



GUINEA (Conakry): Country Dossier

June 2018



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors International / World Watch Research Unit

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World Watch List 2018

		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				
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	
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	10.7	10.5	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	
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		51	55
45	Azerbaijan	13.1	9.1	9.3	11.1	12.4	2.4	57				
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		50	51
48	Bahrain	12.9	13.1	10.2	9.9	10.3	0.2	57	54	54		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

		1. Private Life	2. Family Life	3. Community Life	4. National Life	5. Church Life	6. Violence	TOTAL SCORE WWL 2018
Rank	Country	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score
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.

GUINEA (Conakry) – Country Dossier (June 2018)

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Introduction

This country report is a collation of documents based around [Open Doors World Watch List \(WWL\)](#)¹ including statistical information on world religions, Christian denominations, and people groups prepared by the World Christian Database ([WCD](#))². Further news and analysis is supplied by [World Watch Monitor](#)³ and WWR staff.

GUINEA		
World Watch List	Score	Rank
WWL 2018	No published details	-
WWL 2017	No published details	-
WWL 2016	No published details	-
WWL 2015	No published details	-
WWL 2014	No published details	-

¹ See: <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/countries/>

² WCD website: <http://www.brill.com/publications/online-resources/world-christian-database>

³ See: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/>

WWL 2018: Keys to understanding GUINEA

Link for general background information:

BBC country profile: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13442051>

Recent country history

Guinea was one of the first African countries to gain independence from European colonial powers. The country became independent from France in 1958⁴. Sekou Toure, who led the movement for independence, became the first president of the country and followed a policy of socialism, favoring Russia and China.⁵ He established a single party dictatorship favoring socialistic policies and was proclaimed president for life. All political opposition to the regime was brutally suppressed. There was no free media and many journalists who attempted to criticize the government were arrested or forced into exile.

The government then followed a program called ‘radical Africanization’ in which the country attempted to isolate itself from its colonial past by rejecting Western values. President Toure failed in his attempt to replace French with African dialect and French continue to be the dominant language in the country. Due to Toure’s policy of Africanization and socialism, Guinea became one of the most isolated countries in Africa. The government continued its socialist policy by expropriating land from tribal chiefs.

In 1984 Toure died of heart failure and Prime Minister Louis Beavogui replaced him as interim President. However, Colonel Lansana Conté overthrew the government in a bloodless coup before Beavogui took power. Conte reversed most of Toure policies, but even though the new regime was more relaxed than the previous regime and promised numerous reforms, Conte’s control remain tight.⁶ Conte remained in power until his death in 2008. Moussa Camara then took power through a coup right after the death of Conte. Political unrest followed this coup, forcing Camara to hold democratic elections in 2010. In the same year, Alpha Conde became the first democratically elected president of Guinea. Conde won the next 2015 election also and is the current president of the country.

The religious landscape

According to the World Christian Database, approximately 87.6% of the population is Muslim, 3.5% Christian and 8.6% follow various traditional African religions. These figures are disputed. Both Muslims and Christians mix their faith with various traditional African religious practices. Muslims are dominant in almost all regions of the country. Most Christians live in the cities, like Conakry. Most Muslims are followers of Sunni Islam and most Christians are Roman Catholic.

⁴ See <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/576/Guinea-HISTORY-BACKGROUND.html> accessed on September 15, 2017.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

The Soninke merchants from Ghana were responsible for the spread of Islam throughout Guinea during the 11th century.⁷ The northern part of the country was part of the great Mali Empire during the 13th and 14th centuries. Most of the indigenous tribes converted to Islam during this period. French missionaries were the first Europeans who brought Christianity to the country.

After independence in 1958, the Sékou Touré government followed a policy of socialism and secularism. The regime attempted to reduce the influence of various powerful Islamic and religious figures and also closed the French Catholic schools down and expelled most of the French missionaries from the country. The consecutive regimes that followed Touré attempted to lessen government control in religious affairs and promote tolerance among the different religious groups.

The country's Constitution explicitly states the principles of freedom of religion and separation of religion and state.⁸ It also provides the right of persons to practice their religion openly without interference. However, the government attempts to restrict the influence of certain extreme religious groups through its Secretariat of Religious Affairs (SRA). SRA inspectors are present at most church and mosque religious services to monitor the content of sermons preached.⁹

Most Christians and Muslims live side by side without major problem. However, there have been some violent incidents concerning conversions from Islam to Christianity and marriage between Muslims and Christians. There are also some reports of violence that occurred between minority Muslim groups and the predominantly Sunni Muslims.

The political landscape

Since its independence Guinea has experienced much political instability, including military coups and civil unrest. The first two presidents, Sékou Touré and Lansana Conté, ruled the country with an iron fist. In the 1990s, Conte attempted to introduce some political reforms and the country held its first multi-party elections in 1993. Although this was a stepping-stone in progress towards democracy, the election was marred by numerous irregularities. Conte maintained power through manipulation of the electoral process and through full control of the army, until his death in 2008.

Moussa Camara then took power through a coup right after the death of Conte. Political unrest followed this coup, forcing Camara to hold democratic elections in 2010. Alpha Conde from the Rally of the Guinean People (RGP) party won this election forming the first democratic government in the country's history. Political unrest followed right after the opposition boycott of the 2014 elections. The government was forced to postpone the elections to October 2015. Although this election was marred by several voting irregularities and fraud, President Conde won his second term. There were numerous violent clashes

⁷ See: <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/576/Guinea-HISTORY-BACKGROUND.html>, last accessed 15 September 2017.

⁸ See: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Guinea_2010.pdf?lang=en, last accessed 16 September 2017.

⁹ See: <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/256243.pdf>, last accessed 16 September 2017.

between supporters of the opposition groups and the government during the electoral process.

According to the 2010 Constitution, the country follows a presidential system. The president is elected every five years and is only allowed to run for two terms. Guinea follows a unicameral legislature system with the National Assembly as its body. The National Assembly consists of 114 members.

The socio-economic landscape

The country has around 24 distinct ethnic groups, the largest being the Fulani making up 41% of the population.¹⁰ The Fulani are dominant in the Sahel part of West Africa, including in countries like Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Ghana. In Guinea, most of the Fulani live in the northern part of the country, the Futa Djallon region. The Fulani are predominantly Muslim and pastoralist with some sedentary farmers. The Mandinka people make up approximately 33% of the population. They belong to the larger ethnic-family group called the Mande. The Mande people are the tribal group that formed the Mali empire in the 13th century. They are predominantly Muslim with some traditional believers and follow a sedentary agricultural economic system. The third largest ethnic group (making up 12 % of the population) are the Soussous. The rest of the population is composed of various smaller ethnic groups. Tribal relations play an important role in politics. For example, the current President Alpha Conde is supported by his ethnic group, the Mandinka, whereas most of the opposition are from the Fulani.

Guinea is one of the least developed countries in the world. According to the World Bank report 40% of the population live below the poverty line. The French established a mining dependent economy during the colonial period.¹¹ This trend continues during the post-independence period also and mining based on the export of gold, aluminum ore and crude petroleum is the main source of export earnings. In 2014, Guinea was shaken by the outbreak of the Ebola virus. This outbreak had a great impact on the country's economic development.¹²

Concluding remarks

Guinea's post-independence history has been marked by serious political instability, but since the 2010 elections, the country's political structure has progressed more towards democracy. However, this progress has been hampered by tribal-based political alliances, serious disease-outbreaks and a weak economy.

¹⁰ See: <http://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Guinea.html>, last accessed on 17 September 2017.

¹¹ See: <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/gin/>, last accessed on 17 September 2017.

¹² See: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/one-year-report/virus-origin/en/>, last accessed on 17 September 2017.

WWL 2018: Church History and Facts

How many Christians?

Pop 2017	Christians	Chr%
13,291,000	469,000	3.5

Source: WCD, May 2017

How did Christians get there?

Christianity in Guinea has more than 500 years of history.¹³ The Portuguese arrived along the coast in 1462, but their main interest was in setting up a trading center and not in spreading Roman Catholicism. No effort was made to evangelize in the country until 1877. From 1877 onwards, Roman Catholic missionaries began to arrive. Protestants did not enter the country until 1918. After independence from France in 1958, the Sékou Touré government followed a policy of socialism and secularism. The regime attempted to reduce Western influence, closed the French Catholic schools down and expelled most of the French missionaries from the country.

What church networks exist today? ¹⁴

Orthodox	Catholic	Protestant	Independent	Unaffiliated	Double-aff	Evangelical	Renewalist
0	285,000	115,000	38,600	37,000	-6,200	108,000	75,400

Source: WCD, May 2017

The main Christian denominations are Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, and several evangelical groups. Many people mix Christianity with traditional beliefs.

¹³ See: Melton J G and Baumann M, Religions of The World (Second Edition): A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices (2010), pp.1280-1281.

¹⁴ **Orthodox:** Eastern (Chalcedonian), Oriental (Pre-Chalcedonian, Non-Chalcedonian, Monophysite), Nestorian (Assyrian), and non-historical Orthodox. **Roman Catholics:** All Christians in communion with the Church of Rome. **Protestants:** Christians in churches originating in or in communion with the Western world’s 16th-century Protestant Reformation. Includes Anglicans, Lutherans and Baptists (any of whom may be Charismatic) and denominational Pentecostals, but not Independent traditions such as Independent Baptists nor independent Charismatics. **Independents:** Believers who do not identify with the major Christian traditions (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant). **Unaffiliated Christians:** Persons professing publicly to be Christians but who are not affiliated to churches. **Doubly-affiliated Christians:** Persons affiliated to or claimed by 2 denominations at once. **Evangelicals:** Churches, denominations, and individuals who identify themselves as evangelicals by membership in denominations linked to evangelical alliances (e.g., World Evangelical Alliance) or by self-identification in polls. **Renewalists:** Church members involved in Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal movements.

Religious context (selection)

Christian	Muslim	Hindu	Buddhist	Ethno-religionist	Jewish	Bahai	Atheist & others ¹⁵
469,000	11,643,000	0	11,000	1,145,000	0	190	21,800

Source: WCD, May 2017

According to the World Christian Database, approximately 87.6% of the population is Muslim, 3.5% Christian and 8.6% are classed as Ethnoreligionists. These figures are disputed. The US State Department's 2016 IRF report estimates the number of Christians at 8%¹⁶ and Pew Research (2010) at 10.9% of the total population.

Notes on the current situation

Despite Guinea being a Muslim majority country, Christians do enjoy some level of freedom. However, Christians are not allowed to own radio or television stations (this is also true for all religious groups). The government attempts to restrict the influence of certain extreme religious groups through its Secretariat of Religious Affairs (SRA). SRA inspectors are present at most church and mosque religious services to monitor the content of sermons preached.¹⁷

WWL 2018: Short & Simple Persecution Profile

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

Where persecution comes from

Government authorities discriminate against Christians, for instance, in the allocation of land for the construction of churches and in promotion opportunities for strategic posts in the administration. There is also pressure put especially on converts to Christianity from a Muslim background by family, extended family and community, particularly in Muslim-dominated areas. A strong economic, social, and cultural pressure is also exerted against other Christians in some parts of the country. In the Fouta-Djalon region, a person wanting to convert to Christianity would encounter strong social pressure and would risk being rejected by his or her community. Ethnic tensions are high between the Peul or Poular (40%) and the Maninka (28%) and there has been little peace since the re-election of President Alpha Conde in 2015. Ethnic identity and differences are particularly important to some groups. As part of an effort to keep the traditional beliefs and rituals of an ethnic group intact, converts to Christianity are persecuted. There have also been instances where some ethnic groups, in which Christians are more predominant, have been attacked by other ethnic groups.

¹⁵ This category includes Atheists, Agnostics and New religionists.

¹⁶ See: <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/268900.pdf>, last accessed 23 February 2018.

¹⁷ See: <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/256243.pdf>, last accessed 16 September 2017.

How Christians are suffering

In some parts of the country, converts from Islam are not free to live their faith and must try to remain anonymous most of the time. In such a context, it is not possible for a convert to be seen with a Bible or anything that is likely to demonstrate his Christian faith. In animist and Muslim areas, the baptism of Christians is opposed by their (animist or Muslim) family. In parts of the country where the influence of Islamic militants is being felt, converts from Islam are confronted with harassment and the threat of death. Similar persecution is also felt by converts from African traditional religions. When Christians refuse to participate in traditional rites, the community puts pressure on them. This situation is occurring regularly in Middle Guinea (Fouta Djallon) and also in Labe. Christians are considered aliens within the community. It is sometimes very difficult to obtain legal status or registration for churches because local administrators are reluctant to cooperate with Christians. (The Alliance of Churches is helping to make things easier for churches in this respect.) This seems to be a problem mainly for convert groups and Pentecostal churches. There are some cases of impediments to the construction of churches in certain villages in Forested Guinea and in the area of Kankan and Labé.

Examples

In the WWL 2018 reporting period:

- A young Peulh (Fulani) had to flee the country because his parents tried to kill him due to his faith in Jesus Christ.
- A Christian man was killed because of his faith in the Beyla region.

WWL 2018: Persecution Dynamics

Reporting period: 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

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Position on World Watch List (WWL)

Score and rank are not available.

Persecution engines

Persecution engines in Guinea ¹⁸	Level of influence
Islamic oppression	Strong
Religious nationalism	Not at all
Ethnic antagonism	Strong
Denominational protectionism	Weak
Communist and post-Communist oppression	Not at all
Secular intolerance	Very weak
Dictatorial paranoia	Weak
Organized corruption and crime	Weak

Islamic oppression (Strong):

This engine manifests itself through discrimination occurring in the allocation of land for the construction of churches, in promotion to strategic posts in the administration, and so on. There is also pressure put especially on converts to Christianity from a Muslim background by family, extended family and community, particularly in Muslim dominated areas. A strong economic, social, and cultural pressure is also exerted against other Christians in some parts of the country. In the Fouta-Djalou region, a person wanting to convert to Christianity would encounter strong social pressure and would risk being rejected by his or her community. In one instance, a man converted from Islam to Christianity. After his conversion, it was reported that the community ostracized him and his relatives took away his children. Besides strong pressure against leaving Islam, the Islamic community will put pressure on other religions to make them avoid being publicly visible. There have been some indications that the government has reinforced this pressure at a local level. This support mostly comes from the help of the Ministry for Islamic Affairs within the government. As in a number of other African countries, Guinea is experiencing a proliferation of certain Muslim groups that are extremely radical and intolerant of other religions, including Christianity.

Ethnic antagonism (Strong):

Ethnic antagonism is very visible in Guinea between the Peul or Poular (40%) and the Maninka (28%) and there has been a little peace since the reelection of President Alpha Conde in 2015. Ethnic identity and differences are particularly important to some groups. As part of an effort to keep the traditional beliefs and rituals of an ethnic group intact, converts to Christianity are persecuted. There have also been instances where some ethnic groups, in which Christians are more predominant, have been attacked by other ethnic groups.

¹⁸ The scale for the level of influence of Persecution engines and Drivers in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong.

Drivers of persecution

Drivers of persecution in Guinea	Level of influence
Government officials at any level from local to national	Very weak
Ethnic group leaders	Medium
Non-Christian religious leaders at any level from local to national	Medium
Christian religious leaders at any level from local to national	Medium
Violent religious groups	Very weak
Ideological pressure groups	Weak
Normal citizens (people from the general public), including mobs	Not at all
Own (extended) family	Weak
Political parties at any level from local to national	Strong
Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups	Not at all
Organized crime cartels or networks	Not at all
Multilateral organizations (e.g. UN) and embassies	Weak

Drivers of Islamic oppression:

The main drivers of *Islamic oppression* in Guinea are the extended family and relatives in one's community. Most Christians with a Muslim background have faced pressure from their own family members and relatives. Local level government officials and radical imams have also contributed to the persecution of Christians. Some leaders of ethnic groups could also be considered as drivers of *Islamic oppression* due to the way in which they incite hatred against Christians.

Drivers of Ethnic antagonism:

The Zogos of Guinea Forestière (heads of traditional sacred customs) exert great pressure on the rural populations, with the complicity of the heads of families in the villages, and have caused much suffering to Christians. In some villages, Christians are forbidden to build a church. This has been the case for example in the Macenta region of southern Guinea in villages such as Booh and Lopko. Leaders of ethnic groups have persecuted Christians in Forest areas, where animists force Christians to participate in their traditional rituals and celebrations.

Context

Guinea became independent from France in 1958¹⁹. Sekou Toure, who led the movement for independence, became the first president of the country and followed a policy of socialism, favoring contact with Russia and China.²⁰ He established a single party dictatorship and was proclaimed president for life. All political opposition to the regime was brutally suppressed. Guinea's post-independence history has been marked by serious political instability, but since the 2010 elections, the country's political structure has progressed more towards democracy.

¹⁹ See <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/576/Guinea-HISTORY-BACKGROUND.html> accessed on 15 September 2017.

²⁰ Ibid

However, this progress has been hampered by tribal-based political alliances, serious disease-outbreaks and a weak economy.

The country has around 24 distinct ethnic groups, the largest being the Fulani making up 41% of the population.²¹ Tribal relations play an important role in politics. For example, the current President Alpha Conde is supported by his ethnic group, the Mandinka, whereas most of the opposition are from the Fulani.

Guinea is one of the least developed countries in the world. According to the World Bank, 40% of the population live below the poverty line. In 2014, Guinea was shaken by the outbreak of the Ebola virus. This outbreak had a great impact on the country's economic development.²²

There is a small community of Bahai and Jehovah's Witnesses in Guinea and although they have no official recognition from the government, they operate without much [difficulty](#)²³ according to the 2016 US State Department report.

Christian communities and how they are affected

Communities of expatriate Christians:

Communities of expatriate Christians do not exist as a separate WWL category in Guinea.

Historical Christian communities:

Roman Catholic, Anglican and various Protestant churches have existed in Guinea for hundreds of years and they are at times consulted by the state and given recognition, particularly in religious affairs. The Roman Catholic Church has been given many advantages within the government compared to other denominations.

Communities of converts to Christianity:

Christians with Muslim or animist background are facing serious problems. In all areas of the country, there are some converts killed, some receive death threats and others are forced to leave the family, the city or the area. Converts from Islam are not free to live their faith in areas like the Fouta-Djalon region. They must remain anonymous most of the time and cannot do anything in public to demonstrate their Christian faith. Hence, converts live in isolation at the risk of being thrown out of the community or even put to death in some places. In large cities, the pressure Christians face is in relation to housing. Christians are refused access to renting homes by some radical Muslims.

Non-traditional Christian communities:

Baptist, Evangelical and Pentecostal groups are present in Guinea as in the rest of the region. Some of these communities face pressure in the same manner that converts face. They also experience difficulties in finding places for worship and hostility from radical Islamic groups in

²¹ See: <http://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Guinea.html>, last accessed on 17 September 2017.

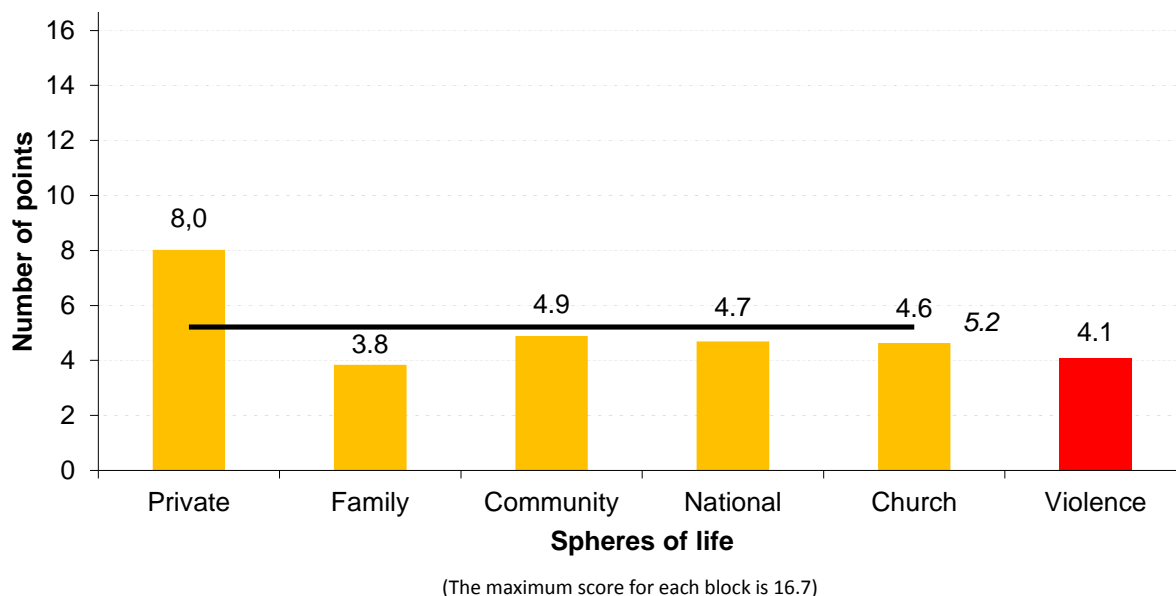
²² See: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/one-year-report/virus-origin/en/>, last accessed on 17 September 2017.

²³ See: <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/268900.pdf>, last accessed 26 February 2018.

certain areas. The pressure is strongest when Non-traditional Christian communities engage in evangelism or when they work with and try to integrate converts to Christianity.

Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence

WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Guinea



The WWL 2018 Persecution pattern for Guinea shows:

- The average pressure on Christians in Guinea is 5.2 points.
- Pressure is strongest in the *Private sphere* of life, which is mainly due to the pressure faced by converts of both Muslim background and ethnic religious background.
- The score for violence is fairly high at 4.1 points.

Private sphere:

Persecution is frequent in Middle, Upper and Forested Guinea where the influence of *Islamic oppression* is more strongly felt. Converts face pressure and hostility to a greater extent in these regions and this is true particularly in the *Private sphere*. Cases of such persecution also happen in Middle Guinea, in Upper Guinea and the Coast (Maritime) and it is a regular occurrence for Christians with a Muslim background in Fulani and Muslim areas. In these areas, converts from Islam are not free to live their faith and must try to remain anonymous most of the time. In such a context, it is not possible for a convert to be seen with a Bible or anything that is likely to demonstrate his Christian faith. Acts of private worship that could reveal one’s conversion could trigger a hostile reaction from one’s family or relatives, and risk being thrown out of the community. Some incidents at the individual and family level indicate that the level of pressure on Christians is increasing. The influence of radical Islam is on the rise in southeastern Guinea.

Family sphere:

In most parts of the country, Christians carry out baptisms unhindered even if their non-Christian family members are not happy. In animist and Muslim areas, the baptism of Christians is opposed by their (animist and Muslim) parents. There are separate cemeteries for Christians and Muslims. Muslim or animist parents of deceased converts want them buried in a traditional way.

In government owned and run schools there is no religious instruction as a rule. However, despite this general principle, in practice in some areas like Kankan, children of converts are under pressure to attend non-Christian religious instruction. Children of converts also face such pressure in other parts of the country such as Middle Guinea and Upper Guinea. In schools dominated by Muslims, Christian children of all backgrounds are sometimes discriminated against because of their parents' faith. The problem seems to be sporadic and affects mainly converts from Islam. The wives of converts are forced to leave their husbands, which is very common in some regions, however, particularly in Fouta-Djalon. In this region, a person wanting to convert to Christianity would encounter strong social pressure and would risk being rejected by his or her family and community as a whole.

Community sphere:

In parts of the country where the influence of Islamic militants is being felt, converts from Islam are confronted with harassment and the threat of death. Similar persecution is also felt by converts from African traditional religions. When Christians refuse to participate in traditional rites, the community puts pressure on them. This situation is occurring regularly in Middle Guinea (Fouta Djallon) and also in Labe. Christians are considered aliens within the community.

National sphere:

Christians are sometimes discriminated against in their dealing with government authorities. Discrimination also affects Christians when they are civil servants and they are denied promotion and do not have the same opportunities as Muslims. In recent times this has been a recurring trend in Guinea. The state promotes Islam by asking Christian cadres to convert to Islam for promotion. This is mainly a problem for Christians with a Muslim background but it is becoming an issue even for all Christians since expressing their views in public might limit their career options. Radical Muslims and some local authorities abuse Christians verbally. In some regions (such as Guinea Forestière, in the prefectures of Lola and Macenta) Christians have complained about this but it went unpunished because the people in power were themselves sympathetic to the perpetrators.

Church sphere:

It is sometimes very difficult to obtain legal status or registration for churches because local administrators are reluctant to cooperate with Christians. (The Alliance of Churches is helping to make things easier for churches in this respect.) This seems to be a problem mainly for convert groups and Pentecostal churches. There are some cases of impediments to the construction of churches in certain villages in Forested Guinea and in the area of Kankan and Labé. The inhabitants of these localities refuse to rent out premises to Christians to be used for

holding church services. In the town of Dinguiraye, a holy city for African Muslims, the public celebration of non-Muslim religious holidays or festivals is not permitted. Dinguiraye town authorities also refused permission to build a church within its boundaries. The integration of converts is very difficult because of persecution and the churches often do not have sufficient means to help them. Converts from both Islam and African religions and some pastors have been particularly targeted for harassment in Forested Guinea and other areas.

Violence:

In addition to pressure and discrimination, Christians in Guinea have also faced violent persecution in the WWL 2018 reporting period. For example:

- A young Peulh (Fulani), whom the parents have sought to kill because of his faith in Jesus Christ, had to flee the country.
- A Christian man was killed because of his faith in the Beyla region.

Gender profile of persecution

Female / Male: No data currently available.

Future outlook

The future for Christians in Guinea is worrying. The influence of radical Islam is on the rise. The country is struggling to consolidate its transition to multiparty democracy. This transition has fueled ethnic division and there is a risk that with the opening of the democratic space for various actors, radical Muslims could try to exploit the situation. One can say that this is a time of transition in Guinea. Depending on the leadership, Guinea might be able to consolidate democratic governance and build upon its relatively good record of tolerance for religious minorities. But on the other hand, there is also a risk that things could deteriorate due to the fragility of the overall political situation in the country. The rise of Islamic militancy in the region as whole is also another cloud on the horizon that does not bode well for the future of Christians in the country.

Policy considerations

Taking into account the above persecution dynamics, Open Doors International suggests the following recommendations:

- The international community should urge and assist the government of Guinea to reaffirm its international commitment to uphold the freedom of religion of its citizens by respecting and protecting the rights of religious minorities to freedom of religion and to equality.
- The government of Guinea should be more vigilante in tackling the rise of radical Islam and militancy that is undermining tolerance and the peaceful co-existence of religious groups.

- The government of Guinea should put in place procedures and mechanisms to ensure ways in which the rights of converts and non-traditional Christian communities will be effectively respected, so that they can have access to land to build places of worship.

WWR in-depth reports

All in-depth reports are available at: <http://opendoorsanalytical.org/reports/> (password: freedom).

- WEST AFRICA – Islam and Islamism in Francophone West Africa
September 2017 (based on 2012 unpublished report)
Using the Islamist occupation of northern Mali as the background and starting point, this 20 page report offers an overview of the current state of Islam in eight further French-speaking countries of West Africa: Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger, Ivory Coast, Benin and Togo.

Open Doors article(s) from the region

There are currently no Open Doors articles on Guinea available at:
<http://opendoorsanalytical.org/articles/> (password freedom).

World Watch Monitor news articles

There are currently no recent articles on Guinea. Any new articles will be made available at:
<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/countries/guinea/>

Recent country developments

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