

World
Watch
Research

30 Years World Watch List

WWL 1993 – WWL 2023

Statements with Factsheet

January 2023



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

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30 years World Watch List

WWL 1993 to WWL 2023

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Contents

Copyright	2
STATEMENTS: 30 years WWL	2
FACT SHEET: Global overview based on numbers of countries scoring 41 or more points	5
APPENDIX: List of countries scoring high to extreme levels of persecution per region and subregion	8

STATEMENTS: 30 years WWL

- The number of countries scoring high, very high or extreme levels of persecution rose from 40 in WWL 1993 to 76 in WWL 2023. (Fact sheet diagram 1)
- Globally persecution of Christians (1) increased from **WWL 1995 to WWL 1999**; (2) decreased from **WWL 1999 to WWL 2006**; (3) remained somewhat stable from **WWL 2006 to WWL 2010**; (4) persecution of Christians increased sharply from **WWL 2010 to WWL 2022**. (Fact sheet diagram 2)
- The biggest increase in persecution of Christians from WWL 2010 to WWL 2022 was in Africa, closely followed by Asia. (The Appendix gives the list of countries scoring high to extreme levels of persecution per region and subregion.)
- In Africa the biggest increase in persecution was in Eastern Africa, closely followed by Western Africa. Persecution in Middle and Northern Africa increased too but a bit less pronouncedly.
- In Asia the biggest increase in persecution was in Western Asia, followed by South Asia. South-eastern Asia and Central Asia come third and fourth. No net increase in Eastern Asia.
- The biggest increase in persecution of Christians from WWL 2010 to WWL 2022 was caused by *Islamic oppression*. Much of it came from the ***Islamist movement***, which is

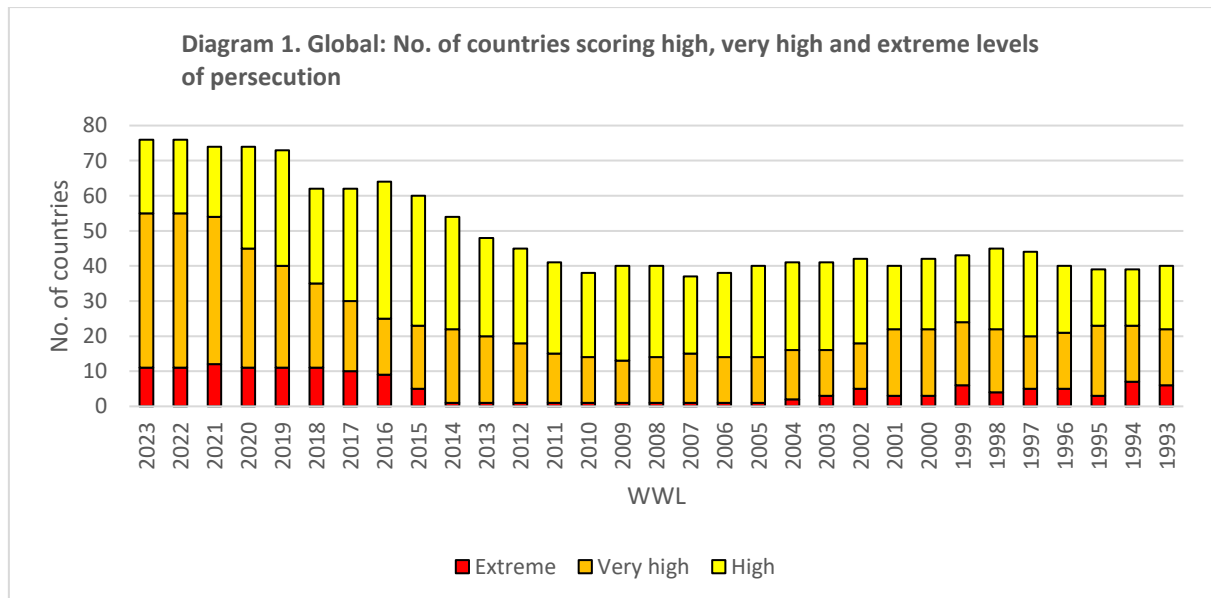
global but has many different shapes and sizes. The **Islamist movement** expresses itself through regimes and/or non-state actors. Most visible are the violent Islamist insurgents, although there is also a lot of persecution resulting from non-violent Islamist groups.

- The rather high increase of *Dictatorial paranoia* from WWL 2010 to WWL 2022 was partially caused by its blending with *Islamic oppression*. Similarly, the rather high increase of *Organized corruption and crime* was partially caused by its collaboration with, sometimes even overlap with violent Islamist insurgents.
 - The increase of *Islamic oppression* in Africa was rather evenly distributed over the continent. It was the biggest in Eastern Africa, followed by Western Africa, Northern Africa and Middle Africa. (Southern African countries didn't show up in the list of countries where Christians were persecuted for their faith at high to extreme levels.)
 - The increase of *Islamic oppression* in Asia was most pronounced in Western Asia, and (much) less in South Asia, South-eastern Asia, and Central Asia. Eastern Asia remained the same.
 - It follows that the **Islamist movement** was the main (though not the only) cause of the increase of persecution of Christians for their faith from WWL 2010 to WWL 2022. The fluctuation from WWL 1995 to WWL 1999, WWL 1999 to WWL 2010, and WWL 2010 to WWL 2022 is also partially related to the **Islamist movement**. See Fact sheet diagram 3.
- **WWL 2003:** Start of scoring effects of '9/11' (2001)
 - 'War on Terror' pushed the *Islamist movement* underground
 - **WWL 2012:** Start of scoring effects of 'the Arab Spring' (started in Tunisia, 17 December 2010)
 - Breakdown of authoritarian regimes
 - Creation or opening-up of the associational space in those countries (i.e. space for Civil Society Organizations to operate)
 - Quickly taken over by the *Islamist movement*
 - **WWL 2013:** Start of scoring effects of the fall of Libya's Muammar Gaddafi (August 2011) and his death (October 2011)
 - Dramatic consequences, in particular for Sub-Saharan Africa (many Libyan weapons in the hands of insurgents)
 - **WWL 2015:** Start of scoring effects of the establishment of a caliphate led by the leader of the **Islamic State group**, in Iraq and Syria (officially proclaimed in June 2014)
 - During the caliphate, and even after its fall, the **Islamic State group** has had an enormous appeal on many different smaller actual and attempted Islamic insurgencies spread over Africa and Asia. They felt encouraged to go for 'jihad' themselves too, or to strengthen their ongoing efforts.

- Sometimes moderate Islamic regimes felt obliged to become stricter in the application of Islamic rules or guidelines, because they didn't want to alienate more radical Muslims or small Islamist groups in their societies who were inspired by the successes of the ***Islamic State group***.

FACT SHEET: Global overview based on numbers of countries scoring 41 or more points

Diagram 1 shows that the number of countries scoring high, very high or extreme levels of persecution rose from 40 in WWL 1993 to 76 in WWL 2023.



To do justice to the gradations in persecution, the different categories are weighted as follows:

- **Red** number of countries, representing countries scoring 81 to 100 points:
to be multiplied by 3
- **Orange** number of countries, representing countries scoring 61 to 80 points:
to be multiplied by 2
- **Yellow** number of countries, representing countries scoring 41 to 60 points:
to be multiplied by 1.

Diagram 2 shows that looking at the global total, persecution of Christians:

- (1) increased from **WWL 1995 to WWL 1999**;
- (2) decreased from **WWL 1999 to WWL 2006**;
- (3) remained somewhat stable from **WWL 2006 to WWL 2010**;
- (4) increased sharply from **WWL 2010 to WWL 2022**.

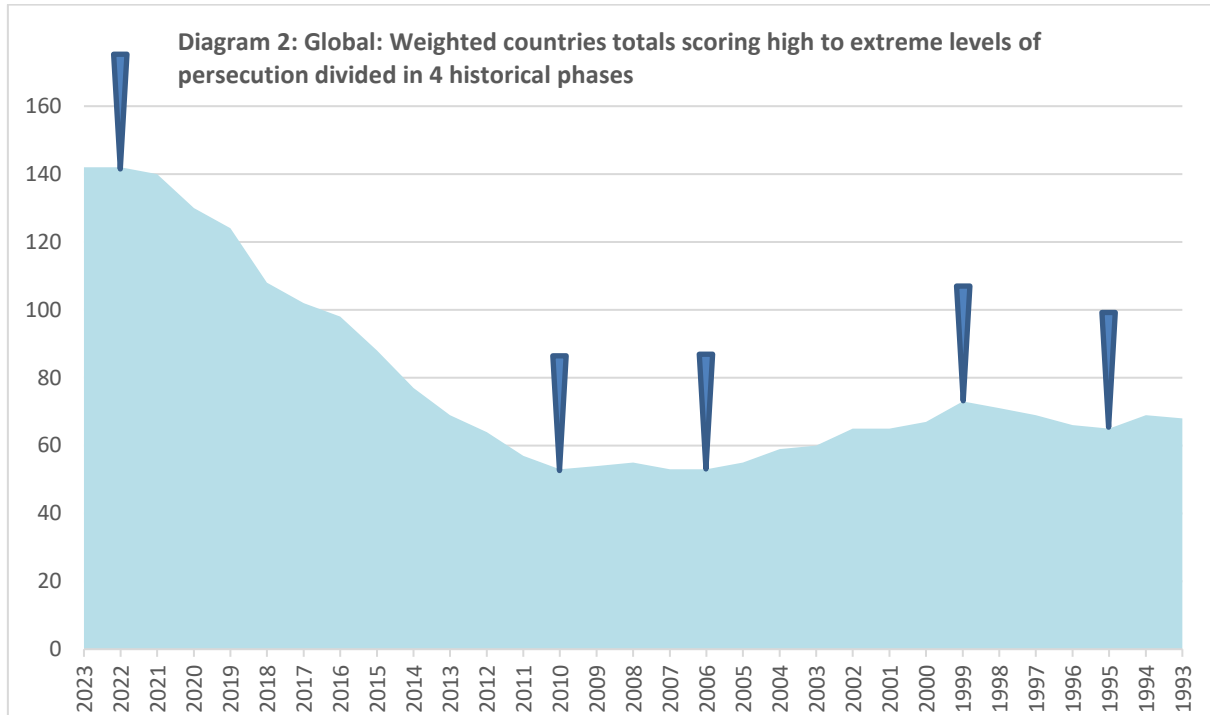
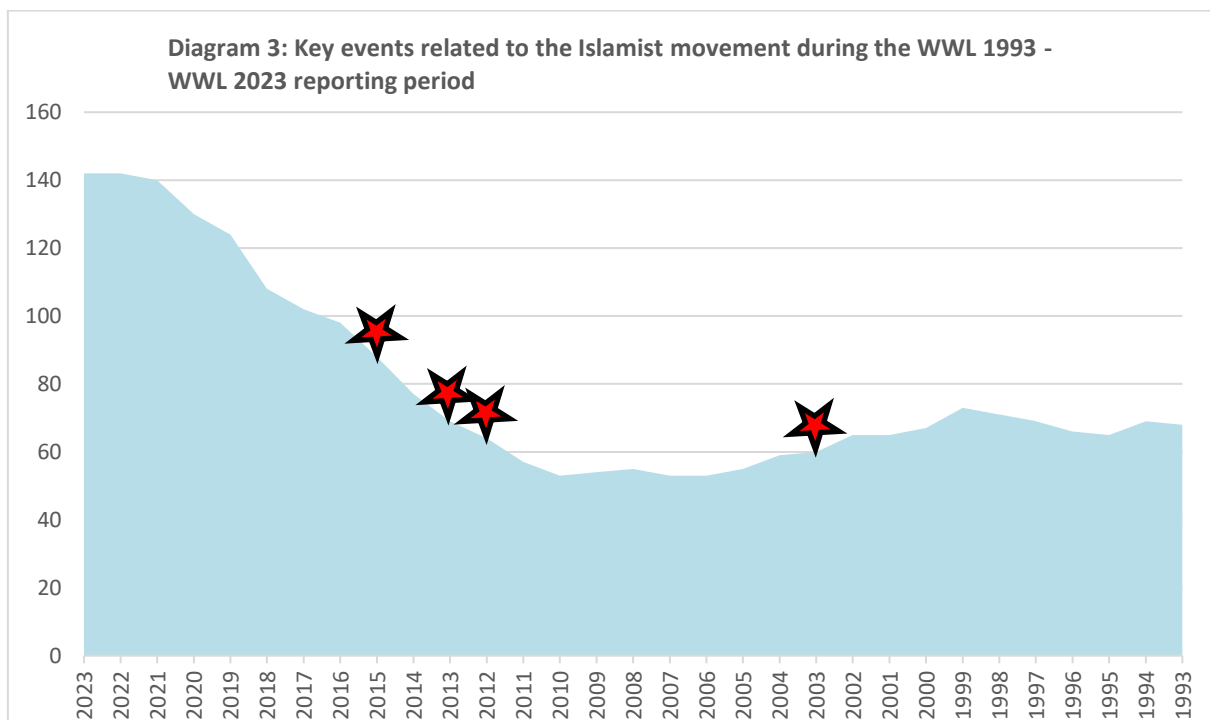


Diagram 3 adds to Diagram 2 some key events related to the *Islamist movement*:

- **WWL 2003** starting to show the effects of ‘9/11’ and the following ‘War on Terror’;
- **WWL 2012** starting to show the effects of the ‘Arab Spring’ which soon was taken over by the *Islamist movement*;
- **WWL 2013** starting to show the effect of the fall of Libya’s Muammar Gaddafi;
- **WWL 2015** starting to show the effects of the proclamation of a caliphate led by the leader of the *Islamic State group* in Iraq and Syria.



APPENDIX: List of countries scoring high to extreme levels of persecution per region and subregion

Please note: The shading in the table below is purely used to make the different subregions easier to identify.

AFRICA	Subregion	ASIA	Subregion	EUROPE	Subregion
Burundi	Eastern Africa	Kazakhstan	Central Asia	Belarus	Eastern Europe
Comoros	Eastern Africa	Kyrgyzstan	Central Asia	Russian Federation	Eastern Europe
Djibouti	Eastern Africa	Tajikistan	Central Asia		
Eritrea	Eastern Africa	Turkmenistan	Central Asia	LATIN AMERICA	Subregion
Ethiopia	Eastern Africa	Uzbekistan	Central Asia	Cuba	Caribbean
Kenya	Eastern Africa	China	Eastern Asia	El Salvador	Central America
Mauritius	Eastern Africa	Mongolia	Eastern Asia	Honduras	Central America
Mozambique	Eastern Africa	North Korea	Eastern Asia	Mexico	Central America
Rwanda	Eastern Africa	Afghanistan	South Asia	Nicaragua	Central America
Somalia	Eastern Africa	Bangladesh	South Asia	Colombia	South America
South Sudan	Eastern Africa	Bhutan	South Asia	Peru	South America
Tanzania	Eastern Africa	India	South Asia	Venezuela	South America
Uganda	Eastern Africa	Iran	South Asia		
Angola	Middle Africa	Maldives	South Asia		
Cameroon	Middle Africa	Nepal	South Asia		
Central African Republic	Middle Africa	Pakistan	South Asia		
Chad	Middle Africa	Sri Lanka	South Asia		
Congo DR (DRC)	Middle Africa	Brunei	South-eastern Asia		
Algeria	Northern Africa	Cambodia	South-eastern Asia		
Egypt	Northern Africa	Indonesia	South-eastern Asia		
Libya	Northern Africa	Laos	South-eastern Asia		
Morocco	Northern Africa	Malaysia	South-eastern Asia		
Sudan	Northern Africa	Myanmar	South-eastern Asia		
Tunisia	Northern Africa	Vietnam	South-eastern Asia		
Burkina Faso	Western Africa	Azerbaijan	Western Asia		
Gambia	Western Africa	Bahrain	Western Asia		
Guinea	Western Africa	Iraq	Western Asia		
Ivory Coast	Western Africa	Israel	Western Asia		
Mali	Western Africa	Jordan	Western Asia		
Mauritania	Western Africa	Kuwait	Western Asia		
Niger	Western Africa	Oman	Western Asia		
Nigeria	Western Africa	Palestinian Territories	Western Asia		
Senegal	Western Africa	Qatar	Western Asia		
Togo	Western Africa	Saudi Arabia	Western Asia		
		Syria	Western Asia		
		Turkey	Western Asia		
		United Arab Emirates	Western Asia		
		Yemen	Western Asia		