

World
Watch
Research

Guinea: Full Country Dossier

February 2023



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

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Introduction

World Watch List 2023

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019
1	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	14.4	98	96	94	94	94
2	Somalia	16.5	16.7	16.6	16.6	16.6	8.7	92	91	92	92	91
3	Yemen	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	5.9	89	88	87	85	86
4	Eritrea	14.6	14.9	15.5	15.9	15.7	12.2	89	88	88	87	86
5	Libya	15.6	15.5	15.9	16.1	16.3	9.1	88	91	92	90	87
6	Nigeria	13.8	13.8	14.6	14.8	14.4	16.7	88	87	85	80	80
7	Pakistan	13.4	13.8	14.8	14.8	12.9	16.7	86	87	88	88	87
8	Iran	14.5	14.6	13.8	15.8	16.5	10.7	86	85	86	85	85
9	Afghanistan	15.4	15.7	15.4	16.1	16.6	4.6	84	98	94	93	94
10	Sudan	14.1	14.2	14.9	14.9	15.5	9.4	83	79	79	85	87
11	India	12.3	13.1	13.0	14.8	13.3	15.7	82	82	83	83	83
12	Syria	13.2	14.1	13.6	14.1	14.1	11.3	80	78	81	82	82
13	Saudi Arabia	15.2	15.3	14.9	15.8	16.7	2.4	80	81	78	79	77
14	Myanmar	12.5	11.6	13.9	13.9	12.9	15.4	80	79	74	73	71
15	Maldives	15.4	15.3	13.8	16.0	16.4	0.2	77	77	77	78	78
16	China	12.9	10.0	12.7	14.5	15.6	11.1	77	76	74	70	65
17	Mali	11.1	10.1	14.7	10.3	15.1	15.0	76	70	67	66	68
18	Iraq	14.1	14.6	14.0	14.8	13.9	4.6	76	78	82	76	79
19	Algeria	14.1	14.1	11.5	13.7	15.1	4.8	73	71	70	73	70
20	Mauritania	14.5	14.2	13.3	14.1	14.2	1.3	72	70	71	68	67
21	Uzbekistan	14.9	12.7	13.9	12.7	15.6	1.5	71	71	71	73	74
22	Colombia	11.8	8.9	13.1	11.3	10.4	15.4	71	68	67	62	58
23	Burkina Faso	9.4	9.7	12.5	9.6	13.8	15.6	71	68	67	66	48
24	CAR	10.3	8.6	13.9	9.6	12.2	15.6	70	68	66	68	70
25	Vietnam	11.8	9.6	12.8	14.6	14.4	6.9	70	71	72	72	70
26	Turkmenistan	14.5	11.3	13.6	14.1	15.7	0.6	70	69	70	70	69
27	Cuba	13.1	8.3	13.1	13.2	14.9	7.0	70	66	62	52	49
28	Niger	9.4	9.5	14.5	7.7	13.1	15.4	70	68	62	60	52
29	Morocco	13.2	13.8	10.9	12.2	14.5	4.8	69	69	67	66	63
30	Bangladesh	12.6	10.7	12.8	11.3	10.6	10.7	69	68	67	63	58
31	Laos	11.7	10.2	13.3	14.2	14.0	5.0	68	69	71	72	71
32	Mozambique	9.3	8.5	13.9	8.4	12.5	15.6	68	65	63	43	43
33	Indonesia	11.3	12.0	11.6	11.1	9.2	12.8	68	68	63	60	65
34	Qatar	14.2	14.1	10.5	13.2	14.4	1.5	68	74	67	66	62
35	Egypt	12.7	13.5	11.6	12.1	10.8	7.0	68	71	75	76	76
36	Tunisia	12.0	12.8	10.4	12.0	13.5	6.5	67	66	67	64	63
37	DRC	8.0	7.9	12.6	9.7	13.0	15.6	67	66	64	56	55
38	Mexico	10.3	8.3	12.5	11.0	10.5	13.9	67	65	64	60	61
39	Ethiopia	9.9	10.3	13.1	10.4	12.1	10.6	66	66	65	63	65
40	Bhutan	13.2	12.3	11.6	13.9	14.2	1.1	66	67	64	61	64
41	Turkey	12.8	11.5	11.8	13.0	11.5	5.7	66	65	69	63	66
42	Comoros	12.7	14.0	11.2	12.4	14.2	1.5	66	63	62	57	56
43	Malaysia	12.8	14.3	11.4	12.2	11.1	3.9	66	63	63	62	60
44	Tajikistan	13.8	12.2	12.3	12.8	13.4	1.1	66	65	66	65	65
45	Cameroon	8.8	7.6	12.6	7.2	13.1	15.9	65	65	64	60	54
46	Brunei	14.8	14.6	10.1	10.9	14.4	0.4	65	64	64	63	63
47	Oman	14.0	14.1	10.3	13.3	12.9	0.6	65	66	63	62	59
48	Kazakhstan	13.2	11.6	11.9	12.7	14.2	1.1	65	64	64	64	63
49	Jordan	13.0	14.0	10.5	12.3	12.7	2.0	65	66	64	64	65
50	Nicaragua	10.8	5.9	11.9	12.8	13.6	9.4	65	56	51	41	41

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2023	Total Score WWL 2022	Total Score WWL 2021	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019
51	Kenya	10.3	9.2	11.4	8.0	11.5	13.3	64	63	62	61	61
52	Kuwait	13.5	13.7	9.8	12.3	13.1	1.1	64	64	63	62	60
53	Tanzania	9.3	10.8	10.3	8.6	8.7	15.6	63	61	58	55	52
54	UAE	13.4	13.4	9.9	11.2	12.8	1.1	62	62	62	60	58
55	Nepal	12.0	9.8	9.4	13.0	12.6	4.4	61	64	66	64	64
56	Djibouti	12.3	12.6	12.7	10.1	12.3	0.6	60	59	56	56	56
57	Palestinian Territories	13.0	13.3	9.7	10.3	12.0	2.0	60	59	58	60	57
58	Azerbaijan	13.2	10.0	9.5	12.0	13.6	0.6	59	60	56	57	57
59	Kyrgyzstan	12.9	10.2	11.0	10.4	12.0	2.0	59	58	58	57	56
60	Chad	11.6	8.2	10.2	10.2	10.3	7.6	58	55	53	56	48
61	Russian Federation	12.3	7.9	10.3	11.8	12.8	2.0	57	56	57	60	60
62	Sri Lanka	12.8	9.1	10.6	11.3	9.5	3.9	57	63	62	65	58
63	Rwanda	9.4	7.7	9.0	10.4	11.7	8.9	57	50	42	42	41
64	Venezuela	6.0	4.6	11.7	10.2	11.4	11.7	56	51	39	42	41
65	Burundi	7.6	7.8	9.4	9.8	9.7	11.1	55	52	48	48	43
66	Bahrain	12.7	13.3	8.7	10.7	8.8	0.9	55	57	56	55	55
67	Honduras	7.1	5.0	11.9	7.6	9.8	11.9	53	48	46	39	38
68	Angola	6.8	6.7	8.1	11.5	11.4	7.2	52	51	46	43	42
69	Uganda	8.1	5.0	7.4	6.7	9.2	14.8	51	48	47	48	47
70	Togo	9.2	6.7	9.3	7.1	11.0	5.4	49	44	43	41	42
71	Guinea	10.3	7.5	8.3	8.3	10.5	3.0	48	43	47	45	46
72	South Sudan	5.7	4.4	7.0	6.3	7.6	15.0	46	43	43	44	44
73	El Salvador	7.7	4.2	10.6	7.4	9.1	6.7	46	45	42	38	30
74	Ivory Coast	12.0	6.5	8.7	5.9	8.0	3.3	44	42	42	42	43
75	Gambia	8.3	8.2	8.9	8.8	8.9	1.1	44	44	43	43	43
76	Belarus	9.5	3.8	4.8	9.4	12.1	3.3	43	33	30	28	35

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Sources and definitions

- This country report is a collation of data and analysis based around Open Doors World Watch List (WWL) and includes statistical information on world religions, Christian denominations and people groups prepared by the World Christian Database (WCD).
- Highlighted links in the text can be found written out in full at the conclusion of each main section under the heading “External links”. In order to reduce the length of these reference sections, a table containing links to regularly used sources can be found at the beginning of the “Keys to Understanding” chapter under the heading “Links for general background information”. Where one of these sources has been quoted in the dossier text, a quote reference is supplied as indicated in the second column of the table.
- The WWL 2023 reporting period was 1 October 2021 - 30 September 2022.
- The definition of persecution used in WWL analysis is: “Any hostility experienced as a result of one’s identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians”. This broad definition includes (but is not limited to) restrictions, pressure, discrimination, opposition, disinformation, injustice, intimidation, mistreatment, marginalization, oppression, intolerance, infringement, violation, ostracism, hostilities, harassment, abuse, violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide.
- The latest update of WWL Methodology including appendices can be found on the [World Watch List Documentation](#) page of the Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom).

WWL 2023 Situation in brief / Guinea

Brief country details

Guinea: Population (UN estimate for 2022)	Christians	Chr%
13,866,000	478,000	3.4

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, World Christian Database (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2022)

Map of country



Guinea: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2023	48	71
WWL 2022	43	73
WWL 2021	47	66
WWL 2020	45	64
WWL 2019	46	63

Ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2019-2023 reporting periods

Dominant persecution engines and drivers

Guinea: Main Persecution engines	Main drivers
Dictatorial paranoia	Government officials
Islamic oppression	Non-Christian religious leaders, One's own (extended) family, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs
Clan oppression	Ethnic group leaders
Organized corruption and crime	Organized crime cartels or networks
Ethno-religious hostility	Ethnic group leaders

Engines and Drivers are listed in order of strength. Only Very strong / Strong / Medium are shown here.

Brief description of the persecution situation

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 converts is opposed by their 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 Labé. Christians there 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.

Specific examples of violations of rights in the reporting period

- Christians are sometimes forced to attend traditional religious ceremonies.
- Churches have been victims of cases of land-grabbing.
- Young female converts are sometimes pressurized into forced marriages.
- The registration of new churches has been very difficult.

Specific examples of positive developments

None

WWL 2023: Keys to understanding / Guinea

Links for general background information

Name	Quote Reference	Link	Last accessed on
Amnesty International 2021/22 country report – covering 154 countries	AI country report 2021/22 - pp.183-185	https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/POL1048702022ENGLISH.pdf	13 September 2022
BBC News country profile	BBC country profile	https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13442051	13 September 2022
Bertelsmann Transformation Index country report 2022 – covering 137 countries	BTI report 2022	https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-dashboard/GIN	13 September 2022
CIA World Factbook	CIA Factbook	https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/guinea/	13 September 2022
Crisis24 country report (Garda World) – covering 193 countries	Crisis24 country report	https://crisis24.garda.com/insights-intelligence/intelligence/country-reports/guinea	13 September 2022
Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2021 – covering 167 countries	EIU 2021 - p.58	https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/eiu-democracy-index-2021.pdf	13 September 2022
FFP's Fragile States Index 2022 – covering 179 countries	FSI 2022	https://fragilestatesindex.org/country-data/	13 September 2022
Freedom House's 2022 Democracy index – covering 29 countries (Guinea not included)	Democracy index 2022	https://freedomhouse.org/countries/nations-transit/scores	13 September 2022
Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2022 report – covering 70 countries (Guinea not included)	Freedom on the Net 2022	https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-net/scores	
Freedom House's Global Freedom index 2022	Global Freedom Index 2022	https://freedomhouse.org/country/guinea/freedom-world/2022	13 September 2022
Human Rights Watch World Report 2022 (country chapter) – covering 100+ countries	HRW 2022 country chapter	https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/guinea	13 September 2022
Internet World Stats 2022	IWS 2022	https://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#gn	13 September 2022
RSF's 2022 World Press Freedom Index – covering 180 countries	World Press Freedom 2022	https://rsf.org/en/guinea	13 September 2022
Transparency International's 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index – covering 180 countries	CPI 2022	https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022/index/gin	14 February 2023
UNDP's Global Human Development Indicators (country profile) – covering 189 countries	HDI profile	https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data/#/countries/GIN	13 September 2022
US State Department's 2021 International Religious Freedom (country profile)	IRFR 2021	https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-report-on-international-religious-freedom/guinea/	13 September 2022
USCIRF 2022 country reports – covering 15 CPC / 12 SWL (Guinea not included)	USCIRF 2022	https://www.uscifr.gov/countries	
World Bank country overview – covering 178 countries	World Bank country overview 2022	https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/guinea/overview	13 September 2022
World Bank country profile data – covering 222 countries	World Bank profile (2020 data)	https://data.worldbank.org/country/guinea?view=chart	13 September 2022
World Bank Macro Poverty Outlook 2022 – covering 147 countries (divided per region)	Macro Poverty Outlook 2022 - Sub-Saharan Africa pp.42-43	https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2f2fc5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-ssa.pdf	13 September 2022

Recent history

Guinea was one of the first African countries to gain independence from European colonial powers, becoming independent from France in 1958. Sékou Touré, who led the movement for independence, became the first president of the country and followed a policy of socialism and close contact with Russia and China. He established a single-party dictatorship favoring socialist 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. (Source: [State University](#), accessed 13 September 2022)

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 Touré failed in his attempt to replace French with African dialect and French continued to be the dominant language in the country. Due to Touré'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 Touré 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. Conté reversed most of Touré's policies, but even though the new regime was less oppressive than its predecessor and promised numerous reforms, Conté's control was still tight. He remained in power until his death in 2008. Moussa Camara then took power through a coup right after the death of Conté. Political unrest followed this coup, forcing

Camara to hold democratic elections in 2010. In the same year, Alpha Condé became the first democratically elected president of Guinea.

Condé went on to win the next 2015 election also and has held power until the September 2021 coup (see below). On 5 February 2018, the first [local elections](#) were held since the end of military dictatorship (France24, 5 February 2018). There had been an eight-year delay due allegedly to a lack of funds, political infighting and the 2013-2016 Ebola crisis. Guinea was scheduled to hold its legislative elections and a constitutional referendum (boycotted by the opposition) on 1 March 2020, but two days beforehand, a further delay was announced. The presidential election was conducted on [18 October 2020](#) and incumbent President Condé won a third term (BBC News, 24 October 2020). That was followed by post-election violence and repression of human rights, as reported by [Human Rights Watch](#) (HRW, 19 November 2020).

In September 2021, a video appeared on national TV showing President Condé under arrest, surrounded by soldiers claiming to have [dissolved the government and the constitution](#), and to have closed all land and air borders. According to a BBC report on 7 September 2021, the leader of the coup, Colonel Mamady Doumbouya, said a new union government would be formed within a short timespan. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, ECOWAS, and the African Union condemned the coup. The coup leaders claimed that "the army had [little choice but to seize power](#) because of the rampant corruption, disregard for human rights and economic mismanagement" (BBC News 1 October 2021). Reports indicated that the people in the country welcomed the coup while ECOWAS and the AU suspended the country's membership.

Guinea's interim president, Colonel Doumbouya announced that the country will return to civilian rule after a 39-month transition period. He also promised that no-one taking part in the interim government, including himself, will be allowed to stand in future elections that will determine the next civilian government (BBC News, 1 May 2022). The National Transitional Council voted on 11 May for a transitional period of 36 months, reducing by three months the preferred timescale expressed earlier by Colonel Doumbouya. ECOWAS has however noted that Guinea would face economic sanctions unless the country speeds up its proposed three-year transition back to democracy.

Political and legal landscape

As recounted above, In September 2021, the civilian government was overthrown in a coup led by Lieutenant Colonel Mamady Doumbouya, the head of the special forces. The 2020 Constitution was suspended and the National Assembly dissolved. On 2 May 2022, the coup leaders [announced](#) that its transition back to civilian rule would probably take more than three years (Reuters, 3 May 2022), longer than ECOWAS had demanded from the coup leaders. In this toxic and undemocratic atmosphere, all rights are under strict limitations. For Christians, freedom of expression or assembly as well as the freedom to exercise their freedom of religion to its fullest extent remain curtailed.

2010 - 2021

Guinea returned to civilian rule in 2010, following a 2008 military coup and decades of authoritarian governance. The 2010 Constitution stated that 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. Local elections were held in February 2018 where mayors and communal leaders were elected, and heads of districts were appointed.

In March 2020, President Alpha Condé won approval of a new constitution that allowed him to seek a third term in office over the objections of opposition groups. In reaction to President Condé's intention to run for a third term in the October 2020 elections, unrest broke out. According to Human Rights Watch:

- [HRW, 10 April 2020](#): A coalition of civil society groups, labor unions, and political parties has organized regular protests since October 2019 and boycotted the referendum on the new constitution. The government's response to these protests was brutal, with the authorities responding to these protests with intimidation, threats, violence against protesters and the arrest of opposition leaders.
- [HRW, 19 February 2020](#): Between October 2019 and January 2020, at least 30 people were killed. Following the referendum on the new constitution, security forces violently cracked down on opposition supporters killing at least 8 people and leaving 20 others injured.

According to [France 24 \(24 March 2020\)](#):

- In March 2020, several people were killed in southern Guinea in an outbreak of violence in Nzerekore, the West African state's second-largest city after the country's contested constitutional referendum. At least 32 people were killed in the runup to the referendum and another 14 more were reported to be killed in the capital Conakry on the polling day itself. There were also reported violent incidents, including attacks on churches and mosques. At least one Protestant church was reported burnt down and the assailants also burned down houses.

As stated above, the 2020 Constitution was suspended in the 2021 coup when the armed forces took over control of the country.

Religious landscape

Guinea: Religious context	Number of adherents	%
Christians	478,000	3.4
Muslim	12,078,000	87.1
Hindu	0	0.0
Buddhist	12,300	0.1
Ethno-religionist	1,273,000	9.2
Jewish	0	0.0

Bahai	290	0.0
Atheist	3,700	0.0
Agnostic	20,600	0.1
Other	0	0.0
<i>OTHER includes Chinese folk, New religionist, Sikh, Spiritist, Taoist, Confucianist, Jain, Shintoist, Zoroastrian.</i>		

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2022)

Muslims (mostly Sunni) are dominant in almost all regions of the country. Most Christians (predominantly Roman Catholic) live in the cities, like Conakry. Both Muslims and Christians are known to mix their faith with various traditional African religious practices.

The Soninke merchants from Ghana were responsible for the spread of Islam throughout Guinea during the 11th century. 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 down the French Catholic schools 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 suspended Constitution explicitly upholds the principles of freedom of religion and separation of religion and state and provides the right of persons to practice their religion openly without interference. However, the government attempts to restrict the influence of certain Islamist groups through its Secretariat of Religious Affairs (SRA). In 2019, [SRA inspectors](#) were present at most church and mosque religious services to monitor the content of sermons preached (US State Department, IRFR 2019).

Most Christians and Muslims live side by side without major problems. However, there have been some violent incidents concerning property disputes, conversions from Islam to Christianity and marriage between Muslims and Christians.

Economic landscape

According to World Bank's Macro Poverty Outlook 2022 - Sub-Saharan Africa pp.42-43:

- **Economic growth:** "Growth decelerated to 3.1 percent in 2021 (0.3 percent in per capita terms). Bauxite exports (in tons) grew by 4 percent in 2021 compared to 24 percent in 2020 because of a slowdown in economic activity after the coup. Gold exports (in ounces) grew 11 percent in 2021, reflecting a strong artisanal production."
- **Inflation:** "Inflation accelerated from 10.6 percent in 2020, to 12.6 percent in 2021 due to higher food prices (15.1 percent) and supply disruptions (domestic and external). The Ukraine conflict will likely increase food price inflation in 2022, affecting disproportionately

the poorest and threatening food security."

- **Exports/Imports:** "The current account deficit improved to 9.4 percent of GDP in 2021, due to lower imports of intermediate goods. Mining-related FDI [Foreign Direct Investment] continued to be the main source of external financing and increased from 9.9 percent of GDP in 2020 to 10.8 percent in 2021. Estimated international reserves declined slightly in 2021.
- **Poverty:** "Extreme poverty is projected to decline to 19.0 percent by 2023. Downward risks to poverty reduction include the persistence of high inflation and the deferral of social reforms. Higher fertilizer prices due to the Ukraine conflict could constraint farmers, disrupting the food industry. Following the COVID-19 crisis, 84 percent of Guinean households cited higher input prices as the most common challenge in farming and the prospects for a prolonged period of food insecurity is high."
- **Economic outlook:** "Mining-related FDI will continue to drive growth. As the service sector and mining production recover, growth will accelerate in 2022. But the Ukraine conflict lowered growth projections to 4.4 percent in 2022, and to 5.8 percent in 2023–2024 and could affect the operations of Rusal, a Russian conglomerate that accounts for 7 percent of bauxite exports. Investment in energy and transport could support growth in the construction sector. Better provisioning of fertilizer stocks could improve agricultural productivity, but higher fertilizer prices could dampen earnings. Rising oil prices could increase fuel subsidies, widening the fiscal deficit. Uncertainties around the political transition could also decelerate the implementation of reforms to strengthen governance and the financial performance of the public electricity utility, which could reduce private investment, and spending in social programs. Inflation is expected to remain high, but to decline gradually to 8.8 percent by 2024."

According to [Theodora/Guinea Economy 2020](#) (27 January 2020):

- Guinea "possesses the world's largest reserves of bauxite and largest untapped high-grade iron ore reserves, as well as gold and diamonds. In addition, Guinea has fertile soil, ample rainfall, and is the source of several West African rivers, including the Senegal, Niger, and Gambia. Guinea's hydro potential is enormous, and the country could be a major exporter of electricity. The country also has tremendous agriculture potential. Gold, bauxite, and diamonds are Guinea's main exports." However, Guinea is one of the least developed countries in the world with over 40% of the population living below the poverty line in some areas.

According to Heritage Foundation's [2022 Index of Economic Freedom](#), Guinea's economic freedom score is 54.2 making the economy the 129th freest. Guinea is ranked #25 among 47 countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, and its overall score is above the regional average but below the world average.

Social and cultural landscape

According to the CIA Factbook and UNDP's Human Development Indicators (HDI profile):

- **Main ethnic groups:** Fulani (Peuhl) 33.4%, Malinke 29.4%, Susu 21.2%, Guerze 7.8%, Kissi 6.2%, Toma 1.6%, other/foreign 0.4% (2018 est.)
- **Main languages:** French (official), Pular, Maninka, Susu, other native languages
- **Median age:** 18.0 years
- **Urban population:** 36.5%
- **Expected years of schooling:** 9.4 years
- **Literacy rate, adult (ages 15 and older):** 32.0%
- **Employment to population ratio (ages 15 and older):** 58.9%
- **Unemployment, total:** 4.3% of labor force
- **Unemployment, youth (ages 15-24):** 5.3%
- **Human Development Index (HDI) score and ranking:** Guinea is ranked #178 out of 189 countries with a value of 0.477 points
- **Average life expectancy at birth:** 61.6 years
- **Gender Development Index (GDI):** 0.817
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII):** No data

According to [Study.com/Guinea Ethnic Groups](https://www.study.com/Guinea-Ethnic-Groups) (accessed 13 September 2022):

- Guinea "has vast natural mineral wealth, yet the population is impoverished. This can be attributed to instability between the various ethnic groups that inhabit the country. Ethnic tensions between these groups have kept Guinea in a state of near-constant instability. With the Fulani at 40%, Malinké at 30%, and Soussou at 20%, ethnic groups make up approximately 90% of the population. Guinea is home to another 21 distinct ethnicities comprising 10% of the overall population. Despite great similarities in culture and belief, the ethnic groups within Guinea, due to a weak and corrupt government, often work to address grievances between one another using traditional ethnic reprisals."

It is well-known that tribal relations play an important role in politics. For example, ousted President Condé was supported by his ethnic group, the Malinke, whereas most of the groups opposing him were from the Fulani.

Technological landscape

According to Internet World Stats (IWS 2022):

- **Internet usage:** 18.6% of the population – survey date: 31 December 2021 (Most recent survey available at time of writing.)
- **Facebook usage:** 17.8% of the population – survey date: 31 January 2022

According to the World Bank country profile:

- **Mobile phone subscriptions:** 100.8 per 100 people

According to [BuddeComm Research](#) (Publication date: February 2023):

- "Fixed broadband services are still very limited and expensive, though there have been some positive developments in recent years. The landing of the first international submarine cable in 2012, and the setting up of an IXP in mid-2013, increased the bandwidth available to the ISPs, and helped reduce the cost of internet services for end-users. A National Backbone Network was completed in mid-2020, connecting administrative centres across the country. In practice, almost all internet connections are made via mobile networks."
- "Mobile broadband traffic increased 18.2% in the third quarter of 2021, quarter-on-quarter".

According to [Article 19](#) reporting on 31 March 2020:

- "From Friday 20 March to Sunday 22 March 2020, Guinea experienced a social media blackout (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) and a WhatsApp restriction. Initially there was an internet cut on Friday night, followed by an intermittent internet shutdown on the voting day. Fatou Jagne Senghore [Regional Director of ARTICLE 19 West Africa] further deplored the arbitrary censorship, stating: 'Access to the Internet is essential for the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, access to information and other rights in the digital age. It promotes transparency and public debate. Cutting off or slowing down access to the Internet, or parts of the Internet, to entire populations or segments of the public can never be justified for any reason, including on grounds of public order or national security'."

Security situation

Since gaining independence, Guinea has experienced much political instability, including military coups and civil unrest - the latest is the September 2021 coup that ousted President Condé. Generally speaking, the country is under the control of a heavy-handed dictatorship. Christians who want to live their life according to their faith are likely to face repercussions if they criticize the government and its actions. The overall situation is very tense and intimidating. Even football players who participated in the African Cup of Nations 2022 were [reprimanded](#) by the coup leader for failing to win the trophy (Goal, 29 December 2021).

Trends analysis

1) Progress towards democracy has been hampered by ethnic division and the army

Guinea's post-independence history has been marked by serious political instability, but since the 2010 elections, the country's political structure has progressed towards more democracy. However, this progress has been hampered by tribal-based political alliances, serious disease outbreaks and a weak economy. The country has been struggling to consolidate its transition to multi-party 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. However, in September 2021, a coup was conducted by the armed forces and in May 2022, the army showed little interest in bringing back civilian rule, stating that the issue could take more than three years. In October 2022, a [two-year timetable](#) was agreed, coming into effect on 1 January 2023 (France24, 23 October 2022).

2) Islamic militancy in the region could spell danger for Guinea's Christians

Now that tribal politics coupled with a coup resulted in a situation that puts any hope of real democracy at risk, the possibility that Guinea could consolidate democratic governance and build upon its relatively good record of tolerance for religious minorities is minimal. In addition, 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 a whole is a cloud on the horizon that does not bode well for the future of Christians in the country.

External Links - Keys to understanding

- Recent history: State University - <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/576/Guinea-HISTORY-BACKGROUND.html%20>
- Recent history: local elections - <https://www.france24.com/en/20180205-guinea-opposition-cries-foul-long-awaited-local-elections>
- Recent history: 18 October 2020 - <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54657359>
- Recent history: Human Rights Watch - <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/11/19/guinea-post-election-violence-repression>
- Recent history: dissolved the government and the constitution - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-58461436>
- Recent history: little choice but to seize power - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-58461971>
- Political and legal landscape: announced - <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/guineas-coup-leader-proposes-3-year-transition-back-civilian-rule-2022-05-01/>
- Political and legal landscape: HRW, 10 April 2020 - <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/10/guinea-violence-during-referendum>
- Political and legal landscape: HRW, 19 February 2020 - <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/19/guinea-fear-further-crackdown-constitutional-poll-nears>
- Political and legal landscape: France 24 (24 March 2020): - <https://www.france24.com/en/20200324-several-dead-in-unrest-in-southern-guinea>
- Religious landscape description: SRA inspectors - <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/GUINEA-2019-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf>
- Economic landscape: Theodora/Guinea Economy 2020 - https://theodora.com/wfbcurrent/guinea/guinea_economy.html
- Economic landscape: 2022 Index of Economic Freedom - <https://www.heritage.org/index/country/guinea>
- Social and cultural landscape: Study.com/Guinea Ethnic Groups - <https://study.com/academy/lesson/guinea-ethnic-groups.html>
- Technological landscape: BuddeComm Research - <https://www.budde.com.au/Research/Guinea-Telecoms-Mobile-and-Broadband-Statistics-and-Analyses>
- Technological landscape: Article 19 - <https://www.article19.org/resources/guinea-government-must-investigate-excessive-use-of-force-and-internet-restrictions/>
- Security situation: reprimanded - <https://www.goal.com/en-cm/news/afcon-2021-bring-back-the-trophy-or-bring-back-the-money/blt204ef1fcf3323da9>
- Trends analysis: two-year timetable - <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20221023-guinea-junta-agrees-return-to-civilian-rule-in-two-years>

WWL 2023: Church information / Guinea

Christian origins

Christianity in Guinea has more than 500 years of history. 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.

(Source: Melton J G and Baumann M: *Religions of The World - A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices*, 2nd Edition 2010, pp.1280-1281.)

Church spectrum today

Guinea: Church networks	Christians	%
Orthodox	0	0.0
Catholic	316,000	66.1
Protestant	59,300	12.4
Independent	81,000	16.9
Unaffiliated	29,200	6.1
Doubly-affiliated Christians	-7,300	-1.5
Total	478,200	100.0
<i>(Any deviation from the total number of Christians stated above is due to the rounding of decimals)</i>		
Evangelical movement	62,000	13.0
Renewalist movement	123,000	25.7

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds, *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2022)

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:** Christians 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. **Evangelical movement:** 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. **Renewalist movement:** Church members involved in Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal.

Christian denominations in the country include Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, and several evangelical groups. Christians are concentrated in large cities and are also present in significant numbers in eastern Forested Guinea.

Areas where Christians face most difficulties

Christians face persecution in most parts of the country. In rural areas, where many people mix Islam with the indigenous belief system, hostility can be stronger. Persecution is frequent in Middle, Upper and Forested Guinea where the influence of *Islamic oppression* is more strongly felt.

Christian communities and how they are affected

Communities of expatriate Christians

Expatriate Christians are not involuntarily isolated in Guinea and so are not counted as a separate WWL category for scoring and analysis.

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 government and given recognition, particularly in religious affairs. The Roman Catholic Church has been given many advantages within the government compared to other denominations.

Converts to Christianity

Christians with Muslim or Animist background face serious problems. In all areas of the country, there are occasions where converts are killed, receive death-threats and/or are forced to leave their homes. Particularly in areas such as the Fouta-Djalon region, converts from Islam are not free to live their faith and must keep a low profile, not doing anything in public to demonstrate their Christian faith. In large cities, the pressure Christians face is commonly in relation to housing, where some radical Muslims prevent them from renting homes.

Non-traditional Christian communities

Baptist, Evangelical and Pentecostal groups are active in Guinea and some face pressure similar to converts. They also experience difficulties in finding places for worship and face hostility from radical Islamic groups in certain areas. Pressure is strongest when Christians in this category engage in evangelism or work with converts to Christianity.

WWL 2023: Persecution Dynamics / Guinea

Reporting period

1 October 2021 - 30 September 2022

Position on the World Watch List

Guinea: World Watch List	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2023	48	71
WWL 2022	43	73
WWL 2021	47	66
WWL 2020	45	64
WWL 2019	46	63

Ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2019-2023 reporting periods

In WWL 2023, Guinea's total score rose by five points (after dropping 4 points in WWL 2022), due to increases in both pressure and violence scores. The average pressure on Christians in Guinea was at 9.0 points, an increase from 8.2 points in WWL 2022. The score for violence rose to 3.0 points from 2.0 points in WWL 2022. As in a number of other African countries, Guinea – which has an 88.5% Muslim population – is facing a proliferation of radical Islamic groups that are intolerant of other religions, including Christianity. However, the main drivers of persecution in Guinea are currently family and the local community. Persecution is frequent in Middle, Upper and Forested Guinea where the influence of *Islamic oppression* is particularly pronounced.

Persecution engines

Guinea: Persecution engines	Abbreviation	Level of influence
Islamic oppression	IO	Medium
Religious nationalism	RN	Not at all
Ethno-religious hostility	ERH	Medium
Clan oppression	CO	Medium
Christian denominational protectionism	CDP	Weak
Communist and post-Communist oppression	CPCO	Not at all
Secular intolerance	SI	Not at all
Dictatorial paranoia	DPA	Medium
Organized corruption and crime	OCC	Medium

The scale for the level of influence of Persecution engines in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. For more information see WWL Methodology.

Dictatorial paranoia (Medium)

The government plays a role in persecuting Christians by restricting space for church life. There is fear among the ruling party that some organized religious groups might be working against the ruling party, hence the need for monitoring church activities at times. The US State Department (IRFR 2021) described the system being used by the government's Secretariat General of Religious Affairs (SRA) to curtail freedom of religion as follows: "The SRA must approve all religious groups. Groups must provide a written constitution and application to the SRA along with their address and a fee of 250,000 francs (\$27). The SRA then sends the documents to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization for final approval and signature. Once approved, the group becomes officially recognized. Every six months, each registered religious group must present a report of its activities to the government."

Islamic oppression (Medium)

This Persecution engine manifests itself, for instance, through discrimination occurring in the allocation of land for the construction of churches and in promotion opportunities to 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-Djalou region, a person wanting to convert to Christianity would encounter strong social pressure and would risk being rejected by his or her community. A male convert is likely to be ostracized and have his children taken away. Besides strong pressure against leaving Islam, the Islamic community will put pressure on other religions to make sure their practice is not publicly visible. There have been some indications that the government has reinforced this pressure at a local level. This support comes from within the government mostly via the Ministry for Islamic Affairs. As in other countries in the region, Guinea is also facing a proliferation of radical Islamic groups that are intolerant of other religions, including Christianity.

Clan-oppression (Medium) blended with Ethno-religious hostility (Medium)

Ethnic identity and differences are particularly important to tribal groups. As part of an effort to keep the traditional beliefs and rituals of an ethnic group intact, converts to Christianity face serious consequences. There have also been instances where some ethnic groups, in which Christians are predominant, have been attacked by other ethnic groups.

Organized crime and corruption (Medium): The government of Guinea is hindered by corruption; the country ranks 147/180 in Transparency International's CPI 2022. There was even a case in Switzerland about corruption in the mining industry: "In January 2021, a Swiss court handed Israeli businessman Benjamin Steinmetz a five-year prison term and a fine of 50 million Swiss francs (\$54.1 million); Steinmetz and two codefendants were convicted of bribing the wife of late President Conté for control of iron ore deposits." In the case of Christians, the presence of such high levels of corruption prevents a dispensation of justice.

Drivers of persecution

Guinea: Drivers of Persecution	IO	RN	ERH	CO	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	MEDIUM		MEDIUM	MEDIUM				MEDIUM	MEDIUM
Government officials								Medium	
Ethnic group leaders			Medium	Medium					
Non-Christian religious leaders	Medium								
Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs	Medium								
One's own (extended) family	Medium								
Organized crime cartels or networks									Medium

The scale for the level of influence of Drivers of persecution in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong.. For more information see WWL Methodology.

Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia

- **Government officials (Medium):** Guinea has become more repressive and controlling. The government still wants to control civic space through directives and regulations, and above all through practice. In addition to protecting its own interest (power), the government also wants to appease the locals by restricting the freedom of Christians. The government uses its registration regulations to make things difficult for religious minority groups. In its rating for 2022, Freedom House rated the country 'not free'. In the previous years (since 2010) Guinea was rated 'partly free'. Justifying the decline in its rating, Freedom House said: "Guinea's status declined from Partly Free to Not Free because military commanders seized power in a coup, removing President Alpha Condé and dissolving the legislature."

Drivers of Islamic oppression

- **Family members (Medium):** 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.
- **Non-Christian religious leaders (Medium):** Radical imams have also contributed to the persecution of Christians. It is not uncommon to see some of these religious leaders preaching hatred against Christians.
- **Ordinary citizens (Medium):** Christians also face problems from the wider community who do not welcome conversion from Islam to Christianity.

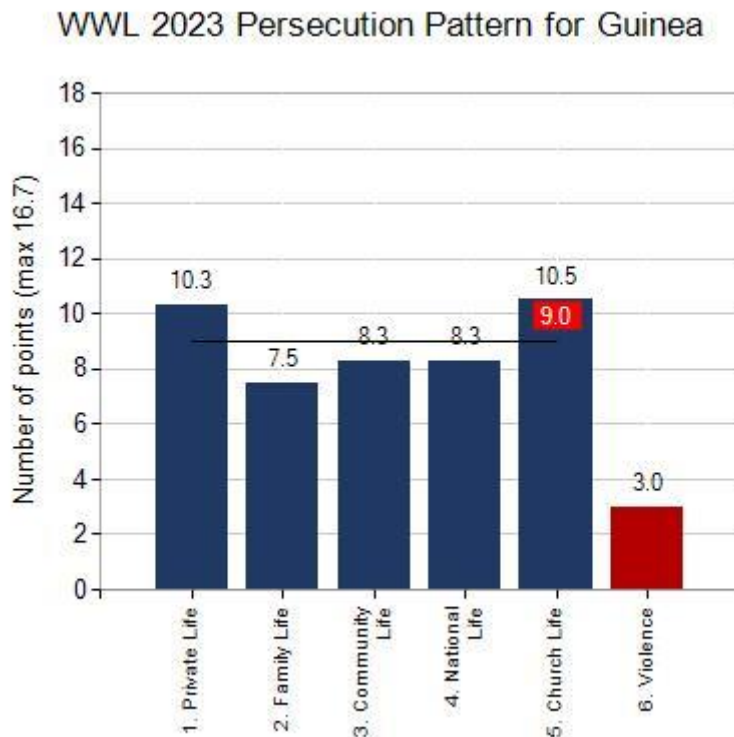
Drivers of Clan oppression / Ethno-religious hostility

- **Clan leaders (Medium):** The Zogos of Forested Guinea (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 serious difficulties for Christians. In some villages, Christians are forbidden to build a church. This has been the case for example in villages in the Macenta region of southern Guinea. Leaders of ethnic groups have persecuted Christians in Forested Guinea, where animists force Christians to participate in their traditional rituals and celebrations.

Drivers of Organized corruption:

- **Organized crime cartels or networks (Medium):** Through the various networks of corruption, Christians struggle to get what they need if they do not pay bribes.

The Persecution pattern



The WWL 2023 Persecution pattern for Guinea shows:

- The average pressure on Christians in Guinea is at 9.0 points, a rise from 8.2 points in WWL 2022.
- The *Church sphere* score is the highest with 10.5 points, followed by the *Private sphere* with a score of 10.3 points. The *Family sphere* scores the lowest with 7.5 points.
- The score for violence is 3.0 points, a rise from 2.0 points in WWL 2022.

Pressure in the 5 spheres of life

In each of the five spheres of life discussed below, four questions have been selected from the WWL 2023 questionnaire for brief commentary and explanation. The selection usually (but not always) reflects the highest scoring elements. In some cases, an additional paragraph per sphere is included to give further information deemed important. (To see how individual questions are scored on a scale of 0-4 points, please see the “WWL Scoring example” in the WWL Methodology, available at: <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/>, password: freedom).

Pressure in Block 1 / Private sphere

Block 1.1: Conversion has been opposed, forbidden, or punishable, including conversion from one type of Christianity to another. (2.75 points)

Although conversion is not forbidden by law, opposition to conversion to Christianity is common both in Voodoo and Muslim families. Conversion from Islam in particular is extremely challenging in households that follow Islam strictly. Some Christian converts from a Muslim background report that they have experienced pressure and occasionally, physical violence for their decision to convert. New Christian converts from Muslim backgrounds were harassed and threatened with death by their families for leaving Islam.

Block 1.4: It has been risky for Christians to reveal their faith in written forms of personal expression (including expressions in blogs and Facebook etc.). (2.75 points)

Similar to 1.1 above, this is common both in Voodoo and Muslim societies. In a society where changing religion is seen as a betrayal of the status quo and the faith of forefathers, many rights related to religion can easily be curtailed. Accordingly, in Guinea, converts from Islam or indigenous belief systems are often persecuted by their parents and people that knew them before their conversion. It is a risk to reveal their faith. This is also true for 'interdenominational converts' where they cannot live their faith openly. Families and communities monitor converts wherever they go, seeking grounds for attacking them. So it is very risky for such Christians to reveal their faith.

Block 1.2: It has been risky for Christians to conduct acts of Christian worship by themselves (e.g. prayer, Bible reading, etc.). (2.25 points)

Due to family and community pressure those who are converts face this problem. It is easy to tell someone's religion by the way they worship. As a result, converts from Islam or the traditional African belief system (ATR) do not risk being seen conducting acts of Christian worship; they choose to live their faith in silence and isolation to avoid the risk of being thrown out of the community or even put to death in some places. They must remain anonymous most of the time. Reports show that the risks are higher in Middle Guinea, and slightly lower in Upper Guinea and the Coast (Maritime), particularly in the Fulani and Muslim areas.

Block 1.3: It has been dangerous to privately own or keep Christian materials. (2.25 points)

Similar to 1.2 above, due to family and community pressure those who are converts face this problem. As much as possible those who change their religion tend to hide their Christian materials, especially in areas where Islam is deeply entrenched. In such a context, it is not pos-

sible for Christian converts to publicly display a Bible or anything that is likely to demonstrate their Christian faith. Parents of converts would regard such materials as insulting to their Islamic or animist beliefs. For this reason, converts are often afraid of keeping any Christian materials in their possession.

Pressure in Block 2 / Family sphere

Block 2.7: Parents have been hindered in raising their children according to their Christian beliefs. (2.50 points)

This is a particularly dangerous issue for convert parents who know that their children could expose them when they are invited to join in non-Christian practices at school or with friends. Thus, in some places, the local culture is a hindrance for how they want to raise their children. At times teaching Christian values and rules can also be dangerous for the children as it can expose them to persecution situations.

Block 2.3: Christians have been hindered in celebrating a Christian wedding for faith-related reasons. (1.75 points)

In Muslim and Animist-dominated areas, it is not safe for any category of Christian to have a large number of guests gathering for a wedding. However, the main problem is for converts, where parents do not agree to their children marrying Christians.

Block 2.4: Christian baptisms have been hindered. (1.75 points)

As in many other African countries, Christian baptism in Guinea is mostly a great celebration in the presence of family and friends. That is often met with some form of resistance, particularly in some remote parts of the country. Because Muslim or Animist parents regard conversion and baptism as a great dishonor and even as blasphemy, baptism of converts cannot be carried out openly.

Block 2.5: Burials of Christians have been hindered or coercively performed with non-Christian rites. (1.75 points)

Land for burial sites have become a contentious issue. Those who are seen as outsiders in terms of their faith struggle to secure a burial place. This has happened occasionally, for example, in areas like Lopoh, Macenta, where local villagers refused to allow a deceased Christian to be buried, claiming that their land is not available for Christians. In Forested Guinea, Upper Guinea and some other areas, Animist or Muslim parents force their children or spouses to perform non-Christians rites during their parents or spouses burials. The head of the village or religious leaders will also impose such rites.

Pressure in Block 3 / Community sphere

Block 3.1: Christians have been harassed, threatened or obstructed in their daily lives for faith-related reasons (e.g. for not meeting majority religion or traditional dress codes, beard codes etc.). (2.75 points)

Community life is often difficult for Christians especially when they are the minority in a given country or locality. This has been observed in many places, for instance in the Fouta Djallon and Upper Guinea regions. Also in Forest Guinea, many Christians face harassment, bullying and death-threats in the communities where they live.

Block 3.4: Christians been hindered in sharing community resources because of their faith (e.g. clean drinking water). (2.75 points)

This is related to 3.1 above. In a community where many things are shared - such as drinking water, grazing land and other resources - faith is a critical aspect. This means that the needs of Christians are frequently ignored and there have also been instances where land has been taken away because it belonged to Christians.

Block 3.6: Christians have been hindered in participating in communal institutions, forums, etc., for faith-related reasons. (2.75 points)

Participation in communal institutions is connected to one's faith. In some parts of Guinea, it has become normal that Christians cannot take part in certain forums in areas dominated by Muslims or the indigenous belief system (ATR).

Block 3.5: Christians have been put under pressure to take part in non-Christian religious ceremonies or community events. (2.25 points)

This happens both in the Muslim and Voodoo communities. Many West African countries are known for traditional rituals where thousands participate. Contributions for ceremonies are often expected from Christian residents. For example, if Christians refuse to support the 'cleansing of holy places' (such as Balizia in the city of Macenta), they will face intense hostility.

Pressure in Block 4 / National sphere

Block 4.8: Christians have been hindered in expressing their views or opinions in public. (3.25 points)

The government and the general community are the main hindering factors. Guinea still suffers in terms of freedom of expression, particularly as regards Christians who want to speak out about their concerns in public. They will be monitored and should they criticize any government action, they risk their own and their church's safety. The September 2021 coup has not made things better in this respect.

Block 4.5: Christians have been discriminated against when engaging with the authorities (local administration, government, army, etc.) for faith-related reasons. (2.75 points)

From a legal point of view, there are no laws that allow such discrimination. However, it is prevalent in areas dominated by adherents of ATR and Muslims. Discrimination occurs, for example, in matters of promotion, where the government seeks to appease the local Muslim community and favors giving greater opportunities to Muslims for positions of responsibility.

Block 4.6: Christians have been barred from public office, or has promotion been hindered for faith-related reasons. (2.75 points)

This is similar to 4.5 above. Faith is an important factor in both private and government institutions in many West African countries. The sense of owning the country is growing among Muslims in Guinea and also in the ranks of the government, which results in Christians being denied promotion.

Block 4.7: Christians have been hindered in running their own businesses without interference for faith-related reasons (e.g. personnel policy, client admission policy). (2.50 points)

There are some practical obstacles in this context. This issue plays out in the context of personnel policy and other forms of government support, as well as in formal or informal regulations. In some areas, government officials deliberately make work for a Christian business particularly difficult by demanding cumbersome requirements that are not applicable to non-Christian-run businesses. In some situations your faith determines what access you have to government support.

Pressure in Block 5 / Church sphere

Block 5.1: Church activities have been monitored, hindered, disturbed, or obstructed. (3.50 points)

Monitoring of church activities is common either through members of the local community or through government agents.

Block 5.2: It has been difficult to get registration or legal status for churches at any level of government. (3.50 points)

Even though there is no law that prevents registration, there are several practical obstacles which make the application process intentionally complicated. As noted by country experts and documented by the US State Department (IRFR 2021): "Groups must provide a written constitution and application to the [Secretariat General of Religious Affairs] SRA along with their address and a fee of 250,000 Guinean francs (\$27). The SRA then sends the documents to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization for final approval and signature. Once approved, the group becomes officially recognized. Every six months, each registered religious group must present a report of its activities to the government." This may look straightforward enough on paper, but it is extremely difficult to navigate in practice.

Block 5.5: Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities outside church buildings. (3.50 points)

Organizing church activities is often problematic since freedom of assembly is another area that is very limited in the country. This is particularly true for unregistered churches. In the areas where Islam and Animism are very strong, the heads of villages or religious leaders prevent Christian activities from being carried out when they conflict with days set aside for their traditional ceremonies.

Block 5.3: Christian communities have been hindered in building or renovating church buildings or in claiming historical religious premises and places of worship which had been taken from them earlier. (3.25 points)

In some places there are animosities toward the church. In addition there are slow procedural steps that those who want to build the church have to go through. This applies to all Christian groups in all parts of the country. Where the construction of churches in villages in Forested Guinea, Kankan and Labé regions has been obstructed in the past, the inhabitants in these places refuse to rent out premises to Christians for holding church services. Land ownership is also another critical element that causes this problem.

Violence

Violence is defined in WWL Methodology as the deprivation of physical freedom or as bodily harm to Christians or damage to their property. It includes severe threats (mental abuse). The table is based on reported cases as much as possible, but since many incidents go unreported, the numbers must be understood as being minimum figures. The following 5 points should be considered when using the data provided in the Block 6 table:

1. Some incidents go unreported because the Christians involved choose not to speak about the hostility being faced. Possible reasons for this may be:

- *Doing so would expose them to more attacks. For example, if a family member is killed because of his/her faith, the survivors might decide to keep silent about the circumstances of the killing to avoid provoking any further attacks.*
- *In some circumstances, the reticence to pass on information may be due to the danger of exposure caused by converts returning to their previous faith.*
- *If persecution is related to sexual violence - due to stigma, survivors often do not tell even their closest relatives.*
- *In some cultural settings, if your loved one is killed, you might be under the obligation to take revenge. Christians not wishing to do that, may decide to keep quiet about it.*

2. Other incidents go unreported for the following possible reasons:

- *Some incidents never reach the public consciousness, because no one really knows about it; or the incident is simply not considered worth reporting; or media coverage is deliberately blocked or distorted; or media coverage is not deliberately blocked, but the information somehow gets lost; or the incidents are deliberately 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, armed conflict can make them additionally vulnerable. Christians killed in areas where fighting regularly takes place are unlikely to be reported separately. Examples in recent years have been Sudan, Syria and Myanmar.*
- *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 oppressive factors 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. These numbers could be immense.

3. For further discussion (with a focus on the complexity of assessing the numbers of Christians killed for their faith) please see World Watch Monitor's article dated 13 November 2013 available at:

<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2013/11/number-of-christian-martyrs-continues-to-cause-debate/>.

4. The use of symbolic numbers: In cases where it has been impossible to count exactly, a symbolic round figure (10*, 100* etc.) is given and indicated with an asterisk. A symbolic number of 10* could in reality even be 100 or more but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 100* could go well over 1000 but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 1,000* could go well over 10,000 but, again, the real number is uncertain. The same applies for symbolic numbers 10,000*, 100,000* and 1,000,000*: Each could indicate much higher numbers, but WWR chooses to be cautious because the real number is uncertain.

Guinea: Violence Block question		WWL 2023	WWL 2022
6.1	How many Christians have been killed for faith-related reasons (including state sanctioned executions)?	0	0
6.2	How many churches or Christian buildings (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	1	0
6.3	How many Christians have been detained for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.4	How many Christians have been sentenced to jail, labor camp, sent to psychiatric hospital as punishment, or similar things for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.5	How many Christians have been abducted for faith-related reasons (including Christians missing in a persecution context)?	0	0
6.6	How many Christians have been raped or otherwise sexually harassed for faith-related reasons?	0	0
6.7	How many cases have there been of forced marriages of Christians to non-Christians?	1	0
6.8	How many Christians have been otherwise physically or mentally abused for faith-related reasons (including beatings and death threats)?	10 *	15
6.9	How many houses of Christians or other property (excluding shops) have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	10 *	10 *
6.10	How many shops or businesses of Christians have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons?	10 *	3

6.11 How many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or go into hiding in-country for faith-related reasons?	10 *	10
6.12 How many Christians have been forced to leave the country for faith-related reasons?	0	0

5 Year trends

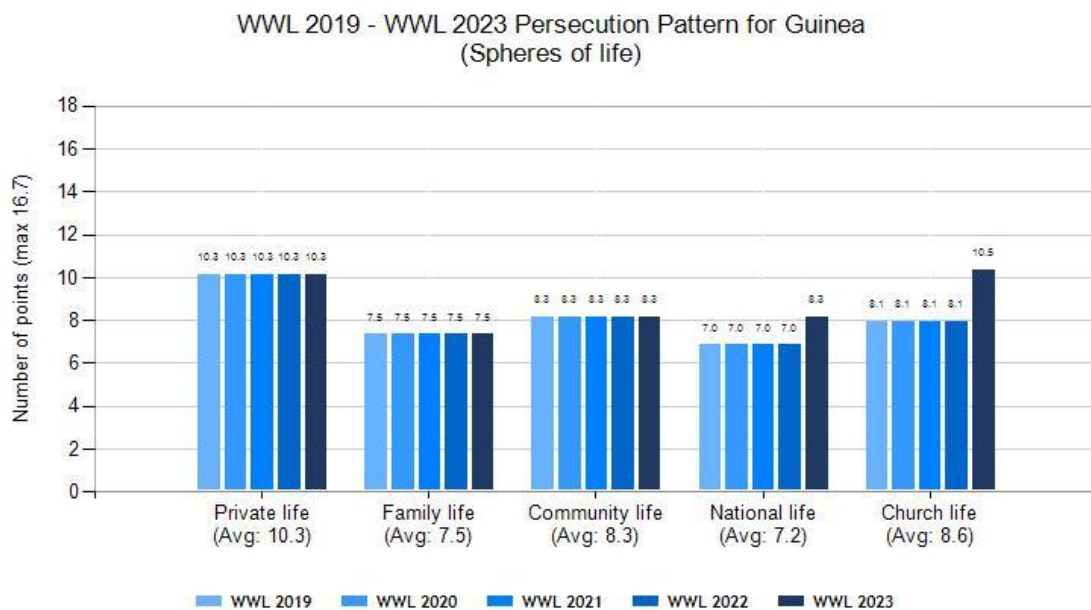
The following three charts show the levels of pressure and violence faced by Christians in the country over the last five WWL reporting periods.

5 Year trends: Average pressure

Guinea: WWL 2019 - WWL 2023 Persecution Pattern history		Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2023		9.0
2022		8.2
2021		8.2
2020		8.2
2019		8.2

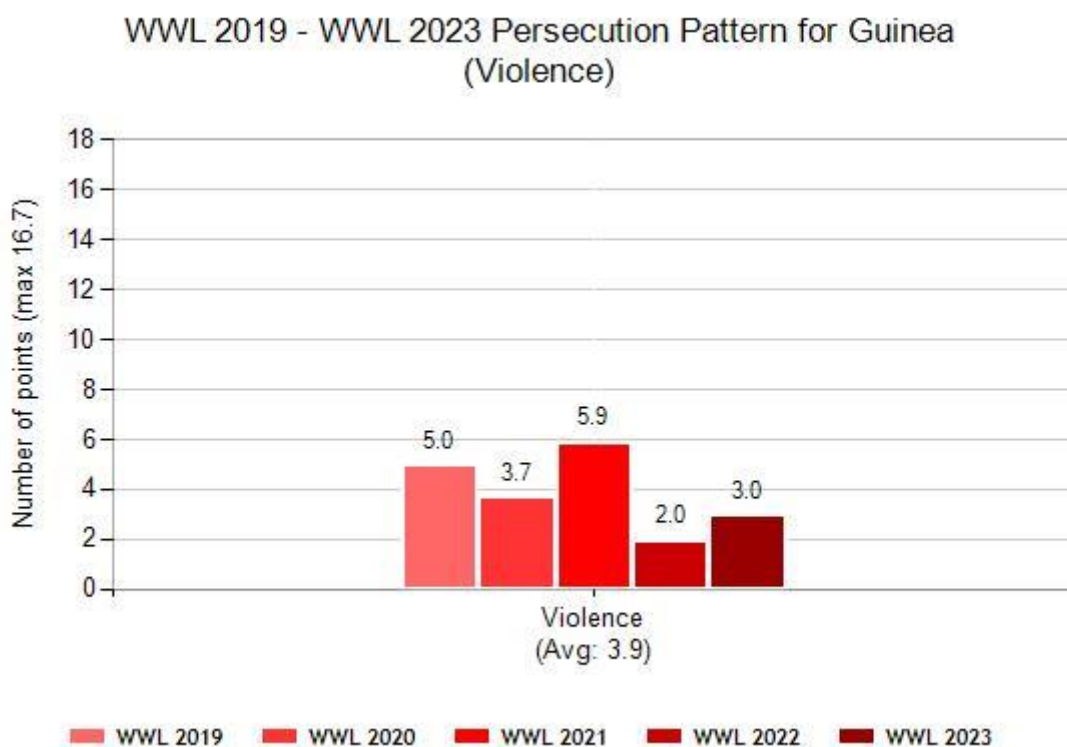
The average pressure on Christians remained constant at a level of 8.2 points for the period WWL 2019-WWL 2022. There was however a marked increase in the WWL 2023 reporting period.

5 Year trends: Pressure in each sphere of life



As the graph above shows, the scores in the *Private sphere of life* are the highest, with an average of 10.3 points. This reflects how converts from ATR or a Muslim background face the most difficulties in their daily life. The scores in all spheres have been very stable, but sharp increases occurred in *Church life* and *National life* in WWL 2023.

5 Year trends: Violence against Christians



The average level of violence against Christians and their property or churches is scored at 3.9 points over the past five reporting periods. The highest score so far was in the WWL 2021 reporting period (5.9 points).

Gender-specific religious persecution / Female

Group	Female Pressure Points
Economic	Denied inheritance or possessions; Discrimination/harassment via education
Political and Legal	Denied access to Christian religious materials, teachings and rites; Denied custody of children; Forced divorce; Forced marriage
Security	Abduction; Forced out of home – expulsion; Forced to flee town/country; Incarceration by family (house arrest); Violence – physical; Violence – sexual
Social and Cultural	Denied access to social community/networks; Denied food or water; Enforced religious dress code; Violence – psychological
Technological	-

In Guinea, female converts to Christianity are especially vulnerable and are at risk of being abducted, isolated and cut off from their family. They might additionally be physically beaten, removed from school, placed under house arrest or, in some instances, be forced out of the family home. With the same intent, others are forcibly married to Muslims, particularly in Islamic strongholds such as Labe and Fouta. According to a country expert, forced marriages, in part, stem from deeply held views that “a woman's salvation depends heavily on her degree of total submission to her husband” and “the practice of total submission to one's parents.” If already married, female converts face the possibility of being divorced by their husband and being denied custody of their children. Considering such pressure, many converts are economically vulnerable and emotionally damaged. Occasionally converts flee their homes, and indeed Guinea, for safety.

Christian women are also affected by cultural and tribal norms; the women's secret society, [Sande](#), for example, shuns Christian women who have chosen not to join the society on faith-related grounds (Britannica, “Sande: African Secret Society”, accessed 4 January 2023). A source revealed: “Our young people are forced to participate in female circumcision.”

Daughters of pastors are also targeted by Muslims for the purpose of marriage. While a Muslim woman cannot marry a Christian man (making female converts further vulnerable to forced marriage to a Muslim), a Muslim man can marry a Christian woman. Indeed, he is encouraged to do so in order to spread Islam.

Gender-specific religious persecution / Male

Group	Male Pressure Points
Economic	Economic harassment via business/job/work access
Political and Legal	Denied custody of children; Forced divorce
Security	Forced out of home – expulsion; Violence – physical
Social and Cultural	Denied access to social community/networks; Violence – psychological; Violence – Verbal
Technological	-

Christian converts to Christianity face the greatest challenges for their faith, often being condemned by their families, harshly threatened and forced from their homes and towns. Some can be whipped, which brings great shame upon them, as well as their wives. In instances where the husband flees his home to escape such pressure, his wife and children are left in an economically vulnerable position.

Additionally, In the same way that Christian women in Guinea face pressure from the female secret-society, Sande, men face persecution from the male secret-society, the [Poro](#) (Britannica, accessed 4 January 2023). Non-members are excluded and looked down upon.

According to reports, there is a growing repression of church activities and increased surveillance of church leaders; the majority of whom are male. A country expert explained: “In the Middle and Upper Guinea regions, Christians are repeatedly prevented from organizing Christian activities outside. The Secretariat General of Religious Affairs (SRA) issues weekly themes for Sunday sermons in churches. Many church leaders think such monitoring serves mainly to silence any government criticism taking place in churches.” The families of Christian leaders are also harassed in schools and public places, a source revealed.

Persecution of other religious minorities

There are small communities of Bahai and Jehovah’s Witnesses in Guinea. They have no official recognition from the government.

Future outlook

The outlook for Christians as viewed through the lens of:

Dictatorial paranoia

In the [WWL 2021 Full Country Dossier](#), WWR noted at this point (page 28): "At the presidential elections in October 2020, Conde won a convincing victory to embark upon his third term. However, a more democratic country would mean more freedom for society. Considering the nature of Guinea's politics since independence, the hope of having robust freedom of religion is still unlikely in the short term." What then transpired in September 2021 was that the army assumed power through a coup, thus changing the whole dynamic. The country has been suspended from AU and ECOWAS membership. The leader of the coup became the country's interim president. Although many Guineans initially welcomed the coup, there is growing discontent against the junta in the nation. This all shows the unpredictability and the volatility of the country's situation. Even though the army promised a return to civilian rule after conducting an inclusive election, there is no guarantee that such a transfer of power can be made without serious complications. Again in the WWL 2023 reporting period, the junta has indicated that transition to civilian rule will take longer than anticipated. Thus, the situation of Christians in the country remains precarious.

Islamic oppression

Christians in Guinea have been under pressure for some years and now the influence of radical Islam is on the rise. Churches have been attacked in the past and this threat is likely to continue in areas dominated by Islam. Although the Saudi-backed Wahhabi group is likely to remain a minority, with Islamic militancy increasing in the region. *Islamic oppression* looks set to increase. Furthermore, the political crisis in the country might also give additional hope for radical Muslims to put their influence to work in the country.

Clan oppression, blended with Ethno-religious hostility

Christian preaching has been ridiculed and attacks against converts may well continue in areas dominated by African Traditional Religions. The fate of this engine can be shaped by two things: If Christians are allowed to evangelize without any restrictions and reach out to those followers of the indigenous belief system or those Muslims who mix Islam with the indigenous belief

systems, then it is very likely that this engine will eventually lose its strength. The Forested Guinea region is where this belief system is particularly prevalent.

Organized crime and corruption

Western African countries, especially around the Gulf of Guinea, have become a hub for organized criminal activity and corruption. High level government officials are often implicated in either cartel operations or the highest form of land-grab corruption that also involves corporations. Guinea is squarely in this category. The country is not performing well on the rating of Transparency international. Freedom House has also indicated that high level government officials are implicated and have even convicted by Swiss Court in corruption in Guinea. Drug Cartels. In March 2022, a report indicated that drug cartels were behind an [attempted coup](#) in the neighboring country - Guinea Bissau (DW, 2 March 2022). All these factors combined together indicate that the impact of this engine on Christians is likely to grow stronger in the future.

External Links - Persecution Dynamics

- Gender-specific religious persecution Female description: Sande - <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sande>
- Gender-specific religious persecution Male description: Poro - <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Poro>
- Future outlook: WWL 2021 Full Country Dossier - <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Guinea-WWL-2021-Country-dossier.pdf>
- Future outlook: attempted coup - <https://www.dw.com/en/guinea-bissau-drug-cartels-behind-attempted-coup/a-60651513>

Further useful reports

A selection of in-depth reports and smaller articles are available on the new Research & Reports page of the website od.org. As in earlier years, they are also available on the Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom) using the following links:

- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/reports/>
- <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/?s=Guinea>