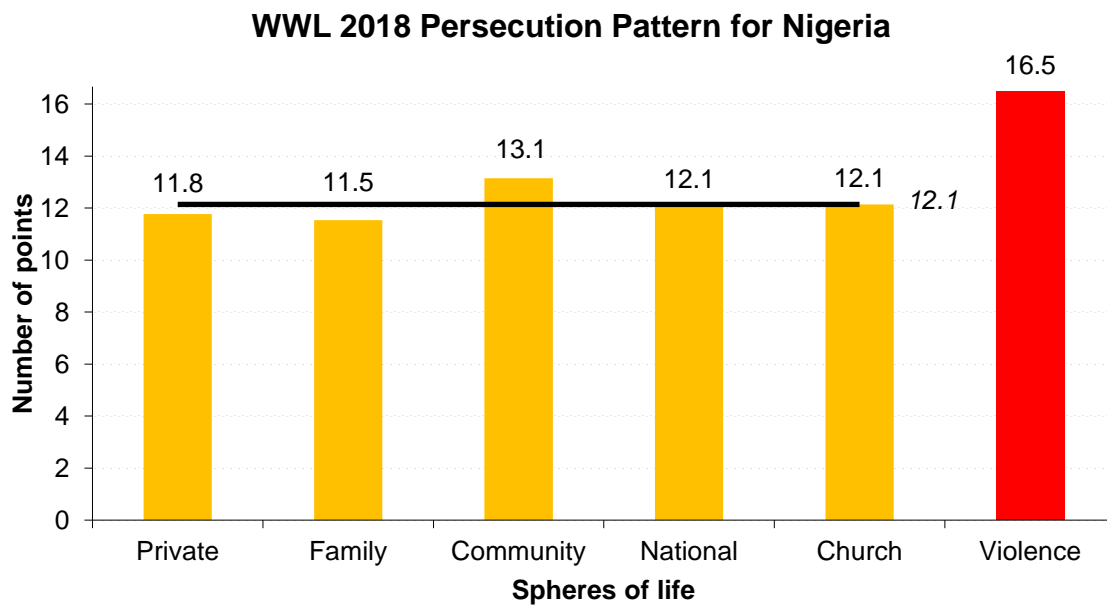
13. Maldives

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017



14. Nigeria

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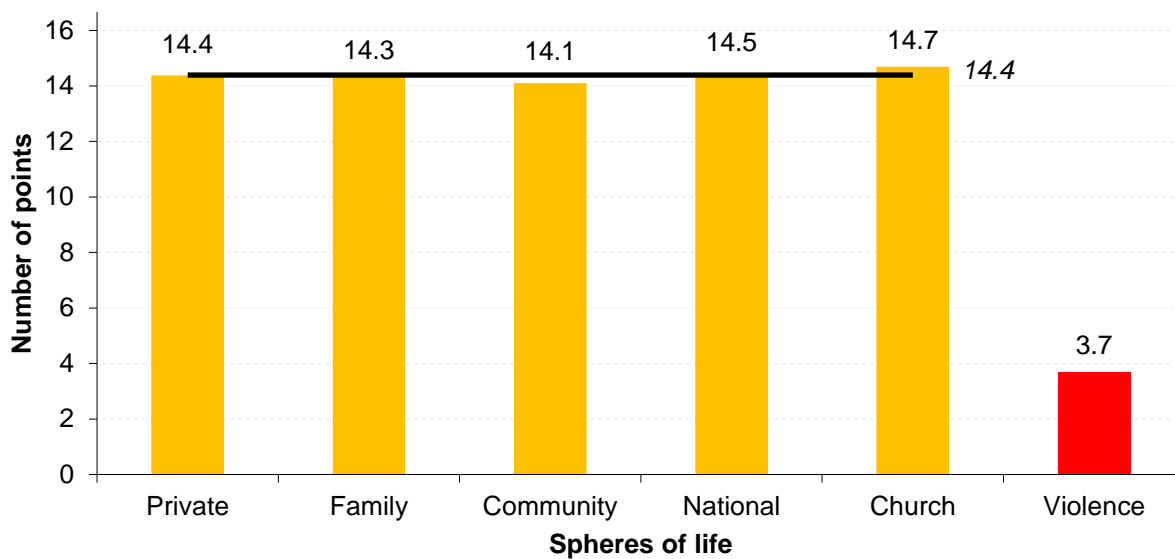


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15. Syria

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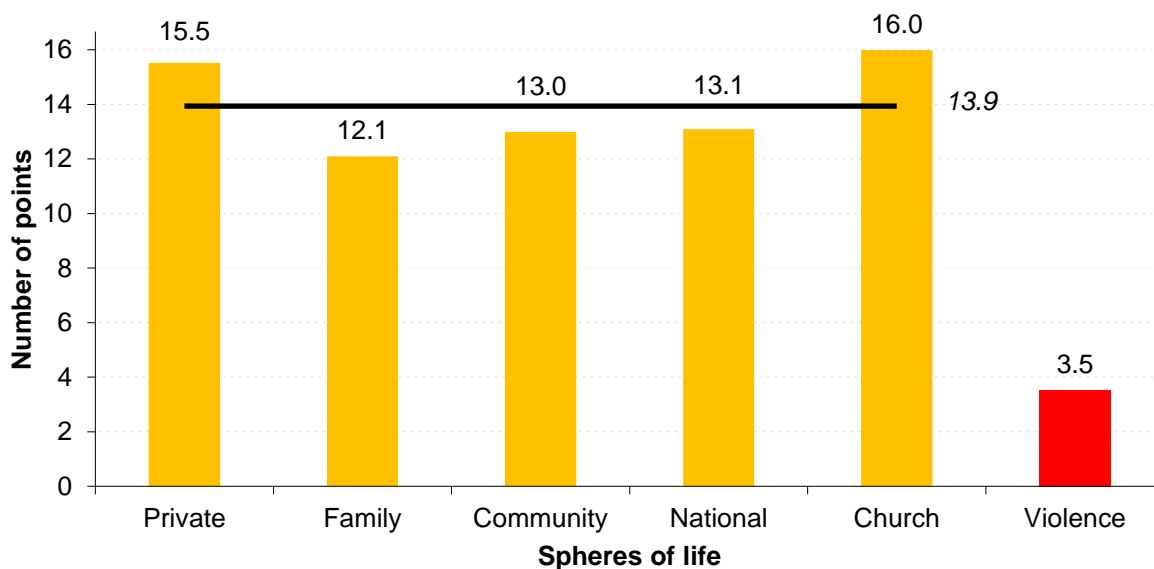
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Syria



16. Uzbekistan

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WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Uzbekistan

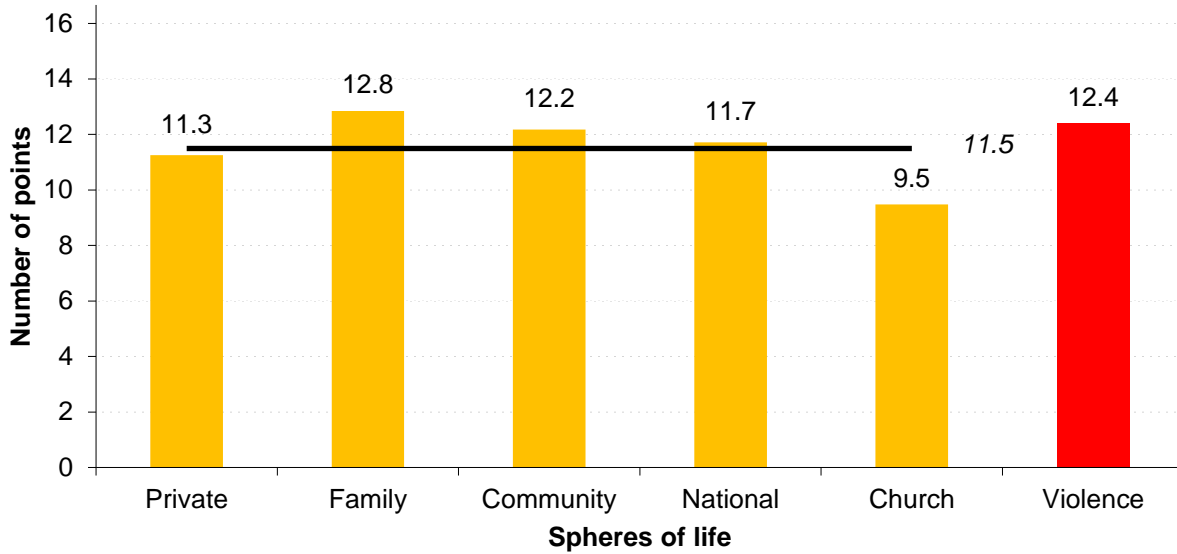


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17. Egypt

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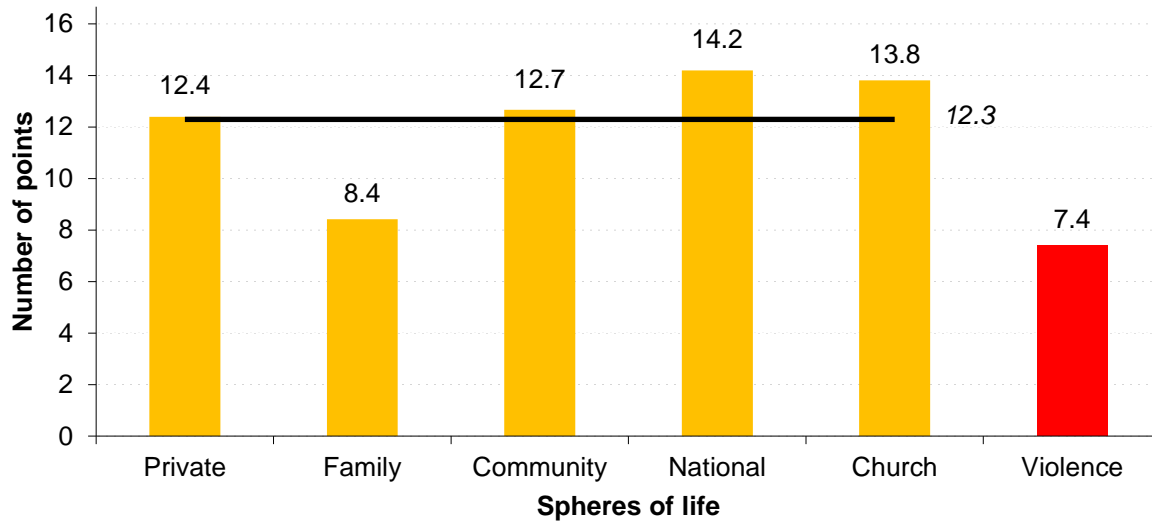
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Egypt



18. Vietnam

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Vietnam

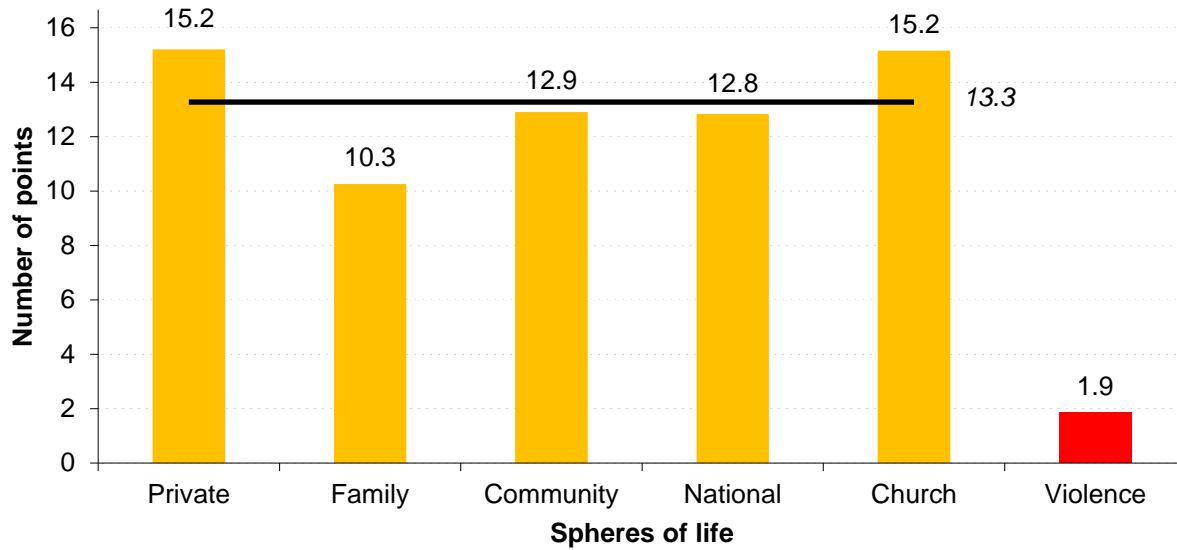


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19. Turkmenistan

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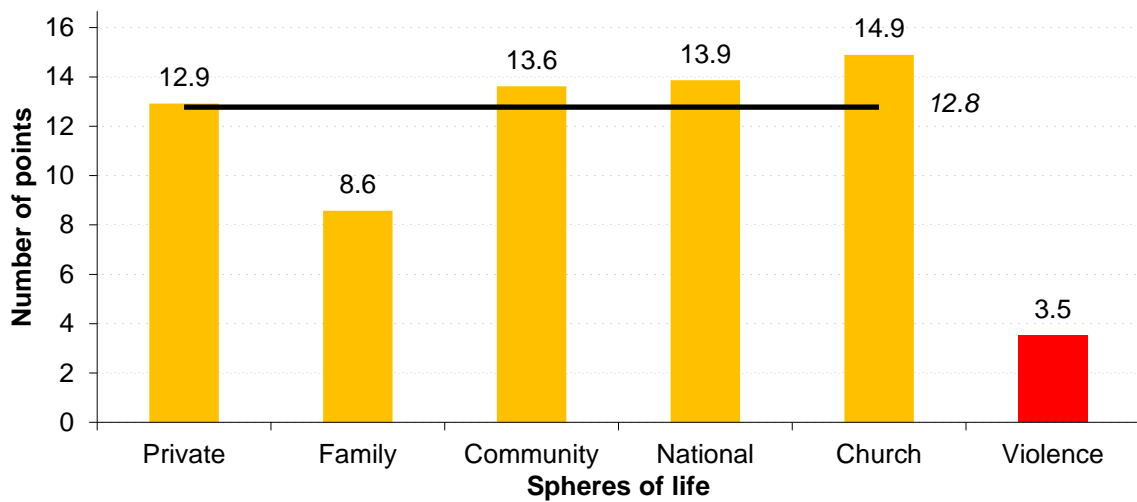
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Turkmenistan



20. Laos

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Laos

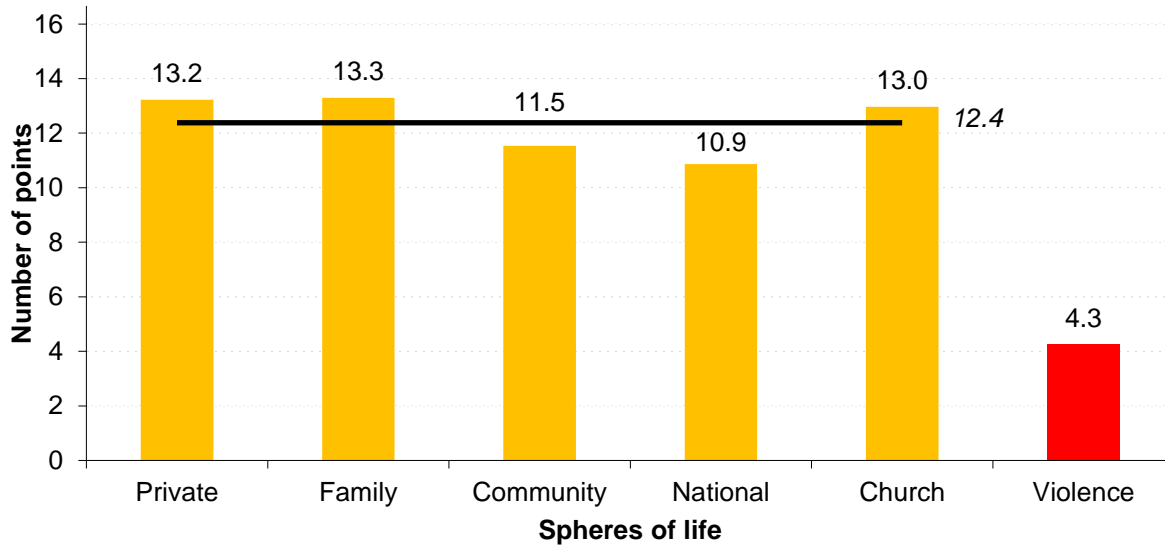


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21. Jordan

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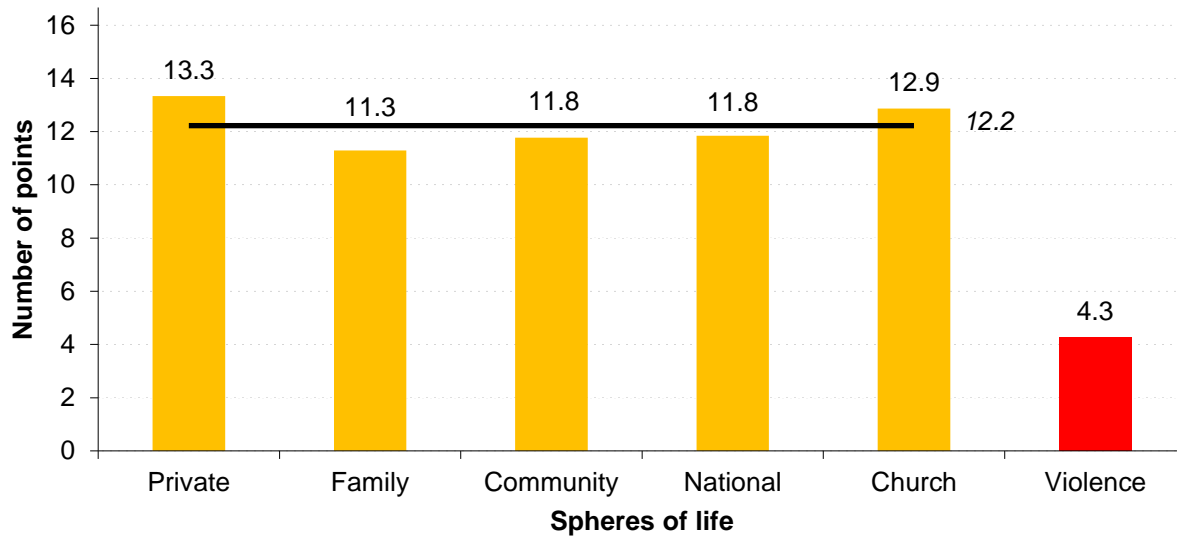
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Jordan



22. Tajikistan

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Tajikistan

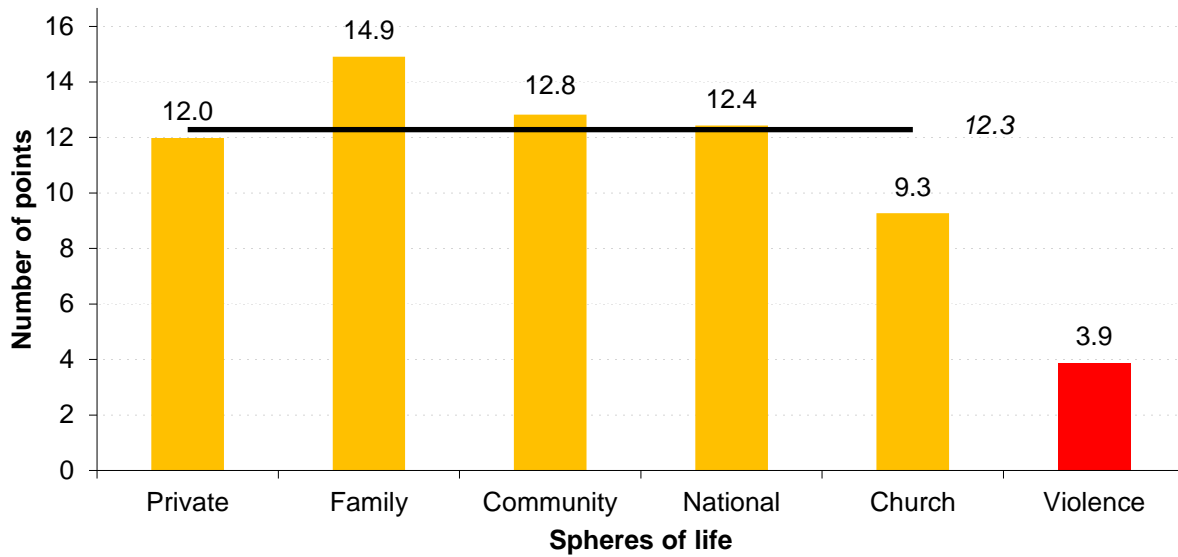


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23. Malaysia

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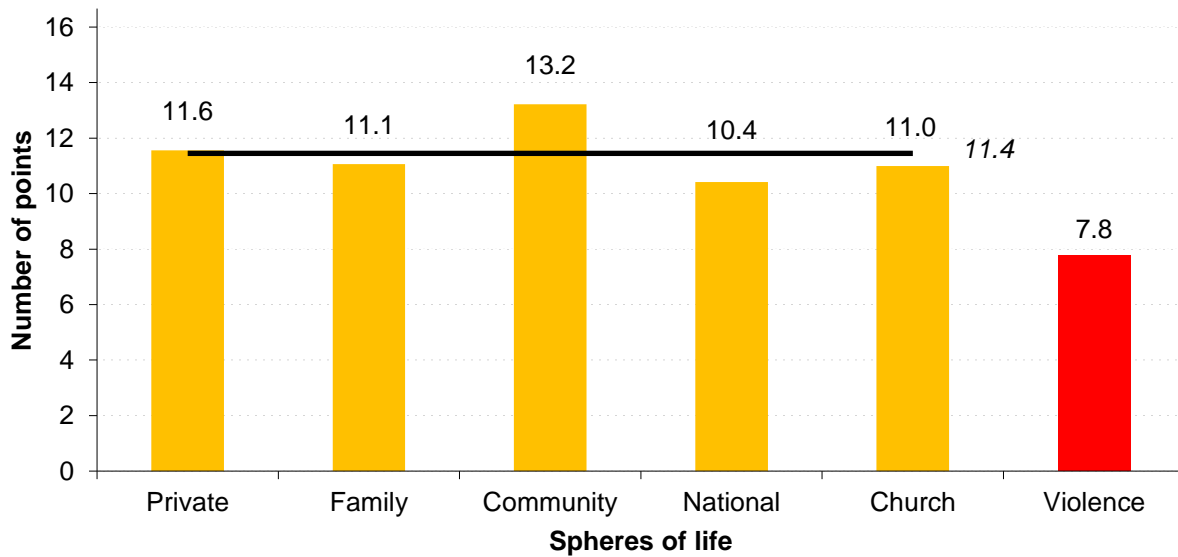
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Malaysia



24. Myanmar

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Myanmar

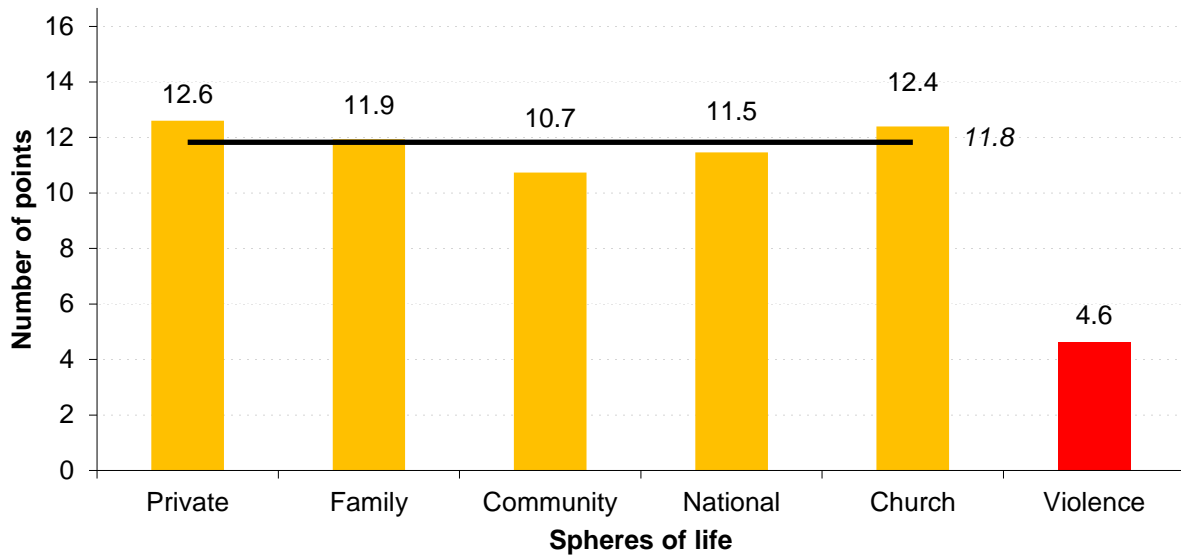


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25. Nepal

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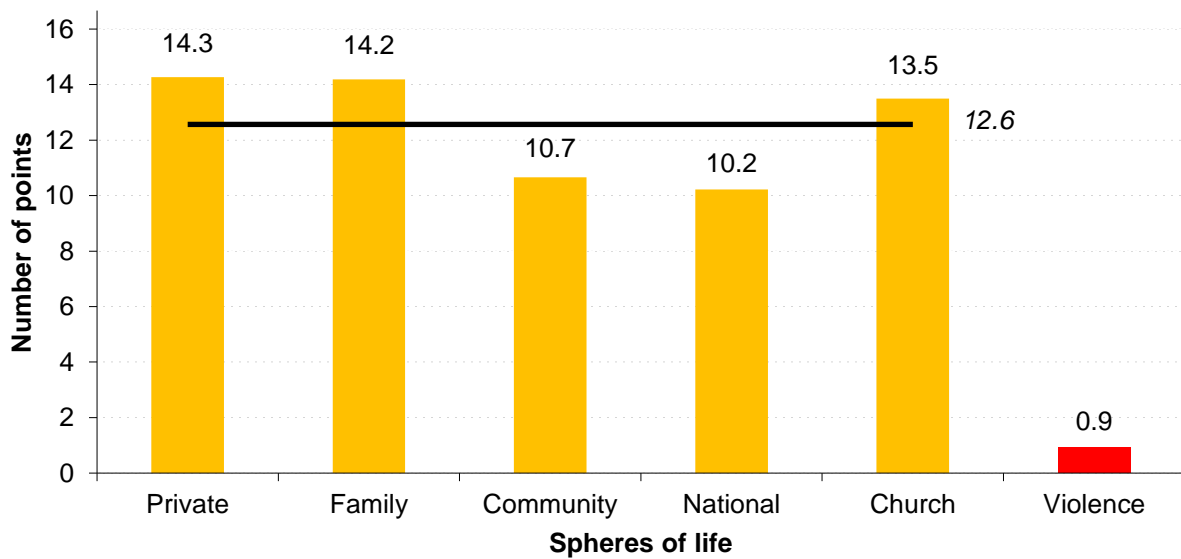
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Nepal



26. Brunei

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Brunei

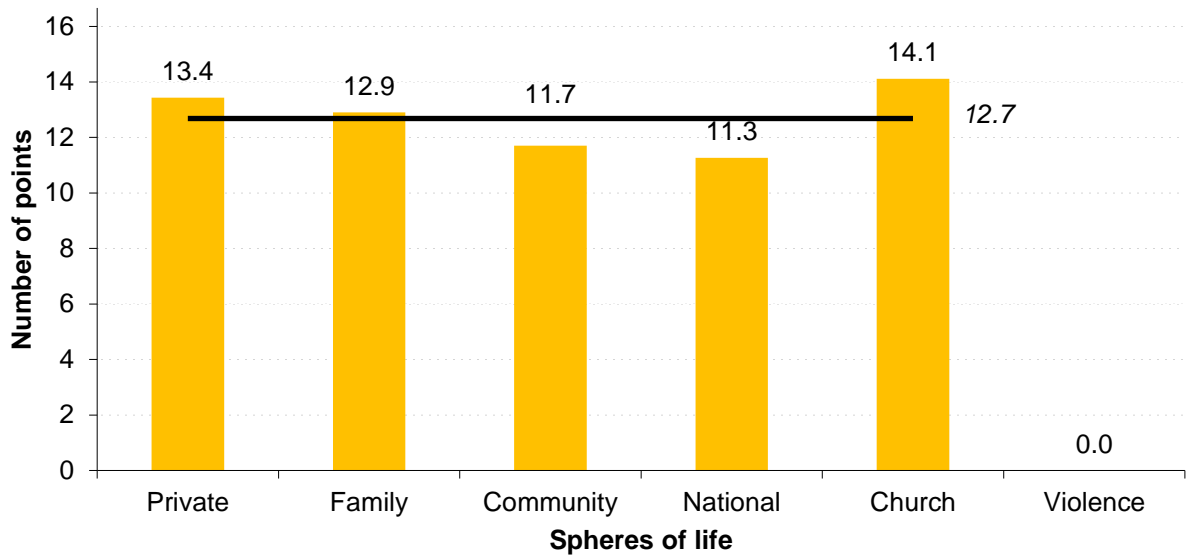


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27. Qatar

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

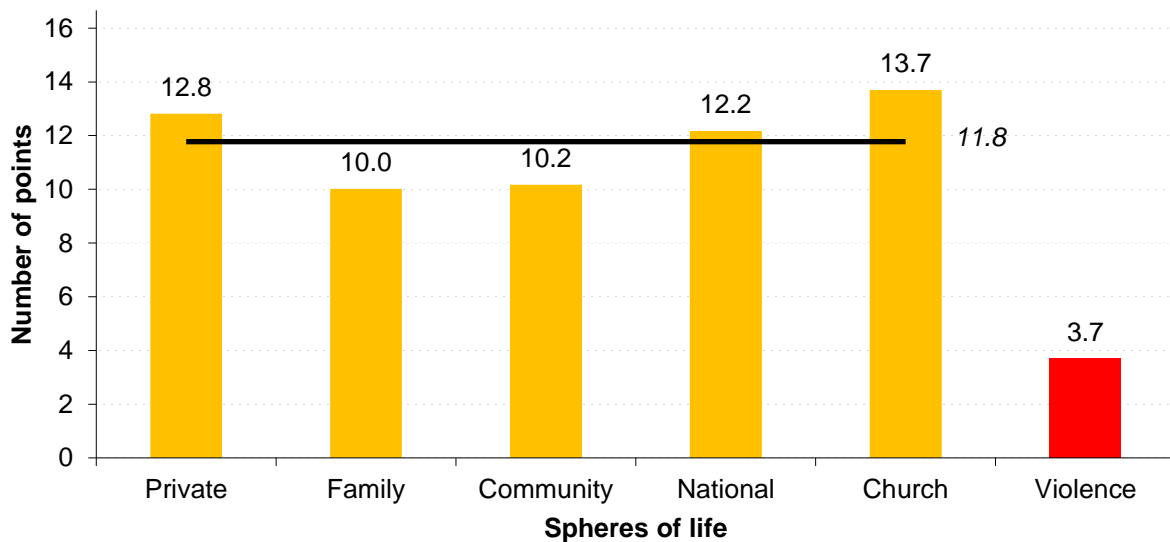
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Qatar



28. Kazakhstan

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Kazakhstan

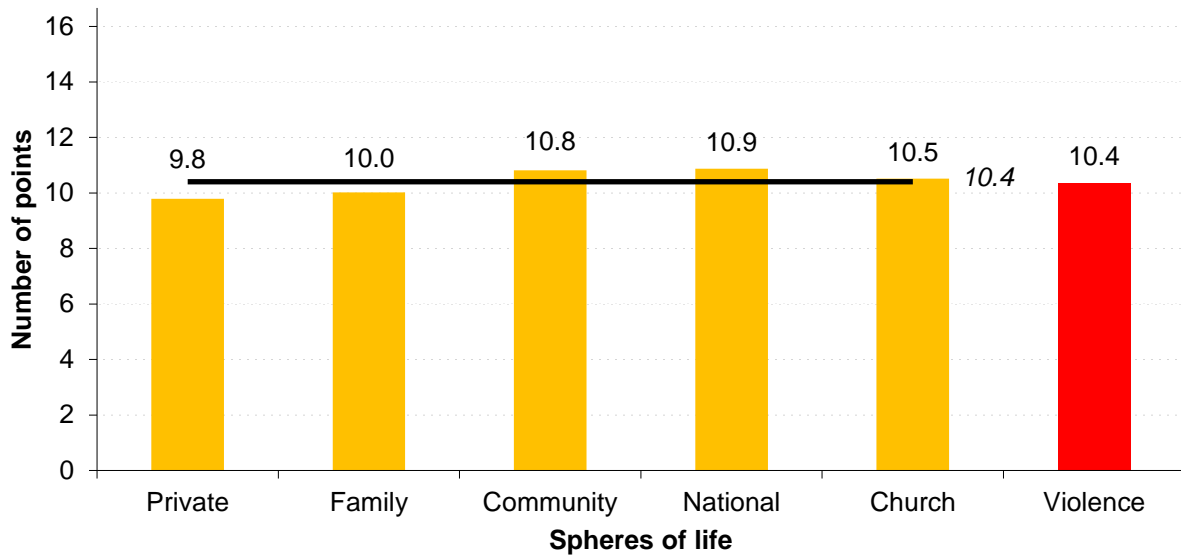


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29. Ethiopia

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

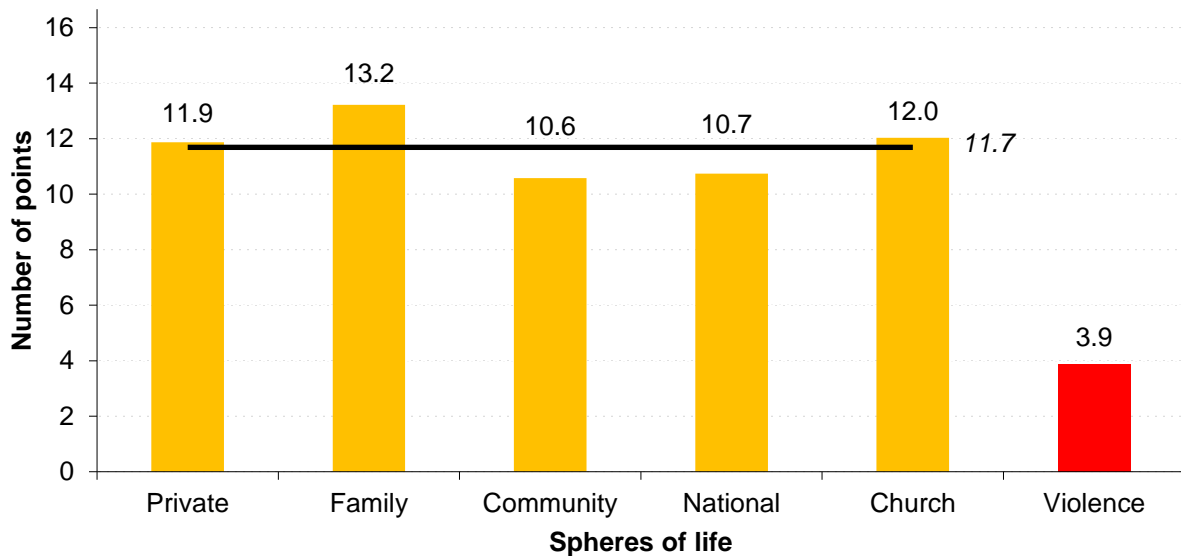
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Ethiopia



30. Tunisia

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Tunisia

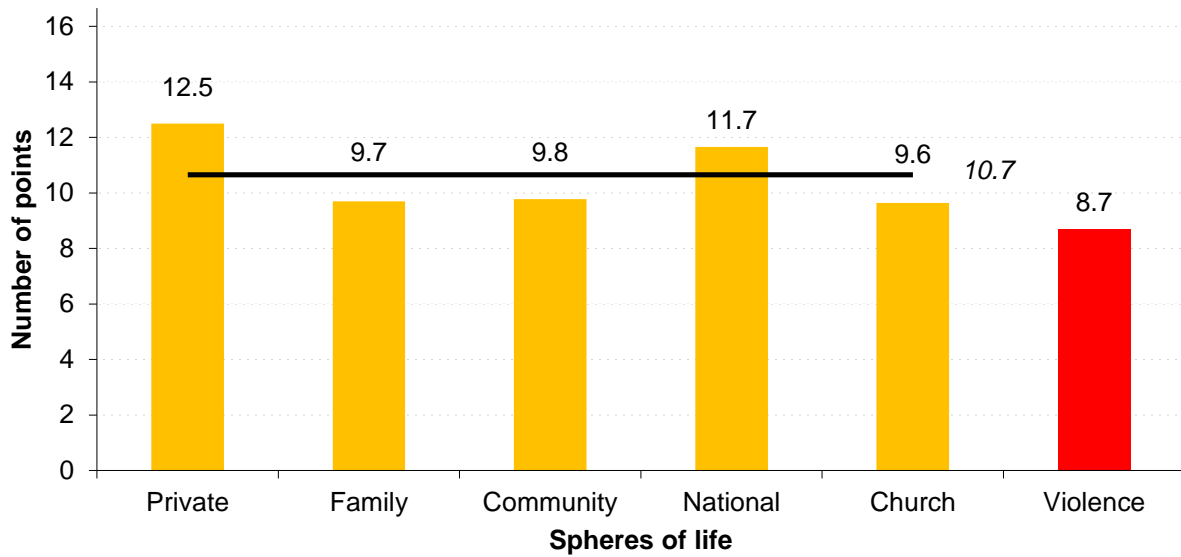


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31. Turkey

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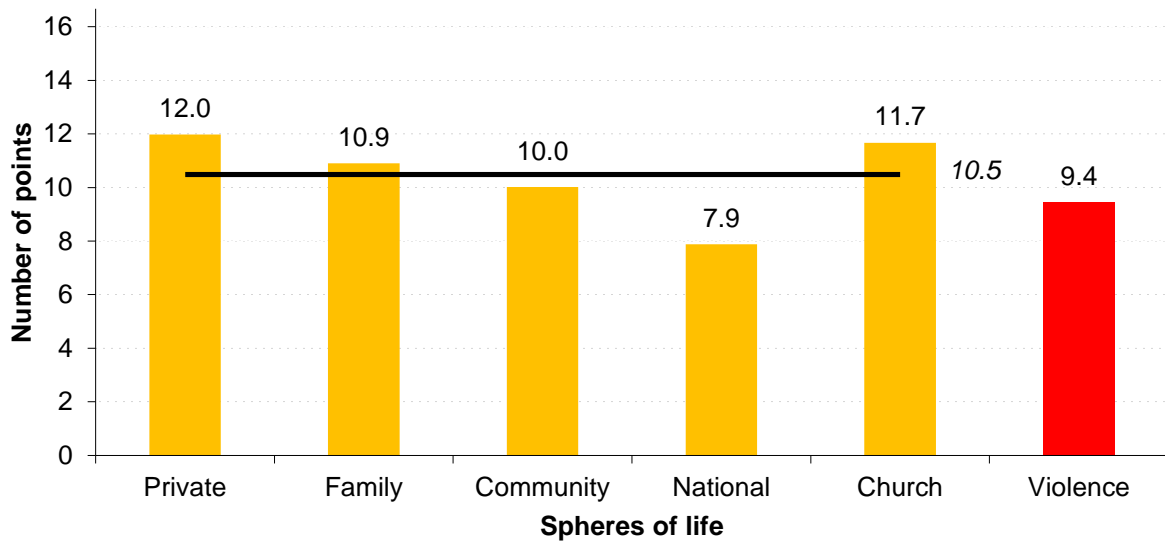
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Turkey



32. Kenya

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WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Kenya

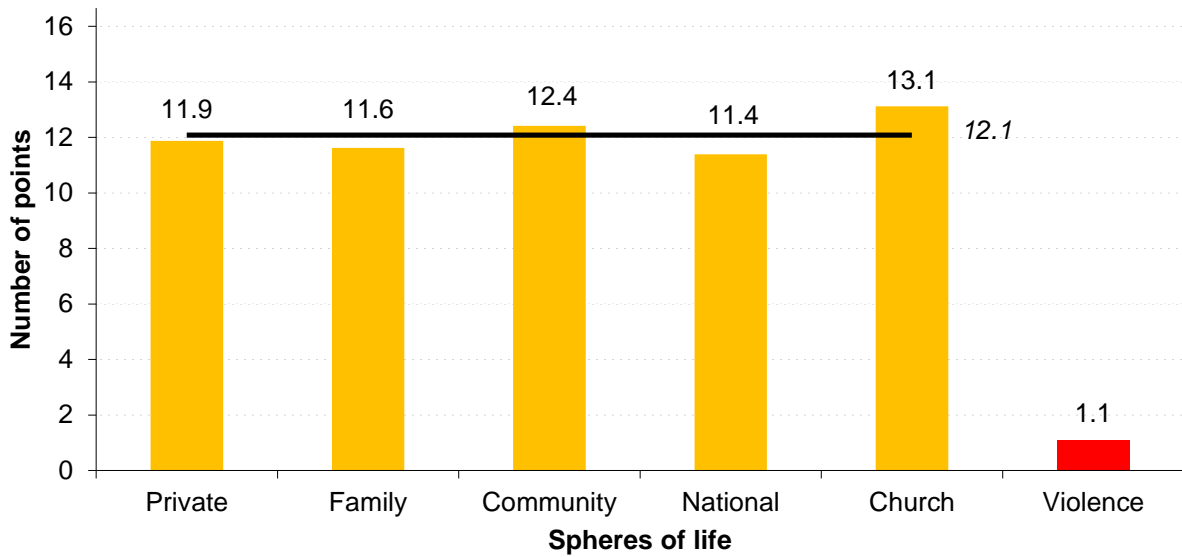


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33. Bhutan

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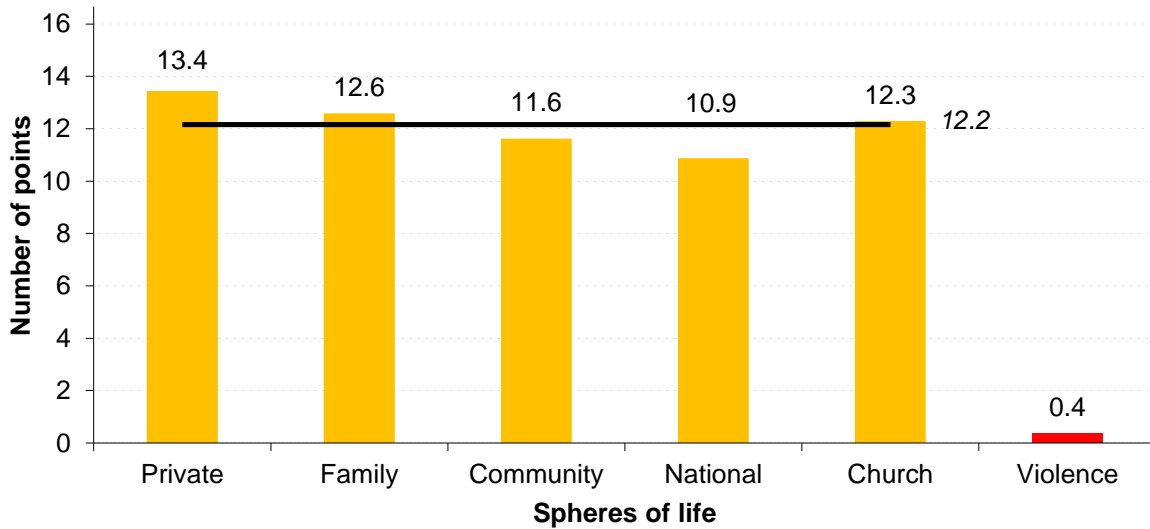
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Bhutan



34. Kuwait

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WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Kuwait

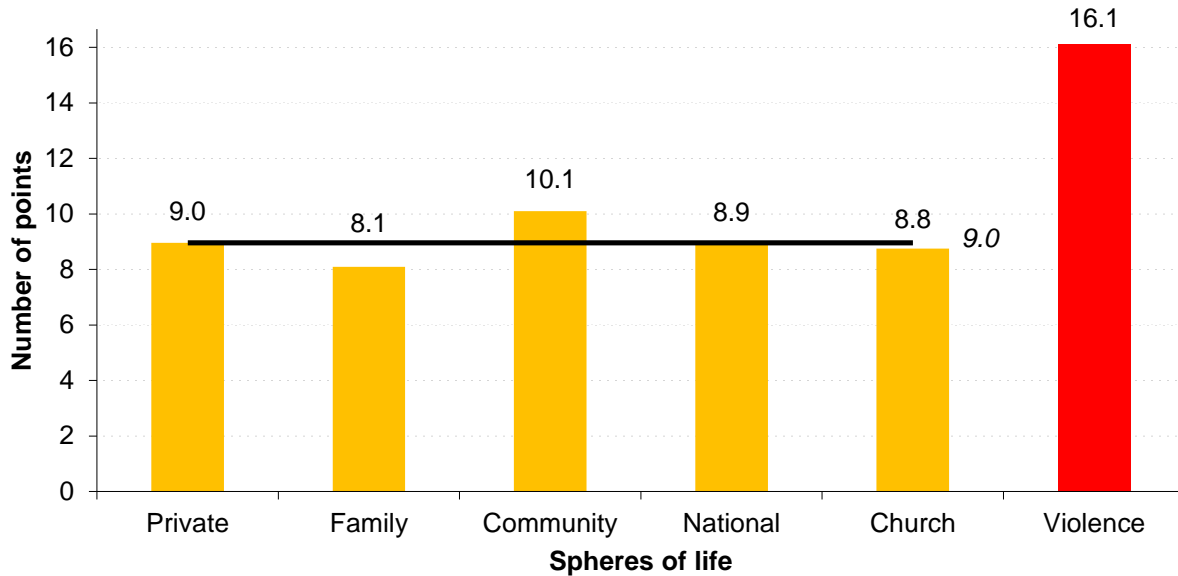


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35. Central African Republic

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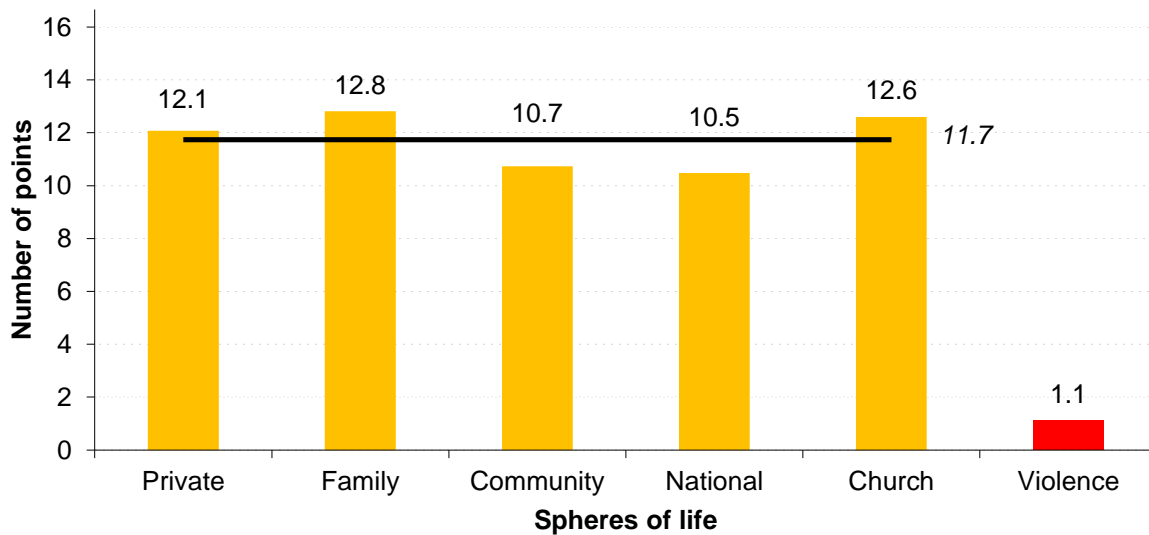
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Central African Republic



36. Palestinian Territories

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Palestinian Territories

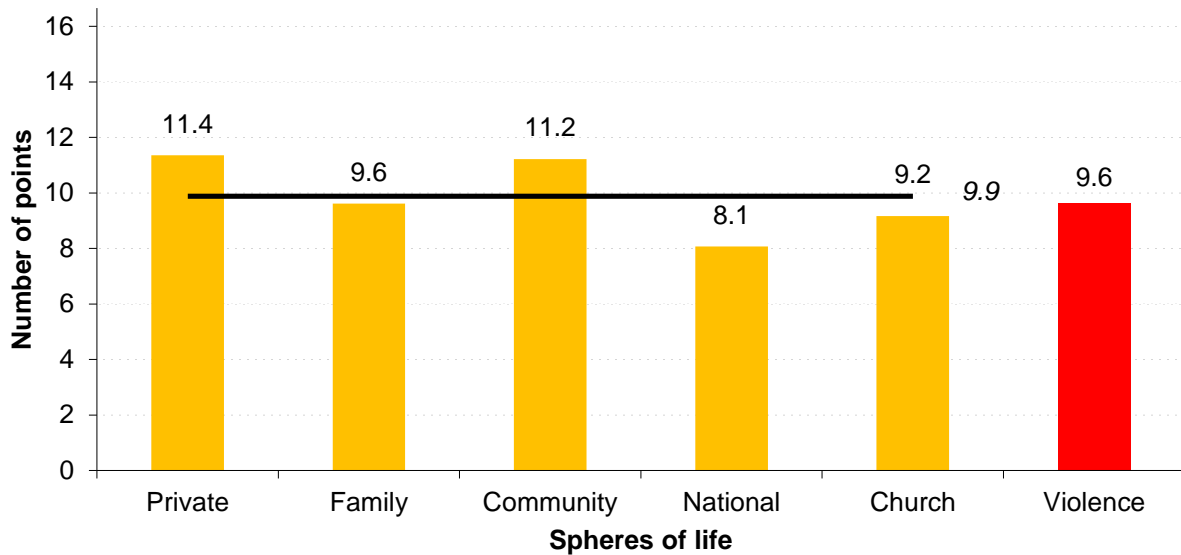


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37. Mali

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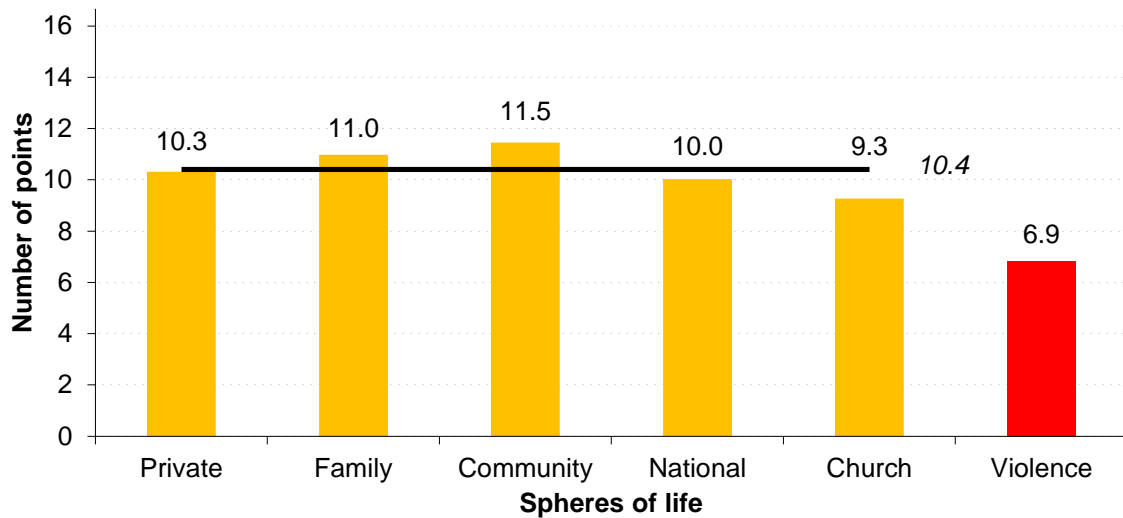
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Mali



38. Indonesia

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Indonesia

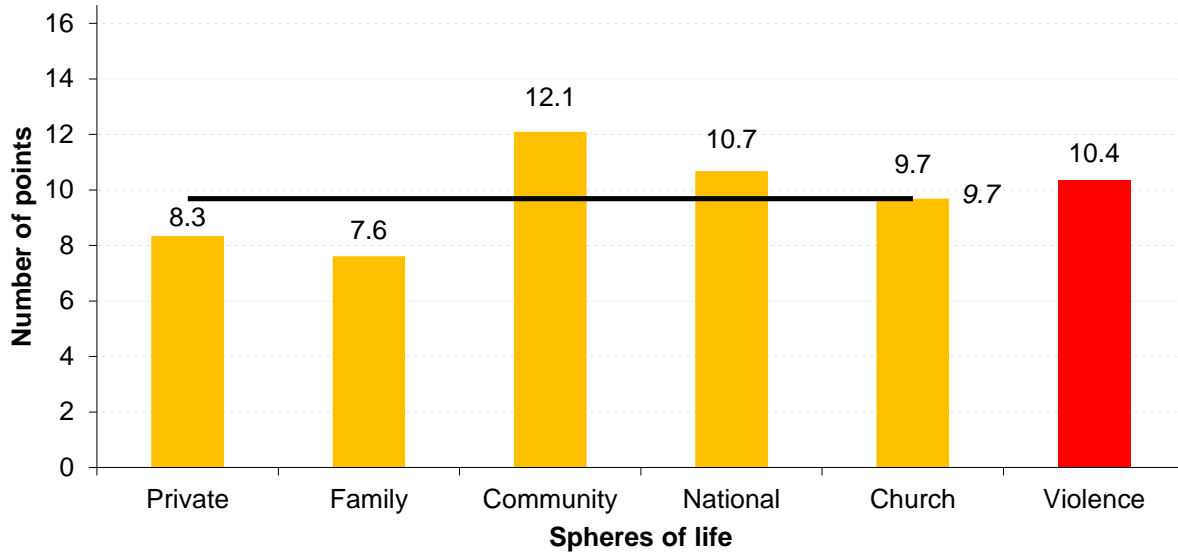


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39. Mexico

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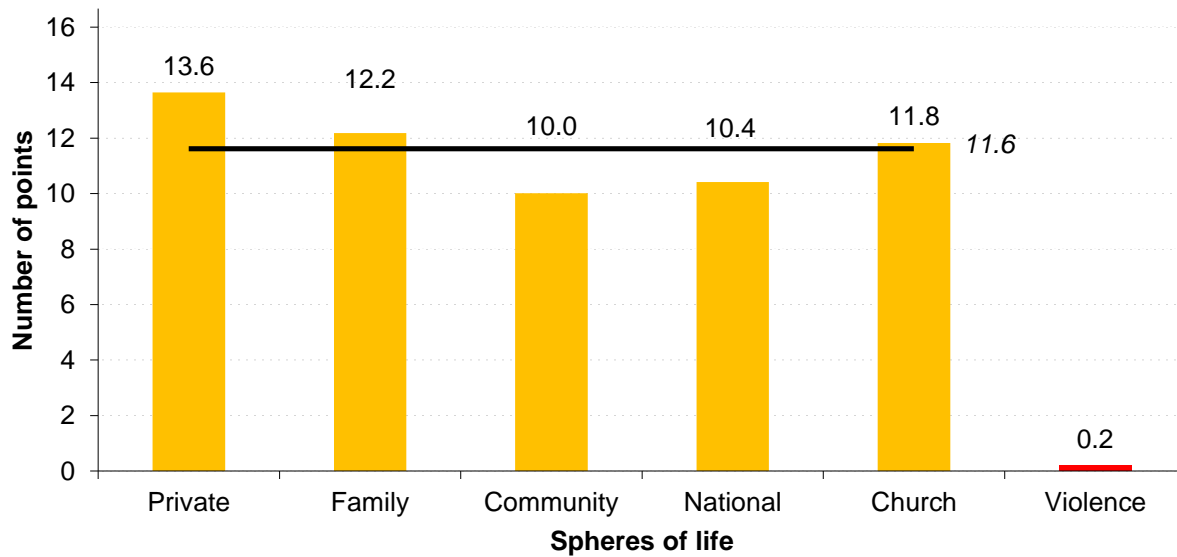
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Mexico



40. United Arab Emirates

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for United Arab Emirates

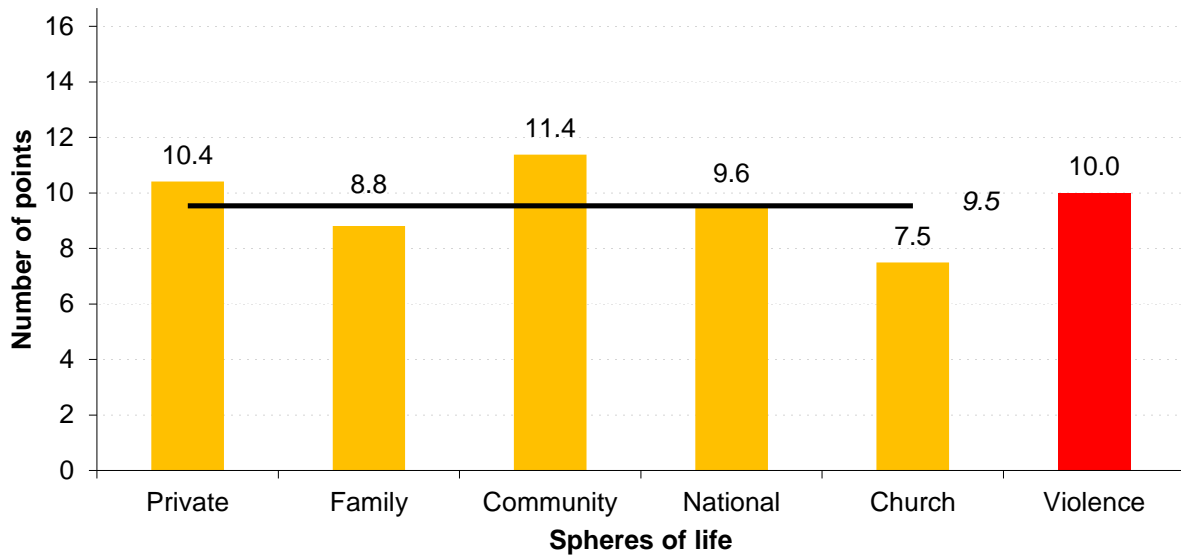


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41. Bangladesh

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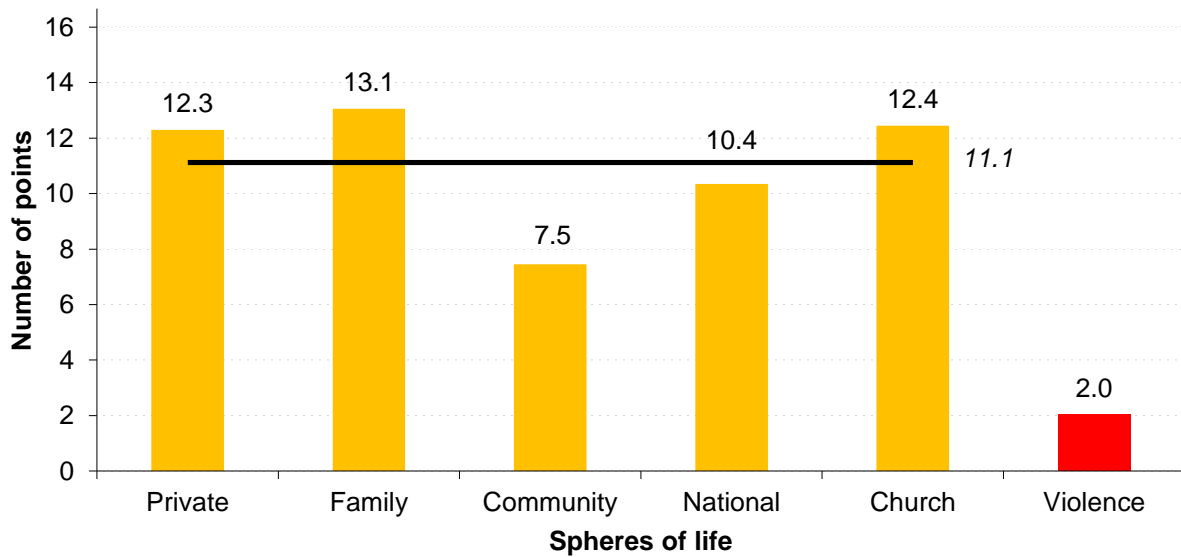
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Bangladesh



42. Algeria

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Algeria

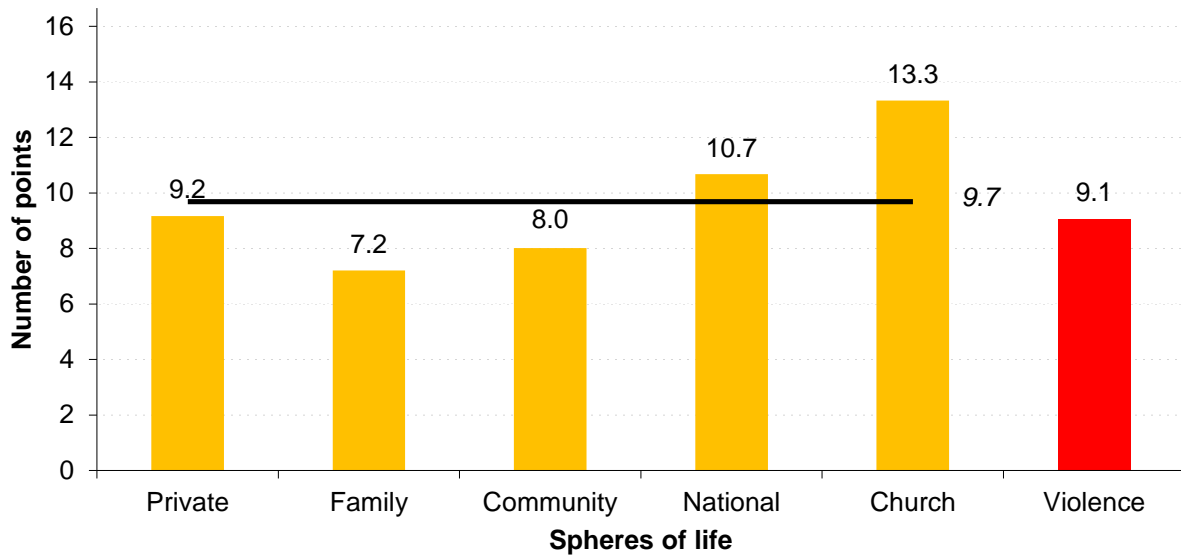


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43. China

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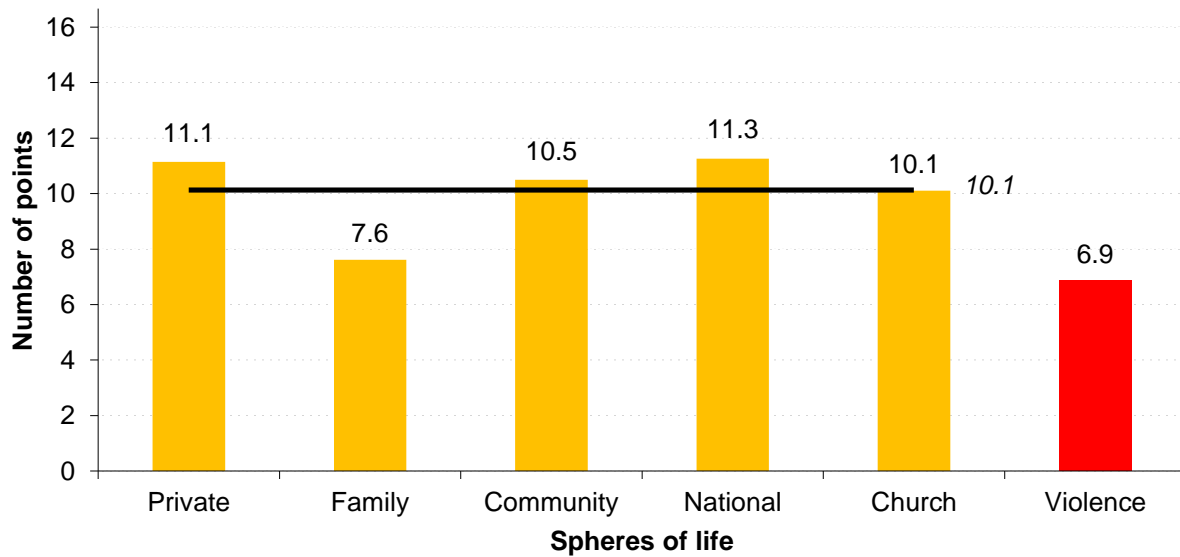
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for China



44. Sri Lanka

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WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Sri Lanka

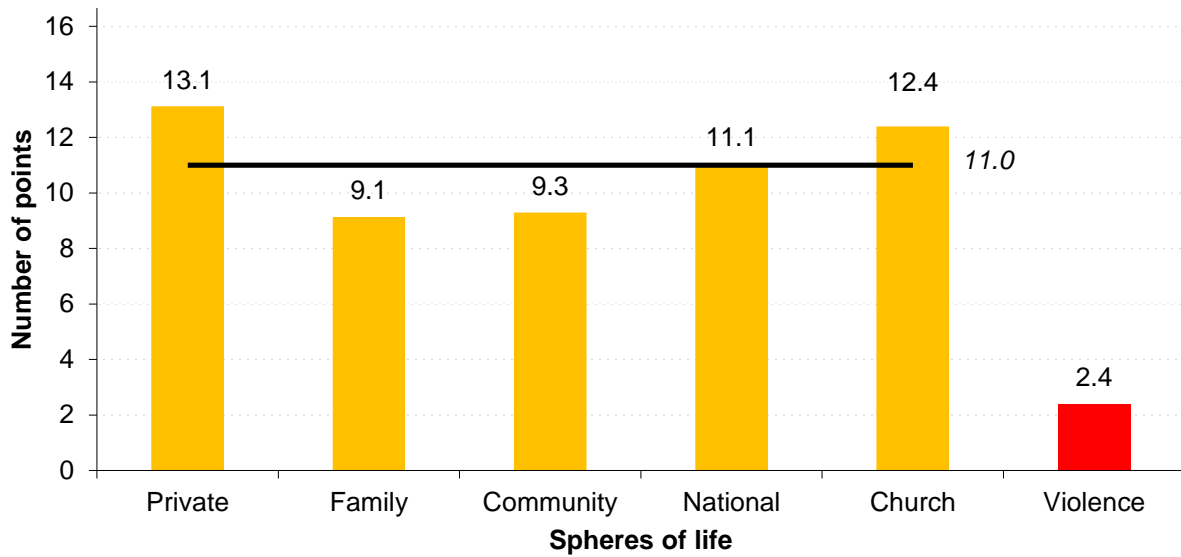


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45. Azerbaijan

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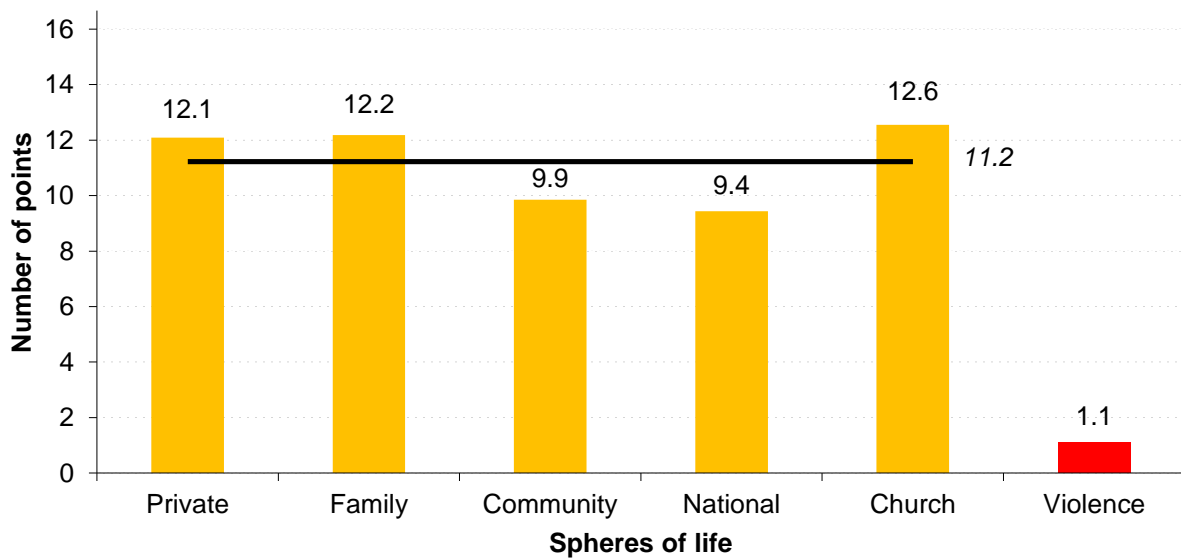
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Azerbaijan



46. Oman

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Oman

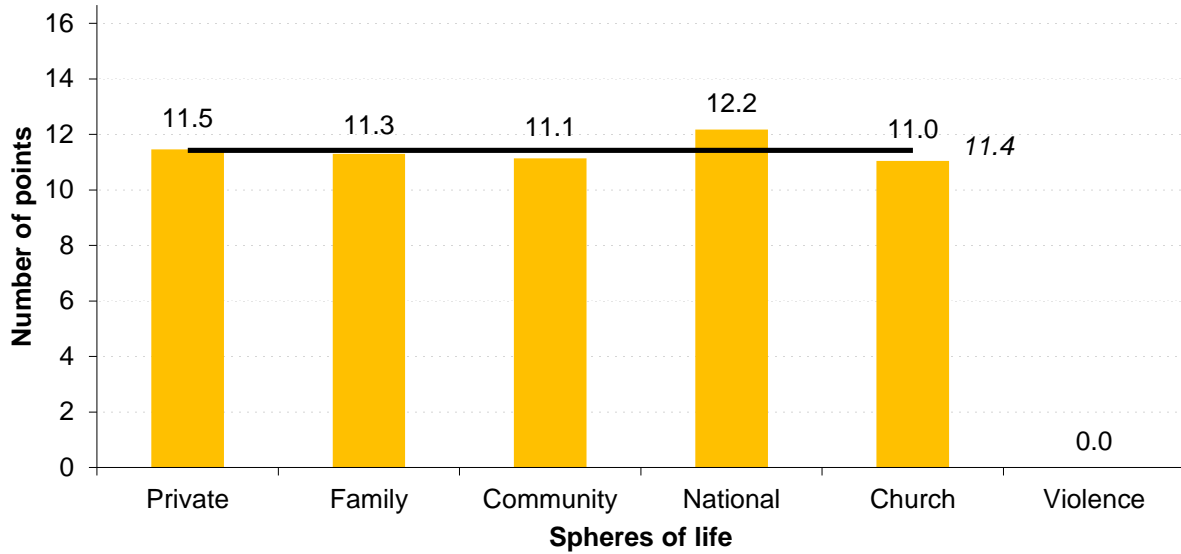


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47. Mauritania

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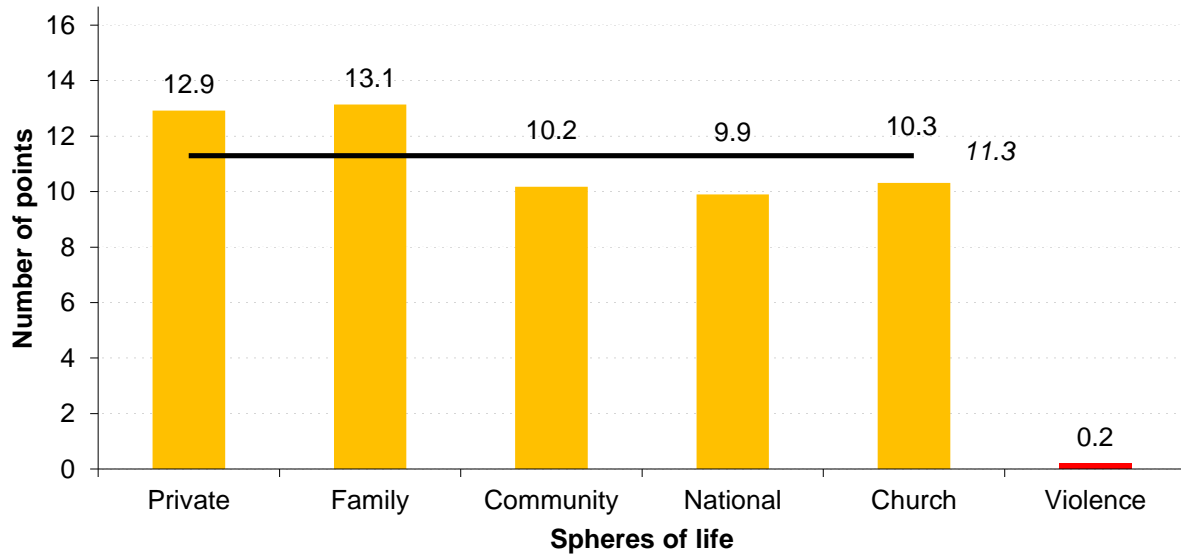
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Mauritania



48. Bahrain

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Bahrain

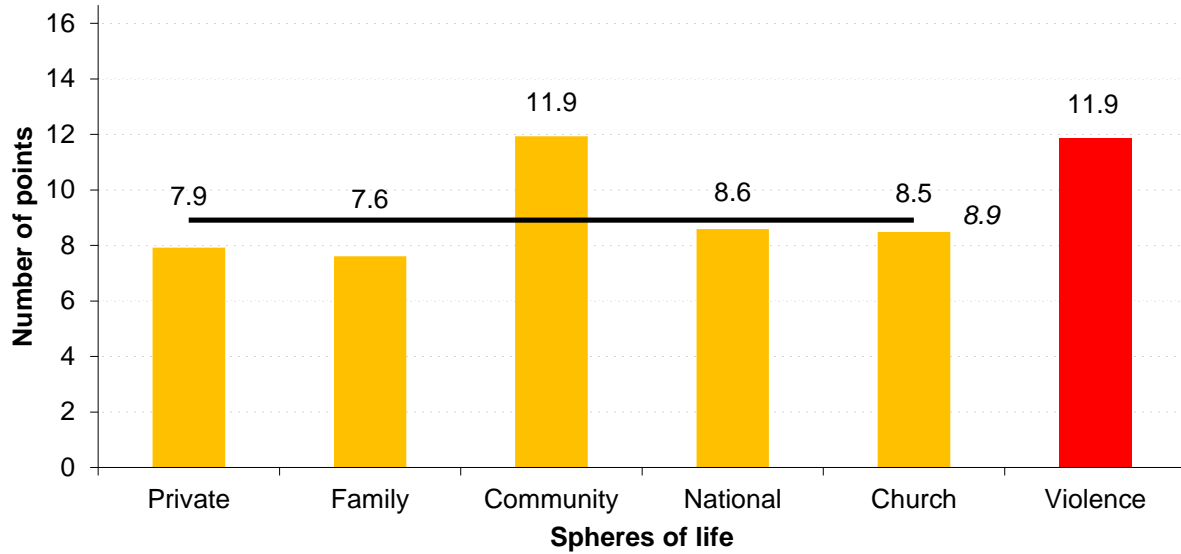


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49. Colombia

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

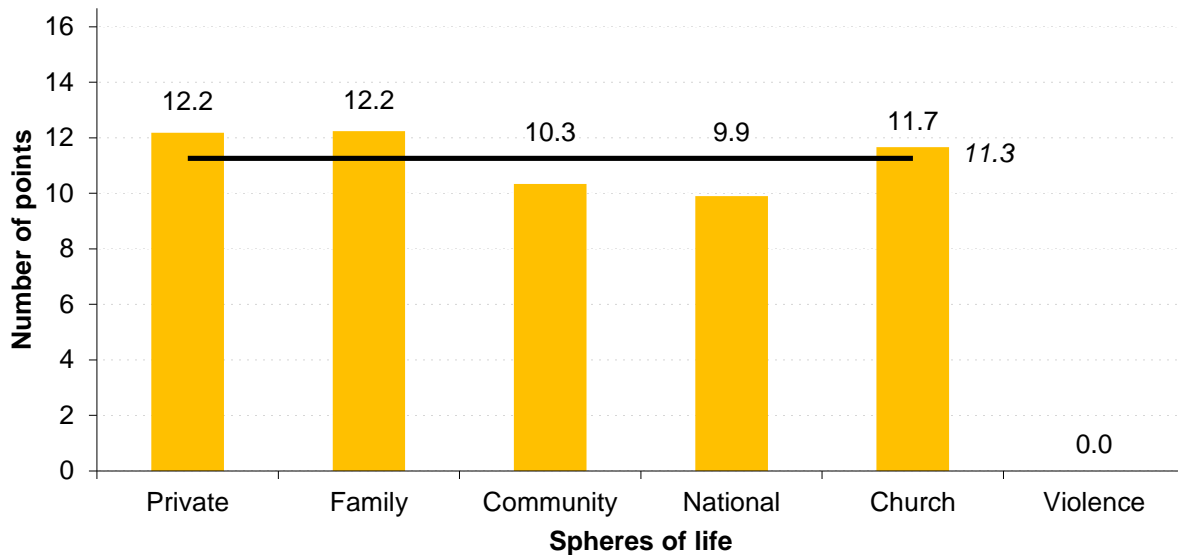
WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Colombia



Djibouti

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Djibouti



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2. Focus on violence against Christians

2.1 Data on Violence

**Data on violence experienced by Christians worldwide
in the WWL 2018 reporting period: 1 November 2016 – 31 October 2017**
(revised version: 2017-12-22)

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Introduction

This document is a restructured version of the previously published “WWL 2018 data on violence”. It was felt that the essential summaries and comparisons should be read first.

Section 1 compares the total data in summary tables from WWL 2016, WWL 2017 and WWL 2018 data. Sections 2 and 3 give a break-down of the WWL 2018 statistics.

Section 2 presents the summary of the data for 11 out of the 12 questions of the WWL 2018 questionnaire Block 6 Violence, carried out for more than 90 countries, followed by details with in country numbers in descending order.

In Section 3, the data of the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe (Vienna, Austria) is presented.

The data given is based on direct counting or on estimations based on different sources. Especially with higher numbers, sources can differ. In those cases WWR has stayed on the conservative side, and used rounded numbers.

This overview does not pretend to be complete. The exact details of what is happening to Christians in a country are difficult to obtain, especially when there is no OD network in that country. This is the case in several countries. Therefore the data presented must certainly be considered as minimal values.

Section 1: Comparison of WWL 2018 violence totals with WWL 2016 and WWL 2017

The number of Christians in the world killed for faith-related reasons rose to 3,066 in the WWL 2018 reporting period. In the WWL 2017 reporting period there had been a significant decrease recorded in comparison to WWL 2016 (see table below). The number of churches attacked (including church-owned hospitals, schools and cemeteries) decreased from 1,329 in WWL 2017 to 793. Although the latter is positive news, the difficulties in getting good data on what is happening in conflict areas, give reason to believe that this number must be regarded as a minimum count.

WWL 2018 reporting period - Christians killed	WWL 2017 reporting period - Christians killed	WWL 2016 reporting period - Christians killed
3,066	1,207	7,106

WWL 2018: No data for North Korea included.

WWL 2017 and WWL 2016: North Korea: No conclusive data available.

WWL 2018 reporting period – Churches attacked ²	WWL 2017 reporting period – Churches attacked	WWL 2016 reporting period – Churches attacked
793	1,329	2,425

WWL 2018: No data for North Korea included.

WWL 2017 and WWL 2016: North Korea: No conclusive data available.

Section 2: Data from WWL 2018 questionnaires

Section 2.1 - Summary

Questions Block 6 Violence	Number of Christians affected
6.1 Christians killed for faith-related reasons	3,064
6.2 Churches and other Christian buildings attacked	692
6.3 & 6.4 Christians detained without trial, arrested, sentenced & imprisoned	1,922
6.5 Christians abducted	1,252
6.6 Christians raped or otherwise sexually harassed	1,020
6.7 Christians - forced marriage	1,240
6.8 Christians physically or mentally abused	33,255
6.9 Houses or properties of Christians attacked	12,746

² Includes churches and church-owned hospitals, schools and cemeteries.

6.10 Shops or businesses of Christians attacked	2,001
6.11 Christians forced to leave their homes	33,967

No data for North Korea included.

Section 2.2 - Detailed tables

Violence Block 6.1 Christians killed for their faith

Nigeria	2,000
Central African Republic	500
Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	136
Egypt	128
Cameroon	100
Kenya	39
Philippines	33
Somalia	23
Afghanistan	21
Pakistan	15
Libya	10
India	8
Mexico	8
Colombia	5
Bangladesh	4
Guinea	4
Chad	3
Ethiopia	3
Iraq	3
Myanmar	3
Sudan	3
Turkey	3
Uganda	2
Eritrea	1
Guatemala	1
Honduras	1
Indonesia	1
Kyrgyzstan	1
Laos	1
Lebanon	1
Mali	1
Venezuela	1

Vietnam	1
TOTAL 6.1	3,064

No data for North Korea included.

Violence Block 6.2 Churches and other Christian buildings attacked

Pakistan	168
Central African Republic	157
India	34
Colombia	32
Sudan	25
Nigeria	22
Ethiopia	19
Indonesia	19
Iran	17
Chile	15
Mali	13
China	10
Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	10
Iraq	10
Sri Lanka	10
Turkey	10
Bangladesh	8
Eritrea	8
Egypt	7
Kosovo	6
Mexico	6
Venezuela	6
Vietnam	6
Tajikistan	5
Tanzania	5
Israel	4
Jordan	4
Nepal	4
Somalia	4
Angola	3
Lebanon	3
Libya	3
Malaysia	3
Saudi Arabia	3

Algeria	2
Azerbaijan	2
Bhutan	2
Chad	2
Ivory Coast	2
Kazakhstan	2
Myanmar	2
Peru	2
Philippines	2
Senegal	2
Uganda	2
Cameroon	1
Cuba	1
Honduras	1
Kyrgyzstan	1
Macedonia	1
Oman	1
Palestinian Territories	1
Russian Federation	1
Syria	1
Tunisia	1
Uruguay	1
TOTAL 6.2	692

No data for North Korea included.

Violence Blocks 6.3 and 6.4 Christians detained without trial, arrested, sentenced/imprisoned

India	635
Eritrea	375
China	134
Cuba	124
Pakistan	110
Central African Republic	83
Iran	69
Afghanistan	37
Ethiopia	32
Azerbaijan	26
Kazakhstan	25
Laos	25

Uzbekistan	25
Vietnam	25
Russian Federation	20
Sudan	20
Myanmar	19
Tunisia	16
Nigeria	14
Saudi Arabia	13
Cameroon	10
Mexico	10
Oman	10
Nepal	7
Colombia	6
Libya	6
Turkmenistan	6
Tajikistan	5
Maldives	4
Turkey	4
Bangladesh	3
Belarus	3
Iraq	3
Algeria	2
Indonesia	2
Jordan	2
Lebanon	2
Malaysia	2
Uganda	2
Comoros	1
Egypt	1
Ivory Coast	1
Kyrgyzstan	1
Somalia	1
Tanzania	1
Yemen	1
TOTAL 6.3 & 6.4	1,922

No data for North Korea included.

Violence Block 6.5 Christians abducted

Pakistan	700
Central African Republic	150
Iraq	65
Nigeria	52
Mexico	51
Libya	50
Colombia	36
Afghanistan	22
Chad	19
Cameroon	10
Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	10
Kenya	10
Philippines	10
Sudan	10
Mali	9
Egypt	6
Lebanon	6
Syria	6
India	5
Malaysia	3
Myanmar	3
Niger	3
Tunisia	3
Vietnam	3
China	2
Turkey	2
Bangladesh	1
Guinea	1
Honduras	1
Palestinian Territories	1
Somalia	1
Yemen	1
TOTAL	1,252

No data for North Korea included.

Violence Block 6.6 Christians raped or otherwise sexually harassed

Nigeria	500
Central African Republic	150
Kenya	100
Pakistan	83
Libya	30
Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	25
Iran	17
Niger	17
Uzbekistan	11
Eritrea	10
Iraq	10
Mali	10
Philippines	10
Saudi Arabia	10
Syria	10
Lebanon	6
Cameroon	5
Bangladesh	4
India	4
Chad	2
Myanmar	2
Tunisia	2
Yemen	2
TOTAL	1,020

No data for North Korea included.

Violence Block 6.7 Christians - forced marriage

Pakistan	700
Nigeria	200
Central African Republic	100
Kenya	100
Mali	25
Guinea	20
Afghanistan	18
Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	11
Cameroon	10

India	10
Myanmar	10
Sudan	10
Nepal	5
Gambia	4
Egypt	3
Somalia	3
Bangladesh	2
Colombia	2
Kyrgyzstan	2
Tunisia	2
Niger	1
Thailand	1
Yemen	1
TOTAL	1,240

No data for North Korea included.

Violence Block 6.8 Christians physically or mentally abused

India	23,793
Nigeria	2,000
Tanzania	2,000
Vietnam	1,083
Central African Republic	1,000
Libya	1,000
Eritrea	385
Colombia	236
Egypt	200
Cuba	104
Afghanistan	100
Kenya	100
Mali	100
Somalia	100
Sudan	100
Mexico	98
Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	60
Laos	60
Iran	55
Bangladesh	50
Guinea	50

Pakistan	50
Tunisia	50
Uganda	50
Nepal	47
Ethiopia	41
Azerbaijan	40
Lebanon	35
Philippines	32
Iraq	29
Tajikistan	20
Turkmenistan	20
Yemen	20
Sri Lanka	17
Cameroon	10
China	10
Kyrgyzstan	10
Myanmar	10
Russian Federation	10
Saudi Arabia	10
Syria	10
Uzbekistan	10
Chad	7
Gambia	6
Venezuela	6
Israel	5
Algeria	3
Indonesia	3
Malaysia	3
Ivory Coast	2
Jordan	2
Kazakhstan	2
Kuwait	2
Niger	2
Peru	2
Bahrain	1
Burkina Faso	1
Guatemala	1
Palestinian Territories	1
Senegal	1
TOTAL	33,255

No data for North Korea included.

Violence Block 6.9 Houses or properties of Christians attacked

Iraq	5,000
Nigeria	5,000
Central African Republic	2,000
Bangladesh	100
Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	100
Kenya	100
Sudan	100
Pakistan	69
Ethiopia	37
Kazakhstan	22
India	14
Iran	14
Colombia	13
Egypt	13
Laos	13
Afghanistan	12
China	11
Chad	10
Eritrea	10
Mali	10
Myanmar	10
Philippines	10
Syria	10
Turkmenistan	10
Uzbekistan	10
Somalia	9
Mexico	8
Vietnam	8
Sri Lanka	5
Jordan	4
Cameroon	2
Israel	2
Kosovo	2
Senegal	2
Tunisia	2

Cuba	1
Gambia	1
Nepal	1
Yemen	1
TOTAL	12,746

No data for North Korea included.

Violence Block 6.10 Shops or businesses of Christians attacked

Iraq	1,000
Central African Republic	500
Nigeria	120
Pakistan	100
Sudan	100
Kenya	50
Ethiopia	22
Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	21
Iran	11
Cameroon	10
Eritrea	10
India	10
Mali	10
Myanmar	10
Egypt	8
Kazakhstan	8
Uganda	3
Vietnam	3
Azerbaijan	1
Bangladesh	1
Chad	1
Laos	1
Somalia	1
TOTAL	2,001

No data for North Korea included.

Violence Block 6.11 Christians forced to leave their homes

Central African Republic	10,000
Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	8,000

Cameroon	5,237
Nigeria	5,000
Kenya	2,000
Sudan	1,000
Niger	500
Philippines	500
India	336
Chad	217
Egypt	202
Ethiopia	122
Pakistan	120
Afghanistan	100
Eritrea	100
Colombia	76
Yemen	70
Iran	50
Mexico	42
Syria	34
Burundi	26
Laos	25
Vietnam	25
Malaysia	24
Kyrgyzstan	18
Nepal	14
China	10
Libya	10
Myanmar	10
Uzbekistan	10
Iraq	8
Lebanon	8
Somalia	8
Tunisia	7
Burkina Faso	5
Guinea	5
Mali	5
Bangladesh	4
Ivory Coast	4
Jordan	4
Uganda	4
Gambia	3

Maldives	3
Tajikistan	3
Thailand	3
Brunei	2
Sri Lanka	2
Tanzania	2
Turkey	2
Algeria	1
Comoros	1
Cuba	1
Kazakhstan	1
Morocco	1
Palestinian Territories	1
United Arab Emirates	1
TOTAL	33,967

No data for North Korea included.

Violence Block 6.12 Christians forced to leave the country

It is not possible to give clear numbers of refugees for a couple of countries. Numbers of refugees often differ greatly over different sources. So giving a total, even if it is a (very) conservative, educated guess, does not make sense.

Section 3: Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe (Vienna, Austria)

THESE STATISTICS DO NOT INCLUDE THE RESULTS OF RESEARCH CARRIED OUT BY OPEN DOORS SWEDEN AMONG CHRISTIAN REFUGEES IN SWEDEN.

Section 3.1 - Summary

Questions Block 6 Violence	Number of Christians affected
6.1 Christians killed for faith-related reasons	2
6.2 Churches and other Christian buildings attacked	101
6.8 Christians physically or mentally abused	36
6.11 Christians forced to leave their homes	4

For questions 6.3 to 6.7, 6.9 – 6.10 and 6.12 the numbers reported are 0.

Section 3.2 - Detailed tables

Violence Block 6.1 Christians killed for their faith

Germany	2
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Violence Block 6.2 Churches and other Christian buildings attacked (desecration, vandalism and arson attack)

Austria	9
Belgium	4
France	41
Germany	2
Greece	1
Italy	2
Kosovo	1
Luxembourg	1
Netherlands	2
Poland	1
Spain	30
Sweden	2
Switzerland	3
United Kingdom	2
TOTAL	101

At least 80 more religious objects (crosses, statues) vandalized:

Austria	6 + many
France	6 + several
Germany	61 + many
Italy	1
Luxembourg	1
Spain	5
TOTAL	80 + many

Violence Block 6.8 Christians physically or mentally abused

Austria	1
Belgium	2

France	1 + many
Germany	9 + many
Monaco	1
Spain	20 + many
Sweden	1
United Kingdom	1
TOTAL	36 + many

Violence Block 6.11 Christians forced to leave their homes

United Kingdom	4
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(One family; assumed 4 persons.)

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2.2 Violence Analysis

Revised version: 2018-01-02

1. Introduction

1.1 The three main questions on violence

Please find below a more detailed view of the situation for Christians suffering from violence. The three sections are structured around the questions:

- In which countries were most Christians killed for their faith in the WWL 2018 reporting period? (WWL Questionnaire Block 6.1)
- In which countries were most churches and other Christian buildings attacked (WWL Questionnaire Block 6.2)
- In which countries were most Christians detained without trial, arrested, sentenced/imprisoned (WWL Questionnaire Blocks 6.3 and 6.4)

In each section the focus is on the top five countries for the stated category of violence against Christians.³

1.2 Preliminary note from Frans Veerman, Managing Director of WWR

Due to various questions concerning the WWL 2018 Data on Violence document, Frans Veerman would like to make the following points:

- Since I joined the organization in 2011, World Watch Research has always tried to cover the whole world. Violence data were always meant as global data. As far as I remember we never limited ourselves to the Top 50. We even developed a specific Violent Incident Database to be able to capture violent incidents worldwide. Later on we altered our procedure to use data from the "[Observatory](#)" in Vienna in addition to gathering data through WWL questionnaires and special reports. Of course our coverage was never complete but that would be an impossible task, and we have always clearly stated that in the violence articles.
- Taking only (for instance) killings from the WWL Top 50 countries would leave out two countries where Christians have suffered high levels of violence in the WWL 2018 reporting period: DRC (136 Christians killed) and Cameroon (100 Christians killed). In my opinion we must recognize the suffering of these Christians and their loved ones; and ask the world's attention for it.

³ Where links to documents on the Open Doors Analytical website have been made, the password is: freedom.

- The totals gathered from the WWL questionnaires (which gathered information from around 90 countries) and the Observatory data are a reasonable approach for assessing what happens worldwide. The list of around 90 countries was derived as follows: First, a global rapid appraisal tool is employed, which only excludes the Western world. Based on the results of this, countries that needed further investigation were then further investigated, leading to the ‘shortlist’ of (around) 90 countries. Europe was then covered by the “Observatory” in Vienna. For the rest of the Western world we may have missed some incidents in Australia and New Zealand. As far as we know there were no shootings or other forms of violence in the USA or Canada in the WWL 2018 reporting period that occurred for faith-related reasons. Of course, for all sources mentioned above it must be repeated that data gathering is never complete.
- In short, there is no reason to deviate from the given data as a worldwide statistic – acknowledging that the data behind this number can never be absolutely complete.

2. In which countries were the most Christians killed for their faith? (Violence Block 6.1)

	WWL 2018	WWL 2017	WWL 2016	
Nigeria	2,000	695	4,028	During the WWL 2018 reporting period the number of Christians killed for faith-related reasons in Nigeria has risen again. This is due to waves of attacks by well-armed Fulani Muslim herdsmen on Christian communities in the Middle Belt states and reports are naming this “ religious cleansing ” (ethnic cleansing based on religious affiliation). Attacks have even been extended into seven southern states. An example of what is going on can be found here .
Central African Republic	500	13	1,269	Since the mainly Muslim rebel group, Seleka, has been pushed out of the capital in 2014, it has split up into several factions. Two of these major factions are: The Union for Peace in the

				<p>Central African Republic (UPC) and the Popular Front for the Renaissance in the Central African Republic (Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique, FPRC). Both ex-Seleka rebel groups are divided along ethnic and regional lines. This has helped reignite the conflict in the Central African Republic. Law and order is deteriorating in those parts of the country where these groups are active and the number of Christians attacked and killed by these groups has shown a dramatic increase compared to the WWL 2017 reporting period. There have been several reports of Christians executed by these rebel groups when attacking civilians. Such attacks have taken place in the villages of Bria and Bambari, in the town of Bakala and there have also been reports of Christians killed in Bangui’s PK5 neighborhood. The rise in violence and number of deaths has prompted senior UN officials to state that the “early warning signs of genocide are there”.</p>
<p>Congo (Democratic Republic of the)</p>	<p>136</p>	<p>156</p>	<p>467</p>	<p>The main culprit behind the killing of Christians in the DRC is the Allied Democratic Force (ADF). This is an Islamist rebel group that is active on the border area between DRC and Uganda. The group attacks civilians in their villages and is responsible for the death of many Christians. The group is believed to have links with Islamic militant groups in various parts of the world. The ADF takes advantage of the weakness and fragility of the state in DRC to plunder and attack civilians most of whom are Christians. For instance, In</p>

				November 2016, some 34 Christians were killed in Tungudu, 17 killed in Kiskivi in December 2016, 14 killed some 15km from Mbau Kamango and 12 in Ngadi again in December 2016; some 57 others killed within same period in the Oicha and other zones. 2 people killed by militant attacks in northern Kivu.
Egypt	128	12	12	Compared to the WWL 2017 reporting period, the current reporting period has been very deadly for Christians in Egypt. There have been several widely publicized suicide attacks against Coptic Orthodox Churches. For instance, in December 2016 there was an attack against St. Peter's Church in Cairo in which 29 Orthodox Christians were killed in a suicide bomb attack inside the church. There were similar attacks in various parts of the country. There have also been instances where individual Christians were shot by suspected Islamists. For instance, in February 2017, in Al-Arish city (Sinai), 8 Orthodox Christians were shot dead on different days. An affiliate of the Islamic State group has taken responsibility for some of the attacks and is believed to be behind many of them. More detail and analysis about the rise of deadly violence against Egyptian Christians can be found here .
Cameroon	100	13	114	Although Boko Haram has lost significant territory in northern Nigeria and has been restricted in its operations, it is active in northern parts of Cameroon and is responsible for the death of many Christians. For instance in a suicide bomb attack some 8 Christian

				children and a church elder were killed in the Far North region. There have also been targeted killings and attacks against IDP and refugee camps. The rise in the number of casualties could be due to the fact that countries neighboring Nigeria - such as Cameroon - seem to be becoming the main theaters of operation for Boko Haram since it has lost most of the territory it used to occupy in northern Nigeria.
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3. In which countries were most churches and other Christian buildings attacked? (Violence Block 6.2)

Please note: This table does not include data from “The Observatory”.

Pakistan	168	600	17	During the WWL 2018 reporting period the number of churches and other Christian buildings attacked in Pakistan decreased as pastors and other leaders across the country were less willing to report such cases. Still, 168 cases were reported, from windows smashed and Sunday services disturbed to churches being completely closed down. The decrease in incidents is partly due to increased security in front of church buildings, provided both by the authorities and by church-security staff.
Central African Republic	157	1	131	Although it is difficult to have a precise number of churches affected by the conflict in the Central African Republic, the best estimate we have on record is 157. Most of these churches - close to 70 - were attacked by different factions of the militant groups that operate in the country. There have also been dozens of

				churches that have been burnt down and several churches have also been looted. A few churches around the Bokaranga axis of Pende province of the Northern region have also been taken over or confiscated by the militants for other uses. In addition to the threat from the ex-Seleka militant groups (which are mainly Muslim), factions of the anti-Balaka militia (which are referred to as “Christian militia” by the press but which are mainly animists) have also looted and attacked churches.
India	34	21	23	During the WWL 2018 reporting period there was an increase in the number of attacks against (house) churches or other Christian buildings in India. Church buildings were demolished, burnt, pelted with stones, and robbed. Religious statues, grottoes, cemeteries and other Christian objects were vandalized – the most striking of them being the damaging of more than a hundred Christian graves at a cemetery in Goa in July 2017. While the numbers were stable in WWL 2016 (23 churches attacked) and in WWL 2017 (21 churches attacked), for WWL 2018 at least 34 such reports were counted – an increase of more than 50%. The main reason for this remarkable increase is the higher level of intolerance from militant Hindus. This has resulted in a growing number of attacks during which normally not only property was damaged, but the Christians at the scene were often manhandled and arrested. The local police often do not interfere and refuse to register the attacks, and in some cases they even looked on at the attacks without

				attempting to stop the militant Hindu attackers.
Colombia	32	9	14	During the WWL 2018 reporting period the number of churches and other Christian buildings attacked in Colombia has increased greatly. The most violent attacks were perpetrated by the guerrillas that still operate in the country, because they try to subdue the Church by force; especially in the areas of Arauca, Guaviare, Meta and Caquetá. The majority of registered attacks, however, were caused by indigenous leaders who close or confiscate the churches in their communities, as one of the ways used to prevent the spread of Christian faith within the ethnic group.
Sudan	25	10	53	Following the secession of South Sudan, the government of Sudan has been putting massive pressure on Christians to make them leave the country. Thousands have already left and moved to South Sudan. The remaining Christians in the country are living under very strict government regulations. One of the tools that the government has been using is (in addition to arrest, harassment, or other forms of persecution) the demolition of churches. Twenty-seven churches were on the government's list to be demolished in the WWL 2018 reporting period and reports indicate that 25 churches were effectively demolished. To mention some examples: A church in Soba region was demolished ; a Sudan Church of Christ (SCOC) building was demolished in Khartoum; a part of a Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC) was occupied by police and a mob; The Bahri Evangelical

				<p>Church, on the outskirts of Khartoum, was also demolished. The government’s behavior concerning this wave of demolitions has forced John J. Sullivan, US Deputy Secretary of State, to call upon the government of Sudan to “immediately suspend” all demolishing of churches.</p>
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4. In which countries were the most Christians detained without trial, arrested, sentenced/imprisoned? (Violence Blocks 6.3 and 6.4)

Please note: There is no comparison here with WWL 2017 and WWL 2016.

India	635	<p>It is a very common occurrence in India that, during attacks by militant Hindus, Christians are threatened and physically harassed because they are accused of forcing the conversion of local people. In many of these cases, the militant Hindus end their attack by forcefully taking the Christians to the police station where they are then detained and arrested on the accusation of the forced conversion of Hindus. In the WWL 2018 reporting period, this was the case for at least 635 Christians. In the WWL 2017 reporting period, the arrest of only (at least) 100 Christians were reported. In the WWL 2016 reported it was 407 Christians. Again, this type of incident happens very often, but from the data available it is not possible to draw the conclusion that numbers are going up – even though this is most likely.</p> <p>Although the number of arrests of Christian in India is very high, it is very rare that Christians are taken to court or sentenced to prison terms. In most cases, the arrested Christians are released after a limited time, sometimes having to pay a fine. However, some incidents in the past have been missed by our sources: In past WWLs, also in WWL 2016 and WWL 2017 it was reported that there were no Christians sentenced to jail. WWR has since discovered that seven innocent Christians were given a life sentence by the district court of Phulbani in Odisha on 1</p>
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		<p>October 2013. They are accused of murdering the radical Hindu Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati in August 2008. This incident triggered off the ensuing violence against the Christian community in Odisha.</p>
Eritrea	375	<p>Hundreds of Christians in Eritrea were arrested on numerous raids conducted by government security forces. At least 375 Christians were arrested (or were still under arrest) in the WWL 2018 reporting period. Some examples: In March 2017, ten Christians were arrested from a home in Ginda, about 28 miles northeast of the capital, Asmara; on 17 May 2017, 35 Christians in Adi Quala, located in country's Southern region, were arrested after security officials with some members of the Orthodox Church started a compulsory house-to-house search; on 21 May 2017, 49 Evangelicals were arrested at a post-wedding celebration outside the capital, Asmara; In addition, there are Christians leaders who have been languishing in Eritrean prisons for years: Haile Naigzhi, leader of Eritrea's Full Gospel Church (arrested in 2004); Kiflu Gebremeskel, founder and pastor of Southwest Full Gospel Church (arrested in 2004), Million Gebreselasie, medical doctor and pastor of Massawa Rhema Church (arrested in 2004); Tekleab Menghisteb, medical doctor and priest (arrested in 2004); Gebremedhin Gebregiorsis, priest (arrested in Nov 2004), Kidane Weldou pastor of the Full Gospel Church (disappeared in 2005 but believed to be in prison). It has also to be noted that Abune Antonios, Eritrean Orthodox Patriarch, has been under house arrest since 2007.</p>
China	134	<p>Reports from the provinces of Anhui, Zhejiang, Henan, Xinjiang, Guangdong, Liaoning, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Qinghai, and Sichuan point to an increase in the number of detentions and arrests for faith-related reasons. Reasons for these range from 'illegal gathering' to alleged fraud and other economy-related crimes. Detention can last from a few days to several weeks and even months. Additionally, there are still Christians who have been serving prison sentences for many years. These include Christian human rights lawyers. Given the country's current stronger emphasis on Communist ideology, the numbers of arrests are not likely to decrease in the near future.</p>
Cuba	124	<p>During the WWL 2018 reporting period, there has been an increase of reports on Christians detained without trial, arrested, sentenced/imprisoned. Although it is not possible to determine if the actual number of incidents has increased, open protests against arrests has occurred more frequently. Raul Castro's regime has officially</p>

		<p>arrested 119 Christians and prosecuted 5 Christians. Most of them were Christians who publicly opposed or denounced (at the community, national or international level) the injustices of the government and who are seen as a threat to the regime due to their religious convictions that could spread among the population and provoke the subversion of other citizens.</p> <p>The most significant cases in the WWL 2018 reporting period involved i) the "Ladies in White", who on several occasions were prevented from attending church worship and were arrested and harassed for claiming justice for the Cuban people; and ii) people linked to the academic or journalistic world, who were expelled from university (if they were students) or dismissed (if they were professors) or they were sentenced for being linked to activist groups defending religious freedom in the country.</p>
Pakistan	110	<p>In Pakistan, Christians face a disproportionately high risk of getting arrested due to the country's notorious blasphemy laws. Several Christians have been sent to prison for this and Islamic militants have demanded the immediate execution of Catholic Christian, Asia Bibi, who has been on death row for blasphemy since 2009. Most detentions that take place for faith-related reasons are simply to harass Christians. Many cases are not documented or registered, and if they are registered, then this is often listed under some other crime but not as a faith-related crime. In just one example, in 2017 an anti-terrorism court in Lahore sentenced 42 Christians for rioting after two churches were bombed in 2015 in Youhanabad (Lahore's largest Christian neighborhood) and two Muslim passers-by were lynched by an outraged mob.</p>

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2.3 Violence categories split into three sub-categories

The tables below show the data for two violence categories split into three sub-categories.

- The two violence categories are “Christians killed for faith-related reasons” and “Churches and other Christian buildings attacked”.
- The three subcategories are “Inside the Top 50”, “Outside the Top 50”, and “Data from the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe (Vienna, Austria)”.

WWR strongly prefers that Development offices only publish the TOTALS highlighted in yellow below.

WWR would also like to emphasize again that the numbers given must be considered to be minimum values.

CHRISTANS KILLED FOR FAITH-RELATED REASONS

Inside and outside the Top 50	WWL 2018 reporting period - Christians killed	WWL 2017 reporting period - Christians killed	WWL 2016 reporting period - Christians killed
Inside Top 50	2,781	948	5,747
Outside Top 50	283	225	1,359
Data Observatory Europe	2		
Countries unrevealed		34	0
TOTAL	3,066	1,207	7,106

WWL 2018: No data for North Korea included.

WWL 2017 and WWL 2016: North Korea: No conclusive data available.

CHURCHES AND OTHER CHRISTIAN BUILDINGS ATTACKED

Inside and outside the Top 50	WWL 2018 reporting period – Churches and other Christian buildings attacked ⁴	WWL 2017 reporting period – Churches attacked	WWL 2016 reporting period – Churches attacked
Inside Top 50	621	1,188	2,242
Outside Top 50	71	141	183
Data Observatory Europe	101		
Countries unrevealed		0	0
TOTAL	793	1,329	2,425

WWL 2018: No data for North Korea included.

WWL 2017 and WWL 2016: North Korea: No conclusive data available.

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⁴ Data includes churches and other Christian buildings such as church-owned hospitals, schools and cemeteries. For WWL 2016 and WWL 2017 the count included churches only.

3. Analysis

3.1 Press release

HARDERWIJK, NETHERLANDS, 10 JANUARY 2018 – North Korea and Afghanistan score highest in the persecution of Christians, according to the annual Open Doors World Watch List (WWL) released today. Although completely different in politics and social structure, research for the period November 2016 – October 2017 showed these two countries receiving maximum scores for pressure on Christians. Only the score for violence made a distinction between first and second place. It was however Pakistan which had the unenviable honor of being the only country to score maximum points for violence against Christians.

The ten countries where Christians currently face most persecution are:

COUNTRY	PERSECUTION SCORE out of 100
North Korea	94
Afghanistan	93
Somalia	91
Sudan	87
Pakistan	86
Eritrea	86
Libya	86
Iraq	86
Yemen	85
Iran	85

Source: Open Doors/World Watch Research

New to the Top 50 and risers

New countries entering the Top 50 are:

Nepal (64 points/Rank 25), where a strong rise in *Religious nationalism* has taken place, with Hindu radicals becoming much more active both in putting pressure on Christians and in perpetrating violence.

Azerbaijan (57 points/Rank 45), where increased access to information such as police raids and arrests has caused a rise in score among other factors.

Libya (86 points/Rank 7) and India (81 points/Rank 11) both rose by 8 points, which in the case of India was clearly due to the increasing influence of radical Hinduism. In the WWL 2018 reporting period, at least 8 Christians were killed for their faith by militant Hindus, at least 34 churches were damaged, and close to 24,000 Christians suffered attacks in India.

Over 3,000 Christians killed for their faith

According to Open Doors research, an estimated 3,066 Christians were killed worldwide in the WWL 2018 reporting period. As can be seen in the table below, the number of Christians killed for their faith has risen again after a decrease in WWL 2017 period.

	Total recorded no. of Christians killed
WWL 2016	7,106
WWL 2017	1,207
WWL 2018	3,066

Source: Open Doors/World Watch Research

That decrease was due especially to a reduction in Boko Haram activity in Nigeria in the WWL 2017 reporting period. However, the killings in Nigeria have risen again due to waves of attacks by well-armed Fulani Muslim herdsmen on Christian communities in the Middle Belt states and reports are naming this “religious cleansing” (ethnic cleansing based on religious affiliation).

Measuring persecution is more than just recording violent incidents

According to Open Doors, approximately 215 million Christians in countries scoring 41 points or more experience ‘high’ levels of persecution for their faith. But persecution does not always mean killings or long prison sentences. The Maldives are a good example with 78 points at Rank 13: Although reports of violent incidents against Christians are few in this supposed holiday paradise, research into church life showed that pressure is at maximum level. As the Managing Director of Open Doors’ World Watch Research team, Frans Veerman, explains: “No church meetings are possible there and even most expatriate Christians prefer not to organize meetings out of fear of repercussions. By reading the individual country profiles the numbers in the list suddenly take on real depth of meaning.”

Making the plight of persecuted Christians public

The Open Doors World Watch List and the in-depth country profiles are published annually as a tool 1) for media to raise awareness 2) for politicians to make informed decisions and 3) for churches around the world to support Christians on the frontline.

More details on the methodology used for scoring and other documentation (including WWL 2018 geographical presentation) are available from Open Doors offices.

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3.2 Explanation of increases and decreases in scores

Rank	Country	TOTAL SCORE WWL 2018	TOTAL SCORE WWL 2017	Difference	Observations (see Long Country Persecution Dynamics for more details)
		Score	Score	Score	Score
1	North Korea	94	92	2	Small scoring refinement. Increasing self-isolation of country, causing increasing surveillance.
2	Afghanistan	93	89	4	Scoring refinement but also tighter tribal pressure and an increasingly violent Islamic militancy.
3	Somalia	91	91	0	
4	Sudan	87	87	0	Reported violence dropped a bit. Pressure increased because government put enormous pressure on church leaders to handover churches etc.
5	Pakistan	86	88	-2	The slight decrease in points in some <i>Spheres of life</i> does not indicate an overall easier situation for Christians since the violence score has stayed at the maximum level.
6	Eritrea	86	82	4	Increase caused by reported higher violence.
7	Libya	86	78	8	The persistent state of anarchy is giving increasing space for violent Islamic militancy and organized crime engaged in human trafficking. Migrants stranded in Libya are vulnerable to pressure and violence; Christian migrants are extra vulnerable.
8	Iraq	86	86	0	
9	Yemen	85	85	0	
10	Iran	85	85	0	
11	India	81	73	8	Both pressure and violence increased. The government does not do or say anything to stop the radical Hindu attacks on religious minorities like Christians.
12	Saudi Arabia	79	76	3	Increase caused mostly by reported higher violence.
13	Maldives	78	76	2	A stand-off between government and opposition has led to stricter controls on social activities, also Christian activities - even on migrant Christians.
14	Nigeria	77	78	-1	Boko Haram influence declining. Unfortunately Fulani Muslim herdsmen are compensating for the violence against Christians.
15	Syria	76	86	-10	10 point decrease mainly caused by less reports of violence. Recording incidents is difficult in the context of Syria.
16	Uzbekistan	73	71	2	Scoring refinement. Tighter tribal pressure. Increasing violent Islamic militancy.
17	Egypt	70	65	5	High profile and dramatic attacks intended to instill fear and terrorize the Christian population caused rise in pressure.
18	Vietnam	69	71	-2	Less reported killings. More pressure due to implementation of new laws on religion.
19	Turkmenistan	68	67	1	No great change - Christians continue to suffer from a high level of control by the authoritarian government.
20	Laos	67	64	3	Stronger emphasis on ideology. More pressure on ethnic minorities who are Christians (a.o. Hmong).
21	Jordan	66	63	3	Increase in reported violence.
22	Tajikistan	65	58	7	The rise is in part due to a scoring refinement, but there is a tightening of religious freedom in legislation and an increase in the level of surveillance of religious communities, as well as an increase in reports of violence.
23	Malaysia	65	60	5	Abduction of pastor (and missing Christian couple) sent shockwaves through country. Further Islamization in eastern part of country. Islamist groups are gaining confidence.
24	Myanmar	65	62	3	Christians among Rohingyas are extra vulnerable. Christian areas in the north (Kachin and Shan States) increasingly cut off. Radical Buddhist groups are gaining in confidence.
25	Nepal	64	(not in WWL)		Increasing pressure and violence by Hindu radicals, government officials, Hindu clergy, Hindu political parties and the environment of family, friends, and community.
26	Brunei	64	64	0	
27	Qatar	63	66	-3	Scoring refinement.
28	Kazakhstan	63	56	7	The rise is partly due to a scoring refinement, but there is also both increasing pressure and higher levels of violence. The country is increasingly getting on par with the other Central Asian countries.
29	Ethiopia	62	64	-2	The political turmoil has caused Christians and Muslims to form alliances beyond religious lines.
30	Tunisia	62	61	1	The government is trying to move the country in a positive direction (reform of law on marriage) but returning IS fighters and influence of radical teaching (particularly in rural parts of the country) makes progress difficult.
31	Turkey	62	57	5	Minor part is scoring refinement. Major part is because of growing anxiety in society, and among Christians, after governmental post-coup escalation.
32	Kenya	62	68	-6	Scoring refinement. Election year made people form alliances along ethnic lines, neutralizing religious tension. Influence of Mombasa Republican Council significantly declined.
33	Bhutan	62	61	1	No major new developments. Especially in rural areas, Buddhist monks oppose the presence of Christians; the authorities do nothing to protect Christians and most often side with the monks.
34	Kuwait	61	57	4	The situation is basically unchanged. There was some scoring refinement. The heavy pressure on Christians is not coming from the government in the first instance, but from the conservative Islamic society.
35	Central African Republic	61	58	3	Much violence and pressure against Christians by Ex-Séléka factions, particularly in the predominantly Muslim areas. Similar dynamics with anti-Balaka factions, particularly in the rest of the country.
36	Palestinian Territories	60	64	-4	The situation has not changed drastically. The fall is mainly due to a scoring refinement.
37	Mali	59	59	0	
38	Indonesia	59	55	4	Situation of Ahok (blasphemy law) is felt as threat by many Christians. Radical Islamic groups gaining in confidence. Further Islamization of society.
39	Mexico	59	57	2	Less reported violence in indigenous context but the high level was kept in the places affected by criminal groups. Increasing pressure by expansion of <i>Ethnic antagonism</i> to all categories of Christianity, as well as inclusion of <i>Secular intolerance</i> as a persecution engine in the analysis.
40	United Arab Emirates	58	55	3	The situation has not changed greatly for Christians. The rise is mainly due to scoring refinements.
41	Bangladesh	58	63	-5	Decrease is partly due to a lower level of violence and partly caused by government acting against violent Islamic militancy, giving some relief to Christians.
42	Algeria	58	58	0	
43	China	57	57	0	A scoring refinement giving a decrease in points was balanced by an increase caused by growing government pressure on house-church registration and also increasing government pressure on registered churches.
44	Sri Lanka	57	55	2	The increase is part of a trend since WWL 2016. Violence increased minimally, but the levels of pressure particularly in the Private sphere for converts and the National sphere for all Christians (especially non-Catholics) increased more noticeably.
45	Azerbaijan	57	(not in WWL)		The rise is partly due to a scoring refinement and due to the fact that more information was obtained concerning pressure and violence. (Whether the situation actually got worse during the WWL 2018 reporting period is not clear.)
46	Oman	57	53	4	Scoring refinement and some extra violence reported.
47	Mauritania	57	55	2	The situation has not changed drastically.
48	Bahrain	57	54	3	Scoring refinement.
49	Colombia	56	53	3	More violent incidents related to <i>Ethnic antagonism</i> reported in the country. Increasing pressure on all categories of Christian communities, including the historical ones, through drivers of <i>Ethnic antagonism</i> and <i>Organized corruption and crime</i> . Inclusion of <i>Secular intolerance</i> as a persecution engine in the analysis.
50	Djibouti	56	57	-1	The situation has not changed drastically.
	Comoros	56	56	0	
	Tanzania	53	59	-6	The new government managed to seriously weaken the aggressive "Awakening" movement which was behind much of the past violence, which led to less pressure on Christians.

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3.3 Trends Article – Part 1: The Islamist revolutionary movement

Article: 3,072 words

Contents

1. Radicalization within Muslim-dominated areas
2. The Sunni-Shia divide
3. Islamic expansionism into non-Muslim-dominated areas
4. Simultaneous Islamic radicalization and expansionism
5. Ethnic cleansing based on religious affiliation

The growing Islamist movement is a threat for Christians and other non-Muslim communities in many parts of the world. Islamism is that part of Islam which embraces a clear political agenda for bringing nations under Muslim domination and Sharia law. In this respect, it is not only a threat to the freedom of religion, but also to nations where the movement is active.

The Islamist movement is threefold⁵:

1. Violent rejectionists, often referred to as jihadists, are individuals and networks (often linked to or inspired by terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and Islamic State) which reject participation in the democratic system and use violence to advance their goals.
2. Non-violent rejectionists are individuals and groups (often linked to radical Islamic thought) that openly reject the legitimacy of any system of government not based on Islamic law, but do not - at least not publicly and openly - advocate the use of violence to further their goals.
3. Finally, participationists are individuals and groups that adhere to the strand of Islamism that advocates interaction with society at large, both at the micro-level through grass roots activism, and at the macro-level through participation in public life and the democratic process.

The Islamist movement manifests itself in Muslim-majority countries by trying to radicalize society, and in Muslim-minority countries by radicalizing Muslim communities within the countries and by expanding its influence into the rest of these countries.

⁵ Vidino L., Islam in Europe, WWR report (re-issued 2015), <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Islamism-in-Europe-2015.pdf>

1. Radicalization within Muslim-dominated areas

AFRICA

- With the global rise and spread of the Islamist movement, Christians are facing increasing persecution in Muslim majority countries in East, West and North Africa. The rising level of persecution can be seen in the increasing pressure on Christians in their day to day life and their interaction with ordinary people, whether neighbors, colleagues or relatives. In addition to such societal pressure, the proliferation of militant Islamist groups is increasingly putting the life and security of Christians at risk. Part of the agenda of this radical religious ideology is to also eliminate Sufi-Islam in many African countries.
- As can be gathered from what has transpired in Egypt within the WWL 2018 reporting period, groups like Islamic State (IS) are determined to wipe out Christians from the region through violence. The group has been [explicit](#)⁶ about its intentions to cleanse the region from Christians in its own statements and declaration.
- Sub-Saharan African countries have a significant presence of Islamic NGOs, many of which were, or still are, paid by countries with strong political Islamic agendas, such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Iran. West Africa provides [a clear example](#)⁷. The political liberalization that swept through West Africa in the 1990s was an opportunity for Arab states, with Saudi Arabia in the lead, to pour money into the new Islamic associations and NGOs that emerged from the ashes of the military or single-party dictatorships that once held sway in the region. These associations and NGOs expanded madrassas and Islamic schools to spread radical Islamic/Wahhabist views, bypassing traditional mosques to become focal points for proselytizing and disseminating radical ideology. The effect of all this can be seen below the Top 50 where a relatively high number of Sub-Saharan African countries are moving up in the direction of the Top 50.

ASIA

- Having lost ground in the Middle East, IS is moving elsewhere for greener pastures - namely Asia, home to one of the biggest Muslim population in the world. Unless government and civil society come up with systemic ways of preventing another upsurge of terrorism, then the chances that IS gains ground in Asia are high. Why? Because the seeds of home-grown terrorism have been there for decades already. With internet and social media it is just a matter of time before it spreads like

⁶ As an example, see: World Watch Monitor, 20 February 2017: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/02/islamic-state-threatens-to-wipe-out-egypts-copts/>.

⁷ See WWR report: <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/WEST-AFRICA-Islam-and-Islamism-in-Francophone-West-Africa-WWR-2012.pdf>.

a virus among the youth. Indonesia is fortunate to have a Head of National Police with a solid background in anti-terrorism intelligence – other Asian countries are not so fortunate.

- In Muslim Asia, everyone is watched in shock as the incidents in Marawi/Philippines unfolded, much like a rabbit watching a snake. The regional governments knew it would happen one day, but now that radical Islamic militants (calling themselves a branch of IS) were able to conquer a city of 200,000, it cannot be ignored any longer. The battle of Marawi was over after about 150 days. First attacked were a church and a Christian school, Christians were singled out and killed, others abducted. The question is: Where will the radicals go next? Of course, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore want to cooperate closer now, but the first two nations named have been lenient with the Islamic militants for too long, and it could happen that they get swallowed up too.
- There has been an increase in Islamic militancy affecting almost all Asian countries: Recently foiled bomb attacks in Bangladesh and Indonesia, the political fall-out of Ex-Governor Ahok's alleged blasphemy (Indonesia), the situation in Marawi and wider Mindanao (Philippines), the forging of an "Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army" in Myanmar etc. Observers think that Marawi and the Rohingya issue may serve as a rallying cry to jihadists around the world, if they find the Middle East region increasingly uncomfortable.
- Bangladesh has witnessed a gradual rise in attacks and Islamic fundamentalism is growing. Religious minorities (specifically Christians and Hindus), foreigners, and liberal writers are the main targets. The South Asian Terrorism Portal writes in its [Bangladesh Report of 2017](#)⁸ that "there is the threat of increasing radicalization, as significant numbers of youth appear to be attracted to the movements of global jihad." Multiple incidents not only point to an irrefutable growth in support for IS within Bangladesh but also to a general rise in radicalization. The current government has consistently denied the presence of international terrorist organizations like IS and al-Qaeda in the country despite growing evidence, and has taken a stand against secular critics stating that citizens have no right to write or speak against any religion. The government has also been accused of arbitrarily cracking down on political opponents, suffocating media and arresting critics.
- Another trend is that the profile of modern-day recruits no longer fits the exclusive old pattern of Muslims from the weaker economic and educational class. Successful, educated professionals are now voluntarily joining the movement too. One regional expert suggests this is happening because young people are getting hungry for a sense of purpose and meaning in life—which is understandable in this growingly materialistic, self-centered, and superficial "selfie" age. And they think *jihad* provides just the answer.

⁸ See: <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/bangladesh/index.htm>, last accessed 8 September 2017.

- Having said this, in general the ‘old tool’ is still used heavily to recruit members to radical Islamic groups: “you are marginalized, you are neglected, you are poor and all this is because you are Muslim.” Of course there are exceptions: well-educated and successful people are also being recruited.
- The growing influence of Saudi Arabia in Maldives, Indonesia, etc. is very worrying. It has been aggressively expanding its financial prowess through numerous investment projects in gigantic sums. Along with the “neutral” investments are accompanying projects for building mosques and Islamic boarding schools. Accepting Wahhabism (the more fundamental/puritan streak of Islam) is just part of the deal. This in turn is creating intolerant societies where the freedom of religion is getting trampled underfoot.

2. The Sunni-Shia divide

An often underreported, but crucial aspect of violent hotspots in the world is the division between Sunni and Shia Muslims. It divides the global Muslim community in general but terrorist groups can also be divided among the lines of Shia vs. Sunni. Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (both worldwide movements), al-Nusra (Syria), al-Shabaab (Horn of Africa) and Boko Haram (West Africa) promote a radical version of Sunni Islam and use anti-Shia rhetoric, while Hezbollah (Lebanon) is the most well-known Shia terrorist group. A group such as the Houthis in Yemen is Shia as well, but they are only labeled as terrorists by Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Australia⁹.

However, it is a fact that wherever Sunnis and Shia are fighting each other, Christians are easy targets and their neighborhoods easy to take control of. This has been seen in Iraq in the waves of sectarian violence following the ousting of Saddam Hussein. In the Sunni-Shia battle for power, influence and territory, Christians and their homes were often attacked.

The main battleground for Sunni and Shia Islam is Asia (including the Middle East).

ASIA

- An example is the war in Syria. President Assad is backed by Shia Hezbollah and Iran (and Russia), whereas many of the Sunni rebels are backed by a block consisting of Saudi Arabia and other Sunni countries (and the US). Iran’s influence is increasing to such an extent that the question now is how much influence Assad still has or will have when the situation stabilizes. If Iran really becomes the major influence in the country, that is naturally bad news for Christians in Syria since Christians

⁹ See: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houthis>

in Iran – especially Muslims who convert to Christianity – are severely persecuted. Iran sees itself as the ‘defender of the House of Islam’.

- During their involvement in the battle against IS, Iran has gained further influence in Iraq. Shiite militias, supported by Iran, played a major role in defeating IS in Iraq. This has all increased the influence of Iran within the region.
- Yemen is another example. Saudi Arabia backs the Sunni government and is actively involved in the fighting. Iran supports the Houthi rebels. This has led to a very bloody war. There are other places, such as Iraq, where such conflicts are taking place, but these are not complete proxy wars, since local militants do the fighting on their own behalf.
- Syria/Iraq: IS has had major setbacks, especially with the loss of Mosul and Raqqa in July and October 2017 respectively. The organization still occupies some areas though. Furthermore, all the groups that have been fighting against IS also have their own agendas and interests. This almost guarantees that the fighting will not stop after the final defeat of IS. Besides that, liberation from IS does not automatically mean that the Christian population will or can return. Some have, but many have lost their confidence in their Muslim neighbors; in particular since many Muslim neighbors did not offer help to Christians when IS took control or they even joined IS.
- The fear of radicalization, especially through IS ideology, is growing throughout the broader Middle East, e.g. in Egypt, Israel, Palestinian Territories, Lebanon (but to a lesser extent in Lebanon since the Christians have more political power), Syria, Iraq, and Jordan. IS has almost been defeated from a military point of view, but its ideological heritage is definitely alive and kicking.

3. Islamic expansionism into non-Muslim-dominated areas

AFRICA

- Islamic expansionism should be closely seen in the context of the Abuja Declaration, a declaration that was adopted in 1989 in Nigeria following a conference organized by the Organization of Islamic Conference (IOC). The objective of the declaration was to unite Muslims in Africa, and make Africa the first Islamic continent in the world. Although the declaration was quickly withdrawn from the internet after its initial publication, developments in the continent, especially in Sub Saharan Africa, seem to suggest this agenda is still being pursued by the Islamist movement.

According to the East African Center for Law and Justice, one of the key but covert objectives of the declaration, even though not written on the public document is: “To eradicate in all its forms

and ramifications all non-Muslim religions in member nations (such religions shall include Christianity, Ahmadiyya and other tribal modes of worship unacceptable to Muslims).”¹⁰

ASIA

- Indonesia: The rise of intolerance towards Christians became visible through the use of various intolerant slogans on banners, in publications, social media posts as seen in the case of the Ahok blasphemy case. This pressure aimed at non-Muslims has also impacted the lives of many at an individual level. Open discrimination is also being faced in education institutions, and children are reported as being the main victim of this ongoing trend.
- Indonesia: The openness of the proselytizing movement by Muslims aimed at Christians: Government agencies have publicly showed their support to the spread of Islam in various areas of Indonesia, especially in Papua. All of the financial and public support, which used to be done in secret, is now being conducted in an open manner.
- Islamic evangelism is strong in the more impoverished societal groups in Indonesia, Malaysia, and even Brunei. They are backed up with ample finance (often supplied by the government) and other resources, making them extremely effective and traditional Christian communities very vulnerable. A researcher said, “Call it what it is: Islamization strategies, some even illicit, just buying poor people.” Either violence against Christians or the dwindling of Christian communities are the possible scenarios that come from the numerically growing Muslim communities.

4. Simultaneous Islamic radicalization and expansionism

AFRICA

- Nigeria: Infringements on the religious freedom of Christians are currently occurring in a variety of ways. First, the rule of Sharia was unconstitutionally declared in 12 northern states. Local governments and social groups thus leave hardly any space for Christians to live their lives. Secondly, this was exacerbated by Boko Haram atrocities in northern Nigeria, especially the six north-eastern states, carrying out an anti-Christian agenda that could qualify as ethnic cleansing, if not genocide. Although the grip of Boko Haram has subsided, the group is still causing much havoc. Thirdly, Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen, often assisted by like-minded settlers, try to cleanse the Middle Belt¹¹ of their original majority-Christian and African traditionalist

¹⁰ See <http://eacj.org/religion/13-religion-feature-articles/15-the-abuja-declaration.html>

¹¹ The Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen increasingly attack targets in southern Nigerian states.

inhabitants.¹² This situation is a clear example of ethnic cleansing based on religious affiliation. Fourthly, mob violence all over northern Nigeria makes Christians vulnerable at any place and any time. While many analysts classify this issue simply as ‘social unrest’, it can be argued that it demonstrates a ‘persecution eclipse’, explaining why religious agendas simply are not recognized by external observers. Finally, a gradual expansion of political Islam over majority-Christian southern Nigeria with the intention to Islamize the South can be observed. Muslim leaders and their constituents pressure adherents of other religions via banking, businesses, symbolism, mosque-building, schools and NGOs to the extent that Christians (and adherents of other religions) must either leave or gradually adopt Islamic mores and, in some cases, convert to Islam or resist this attempt to impose an Islamic identity on their land. Nigeria can be seen as a test case concerning the persecution dynamics of *Islamic oppression* in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. Similar dynamics can be observed in other countries at various levels and with different intensities.

5. Ethnic cleansing based on religious affiliation

AFRICA

- *Ethnic cleansing* based on religious affiliation is evident in a growing number of sub-Saharan African countries. This aptly describes the dynamics created by agents of political Islam against the presence of Christians in what they consider their territory within countries. *Ethnic cleansing* is one of the most recent concepts punishable under international criminal law. It denotes the forced expulsion of a competitor or those who differ in race, ethnicity or religion from a given area by employing unlawful means such as murder, destruction of property, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, confinement of civilian population in ghetto areas, displacement and deportation of civilian population, extra-judicial executions, rape, deliberate military or other organized attacks or threats of attacks on civilians, or even genocide. What is happening in northeast Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan can be considered typical examples, in some cases even coming close to genocide.¹³

¹² WWR has commissioned several studies on the activities of the Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen: <https://staging.worldwatchmonitor.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Nigeria-Benue-State-2017-WWR.pdf> <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Migration-and-Violent-Conflict-in-Divided-Societies-March-2015.pdf>, <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Violent-Conflict-in-Taraba-State-2013-2015.pdf>, <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Ethnic-cleansing-in-the-Middle-Belt-Region-of-Nigeria-2015.pdf> and <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Nigeria-Investigating-common-narratives-of-violent-conflict-in-Nasarawa-State-2016.pdf>. (Password: freedom).

¹³ See WWR reports on ethnic cleansing: <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Ethnic-cleansing-in-the-Middle-Belt-Region-of-Nigeria-2015.pdf>, <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Kenya-Ethnic-cleansing.pdf> and <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Sudan-Ethnic-cleansing-WWR.pdf>.

- The typical social set-up of political Islam is characterized by voluntary ghettoization that helps to radicalize the Muslim community and purify it from non-Muslims – especially by putting enormous pressure on Muslims not to leave their religion – and to ‘invade’ the surrounding non-Muslim territories. While not all Muslims adhere to this concept, the resistance of Muslim communities that would see this differently is often limited or ineffective.

The situation has become very worrying for the future of religious freedom in the African subcontinent. Many majority-Christian countries have become stratified between Islam and Christianity as a result of the strategy of political Islam. Sometimes this stratification exists at a very local level; at other times it covers large areas. This Islamic stratification movement is twofold: Majority-Muslim areas within countries seek to consolidate and to side-step national legislation (for instance by setting up informal sharia courts), and at the same time these areas continue to try to expand into majority-Christian areas. This expansion may be combined with serious violence, but many governments are not able to create stable states that can protect their citizens. This easily leads to a vicious circle in which governments are side-lined or co-opted, giving in to perpetrators of persecution for the sake of ‘peace’. By doing so, they surrender their Christian populations to practices of ethnic cleansing, if not genocide.

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3.4 Trends Article – Part 2: Religious and ideological nationalism

Main article: 1,766 words / Summary: 614 words

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Summary

Nowhere to hide - Nationalism sweeps over Asia

Nationalist Hinduism and Buddhism are gaining more and more ground in Asia. ‘To be Indian is to be Hindu.’ Or: ‘To be Sri Lankan is to be Buddhist’. These religions may have the reputation of being peaceful in the West, but that is not how Christians in those countries experience them.

Religious Nationalism in Asia is like a tsunami that increases in velocity and height the closer it gets to shore. It sweeps over the continent, destroying many lives. This is compounded by the fact that in some countries parties that uphold nationalist ideology have become governments; thus, giving further impetus to the nationalist movements.

India reached Rank 28 on World Watch List (WWL) 2014 with a score of 55 points. In WWL 2018 it reached Rank 11 with 81 points. 2017 was a record year in terms of persecution incidents (i.e. threats, social exclusion, abuse, imprisonment etc.) with over 600 being reported. But most cases actually remain unreported, so the true number is much higher.

The root cause for the increase of persecution in India is the growing Hindutva movement, a nationalistic drive to ‘Hinduize’ India. Christians are confronted with social exclusion, expulsion from villages, detention, threats, abuse, physical violence and sometimes killings.

Unfortunately, Nepal follows in the footsteps of its ‘big brother’. It did not appear in the WWL 2017 Top 50, but entered at Rank 25 with a score of 64 in WWL 2018. The government as well as local communities became more active in persecuting Christians. Here too there was a steep rise in the number of people being physically abused for their faith in Jesus.

Religious nationalism is not only limited to India and Nepal, the Buddhist World is confronted with this trend as well. Persecution in countries such as Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Myanmar manifests itself differently and is much more subtle.

For example, there are few Christian schools in Buddhist countries. If parents want their children to be educated, they have to send them to Buddhist schools. There, the children have to take part in classes that teach Buddhism. They are also forced to participate in Buddhist rituals. In other words, during their day at school they live as Buddhists, which undermines their Christian faith. There are also many legislative restrictions against Christians, who often, for example, do not receive a permit to rent a place to hold religious meetings.

Minorities in Buddhist countries find themselves between a rock and a hard place. They are persecuted for not being part of the majority ethnic group and their own community persecutes them for not belonging to the majority religion of their own ethnic group.

Ideological nationalists

There is a second category of nationalists in Asia: Ideological nationalists. This category has become more evident over recent years and is frequently linked with Communism, as in China, Vietnam and Laos. Religion is still seen by these countries' authorities as 'opium for the people' and as something which should be eradicated, if possible. This does not hinder them from cooperating with Buddhist or animist leaders against "foreign" Christianity from time to time.

In all these countries, Communist ideology is being revived and any economic opening-up should not be mistakenly interpreted as meaning a general easing of pressure or even liberalization is taking place. On the contrary. For Vietnam, civil rights and freedom of religion remain elusive and Christians should not expect any increase in freedom or any real benefit from the new law on religion. Christians from the ethnic minorities will continue to bear the brunt of persecution, but the increasing self-consciousness of the Communist rulers was illustrated in the WWL 2018 reporting period when a Catholic Christian was deported to France and a Protestant Christian to the United States, both being Vietnamese citizens.

Full article

Nowhere to hide - Nationalism sweeps over Asia

Nationalist Hinduism and Buddhism are gaining more and more ground in Asia. 'To be Indian is to be Hindu.' Or: 'To be Sri Lankan is to be Buddhist'. These religions may have the reputation of being peaceful in the West, but that is not how Christians in those countries experience them. Religious Nationalism in Asia is like a tsunami that increases in velocity and height the closer it gets to shore. It sweeps over the continent, destroying many lives.

Hinduization in India (and Nepal)

Exaggerated? Not to Christians in India. 2017 was a record year in terms of persecution incidents (i.e. threats, social exclusion, abuse, imprisonment etc.). Open Doors' partners registered more than 600 persecution incidents. And that is only the tip of the iceberg. Most persecution incidents remain unreported.

In WWL 2014, India scored 55 points and reached Rank 28. A year later it scored 62 points and rose to Rank 21. WWL 2016 saw an increase to 68 points and a rise to Rank 17. For WWL 2017, India scored 73 points and ranked 15. Now for WWL 2018, India has risen to Rank 11, with a chilling score of 81 points.

India used to be quite tolerant towards Christians. Roughly twenty years ago there was little persecution and in the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had only two seats in parliament. Violence against Christians and other minorities was scarce—only 38 incidents were recorded between 1964 and 1996, according to Dr Ron Boyd-MacMillan¹⁴. In 1996 the BJP won the elections for the first time, but their government did not last very long. In 1998 it formed a coalition named the National Democratic Alliance and thereafter a wave of violence crashed upon the Christians. It started with 417 registered acts of violence between 1999 and 2001. 33 Christians lost their lives. Many will remember the death of 58-year-old Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two young sons, who were burnt alive in their car.

In 2004, the BJP and their coalition partners met a surprising defeat and the violence against Christians decreased. Since 2014, the BJP is back in the driver's seat and there has been seen an immediate rise in persecution incidents.

India is in a process of 'Hinduization,' which was born from the 'Hindutva' ideology (literally: 'Hindu Principles') or Hindu nationalism which holds that the Indian nation can be a cohesive and aspiring force only if the tenets of one religion, one culture, and one nation are maintained. The founder of RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh), M.S. Golwalkar, identified five defining features of the Hindu nation—geographical unity, racial unity, cultural unity, linguistic unity, and the slogan "Hindu, Hindi, and Hindustan".¹⁵ He also made the following statement:

"The non-Hindu people in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and revere Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but the glorification of the Hindu religion, that is they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ingratitude towards this land and its age-long tradition but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead; in one word they must cease to be foreigners or may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment, not even citizen's rights."¹⁶

The RSS movement is widespread in India. The Bharatiya Janata Party, the political wing of the RSS, rules many states and is the party Prime Minister Narendra Modi belongs to. Modi categorically denies there is such a thing as persecution of Christians or other minorities in India. During a television show he said he has no knowledge of the burning of churches or other types of persecution. It has been said that India should be 'free of Christians (and Muslims) by 2021', an influential leader said at a rally in December 2014.¹⁷

¹⁴ Faith that endures, Ronald Boyd-MacMillan, 2006, p. 46-47

¹⁵ See: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/08/hinduisation-of-india-leads-to-more-anti-christian-violence/>, <https://www.dailyo.in/politics/hindi-imposition-protest-regional-languages-modi/story/1/16815.html> and Golwalkar M S, We or Our Nationhood Redefined, 1939, pp. 43-44.

¹⁶ Sweetman W and Malik A., Hinduism in India: Modern and contemporary movements, p. 116.

¹⁷ See: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-2879597/We-free-India-Muslims-Christians-2021-DJS-leader-vows-continue-ghar-wapsi-plans-restore-Hindu-glory.html>

Meanwhile, Christians are confronted with social exclusion, expulsion from villages, detention, threats, abuse, physical violence and sometimes killings. Radical Hindus apply a five step process to ‘bring Christians home’, according to local Open Doors’ partners:

1. The pastor is chased out of the community. Church members are not allowed to contact him or to leave their villages and worship with other Christians.
2. The militants prevent Christians from participating in society. They are not allowed to have a government job, trade, draw water from the well, buy food and other products from local stores or to even talk to other people in the village.
3. As the records show, physical violence then happens more frequently. Families are threatened, Christians are beaten up, girls and women may be raped, children may be kidnapped.
4. At some point, the Hindu priest will come to indoctrinate the Christians, to remind them that they were born as Hindus and to persuade them to come back to the religion of their community.
5. If they still resist, they are often forcibly taken from their house, pushed into a Hindu procession and dragged to a temple. There they have to bow to idols, recite Hindu scriptures and often get smeared with cow dung and/or cow urine (to ‘cleanse’ them).

Nepal

But India is not the only country that has been dragged into this process of Hinduization. Nepal is following in the footsteps of its ‘big brother’. The Himalayan country did not even make it to the WWL 2017 Top 50, but now it has shot up to Rank 25 with a score of 64 points. The situation for Christians in Nepal have deteriorated markedly in the WWL 2018 reporting period – in all spheres of life. Hindu radicals have become much more active. Government officials, Hindu clergy, Hindu political parties and the environment of family, friends, and community have all stepped up pressure. The number of reported violent incidents increased too – there were reports on attacked churches, arrests, Christians being sentenced to jail, dozens of Christians were beaten up, and there were Christians who had to flee their homes and villages because of threats.

2017 was a bad year for India and Nepal and if the trend continues, 2018 will be worse.

Buddhization

In the ‘Buddhist world’ there is a similar nationalistic trend. However, persecution in countries such as Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Myanmar manifests itself differently – and it is much more subtle.

For example, there are few Christian schools in Buddhist countries. If parents want their children to be educated, they have to send them to Buddhist schools. There, the children have to take part in classes that teach Buddhism. They are also forced to participate in Buddhist rituals. In other words, during the day at school they live as Buddhists, which undermines their Christian faith. There are also many legislative

restrictions against Christians, who, for example, are often refused a permit to rent a place to hold religious meetings.

Then there are also many practices that are remarkably similar to those in the Hindu world. Take the communities that do not allow Christians in their villages. If a person converts in such a village they are subjected to strong harassment until they leave.

But even in other villages, if Christians stop giving alms to Buddhist monks, refuse to contribute to the renovation or building of Buddhist temples, or desist from participating in Buddhist festivals, they are harassed, forced to donate and threatened with expulsion from the village. Christians, especially those gathering in house-churches, are monitored, pressured into renouncing their faith and excluded from communal decisions and resources.

This pressure is also felt in everyday life when they are refused help in gathering bamboo for repairing houses or denied access to water. Areas with a high percentage of Christians are deliberately disadvantaged through poor infrastructure and health care. In conflict zones such as the northern states of Myanmar, humanitarian aid to Christians is not allowed or only given in minimal portions.

Christians among minorities between a rock and a hard place

In most Buddhist countries, Christians are not the only people who are being persecuted. Many minorities face pressure and often violence from the majority people as well. Christians among the minority groups experience persecution not only because they are a minority but because of their faith as well. They are between a rock and a hard place.

There is another category of nationalists in Asia. Hindu and Buddhist nationalists are *religious* nationalists, but there are also *ideological* nationalists too. This category has become more evident over recent years and is frequently linked with Communism, as in China, Vietnam and Laos. Religion is still seen by the authorities in these countries as the ‘opium for the people’ and as something which should be eradicated, if possible. This does not hinder them from cooperating with Buddhist or animist leaders against “foreign” Christianity from time to time.

In all these countries, Communist ideology has been revived and any economic opening-up should not be mistaken for a general easing of pressure or even liberalization. On the contrary. For Vietnam, civil rights and freedom of religion remain elusive and Christians should not expect any increase in freedom or any real benefit from the country’s new law on religion. Christians from the ethnic minorities will continue to bear the brunt of persecution, but the increasing self-confidence of the Communist rulers was illustrated in the WWL 2018 reporting period when a Catholic Christian was deported to France and a Protestant Christian to the United States, both being Vietnamese citizens.

For China, it became clear that the over-arching goal of the Communist Party of China is to maintain its power through national unity and by limiting outside influences. The rulers will do everything they deem necessary to reach these goals. Recent years have shown a growing orthodoxy in ideology and in

emphasizing Communist rules, acting against everyone perceived as threat, including Christians. The leadership's goal of maintaining power includes the control of all religions. The question of how to regulate Christianity and its growth is gaining weight. The sinicization of religion continues to be the guiding thought in this.

The Chinese government finally announced on 7 September 2017 that the implementation of new regulations on religion would begin on 1 February 2018. While these regulations are more detailed and seem to be stricter than in the former draft version, all depends on how they will be implemented. It is likely that life will get more complicated for Christians in China, especially when house-churches continue to withstand the pressure of joining registered churches.

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3.5 Trends Article – Part 3: The good news

Article: 1,830 words Revised: 2017-12-23

The Good News

Open Doors' World Watch List is a tool that measures the 'persecution temperature' in certain countries. Unfortunately, the 'fever' isn't subsiding in most of them. Only a handful saw an improvement significant enough to be mentioned here. However, there is a lot of good news to share from the Persecuted Church that does not come directly from the World Watch List.

1. Tanzania tumbles off the list

Tanzania is the most eye-catching example of a country where the situation for Christians considerably improved. It was Rank 33 on WWL 2017 list with 59 points. For WWL 2018 it dropped six points and did not make the Top 50. (However, 53 points still means there is a high level of persecution occurring in the country.)

The majority of people in Tanzania are Christian, but the percentage of Muslims is growing and especially younger Muslims are susceptible to 'radical influences' from groups in neighboring countries, such as al-Shabaab (operating in Somalia and also Kenya).

There is a group called 'Uamsho' (lit. 'The Awakening') that wants autonomy and Islamic law for the island Zanzibar. They started using violence against Christians to enforce their demands. But late 2015 saw the election of President John Magufuli, which meant a turning point. His administration made serious work of cracking down on radical Islamic groups. Many leaders were caught, others went into hiding. The violence against Christians decreased a lot.

2. Government turmoil improves scores for Ethiopia and Kenya

Kenya is at Rank 32 on WWL 2018. It dropped 6 points to a score of 62. Ethiopia is at Rank 29 and went down two points. It also has a score of 62 points.

The reason for the 'improvement' in these two countries is remarkably similar. In both cases, Muslims and Christians found a common cause.

In Kenya the 2017 presidential elections brought a lot of unrest to the country. Uhuru Kenyatta was declared the winner, but his opponent Raila Odinga contested the results. Later, the opposition boycotted the new elections.

“What happens during the elections is that one’s tribe becomes more important than one’s religion”, explains an Open Doors researcher. “So Muslims and Christians from the same tribe actually get along better.” Kenyan political alliance depends on tribe.

Secondly, the government exerts less pressure on Christians. This is especially true in Ethiopia, where for the last two years many people have been protesting against the government. They want change - an end to corruption, more respect for human rights, more democracy, a fairer distribution of wealth etc. Here too, Christians and Muslims found each other in a common cause. The protests and turmoil forced the government to declare a state of emergency in October 2016 and it has been in place for most of the year 2017. That meant the government had less time to persecute Christians practicing their faith outside church walls.

The bad news is that although the WWL 2018 shows there was less persecution in Ethiopia, the government cracked down violently on the protesters. Scores of people have been injured or killed, but those are not scored during the WWL survey as these are human rights violations, but not persecution for one’s Christian faith.

In Kenya we see a new, alarming phenomenon. Radical Islamic al-Shabaab killed over thirty Christians, many by beheadings. This seems to be a new tactic to instill fear in the Christian community and get them to flee *en masse*.

3. Vietnam turns back to ‘normal’

On WWL 2017, Vietnam scored 71 points, an increase of 5 points compared to WWL 2016. That increase had mainly to do with three killings and other violence. However, the WWL 2018 reporting period did not see as much violence, although pressure did rise and remains at a very high level. While it is good that no Christians died for their faith in Vietnam, the authorities continue to crack down on ethnic minority Christians and will start implementing a new law on religion in 2018 for all Christians.

4. Less violence in Syria

Syria is a country that makes a big drop too in WWL 2018. It loses ten points and is no longer found in the Top 10. The drop is explained by looking at the violence category. There were less reports of violence in which Christians were targeted. This was mainly because the areas held by IS (Islamic State) were recaptured, but another factor is the difficulty of receiving confirmed information from a country in the chaos of civil war. Anti-Christian violence has not disappeared: There were still Syrian Christians being abducted, physically and sexually abused, fleeing their homes and country in the WWL 2018 reporting period.

Countries that seem to have improved, but did not really

Pakistan from 88 to 86: Slight improvement in some areas of Christian life, but violence still at maximum level. It is hardly any improvement.

Nigeria from 78 to 77. Boko Haram has less influence, but unfortunately the Fulani Muslim herdsman 'compensate' for that fact by being very violent against Christians, chasing them away from their farms.

Qatar and Bangladesh both have lower scores. For Qatar it does not reflect an improvement of the situation but has to do more with a refinement on how Christians from a Muslim background and their communities were scored. Bangladesh saw less violence and more efforts by the government to crack down on radical Islamic groups, what to a certain extent relieved the pressure on Christians.

The good news the World Watch List does not tell you

Christina is back! – When she was only three years old, Iraqi Christina was snatched from the arms of her mother by an IS fighter. For three years, she lived with a Muslim family in IS territory. With the liberation of Mosul, also came the liberation of Christina. [The Muslim family brought her back to her parents and she is now doing well](#). It's just one example of good news from Iraq. Families have begun to return to their home villages now that IS has been defeated on the battlefield (if not in the hearts of many in the population). There is still much uncertainty and fears for the future, but it is a start.

Help for displaced Christians in Cameroon - Boko Haram related violence has killed more than 2,000 people and uprooted at least 155,000 in northern Cameroon since 2014¹⁸. Though several NGOs were present in this area to assist the displaced, Christians were often not treated fairly during distributions. Thanks to the help of its supporters, Open Doors [recently delivered relief aid](#) to close to 300 displaced Christian families in the town of Mora. Pastor Mattieu, a beneficiary, said: "For those who have given their money and are supporting us in prayer, may God bless them. And you who are here, you take your time to converse with us or to even come and see us and speak to us face-to-face. It also encourages us in this work of the Lord because you also share in our suffering. So we are really happy. May God bless you in your service! May God sustain you, and as you go back, may God keep you on the way! It is our joy that you think about us always in prayer. You share in our suffering. We are really happy. Thank you very much!"

Christians in Marawi grateful despite IS terror – "OD is relentless in pursuing us", one Christian from the Southern Philippine city Marawi [recently told Open Doors](#). We held a gathering with Christians who received aid via us during the time their city had been taken over by a local IS affiliate. "When the war broke, many helped us who were there for the first week, the second week, and then they were gone. But you stayed. You gave us rice, and we have something to eat. God truly never leaves his children, and I praise Him", says the wife of a pastor. It's these small acts – like giving food, listen to someone's story – that help Christians to persevere in hostile environments.

¹⁸ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/cameroon-confronting-boko-haram>

Mexican translator not lost for words – We asked a Mexican translator to work on a Standing Strong Through the Storm Manual, a Biblical training designed to help Christians withstand persecution. During his three months work on the translation, he felt he was being taught by God on a deep level. He needed all those lessons when he was put in prison. Since his release, [he continues to prepare others for persecution](#).

Christians bravely represent Christ in prisons – Their names cannot be mentioned here, because that could lead to more persecution for them. One country expert recently commented: “There are thousands of Christians around the world who serve as Christ’s ambassadors in prisons. And maybe that is why they are there. How else are other prisoners going to hear the Good News? That does not make it easy for them to suffer (in fact, it may be traumatic), but hopefully they experience God’s strength and joy as well. They need our daily prayers.”

The Secret Church is growing – Again, the exact countries or numbers cannot be published for obvious reasons, but from around the world we receive reports about the growth of underground churches. This is true for North Korea, for India, for many Muslim and Buddhist countries.

One Chinese Open Doors contact who supports North Korean refugees and Christians (who usually go back to North Korea to share the Gospel there), recently told us: “God is answering your prayers. I’ve done this work for many years. But never before have I seen so many North Koreans come to faith as nowadays. What happens when God is changing the country from the inside out? The forces of darkness will resist as hard as they can. If you look with human eyes, then your prayers made the situation worse. But if you look with spiritual eyes and have a love for lost souls like I do, then you should be joyful. Sure, the battle is more intense than ever. But why? Because God is setting His children free.”

In other words, do not let the World Watch List make you depressed. It shows where the resistance against the Gospel is perhaps the fiercest. It is also an indication where God is transforming people from the inside out. It is meant for informing you and guiding/helping your prayer. Look at this message from an underground, North Korean believer:

“We are able to walk in faith even though there are many difficulties. We try to keep our faith pure in Christ in any sufferings. We put our hope in the place that God prepared for us before He even created the world. Until we reach that place, we will keep going forward. Even when there are many barriers and limitations. It is our desire that we will follow our calling to keep the faith and to spread the Gospel. But we always remember your love and concern for us. We are doing well thanks to your prayers.”

3.6 Statements on Squeeze

WWL 2018: STATEMENTS ON SQUEEZE DERIVED FROM COUNTRY QUESTIONNAIRES

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Squeeze (pressure) as distinguished from Smash (violence)

This article highlights examples of the pressure Christians are experiencing in their lives (often referred to as Squeeze) in a variety of persecution situations. The examples are mainly taken from countries with high scores for the respective questions. The distinction between Squeeze and Smash is described as follows in Section 1.3 of the WWL Methodology (November 2017), pp. 17-18:

“World Watch Research distinguishes two main expressions of persecution: *squeeze* (the pressure Christians experience in all areas of life) and *smash* (violence). Nevertheless, while it might seem that *smash* is the most prevalent and invasive expression of persecution, it is often the *squeeze* that is most prevalent and invasive. The WWL methodology, therefore, negates the idea that *the more violence there is against Christians, the more persecution there must be*, but states that less violence can go together with (very) high levels of persecution.

An example of a very high level of *squeeze* is the situation of Christians on the Maldives. From every side, they are facing massive pressure from friends, neighbors, family, and the government, which means they can hardly express their faith at all. Due to the enormous amount of pressure and control, Christians are virtually unable to express their faith in any way. Christians feel that they and their faith are being squeezed out of existence by their persecutors. However, if someone were looking for a list of incidents where Christians were beaten, put in jail or deported, there would be very few.

In other words, the degree of persecution can be so intense, and so all-pervasive, it actually results in fewer incidents of persecution, since Christians hide their faith and acts of public witness and defiance are so rare. So while there is no evidence of ‘smashing’ the church through violence and arrests, the *squeeze* is what is killing the church. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that many persecutors prefer to *squeeze* the church, rather than *smash* it, in the belief that it is a more successful form of persecution.

The WWL methodology also seeks to negate another assumption, which is that *the most violent persecutors of the church are its main persecutors*. An example of this is the situation of Christians in Northern Nigeria. One of their most violent persecutors in recent years has been the Islamic militant group, Boko Haram that has bombed churches and killed numerous pastors and other Christians. It is an unobvious attempt to *smash* the church. But in fact, for most Christians the greatest threat comes from a creeping cultural Islamization. This has been stealthily progressing since the 1980’s and now Christians suddenly realize they are second-class citizens in a once hospitable but now hostile culture.

While *smash* can be measured and tracked through incidents of violence, *squeeze* needs to be documented differently. It needs to be tracked by discerning how Christian life and witness itself is being squeezed in all the different areas of life.”

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Selection of questions and statements from the squeeze related section of the WWL 2018 questionnaire (Blocks 1-5)

Question 1.3: Has it been dangerous to privately own or keep Christian materials?

Country	Points	Comment
Afghanistan	4	All Christian materials are seen as anti-Muslim and anti-Afghanistan. So it is considered both an act of apostasy as well as an act of treason.
Maldives	4	Christian materials are banned from the country. Maldivians found in possession are punished with fines, imprisonment, or banishment. Expats are generally allowed to keep a small amount of such materials for their own use. But expats discovered with quantities suspected of being for distribution, or evangelistic materials, or any materials in the local language, will be detained and removed from the country.
North Korea	4	Also due to strict neighborhood control (Inminban) homes are regularly searched. Were a Bible to be discovered, the family would be immediately relocated to a labor or concentration camp.
Turkmenistan	4	All religious materials need approval by the Council for Religious Affairs, the state agent that fully controls religion in the country. This is hardly ever granted. Possession of religious materials is therefore problematic for all Christians. For converts: if their relatives or community discover Christian materials they will confiscate and destroy it immediately.
Yemen	4	If Christian materials are found by family members, it can lead to honor killings where their own families can kill their sons and daughters and not receive punishment for it, as it would be viewed as the family members restoring their honor.
Somalia	3.75	This is not acceptable and will automatically mean that the individual is a Christian. Mere suspicion of being a Christian is generally a death sentence except in very rare cases where the person is found with soft copies of Christian material in their phone and are beaten up and warned to desist from befriending Christians or being interested in Christian materials. However if found in possession of a Bible or other Christian material, the person is executed with the blessing of their immediate family members, relatives, neighbors and even friends.
Libya	3,5	Possessing this material exposes Christians to grave dangers. The risk is not restricted only to converts even though it is more intense and prevalent as far as BMBs are concerned. For expat Christian's possession of Christian material, especially in foreign languages would be less risky,
Qatar	3.5	A Qatari family is not likely to be tolerant of their household workers keeping Christian materials in the home. it is also risky for converts to Christianity to privately own or keep Christian materials. A convert from Islam to Christianity would likely keep Christian materials hidden in fear of backlash from his or her family or community if they find out about his or her new religious beliefs.

Saudi Arabia	3.5	In Arabic or other languages that suspect distribution. This is possible for Western expats (only one copy) but not for migrant workers - notably those living in dormitory type accommodation with limited privacy - and especially not MBBs. For all types it is risky to keep several copies of Christian materials in all languages (as soon as the number is higher than for personal use). Migrants recognized as Christians should be able to have one copy in their own language on grounds of "my holy book for my personal use". For some, standing up for this right is easier said than done. It is not made easy, which is what would be the case with true religious freedom.
Sudan	3.25	Materials related to evangelism like Bibles, Christian books, media or Christian movies would be more risky. In general, all Christian material can provoke attacks against believers. It should be noted here that we are talking about a country led by a president who came to power with a promise to introduce a strict form of Islamic law in the country. In addition there are a number of paramilitary groups some supported by the ruling party and some others operating independently ready and willing to prosecute minority religious groups in the country.

Question 2.5 Have burials of Christians been hindered or coercively performed with non-Christian rites?

Country	Points	Comment
Afghanistan	4	For many Christians it will not be known that they converted from Islam. Therefore they will be buried as a Muslim. To suggest otherwise is to hand one's self and one's pocket of believers over to the authorities.
Bhutan	4	Christians are restricted from burying their dead in public cemeteries.
Libya	4	Impossible to have Christian rites at a funeral.
Maldives	4	Since Christianity is outlawed, no Christian burials are possible.
North Korea	4	That is unthinkable in NK. A person putting in such a request would be imprisoned, tortured and/or murdered.
Somalia	4	There is no way Christians can conduct a burial. In fact, every time they attend the burial of a Christian believer they have to adhere to Islamic tradition and mourn silently.
Malaysia	3.75	Since converts from Islam to Christianity are still legally Muslims, they automatically have to go through the Islamic rites of burial and there is no way for them to be buried using Christian rites. The same applies to their children.
Saudi Arabia	3.75	Christians with a Muslim background are often buried using Islamic rites in Muslim cemeteries or are denied official burial. Normally the dead bodies of expatriates are taken to their own country. There is no public Christian funeral service permitted in Saudi Arabia.
Algeria	3.5	This is a very significant issue. Cemeteries are for Muslims. Special provisions are made for criminals and dishonorable people. Converts are either buried as Muslims or in a manner reserved for the dishonorable in society.

Eritrea	3.5	Graves/burial places are a challenge leading to persecution. This is because each of the official churches were allocated burial plots by the government after registration. They generally allowed Evangelicals to be buried in these but they are now full. This means that Evangelical Christians are now forced to transport bodies to the villages where relatives protest against burials on their small pieces of land. Also, Evangelical Christians are not allowed to conduct burials according to their beliefs and must do so under an official church. Please note that the lack of burial space is affecting all categories of Christian communities, but with the added stress for Evangelicals who have Orthodox or non-believing relatives in the villages.
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Question 2.7: Have parents been hindered in raising their children according to their Christian beliefs?

Country	Points	Comment
North Korea	4	It is highly dangerous to share your faith with your children. See the article on GP: “Why there are not Christian children in North Korea”.
Somalia	4	Parents cannot raise children as Christians especially the very innocent ones as they will sing, recite a Bible verse or pray in the name of Jesus and will reveal the Christian identity of their parents and family.
Yemen	4	The extended families would prohibit the Christian families from raising their children in a Christian way. The only way this is possible is if the couple has a separate apartment where they can practice their faith in private. The family would take the children and the rest of the immediate family away from the convert.
Sudan	3.75	It is very tough to raise children according to Christian faith. The school system, the welfare system and society in general complicate many things.
Turkmenistan	3.75	There is no official religious education in public schools and private religious education is restricted by the government. The surrounding family will try to keep the children of converts within Islam and raise them accordingly.
Uzbekistan	3.75	In Uzbek families relatives (grandfather, grandmother for example) will make a child go to the mosque, despite the fact that the parents are Christians. But this goes a little bit further than just converts. Members of unrecognized churches will also face problems at this point.
Brunei	3.5	Christian parents find it increasingly difficult to raise their children according to their faith. All Christian girls are required to wear a hijab when attending local schools. Islamic authorities also offer a number of incentives, including monthly financial assistance, new homes, electric generators and water pumps to those who convert to Islam.
Iran	3.5	It is deliberate policy that most of the Armenian and Assyrian schools in Iran are managed by Muslims. An Islamic text book prepared by the government is imposed on ethnic Christians in Iran and must be taught in their schools. This is also applicable to convert communities for obvious reasons. Convert parents raising their children according to the Christian

		faith often fear that their children will be discriminated against in school and society if it is discovered that they are Christians. This leads to living a double life.
Iraq	3.5	Christians from historical churches in central and southern Iraq report that they are careful what they share about their faith with their children, as the children could speak about these things at school, especially during religion classes. If the teacher talks about Muhammed and the children reply with comments about Jesus, the family could be in trouble for possible blasphemy.
Kenya	3.5	Christians in Kenya with a Muslim background cannot raise their children as Christians as the children are expected and even forced to go to Quranic schools. Also, the parents must keep their faith secret and this does not give room for freedom to raise their children as believers. This affects even those in Nairobi and other predominantly Christian regions in Kenya.

Question: 3.4 Have Christians been hindered in sharing community resources because of their faith (e.g. clean drinking water)?

Country	Points	Comment
Yemen	4	In general Christians are hindered from receiving benefits from most local NGO's that are Muslim run or international NGO's whose employees are local Muslims, which is generally the case. If they were known to be Christians, they would not receive any aid.
Iraq	3.75	Occurs in areas held by Islamic militants but also in the area governed by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Infrastructure development and repairs are not being carried out in Christian areas (or only on a small scale), even in the KRG region.
Sudan	3.75	Both society and the government believe that all Sudanese are Muslim, Christians do not have any right in the country. The government uses all available opportunities to downgrade and punish Christians. Restricting them from using community resources is one of the ways.
India	3.5	When converts persist in their new faith and other Christians are suspected of outreach activities, they may be refused the use of community resources.
Nigeria	3.5	In IDP-camps discrimination in food distribution has been a huge problem. Christians are seen as second class citizens in their fatherland, therefore they are not entitled for social amenities (schools, clinics, portable drinking water, good roads etc.). This has become a permanent thing and it is fixed in the minds of the Christians that the resources of the country are meant for their persecutors. Muslim communities are supported while Christian communities are neglected.
Djibouti	3.25	In the context of Somali and Afar culture, everything is community resourced. Hence, when someone decides to abandon Islam, he will be punished by losing his/her share.

Indonesia	3.25	Some Islamic villages were given aid in the form of clean water and modest housing by the Islamic foundation. However, in order to get such aid, the Christian has to convert to Islam. And recently, there is a growing trend of Sharia housing complex. Developers build housing complexes for Muslim residents, and Christians and other non-Muslims are forbidden to rent/buy a house in that complex.
Myanmar	3.25	Christians have been sidelined in villages owing to their faith, at the behest of militant Buddhist monks. A convert was not allowed to have irrigation water for his rice farm. Community was pressuring him to deny his faith. Chin State, a Christian majority state, argues that the government neglects them because they are Christian. The roads to the towns are unusable for any vehicle during the rainy season. There is also an argument that in Kachin and Chin States, the Government builds NaTaLa schools (Buddhist schools) instead of regular state schools.
Mali	3	Christians in the north are not given the same treatment as Muslims. The resources are seen as Islamic and only Muslims should benefit.
Mauritania	3	Christians with a Muslim background report frequent exclusion from benefits given by the community. (There is an unclear line between extended family and the community.)

Question 3.10: Have Christians been discriminated against in public or private employment for faith-related reasons?

Country	Points	Comment
Laos	4	It is normal for Christians to be rejected for employment due to their faith. Preference is given to Communist cadres or Buddhists. Christians need to hide their faith if they want to apply for a government position. Christians who are employed are often overlooked for promotion.
Libya	4	Converts from Islam who are open about their faith will not get a job. Migrants are also under pressure not to share their faith and/or present themselves as Muslim.
Malaysia	4	Christians face discrimination when they apply for public and private employment. The Malay (and on paper at least, the indigenous community or 'Bumiputera' - 'sons of the soil') have a special quota and are usually given preference. The policies are not always blatantly discriminatory, but are very subtle and impact every area of life, including employment.
Turkey	4	There are no Christians in the judiciary, military or police and public administration (bureaucracy). Although there is no law against their employment and the Constitution protects equality in practice, there seem to be unwritten codes in this area.
Vietnam	4	Christians are not allowed to work with government agencies or agencies connected to the government.

Yemen	4	As Christianity is not accepted by society, Christians are all discriminated against in their employment prospects to the extent that they have to hide their Christian identity in the professional sphere.
Eritrea	3.75	Christians, if discovered, are hounded out of office for example (1) in July 2017, it was reported that "new staff members assigned to Addi Hallo (temporary President's office) were interrogated about their religion and those who were Christians were detained, their hair was shaved and they were sent to Metkel Abet Military Camp Prison. (2) Also when arrested for being in cell group meetings, the majority of employed Christians automatically lost their jobs.
Pakistan	3.75	Minorities are facing discrimination in all walks of life. They see no future for themselves and for their future generations and are now forced to flee the country. Recently, the Greater Hyderabad municipal corporation advertised vacancies for sanitary workers in which applications were invited only from non-Muslims and a further condition wa. added in the application form, that they must take the religious oath on their religious holy book - Geeta or Bible – that they will never do anything else but work as a sanitary worker and will never refuse to carry out the work.
Saudi Arabia	3.75	All non-Muslims have lesser rights than Muslims. Migrant workers are discriminated against in several levels of society (court, job, etc.), and this especially affects converts among the migrant workers, if their faith is known.
Bhutan	3.5	Although there are Christians working in various government run agencies/offices, Buddhism is integral to daily life and government operations. Christians are limited in their growth and opportunities at work. Christians would be the second choice in an application, simply because of their faith.

Question 4.5 Have Christians been discriminated against when engaging with the authorities (local administration, government, army, etc.) for faith-related reasons?

Country	Points	Comment
Egypt	4	Such discriminating practices are a part of everyday life experience. Christians in Egypt have faced discriminatory treatment when contacting the authorities. Government paper work for any church related issue is deliberately hindered and prolonged for months and even years.
Libya	4	Reports of violence against Christians by armed militias of all color were widespread. These armed groups are the only "authority" left in the country. This is true for all categories of Christian communities left in Libya.

Malaysia	4	Religion has become a defining factor in life in Malaysia. Discrimination against Christians takes place at all levels of society, including local administration and government.
Myanmar	4	Happens frequently at the local level; very strongly in the Chin and Kachin areas. Christians are treated like second class citizens.
North Korea	4	Christianity is regarded as a heinous crime.
Pakistan	4	There is no equality. Minorities are facing discrimination in all walks of life and even their worship places, properties and honor is not safe. While constitutionally Christians have rights, the pressure groups within instruments of government etc. are extremely strong in terms of defining roles for Christians and forming discriminatory patterns and trends of persecution in the work place. Christians see no future for themselves and for their future generations and are now forced to flee the country.
Turkmenistan	4	Christians will never receive a fair treatment from the government.
Iran	3.75	Discrimination takes many different forms. Although the historical Christians do have representatives in different governing bodies, they cannot take high offices or take part in policymaking that has a meaningful impact on laws, policies and procedures in the country.
Nepal	3.75	In most cases in rural areas, the local police administration is influenced by local religious groups. Thus, incidents related to persecution are not followed up or are ignored. Unless pressure from the central administration arises, they remain inactive.
Sudan	3.5	"We are second class citizens", said a church leader in Khartoum in reference to their experience every time they have cases at courts. "We are not equally treated with Muslims", he added. There is always discrimination of all kinds against non-Muslim people. The discriminatory attitudes of local officials are the main problem. Where the officers belong to the security, police or fire services then very serious consequences ensue. This has been an issue all over the country. (However, there are also occasions when Christians do get some sort of fair treatment.)

Question 4.10: Has media reporting been incorrect or biased against Christians?

Country	Points	Comment
Cuba	4	The State has absolute control over the press, in such a way that news items disseminated about Christians are always in favor of the regime and do not report the facts of persecution or religious discrimination against the Christians.
Eritrea	4	The state-owned media operates as one wing of the executive, and the level of censorship even against the state-owned media is unbelievable. As a 'mouthpiece' of the state, the reporting by the state media against minority religious groups is biased and often encourages local communities to actively oppose minority religious groups.

India	4	Media reports, especially in the local languages, are very biased in general and are positively hostile in rural areas. They entirely ignore the issues of Christians generally and allow instead space for hate propaganda by militant Hindus.
Iran	4	The only views expressed through state media are government or state affirming messages by representatives of historical (ethnic) communities (Assyrian and Armenian). These representatives are even sent to foreign countries where they emphasize that Christians have freedom of religion in Iran.
Maldives	4	Not just in the media but from the education system itself, it has already been inculcated in the minds of the children that Christians and Jews are enemies. This results in xenophobia and anti-semitism. Early in 2017, a book from an international school was recalled due to a page with pictures of churches and Roman gods. The publisher has been accused of proselytizing.
Vietnam	4	Christian communities which have clashed with the authorities, for example because they advocated for social justice or on environmental issues, have been smeared in the local media and accused of disruptive and anti-government activities.
Libya	3.75	The media in Islamist-held territories is highly biased against all non-radical Islamic individuals and groups. Media from other areas in Libya are controlled by the local governments and groups and are generally biased in their reporting.
Mauritania	3.5	Periodically, there are attacks from the press, particularly against expatriate Christians, making all kinds of wild, unsubstantiated claims. The Mauritanian press is fertile ground for gossip, innuendo and outright fabrication.
Nigeria	3.5	Privately owned media houses - especially the ones owned by Muslims and other foreign media houses like BBC, VOA, RFI (reporting in Hausa local language that has wider coverage most of the times) - are biased against Christians in their reportage.
Turkey	3.5	The pro-government media has published extensive false claims in a steady slander campaign against arrested Pastor Andrew Brunson. Still after a year's imprisonment the authorities have not released any legal indictment or evidence to back up these alleged charges against him.

Question 4.14: Have those who caused harm to Christians deliberately been left unpunished?

Country	Points	Comment
Eritrea	4	This is the norm especially for State interrogators and prison officials. Even when Christians die in prison, no action is taken against the prison officers responsible.

Iran	4	Secret police officers and authorities are responsible for persecuting Christians (including recognized Christians) and harassing them and are being left unpunished. Based on Sharia law which is being used in Iran, even if a Muslim Iranian would harm a convert to Christianity for apostasy, most of the time the Muslim person will be left unpunished deliberately. Apostasy remains “uncodified” in the Iranian constitution. Therefore, people can abuse this part of Sharia law. Police, intelligence ministry officers, interrogators, judges, prison authorities, and media personnel record and broadcast false confessions. They are all deliberately left unpunished and are even protected by the government.
Laos	4	Christians, rather than the persecuting officials, are often blamed for disturbing the peace. The government has sometimes admitted that local officials are part of the problem but has been unwilling to take action against officials who have violated laws and regulations on religious freedom.
Myanmar	4	It is the State apparatus and militant Buddhist groups empowered by State policies, who are responsible for the persecution of Christians. Persecutors are left unpunished. The best that a Christian can get is a settlement between parties.
Somalia	4	In the country, those who attacked Christians are actually considered heroes by the radicals. A country expert stated: "No one will be punished for persecuting Christians."
Yemen	4	People that cause physical harm or kill Christians are deliberately left unpunished. Within family, wider family or tribe, the perpetrators then have immunity from state action - either by official policy or through the discriminatory practices of local officials.
Mali	3.75	For all the atrocities and crimes committed against Christians, many Islamic militants have remained unpunished. If anything, the Malian government always goes into peace negotiations with the rebels.
Nigeria	3.75	Most of the violent conflict perpetrated against Christians has been left uninvestigated, and when investigated, perpetrators are left unpunished. This has increased the level of impunity and recklessness in crimes against Christians.
Saudi Arabia	3.75	In radical Islam it is common to think that men can have sex freely with the ones his "right hand possesses" - this is understood to be his wives and his captives and slaves. In Saudi Arabia it is also common to treat house servants as slaves and possession and also as sex slaves. Many Christian maids and nannies are suffering from this but it is part of the Saudi culture and the perpetrators are left unpunished.
Sri Lanka	3.75	Many incidents of anti-Christian violence have been incited by Buddhist monks, and in some areas the monks have themselves beaten up pastors. Most attacks against Christians go unpunished. Police are often reluctant to act against suspects infringing on the rights of Christians. They also accuse Christians of disturbing the peace of the community. This reluctance appears to be due to influence and pressure exerted by local Buddhist monks, government officials and politicians.

Question 5.2: Has it been difficult to get registration or legal status for churches at any level of government?

Country	Points	Comment
Afghanistan	4	There are no officially recognized Christians. With no formal need for churches, so there is no registration process.
Bhutan	4	There are no registered Christian groups in the country.
Laos	4	Any new construction of churches needs to be approved by the prime minister, upon the recommendation of the provincial governor. This is besides the regular submitting of reports and waiting for approval from the district supervisor (and possibly even from the Ministry of Interior.) If a pastor would follow this, it would be hard for him to have enough time to do his ministry.
Morocco	4	Registration has been impossible for Moroccan Christians. It is difficult for expatriate Christians too.
Nepal	4	There is no legal recognition of churches. Church property is registered in the name of persons. There is no provision for registering churches.
North Korea	4	The only four churches which exist are owned and operated by the state for propaganda purposes.
Saudi Arabia	4	There is no such thing as church registration in Saudi Arabia. It is impossible for anyone. There is no religious freedom at all. So there is no question of getting legal status for worship places at the level of government. No churches have been built in Saudi Arabia.
Sudan	4	It is difficult to register anything related to churches. The Minister of Religion has been quoted as saying that they will not allow any new churches to be built.
Tajikistan	4	The registration procedure has become so difficult that for the last decade or longer no congregations have been registered.
Tunisia	4	Impossible.

Question 5.6: Has work among youth in particular been restricted?

Country	Points	Comment
Afghanistan	4	One of the greatest challenges to the Afghan Church is the area of youth ministry. This is due to the three main recruiters of youth who are active in Afghanistan: 1. The Taliban, 2. Islamic State group (IS), and 3. Drug lords. In such a scenario, the Christians face immense hurdles in sharing Christ with young people who are in the grip and control of the groups to whom they offer their allegiance. The local mosque will use youth to keep an eye on dangerous religious sects like Christians who are associated with the West and are seen as agents of foreign intelligence and influence.
Comoros	4	Working with any locals is very tough for Christians - and for youth it is even tougher.

Eritrea	4	Youth activities, particularly Christian youth activities, must be done in secret. In attempts to indoctrinate the young, all must go through military service in order to graduate from high school. Christian activities in the military camps are illegal and those discovered are punished and detained without trial.
Kuwait	4	Including non-Christians as participants in work among youth is problematic and makes this one of the toughest challenges for Christians in the country. This seriously affects the expatriate community, and even more the converts.
Somalia	4	The youth are the potential recruits for al-Shabaab. The Islamic religious education in the madrassas is compulsory for all children and youth. Even for schools in Mogadishu, they cannot operate without compulsory community Islamic education. This is how the youth are shielded from any anti-Islamic influence.
Turkmenistan	4	Youth work is prohibited; youth camps have been raided.
Uzbekistan	4	All youth work, Sunday schools and youth summer camps are prohibited by law.
Mexico	3.75	Drug cartels and other criminal groups are very jealous about the youth that collaborate with them. It is very dangerous for churches to do youth work when this leads to criminal groups having reduced influence over the youths that collaborate with them or are their clients. The moral influence of church leaders is the main challenge here.
China	3.5	Youth are discouraged from believing in religion although many registered and unregistered churches have youth programs. However, there are permanent restrictions on religious activities involving under-18s, including those run by foreign groups. Some summer camps run by unregistered groups have been shut down recently. Educational institutions have been warned by the authorities not to allow religious activities on campus. This Christmas (2017), universities made headlines by not allowing Christmas celebrations, seeking instead to strengthen socialist self-consciousness.
India	3.5	Youth organizations like Campus Crusade and Youth for Christ have found it increasingly difficult to approach campuses. They are chased away and special vigilance is kept against such groups. The Hindu groups however enjoy the patronage of the institutions.

3.7 Q&A notes

**Notes on Skype-session with WWR/Development staff
on 19 December 2017 at 09:00hrs Dutch time**

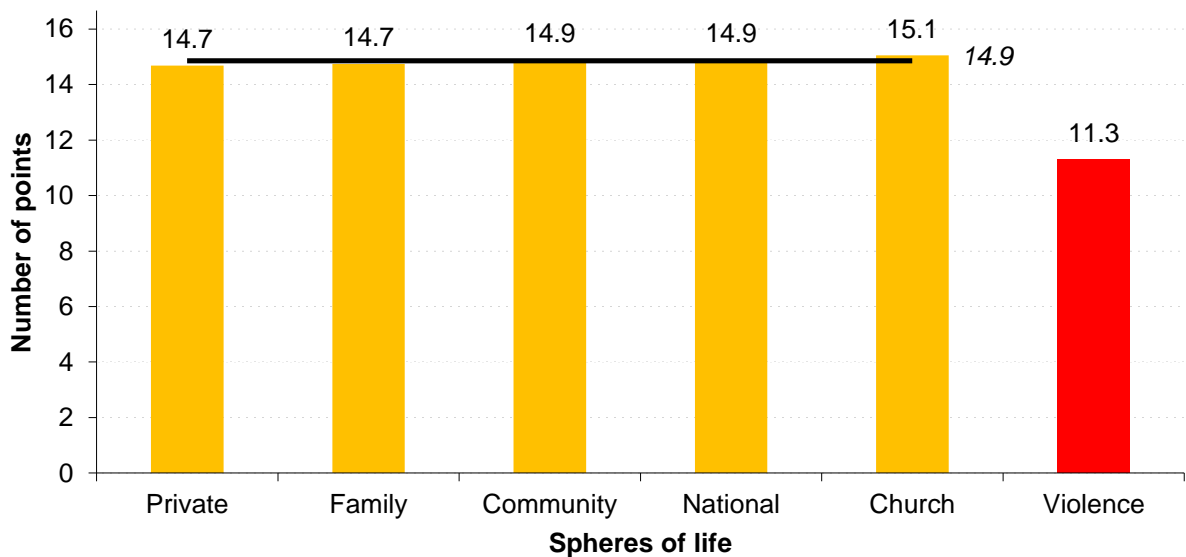
1. Why the difference between Iraq and Syria – why has Iraq not gone down the list like Syria? Is Syria a good news story or should we say we don't know what is happening in areas that are still dominated by Islamic militants?

WWR answer:

Although the pressure on Christians is similarly high for both countries, Iraq did not go down the list due to the very high level of violence (11.3) against Christians. For Syria there were much fewer verified reports of violence against Christians and scored only 3.7.

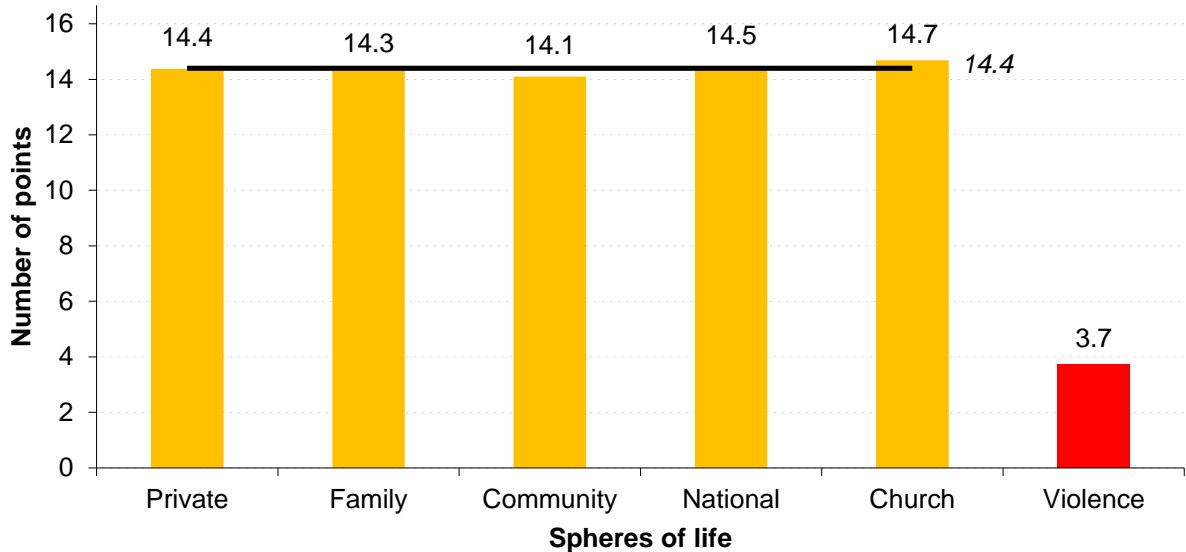
From the Long Persecution Dynamics Iraq (max. score for each block = 16.667):

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Iraq



From the Long Persecution Dynamics Syria (max. score for each block = 16.667):

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Syria



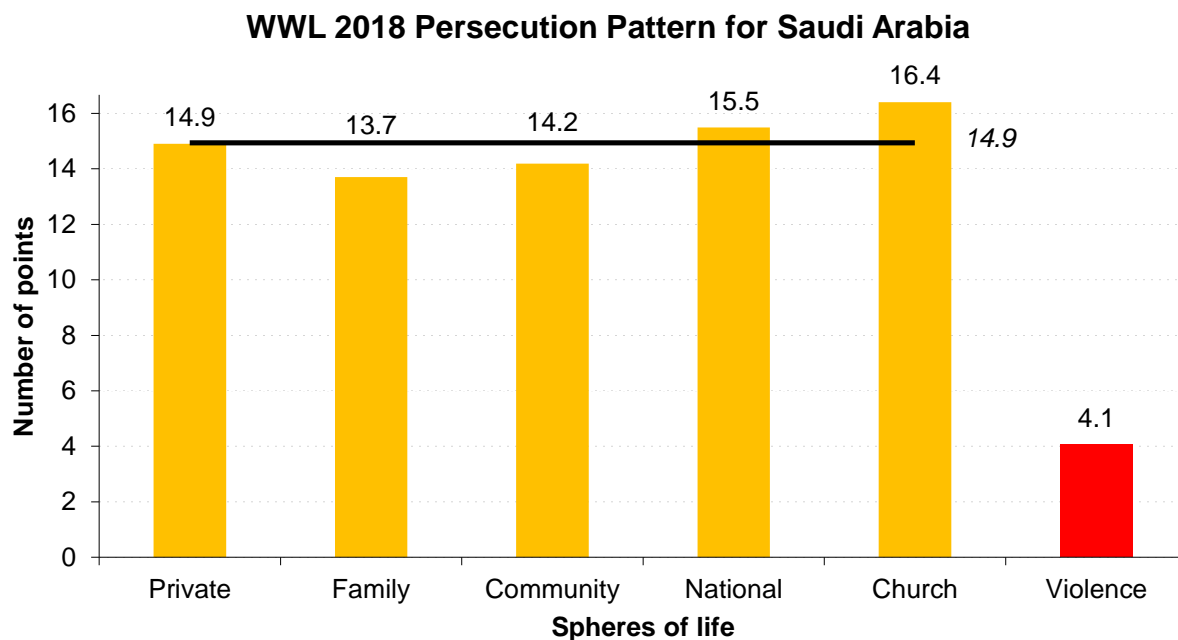
Syria going down the list is not really a good news story, since it is difficult to get reports verified in a war-torn country and there may have been more violent incidents where there are pockets of Islamic militants (although most Christians would have fled these areas). But one difference to Iraq is that Syrian Christians are hopeful for the future and feel supported by Assad's government. Iraqi Christians generally do not trust the Baghdad government to protect them.

- Why is Saudi Arabia so low when there are no churches allowed at all? Surely we underestimate the fate of Saudi Christians that convert? We understand that there are lots of expat Christians that are not persecuted, but does this not mean the risk for nationals is understated in the WWL score? Is there a weighting for national believers compared to guest workers?

WWR answers:

A score of 79 points is far from low! The most important reason why Saudi Arabia is not higher, is that the score for violence only reached 4.1 points. Pressure is at an extreme level in all *Spheres of life* except in the *Family sphere*. Yes, for converts from Islam the score is maximum, but it is not maximum for expatriate Christians who make up the majority of Christians in the country. In 2018 an in-depth study of Gulf Christians (with a particular focus on the situation for Asian Christian migrants) is planned.

From the Long Persecution Dynamics Saudi Arabia (max. score for each block = 16.667):



3. Looking at countries like Iran, Iraq and Yemen, when the score is unchanged compared to last year. Is there any change in persecution? Why does the score stay the same?

WWR answer:

Iran:

The situation for Christians remained largely the same as in WWL 2017. The same categories of Christianity (historic, converts and non-traditional) experienced the same kind of persecution as last year. (Expatriate Christians, especially Western, have more freedom.) In the WWL 2018 reporting period, we have seen extreme prison sentences being handed out, but the length of the sentences does not influence the score. Although we received less reports of sexual harassment within prisons, this did not change the score significantly either.

Iraq and Yemen:

Yes, the final scores are the same (rounded to one decimal place) as in WWL 2017. But if you look at the persecution patterns in the Long Persecution Dynamics for WWL 2017 and WWL 2018 you will see differences in the levels of pressure in the 5 *spheres of life* and violence.

For Yemen: In WWL 2018, pressure increased and violence decreased, resulting in zero change to the final score. The increased levels of pressure are explained by the war and humanitarian crisis, in which Christians are additionally vulnerable.

For Iraq: The situation is the other way round compared to Yemen: Whereas pressure decreased somewhat, the score for violence increased, resulting again in zero change to the final score. The decrease in pressure is connected to the shrinking of IS-held areas. On the other hand, there were a slightly higher number of reported violent acts against Christians which happened both outside and inside IS-held areas, the majority being inside.

4. Kuwait has a 4 point change yet is marked as largely unchanged. Please explain. Bahrain and UAE have a 3 point change yet are marked as largely unchanged – please explain.

WWR answer:

A scoring refinement in registering the situation of converts from Islam to Christianity in the Gulf countries contributed to the increase in points. This refinement was necessary to align the scoring better across all Gulf countries. Please check the Long Persecution Dynamics for each country to see what rises in pressure or violence were also recorded.

5. Why is Tunisia (62points/Rank30) - a democracy - much higher than Morocco (at 51 points/Rank 55). I just got a call from a Moroccan who was irate that his country is not in the WWL!

WWR answer:

It is true that Tunisia is a democracy and has been making a conscious effort to project an image of a more tolerant and free society and this effort is backed by action on the part of the government. However, the greater freedom Tunisians are enjoying as a democracy has also opened up opportunities for radical Islamic groups to propagate their message and even recruit members. For instance, as has been widely reported, Tunisia has one of the highest IS returnees from Syria.

Commenting on this contradiction, one observer has written the [following](#): “Unfortunately, Tunisia’s newfound enthusiasm for democracy is not shared by all. Roughly 6,000 Tunisians have left home to join the ranks of ISIS, the highest per capita rate in the world. The ISIS admirers who stayed behind are just as worrying; it was a Tunisian inspired by ISIS social media who was responsible for the 2015 beach shooting that left 38 dead (most of whom were foreign tourists), the deadliest terrorist attack in the history of modern Tunisia. Democratic growing pains, ongoing economic struggles, and the return of defeated jihadists will continue to give ISIS openings into the country”.

In other words, in the short term, Tunisia's more open and democratic system gives an opportunity for the rise of the influence of Islamic militants compared with Morocco which is not democratic but which has a government that also tries to project an image of a religiously tolerant and more open society. The score for violence in Tunisia is also considerably higher, contributing to the gap in their scores and also indicating the influence of Islamic militants in Tunisian society as compared with Morocco.

6. How could Nepal rise so quick and high, when it has not been on the World Watch List before, and now is No. 25 (64 points). Has the persecution risen so dramatically in one year, or is the rise because of other reasons? What number of points did Nepal score in WWL 2017?

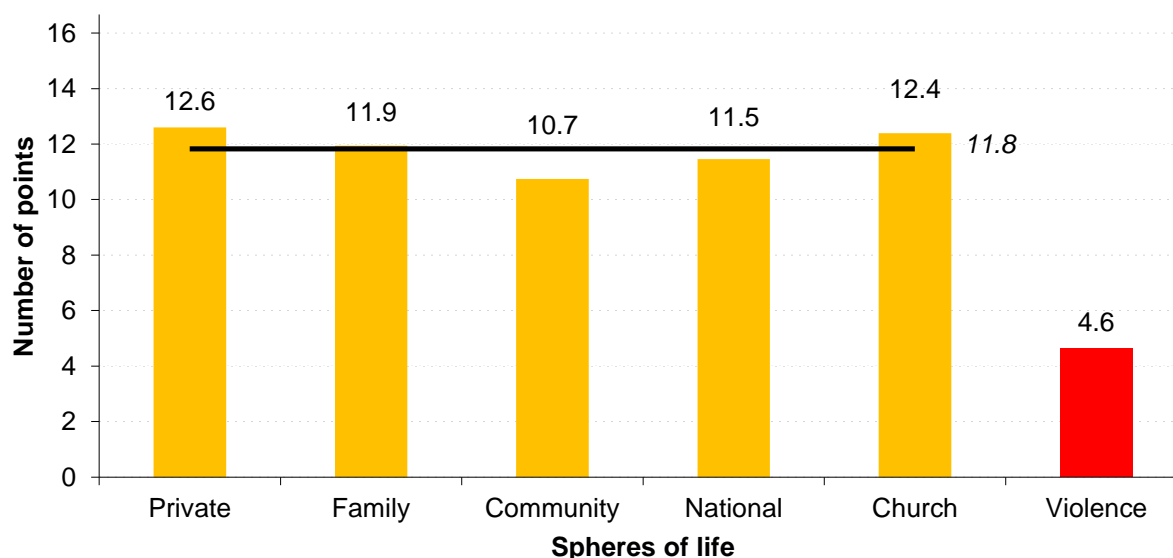
WWR answer:

The rise was not as surprising as it may seem. Nepal scored 53 in WWL 2017 analysis but did not make it into the top 50. That was already a rise compared to WWL 2016 and earlier scores. (In retrospect Rolf says the country may have deserved a few points more in WWL 2017 already.)

Nepal rose 11 points to a score of 64 due to the rise in radical Hindu activity against Christians. Apart from India, Nepal is the only other country in the world with a Hindu majority. Until 2008 it was a Hindu kingdom, since then it became a secular country. The political situation is unclear in Nepal, but two radical Hindu parties are active and (as in India) there are other Hindu organizations operating as well. These have stepped up pressure on non-Hindus causing such an increase of points.

From the Long Persecution Dynamics for Nepal (max. score for each block = 16.667):

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Nepal



The Persecution pattern for Nepal shows:

- The average pressure on Christians in Nepal was 11.8, rising from 9.9 in WWL 2017 which points to a deterioration in the situation for Christians.
- Pressure is highest in the *Private sphere of life* (especially for converts) with 12.6 points and in the *Church sphere* with 12.4 points. *Religious nationalism* has made life for Christians with a Hindu background more difficult and new legislation has imposed more restrictions on church life.
- The score for violence rose from 3.1 in WWL 2017 to 4.6 points.

How is the link between India and Nepal? Nepal is walking a tightrope between its two powerful neighbors: India and China. It is very difficult for the poor country that Nepal is to follow an independent course. However, many people in India consider Nepal to be just another one of their states – a sort of colony. There is little doubt that support from India is stimulating Hindu radicals in Nepal. As a result of all this, the situation in Nepal is deteriorating for non-Hindus, but it is not as bad as in India itself yet. Nepal is following in India's footsteps.

On 8 August 2017 the Nepalese parliament passed anti-conversion legislation which was signed into law by the President on 16 October 2017. Another sign of a deteriorating situation for Christians.

On the other hand, the December 2017 parliamentary elections were won by the Maoist party and the Communist Party. It therefore looks like Nepal may well turn to China in the coming years. For Christians this may mean an improvement – but it really is a choice between two bad options – the China model or the India/Modi model.

7. Are we saying that NK is no. 1 for the 17th year in a row, or should we not mention that?

WWR answer:

Yes, you can mention that. An alternative is to communicate that **NK is No.1 since WWL 2002.**

8. How far back in time can we compare the statistics on the World Watch List? (If we, for example, want to follow a specific country and see how the situation has change over the years.)

WWR answer:

The last couple of years WWR has published a large Excel Overview of WWL 1993 to date. However, due to major scoring changes and refinements to the WWL methodology over the years,

extreme caution is necessary. Direct comparisons will only give a distorted picture. Please let WWR check any comparisons made prior to publication.

Comparing statistics for groups of countries is less problematic than comparing them for individual countries. Again, let WWR know your needs, and we can help you with it.

9. In comparing the three hotspots of persecution (ME, Africa and Asia) – is there still a net increase in persecution in Asia compared to the others? Can we say that persecution in Asia is still growing?

WWR answer:

Asia is very diverse. There are various trends as written about in the WWL 2018 Trends Article. In some countries there is increasing RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM with violent waves of radical Buddhist and Hindu Islamic hostilities against Christians. In some countries there is increasing IDEOLOGICAL NATIONALISM with Communist governments promoting their Communist roots more aggressively. In Central Asia PRAGMATIC NATIONALISM is on the increase – particularly in Tajikistan and Kazakhstan – where governments use national culture/pride as a vehicle for staying in power.

In WWL terminology: Islamic hostilities against Christians in the context of a nationalistic atmosphere, are sometimes seen as a blend of two persecution engines: *Islamic oppression* and *Religious nationalism*, but more often simply classified as *Islamic oppression*.

In Africa the trends are less clear. Some countries are increasing in points, others not.

In the Middle East, IS-held areas are shrinking, meaning less pressure on Christians (although repercussions are expected later since militants are disappearing into the local population).

10. How can we communicate a global comparison of increase in persecution compared to last year as the way the points are calculated has changed. What do we say?

WWR answer:

The increase in scores is in part content-related and in part due to refinements made in the WWL analysis. The refinements are made only to ensure a better quality of research and analysis.

These are the scoring refinements that were made: (1) Use of N/A in the questionnaire instead of scoring 0 or 4 points; (2) adaptation of second answer element using ‘% of general population living in the area affected by persecution, of the total population’ instead of ‘% of area affected by

persecution, of the total territory'; (3) better uniformity among the persecution analysts about how to deal with MBBs and MBB communities in all questions but especially in block 5 Church life.

11. Can we have a comparative table of the evolution of Smash and Squeeze over the last few years for each country?

WWR answer:

This is possible but it is quite a lot of work – because of the changes in methodology discussed above - and cannot currently be a priority. If there is capacity available, a document will be uploaded at the end of the first week of January 2018. However, it is more likely that this will need to be postponed until WWL 2019.

12. How can we explain that the Congo and Cameroon are not in the WWL when there are so many people killed for their faith? It is difficult for us to explain.

WWR answer:

Both DRC and Cameroon registered high scores for violence - especially for the killing of Christians. In fact DRC scored 15 out of 16.7 points for violence. However, in both countries, since there is a Christian majority in most parts of the country, the score for pressure is lower compared to many other countries. That is why these countries did not make it to the WWL Top 50. However, they will appear within the Top 75. Country profile documents will be supplied for Top 75 countries in February 2018.

13. Can WWR please not upload locked excel files so we can modify them easily?

WWR answer:

WWR feels safer uploading locked Excel files to GP. However, Dev. staff can always contact the WWR communicator to receive the password for unlocking a downloaded copy.

14. How many points did Azerbaijan score in WWL 2017.

WWR answer:

As stated in both the Long country persecution dynamics and Short and Simple Persecution profile: 52 points. This rose to 57 in WWL 2018. Most of this rise in points is due to a refinement in WWL analysis. Expatriate Christians in Azerbaijan are not involuntarily isolated from contact with other

Christians. They have therefore not been counted as a separate category. This means the pressure on Christians is being measured on 3 categories of Christian communities instead of four. This causes a rise in total. Dev. Offices can expect enquiries from Azerbaijani embassy staff etc. concerning this!

15. Where is the evenness of approach? In Saudi Arabia expatriates are counted in WWL analysis as a separate category, but in Central Asia not. What is the difference?

WWR answer:

Where expatriates are not isolated and can visit other churches, they are not counted as a separate category. Where they are INVOLUNTARILY ISOLATED and are restricted from meeting with other categories of Christian communities, they will be counted as a separate category.

16. What is the overall situation in Latin America? Is persecution rising?

WWR answer:

A glance at [Recent Country Developments](#)¹⁹ on the Open Doors Analytical website shows that *Organized Corruption and crime* and *Secular intolerance* are widespread throughout Latin America. Beside Mexico and Colombia (in Top 50), Cuba (rank 56) and Venezuela will both be within the WWL 2018 Top 75. Another persecution engine that is also widespread in Latin America is *Ethnic antagonism*.

WWR/2017-12-22 [Return to Contents \(page 1\)](#)

¹⁹ Password: freedom

4. Background documents

4.1 WWL methodology – SHORT VERSION

WWL 2018 Methodology – Short version with Scoring Example

November 2017 Revised: 2018-01-04

This document is intended for quick reference purposes. It provides level 3 background information for a basic understanding of the World Watch List (WWL) scoring system and of the terminology used in the Country persecution dynamics. For further details please consult the long version of the updated WWL 2018 Methodology.

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1. Quick overview of changes made in comparison to WWL 2017

Two types of changes have been made concerning i) the content of the WWL Methodology, and ii) the processing of WWL data.

- i) Changes made in the content of the methodology:
 - a) There has been an alteration in the second of the four elements of the scoring grid. Instead of calculating the “proportion of inhabited territory affected by persecution”, it is now possible for the analysts to calculate the “proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution”. For further explanation, please see the adapted text in the long version of the WWL Methodology.
 - b) The list of Drivers of persecution²⁰ has been expanded to a total of twelve by splitting the category “fanatical movements” into two: “violent religious groups” and “Ideological pressure groups”. One further change is that “multilateral organizations (e.g. UN)” has been expanded to “Multilateral organizations (e.g. UN) and embassies”.
- ii) Changes made in the processing of WWL data:

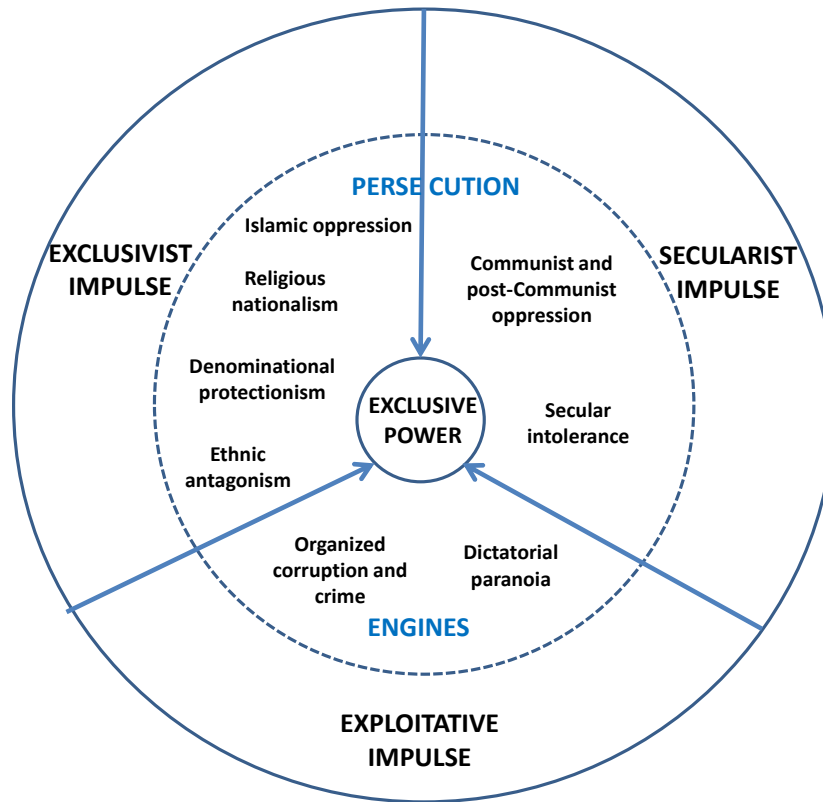
This is now carried out mainly online. Automating and streamlining the WWL process makes the interaction with Field researchers etc. more efficient, and it also helps to control and even improve the quality of the results.

2. WWL background philosophy

Persecution situations are usually highly complex and it is not always clear if and to what extent pressure felt by Christians or even violence against them is directly related to their Christian faith. Basically, persecution is related to religions, ideologies or corrupted mind-sets, i.e. elementary human impulses seeking exclusive power in society. The WWL methodology considers these impulses to be the power sources behind eight different “persecution engines” (see Appendix 4).

²⁰ See Appendix 5

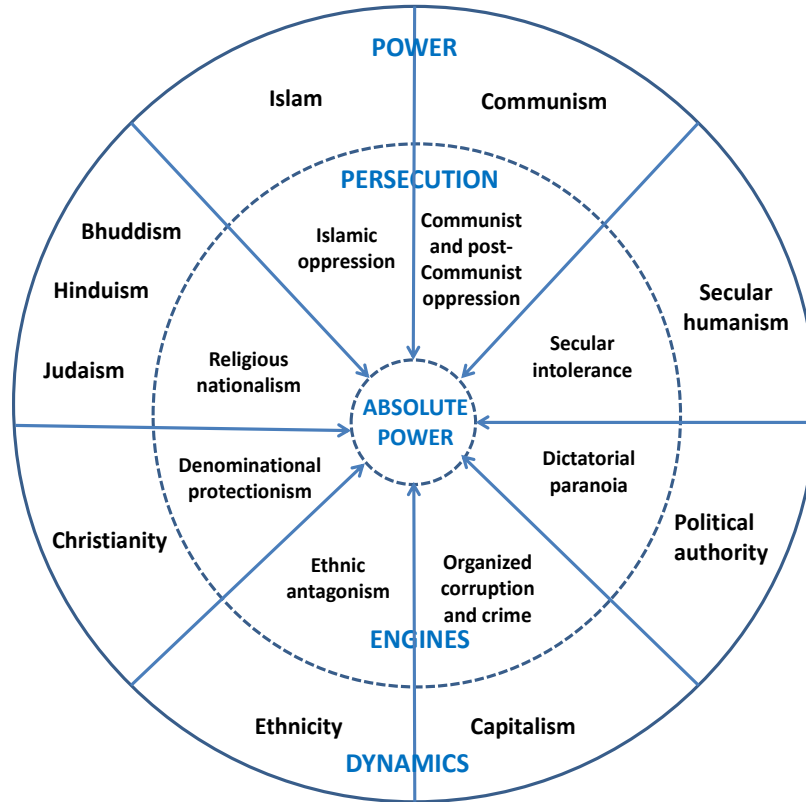
Diagram 1: Persecution engines acting as vehicles for the different elementary human impulses seeking exclusive, absolute power.



World Watch Research uses the term “Persecution engine” to describe a distinct situation which is causing Christians to be persecuted either violently or non-violently. This situation of persecution can be considered as the consequence of a societal “power dynamic”. A power dynamic normally represents a world view that has a claim of superiority over other world views. That is not a problem in itself, as long as this power dynamic is coupled with a true sense of pluralism. When this is not the case, the drivers of the power dynamic will strive for absolute submission of society to their world view. The drivers of the power dynamic are often smaller (radical) groups within the broader group of adherents of that worldview, who are not necessarily representative of that broader group, but who somehow get sufficient space to maneuver towards their aim. Examples of power dynamics are secular humanism, Islam and Communism.

In total WWR has defined 8 persecution engines corresponding to their related background power dynamics, as illustrated in the diagram below. These persecution engines each display their own brand of hostility towards Christians and are central both for scoring the WWL questionnaires and for the analysis of the persecution of Christians and their communities.

Diagram 2: Eight Persecution engines and their corresponding societal Power dynamics



3. Definition of persecution

There is no international, legal definition of persecution. Situations can be defined as persecution where persons experience the denial of the rights listed in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, the WWL methodology has opted for a theological rather than a sociological definition: Thus persecution is understood to be “any hostility experienced as a result of one’s identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians.” The definition of “Christian” and the “categories of Christianity” used by World Watch Research can be found in Appendix 2.

4. How the WWL is compiled

Open Doors has been monitoring the worldwide persecution of Christians since the 1970s. The WWL methodology gradually evolved during the 1980s and 1990s and was comprehensively revised in 2012 by Open Doors’ research unit, World Watch Research (WWR), in order to provide greater credibility, transparency, objectivity and academic quality. Further refinements are regularly made.

The WWL methodology distinguishes two main expressions of persecution: *squeeze* (the pressure Christians experience in all areas of life) and *smash* (plain violence). While *smash* can be measured and tracked through the reporting of concrete incidents, *squeeze* is documented by discerning how Christian life and witness is placed under pressure in 5 specific spheres of life (see Appendix 3). After a series of initial research enquiries, a questionnaire consisting of 84 questions (covering the reporting period 1 November – 31 October) is filled out by Open Doors’ field staff and networks in countries experiencing persecution. An example from Block 1 of the questionnaire can be viewed below.

Diagram 3: Extract from Block 1 of the questionnaire used for WWL 2018

	Question	Choice	Answer elements	Answer element value	Score	Comments			
2									
3									
4	11 Has conversion been opposed, forbidden, or punishable, including conversion from one type of Christianity to another?	<input type="text"/>							
5									
6									
7									
8									
9					Total	0.000			
10									
11									
12									
13	12 Has it been risky for Christians to conduct acts of Christian worship by themselves (e.g. prayer, Bible reading, etc.)?	<input type="text"/>							
14									
15									
16									
17									
18					Total	0.000			
19									
20									
21									
22									
23	13 Has it been dangerous to privately own or keep Christian materials?	<input type="text"/>							
24									
25									
26									
27									
28					Total	0.000			
29									
30									
31									
32									
33									
		Intro(a)	Intro(b)	Intro(c)	Intro(d)	1.Private	2.Family	3.Community	4.National

The completed questionnaires are cross-checked by input from external experts. Scores are calculated for each of the spheres of life with variables being taken into account.²¹ For instance, persecution can be worse for some categories of Christians than others or much worse in some parts of a country than in others. Also, the intensity and frequency of persecution is taken into consideration. Different persecution

²¹ See Appendix 1 for a detailed scoring example. The Long WWL methodology offers further discussion on these points.

engines (see Appendix 4), persecution drivers (see Appendix 5) and a distinct Persecution pattern (see Appendix 6) become visible for analysis. An audit is made by [IIRF](#)²² to confirm that all results have been calculated according to the WWL Methodology.

A final score is calculated for each country which is then used to determine the order of countries from position 1 to 50 on Open Doors’ annual World Watch List. The WWL scores make possible a detailed comparison of Christian life in the countries listed. Below is an example of the final scores for the highest ranking countries on the WWL 2017. (Please note that for WWL 2018 the block scores will only be presented to one decimal place to avoid giving any false impression of accuracy.)

*Diagram 4: Extract from the WWL 2017 Table and Scores
(The highest possible score in each Block is 16.667)*

WWL 2017 RANK	COUNTRY	1. Private	2. Family	3. Community	4. National	5. Church	6. Violence	WWL 2017 TOTAL SCORES
1	North Korea	16.667	15.385	16.427	16.667	16.667	9.815	92
2	Somalia	16.667	15.385	15.385	16.667	16.667	10.185	91
3	Afghanistan	16.667	16.427	15.145	15.625	14.844	10.556	89
4	Pakistan	14.792	14.023	14.183	14.974	13.125	16.667	88
5	Sudan	13.854	14.423	14.583	15.625	15.469	13.334	87

The most important reason for ranking countries is to be able to present a complex reality to the broader public. However, the WWL rankings must always be viewed in conjunction with the corresponding [country Persecution Dynamics](#)²³ which explain the particularities of the persecution situation.

²² International Institute for Religious Freedom, <http://www.iirf.eu/>.

²³ For WWL 2017 Long versions of Country persecution dynamics, see: <http://theanalytical.org/world-watch-list-2017/> (password: freedom). The Country Persecution Dynamics are one of four documents making up a WWL Country Profile. The other three parts for WWL 2018 are: Church History and Facts, Keys to Understanding and Short and Simple Persecution Profile.

Appendix 1:

WWL Scoring example

The following shows how the country scores and rankings are calculated for the annual Open Doors World Watch List

1. Background details required prior to scoring

For each country, the Persecution engines, Drivers of persecution and Christian communities affected are first identified.

2. Six blocks of questions for each country are answered and scored

The WWR research analyst uses the information gathered from all the country staff, contacts and external experts who have filled out a WWL-Questionnaire, to now answer and score the six blocks of questions for each country. Altogether there are 84 questions to answer and score. (Further questions are asked for gathering background information in Block 7, but these are not included in the scoring process.)

Block 1: Private Life (10 questions)

Block 2: Family Life (13 questions)

Block 3: Community Life (13 questions)

Block 4: National Life (16 questions)

Block 5: Church Life (20 questions)

Block 6: Physical Violence (12 questions)

3. An example showing the background considerations for answering and scoring ONE of the questions in Blocks 1-5

The score for each question can range between 0 and 16 points. For the purposes of example, we have chosen the third question in Block 1 (Private Life):

“1.3 Has it been dangerous to privately own or keep Christian materials?”

Please click on most appropriate answer

Yes No N/A Unknown

“No” = 0 points.

“Yes” = scoring is required taking 4 further elements into consideration. Each element can get a maximum of 4 points as shown in the following table:

	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
(1) Number of categories of Christianity affected	None	1 out of 4	2 out of 4	3 out of 4	4 out of 4
(2) Proportion of general population in territory affected	None	Above 0% – 25%	26% – 50%	51% - 75%	76% - 100%
(3) Intensity	None	Low	Medium	High	Very high
(4) Frequency	None	Sporadic	Quite frequent	Frequent	Permanent

In this imaginary WWL country, we shall say “Yes” - with the following scoring:

(1) Number of categories of Christian communities affected by persecution

In the imaginary WWL country, the danger to privately own or keep Christian materials mainly concerns three categories of Christian communities i.e. the historical Christian communities, the communities of converts to Christianity and the non-traditional Christian communities:

“3 out of 4 categories affected” = 3 points.

(2) Proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution

In the imaginary WWL country, the danger applies in the whole territory, so the proportion of the general population living in that territory is 100%:

“76-100% of population” = 4 points.

(3) Intensity = the degree of persecution (or level of pressure) caused by a driver of persecution.

1 point - low:	The issue in question can be dealt with or processed quite easily;
2 points - medium:	The issue in question can be dealt with or processed, but with more difficulty than if it were low;
3 points - high:	The issue in question can be dealt with or processed, but with difficulty;
4 points - very high:	The issue in question can only be dealt with or processed with very great difficulty.

The consequences of discovery in the imaginary WWL country are severe:

“high intensity” = 3 points.

(4) Frequency = the rate at which incidents of persecution happen.

1 point - sporadic:	The issue in question is true, but only every now and then;
---------------------	---

2 points - quite frequent:	The issue in question is less often not true than it is true, but is still more true than to say it is sporadically true;
3 points - frequent:	The issue in question is more often true than it is not true, but is not always true;
4 points - permanent:	The issue in question is always true or true with rare exceptions.

The danger is frequent though not permanent in the imaginary WWL country:

“frequent” = 3 points.

The total number of points for this question is therefore $3 + 4 + 3 + 3 = 13$ (out of a maximum of 16 points).

The average score for this question = $13/4 = 3.250$. (Fractions to 3 decimal places are required.)

4. An example showing the background considerations for obtaining the score for ONE whole block

The process illustrated above for 1.3 is carried out for all questions of the block, and each time the points and average score per question are listed. The table below shows the imaginary scores for our chosen WWL country.

Questions	Points	Average score per question	Block score (max. points 16.667)
1.1	13	3.250	
1.2	13	3.250	
1.3	13	3.250	
1.4	11	2.750	
1.5	11	2.750	
1.6	10	2.500	
1.7	12	3.000	
1.8	15	3.750	
1.9	13	3.250	
1.10	10	2.500	
Total	121	30.250	12.604

In the example above, the total of the average scores for all ten questions in Block 1 = 30.250 (out of a possible maximum of 40.000).

Block 1 is just one of six different blocks contributing to the maximum score of 100 points for all six blocks. So that each block is given the same weighting, they each have a maximum threshold of 16.667 points

(=100/6). Since not all blocks have the same number of questions, the FINAL BLOCK SCORE is calculated via the following equation:

FINAL BLOCK SCORE =

Total of the average scores per question / Maximum total possible of average scores per question x 100 / 6

Therefore, in our Block 1 example above, the Final Block score = $30.250 / 40.000 \times 100 / 6 = 12.604$.

5. Final block scores for Blocks 1-5 (denoting “SQUEEZE”) are added together

Blocks 1 to 5 form the ‘squeeze part’ of the questionnaire. The same scoring procedure as shown above for Block 1 is now done for Blocks 2 to 5. For our imaginary WWL country, the resulting table is as follows:

Questions	Block scores
Block 1	12.604
Block 2	10.337
Block 3	9.696
Block 4	10.547
Block 5	12.552
Total for 1-5	55.736

The SQUEEZE in our imaginary WWL country (i.e. the amount of pressure in the Five Spheres of Life) = **55.736**.

Now the SMASH needs to be added ...

6. How the points for Violent Incidents within the reporting period are calculated for Block 6

The country score is completed by adding Block 6, which deals with many different forms of physical violence occurring within the WWL reporting period which stretches from 1 November to 31 October. To cover the various forms of violence, a different method of scoring to that used in Blocks 1-5 is required.

The first two questions deal with killings and attacks on churches and can get a maximum of 30 points each. Each killing gives 3 points. Ten or more killings give the maximum number of 30 points.

The other 10 questions dealing with other forms of physical violence can get a maximum of 3 points. The scoring for this is: 1 incident = 1 point; 2 - 9 incidents = 2 points; 10 or more incident = 3 points. The maximum possible number of points for all 12 questions = 90.

In our imaginary WWL country, we have the following reported incidents and points:

	Description of Violent incident per WWL Questionnaire	Incidents	Points	Block score (max. points 16.667)
6.1	Christians killed	0	0	
6.2	Churches attacked	0	0	
6.3	Christians detained without trial	0	0	
6.4	Christians sentenced to jail, labor camp etc.	0	0	
6.5	Christians abducted	0	0	
6.6	Christians raped / sexually harassed	15	3	
6.7	Cases of forced marriages to non-Christians	12	3	
6.8	Christians physically or mentally abused	4	2	
6.9	Houses or other property of Christians attacked	0	0	
6.10	Shops or businesses of Christians attacked	0	0	
6.11	Christians forced to leave their homes / go into hiding in-country	5	2	
6.12	Christians forced to leave their country	0	0	
	Total	36	10	1.852

In the example above, the total number of points for all 12 questions of Block 6 = 10 (out of a possible maximum of 90).

Block 6 is just one of the six blocks contributing to the maximum WWL score of 100 points for all six blocks. So that each block is given the same weighting, they each have a maximum threshold of 16.667 points (=100/6). The FINAL BLOCK 6 SCORE is calculated via the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{FINAL BLOCK 6 SCORE} &= \text{Number of points} / \text{Maximum possible number of points for block} \times 100 / 6 \\ &= 10 / 90 \times 100 / 6 = 1.852. \end{aligned}$$

7. Finally, the scores for Blocks 1-5 and Block 6 are added together

To get the final WWL score for a country, all the Block totals are added together. The maximum for each block is 16.667 and the maximum total possible is 100.

Questions	Block scores
Block 1	12.604
Block 2	10.337
Block 3	9.696
Block 4	10.547
Block 5	12.552
Block 6	1.852
Total	57.588

Our imaginary WWL country thus has a final total score rounded to **58 points**. Its ranking on the WWL depends on the number of countries achieving a higher/lower final total score.

It should be noted that from WWL 2018 onwards, the final Block scores appearing in the official WWL Table will be displayed only to one decimal place (see example below). The reason for this is to avoid giving the impression of a degree of accuracy that would be misleading.

WWL 2018 RANK	Country	1. Private	2. Family	3. Community	4. National	5. Church	6. Violence	TOTAL SCORE DISPLAYED TO 1 DEC. PLACE	WWL TOTAL SCORE
?	Imaginary country	12.6	10.3	9.7	10.5	12.6	1.9	57.6	58

WWR/FV/DAT/2017

Appendix 2:

Definition of Christian and categories of Christians

The WWL is a tool focusing on persecution experienced by Christians. The WWL methodology defines 'Christian' (sociologically) as "anyone who self-identifies as a Christian and/or someone belonging to a Christian community as defined by the church's historic creeds". Based on this definition the WWL methodology distinguishes four types of Christianity:

- 1. *Communities of expatriate Christians:*** This category applies to a situation in which foreign Christian residents (expatriates or migrant workers) are allowed to rent or own church buildings to a certain degree or at least to conduct church services, but they are not allowed to have contact with nationals regarding Christianity.
- 2. *Historical Christian communities:*** This category applies to the typical historical churches, such as Catholic, Orthodox and traditional Protestant churches, which have often been part of a country's history for hundreds of years. Their situation and degree of freedom differ from country to country.
- 3. *Communities of converts to Christianity:*** This category considers people who once belonged to a dominating religion or ideology, traditional religion, organized crime or other strong identifier and who changed identity in order to become Christian. Converts may be absorbed by one of the other types of churches but often gather in 'house' or 'underground' churches.
- 4. *Non-traditional Christian communities*** (such as Evangelical, Baptist and Pentecostal congregations) and/or other Christian communities not included in the above three groups: This category deals with the great variety of new Protestant expressions and includes the independent churches in many countries. Some of them may be disputed by other Christians in terms of having a serious lack of theological orthodoxy but as long as they self-identify as Christians (see definition of Christian) they are included in this category.

Appendix 3:

Explanation of the 5 spheres of life and violence

A ‘five spheres concept’ has been developed to track the various expressions of persecution in the different areas of a Christian’s life. The WWL questionnaire contains questions specific for each sphere and a score is recorded. The maximum for each of the 5 spheres and 1 violence block is 16.667, making a maximum overall score of 100 points when the scores for violence are added.

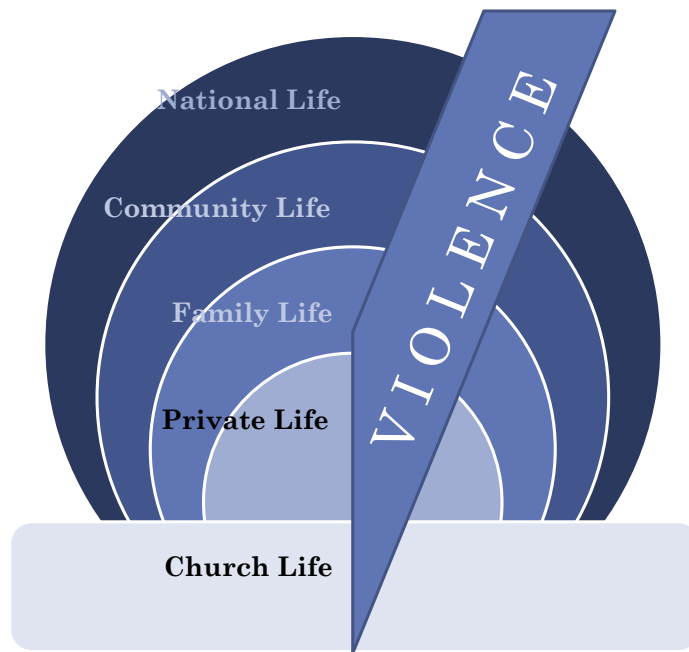
<p>1. Private life</p>	<p>The guiding WWL question asked is: “How free has a Christian been to relate to God one-on-one in his/her own space?”</p> <p>The questions set out in the WWL questionnaire deal with conversion, private worship, possession of religious material, freedom of expression (e.g. in spoken word and writing, through images and symbols, access to information and media, privately sharing a belief with others), freedom of private assembly, and isolation of Christians.</p>
<p>2. Family life</p>	<p>The guiding WWL question asked is: “How free has a Christian been to live his/her Christian convictions within the circle of the family, and how free have Christian families been to conduct their family life in a Christian way?”</p> <p>The questions set out in the WWL questionnaire deal with the forced allocation of religious identity, registration of civil affairs, weddings, baptisms, burials, adoptions, child rearing, indoctrination of children, harassment of or discrimination against children, separation of families, isolation of converts, pressure to divorce, custody of children, and inheritance rights.</p>
<p>3. Community life</p>	<p>Community life includes the workplace, business, health care, education, and local public life and civic order.</p> <p>The guiding WWL question asked is: “How free have Christians been individually and collectively to live their Christian convictions within the local community (beyond church life), and how much pressure has the community put on Christians by acts of discrimination, harassment or any other form of persecution?”</p> <p>The questions set out in the WWL questionnaire deal with threat or obstruction to daily life, dress codes, monitoring of Christians, abduction and forced marriage, access to community resources, community ceremonies, participation in communal institutions and forums, pressure to renounce faith, access to health care, access to and disadvantages in education, discrimination in employment and</p>

	obstruction in business, policing issues (fines, interrogations, forced reporting).
4. National life	<p>The interaction between Christians and the nation they live in includes rights and laws, the justice system, national public administration and public life.</p> <p>The guiding WWL question asked is: “How free have Christians been individually and collectively to live their Christian convictions beyond their local community, and how much pressure has the legal system put on Christians, and how much pressure have agents of supra-local life put on Christians by acts of misinformation, discrimination, harassment or any other form of persecution?”</p> <p>The questions set out in the WWL questionnaire deal with national ideology, constitution, registration of religion in IDs, conscientious objection, travel within a country and abroad, discrimination by authorities, barring from public office or professional progress, policy interference with businesses, expression of opinion in public, Christian civil society organizations and political parties, reporting about religious or social conflicts, smear campaigns, toleration of public disrespect, religious symbols, blasphemy accusations, impunity, equal treatment in court, monitoring of trials.</p>
5. Church life	<p>Church life is understood as the collective exercise by Christians of freedom of thought and conscience, particularly as regards uniting with fellow Christians in worship, life, service and public expression of their faith without undue interference. It also pertains to properties held or used by Christians for these purposes.</p> <p>The guiding WWL question asked is: “How have restrictions, discrimination, harassment or other forms of persecution infringed upon these rights and this collective life of Christian churches, organizations and institutions?”</p> <p>The questions set out in the WWL questionnaire deal with the hindrance in gathering of Christians, registration of churches, monitoring or closing of unregistered churches, church building and renovation, expropriation and non-return, disturbance or disruption of services, prevention of activities inside or outside churches or among youth, acceptance of converts, monitoring of preaching and published materials, election and training of leaders, harassment of leaders or their families, Bibles and other religious materials and their printing, importing, selling or dissemination, and confiscation, broadcasting and Internet use, interference with ethical convictions (regarding family and marriage) and personnel policy of Christian institutions, Christian civil society organizations and social activities,</p>

	interaction with the global Church, and the denouncing of government persecution.
--	---

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

Diagram showing how violence can cut through all spheres of life (© Christof Sauer, IIRF)



Appendix 4:

Explanation of Persecution engines

There are different types of Persecution engine, each displaying their own brand of hostility towards Christians. WWL methodology works with 8 categories of Persecution engine.

1. *Islamic oppression:*

This engine describes the persecution situation where countries, communities and households are being forced under Islamic control. This can be done gradually by a process of systematic Islamization (building up pressure) or suddenly by the use of militant force (violence) or by both together.

- An example of gradual Islamization is found in many countries where the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic NGOs and other likewise groups roll out a holistic Islamic mission strategy, coupled with a ban on conversion at the family and local community level.
- An example of the use of militant force can be seen in groups such as Islamic State, Boko Haram and al-Shabaab.

The scope of this 'Islamic movement' is global.

2. *Religious nationalism*

This engine describes the persecution situation where countries, communities or households are being forced under the control of one particular religion (other than Islam). This religion can be Hinduism, Buddhism or Judaism, or even other. The process can be gradual and systematic (via a building-up of pressure), or abrupt (through violence). Often it is the combination of both that increasingly makes life for Christians in the country difficult.

- An example is Hindu mob violence in India against Christians who witness in the public domain against the background of ever increasing legislation that curtails religious freedom (e.g. anti-conversion laws).

The scope of these 'religious movements' is mostly national.

3. *Ethnic antagonism*

This engine describes the persecution situation where communities and households are being forced to adhere to age-old indigenous customs established by tribes or ethnic people groups. There is a huge variety of groups here. The 'mechanics' of this engine is comparable to Islamic oppression and Religious nationalism - there often is a combination of a gradual building-up of pressure and incidental outright violence.

- An example of subtle pressure is when the authorities of an indigenous community in Myanmar or Mexico refuse to allow a Christian family's children to attend school.

- An example of outright violence is when Christian families are driven out a village because they do not want to participate in traditional ceremonies.

The scope of this 'ethnic movement' is mainly subnational (part of territory of country) but can involve the crossing of national borders depending on the regional spread of the ethnic people groups.

4. *Denominational protectionism*

This engine describes the situation where fellow Christians are being persecuted by one church denomination to make sure it remains the only legitimate or dominant expression of Christianity in the country. This engine is comparable to the other engines that are related to religious expressions: It is characterized by a combination of subtle pressure and outright violence, although in practice the balance is often towards non-violence.

- Outright violence can however happen as the Ethiopian Orthodox anti-reformist movement in Ethiopia has been showing for several years now against Christians in their own churches who want to reform the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

The scope of this 'ecclesiastical movement' is national, especially when the denomination involved has narrow ties with the State.

5. *Communist and post-Communist oppression*

This engine describes the situation where Christians are being persecuted and churches controlled by a state system that derives from Communist values. Key for controlling churches is a rigid system of state registration and monitoring. This system may still be in use in countries after the fall of Communism, as is the case in Central Asia. Although the engine relies on a combination of pressure and violence, the violence is often not particularly visible because the system's hold on the church is complete and tight.

- An example is President Berdymukhamedov's authoritarian government in Turkmenistan, where no religious activities beyond state-run and state-controlled institutions are allowed.
- However, extreme cases such as North Korea with its concentration camps do show high prevalence of violence against Christians.

The scope of this ideological movement is national, though in the past it was global.

6. *Secular intolerance*

This engine describes the situation where Christian faith is being forced out of the public domain, if possible even out of the hearts of people. Its drivers seek to transform societies into the mold of a new, radically secularist ethic. This new ethic is (partly) related to a radically new sexual agenda, with norms and values about sexuality, marriage and related issues that are alien to, and resisted by the Christian worldview. When Christian individuals or institutions try to resist this new ethic, they are opposed by (i) non-discrimination legislation, (ii) attacks on parental rights in the area of education, (iii) the censorship of the Cross and other religious symbols from the public square, (iv) the use of

various manifestations of “hate” speech laws to limit the freedom of expression, and (v) Church registration laws. Most of this is not violent, although arrests of pastors and lay people have happened.

- An example of this engine is compulsory sexual education based on gender ideology (including LGBTI insights) in nursery and primary schools in some countries, and the serious threat against parents who want to withdraw their young children from these lessons.

The scope of this ‘secularist movement’ is global.

7. *Dictatorial paranoia*

This engine describes the persecution situation where an authoritarian government at different levels of society, assisted by social stakeholder groups, does all it can to maintain power. There is no special focus on realizing an ideological vision; it seems lust for power and the benefits it brings with it are decisive. The dynamics of this engine is comparable to Communist and post-Communist oppression: although the engine relies on a combination of pressure and violence, often the threat of violence is sufficient to force the non-state controlled Church underground.

- Example: The government of Eritrea has been controlling the Church in Eritrea more and more. It began by reacting very strongly against the new Christian communities (e.g. imprisoning Christians in shipping containers), but has continued by putting increasing pressure on the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (e.g. through curtailing the clergy).

The scope of this engine is national.

8. *Organized corruption and crime*

This engine describes the persecution situation where groups or individuals are creating a climate of impunity, anarchy and corruption as a means for self-enrichment. It has two main ‘branches’: (i) corruption within state structures and (ii) corruption of society by organized crime. This engine expresses itself through a combination of systematic pressure caused by fear for violent repercussions in case of non-compliance, and by such violence.

- Corruption from within: Princes in Saudi Arabia are often free to do what they want. The country is theirs. The trade-off is giving radical Islamic forces a high level of influence both within and outside the country. The negative effect of this on Christians worldwide is enormous through the spread of Wahhabism (a very radical strand of Islam) in moderate Muslim countries.
- Organized crime: In Latin American countries such as Colombia and Mexico criminal groups (drugs, human trafficking etc.) use violence to keep the Church under control, especially at the level of the local community. At national level the interests of these groups are served by co-opting politicians and the security apparatus of the state.

The scope of this engine is global.

Appendix 5:

List of drivers of persecution

The term “drivers of persecution (engines)” is used to describe people and/or groups causing hostilities towards Christians in a particular country. WWR uses 12 drivers in its documents:

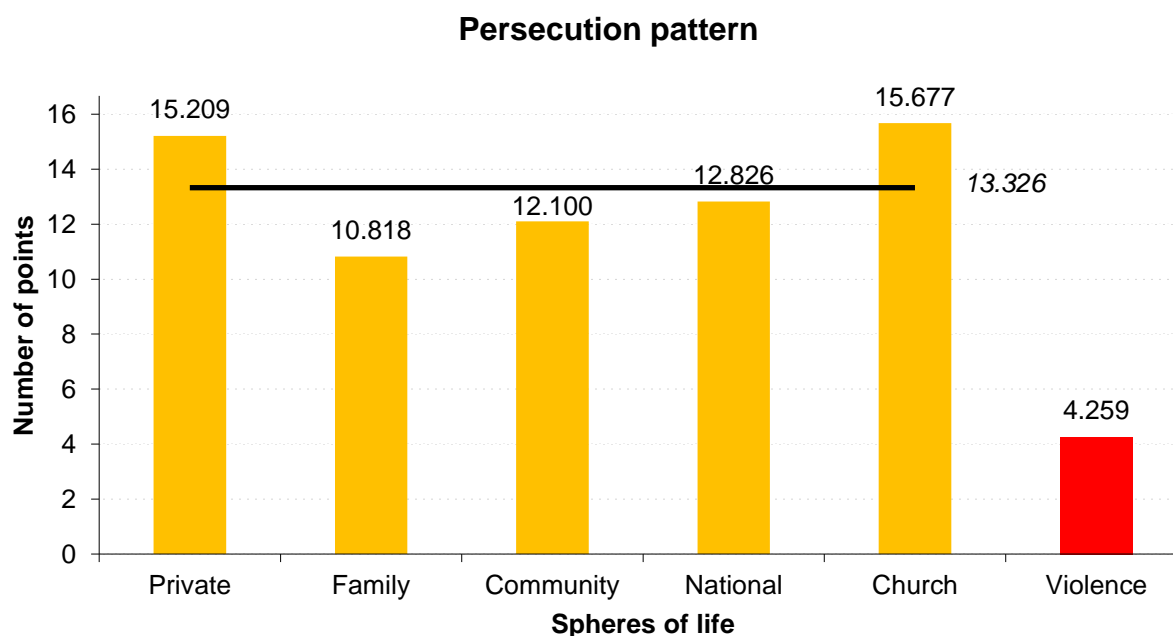
- 1. Government officials at any level from local to national**
E.g. teachers, police, local officials, presidents, Kim Jong Un
- 2. Ethnic group leaders**
E.g. tribal chiefs
- 3. Non-Christian religious leaders at any level from local to national**
E.g. imams, rabbis, senior Buddhist monks
- 4. Christian religious leaders at any level from local to national**
E.g. popes, patriarchs, bishops, priests, pastors
- 5. Violent religious groups:**
E.g. Boko Haram (Nigeria), Hamas (Palestinian Territories), *Bodu Bala Sena* (BBS) and the *Sinhala Ravaya* (SR) (both in Sri Lanka)
- 6. Ideological pressure groups:**
E.g. LGBTI rights groups, Abortion Rights UK, National Secular Society
- 7. Normal citizens (people from the general public), including mobs**
E.g. students, neighbors, shopkeepers, mobs
- 8. Extended family**
E.g. one’s direct family members or the wider circle of kinsmen.
- 9. Political parties at any level from local to national**
E.g. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India, AKP in Turkey
- 10. Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups**
E.g. FARC
- 11. Organized crime cartels or networks**
E.g. There are several cartels in Latin America, Italy and other parts of the world.
- 12. Multilateral organizations (e.g. UN/OIC) and embassies**
E.g. UN organizations pushing for compulsory sexual education programs contrary to Christian values, OIC pushing for Islamization of the African continent.

Appendix 6: Understanding the Persecution pattern

The detailed country scores of the 6 blocks of the WWL questionnaire converge into a specific pattern, the *country persecution pattern*. This persecution pattern consists of the following elements:

- The average score over blocks 1 to 5;
- The deviance from the average score of the scores for the different spheres of life;
- The level of violence experienced by Christians in the country.

The example below is for Uzbekistan (WWL 2017).



(The maximum score in each block is 16.667, giving a maximum total of 100 points for all 6 blocks combined.
The scores above are displayed to three decimal places and are not to be read as thousands.)

The WWL 2017 Persecution pattern for Uzbekistan shows:

- Although there have been increases in the scores for pressure particularly in the *private* and *church spheres*, the average pressure on Christians has reduced slightly from 13.413 (WWL 2016) to 13.326, but remains at a high level.
- Pressure is strongest in the *private, national, and church spheres*. This is typical for a situation in which *Dictatorial paranoia* is the leading persecution engine.
- Pressure from *Islamic oppression* is present mostly in the *private, family and community spheres* and is exerted particularly on MBBs by the social environment.

- There has been a significant number of violent incidents in Uzbekistan; the score for violence against Christians shows a marked increase rising from 2.778 (WWL 2016) to 4.259.
- The overall persecution situation in Uzbekistan is caused by a paranoid government seeking to increase its control over all areas of life.

World Watch Research recognizes the potential for using the persecution pattern as part of the consistency check for questionnaires. The persecution pattern can also serve to predict trends in ongoing persecution in countries on the WWL. Finally the persecution pattern can serve as a tool giving early indications of upcoming persecution in countries not yet on the WWL.

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4.2 Guidelines and FAQs

WWL Guidelines and FAQ

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A. QUICK Q&A ON WWL

More details about the background to the World Watch List (WWL) are available in the long and short versions of the WWL methodology.

1. How is the WWL compiled?

World Watch Research (WWR) distinguishes two main expressions of persecution: *squeeze* (the pressure Christians experience in all areas of life) and *smash* (plain violence). While *smash* can be measured and tracked through incidents of violence, *squeeze* needs to be tracked by discerning how Christian life and witness is being squeezed in different areas of life. Different persecution engines and drivers become identifiable from the answers to country questionnaires covering the reporting period 1 November – 31 October. A final score is calculated for each country which is then used to determine the order of countries from position 1 to 50 on the annual WWL.

2. How are the countries scored?

A detailed example on the method of scoring can be found in Appendix 1 of “WWL 2018 Methodology – Short version with Scoring Example”. Further discussion is to be found in the long version of the WWL Methodology.

3. Why are countries with the same score ranked differently?

For each country, the public version of the WWL Table and Scores gives the Total Score as a rounded number displaying no decimal places. In the event that countries are listed with the same score (e.g. in WWL 2017 Syria and Iraq; Iran and Yemen) the actual decimal fraction will determine which country appears higher in the list.

WWL 2017 RANK	Country	1. Private	2. Family	3. Community	4. National	5. Church	6. Violence	TOTAL SCORES DISPLAYED TO 3 DEC. PLACES	WWL TOTAL SCORES
6	Syria	14.375	14.263	14.664	14.584	14.896	13.704	86.486	86
7	Iraq	15.104	14.904	15.465	15.104	15.209	10.370	86.156	86
8	Iran	14.063	14.343	14.744	15.625	16.459	10.185	85.419	85
9	Yemen	16.667	15.305	14.503	16.341	16.615	5.926	85.357	85

Extract from WWL 2017 Table and Scores with added column showing Total Score to three decimal places

Please note that from WWL 2018 onwards, the final Block scores appearing in the official WWL Table and Scores will be displayed only to one decimal place and not to three decimal places as was previously the case. The fraction is the result of mathematical calculation. As far as scoring the answers of the questionnaire is concerned, it would be misleading to understand a greater number of decimal places as denoting a greater degree of accuracy in persecution measurement.

4. Why does World Watch Research use World Christian Database statistics?

Since 2007, the World Christian Database ([WCD](#)²⁴) has been published in cooperation with [Brill](#)²⁵ publishers (USA) who aim to meet the information requirements of specialized academic target groups. For an annual fee, World Watch Research receives access to comprehensive statistical information on world religions, Christian denominations, and people groups. This information is updated regularly by staff at the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (USA).

Please note: Where Open Doors estimates differ to WCD figures, this is clearly indicated in the WWL 2018 country profile documentation and in the WWL 2018 Country religious statistics.

5. What are persecution engines and persecution drivers?

Please see Appendix 4 and Appendix 5 of “WWL 2018 Methodology – Short version with Scoring Example”. For more detailed background discussion, see also the Long version of the WWL Methodology.

6. What gives the WWL credibility (academic status)?

The WWL team consists of one managing director, five fulltime and two part-time persecution analysts and one communicator, all with university degrees. Three of the team (including the managing director) have or are completing PhDs. Five are lawyers with experience in the field of human rights, constitutional law or governance. The persecution analysts collaborate closely with researchers and other experts operating at regional, national and subnational level. Some of these are Open Doors staff, others are external experts who have different professional backgrounds.

The WWL questionnaire is the main tool behind the WWL methodology. The International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF; www.iirf.eu) has audited the WWL methods for arriving at country scores and their transnational comparability. It has also audited their proper application on varying sample countries for WWL 2014-2018. The main focus of the audits is on consistency in the processing of the WWL questionnaires for the different countries with their specific persecution situations.

²⁴ WCD website: <http://www.brill.com/publications/online-resources/world-christian-database>

²⁵ Brill website: <http://www.brill.com/about/mission-statement>

The WWL audit statements express IIRF's conclusions and enhance the quality of the WWL and contribute to the degree of objectivity and transparency of the results. The IIRF stresses that additional statements, documents and interpretations by Open Doors based on or associated with the publication of the WWL lists remain outside the scope of their audits.

7. How is it possible to measure and compare persecution in different countries?

The pressure on Christians and the violent incidents occurring against Christians can be compared from country to country regardless of the origin of the hostilities involved. This is possible because the WWL Methodology takes as starting point the pressure and violence Christians experience in different spheres of life. Whether this pressure or violence originates from the same or different persecution engines is not relevant for the final score, though it is for the country narrative.

8. What sort of pressure is being measured in the “Spheres of life”?

The ‘five spheres concept’ tracks the various forms of pressure being experienced in the different areas of a Christian's life. For a list and description please see Appendix 3 of “WWL 2018 Methodology – Short version with Scoring Example”. For more detailed background discussion, see also the Long version of the WWL Methodology.

9. Why does the WWL only focus on Christians?

The WWL focuses only on Christians for two main reasons. First, the mandate of Open Doors is to support suffering Christians worldwide. The WWL is essentially a tool for both Open Door's leadership and constituency to obtain insight into the nature, scope and spatial location of the persecution of Christians. Secondly, via its long-standing in-country networks Open Doors can research down to “village level.” Hence, WWL is uniquely equipped for specifically researching the persecution of Christians. The research team is aware that in many situations other minority groups are also suffering alongside Christians. Where relevant, this is clearly mentioned in the country profiles.

10. Why is the WWL limited to 50 countries?

For practical communication purposes - although it must be stressed that if a country does not make it to the top 50, this does not mean there is no persecution in that country! For WWL 2018 the WWL team will be scoring over 80 countries. A list of scores and rankings for the top 75 is being prepared for OD-internal use only.

11. Does the WWL look at Christians of all denominations?

Yes, the WWL looks at all Christian denominations. For details please see Appendix 2 of the “WWL 2018 Methodology – Short version with Scoring Example”. For more detailed background discussion, see also the Long version of the WWL Methodology.

B. WWL BACKGROUND DISCUSSION – SHORT VERSION

Note: Please see section C for more detailed discussion of these points.

1. Is Christianity the most persecuted religion in the world?

No one is claiming that ONLY Christians are suffering severe persecution. However, there is little data comparable to the WWL available. The number of persecuted Christians is huge – well over 200 million – and the likelihood is very great that more Christians are suffering severe persecution than adherents of any other religion. There is, however, no academic research on the persecution of Muslims currently available to confirm this.

2. How many Christians are persecuted worldwide?

Since WWL 2017, the calculation for the number of persecuted Christians is linked to the annual WWL and indicates the number of Christians who are persecuted in the 50 countries on that specific WWL. This number will therefore change according to the exact composition of the annual WWL. For WWL 2017 the calculation was as follows:

In the WWL Top 50 countries the total population is 4.83 billion and the total number of Christians is estimated at 650 million (13%). Out of these 650 million Christians, 215 million (33%) are considered to be suffering from “high” (or “very high” or “extreme”)²⁶ levels of persecution, according to the levels set out in the WWL-Methodology.

One can also say: 215 million are considered to be suffering from “high” (or “very high” or “extreme”) levels of persecution, out of a total global Christian population of 2.48 billion, or 1 in every 12 Christians.

For WWL 2017 it was not possible to supply an accompanying Level 3 version of the break-down per country. WWR will attempt to do this for WWL 2018.

Because the number of persecuted Christians used in WWL documentation is limited to the 50 countries on the WWL, it will mean that - globally - there are more Christians who are persecuted.

²⁶ In the WWL-Methodology, “high” levels of persecution occur when the score-range is 41 to 60 points. Above this there are two other categories: “very high (61-80pts)” and “extreme (81-100pts).” In the WWL-Methodology, “high” is defined as “where living as a Christian means that although there may be a tolerated church which enjoys some freedom, in practice prominent Christians are targeted, churches themselves subject to significant restrictions, and the culture remains largely hostile to a Christian presence in such areas as education and employment.” For calculating the number of Christians who suffer “high” or higher levels of persecution, these concepts are not simply applied to the total country scores but to the estimated scores of different regions within the countries. This is done because not all Christians in a country that scores 41 points or more, are suffering to the same degree.

3. How many Christians are killed for their faith annually?

There is an ongoing debate about the number of martyrs or Christians killed for faith-related reasons. While some organizations publish numbers often as high as 100,000 Christian martyrs per year, or ‘one Christian killed every 5 minutes’, research by WWR reveals much lower numbers. (The numbers in the table below are global totals recorded within the WWL reporting period.)

WWL	Christians killed for faith-related reasons	Churches attacked
WWL 2014	2,123	1,111
WWL 2015	4,344	1,062
WWL 2016	7,106	2,425
WWL 2017	1,207	1,329
WWL 2018	See Article on Violent Incidents (available 8 December 2017).	

The numbers listed above are likely to be much lower than in reality, but they are based on what WWR have been able to assess via a variety of sources (reports of OD Field research and external research, and media reports). Information on the [debate about the number of Christian martyrs](#) can be found in World Watch Monitor’s article dated 13 November 2013.

4. How does OD’s definition of persecution compare with other definitions?

There is no international legal definition of persecution. Situations can be defined as persecution where persons experience the denial of the rights listed in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For defining the persecution of Christians, the WWL methodology has opted for a theological rather than a sociological definition. Persecution is hence: “Any hostility experienced as a result of one’s identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians.” This definition covers not just violence but also the full range of pressure experienced by Christians as a result of their Christian faith.

Many lawmakers have tried to set a high threshold before a situation can be termed persecution. E.g., [United States Court of Appeals, Third Circuit \(1961\)](#) states: “[Persecution] should be taken to mean confinement, torture or death inflicted on account of race, religion, or political viewpoint.” However, the rationale behind this is clearly political: If the standard was not set high, it might lead to a situation where the international community has to face the serious challenge of affording protection to very large numbers of people claiming ‘persecuted’ status. Hence the international community is deliberately underestimating the continuous pressure Christians (and other minorities) are often facing in their different *spheres of life*. It is exactly this pressure that the WWL methodology seeks to document and therefore its definition deliberately includes “hostile attitudes [and] words”.

5. Does ethnic cleansing apply to countries in the WWL Top 50?

Ethnic cleansing is when a competitor or those who differ in race, ethnicity or religion are forced to leave a given area by unlawful means. These can be murder, destruction of property, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, confinement of civilian population in ghetto areas, forcible removal, displacement and deportation of civilian population, extra-judicial executions, rape and deliberate military or other organized attacks, or threats of attacks on civilians or even *genocide*. The situations in northeast Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan can be said to be typical examples.

It should however be noted that even in contexts not defined as conflict, *ethnic cleansing* can be in process. Saudi Arabia is an example of this, notwithstanding the massive presence of Christian migrants in the country. The enormous pressure on converts from Islam to Christianity and isolation of Christian migrants from local Saudis, could be characterized as a form of *ethnic cleansing* based on religious affiliation.

The concept of *ethnic cleansing* based on religious affiliation can thus be applied to (part of) what is happening in a number of the WWL Top 50 countries.

6. What is religious freedom?

The definition of freedom of religion in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (ICCPR version) reads: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.” This definition is broader than many realize. For instance, the right to “manifest his religion” contains the following rights:

- To worship or assemble in connection with a religion or belief, and to establish and maintain premises for these purposes.
- To establish religious, humanitarian and charitable institutions.
- To make, acquire and use articles and materials related to the rites or customs of a religion or belief, including to follow a particular diet.
- To write, issue and disseminate relevant publications.
- To teach a religion or belief in places suitable for the purposes and to establish theological seminaries or schools.
- To solicit and receive voluntary financial and other contributions.
- To train, appoint or elect leaders, priests and teachers.
- To celebrate religious festivals and observe days of rest.
- To communicate with individuals and communities on faith issues at national and international level.

- To display religious symbols including the wearing of religious clothing.

All these points are areas where Christians can become vulnerable, whether directly in the form of violence (*smash*), or indirectly through restrictions (*squeeze*) and can be experienced in all spheres of life: private, family, community, national and church.

7. How does persecution originate and develop in society?

WWR identifies six stages in the gradual development of persecution.²⁷ The length of time that persecution engines take to develop from stages 1 to 6 can differ greatly depending on the specific context in the country, and on the type of persecution engine.

1. A small, highly ‘charged’ social group representing a specific religion or ideology starts to spread their ideas at the expense of (an)other group(s).
2. Fanatical movements grow out of this ‘starter group’ or assemble around them, and exert pressure on society and government through media strategies and/or physical mob attacks on elements of the other group(s).
3. The violence disturbs society but governments leave the fanatical movements unpunished while blaming the other group(s) for being the cause of the social unrest by their mere existence.
4. This reinforces the actions of the fanatical movements, and draws in more and more regular citizens. This leads to more pressure on the government to collaborate with their agenda.
5. Society, government, security apparatus and judicial system squeeze the members of the other group(s), to the point of near suffocation in all spheres of life.
6. Culture as a whole is taken over by the agenda of the highly ‘charged’ social group representing a specific religion or ideology (point 1).

8. Are only Christians who evangelize persecuted?

Not at all. Normally the first victims of persecution are converts to Christianity. Take for instance converts to Christianity from a Muslim background: Even when society is not yet Islamized and the nation’s government has not yet adopted Sharia law, converts are very vulnerable in their private, family and community spheres of life. (The same applies for defectors from a criminal gang, although their community sphere of life is likely to be more problematic than their private and family spheres of life.) Next, it is Christians who are active in evangelism or social-political work in the public domain who are likely to experience hostility. When the persecution situation develops further, Christians by identity are affected too. Finally, the visibility of Christianity in the public domain in the form of churches and other Christian buildings is reduced by targeted destruction and closure.

²⁷ These stages are an adaptation of the *Religious Economies Model* in: Grim, B.J. and Finke R., *The Price of Freedom Denied*, 2010, page 68ff.

9. How do the duties of the State relate to persecution?

State governments have the responsibility of ensuring that human rights (e.g. Freedom of Religion or Belief) are not violated. The State has an active duty in terms of protecting the rights of Christians from different drivers (actors) of persecution. In the case where drivers of persecution are related to the persecution engines *Dictatorial paranoia* and *Secular intolerance*, it is apparent that the State itself violates its duty to respect and protect. In the case where radical groups or militias violate the rights of Christians, it means the government is failing to offer protection, and is perhaps even collaborating with these groups.

10. What is meant by “persecution eclipse”?

This is a situation whereby persecution and civil conflict overlap to the extent that the former is in a real or imaginative sense overshadowed or rendered almost invisible by the latter. Nigeria is a country with an alarming record of religiously-related violence. There is debate whether this is actually persecution, or just civil unrest. Is there an agenda of Islamization or is it about ‘environmental degradation and migration’? A paper, published by World Watch Monitor in June 2013, argues that this is a classic example of [persecution eclipse](#).

11. Does the WWL sometimes confuse civil conflict with persecution?

Commentators often look at the situation of civilians in civil conflicts and ignore the role of religious identity on the side of the victim and religious motivation on the side of the perpetrator among the complex mix of factors and motives for hostilities against civilians. Detailed research shows that religion often plays an important or even decisive role, without which the situation cannot be fully or correctly understood. This applies even when religion is not the only factor. Hence, according to WWL research, conflicts such as those in Central Africa, Nigeria, Iraq and Syria are (at least in part) situations involving the persecution of Christians on grounds of faith. (See also: 10. Persecution eclipse.)

C. WWL BACKGROUND DISCUSSION – LONG VERSION

1. Is Christianity the most persecuted religion in the world?

No one is claiming that ONLY Christians are suffering severe persecution. However, there is little data comparable to the WWL available. The number of persecuted Christians is huge – well over 200 million – and the likelihood is very great that more Christians are suffering severe persecution than adherents of any other religion. There is, however, no academic research on the persecution of Muslims currently available to confirm this. Pew research comes the nearest.

Pew research has shown for the period 2006-2012, that Christians were “harassed” in 151 out of a total of 198 countries or territories studied and Muslims in 135.

Number of Countries Where Religious Groups Were Harassed, Across All Years

Any time between mid-2006 and end of 2012

Christians	151
Muslims	135
Jews	95
Others*	77
Folk religionists**	52
Hindus	33
Buddhists	28
Any of the above	185

* Includes Sikhs, members of ancient faiths such as Zoroastrianism and members of newer faiths such as Baha'is and other religious groups.

** Includes a followers of African traditional religions, Chinese folk religions, Native American religions and Australian aboriginal religions.

This measure does not assess the severity of the harassment.

Numbers do not add to total because multiple religious groups can be harassed in a country.

Data: Pew Research Center, Jan. 2014

The WWL also has a broad definition of persecution, and includes types of “harassment” in its definition. However, the WWL also assesses the severity of persecution. The question is if (for instance) the “harassment” of Muslims in Western European countries can be compared to the “harassment” of Christians in Muslim majority countries. Also, if intra-religious “harassment” (or persecution) were excluded out of Pew’s data (viz. the Sunni-Shia conflict), Christians would in WWR’s opinion turn out to be much more persecuted by people from other religions or ideologies, than Muslims, and at a higher level of intensity.

2. How many Christians are persecuted worldwide?

For many years, the number of 100 million persecuted Christians was used as a global number, but this was not directly linked to the methodology of the WWL. Since WWL 2017, the calculation for the number of persecuted Christians is linked to the annual WWL and indicates the number of Christians who are persecuted in the 50 countries on that specific WWL. This number will therefore change according to the exact composition of the annual WWL. For WWL 2017 the calculation was as follows:

In the WWL 2017 Top 50 countries the total population was 4.83 billion and the total number of Christians was estimated at 650 million (13%). Out of these 650 million Christians, 215 million (33%) were considered to be suffering from “high” (or “very high” or “extreme”)²⁸ levels of persecution, according to the levels set out in the WWL-Methodology. One could also say: 215 million are considered to be suffering from “high” (or “very high” or “extreme”) levels of persecution, out of a total global Christian population of 2.48 billion, or 1 in every 12 Christians. For WWL 2017 it was not possible to supply an accompanying Level 3 version of the break-down per country. WWL will attempt to do this for WWL 2018. Because the number of persecuted Christians used in WWL documentation is limited to the 50 countries on the WWL, it will mean that - globally - there are more Christians who are persecuted.

In estimating the number of persecuted Christians in the 50 countries of the WWL it should be noted that not all Christians in the 50 countries can be counted as being persecuted. In some countries persecution affects all Christians, whatever their denomination (see WWL categories of Christianity, in Appendix 2 of “WWL 2018 Methodology – Short version with Scoring Example”. Further discussion is also to be found in the Long version of the WWL Methodology). In other countries, persecution affects only part of the Christian community. This can be according to their denomination – some denominations are (for instance) less active in evangelism and/or other public activities than others. The former will draw less negative attention than the latter, and thus be less confronted with persecution. Persecution can also depend on the part of the country Christians live in. For instance, Muslim dominated areas in Christian majority countries could put heavy pressure on Christians, even commit acts of violence against them, even though the country is majority Christian.

²⁸ In the WWL-Methodology, “high” levels of persecution occur when the score-range is 41 to 60 points. Above this there are two other categories: “very high (61-80pts)” and “extreme (81-100pts).” In the WWL-Methodology, “high” is defined as “where living as a Christian means that although there may be a tolerated church which enjoys some freedom, in practice prominent Christians are targeted, churches themselves subject to significant restrictions, and the culture remains largely hostile to a Christian presence in such areas as education and employment.” For calculating the number of Christians who suffer “high” or higher levels of persecution, these concepts are not simply applied to the total country scores but to the estimated scores of different regions within the countries. This is done because not all Christians in a country that scores 41 points or more, are suffering to the same degree.

3. How many Christians are killed for their faith annually?

There is an ongoing debate about the number of martyrs or Christians killed for faith-related reasons. While some organizations publish numbers often as high as 100,000 Christian martyrs per year, or “one Christian killed every 5 minutes”, research by WWR reveals much lower numbers: (The numbers in the table below are global totals recorded within the WWL reporting period.)

WWL	Christians killed for faith-related reasons	Churches attacked
WWL 2014	2,123	1,111
WWL 2015	4,344	1,062
WWL 2016	7,106	2,425
WWL 2017	1,207	1,329
WWL 2018	See Article on Violent Incidents (available 8 December 2017).	

The numbers reported and listed are likely to be much lower than in reality. Here are some reasons why:

- The deaths or martyrdom of some Christians never reaches the public consciousness:
 - No one really knows about it;
 - Their death is simply not considered worth reporting;
 - Media coverage is deliberately blocked or distorted;
 - Media coverage is not deliberately blocked, but the information somehow gets lost;
 - The deaths are consciously not reported widely for security reasons (e.g. for the protection of local church leaders).
- In situations where Christians have been discriminated against for many years, conflict can make them additionally vulnerable. Christians killed in conflict areas are unlikely to be reported separately. Examples are Sudan and the Nuba people, also Christians in Syria.
- Christians who die through the deprivation of basic necessities such as clean water and medical care (due to long-term discrimination) are unlikely to be reported separately: Christians are not always killed directly; they can be so squeezed by regulations and other vulnerabilities that they die – not at once, but in the course of years. This often includes the deprivation of basic necessities such as clean water and medical care, or exclusion from government assisted socio-economic development projects. If we would include them in the counting, it would be an enormous number of people. However, the precise number of Christians who die due to these factors is very difficult to quantify.

More information on the [debate about the number of Christian martyrs](#) can be found in World Watch Monitor’s article dated 13 November 2013.

4. How does OD's definition of persecution compare with other definitions?

In its classical understanding persecution is carried out by the state or sponsored by the state. In reality that is usually not the case. Nowadays, the role of non-state actors has become massive in many ways – e.g. very radical groups like Islamic State, Boko Haram and al-Shabaab. But also a variety of other social actors could be mentioned: actors from civil society, such as ethnic group leaders, non-Christian religious leaders, church leaders, fanatical movements, ordinary citizens forming mobs, the extended family, political parties, revolutionaries, paramilitary groups, organised crime cartels or networks, or multilateral organizations.

There is no universally accepted definition of persecution. Courts, lawmakers and scholars have approached the concept from different angles. The preamble, the articles or the *Travaux Préparatoires* of the 1951 Refugee Convention do not define persecution. However, some have tried to put the bar high for a situation to be called persecution. The [United States Court of Appeals, Third Circuit \(1961\)](#) noted that the mere “repugnance of ... a governmental policy to our own concepts of religious freedom cannot ... justify our labelling such actions as ‘persecution’. [Persecution] should be taken to mean confinement, torture or death inflicted on account of race, religion, or political viewpoint.” [The Preparatory Commission for the International Criminal Court](#) also suggested that the bar has to be very high. It states: “The perpetrator severely deprived, contrary to international law, one or more persons of fundamental rights.” The WWL methodology, however, defines persecution as “any hostility experienced as a result of one’s identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians.”

The reason for national jurisdiction setting the bar very high is clear: If the standard was not set high, it might lead to a situation where the international community has to face the serious challenge of affording protection to very many people claiming ‘persecuted’ status. This fear of the international community has the flipside of underestimating the various dimensions of persecution, especially the continuous pressure Christians (and other minorities) might face in their different *spheres of life*. The WWL methodology intends to track, document, analyze and report about these challenges that Christians face in their daily lives.

5. Does ethnic cleansing apply to countries on the WWL Top 50?

Ethnic cleansing and the WWL Top 50 countries

The concept of *ethnic cleansing* based on religious affiliation might well apply to (part of) what is happening in a number of the WWL Top 50 countries. Sub-Saharan Africa is an example.

In a growing number of Sub-Saharan African countries *ethnic cleansing*, one of the most recent concepts under international criminal law, would seem to apply for the dynamics created by (political) Islam opposing the presence of Christians in what Muslims consider their territory within countries. *Ethnic cleansing* is when a competitor or those who differ in race, ethnicity or religion are forced to leave a given

area by different unlawful means. These can be murder, destruction of property, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, confinement of civilian population in ghetto areas, forcible removal, displacement and deportation of civilian population, extra-judicial executions, rape and deliberate military or other organized attacks, or threats of attacks on civilians or even *genocide*. The situations in northeastern Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan can be said to be typical examples, which in some cases are verging on *genocide*. WWR has published studies on *ethnic cleansing* based on religious affiliation in the countries: [Nigeria \(Middle Belt Region\)](#), [Kenya](#), and [Sudan](#).

It should be noted that even in contexts not defined as conflict, *ethnic cleansing* can be in process. Saudi Arabia is an example of this, notwithstanding the massive presence of Christian migrants in the country. The enormous pressure on converts from Islam to Christianity and isolation of Christian migrants from local Saudis, could be characterized as a form of *ethnic cleansing* based on religious affiliation.

Further research will reveal if *ethnic cleansing* based on religious affiliation could be considered a universal characteristic of the WWL top 50 or if it only applies to a limited number of specific countries.

Finally, it was said above that *ethnic cleansing* can even use acts of *genocide* as a means to force others to leave a given area. Some of the acts of persecution in some countries could be characterized as a genocide. An example is what happens in Sudan. Although WWR characterized the process going on in Sudan against Christians as ethnic cleansing based on religious affiliation, what the government of Sudan is doing against the Nuba-Christians is an example of what could be labelled *genocide*. Further research will further develop this element too.

Scope of ethnic cleansing

There is a popular misunderstanding about *ethnic cleansing*: Some think that *ethnic cleansing* can only be committed by the killing or forceful displacement (deportation) of a certain group. However, there are other means of committing the crime of *ethnic cleansing*.

- **Administrative measures:** Administrative measures such as imposing discriminatory and oppressive legal rules, dismissal of members of targeted groups from public service positions, providing no protection or ignorance when rights of such groups are violated, amount to systematic measures to cleanse certain groups off an area.²⁹
- **Intimidation (terrorizing) methods:** These acts usually, but not necessarily, are committed by armed civilians, soldiers or government agents and in most instances are committed against the law. Terrorizing methods towards the ethnic cleansing process include intimidation in the street,

²⁹ Pegorier, Clotilde: *Ethnic Cleansing: a Legal Qualification*, 135 (2013), available at <http://www.worldcat.org/title/ethnic-cleansing-a-legal-qualification/oclc/841914938?referer=di&ht=edition>.

arbitrary detention of selected target groups and destruction of cultural as well as religious monuments.³⁰

- **Other Non-violent methods:** The behavior of some perpetrators may not be inherently violent but sows fear and hatred among people. The dissemination of information that inflames hatred against certain group and threatening speeches against a targeted group by powerful group representatives are instances of non-violent methods.³¹ Another non-violent method, which is of relatively recent origin, is to release war prisoners on the condition that their families agree to leave a specified territory.³²

An example of ethnic cleansing evolving out of a process of Islamization can be seen in sub-Saharan African countries, where many Muslims live clustered together in majority-Muslim areas, or at least areas with tangible Muslim minorities. (This corresponds with advice given to Muslims by the Muslim Brotherhood writer Yusuf al-Qaradawi to live in ghettos, in his vision document 'Priorities of The Islamic Movement in The Coming Phase'.) Such ghettos facilitate the fight for the 'soul of Islam', which is a struggle to get Muslims to progress from being merely 'cultural' to 'devout' or from being 'moderate' to 'radical'. The ghettos provide very limited possibilities for Christians to live there, even less as converts to Christianity from a Muslim background. The ghettos also offer a suitable base for a gradual Islamization of surrounding areas.

Nigeria mirrors this situation. Currently infringements on the religious freedom of Christians occur in a variety of ways. Firstly, the rule of Sharia was unconstitutionally declared in 12 northern states. Local governments and social groups leave hardly any space for Christians to freely live their lives. This is exacerbated by Boko Haram atrocities in northern Nigeria, especially the six northeastern states, carrying out an anti-Christian agenda that could qualify as ethnic cleansing, if not genocide. In addition, Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen, often assisted by like-minded settlers, try to cleanse the Middle Belt of their original majority-Christian or African traditionalist inhabitants. This situation is a clear example of ethnic cleansing. Furthermore, mob violence all over northern Nigeria makes Christians vulnerable at any place and any time. Finally, a gradual expansion of political Islam over majority-Christian southern Nigeria with the intention to Islamize the South can be observed. Muslim leaders and their constituents pressure adherents of other religions via banking, businesses, symbolism, mosque-building, schools and NGOs to the extent that the Christians (and adherents of other religions) must either leave or gradually adopt Islamic mores and, in some cases, convert to Islam or resist this attempt to impose an Islamic identity on their land. Nigeria could be seen as a test case concerning the persecution dynamics of Islamic oppression in Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. Similar dynamics can be observed elsewhere at various levels and with different intensities.

³⁰ Petrovic, Drazen: Ethnic Cleansing- An Attempt at Methodology, 5 Eur. J. Int'l L. 1 (1994). p 5.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Bell-Fialkoff, Andrew: A Brief History of Ethnic Cleansing, Foreign Affairs, 1999.
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1993-06-01/brief-history-ethnic-cleansing>.

6. What is religious freedom?

Freedom of religion is a multidimensional concept and cannot stand alone. The modern legal concept of the multidimensionality of religious freedom can be derived directly from Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was later incorporated under Article 18 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) be it slightly modified:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

It is important to bear in mind that the presentation of freedom of religion in Article 18 is much broader than how it is commonly understood. To remind the world about the rich tenor of the article, the UN Human Rights Committee published a [general comment on Article 18](#), adopted by the Committee on 20 July 1993. The Swedish Mission Council (2010) produced a booklet entitled *“What freedom of religion involves and when it can be limited”*, which enumerates seven specific dimensions of religious freedom:

1. Freedom to have, choose, change or leave a religion or belief;
2. Freedom to manifest a religion or belief;
3. Freedom from coercion;
4. Freedom from discrimination;
5. Right of parents to give their children religious and moral education in accordance with their own beliefs;
6. Right to conscientious objection;
7. Freedom to practice one’s religious belief in the workplace.

The second point in this list includes a set of dimensions, which are in fact different types of religious behavior. This set of dimensions can encompass other fundamental human rights principles protected under international law. As there are:

- To worship or assemble in connection with a religion or belief, and to establish and maintain premises for these purposes.
- To establish religious, humanitarian and charitable institutions.
- To make, acquire and use articles and materials related to the rites or customs of a religion or belief, including to follow a particular diet.
- To write, issue and disseminate relevant publications.
- To teach a religion or belief in places suitable for the purposes and to establish theological seminaries or schools.
- To solicit and receive voluntary financial and other contributions.
- To train, appoint or elect leaders, priests and teachers.
- To celebrate religious festivals and observe days of rest.
- To communicate with individuals and communities on faith issues at national and international level.

- To display religious symbols including the wearing of religious clothing.

All points in this list refer to different forms of hostilities to which Christians can become vulnerable, whether directly in the form of violence (*smash*), or indirectly through restrictions of specific rights and freedoms (*squeeze*). Hostilities can be experienced in different *spheres of life*: *private sphere (forum internum)*, and *family, community, national and church spheres (forum externum)*.

7. How does persecution originate and develop?

The evolution of persecution was well described by the *Religious Economies Model* of Finke and Grim. In this model one can see that social groups and government are continuously reinforcing each other against religious minorities.³³ It normally starts with a specific social group in a country representing a specific religion or ideology trying to manipulate the government. From this beginning persecution begins to take root and develop.

The WWL team adapted the *Religious Economies Model*. Schematically, these would be the six stages of gradual development of most of the persecution engines:

1. A small, highly 'charged' social group representing a specific religion or ideology starts to spread their ideas at the expense of (an)other group(s). Often a social or political vacuum presents an excellent breeding ground for such ideas.
2. Fanatical movements grow out of this 'starter group' or assemble around them, and exert pressure on society and government through media strategies and/or physical mob attacks on elements of the other group(s). (These are not usually violent terrorist attacks without involvement of the general public, since these might otherwise alienate the general public from the 'sacred cause'.)
3. The violence disturbs society but governments and the security apparatus (police, military) leave the fanatical movements unpunished while blaming the other group(s) for being the cause of the social unrest by their mere existence. By doing this the government creates a climate of impunity for human rights abuses by those movements and their allies from the general public.
4. This reinforces the actions of the fanatical movements, and draws in more and more regular citizens. This leads to more pressure on the government to collaborate with their agenda, and also to more pressure and/or violence against the other group(s). Sometimes citizens will join out of fear instead of conviction.
5. In the end society and government (including the security apparatus and the judicial system) squeeze the members of the other group(s), to the point of (nearly) suffocating them. This extends to all spheres of life (private, family, community, national and church spheres) and all spheres of society (family, church, school, marketplace, media, arts & entertainment, health system and government).

³³ The Price of Freedom Denied, 2010, page 68ff.

6. Culture as a whole is taken over by the agenda of the highly ‘charged’ social group representing a specific religion or ideology (point 1), and the worldview that is intrinsically linked to this agenda becomes a main cultural source.

In the second point it said violent attacks, often instigated by fanatical movements, are done through mob mobilization. That is the case when persecution gradually develops in society, co-opting the government. In cases in which the aim is to overthrow governments – as Islamic State is doing – violent attacks are more in the context of a religious (or ideological) revolutionary movement. (Consequently steps 2 to 6 will then be different.)

The length of time that persecution engines take to develop from stages 1 to 6 can differ greatly depending on the specific context in the country, and on the type of persecution engine. It can also be a continuous or a discontinuous process and/or a clearly visible or more invisible process.

8. Are only Christians who evangelize persecuted?

Not at all. In the context of persecution it makes sense to distinguish the following profiles of Christians.

A. Convert to Christianity	B. Missionary active Christian	C. Christian by identity
<p>Someone who left his or her former religion or ideological background to become a Christian (can also concern change from one type of Christianity, often the majority type, to another)</p> <p>‘Defectors’, who leave the ranks of a criminal organization after conversion to Christianity, are also part of this profile.</p>	<p>Christian who is active in the public domain by evangelism, or by social or political activities as a Christian</p>	<p>Someone with a Christian identity (or considered a Christian by antagonistic groups such as radical Islamic groups)</p> <p>This can concern people who live as Christians within the boundaries of regular church life (‘passive’ Christian lifestyle). It can also concern people who are considered Christians since ages but hardly know what the Christian faith entails.</p>

The first Christian profile is the ‘convert to Christianity’. Conversion to Christianity often causes hostilities against Christians by dominating religious or ideological groups. Conversion is normally unacceptable for these groups, especially so when that religion or ideology has radicalized i.e. has created a radical momentum in its midst. WWR takes the concept of conversion broadly so as not to limit it to religion alone. Conversion is about someone leaving his or her religious or ideological group setting or even an ‘anti-ideological’ or anarchistic group setting linked for instance to organized crime, to become a Christian.

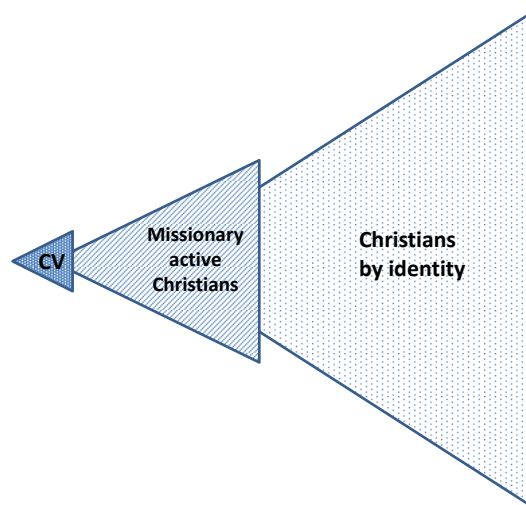
The second Christian profile is the ‘missionary active Christian’. These Christians are often active in different forms of evangelization. Christians can also be active in other forms of Christian witness in the public domain, because they feel driven by their faith, by their King and Savior. This can concern different aspects of social or political work, such as socio-economic development workers, leaders of public opinion, political leaders, journalists, lawyers, human rights advocates, indigenous rights advocates etc. Activity in the public domain, be it evangelization or socio-political work, activates annoyance or causes feelings of threat, while at the same time Christians expose themselves clearly in the local community as potential targets.

The third Christian profile is the ‘Christian by identity’. Whatever you say or do, or fail, is not important. It is sufficient to be considered a Christian as a reason for being targeted by persecutors. It can happen that people, who hardly know what the Christian faith entails, are pressurized, even killed for being (considered) Christians.

Gradual affection of Christian profiles by development of the persecution situation

Which Christian profile is affected by persecution depends more on the phase of development of the persecution situation than on the type of persecution engine. Converts normally are the first victims of persecution. For instance converts to Christianity from a Muslim background. Even when society is not yet Islamized and government has not yet adopted Sharia law, converts are very vulnerable in their private, family and community spheres of life. The same applies for ‘defectors’, be it that their community sphere of life is often more problematic than their private and family spheres of life. Following the converts are Christians who are missionary active in the public domain. When the persecution situation further develops, Christians by identity are affected too. In the end the visibility of Christianity in the public domain through churches and other Christian buildings is reduced by destruction and closure of buildings.

The figure shows how persecution often starts with converts, gets a boost with missionary active Christians and culminates with Christians by identity:

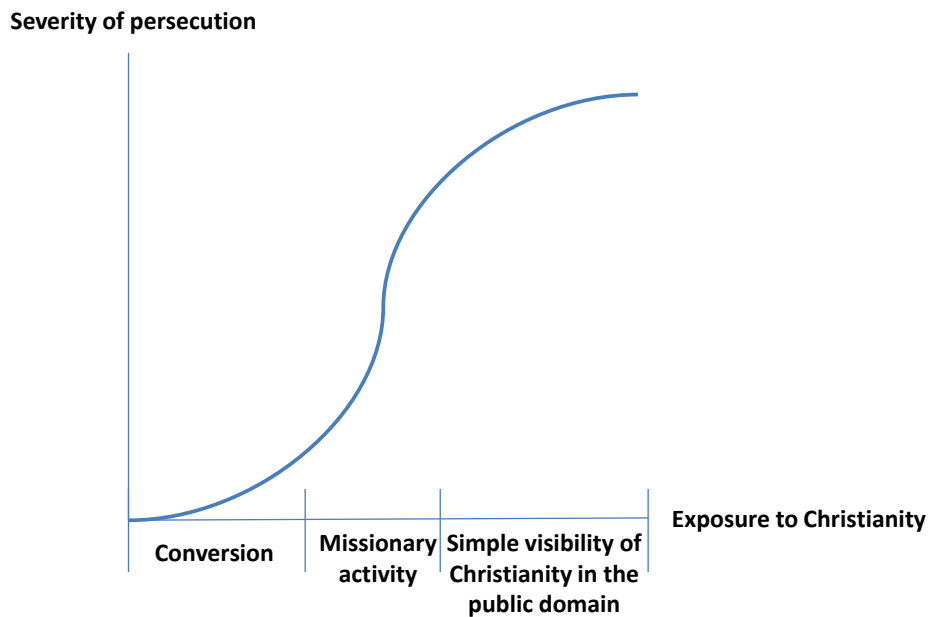


Otherwise said, converts put persecution into motion. Once people convert to Christianity, missionary activity is felt more and more as a threat and will thus be suppressed. If the Christian movement continues, all signs of Christianity in the country will be wiped out, be it Christian dress codes or church buildings or others.

Missionary activity as an accelerator of persecution

Missionary active Christians bring persecution to the public domain. While persecution of converts often starts in the inner circles of converts, persecution of missionary active Christians normally happens in direct relation to public activity. That gives missionary activity a special meaning in the framework of persecution. Missionary activity is a paradoxical reality of the Christian faith. It is the undeniable vocation of Christians and producing the fruits of obedience, but it also crystallizes social and governmental tendencies to safeguard vested interests through bitter persecution of these same Christians, and even others who were not involved in missionary activity.

Missionary activity not only brings persecution to the public domain, it also accelerates the dynamics of persecution. The following figure describes this persecution development curve:



The progress of persecution and the ‘role’ of missionary activity could be compared to the turning point of a titration curve (chemistry). Gradually increasing numbers of converts might cause a gradually increasing awareness that something is going wrong from the point of view of (religious) social leaders (including government). However, there is a buffer capacity in society for (religious) dissent. Only when things become obvious – converts get a higher profile while missionary activity is visibly present in the public domain – alarm bells might start ringing, and there could be a turning point in persecution in the

sense that it suddenly seems to increase disproportionately. The sheer visibility in the public domain of Christians, churches and other Christian buildings gives the final push to the development of persecution.

9. How do the duties of the State relate to persecution?

Of all entities, the State has a huge responsibility to make sure that human rights (Freedom of Religion or Belief in this case) are not violated. Generally speaking the State has the following duties:

- To respect – not breach or interfere with the enjoyment of the right
- To protect – stop and prevent violations
- To fulfill – adopt appropriate measures towards the full realization of rights; and the obligation to facilitate, provide and promote human rights.

The State has an active duty in terms of protecting the rights of Christians from different drivers (actors) of persecution. In the case where drivers of persecution are related to the persecution engines *Dictatorial paranoia* and *Secular intolerance* it is apparent that the State itself interferes with the right (duty to respect and protect). In the case where radical groups or militias violate rights of Christians, it means the government fails to protect, or even collaborates with these groups. It is clear that in these cases the State also fails to fulfill the right to Freedom of Religion or Belief.

10. What is meant by “persecution eclipse”?

This is a situation whereby persecution and civil conflict overlap to the extent that the former is in a real or imaginative sense overshadowed or rendered almost invisible by the latter. There are two typical contexts for *persecution eclipse*.

First, *persecution eclipse* arises when specific events are wrongly interpreted. Nigeria provides a clear example. Nigeria is a country with an alarming record of religiously-related violence. There is debate whether this is actually persecution, or just civil unrest. Is there an agenda of Islamization or is it about ‘environmental degradation and migration’? A paper, published by World Watch Monitor in June 2013, argues that this is a classic example of *persecution eclipse*. Additional reports on fact finding missions in the Nigerian Middle Belt further illustrate the case.³⁴

Secondly, *persecution eclipse* arises when conflicts catch international attention after their initial phases. An example is Boko Haram in Nigeria. In the beginning phases after its resurrection in 2010 Boko Haram killed government personnel (including security forces) and Christians. While government personnel (whether Muslims or Christians) were killed because they were linked to the government, Christians were killed because of their faith. When the international community caught attention of the situation, the

³⁴ See the three reports: <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Migration-and-Violent-Conflict-in-Divided-Societies-March-2015.pdf> , <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Violent-Conflict-in-Taraba-State-2013-2015.pdf> and <http://theanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Nigeria-Investigating-common-narratives-of-violent-conflict-in-Nasarawa-State-2016.pdf>. (Password: Freedom).

conflict had already spread to everyone (Muslims too) who was not a Muslim of the type of Boko Haram. Another example is Central African Republic in 2012/2013. Christians were cruelly persecuted by the Islamic terrorists of Séléka, on their way to power in Bangui, the capital of the country. International attention arose when the anti-Balaka (seen by some as a Christian militia) had started to commit revenge attacks on Muslims in Bangui. The origin of the conflict was then quickly forgotten, and the (near) entire blame was put on the (so-called) Christian militia.

11. Does the WWL sometimes confuse civil conflict with persecution?

Conflicts such as those in Central Africa, Nigeria, Iraq and Syria are presented on the WWL – at least partly – as situations involving the persecution of Christians. The question is if WWL is thereby confusing ethnic rivalry and civil conflict with persecution. How much of it is really religious persecution?

Nigeria is a typical example where ‘persecution’ and ‘civil unrest’, ‘Islamization’ and ‘environmental degradation and migration’ are confused. The country has, in recent years, earned the reputation of being a country with an alarming record of religiously-related violence. Numerous incidents of such violence have resulted in the wanton loss of lives and property, and inflicted pain and suffering on individual people and communities, as well as undermined the fabric of the society. No one seems to be in doubt about the far-reaching and appalling implications of this for religious freedom. However, the phenomenon has also triggered a debate among analysts and commentators about the question of whether the Nigerian situation is actually persecution, or just civil unrest. Is there an agenda of Islamization or is it about ‘environmental degradation and migration’?

A paper, produced for WWR by a Nigerian researcher (identity withheld for security reasons), argues that the Nigerian case is a classic example of what could be referred to as *persecution eclipse*. This is a situation whereby persecution and civil conflict overlap to the extent that the former is in a real or imaginative sense overshadowed or rendered almost invisible by the latter. Other papers illustrate the point for the [Nigerian Middle Belt region](#), see footnote 13. The researchers call the one-sided emphasis on environmental degradation and migration a “single story that gradually becomes the only story”. According to the researchers, “though environmental degradation might have played a part, the conflict appears to be inspired by Islamic religious propaganda to dominate Christian territories and bring them under the *darul Islam* (house of Islam).”

Nigeria is only one example, there are others. In the complex mix of factors and motives for hostilities against civilians, many commentators look at the situation of civilians in civil conflicts without considering a) the role of religious identity on the side of the victim and b) the religious motivation on the side of the perpetrator. Religion very often plays an important or even decisive role, without which the situation cannot be fully or correctly understood. This applies even when religion is not the only factor.

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4.3 Persecution Watch Countries

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It always needs to be emphasized that countries which are not part of the WWL Top 50 are not necessarily free from persecution. The Persecution Watch Countries are part of a group of countries included in the category “High persecution level” (scoring 41 – 60 points).

Overview of the WWL 2018 Persecution Watch Countries

	1. Private Life	2. Family Life	3. Community Life	4. National Life	5. Church Life	6. Violence	TOTAL SCORE WWL 2018
Country	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score
Comoros	11.7	11.5	9.1	9.4	13.9	0.4	56
Kyrgyzstan	11.7	9.5	10.0	8.1	11.6	2.8	54
Tanzania	10.1	10.3	10.1	9.5	9.0	3.9	53
Russian Federation	11.1	8.4	10.1	8.9	10.7	2.0	51
Morocco	10.4	11.5	7.6	8.8	12.0	0.6	51
Cuba	8.5	4.9	10.7	10.4	12.2	2.4	49
Uganda	10.9	8.7	9.5	8.7	4.8	3.9	46
Niger	9.9	9.7	9.0	7.0	7.1	2.6	45

Comoros

Persecution engines:

- **Islamic oppression:** The Constitution states that all public policies must be based on Islamic beliefs. Some legal provisions for religious freedom exist, but these are directed more towards foreigners than native Christians. Since the referendum on the Constitution in 2009, it has become visible that residents are adopting a more radical view of Islam, especially on the islands of Anjouan and Moheli. The rise of radical Islamic sympathies among the population at large, government officials, religious leaders and Muslim youth groups in particular, causes anxiety among Christians.
- **Dictatorial paranoia:** Since independence (from France) in 1975, Comoros has seen at least twenty coups or attempted coups. Thus, Comoros has a history of violence which has left the country desperately poor, and at times on the brink of disintegration. This history has also led to a paranoid state of mind among government officials. Considering the peaceful February-May 2016 election and transition, one might say that the country has become truly democratic. However, that would be a mischaracterization. The country's rulers are still known for suppressing freedom of association, religion, and expression - this is particularly true when it comes to restricting Christians' freedom in all walks of life.

Drivers of persecution:

- The machineries that drive persecution in the country are manifold. Muslim religious leaders are at the forefront. In mosques and madrassas, they regularly teach anti-Christian sentiments. Government officials have their share in this as they obligate parents to send their children to madrassas. They also prohibit Christians from engaging in religious discussion in public and preaching in public. Family and community members discriminate and harass suspected converts. They also deny worshipping space for Christians in general. An ultra-conservative group of Islamic scholars locally known as *Djaulas* (many of whom trained in Pakistan) is pushing the country to a more radical view of Sharia law in the country and are against Christians.

Who is affected and how:

- All Christian communities in Comoros face persecution, although the level and the types of persecution may differ. Christians in the country are expected not to discuss their faith in public. In some parts of the country, radical groups intimidate Christians with violence. However, violence is not common in the country, although this might change in the future. Proselytization by any religion except Islam is illegal and converts can be prosecuted. Converts to Christianity from a Muslim background face the severest difficulties at the hands of family, community leaders and

government officials. They are put under pressure not to practice their faith, leaving them little option but to live out their faith in secret.

Kyrgyzstan

Persecution engines:

- **Dictatorial paranoia:** No religious activities beyond state-run and state-controlled institutions are allowed. In 2009 a new Religion law was introduced bringing many restrictions for Christians. Since 2015 a new draft law on religion is under discussion which would make registration of congregations almost impossible as it would require at least 500 church members.
- **Islamic oppression:** Kyrgyzstan is much more traditional than many other countries in Central Asia. Pressure on Christians coming from Islamic circles is particularly aimed at Christian converts from a Muslim background. If indigenous people convert to Christianity, they will experience pressure and occasionally physical violence from their families, friends and local community to force them to return to Islam.

Drivers of persecution:

- Besides government officials driving the persecution engine Dictatorial paranoia, ethnic group leaders, extended family, non-Christian religious leaders and normal citizens are the drivers that can be connected to the oppression created by the Islamic environment especially on Christians with a Muslim background.

Who is affected and how:

- Christians with a Muslim background will take care not to draw unwanted attention to themselves, since family, friends and community will do their utmost to make converts recant their faith. Converts have been locked up in their homes to pressurize them into recanting. Known converts and non-traditional Protestants who are actively evangelizing will be monitored by the community. For church groups, registration is obligatory, but the biggest hurdle is that 200 signatures currently required to obtain registration, a demand that practically no church can meet.
- In the WWL 2018 reporting period, country researchers reported that one female convert to Christianity was killed by her brother. One church was attacked in Tokmak. One pastor was arrested. There were two reports on women being forced to marry – a common practice in Kyrgyzstan. Some 30 Christians were beaten – most by their families. 18 Christians had to go into hiding.

Tanzania

Persecution engines:

- **Islamic oppression:** The Union of Tanzania has two contrasting demographic realities. The majority of mainland Tanzanians are Christians, and the majority of the population on the island of Zanzibar are Muslims. In recent years, *Islamic oppression* has become more prominent, originating from Zanzibar and moving across the coast of mainland Tanzania. The radical Islamic group Uamsho (a Swahili acronym for the Association for Islamic Mobilization and Propagation) uses Zanzibar as a springboard to further its radical Islamic agenda in Tanzania. Uamsho and related groups aim to establish an Islamic state that includes Zanzibar and a significant section of Tanzanian mainland along the coast. In this new would-be Muslim state, there would be no place for Christians or people with other religious beliefs. It appears that the idea of this Islamic state is gaining popularity among Muslims even on the mainland. The influence of the radicals has even influenced the drafters of the Constitution (to be ratified by referendum) to include a provision that allows the establishment of Sharia courts in the whole country. At the moment Uamsho seems to have lost momentum as its leaders have been arrested or left their leadership role. However, the ideology it has implanted will continue to create problems both for Christians and the government of the country.

Drivers of persecution:

- The drivers of persecution in Tanzania are mainly those who subscribe to the radical ideology propagated by some Wahhabists in the country and members of Uamsho. Muslim family and community leaders are also drivers of persecution especially when it comes to converts from Islam. Government officials who buy into the Wahhabist ideology and some ethnic leaders are also to some extent drivers of persecution.

Who is affected and how:

- All Christian communities in Tanzania are experiencing persecution to some degree, however Christians with a Muslim background on Zanzibar are affected the most severely, where bullying, harassment and sometimes physical attacks have been observed. There have been waves of attacks against Christians and their property as well as churches over the last four years or so. On 30 April 2017, a Catholic church in the coastal region was broken into and property set on fire. A note was left containing a death-threat.

Russian Federation

Persecution engines:

- **Dictatorial paranoia:** Under president Putin, a former KGB officer, more and more restrictions are being introduced in the legislation. The authoritarian government continues to restrict freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion and other human rights.
- **Islamic oppression:** This is the most important persecution dynamic in the Caucasus region. In the various republics on the northern slopes of the Caucasus range (Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia) Islamic militants are fighting the Russian army to establish a Muslim emirate. Many ethnic Russians have left the area due to the violence. Churches have seen the number of their members drop. Christian converts from a Muslim background have to keep their faith secret for fear of being executed. The influence of radical Islam is also growing in Tatarstan, a region 800 kilometres east of Moscow.

Drivers of persecution:

- Government officials at various levels, normal citizens and political parties (especially the United Russia party of President Putin) are drivers of Dictatorial paranoia throughout the Russian Federation. Christians with a Muslim background experience additional (and much more intense) pressure from their Muslim environment, which is caused by ethnic group leaders, non-Christian religious leaders and extended family.

Who is affected and how:

- Officially, Russia is a secular state, but the regime is openly courting the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) to the disadvantage of other denominations (which are often regarded as foreign). In the Muslim regions, the situation is quite different: Here the rulers are explicitly courting Sunni Islam. Russia has one region where very conservative Islam is dominant: the North Caucasus. Here pressure on all Christians, but most specifically on converts from Islam, is very high. Conversion is strongly opposed. Many Christians have fled this region over the past decades. Converts living, for example, in Chechnya and Dagestan are considered to be traitors to their national identity, since Christianity is associated with the Russian occupiers, the 'enemy' in the guerrilla war that has been going on for decades.
- Non-traditional Christian communities have also frequently been targeted by the ROC for so-called sheep stealing. Protestant groups are often regarded as heretics by the ROC and as un-Russian, Western spies by the State. In Muslim areas, these Christians are often targeted because they are suspected of being active in evangelism.

- At least 10 Christians were physically attacked. 20 Christians were briefly detained by Russian police during the WWL 2018 reporting period, but none of them were sentenced to jail. One Christian from India and two from South Korea were extradited. One church and one Christian cemetery were damaged. Russian troops demolished a dilapidated Polish Catholic church and cemetery in Tsebelda, Abkhazia.
- In December 2016, the pastor of an unregistered Council of Churches Baptist congregation in Zabaikalsk Region was charged for not notifying the authorities of his group's activities. This carries a fine of up to 500 Rubles (less than \$10).

Morocco

Persecution engines:

- Islamic oppression: Although Muslim-majority Morocco is considered to be a relatively tolerant country (with the intensity and frequency of persecution being less compared to many other countries in the region), nevertheless Christians suffer persecution from both the state and society at large. A recurrent problem for Christians who are open about their faith relates to Article 220 of the Penal Code which criminalizes shaking the faith of a Muslim. This puts many Christians who talk to others about their faith at risk of criminal prosecution and arrest. However, on the positive side in the WWL 2018 reporting period, an important decision was made by Morocco's High Religious Committee: In its latest ruling, the Council has determined that apostasy is not an offense that should be punished by [death](#)³⁵.

Drivers of persecution:

- Islamic religious leaders and Islamist politicians are the main drivers of persecution. There are restrictions imposed by the State and radical Muslims within the general populace also put pressure on Christians. In rural areas, the pressure coming from the extended family and the community at large can also be considerable, especially on converts from Islam.

Who is affected and how:

- Persecution mainly affects Christian converts from a Muslim background although restrictions also apply to the small historical Catholic and expatriate communities in the country. Many Moroccans who have converted to Christianity live in urban areas and enjoy relatively more freedom than

³⁵ <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/02/207505/moroccos-high-religious-committee-says-apostates-should-not-be-killed/>

Christians in rural areas. In the WWL 2018 reporting period, there were a few instances of Christians being forced to leave their homes and go into hiding and even leave the country. Political analysts have also observed that while the law only punishes proselytization, converts to Christianity can be punished in other ways, for instance through losing child custody and inheritance rights.

- Advocates for the rights of Christians have been targeted for violent attack by radical Islamic militants. On 4 November 2016, Mohammed Saeed Zao, a well-known activist for the rights of Christians, survived a knife-attack in Casablanca. Although the incident was reported to the police, they refused to take up the [issue](#), calling him a troublemaker.³⁶

Cuba

Persecution engines:

- **Communist and post-Communist oppression:** Due to a progressive opening to the world market in recent years, the main socialist aspects of the regime have gradually decreased, which has meant a major move away from the State's original policies. Nonetheless, since the country is still ruled according to Communist postulates, the idea of a paternalistic state remains and until now it continues applying a socialist economic model, with a predominance of the central level and the state enterprise. This provides no possibility of entrepreneurship for its citizens and means the continued censorship of independent journalism and freedom of conscience and the limitations of most civil and social rights in general.
- **Dictatorial paranoia:** Cuba has in practice become a Communist dictatorship. Thus, Raul Castro's government is trying to control the private and public life of Cubans and any indication of opposition to the regime by Christians or others will be investigated and dealt with harshly. The desire to maintain a system of total monitoring has resulted in excessive repression and the infringement of citizens' rights; anyone contradicting or questioning the leaders and their power - whether for reasons of faith or otherwise - suffers relentless harassment, is eventually classed as an enemy of the regime and is targeted by the State.
- **Organized corruption and crime:** Due to the strict application of the law and the severe penalties imposed, there are no large crime networks on the Island. However, corruption has become a part of daily life at every level. Not only the management of the high-level official's accounts - among other perks - is totally free of any regulatory system, but most citizens are forced to "find solutions" with whatever they have at hand. Accessing the black market and bribing officials is very often the

³⁶ See: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/coe/morocco-christian-survives-assassination-attempt/>

only way to get things done. Everyone, including Christians, cannot avoid taking part in this in order to survive. So when the government wants to build a case against Christians, they can easily accuse them of buying on the black market.

- **Secular Intolerance:** The government restricts groups seeking to defend of human rights, regarding itself the source of all norms and values. Anyone disagreeing is seen as an enemy of the regime. Additionally, the government is launching a strong LGBTI agenda through social reforms and registered “churches”. The latter are members of the Cuban Council of Churches who have a liberal theology and accept LGBTI policies.

Drivers of persecution:

- The main driver is the government and its officials. Given that regime the pushes for exclusive power at all levels, its agenda affects Christians since the authorities attempt to control both the Cuban citizen's public and private life. The government seeks to control every activity on the island, including church activities - through the Office of Religious Affairs (ORA) – which even means a strict monitoring and censorship of all sermon content. The main method used by the government to maintain power is the indoctrination of children and youth. This is the best method to win future supporters and is the reason why education through the state system is mandatory. No other kind of education is possible in the country.
- Other drivers of persecution are related to society and include normal citizens sympathizing with the Communist party, who feel obliged to inform the authorities about actions taken "against the postulates of the regime". Other drivers are from religious groups such as “santeros” (who practice [Santeria](#)³⁷) who may retaliate against converts to Christianity. Also, persecution may come from the extended family, when they betray and accused their “dissident” relative fearing State reprisals. Finally, persecution comes as well from the Communist Party of Cuba, especially when claims or proposals presented on behalf of ordinary citizens are used as an excuse for penal or civil prosecution.

Who is affected and how:

- All forms of church are affected by the government control. Compared to WWL 2017, in the WWL 2018 reporting period there were more arrests of Christians attending unregistered meetings and of Christians expressing disagreement with the regime. Also, some Christians considered to be opponents of the regime were removed from their jobs. In addition, secular ideology has become more influential through the imposition of LGTBI content in the educational field.
- On 20 February 2017, police once more detained over 50 "Ladies in White" as they were on their way to attend a church service. "Ladies in White" are a peaceful opposition movement in Cuba founded in 2003 by female relatives of 75 jailed dissidents. The women protest against the

³⁷ See: <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Santeria>, last accessed 19 September 2017.

imprisonments by attending Catholic Mass each Sunday wearing white clothes (the color symbolizing peace) and silently marching through the streets in a group afterwards.

- On 20 March 2017, the leader of the Christian Liberation Movement (MCL), was sentenced to three years in prison after publicly criticizing Fidel Castro, shortly after the latter's death. Similarly,
- On 27 April 2017, a 20 year old Cuban student returning from the United States was arrested by the police at the airport, accused of terrorism, and later expelled from the university. He belonged to a Christian-based academic society and had submitted a report on religious freedom violations in Cuba to the United States International Religious Freedom Commission (USCIRF).
- In May 2017, Mariela Castro (daughter of the president) led a campaign to promote LGBTBI content within the school curriculum. In the same month, and as a way of reinforcing the power of the regime over the Church, a special LGBTBI-"Catholic communion service" was authorized, celebrated by three transgender women.

Uganda

Persecution engine:

- **Islamic oppression:** This engine can be divided into two: (i) the rise in radical Islamic activities in the country and (ii) the harmful activities of the Allied Democratic Forces. According to an Open Doors researcher, the Tabliqs (a sect of puritanical Muslims whose members portray themselves as Muslim evangelists) "have continued to advance the cause of Islam in areas like Mbale, Kasese, Arua/Yumbe. From its base in East Democratic Republic of Congo (East DRC), Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an armed force established by Tabliqs, has been creating fear among Christians. The group has recruited many youths from Uganda. The most difficult aspect of this is that the presence of the group is creating an environment of intolerance. Ugandan Muslims were not intolerant in the past. But, those who sympathize with ADF are preaching the idea of having an Islamic state in Uganda and in a part of DRC, and this is taking away the culture of tolerance. In the eastern part of the country, there has been pressure on Christians from the Muslim community who oppose the presence of churches in their areas. Converts are often targeted, as are church leaders.

Drivers of persecution:

- The drivers of persecution are non-Christian religious leaders, fanatical groups, some governed officials, some church leaders and family members (especially when a member becomes a convert

from Islam to Christianity). All these drivers exert pressure on Christians in the different *Spheres of life* with varying magnitude.

Who is affected and how:

- All Christian groups living in areas affected by the presence of Islamic radical tendencies face persecution. Converts in particular face major problems and find it difficult to live a normal life. For example, owning Christian materials or discussing their faith with family members or community members was often matched by expulsion, serious physical attacks and even death. Bullying and harassment have been very common in eastern parts of the country.
- In the WWL 2018 reporting period, two Christians were killed by radical Muslims and two churches were attacked and damaged.

Niger

Persecution engine:

- Islamic oppression: This engine is evident in both radical Islamic activity and Islamic family and business life.

Drivers of persecution:

- Drivers of Islamic oppression are militant groups like Boko Haram and radical Islamic teachers who influence ordinary members of society. Ordinary citizens and state officials (in some parts of the country and at the local level) also contribute to the persecution of Christians.

Who is affected and how:

- Niger is home to three WWL categories of Christianity: Historical Christian communities; communities of converts to Christianity (from a Muslim background) and non-traditional Christian communities. Sometimes the pressure on Christians only affects converts – for instance, ostracization by family members including denial of inheritance rights and also abduction and forced marriage. Sometimes all three types of Christianity are affected, for instance in renting properties for residence or business purposes.
- The persecution of Christians has worsened in some parts of the country while the situation has improved in others. In places like Niamey, the capital city, the treatment of Christians has improved slightly. However, in areas where the influence of Islamists is prominent such as Diffa, it has increasingly become difficult for Christians, particularly those who are businesspeople. In Diffa and Tahoua regions the situation is worsening because militant Islamic groups are in control of some areas. In regions like Zinder, Christians suffer from harassment by ordinary citizens. In

Maradi, Tahoua, Dosso, Niamey and Tillabery the effect of such harassment is minimized due to the campaign for peaceful cohabitation between Muslims and Christians organized by the government.

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4.4 Policy Considerations

WWL 2018 Policy Considerations (selection for publication)

The following list follows the WWL 2018 ranking.

1. North Korea

WWL 2018 Points 94 / Rank: 1

- Reports show that large numbers of Christians are held in labor camps. The international community should strongly denounce the existence of these labor camps and put pressure on the North Korean government to close them and to restore justice to the victims.
- Sanctions and international isolation have not stopped underground exports from North Korea to China and have resulted in greater tension with North Korea and a worsening situation for the population, including Christians. In the current context, China is wary of implementing sanctions, and the government is reducing space for negotiation in all areas, including religious freedom. Therefore, the international community should ensure cooperation and a common effort to engage in direct negotiation with the North Korean government and refrain from military pre-emptive approaches.
- The international community should work with countries allied to North Korea to put pressure on the government to release any imprisoned Christian foreigners.
- The Seoul UN field base and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should request permission to carry out prison visits with a view to including the situation of Christian prisoners, in line with international law requirements to hold routine prison monitoring.
- The Seoul UN field base and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea might use their position to examine the persecution of Christians in North Korea to provide fuller reporting on the situation, to call on the regime to allow access to Christians held in forced labor camps and prisons and to call for their eventual release.
- China should stop the forced repatriation of North Korean refugees and uphold their full human rights, including access to housing, education and religious freedom.
- The international community should examine the human rights situation of North Korean refugees and fully investigate claims of human trafficking and slavery.

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2. Afghanistan

WWL 2018 Points 93 / Rank: 2

- The EU, as the biggest financial contributor to Afghanistan’s National Action Plan for Women, should establish indicators for religious freedom, then monitor and report on progress across all religious groups and minorities. The EU and UNSCR should hold the government of Afghanistan accountable to setting timelines, benchmarks and institutions responsible for implementation of the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325.2.
- While Open Doors welcomes the ambitious reform agenda of the Afghan government, the government should ensure that all religious groups are treated as full citizens before the law, and are thus included in the vision to enable citizens to exert their constitutional rights with confidence. (The reform agenda is presented in the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework [ANPDF].)
- While Open Doors welcomes the opening up to civil society participation in the development of policy and accountability structures, the government and international community should make a firm commitment to guarantee the participation of religious leaders and faith-based organizations.
- While Open Doors welcomes the commitment to inclusive development, poverty alleviation and economic growth, and call for the EU and international community donors of significant funding for Afghanistan to monitor and review progress against international Freedom of Religion or Belief standards. Commitments made under the ANPDF should be applied equally to people of all religious beliefs, discrimination on the grounds of religious belief or conversion should be penalized.
- The government of Afghanistan and the international community should mainstream equality for all religious groups into the strong and positive commitment to women’s participation and empowerment, and full access to quality education for all. (ANPDF 5.6)
- As the EU Council seeks to stem migration and aid Afghanistan in refugee efforts, a firm commitment is needed to human rights obligations to guarantee asylum for those fleeing religious persecution.
- The EU and international donors supporting Afghanistan in the ANPDF and Self-Reliance Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF) should make their financial and political contributions conditional to the respect and protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief.
- The Afghan government should implement the significant human rights commitments made under SMAF and enshrine people of all religions as equal under law.
- The Afghan government should deliver on citizen-based monitoring of development and governance benchmarks, with full participation of Christians and all religious groups.
- The Afghan government should implement the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) indiscriminately of religious belief, with particular attention to religiously motivated abuses.
- The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) should hold the Afghanistan government accountable to Article 57 of the Special Report on the 23 July 2016 attacks calling for

increased efforts to protect all ethnic and religious communities and to bring legal action against any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.

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3. Somalia

WWL 2018 Points 91 / Rank: 3

The issues in Somalia are very complex and it is important that a balanced approach is made on a variety of fronts:

- The UN should not only extend the presence of AU troops in the country, it should also urge the Somali government to respect the rights of minorities, especially religious minorities.
- Some Middle Eastern countries are trying to establish their military bases in the country. It is very important that these countries help Somalia protect minorities in the country.
- The protection of minorities in Somalia must be a part of any post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

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4. Sudan

WWL 2018 Points 87 / Rank: 4

The government of Sudan does not show any willingness to cease its animosity toward Christians. Open Doors suggests the following policy considerations:

- The US State Department should continue designating the country as CPC.
- THE USCIRF should continue recommending the designation of the country as CPC.
- It has been found that EU countries are directly dealing with the government of Sudan with respect to controlling migrants that cross through Sudan. The Sudanese government is using part of that fund to finance Janjaweed fighters. EU countries must insist on high level accountability when it comes to respecting human rights.
- The government of Sudan must be pressed to stop arresting, harassing and intimidating Christians.
- The government of Sudan must cease the demolition of churches immediately.

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5. Pakistan

WWL 2018 Points 86 / Rank: 5

- In line with its commitments under the ICCPR³⁸, the government of Pakistan should repeal the 1986 blasphemy laws which are broadly and vaguely defined, used largely to imprison religious minorities, and are frequently applied on the basis of false accusations. The government should protect the judges dealing with blasphemy cases and guarantee a fair trial.
- Asia Bibi is still on death-row. The international community should request the immediate release of Asia Bibi and others from religious minorities imprisoned under the blasphemy laws.
- The government of Pakistan should respond to the questions of the UN Human Rights Committee on Pakistan's human rights with a concrete plan on the blasphemy laws, honor killings, and physical and sexual attacks on religious minorities which are often used for forcible conversion.
- The UN and international community should urge the government of Pakistan to grant and implement protection and rights for girls and women of religious minorities.
- The government of Pakistan should expand the National Action Plan to Combat Terrorism to include the promotion of rights for religious minorities and interfaith participation in education, business and politics as the prerequisite for peace and stability.
- Given the frequency of violent incidents at family and local community level against Christians, the government should develop measures to fully investigate attacks and end impunity.
- Given the frequency of threats, reported attacks and the fear that Christians undergo, the government should end its silence on such incidents, accept that they are happening and seek ways of changing the mind-set of those who initiate such actions.

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6. Eritrea

WWL 2018 Points 86 / Rank: 6

The Eritrean government has isolated itself and the people from the international community in many ways. The many condemnations have not yet brought any meaningful results. Yet it is important to continue doing so:

- The US State Department should continue designating the country as CPC.
- THE USCIRF should continue recommending the designation of the country as CPC.
- The government of Eritrea must be pressed to stop arresting, harassing and intimidating Christians.

¹ ICCPR = The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - an international human rights treaty adopted by the United Nations in 1966.

- The government of Eritrea must be pressed to release all Christians in jail.
- The government of Eritrea should be urged to allow international observers and investigators to enter the country.

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7. Libya

WWL 2018 Points 86 / Rank: 7

Taking into account the persecution dynamics in Libya, Open Doors suggests the following policy recommendations:

- Strengthening state institutions is essential for rebuilding the country and ensuring fundamental rights including the freedom of religion. Therefore, the international community should redouble its efforts to strengthen state institutions and bring an end to the state of anarchy in Libya. Efforts at strengthening the state and resolving the conflict should also be accompanied by requirements concerning guarantees of the protection of the rights of minorities, including Christians.
- The international community should ensure that the UN-backed government in Tripoli (as well as other actors in Libya which are exercising state powers) fights impunity for the gross human rights violations and upholds the rights of minorities, including Christians.
- The UN and international community should monitor the activities of militia groups which seek to attack or reduce the freedom of religion or belief, and hold accountable those who are responsible for gross violations of human rights including freedom of religion.

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8. Iraq

WWL 2018 Points 86 / Rank: 8

Open Doors suggests the following recommendations:

- The KRG and Iraqi government should ensure future legal frameworks in the countries fully promote and protect the equal and inalienable rights of all their citizens, irrespective of race, religion or other status. Thereby:
 - Endorsing by law the creation of a National Accountability Mechanism to monitor instances of discrimination based on religious or ethnic belonging, and to ensure accountability for violations.

- Fully applying Article 14 of the Iraqi Constitution which recognizes and upholds the equal rights and status of people of all religions before the law without discrimination.
- The international community and local governments should ensure the dignified and continued improvement of living conditions for all citizens, but especially for the refugees and internally displaced – including the provision of adequate housing, education and jobs. Thereby:
 - Instigate and encouraging flexible funding opportunities to allow a variety of well-coordinated, non-partisan, in-country Faith and Community Based Organizations (FBOs/CBOs), such as churches and mosques, to provide access to food, safe drinking water and essential medical supplies; regain normality by initiating a variety of locally-appropriate psycho-social care, reconciliation and community-building projects amongst the displaced; and initiate rehabilitation and reconstruction activities, such as housing repair and income-generating projects. EU delegations and large NGO consortia managing local calls for proposals and funding should include faith-based organizations and religious leaders in their increased engagement with local CBOs and minority aid organizations.
 - Ensuring that the government discourse and education curricula in Iraq affirms religiously pluralistic society which promotes tolerance, respect and peaceful coexistence between people of all religions and ethnicities.
 - All donors, the EU and its Member States ensuring they fulfil commitments to deliver humanitarian assistance swiftly, and with the express inclusion of local civil society and faith-based groups and aid organizations.
- The international community along with the KRG and Iraqi governments should identify and equip religious leaders and faith-based organizations to play a constructive and central role in reconciling and rebuilding Iraqi society, thereby:
 - Supporting the establishment of a grass-roots Peace Program, with projects run by faith-based organizations and other active civil society organizations. The program should support and equip existing peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives in Syria and Iraq, and promote the valuable role of civil society in restoring peace to both countries.
- The EU and Iraqi government should uphold the human rights focus of their Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, ensuring that religious freedom as a fundamental human right is protected in all strategies to combat terrorism and boost security.
- The EU and Iraqi government should ensure that the humanitarian law and refugee law instruments mainstreamed in the EU-Iraq Partnership Cooperation Agreement are fully implemented in refugee and IDP policies.
- The international community should ensure follow-up reporting on EU Member State responses to the call of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and European Parliament to undertake a stronger commitment to finding protection for refugees fleeing due to persecution on religious or ethnic grounds through resettlement, humanitarian admission schemes, simplified family reunification or more flexible visa regulations.

- The European Parliament and UN should continually monitor and report on atrocities committed against Christians and Yazidis.³⁹
- The EU External Action Service (EEAS), EU Member States and European Commission should respond urgently to the European Parliament Resolution calling for a repatriation plan for religious groups.

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9. Yemen

WWL 2018 Points 85 / Rank: 9

Open Doors recommends:

- The international community should put the issue of religious freedom and the protection of religious minorities on the agenda of future peace negotiations and should systematically raise this issue in bilateral discussions.
- The international community should highlight the human tragedy caused by the Yemeni conflict, place it high on its agenda and increase the necessary humanitarian assistance. The vulnerability of Christians as targets of the warring Islamic militants should be of particular concern.
- The international community should work together with both the de facto government and the exiled government of Yemen to restore the rule of law and stability in the country.
- The growing influence of various Islamist groups (mainly al-Qaeda but also Islamic State and Shia radical groups) in Yemen is a source of concern. The international community should closely monitor the situation in the country and hold regional powers such as Saudi Arabia and Iran accountable for the role they play in the country and urge them to cease their support of the violence, and work to prevent the empowerment of groups with a radical agenda who are seeking to take advantage of the anarchic situation in Yemen.

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³⁹ On 21 September 2017 the UN Security Council voted unanimously to create an investigative team to collect evidence of genocide and war crimes committed against civilians by IS members. See: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/>, last accessed 22 September 2017.

10. Iran

WWL 2018 Points 85 / Rank: 10

Open Doors recommends that:

- The international community, taking advantage of the improved diplomatic relations with the West, should urge the government of Iran to recognize all minority religions as full citizens before the law enjoying their full human rights including the ethnic Persian believers.
- The human rights situation should be addressed in the contact between Iran and Western countries, especially now more and more Western business are investing in Iran, with a mainstreamed emphasis on Freedom of Religion or Belief. The increasing frequency of multimedia hate campaigns should be denounced and penalized.
- The international community should hold the Iranian government accountable to uphold these international and constitutional commitments to protect the freedom of Christians in its territories. Closing churches, appropriating church property, arresting church leaders and threatening churchgoers are violations of Freedom of Religion or Belief proscribed in Article 18 of the ICCPR, to which Iran is a signatory. Article 13 of Iran's Constitution says Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians are recognized religious minorities free to perform religious rites and ceremonies. Article 23 of Iran's Constitution says: "investigation of individuals' beliefs is forbidden, and no one may be molested or taken to task simply for holding a certain belief."
- At least 52 Christians were arrested in the WWL 2018 reporting period, many have been imprisoned and faced physical and psychological torture during interrogation. The international community should press for the immediate release of the prisoners and legal justice for violence committed in prisons.

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11. India

WWL 2018 Points 81 / Rank: 11

- The international community should urgently integrate concern for religious freedom into bilateral and multilateral business contracts with India.
- The international community should put pressure on the Indian government to remove the Presidential order of 1950 that unconstitutionally excludes Christians (and Muslims) from privileges entitled to people from Scheduled Caste background.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Indian law provides all people belonging to Scheduled Castes/tribes special rights and privileges for enhancing their position in society. Such rights and privileges are curtailed at once when a Scheduled Caste person changes his/her religion to Christianity.

- The central Indian government should press states that have adopted anti-conversion laws to repeal them. The states in question are Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Gujarat.
- The Indian state governments should investigate and prosecute those who are responsible for the killings, raping and kidnapping of Christians.
- The Indian state governments should investigate the damage caused to churches and Christians' property after they have suffered attack. Additionally, special instructions should be given to the police and district administrations to insure the future safety of churches.

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12. Saudi Arabia

WWL 2018 Points 79 / Rank: 12

Open Doors recommends:

- The international community should engage with the Saudi government to call for provisions in the Constitution and basic laws to protect religious minorities and decriminalize conversions.
- The country's legislation and Constitution severely restrict Christian gatherings and the distribution of religious literature, in contrary to the principles of the ICCPR. Therefore, the international community should press the Saudi government to grant religious freedom to its citizens.
- The international community should press Saudi Arabia to fully investigate and punish verbal, physical and sexual abuse by employers of their domestic workers from South East Asia and Africa. Some of these are Christians and face extra vulnerability.
- Companies working with the Saudi government should take all available opportunities to discuss the status of Christians in the kingdom.
- The Saudi government should put in place a mechanism to hold the religious police accountable for violations of freedom of religion.

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13. Maldives

WWL 2018 Points 78 / Rank: 13

- The government of Maldives should uphold the citizens' right to change one's religion.
- Article 9 (d) of the Constitution which states that a non-Muslim may not become a citizen of the Maldives would mean converts would lose their citizenship, thus, the government should amend this provision.
- Countries that do business, especially pertaining to tourism, with the government of Maldives should discuss the issue of religious freedom with the country's leaders, and integrate the Freedom of Religion or Belief standards in their business policy.
- The international community, with the guidance of the UN Special Rapporteur Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, should raise awareness of the situation of religious minorities in the Maldives and attacks against the Special Rapporteur should be strictly condemned by all political players in the country.
- The UN, through the Special Rapporteur Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, should call for the Maldives to repeal the Defamation law ratified in August 2016 in line with international Freedom of Religion or Belief.
- The international community should cooperate with the Maldives to develop a de-radicalization plan for Islamic fighters returning from the Middle East.
- Open Doors welcomes the Maldives' pioneering role in the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, crucial for the prevention and stemming of extremism. The UN in Maldives and UN Security Council should address Freedom of Religion or Belief under the Resolution as a fundamental right for youth and cornerstone for peace and security.
- The UN in Maldives should report on and press the government to comply with Freedom of Religion or Belief as a signatory to and active supporter of the Sustainable Development Goals: Ensuring (10.2) social, economic and political inclusion for Christian minorities and (16.10) guarantees of the fundamental freedoms under international law.

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14. Nigeria

WWL 2018 Points 77 / Rank: 14

Taking into account the persecution dynamics, in Nigeria, Open Doors suggests the following policy recommendations:

- The Federal and individual state governments should instigate safeguards to ensure that religion will not be used or allowed to be used to promote injustice, impunity and discrimination. The international community should monitor the application of this principle.

- The Federal and individual state governments should ensure equal treatment, development, and economic empowerment of all entities within the states of Nigeria, both those local to the state and those displaced from elsewhere.
- The Federal and individual state governments should ensure needs-based assistance, rehabilitation and reconstruction is provided to victims of Boko Haram and Fulani herdsman attacks and other forms of targeted violence, regardless of location.
- The Federal Government and individual states should put in place measures and programs to protect women's rights, tackle GBV, abduction of girls, forced marriages and also for the rehabilitation and support of girls and women who had experienced such abuse and attacks.

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15. Syria

WWL 2018 Points 76 / Rank: 15

Open Doors suggests the following recommendations:

- The Syrian government – or any future post-settlement government, should ensure future legal frameworks in the countries fully promote and protect the equal and inalienable rights of all their citizens, irrespective of race, religion or other status. Thereby:
 - Endorsing by law the creation of a National Accountability Mechanism to monitor instances of discrimination based on religious or ethnic belonging, and to ensure accountability for violations.
 - Fully applying Article 14 of the Iraqi Constitution which recognizes and upholds the equal rights and status of people of all religions before the law without discrimination.
- The international community and local governments should ensure the dignified and continued improvement of living conditions for all citizens, but especially for the refugees and internally displaced – including the provision of adequate housing, education and jobs. Thereby:
 - Instigate and encouraging flexible funding opportunities to allow a variety of well-coordinated, non-partisan, in-country Faith and Community Based Organizations (FBOs/CBOs), such as churches and mosques, to provide access to food, safe drinking water and essential medical supplies; regain normality by initiating a variety of locally-appropriate psycho-social care, reconciliation and community-building projects amongst the displaced; and initiate rehabilitation and reconstruction activities, such as housing repair and income-generating projects. EU delegations and large NGO consortia managing local calls for proposals and funding should include faith-based organizations and religious leaders in their increased engagement with local CBOs and minority aid organizations.

- Ensuring that the government discourse and education curricula in Syria affirms religiously pluralistic society which promotes tolerance, respect and peaceful coexistence between people of all religions and ethnicities.
- All donors, the EU and its Member States ensuring they fulfil commitments to deliver humanitarian assistance swiftly, and with the express inclusion of local civil society and faith-based groups and aid organizations.
- The international community along with the local government should identify and equip religious leaders and faith-based organizations to play a constructive and central role in reconciling and rebuilding Iraqi society, thereby:
 - Supporting the establishment of a grass-roots Peace Programme, with projects run by faith-based organisations and other active civil society organisations. The programme should support and equip existing peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives in Syria and Iraq, and promote the valuable role of civil society in restoring peace to both countries.
 - help the population regain normality by initiating a variety of locally-appropriate psycho-social care, reconciliation and community-building projects amongst the displaced;
 - initiate rehabilitation and reconstruction activities, such as housing repair and income-generating projects.
- All donors from the EU and its member states should ensure they fulfil commitments to deliver humanitarian assistance swiftly, and with the express inclusion of local civil society and faith-based groups and aid-organizations.⁷
- The international community should ensure follow-up reporting on EU member state responses to the call by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and by the European Parliament to undertake a stronger commitment to finding protection for refugees fleeing persecution on religious or ethnic grounds through resettlement, humanitarian admission schemes, simplified family reunification or more flexible visa regulations.
- The European Parliament and UN should continually monitor and report on atrocities committed against Christians.
- The EU External Action Service (EEAS), EU Member States and European Commission should respond urgently to the European Parliament Resolution calling for a repatriation plan for religious groups.

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16. Uzbekistan

WWL 2018 Points 73 / Rank: 16

Open Doors suggests the following recommendations be made:

- The international community, UN Human Rights Council and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) should strongly denounce and call for a repeal of the amendments to the Criminal and Administrative Code ratified 26 April 2016, which make it possible to punish those who publish, disseminate and broadcast allegedly extremist religious materials with prison terms of between five and eight years with possible fines of 300 to 400 times the minimum monthly wage. The laws have been used to target Muslims and other religious groups.
- The OSCE should call the government of Uzbekistan to account, insisting that it complies with commitments to combat violent extremism and terrorism by adopting a human rights-based approach. Criminal Code Article 244-1 should specify which “religious extremist or terrorist groups” are meant in order to remove the possibility of targeting any religious group at will on this legal basis.
- As part of the New Partnership Agreement with Central Asia, the EU should, alongside OSCE and UN participants, press the government of Uzbekistan to cease all religious censorship and torture, and decriminalize by law the possession of religious literature and its dissemination. Full freedom of religious belief should be enshrined in law and guaranteed in practice.
- The prohibitive registration requirements for religious associations should be abolished, and the monitoring of religious activities that do not threaten national security should cease. This concerns specifically: Administrative Code Article 240 ("Violation of the Religion Law", dating from 1998) and the 2003 decree that restricts the activities of faith-based NGOs should be repealed.

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17. Egypt

WWL 2018 Points 70 / Rank: 17

Taking in to account the persecution dynamics in Egypt, Open Doors suggests the following policy recommendations:

- The government and parliament should legislate and enforce laws to prohibit and prevent the unofficial customary-law sessions which often lead to collective punishments for the actions of an individual and unfair decisions since minority rights are not guaranteed in these sessions.
- The international community should urge Egypt to review all legislation restricting freedom of religion or belief, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, to be compatible with the obligations and principles of ICCPR and other relevant treaties to which Egypt is a signatory.

- Specifically, the review of the Civic Association Law of 15 November 2016 should be reviewed, as in implementation it may give rise to curtailed space for NGOs, a punitive registration system and lack of freedom of association as laid out in ICCPR Article 22.

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18. Vietnam

WWL 2018 Points 69 / Rank: 18

There are no Open Doors recommendations available for publication.

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19. Turkmenistan

WWL 2018 Points 68 / Rank: 19

Open Doors suggests the following recommendations be made:

- The government of Turkmenistan has so far rejected the recommendation of the UN Human Rights Council (CCPR/C/TKM/CO/1, para. 17), and should now act upon the UN Human Rights Committee's list of issues for consideration of July 2016 (point 21 and 22 specifically) in the framework of ICCPR articles 2, 18 and 26.
- The focus on Freedom of Religion or Belief issues of the UN Human Rights Council is to be welcomed. However, the government authorities in Turkmenistan need to pay additional attention to the rights of Muslim background Christian women who are being forced to re-convert and marry Muslims, and on sexual attacks used as a form of persecution of Christians.
- The UN Human Rights Committee should cooperate with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to ensure that recommendations are made for the government of Turkmenistan to take ownership of developing rights-based policies for tackling violent extremism, terrorism and dealing with returning jihadists.
- The government of Turkmenistan has ignored OSCE recommendations on Freedom of Religion or Belief in the creation of the new Constitution in September 2016. The international community and OSCE should continue to cooperate with the government of Turkmenistan to convert commitments into legal policy-making and implementation.

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20. Laos

WWL 2018 Points 67 / Rank: 20

There are no Open Doors recommendations available for publication.

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21. Jordan

WWL 2018 Points 66 / Rank: 21

- The EU (in its role of spearheading international support for refugees in Jordan through European Neighborhood funding and the Madad Trust) should ensure that support is specifically given to ensure Jordan maintains civil society participation, interfaith dialogue and co-existence between religious groups and freedom of religion, belief and conversion.
- The EU (through the Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief outside Europe, Jan Figel) should closely monitor and report on religious pressures in Jordan occurring as society changes through the influx of large numbers of refugees and the influence of radical Islamic groups. Recommendations from this reporting should then be implemented in the programs for humanitarian assistance and education, ensuring that all citizens and refugees of any religious group are treated equally.
- Both the Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief outside Europe, Jan Figel, and the EU External Action Service (EEAS) should press the Jordanian state to ensure the protection of all religious converts of Muslim background, including Christian converts, and call for the implementation of the Freedom of Religion or Belief measures introduced under King Abdullah II in an educational system that respects all religions and beliefs.
- The international community should support Jordan in integrating Freedom of Religion or Belief as a key concern into security policies aimed at countering religiously motivated radicalism and terrorism.
- The government of Jordan and the international community should protect the diverse religious and ethnic Jordanian society and the freedoms they enjoy, as the influence of radical Islamic organizations grows in the country.

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22. Tajikistan

WWL 2018 Points 65 / Rank: 22

Open Doors recommends that the government of Tajikistan be encouraged to honor all its OSCE commitments to Freedom of Religion or Belief through full implementation in all legislation and practice. This includes:

- Cooperating fully with the OSCE and international community to develop a human rights-based approach to countering violent extremism and terrorism, in line with its commitment to interfaith, interreligious and intercultural dialogue and to counter manifestations of intolerance and discrimination on the basis of religion or belief. (Ministerial Declaration on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that lead to Terrorism, Belgrade 2015).
- A full revision of the 2009 Religion Law, with full public consultation and parliamentary debate, removing articles requiring state permission for all exercise of Freedom of Religion or Belief.
- The removal of all articles providing for sanctions and punishment for religious teaching, education and activity from the Administrative Code (July 2012), and revision of the language to remove all ambiguities concerning Freedom of Religion or Belief.
- Full revision of the youth law which leaves Christians and other affected religious minorities in legal limbo due to the ambiguities in what is allowed or denied by law.
- Legal provisions and monitoring to ensure that all citizens receive a fair trial and legal representation in court cases (with no exemption of or discrimination against religious minorities).

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23. Malaysia

WWL 2018 Points 65 / Rank: 23

- The attempt to enforce Sharia penal law (*hudud*) in the federal state of Kelantan and other states should be rejected as it severely violates rights of Christians and other non-Muslim minorities.
- The international community should increase its support to Malaysia in tackling Islamic State (IS) activities following an increased presence and the June 2016 attack in Selangor.
- The international community should demand that the Malaysian government ends the practice of putting Christian converts under house-arrest.
- The international community should call for the Malaysian government to investigate and end the use of bribes and similar enticements by local authorities to encourage conversion to Islam.
- The Malaysian government should enshrine the equality of Bumiputra (indigenous Malay) peoples and Chinese and Indian minorities before the law, in particular of Christians in these groups.

Policies which deprive the right of Bumiputra Christians to government benefit schemes (unless they convert to Islam) should be revoked.

- The Malaysian government should repeal anti-conversion laws, laws banning Christian literature and materials, and laws that ban the use of the term “Allah” (God) by Christians.
- The Malaysian government should allow Bumiputra Christians, who were unwillingly converted to Islam through the *National Registration Department* (NRD) because their names reflect ‘bin’ or ‘binti’ (commonly used by Malay people), to change their religious identity back to Christian.
- In light of the recent cases of missing persons (including Pastors Raymond Koh, Joshua Hilmy and his wife, Ruth) the international community should demand that the Malaysian government do everything in their power to locate them and ensure that such disappearances do not happen again in the future.

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24. Myanmar

WWL 2018 Points 65 / Rank: 24

There are no Open Doors recommendations available for publication.

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25. Nepal

WWL 2018 Points 64 / Rank: 25

The international community should request the Nepalese Government to:

- abolish Articles 156 and 160 which criminalize proselytization and conversion, since both these laws are curtailing the freedom of religion and are being used against Christians.
- investigate and prosecute those responsible for attacking Christians, socially boycotting them and expelling them from their villages.
- give official recognition to churches as religious institutions and to Christian rituals performed in the churches.
- give the Christian community legal burial grounds.
- give special instructions to the police and district administrations to ensure the safety of the churches.

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26. Brunei

WWL 2018 Points 64 / Rank: 26

- The government of Brunei should lift the decree that bans the importation of Bibles and the public celebration of Christmas.
- The international community should urge the government of Brunei to end the policy of “Islamic evangelism” which is forcing people to change their faith and convert to Islam for financial and material benefits.
- The international community should urgently call for the government of Brunei to repeal the first phase of the Sharia penal law introduced in 2014 and the next phase (which was due in June 2017). The rights of non-Muslims are severely restricted under penal law.
- The European Union (as it prepares the EU-Brunei Partnership Agreement) and countries entering into major trade agreements with Brunei under Vision Brunei 2035, should make trade agreements conditional to compliance with repealing the Sharia penal law which violates the fundamental right to Freedom of Religion or Belief.

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27. Qatar

WWL 2018 Points 63 / Rank: 27

Open Doors recommends:

- Qatar’s Fourth National Human Development Report (2015) found that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) human rights recommendations set in 2014 were falling short of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and limited by their non-binding status. The GCC Human Rights Bureau should extend “respect for all religions” (GCC Human Rights Declaration 2014) to enshrine full freedom of religion, including conversion and the right to association and assembly. The international community should engage with the GCC Human Rights Bureau and call for full and binding rights provisions.
- The government of Qatar should remove reservations to Article 14 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
- The international community should hold Qatar accountable on Freedom of Religion or Belief in line with international human rights treaties as part of its call for improvement of migrant worker rights.
- The government of Qatar should remove apostasy laws and guarantee the rights of all citizens to freedom of religion.

- The government should uphold article 35 of the Permanent Constitution and fully investigate and penalize discrimination against Christians, in particular those of Muslim background.
- The Qatar National Vision 2030 seeks to remove barriers that people face on account of religion, and to sponsor and support dialogue among civilians, promoting coexistence between different religions and cultures.⁴¹ Under the QNV 2030, a plan with indicators should be created to measure progress toward full enjoyment of Freedom of Religion or Belief.
- The government should properly investigate and punish (domestic) violence committed against Christians.

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28. Kazakhstan

WWL 2018 Points 63 / Rank: 28

Open Doors suggests the following recommendations be made:

- The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and international community should press the government of Kazakhstan to implement recommendations on Freedom of Religion or Belief by the OSCE within the framework for ‘Countering Extremism and Terrorism’.
- The OSCE and international community should press the Kazakhstan government to amend provisions in the Religion Law and Administrative Code which enact compulsory religious censorship and legal prohibition and sanctioning of unregistered activities. There should be no prior registration for individuals and communities wishing to express Freedom of Religion or Belief.
- The government and the OSCE should cooperate closely to ensure those drafting and applying policies concerning Freedom of Religion or Belief refer to the 2015 benchmark Guidelines on the Legal Personality of Religious or Belief Communities.
- The government should stop arbitrary arrests of Christians.

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⁴¹ See: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/qatar_nhdr4_english_15june2015.pdf, last accessed on 7 October 2017.

29. Ethiopia

WWL 2018 Points 62 / Rank: 29

Christians in Ethiopia have been under pressure for decades. One of the challenges has been the lack of recognition of this situation by the international community. Open Doors suggests the following policy considerations:

- The government should repeal laws introduced to restrict the establishment of broadcasting services for religious purposes.
- The government should repeal the 2009 civil society law which curtails space for civil society and bans work by foreign NGOs on political and human rights issues.
- The government should respect the citizen's right to form association.
- The government should investigate violence perpetrated against Christians and bring those who are responsible to justice.
- The government should repeal the ban on religious activities which disallow worship in groups within educational institutions.
- The international community should hold the government of Ethiopia accountable to the above, in line with its obligations under international human rights treaties through specific recommendations and letters of appeal.
- Christian leaders around the world should use all available forums to urge the Ethiopian Orthodox Church to stop persecuting Protestants. Mahibere Kidusan, an ultra-conservative group in Ethiopian Orthodox Church is putting massive pressure on Protestants and even on the EOC leadership to target Protestants.

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30. Tunisia

WWL 2018 Points 62 / Rank: 30

Taking into account the persecution dynamics in Tunisia, Open Doors suggests the following policy recommendations:

- The international community should work with the Tunisian government to clarify Article 6 of the Constitution to comply fully with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of ICCPR and leave no room for interpretation. Open Doors recommends that a plan for implementation, including full protection for those who convert from Islam be developed.
- The government of Tunisia should put in place effective legal measures to prevent, investigate and finally bring justice for violations of freedom of religion, particularly involving those of Muslim background who converted to Christianity.

- The EU should mainstream Freedom of Religion or Belief into its major investment programs aimed at bringing security and stability in Tunisia, and so ensure the protection of Christians vulnerable to radical Islamic groups and the creation of a culture of peaceful interfaith participation in politics, business and education.

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31. Turkey

WWL 2018 Points 62 / Rank: 31

- The implementation of European Union humanitarian aid programs in Turkey should include the monitoring of equal access and protection for religious minorities.
- Provisions for protecting persecuted religious minorities should be integrated into the implementation of all EU-Turkey refugee agreements.
- In the wake of the 2016 attempted coup, the repression of Christians and non-Sunnis has sharply increased in Turkey. The international community should press the Turkish government to comply fully with Freedom of Religion or Belief in law and practice, and fully investigate and report on the increasing number of violations.
- The new Constitution should guarantee the rights of all citizens to Freedom of Religion or Belief, with the express protection of the right to conversion, and of Christians and religious minorities to equal citizenship before the law, with equal access to ID cards, residential permits and permits for places of worship.
- The international community should also urge the Turkish government to ensure the return of all confiscated property belonging to Christians that were disputed under the zoning law, and those seized, such as Syriac Christian property in the southeast of Turkey.
- The government of Turkey should do all that is in its power to prevent and punish the violence of radical Islamic groups against houses of worship of religious minorities, including Christians.
- The government should fully respect press freedom, and more broadly, freedom of expression in Turkey.
- The government should allow all religious minorities to register and to function freely, without restriction, and to establish universities or seminaries to train their leaders. The right to distribute religious materials should be respected, and Christian evangelistic activities should not be criminalized. Neither the so-called Lausanne minorities nor the other minorities are fully protected by the Turkish state.
- The international community should urge the government of Turkey to eliminate any bias against Christians in the judiciary system. Illegal detentions and the intimidation of religious minorities should be investigated and ended.

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32. Kenya

WWL 2018 Points 62 / Rank: 32

The Kenyan government vowed to bring the perpetrators of atrocities that have been committed against Christians to justice, especially the perpetrators of the massacre of Christian students at Garissa University in 2014. However, there have been no satisfactory results and Christians are still getting killed at the hands of radical Islamic militants. Open Doors recommends:

- The Kenyan government should investigate the atrocities committed against Christians with due diligence.
- The African Union and the international community should call on and support the Kenyan government to develop a plan with legal and practical steps to fight corruption in line with Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals and in this way indirectly assure that incidents of killings and violence against Christians are fully investigated and measures for the protection of Christians are put in place.
- The international community should help Kenya in its attempt to fight terrorism that has been taking the lives of Christians and other civilians.
- Kenyans should hold serious interfaith discussions in order to avoid misunderstandings and suspicions between different faiths in the country.
- Kenyans should go beyond politics and political alliance to solve the issue of faith-related killings in the country that have taken lives of many Christians.

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33. Bhutan

WWL 2018 Points 62 / Rank: 33

There are no Open Doors recommendations available for publication.

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34. Kuwait

WWL 2018 Points 61 / Rank: 34

Open Doors recommends:

- The government of Kuwait should be urged to ensure the Freedom of Religion or Belief for international domestic workers, a significant number of whom are Christians.

- The government of Kuwait should be urged to ensure the necessary protection of international domestic workers during their employment.
- The international community and businesses operating in Kuwait should urge the government and businesses to uphold Freedom of Religion or Belief when developing security policies aimed at stemming the influence of IS and violence by radical groups.
- As Islam is the state religion, the freedom to choose a different religion is severely restricted and converts are still considered Muslims. Therefore, the international community should urge the government to ensure the full rights of converts to fully embrace the religion they choose.
- The government should encourage the establishment of interfaith discussions that can reduce religious animosities and build unity based on the peaceful co-existence of religions.

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35. Central African Republic (CAR)

WWL 2018 Points 61 / Rank: 35

Taking into account the persecution dynamics in CAR, Open Doors suggests the following policy recommendations:

- Security should be effectively kept in the whole country and notably in the PK5 quarter of the capital of Bangui and at the Batafango-Mobaye frontier (dividing the country in two) where former Seleka and anti-Balaka militia clash. Special concern should be given to the integration of Muslims returning to western CAR and to the safeguarding of Christians in northeastern CAR. Since January 2013, these Christians have been marginalized, discriminated against and violently targeted by former Seleka militia and associated groups of Muslim Fulani herdsman.
- The government of CAR should actively pursue a working relationship with the former Seleka rebels in the north and northeastern regions. The process of reconciliation should be inclusive, giving voice to groups both in support of and against the Seleka to re-establish peace and stability.
- The government and international community should engage with the concerns of the former Seleka and anti-Balaka groups regarding the program of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and come to agreement about bringing the remaining armed groups into the program.
- The UN and the AU should bolster the existing peace keeping force in the country with the troops and resources it needs to restore peace and stability in the country.
- The UN's decision to conduct an investigation into the complicity of peacekeepers who are members of UN Mission (MINUSCA) in violent incidents that have resulted in the death of civilians.

Based on the findings of this investigation the UN should take firm measures to avoid such incidents from happening again.

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36. Palestinian Territories

WWL 2018 Points 60 / Rank: 36

Open Doors suggests the following recommendations:

- Above all, the international community, the Palestinian leadership and the Israeli leadership should strive for a sustainable political solution to the conflict based upon the UN resolutions. This should help to stop the ongoing emigration of Christians.
- The Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority should respect basic human rights for all Palestinians, including Christians in the West Bank.
- The influence of radical Islamic organizations in the Palestinian Territories is growing. The international community should urge the political leaders of the Palestinian Territories and of Israel to address the threats posed by these organizations and protect the Christian population. It is crucial that the sense of hopelessness and despair, which leads to radicalism is recognized and dealt with at all political levels.
- Palestinian Basic Law should be amended or fully implemented to provide full protection for religious minorities and to provide in law and practice for Freedom of Religion or Belief and conversion.
- The Palestinian and Israeli authorities should ensure all citizens of any religion enjoy equal rights in the workplace, ensuring company policies end discrimination in appointments, salary and promotions.

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37. Mali

WWL 2018 Points 59 / Rank: 37

Taking in to account the persecution dynamics in Mali, Open Doors makes the following policy recommendations:

- Through the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali; MINUSMA) the government of Mali and the international community together should enable religious minorities (especially Christians) to exercise their freedom of religion in northern Mali by rebuilding communities and ensuring security.

- The government of Mali should ensure that Christians are guaranteed rights as citizens of the state, therefore entitled to freedom of religion and deserving protection.

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38. Indonesia

WWL 2018 Points 59 / Rank: 38

- The government of Indonesia should ensure that it continues to promote the values of tolerance and pluralism, in particular as it steps up efforts to maintain public order and security. Such policies should safeguard Freedom of Religion or Belief, and seek to tackle the propagation of radical Islam and media smear campaigns aimed at inciting hatred and unrest.
- The government should draft and enforce a policy that curbs the spread of teachings on religious radicalism, violence, and intolerance in the educational system, especially public schools, and instead promote teachings on tolerance and diversity.
- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and international community should cooperate closely with Indonesia to develop a plan for dealing with radical Islamic fighters returning from Syria and Iraq.
- The international community should urge the Indonesian government and its legislative body to abolish any legal disposition that restricts freedom of religion. Islamic by-laws are in force in many regions and territories and the province of Aceh is ruled by Sharia law. These legal dispositions contradict the core principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular in relation to freedom of religion.
- The government should do all that is in its power to prevent and punish the violence of radical Islamic groups against houses of worship of religious minorities, including Christians. In addition, the government should dissolve civil society groups that spread violence in the name of Islam.
- The government should remove any practical or administrative obstacles regarding the registration of church buildings.
- The international community should urge the Indonesian government to repeal its blasphemy laws as they continue to be abused by radical Islamic groups.

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39. Mexico

WWL 2018 Points 59 / Rank: 39

Open Doors suggests the following recommendations:

- The Mexican government, International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, UN and the international community should cooperate with indigenous authorities to integrate Freedom of Religion or Belief as a fundamental right into indigenous laws and develop a plan to set out how to preserve traditional cultures and values while guaranteeing the co-existence of different faiths.
- The International community (especially UN and OAS) and Mexican government should ensure that citizens of all faiths maintain full access to the media and equal participation in public debates. They should tackle and counter the slander and ridicule of Christian values and promote a pluralistic and healthy space for all religious groups to fully express and exercise their religion or belief.
- The government should guarantee by law and in practice the full rights and equal treatment and benefits of all religious minorities, including Protestant Christianity. For this, it is necessary that the constitutional protection of religious freedom follow the established in Article 18 of the UNDHR and facilitates its legislative development in each Federative entity and the application of its content by the institutions of the State. Many times the treatment of matters of religion has been reduced to respecting State-Church secular principles and this carries with it many misinterpretations that leave Christians of all denominations unprotected.
- The international community should pay special attention to the position of vulnerable groups in Mexico, particularly that of actively practicing Christians. They should also recognize the violations of religious freedom, including the vulnerability of Christians in a context of organized crime (particularly Christians engaged in social work with youths and drug addicts), without the situations being ignored or minimized by their relationship with the Church or by the fear of reprisals by aggressors. Efforts in the field of state reforms, corruption prevention, strengthening of the rule of law and human rights are also essential to Mexican society as a whole.
- The international community should work together with the government to create a system in which churches and Christian leaders who are victims of extortion feel safe to denounce threats against them and allow investigations of these cases to be public and transparent in order to avoid impunity and motivate complaints of similar cases.
- Mexico is one the signatories of the United Nations Convention against Corruption. However, corruption levels within the country are high. Mexico is also the country with the world's highest number of abductions. The international community should assist the government in tackling corruption at all levels. Also, the infiltration of organized crime in public institutions by means of corruption should be addressed.

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40. United Arab Emirates

WWL 2018 Points 58 / Rank: 40

Open Doors recommends:

- The international community should support the UAE and other Gulf countries in efforts to tackle intolerance and radicalism, and ensure that new policies actively protect people of all religions.
- The government of UAE should be requested to give the necessary protection to domestic workers from South East Asia and Africa, many of whom are Christians.
- The government should actively stop all kinds of discrimination that Christians face in the country, thereby ensuring equal civil and legal rights for residents from all religions and ethnicities.
- The government should actively stop all kinds of pressure on Christians to convert to Islam. Any religious conversion should be of one's own volition.
- The international community should urge the government to ensure the protection of religious minorities in the country.
- The government should remove the restrictions it imposes on Christian fellowship and on the construction of places for worship.
- The government should remove any restrictions on the citizen's right to change his/her religion.

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41. Bangladesh

WWL 2018 Points 58 / Rank: 41

- The religious freedom provision of the Constitution of Bangladesh should be upheld.
- The constitutional definition of Islam as state religion should be deleted. The international community should urge the government of Bangladesh to not give in to any demands to introduce Sharia law or any form of legislation that restricts freedom of religion.
- The government has the duty to protect its citizens, including Christians, against any threat to harm their physical integrity. The government should properly investigate and punish those responsible for any harm done against the physical integrity of representatives of religious minorities.
- The UN and Bangladesh government should follow through on the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur ensuring that there are no ambiguities in government language and in reporting on incidents of violence against religious minorities which could incriminate the victims themselves.
- The government should develop policies to stop the influence of radical Islamic teaching coming from groups such as Islamic State into the country. In addition, the government should closely

monitor and take deliberate action against the activities of radical Islamic groups who are inspired by Islamic State and similar organizations.

- The government and UN Human Rights Council should follow up on recommendations by former Special Rapporteur Heiner Bielefeldt to actively promote civil society inclusion by addressing threats and violence against Christians and minorities.
- The UN Human Rights Council should also follow up on the recommendation to ensure autonomy for Christian schools and for the proper funding for the inclusion of Christians in the recruitment and training of teachers in schools.
- The government should ensure full equal participation and representation of people of any religion or belief, ensuring political and media language is free from slander that undermines their equal status as citizens.
- The international community should urge the government authorities in Bangladesh to end impunity in cases of attacks and killings of Christians.
- While the government's effort to curb terrorism-related money-laundering into and out of the country is to be highly praised, the government should develop a mechanism making international money transactions possible which clearly serve humanitarian purposes. This would be of benefit to Bangladeshi society, regardless whether the charities concerned are an NGO or Trust and regardless of the religious affiliations involved.

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42. Algeria

WWL 2018 Points 58 / Rank: 42

Taking into account the persecution dynamics in Algeria, Open Doors makes the following recommendations:

- The international community should urge Algeria to repeal Ordinance 06-03 which curtails freedom of worship for non-Muslims and prohibits conversion.
- The government should commit to its constitutional obligation and implement sufficient measures to protect religious minorities against increasing violence by radical groups. The government should commit to providing adequate protection of and full freedom to the growing number of Christian converts from a Muslim background in the country.
- The government should commit to providing all legal and logistical facilities for the growing indigenous Algerian church and remove any restrictions preventing them practicing their faith. Furthermore, any restrictions on obtaining or building a place of worship should be removed.

- The government should remove any restrictions on the civil and legal rights for converts from Islam to Christianity, validate Christian marriages and permit Christian burials. The government should also take measures to ensure the equality of Christians (including converts to Christianity) in the formation, duration and dissolution of marriage. In particular, the law and authorities should treat Christians with a Muslim background equally in matters of custody during divorce.

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43. China

WWL 2018 Points 57 / Rank: 43

- The international community should encourage the Chinese government to have dialogue with local churches on the prudent enforcement of the new religious regulations, in order to maintain social stability and harmony.
- The Chinese government should be encouraged to proactively continue constructive dialogue with local churches, in order to understand that Christian values are aligned with traditional Chinese values and that Christianity can be a positive influence for Chinese society.
- The international community should encourage the Chinese government to exchange experiences with overseas religious leaders, with a view to appreciating how religious issues are dealt with in overseas countries and how positively Christianity can impact society.

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44. Sri Lanka

WWL 2018 Points 57 / Rank: 44

There are no Open Doors recommendations available for publication.

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45. Azerbaijan

WWL 2018 Points 57 / Rank: 45

- The Government of Azerbaijan should honor international laws on Freedoms of Religion, making it clear that the involvement of the State in the internal affairs of religious institutions should be limited to and aimed only at the prevention of real threats from extremists' activities. Citizens need to be given the right and the opportunity to meet freely for religious purposes.

- The Government should allow the Church of Azerbaijan to communicate freely with churches abroad.
- The Government should allow non-registered religious groups to be able to meet freely for religious purposes. Surveillance, raids, interrogation and censorship of Christian groups should be stopped.

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46. Oman

WWL 2018 Points 57 / Rank: 46

Open Doors recommends:

- The Oman government and international community should support and engage with the work of the al-Amana Center, which is influential for establishing peace and stability in the region.
- The government of Oman should develop a plan for dealing with radical Islamic militants who may cross the border from war-torn Yemen.
- The government should be requested to give the necessary protection to domestic workers, some of whom are Christians.
- The government should end all forms of discrimination in law and practice that Christians face in the country, thereby ensuring equal civil and legal rights for residents from all religions and ethnicities.
- The government should repeal the family law that denies a father who has left Islam custodian rights, as it is incompatible with international standards on Freedom of Religion or Belief.

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47. Mauritania

WWL 2018 Points 57 / Rank: 47

Taking into account the persecution dynamics in Mauritania, Open Doors makes the following suggestions for policy recommendations:

- The international community should hold the Mauritanian government accountable for ensuring full Freedom of Religion or Belief as party to the major international treaties, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and ICCPR. In accordance to the treaties, the Mauritanian criminal law sanctioning capital punishment for apostasy should be repealed. The threat of sentencing stifles religious freedom for Christians with a Muslim background and atheists.

- In accordance with international human rights treaties, the international community should investigate and monitor the xenophobic and racist attacks against immigrants, including Christians.
- The international community should actively monitor the position of Christians and religious minorities. The government of Mauritania and the African regional organizations should closely monitor developments in radical Islamic activity in the country.

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48. Bahrain

WWL 2018 Points 57 / Rank: 48

Open Doors recommends:

- The government of Bahrain should be requested to ensure that protection is given to foreign domestic workers, many of whom are Christians.
- The international community and those involved in business with Bahrain should urge the government to ensure the protection of religious minorities in the country and uphold the Freedom of Religion or Belief.
- The government should remove restrictions it imposes on Christian fellowship and on the construction of worship places.
- The government should ensure equal civil and legal rights for residents of all religions and ethnicities.
- Under rising pressure from radical Muslims, the government should introduce measures to protect religious minorities in the country and champion pluralism over any caliphate rule.

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49. Colombia

WWL 2018 Points 56 / Rank: 49

- The international community should assist in training officials of the Colombian authorities in order to help them implement effective policies which protect the human rights of the indigenous population and the minorities within indigenous peoples - especially those professing a faith different from the indigenous tradition - without undermining their traditional autonomy, self-determination and identity. In this way, the living conditions of those members who have converted to Christianity can be improved.

- The international community should reinforce the Colombian government’s dialogue with criminal networks and its actions to combat corruption and drug trafficking. This will help safeguard national and international security and improve the living conditions of persecuted Christians and others in areas dominated by organized crime.
- The international community should urgently press the Colombian government to speed up peace negotiations with the remaining guerrilla groups in the country, so that these can relinquish their control of marginalized areas so that the citizens in these regions – especially Christians - can live their lives without fear.
- The international community should put pressure on the Colombian government to carry out a transparent and democratic electoral process, in which every party can be heard and supported, without discrimination of any kind, especially for religious reasons.
- The international community should enter into dialogue with the authorities of the Colombian government to generate awareness about the importance of respecting and protecting religious freedom, worship and conscience in the private and public realm (including media), particularly in native territories.
- The international community should put pressure on the Colombian government to educate citizens through public education centers and state institutions so that the harassment of political, religious and social leaders when speaking out about their Christian beliefs can be prevented.
- The international community should encourage the Colombian authorities to actively investigate every act of discrimination or violence committed on religious grounds.

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50. Djibouti

WWL 2018 Points 56 / Rank: 50

Christians in Djibouti have been persecuted in many ways, even though the level of violence is not as high as in neighboring countries such as Eritrea or Somalia. Open Doors suggests the following policy considerations:

- The government of Djibouti should protect Christians from harassment perpetrated by radical groups.
- Western governments with strong reciprocal relations with Djibouti, especially the USA and France, should engage the government of Djibouti regarding freedom of religion and belief, as well as freedom of expression, the situation of Christians in particular, and counter-terrorism measures as the threat of an influx of jihadists crossing from Yemen increases.
- Anti-Christian sentiment has spread within society without any preventative action being taken by the government. Therefore, the international community should urge the government of Djibouti to establish an interfaith commission.

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4.5 IIRF Audit



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**Audit Statement
 on the outcomes of the Open Doors World Watch List 2018**

The results of the Open Doors World Watch List 2018 are accurately presented by World Watch Research (WWR) within the parameters of precision reached in the processing of information. Country profiles give a thorough, detailed, and differentiated account of the discrimination and persecution of Christians.

In depth inspection of two sample countries selected by the auditors gave evidence that published methodology was diligently applied by WWR staff. Processes and sources were thoroughly documented and have been made transparently available on request. The documentation mechanisms have been improved and the number of countries examined has increased.

Although the scoring accurately reflects the methodology and information processed, the reliability of each country score always depends on the depth and quality of the information received in the reporting period. This may vary from country to country.

There has been an improvement in determining one of the variables influencing the question scores (proportion of general population living in the territory affected by persecution), which results in a better approximation to reality.

The updated methodology document (November 2017) describes various quality assurance measures by the WWR staff with regard to consistency in application of the questionnaire and methodology. WWR gave credible written description how these were applied.

Additional statements, documents or interpretations by Open Doors International or the Open Doors national affiliates based on or associated with the publication of the World Watch List 2018 remain outside the scope of this audit statement.

IIRF has submitted a list of recommendations for potential future improvements to Open Doors.

Bonn, Cape Town, Colombo, this 8 January 2018

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Prof. Dr. Christof Sauer
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