



## UGANDA: 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 Countries<sup>1</sup>

		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

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

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## Introduction

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

UGANDA		
World Watch List	Score	Rank
WWL 2018	46	57
WWL 2017	51	-
WWL 2016	-	-
WWL 2015	-	-
WWL 2014	-	-

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

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

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

# WWL 2018: Keys to understanding UGANDA

## Link for general background information:

BBC country profile: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14107906>

## Recent country history

The struggle for independence did not take a bloody course like it did in Kenya or Algeria, yet it was not easy as Britain was unwilling to relinquish one of its most prosperous colonies. Eventually in 1962, Uganda gained independence and the traditional kingdoms Ankole, Buganda, Bunyoro and Toro were accorded federal status and a certain amount of autonomy.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Milton Obote of the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) became the first prime minister. In 1967, Obote abolished the kingdoms and assumed both the office of president and prime minister. That continued until 1971 when he was ousted by General Idi Amin Dada. In 1971, while President Obote was attending a Commonwealth meeting in Singapore, Idi Amin conducted a coup that effectively overthrew Obote's regime. Idi Amin expelled Asians from the country and conducted massacres especially against the Acholi and Lango civilians and soldiers. Under the leadership of Amin, Uganda became very repressive, with extrajudicial killings and mass executions becoming commonplace. In 1978, the Ugandan army invaded the Kagera strip of Tanzania. This was seen as an act of aggression by Tanzania who invaded the country in 1979. Idi Amin was defeated and fled the country (to Saudi Arabia via Libya). Milton Obote took this chance and went back to his country, won the next presidential election and re-assumed power. During this time, Obote tried to revive the economy through international aid, but Obote was ousted by another coup in 1985. In 1986, a leader of the guerrilla National Resistance Army (NRA), Yoweri Museveni took control of the country and became president.

## The religious landscape

Uganda is a Christian majority country. As in many countries, the reliability of religious statistics is a challenge and Muslims argue that their presence is as high as 25% of the total population (compared to WCD figures of 11.8%). The country's population secretariat reported its census (which is carried out every ten years) in 2014, and the reporting mentions new developments. According to its report: "Even though Catholics and Anglicans are still the dominant faiths in the country, they are losing believers to the Islamic faith, Pentecostals/Born Again/ Evangelicals and the Seventh Day Adventists."<sup>5</sup>

## The political landscape

Uganda (*Jamhuri ya Uganda*) is a multiparty republic (since 2005) with one legislative house that has 375 members.<sup>6</sup> The constitution has no presidential term limits. The president is both the head of the state and the government. In the 2006 election, the first presidential and

<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/uganda-gains-independence>, last accessed 15 February 2018.

<sup>5</sup> See: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201603280284.html>, last accessed 15 February 2018.

<sup>6</sup> See: <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/uganda/constitution-politics>, last accessed 15 February 2018.

parliamentary elections after the introduction of a new multi-party system, Museveni won the presidency while his party, the National Resistance Movement (NRM), won the majority of seats in parliament. Again, Museveni won the February 2011 and 2016 elections. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the land, it also gives final decisions on constitutional matters.

Museveni was defense minister and a member of a three-man caretaker military council until the 1980 presidential election could be staged. He ran for the presidency, but Obote won. Museveni rejected the result and formed the National Resistance Army (NRA). In 1986, Museveni took control of the country, formed a government of national unity and has remained in power ever since.<sup>7</sup> The rule of Museveni has not gone unchallenged, especially in the north. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) fought against the Ugandan army and displaced millions of civilians whilst aiming to remove Museveni's regime.

The LRA was formed by some former members of the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSMF), which was founded by the self-proclaimed priestess Alice Auma Lakwena, who fought against the Ugandan army in 1986-1987. The group first formed the United Holy Salvation Army and then changed its name to Uganda Christian Army/Movement. In 1992, it became the Lord's Resistance Army.<sup>8</sup> Ever since it was created, the LRA waged a brutal war in an attempt to remove the government of Museveni. Even though the LRA claimed to be establishing a country ruled by the Bible's Ten Commandments, the acts they committed were clearly evil and by no means Christian. The LRA has committed unspeakable atrocities in northern Uganda and South Sudan: Forced marriages, child soldiering, sexual and other forms of enslavement are just some of the atrocities committed. In December 2003, the government of Uganda referred the matter to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Five LRA leaders, namely Kony, Lukwiya, Odhiambo, Ongwen and Otti were charged under different counts. Except for [Dominic Ongwen](#)<sup>9</sup>, who was arrested in 2015, the rest are still at large. The influence of the LRA in northern Uganda is diminishing, and it is believed that only a few remnants are now in existence in the forests of Central African Republic.

## The socio-economic landscape

Though not among the fastest growing economies on the African continent, Uganda's economy is stable and has the potential to grow fast. According to the 2014 World Bank report, Uganda has registered \$27.00 billion GDP and 4.8% GDP growth.<sup>10</sup> The country's top exports are coffee, raw tobacco and refined petroleum. The country has established trading partnerships with neighboring countries. Top export destinations are Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Rwanda and South Sudan.<sup>11</sup> The Heritage Foundation rated the country's economy as "mostly unfree", yet it commended the improvements in trade and monetary freedom.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See: <http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ad22>, last accessed 15 February 2018.

<sup>8</sup> See: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/10/2011101418364196576.html>, last accessed 15 February 2018.

<sup>9</sup> See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-38219007>, last accessed 15 February 2018.

<sup>10</sup> See: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/uganda>, last accessed 15 February 2018.

<sup>11</sup> See: <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/uga/>, last accessed 15 February 2018.

<sup>12</sup> See: <http://www.heritage.org/index/country/uganda>, last accessed 15 February 2018.

## Concluding remarks

Yuweri Museveni has been governing Uganda since 1986. His presidency has attracted criticism from Western governments and human right groups. The Committee to Protect Journalists has reported extensively on the mistreatment that journalists and media staff have received at the hands of the government.<sup>13</sup> The US State Department human rights report of 2014 lists the main human rights problems in the country as follows: Lack of respect for the integrity of the person (including unlawful killings, torture, and other abuse of suspects and detainees); restrictions on civil liberties (including freedoms of assembly, the media, and association); and violence and discrimination against marginalized groups.<sup>14</sup> In its 2016 report, Freedom House rated the country “not free”.<sup>15</sup> The report shows that the country has not succeeded in creating a conducive environment for political pluralism to flourish. It also states that there were “increased violations of individual rights and freedom of expression, assembly, and association, particularly for opposition supporters, civil society groups, and women...”<sup>16</sup> In this context it is inevitable that Christians also face serious challenges.

## WWL 2018: Church History and Facts

### How many Christians?

Pop 2017	Christians	Chr%
41,653,000	35,168,000	84.4

Source: WCD, May 2017

### How did Christians get there?

Since Uganda is a landlocked country deep inside the African continent, Christianity entered the region relatively late compared to other parts of Africa (especially the coastal regions). Protestant missionaries first arrived at the court of Kabaka Muteesa<sup>17</sup> in 1877.<sup>18</sup> The Roman Catholic Church became established in the country in 1879. Other Christian denominations arrived in the 1930s (and following decades), including the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, an Orthodox community under the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, the All Africa Church, the New Apostolic Church, the Seventh-day Adventists and the Church of God.

<sup>13</sup> See: <https://cpi.org/africa/uganda/>, last accessed 15 February 2018.

<sup>14</sup> See: <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>, last accessed 15 February 2018.

<sup>15</sup> See: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/uganda>, last accessed 15 February 2018.

<sup>16</sup> See: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/uganda>, last accessed 15 February 2018.

<sup>17</sup> Muteesa was a 30<sup>th</sup> Kabaka of the Kingdom of Buganda, reigned from 1856-1884.

<sup>18</sup> See <http://www.dacb.org/stories/uganda/histories/a%20history%20of%20christianity%20in%20uganda.html>, last accessed on 21 June 2017.

It is also important to mention that there was a huge setback in 1885-86 when Christians were persecuted and some were viciously murdered. Persecution reoccurred under Idi Amin in the 1970s.

## What church networks exist today? <sup>19</sup>

Orthodox	Catholic	Protestant	Independent	Unaffiliated	Double-aff	Evangelical	Renewalist
31,100	17,330,000	17,429,000	1,392,000	611,000	-1,625,000	7,936,000	9,074,000

Source: WCD, May 2017

Many denominations are present in Uganda: Roman Catholic, Anglican, Pentecostal, Seventh-day Adventist, and Greek Orthodox are examples of the major ones. There has been some conflict between different Christian groups in some parts of the country.

## Religious context (selection)

Christian	Muslim	Hindu	Buddhist	Ethno-religionist	Jewish	Bahai	Atheist & others <sup>20</sup>
35,168,000	4,935,000	333,000	2,500	896,000	3,700	122,000	179,900

Source: WCD, May 2017

Uganda is a Christian majority country, with Muslims making up an estimated 11.8% of the population. In eastern Uganda, Christians - especially converts with a Muslim background - have been targeted by Muslim majority communities and family members.

## Notes on the current situation

- The Alliance for Democratic Forces (ADF), an Islamist rebel group which wants to create a Sharia state in Uganda, is currently recruiting members. If this group grows significantly it could prove to have long-term negative effects on the Christian community.
- Law enforcement is not effective and radical Muslims who are attacking Christians are able to do so with impunity.

<sup>19</sup> **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.

<sup>20</sup> This category includes Atheists, Agnostics and New religionists.

## WWL 2018: Short & Simple Persecution Profile

**Reporting period:** 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

**WWL 2018 Points: 46 / Position: 57**

WWL 2017 Points: 51 / Position: -

WWL 2016 Points: - / Position: -

### Where persecution comes from

*Islamic oppression* is the main persecution engine in the country and is apparent in two forms:

(i) in the rise of radical Islamic influence in the eastern part of the country, where the *Tabliqs* (a sect of puritanical Muslims whose members portray themselves as Muslim evangelists) have continued to advance their version of Islam in areas like Mbale, Kasese, Arua/Yumbe.

(ii) in the morale boost to radical Muslims in the country generated by the activities of ADF-NALU (Allied Democratic Forces - National Army for the Liberation of Uganda).<sup>21</sup>

### How Christians are suffering

There is particular pressure on Christians with a Muslim background which is exerted by family and local community, especially in Muslim dominated areas. Bullying and harassment - targeting converts from Islam in particular - have been very common in eastern parts of the country, making it particularly difficult for such converts to live a normal life. For example, owning Christian materials or discussing Christian faith with family or community members was often matched by expulsion, serious physical attacks and even killings. In addition, there have been reports of mob attacks on churches and converts.

### Examples

Christians in Uganda face various restrictions. They have to carry out baptisms in a secretive way. Christians in Muslim dominated areas face an enormous challenge in sharing community resources and even using their own property is at times difficult. Violent incidents occurring in the WWL 2018 reporting period were, for example: The 72 year old Christian, Kinyera Maurenio, was attacked and killed in his garden by a Muslim man on 6 June 2017. Ochama Alex was also killed in his garden on 9 June 2017.

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<sup>21</sup> In more recent times ADF-NALU is also referred to as Muslim Defense International (MDI).



# WWL 2018: Persecution Dynamics

**Reporting period:** 1 November 2016 - 31 October 2017

**WWL 2018 Points: 46 / Position: 57**

WWL 2017 Points: 51 / Position: -

WWL 2016 Points: - / Position: -

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## Position on World Watch List (WWL)

Uganda dropped points in the WWL 2018 reporting period, which was mainly due to a sharp decrease in violence.

## Persecution engines

Persecution engines in Uganda <sup>22</sup>	Level of influence
Islamic oppression	Very strong
Religious nationalism	Not at all
Ethnic antagonism	Weak
Denominational protectionism	Weak
Communist and post-Communist oppression	Not at all
Secular intolerance	Weak
Dictatorial paranoia	Strong
Organized corruption and crime	Not at all

### Islamic oppression (Very Strong):

<sup>22</sup> 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.

This Persecution engine is apparent in two forms:

- (i) in the rise of radical Islamic influence in the eastern part of the country, where the *Tabliqs* (a sect of puritanical Muslims whose members portray themselves as Muslim evangelists) have continued to advance their version of Islam in areas like Mbale, Kasese, Arua/Yumbe.
- (ii) in the morale boost to radical Muslims in the country generated by the activities of ADF-NALU (Allied Democratic Forces - National Army for the Liberation of Uganda).<sup>23</sup>

Islam is the primary driver of persecution in Uganda as Muslims strive to increase in numbers, influence and visibility. An example from the WWL 2018 period is given by a country researcher thus: "In the last general election, a number of Muslims contested for and won different positions of both local councils and at national level, e.g. the mayor of Mbale municipality and local division councils are mostly headed by Muslims. These put them in a position from which they easily pass policies that are oppressive to other religions especially Christians." Although Uganda is a secular country, it joined the OIC in the 1970's when Idi Amin was president. Muslims make up less than 15% of the population and are spread across the nation. However, they are predominantly found in Eastern Uganda. There, Iganga District, Busoga, has the highest concentration of Muslims in the country. Also with high levels of Muslim population are Mbale town and surroundings; Kasese/Bwera in Western Uganda; Arua/Yumbe in Northern Uganda; and Kampala/Jinja in Central Uganda.

#### **Dictatorial paranoia (Strong):**

President Yuwari Museveni has been governing Uganda since 1986. His presidency has attracted criticism from activists and human right groups. Freedom of assembly, expression and association are restricted. In the process Christians are also affected.

## Drivers of persecution

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

<sup>23</sup> In more recent times ADF-NALU is also referred to as Muslim Defense International (MDI).

The drivers of persecution in the country are mainly the ones that belong to *Islamic oppression*. Bullying and harassment - targeting Christians with a Muslim background in particular - have been very common in eastern parts of the country. Family and the local community, especially in Muslim dominated areas, are the main drivers in this context. Converts from Islam have found it particularly 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 (sometimes by mobs) and even death. Government officials are also in part responsible, since they either fail to protect Christian victims or are complicit in the act.

## Context

Uganda is a Christian majority country but religious demographics are challenging. World Christian Database puts the percentage of Christians at 84.4% and Muslims at 11.8%. However, Muslims in the country regard such statistics as manipulated. According to them, Muslims are 25% of the total population. According to the country's official census of 2014 (which is carried out every ten years): "Even though Catholics and Anglicans are still the dominant faiths in the country, they are losing believers to the Islamic faith, Pentecostals/Born Again/ Evangelicals and the Seventh Day Adventists."<sup>24</sup>

President Yoweri Museveni has been governing Uganda since 1986. His presidency has attracted criticism from Western governments and human right groups. The Committee to Protect Journalists has reported extensively on the mistreatment that journalists and media staff have received at the hands of the government.<sup>25</sup> The US State Department human rights report of 2016 lists the main human rights problems in the country as being: lack of respect for the integrity of the person (including unlawful killings, torture, and other abuse of suspects and detainees); restrictions on civil liberties (including freedoms of assembly, the media, and association); and violence and discrimination against marginalized groups.<sup>26</sup> In its 2017 report, Freedom House rated the country "partly free".<sup>27</sup> The report shows that the country has not succeeded in creating a conducive environment for political pluralism to flourish. It also states that, there were "increased violations of individual rights and freedom of expression, assembly, and association, particularly for opposition supporters, civil society groups, and women..."<sup>28</sup> In this context it is inevitable that Christians also face serious challenges.

The country has other religious groups besides Muslims and Christians, such as adherents of indigenous beliefs, Hindus, and those with no religious affiliation. However, there are no reports about the persecution of these other groups.

<sup>24</sup> See <http://allafrica.com/stories/201603280284.html>, last accessed 27 February 2018.

<sup>25</sup> See: <https://cpi.org/africa/uganda/>, last accessed 27 February 2018.

<sup>26</sup> See <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>, last accessed 27 February 2018.

<sup>27</sup> See <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2017/uganda>, last accessed 27 February 2018.

<sup>28</sup> See: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/uganda>, last accessed 27 February 2018.

## Christian communities and how they are affected

### **Communities of expatriate Christians:**

This group does not exist as a separate WWL category in the country.

### **Historical Christian communities:**

This group has strong presence in the country and includes the Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Church (Church of Uganda), Orthodox Church and Seventh Day Adventists among others. Historical records indicate that the first Protestant missionaries arrived in 1877. They were followed by French Catholic missionaries in 1879. The various denominations are widely spread around the country and are even present in Muslim dominated areas. According to country researchers, those that are based in Muslim dominated areas are the ones that report persecution while those in predominantly Christian regions are free to conduct their services/church activities undisturbed.

### **Communities of converts to Christianity:**

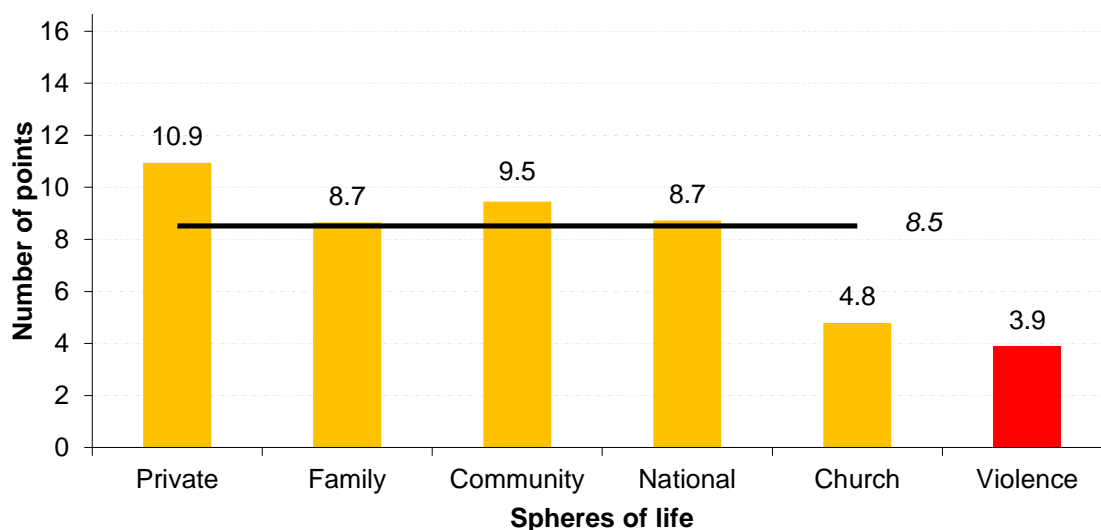
This category includes converts from Islam but also “cross-denominational” converts. A country researcher writes: “Some converts are open about their new faith and face much persecution and pressure to revert to Islam or their former 'traditional' Christianity, while others, especially from Islam, remain underground and only meet with brethren and pastors in secret. Overall, this category of Christians reports the highest number of persecution cases, as well as the most intense.”

### **Non-traditional Christian communities:**

This group is becoming more visible in the country. A country researcher states: “The growth of this category of Christians, particularly the evangelicals/Pentecostals/charismatics, has been rapid and their numbers continue to increase. There are thousands of churches that adhere to the various Pentecostal faith systems. The churches are also widespread as they plant churches in all areas of the country. Those in predominantly Christian regions enjoy relative peace and acceptance while those in Muslim dominated areas such as Western Uganda, Jinja District, Arua, Yumbe, Mbale etc. report high numbers of persecution cases as they are aggressive in evangelism.”

## Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence

### WWL 2018 Persecution Pattern for Uganda



(The maximum score for each block is 16.7)

The WWL 2018 Persecution pattern for Uganda shows:

- The average pressure on Christians in this reporting period is 8.5, compared to 8.6 in WWL 2017.
- Pressure is strongest in the *Private sphere* (10.9) - an indication that converts are facing very high pressure in their private lives due to pressure from family and community.
- The score for violence is 3.9, which is significantly less than the level in the WWL 2017 reporting period, when the score was 10.0.

#### Private sphere:

Christians face different forms of persecution; a country researcher reports that some converts are thrown out of their house and cursed. Converts from Islam must keep all Christian material and their Christian worship out of sight from their Muslim parents or relatives' homes. Any Christian material found in their possession is likely to be destroyed and severe punishment results.

#### Family sphere:

Converts are under pressure not to raise their children according to their faith; these are also harassed at schools. A country researcher states: "All converts who are disowned by their parents or divorced by their spouses for faith reasons are forced to live separate from their families." In the WWL 2018 reporting period many new Christians were disowned, thrown out of their houses or forced to flee their homes to avoid beatings or worse.

**Community sphere:**

Christians in many Muslim dominated communities are bullied and hindered from using community resources etc. - this is particularly the case in eastern Uganda. According to a country researcher: "Muslims regularly abuse Christian girls because they do not cover their heads and put on long dresses/skirts. Muslims also mock Christian men for shaving off their beards and those found not to be circumcised. They disparage Christian food as being 'defiled' eg. meat that is not slaughtered by Muslims, pork etc."

**National sphere:**

In some places, Muslim officials (mayors and district authorities) follow policies which deliberately put Christians at a disadvantage (e.g. regulations concerning halal food). Furthermore, the undemocratic nature of the Museveni government is restricting Christian freedom in terms of freedom of expression and assembly. The government wants all institutions in society to support its policies.

**Church sphere:**

Church life is also another area that is affected by persecution. Church property and church buildings are under frequent attack from mobs and at times the ownership of church land has turned into a legal battle. A country researcher writes: "Christian activities are hindered. For example, open air meetings and night prayers around the Muslim dominated areas are not allowed. Also, some churches are forced to pay fees to hold overnight prayers to local authorities with no acknowledgement receipts...".

**Violence:**

Two Christians were killed in the WWL 2018 reporting period. Two churches were also attacked by mobs.

## Gender profile of persecution

**Female:**

Poisoning, divorce, physical/domestic violence, cursing and being disowned by their Muslim husbands and/or relatives.

**Male:**

No data available.

## Future outlook

- Uganda has been ruled by one man for more than 30 years and the president is still in a strong position to continue ruling the country since the Constitution has been amended to allow him to do so. It is likely that he will continue ruling the country through the means he has employed in the past (arresting his opponents, harassing them, restricting freedom of expression and assembly).
- There is no indication that the government will intervene with any serious intention of protecting Christians facing difficulties - particularly in Eastern Uganda.

## Policy considerations

During the last 30 years, many citizens have disappeared, were killed, tortured or forced to flee the country. Christians also face pressure from the government to support its policies. In some parts of the country Christians are also under pressure from radical groups. We suggest the following policy considerations:

- The international community should put pressure on the government to respect human rights.
- The Ugandan government should protect Christians who are under pressure in the country, especially Eastern Uganda.

## WWR in-depth reports

There are currently no in-depth reports on Uganda available at: <http://opendoorsanalytical.org/reports/> (password: freedom).

## Open Doors article(s) from the region

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

## World Watch Monitor news articles

Up-to-date articles are available at: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/countries/uganda/>

- [Uganda: Refusal to convert to Islam ends in family tragedy](#)  
30 January 2018  
A Christian woman has been brutally attacked with a machete by her Muslim husband for refusing to convert to his religion. The attack led to the death of the woman's one-week-old twins.

## Recent country developments

There are currently no recent items on Uganda. Any new articles will be made available at: <http://opendoorsanalytical.org/?s=uganda> (password: freedom).

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