



**WORLD
WATCH
LIST
2022**



**THE TOP 50
COUNTRIES
WHERE
FOLLOWING
JESUS COSTS
THE MOST**

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FOLLOWING JESUS COSTS THE MOST

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FOR MILLIONS OF CHRISTIANS AROUND THE WORLD, **FOLLOWING JESUS COMES WITH ENORMOUS SACRIFICE.**

Some sacrifice their safety, risking violence or attack to read the Bible or worship with others.

Others must give up the chance of a decent education or a job. Or abandon homes, or businesses, driven out of the places where they live by those who oppose their faith.

Some sacrifice their freedom, choosing to go to prison or a labour camp rather than deny their faith. Some even pay with their lives.

Many – far too many – must sacrifice their voice. They must stay silent and secret, hide what they believe, what they think, who they really are.

What gives them the strength to keep following Jesus?

First, they see the bigger picture. They know that they are part of a greater reality and an eternal story.

Second, they know that God is with them, so they are not alone. They know that others are with them as well: praying for them, speaking up for them, supporting them.

Their family might abandon them, but they are wrapped in the worldwide family of Christ. Their country might turn against them, but they know they are part of the strong, growing and victorious kingdom of God.

This is a guidebook to their world. It's not a book of facts or a collection of statistics – although these are important. It's a call to stand with our persecuted family, with the hidden and the hurting, and with those who live with secrecy and sacrifice.

It's an invitation to bring hope and healing and to make sure that wherever possible, they do not go through the fire alone.



‘THEY ARE TAKING ALL THAT IS BEAUTIFUL AWAY’

“Everything beautiful is considered ‘infidel,’” says Sharifullah*. A traditional craftsman in Afghanistan, Sharifullah’s business came to a standstill when the Taliban returned to power. “The Taliban want their ideology reflected everywhere, and so all signs of colour, life and hope have been removed.

“The Taliban are killing our souls and spirits,” says Sharifullah. “They are killing the souls of our children by taking all that is beautiful away from them.” Sharifullah has good reason to fear the Taliban: he and his wife are secret Christians.

The Taliban’s return to power in Afghanistan has propelled the country to number one in the Open Doors World Watch List rankings. The country was already number two under the previous regime, but the Taliban takeover has made a terrible situation even worse. What little progress the country had made in human rights has been reversed. And for Christians, life is more dangerous than ever. If they are discovered, they are simply killed.

Yet Sharifullah and his fellow believers have not given up. They always knew that the Taliban could return, but they have chosen to carry on with their secret ministry.

“We will never let that hope be silenced,” he adds. “We will make sure the world hears the gospel through every breath we take. And we know you will help us by living the gospel, using your freedom and sharing Jesus. Please continue to stand with us.

“Jesus came to us in a dream and opened up our imagination,” he says. “It is a door that has been opened that can never be shut.”

WHAT’S HAPPENING AROUND THE WORLD?

- **The Taliban has taken control in Afghanistan – boosting the morale of extremists everywhere**
- **The global church is increasingly a refugee church – making it even more vulnerable**
- **More and more nation imposition of conformity on its citizens. This extends to pretty much every area of life; speech, belief, and behaviour. This is enforced by using pioneering technology to surveil and control its citizens**
- **The church continues to be hit by Covid-19 restrictions – allowing governments and gangs to exploit it for their own ends**

**name changed for security reasons*

Join us in praying for Afghanistan throughout this year. Find resources to help at www.opendoors.org.hk

AT LEAST 360 MILLION CHRISTIANS EXPERIENCE HIGH LEVELS OF PERSECUTION AND DISCRIMINATION

That's an astonishing **1 in 7 of the global Christian population.** Persecution of Christians has reached the highest levels since the World Watch List began nearly 30 years ago. For much of that time North Korea has been the most dangerous country in the world to be a Christian. This year it recorded its highest ever score - yet it dropped to number two. **Because right now, nowhere in the world is more dangerous for Christians than Afghanistan.**

1 THE TALIBAN HAS TAKEN CONTROL IN AFGHANISTAN – BOOSTING THE MORALE OF EXTREMISTS EVERYWHERE

The Taliban's victory is devastating for Christians way beyond the borders of Afghanistan. It has given jihadist groups throughout the world a profound psychological boost. It has strengthened Islamist groups in neighbouring Pakistan and may well embolden jihadist groups in other regions. Islamic militancy has been steadily growing in sub-Saharan Africa, with the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Mozambique and Cameroon joining Nigeria in the countries where Christians face most violence. **The Taliban's success encourages extremists around the world.**

2 THE GLOBAL CHURCH IS INCREASINGLY A REFUGEE CHURCH – MAKING IT EVEN MORE VULNERABLE

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, by mid-2021, the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide had surpassed 84 million. Many of these are Christians fleeing persecution. The majority are displaced through violence. Many Christians were among the millions fleeing for their lives in Afghanistan, while in countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria, churches and communities have been attacked. Even where there is no active conflict, Christian refugees from places like Iran leave because they have simply had enough of the daily struggle against discrimination.

All they want is somewhere to be free and safe. Sadly, life on the move or in refugee camps is even more fragile, and exposes them to discrimination, extortion, human trafficking and rape. **A displaced church is a vulnerable church.**

3 'ONE COUNTRY, ONE PEOPLE, ONE CREED' – THE FAMED DIVERSITY

More and more nation imposition of conformity on its citizens. This extends



to pretty much every area of life; speech, belief, and behaviour. This is enforced by using pioneering technology to surveil and control its citizens. Numerous nations follow the way of this imposition of "unity" over diversity.

Open Doors' recent India report describes a nation being drawn further into nationalist 'Hindutva' ideology, where to be Indian is to be Hindu. A wave of vigilante violence against Christians and other religious minorities, has been overlooked or even encouraged by political leaders across the nation, and accompanied by a surge in misinformation and propaganda from mainstream and social media.

A similar model of loyalty and homogeneity is seen in nations as diverse as Myanmar, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and the central Asian states. **All these face increased restrictions for those who deviate from the creed of 'one country, one people, one creed'.**

4 THE CHURCH CONTINUES TO BE HIT BY COVID – ALLOWING GOVERNMENTS AND GANGS TO EXPLOIT IT FOR THEIR OWN ENDS

All around the world the church took precautions against Covid. But in many countries, the pandemic was used as an excuse to put churches under surveillance or restriction. In Vietnam churches were blamed for outbreaks – one church was even prosecuted.

And from West Africa to Central America, jihadist and/or organised criminal groups exploited the situation – using the absence of security to expand their power and territorial control. Just as last year, **Covid restrictions continue to be weaponised against the church.**

5 WHAT GIVES US HOPE?

The global forces ranged against Christians seem overwhelming. So many governments, dictators, militias, judges, councils, employers – so many systems that are actively seeking to crush and destroy the church.

But here's the thing: they haven't succeeded. They *cannot* succeed.

The countries in this book list the many ways in which the church is attacked, maligned, threatened and cheated. Yet despite all that, the church is growing.

It is happening almost unnoticed, under-the-radar, as tiny as a mustard seed. Lives are changed in the unlikelyst of places. In the toilet blocks of North Korean labour camps, or behind closed doors in Somali houses; disguised as chats over coffee in North African cafés, or in remote villages off Central Asian passes – wherever two or three are gathered in Jesus' name the secret kingdom is living, vibrant and powerful.

It doesn't look like power. Not as the world understands it. But it is a kingdom that cannot – *will not* – be destroyed. **All around the world Christ is building His church, and nothing will prevail against it.**

6 RISERS AND FALLERS

The closure of the majority of house churches has meant that Qatar (18) rises 11 places. The forthcoming football World Cup will no doubt continue to raise questions about this repressive regime. Jihadist violence in sub-Saharan Africa is a major problem and lies behind Niger's (33) re-entry into the top 50, a leap of over 20 places. Meanwhile Myanmar (12) (PICTURED ABOVE) has risen six places due to civil unrest and military violence, which has seen over 200,000 Christians displaced, while the military bombs churches and kills or detains pastors. Indonesia (28) has leapt up 19 places as a result of deadly attacks against Christians in Sulawesi. The other major riser is Cuba (37), back in the list after many years as a result of a government-led clamp down on protests.

Where countries have fallen in the list, often it's not that their situation has improved, merely that persecution in other countries has increased. Iraq (14),



Syria (15), Egypt (20) and Turkey (42) all saw reductions in violence, although Covid restrictions curtailing movement may well have played a part. In Iraq there were fewer large-scale violent attacks, but more low-key incidents, such as Christians being abducted, forcibly married, or having property confiscated.

7 BEYOND THE TOP 50

Sadly, Christians are persecuted in many more countries than just the 50 listed in this booklet. The World Watch List monitors many countries where freedom of worship is threatened or curtailed. Overall, this year, 76 countries showed extreme, very high or high levels of persecution, two more than in 2021. Ten years ago a score of 40 points or more would have put a country into the top 50. Today every Top 50 country has over 60 points.

Kenya and Comoros have dropped out of the Top 50, not because persecution has decreased there, but because it has increased in other countries. Tanzania, Angola, Rwanda and Burundi are all hovering just outside the Top 50, reflecting the activities of Islamic extremists in sub-Saharan Africa. Meanwhile, both Venezuela and Nicaragua saw worrying rises in persecution, due to widespread criminality and unrest, as well as government-supported persecution of Christian leaders who dare to speak out against human rights abuses.



“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.”

ROMANS 12:14-15

Praba lost her eight-year-old son Peter, in an Easter bombing attack in Sri Lanka (now ranking at number 52 on the World Watch List). “Sometimes I ask God why he has taken our joy away from us, but I know He has a plan. I cannot undo the memories but I will not turn from the Lord. “People who had never even seen us were praying for us when we could not. It is because of their prayers that we have been able to stay strong in our faith.”

THE WORLD WATCH LIST: UNIQUE, RELIABLE, COMPREHENSIVE

The Open Doors World Watch List is a unique, reliable, comprehensive ranking of the countries where the persecution of Christians is most extreme.

It's unique. As far as possible, our data is gathered at grass-roots level. Detailed information from in-country networks and local partners gives us a unique insight into the real, day-to-day lived-experience of Christians in over 150 countries.

It's reliable. Over the course of three decades the list has built up a reputation for credible, dependable information. What's more, our research methods and analysis is independently audited by the International Institute for Religious Freedom.

It's comprehensive. The World Watch List tracks persecution in all areas of life, measuring not only violence, but also how much freedom Christians have to practise their faith in their private, family, community, national and church life. This data is converted into a robust points system, which is then ranked into categories:

- EXTREME** 81-100 POINTS
- VERY HIGH** 61-80 POINTS
- HIGH** 41-60 POINTS

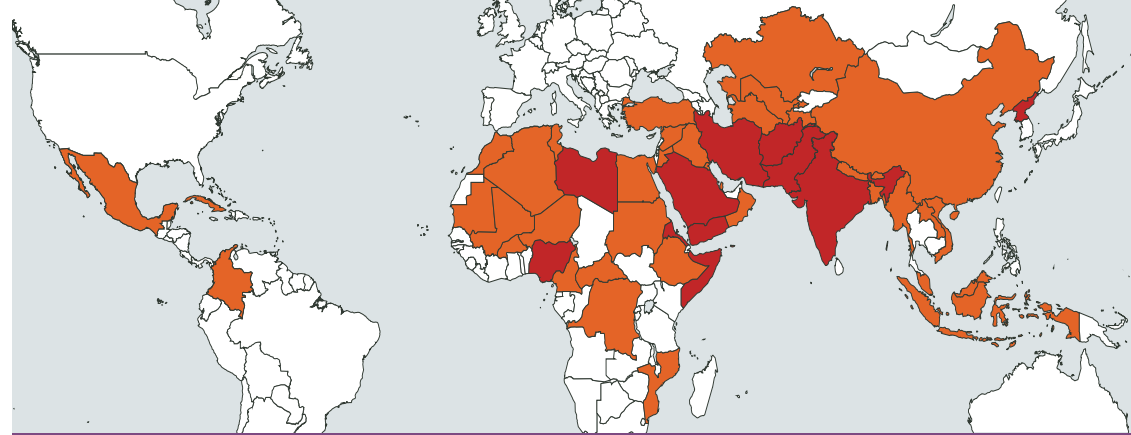
You can find more details on our methodology and research at www.opendoors.org.hk/persecution

HOW DO YOU DEFINE PERSECUTION?

Persecution takes many forms, from insults and abuse, to discrimination in education and the workplace, to outright violence. We might characterise these different forms as 'smash' and 'squeeze'.

- The **'smash'** represents overt violence against Christians: bombing, shooting, rapes, kidnappings, forcible evictions.
- The **'squeeze'** represents the suffocating restrictions faced by many Christians in daily life: red tape and legal restrictions, an inability to publicly display your faith, discrimination woven into the fabric of society.

'Smash' is physical, visible, violent. 'Squeeze' is insidious, structural, suffocating. But both have the same end goal: the erasure of Christianity in their country, region, tribe or family.



WHO ARE OPEN DOORS?

For over 65 years Open Doors has stood alongside the persecuted church, strengthening and supporting millions of Christians who dare to follow Jesus no matter the cost.

Our global underground networks operate in almost 70 countries around the globe, smuggling Bibles and literature, training church leaders and other Christians, offering legal advice, and providing vital

practical support such as trauma care and emergency aid.

Meanwhile our family of supporters worldwide raise prayer and financial support and speak up for their persecuted church family.

Wherever we operate we always work in partnership with the local church, wherever it is found and whatever form it takes. It is this partnership with churches around the world that brings hope to so many and continues to shine light and love into some of the darkest places on earth.



ABOVE Christians at a youth camp in Bangladesh, run by Open Doors partners. The camp brings together over 300 young Christians from Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist backgrounds.



WHAT CAN I DO?

Persecution is at unprecedented levels. But your support can help those who worship in secret, and those who sacrifice so much to follow Jesus.

GIVE

Give an isolated Christian a precious Bible, help rebuild shattered homes and churches, provide persecuted Christians with vital food and medicine. Whatever you can give will make a difference.

ACT

Tell others what is happening. Tell your church about their persecuted brothers and sisters using our resources for churches. Whatever you can do for your persecuted church family, you will be supporting those who live in secrecy and sacrifice.

PRAY

Sign up for weekly emails with stories of courageous faith to inspire your prayers. Our website has a wealth of prayer resources for individuals and churches.

Find out more at opendoors.org.hk

PRAYING WITH THE OPEN DOORS WORLD WATCH LIST

Throughout this book you will find loads of ways to pray for the persecuted church. As well as the wealth of information about the Top 50 countries, there are inspiring testimonies, Bible verses, written prayers and a World Watch List map to help you to lift our persecuted family before the Lord.

WEEKLY PRAYER ALERT

Many of our supporters like to pray for a country each week. And you can sign up for regular emails which will give you the very latest in news and prayer requests from around the world.

Sign up:

www.opendoors.org.hk/subscribe



INVITE OPEN DOORS SPEAKER

Why not invite a speaker to come and help your church connect with the persecuted church?

Invite a speaker:

www.opendoors.org.hk/getinvolved/invitespeaker

1 AFGHANISTAN



POPULATION
39 million / Thousands of Christians
LEADER
Hibatullah Akhundzada
PERSECUTION SCORE (+4)

Afghanistan is number one on the Open Doors World Watch List for the first time.

Even before this year, it was impossible to live openly as a Christian in Afghanistan, and persecution has increased since the Taliban took control in August 2021. Leaving Islam is considered shameful, and Christian converts face dire and violent consequences if their new faith is discovered. Either they have to flee the country or they will be killed.

Open Doors raises prayer for persecuted believers in Afghanistan, and provides practical support to Afghan Christians forced to flee to neighbouring countries.

PLEASE PRAY

- For secret believers in Afghanistan, that they will be protected from the violence of the Taliban
- That Taliban leaders will uphold and preserve human life, and that God would turn their hearts from hate to love
- That Open Doors partners supporting Afghan refugees will be filled with grace and love.

2 NORTH KOREA



POPULATION
26 million / 400,000 Christians
LEADER
Kim Jong-un
PERSECUTION SCORE (+2)

Any North Korean caught following Jesus is at immediate risk of imprisonment, brutal torture and death.

The government, led by Kim Jong-un, views Christians as the most dangerous political class of people, and the persecution is violent and intense. North Korean parents must hide their faith from their children. An estimated 50,000 to 70,000 Christians are imprisoned in North Korea's notorious system of prisons and labour camps.

Through our networks in other country, Open Doors helps persecuted North Korean believers with emergency relief aid, Bibles, discipleship materials and training, worldwide prayer support and more. We also provides discipleship through radio broadcasts.

PLEASE PRAY

- That God will be with all North Korean believers, to strengthen them and give them hope
- For radical change in the hearts of Kim Jong-un and the other leaders of the North Korean regime
- That God will bless and protect Open Doors' networks as they strengthen the North Korean church.

HUNGER



Bae* in North Korea received a life-long punishment: exiled to a remote village, forced to do backbreaking labour and always on the edge of starvation. Her crime? Owning a Bible.

Every day, Bae works for long hours in the fields. If she can, she forages for mushrooms and plants in the wood – anything to augment the meagre rations she receives.

But at night, her real work begins. She and her housemates gather together. Quietly, Bae gets out a book, and reads: "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."

And so starts another night in North Korea's underground church. Open Doors estimates there are 400,000 Christians in North Korea. Every one of them is risking everything for their faith. They hunger for God's Word, and truly know what it means to follow Jesus no matter the cost.

**name changed for security reasons*

“ VOICES OF THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Suad* is a believer living in a country in the Arab world. We can't say which country he is from as that would be too dangerous for him.

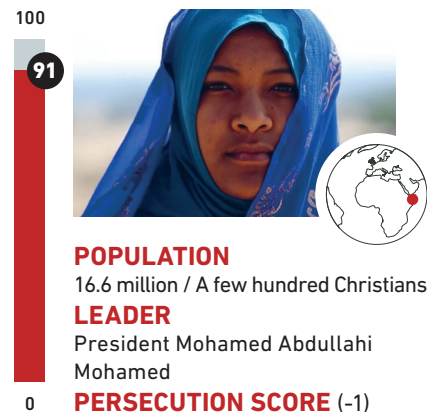
“Now that I follow Christ, I have discovered the scriptures that describe prayer as incense,” says Suad. “Like in Psalm 141:2: ‘May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.’

“When I read scriptures like this, I understand that prayer should be something that permeates my home like the incense I burn, which even wafts out onto the street. My neighbours may not see me burning the incense, but the fragrance often reaches them, and those who enter my home will walk away with the fragrance on them.”

**name changed for security reasons*



3 SOMALIA



Violent attacks by Islamic militants, targeting Christians, remain common in Somalia and have been for more than 25 years.

Groups like al-Shabaab operate with seemingly little pushback and control large parts of Somali territory, and they consider Christians 'high-value' targets for killing.

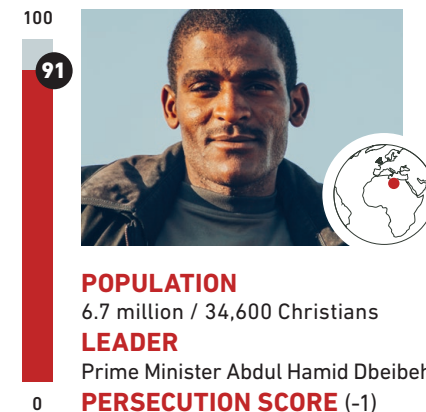
The small number of believers in Somalia are largely Christians who have converted from Islam. This is seen as a betrayal, and even someone suspected of conversion is likely to face harassment, intimidation, rape or even murder.

Open Doors partners support Somali believers across the Horn of Africa with discipleship training and equipping them to cope with severe persecution.

PLEASE PRAY

- For peace and stability in Somalia after decades of civil war
- That secret believers would find ways of being in community, and be strengthened by God's unfailing love
- For Open Doors partners supporting Somali believers across the Horn of Africa to be filled with God's compassion and wisdom.

4 LIBYA



Libya is effectively a lawless land where to be a Christian is to live a secret life.

Those who leave Islam to follow Jesus face immense pressure from family to renounce their faith. Their community ostracises them, and they can be left homeless, jobless and alone. Telling others about Jesus can lead to arrest and even violent punishment.

Believers are further exposed to danger since Libya has no central government, so laws are not enforced uniformly. Targeted kidnappings and executions are always a possibility for believers.

Open Doors works with local partners and churches in North Africa to provide leadership training, discipleship, livelihood support, pastoral care and prayer support.

PLEASE PRAY

- That the tangible presence of God will give secret believers strength to persevere in their faith
- That opportunities will open for believers to share their faith and meet with others for fellowship
- For the provision of a government that strives to protect its people.

5 YEMEN



POPULATION

30.9 million / A few thousand Christians

LEADER

President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi

0 **PERSECUTION SCORE** (+1)

Yemeni culture is tribal – so if you leave the tribal faith and become a Christian, you are isolated and at risk. The punishment might be banishment or even death. And, in the past year, violence has become even worse.

All of Yemen is suffering from one of the greatest humanitarian crises in the world – but Yemeni Christians are even more vulnerable, because emergency relief is distributed largely by local Muslim leaders, who often deliberately neglect anybody suspected of not being a devout Muslim.

Open Doors supports the church on the Arabian Peninsula by organising prayer, distributing Scripture resources, and training believers and pastors.

PLEASE PRAY

- For stability after years of upheaval, and for an openness to letting all Yemenis, regardless of religion, live their lives in peace and hope
- That secret Christians would receive God's courage, wisdom and boldness
- For all Yemeni people who find out about Jesus via television, radio or the internet to receive God-given understanding about the gospel.

6 ERITREA



POPULATION

5.6 million / 2.6 million Christians

LEADER

President Isaias Afwerki

0 **PERSECUTION SCORE** (no change)

Despite almost half the population identifying as Christian, believers in Eritrea suffer extreme persecution.

The government recognises only three denominations: Orthodox, Catholic and Lutheran. Those not part of these groups are at risk of severe persecution by the state. This includes intrusive surveillance, raids on gatherings, and arrests. The conditions facing Christians in prison can be inhumane.

Meanwhile, converts from Islam and those who leave the Orthodox Church for a Protestant group can face harsh mistreatment from their communities.

Open Doors works through local church partners in Eritrea to provide discipleship training, economic empowerment projects and persecution survival training.

PLEASE PRAY

- That imprisoned Christians and their families will be sustained by God
- For wisdom, discernment and boldness for believers as they seek to gather
- That Christians from Islamic and Orthodox backgrounds will be encouraged and empowered.

A PRAYER FOR PRISONERS

Lord Jesus,

We pray for those who are imprisoned because of their faith.

Be with the unjustly accused and illegally detained.

Give them courage to face the beatings, patience to bear the lies, and hope to see beyond the bars and the barbed wire.

May they live Christ-like lives in the labour camps and prisons.

May their cells become churches, places of worship and witness.

And may we do all we can to let them know that they are not forgotten, and so lighten their burden of loneliness.

Amen.



At first, Manga* and Daniel* from Nigeria hid their scars. They wanted to avoid questions and not scare people. "But we later came to realise, it's a testimony," says Manga (PICTURED).

The two brothers and their father were left for dead when Boko Haram militants stormed their home. All three were attacked for refusing to deny Jesus. Tragically, their father was killed, but Manga and Daniel miraculously survived.

"This incident increased my faith," shares Daniel. "No matter what the enemy will do against you, if your time has not yet come, there is nothing he can do."

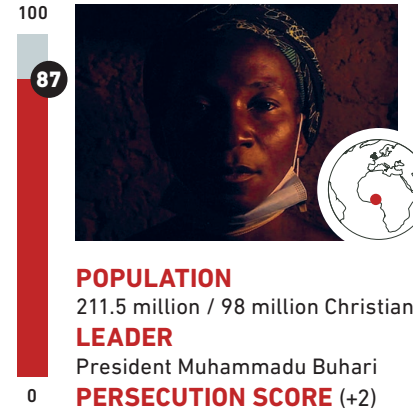
"Paul, the apostle, said he suffered for Christ, but above all he should count it all joy," adds Manga. "This kept pounding in my heart: I should count it all joy. But with the hatred of what these people did, count it all joy? But again, with the second chance God gave me, that joy had to exist."

The scars are no longer hidden. "They're evidence of the existence of God," says Manga.

**name changed for security reasons*

SCARS

7 NIGERIA



The persecution facing Christians in Nigeria is extreme and often brutally violent, as Islamic militants and armed bandits attack with increasing impunity.

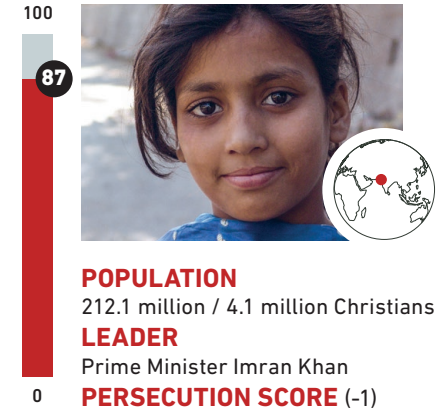
This mostly affects believers living in the Muslim-majority north and Middle Belt, but it's spreading south. Although all civilians are subject to threats and violence, Christians are often specifically targeted because of their faith. In northern states that operate under Sharia (Islamic law), Christians can be treated as second-class citizens. Christians who convert from Islam are also vulnerable to pressure and persecution.

Open Doors partners strengthen Christians in Nigeria with discipleship and persecution survival training, trauma care and economic empowerment projects.

PLEASE PRAY

- That all those affected by violence will be healed of all physical, spiritual and emotional wounds
- That Christians will be kept safe from harm and able to live in peace
- That the government and security forces in Nigeria will be equipped to do more to protect Christians.

8 PAKISTAN



In Pakistan, Christians are considered second-class citizens and discriminated against in every aspect of life.

Believers who have converted from Islam are the most vulnerable to persecution.

There is a silent epidemic of kidnappings, forced marriages and forced conversion of Christian girls and women – used as a tactic to persecute whole Christian communities. Pakistan's infamous blasphemy laws continue to be used to target Christians. Even a false accusation can lead to mob violence.

Open Doors is active in the Persian Gulf countries through our network of partner churches, but for security reasons, we cannot say what we do where.

PLEASE PRAY

- For Christian women who've faced abduction to be healed from trauma, and protected from future violence
- For any believers accused of blasphemy to be kept safe and delivered from false accusations
- For God to soften the hearts of those in power in Pakistan to see the importance of religious freedom.

9 IRAN

100

85



POPULATION

84.3 million / 800,000 Christians

LEADER

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

PERSECUTION SCORE (-1)

In Iran, converts to Christianity from Islam are most at risk, especially from the government and to a lesser extent from society and their own families.

House groups comprising converts from Muslim backgrounds are often raided. Leaders and members have been arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned for 'crimes against national security'.

Encouragingly, at the end of 2021, Iran's Supreme Court ruled that nine Christians imprisoned for attending house churches should not have been charged for 'acting against national security', raising hopes that Christians will have more freedom moving forward.

Open Doors partners support the church in Iran with online ministry presence, Christian multimedia initiatives and advocacy.

PLEASE PRAY

- That the Supreme Court's ruling will result in house churches being given more freedom
- That Iran's new president Ebrahim Raisi will honour the rights of Iran's religious minorities
- That the house churches will continue to equip believers for serving Jesus.

10 INDIA

100

82



POPULATION

1.4 billion / 68.9 million Christians

LEADER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

PERSECUTION SCORE (-1)

The persecution of Christians in India is intensifying as Hindu extremists aim to cleanse the country of their presence and influence.

Violence against Christians remains extreme. Social media is increasingly contributing to this, as it is used to spread disinformation and stir up hatred. False accusations are commonly levelled against Christians, including allegations of forced conversions. In some areas during the pandemic, Christians have been deliberately overlooked in the distribution of government aid and have even been accused of spreading the virus.

Open Doors partners strengthen the church in India by providing Bibles, emergency aid, persecution survival training, livelihood training and community development projects.

PLEASE PRAY

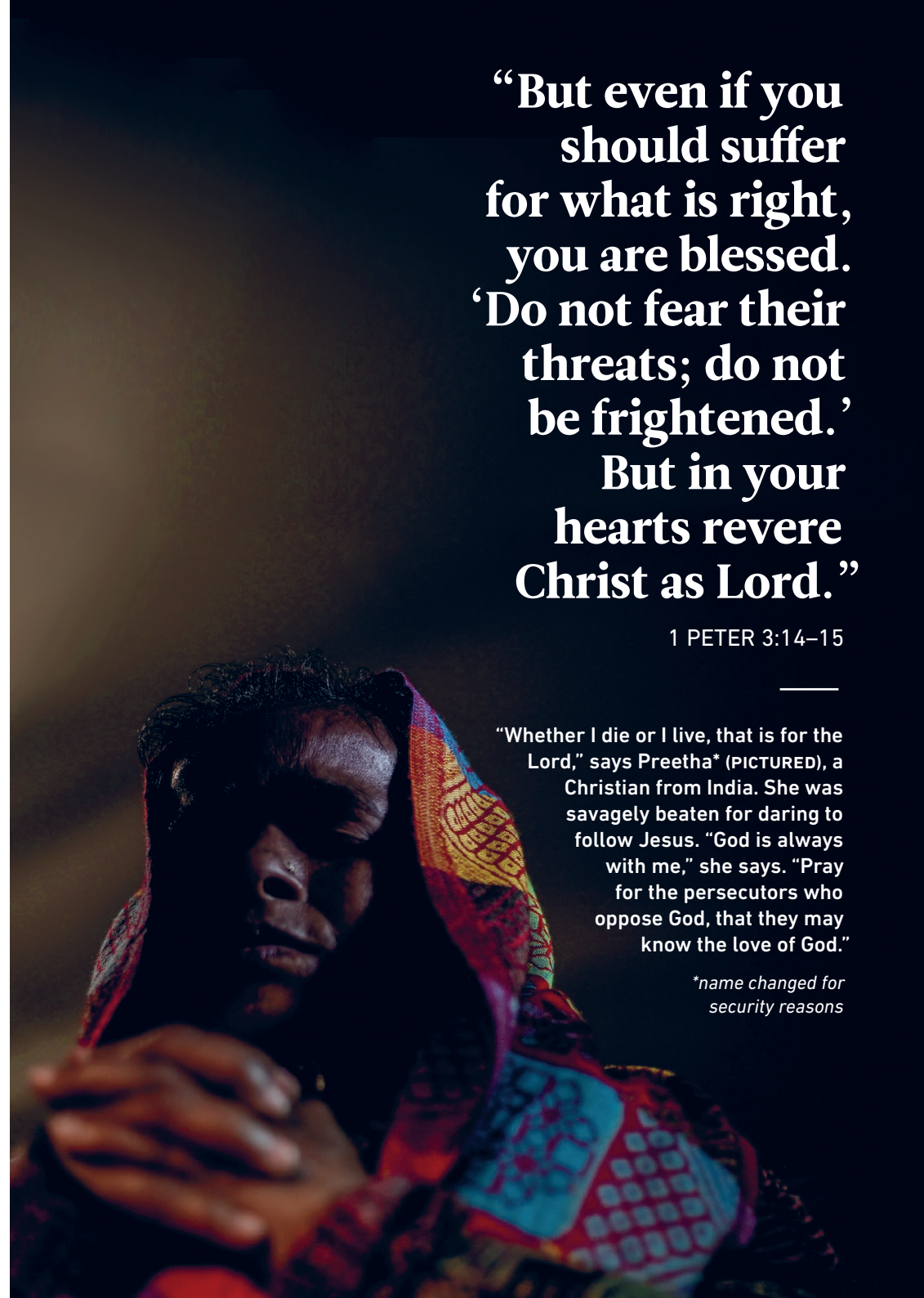
- That persecuted Christians will be empowered to stand strong
- That social media companies will do more to combat the spread of disinformation and hatred
- For continued protection, strength and encouragement for Open Doors partners as they serve the church.

“But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.’ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.”

1 PETER 3:14–15

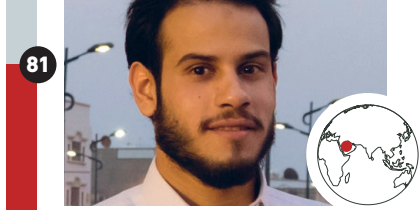
“Whether I die or I live, that is for the Lord,” says Preetha* (PICTURED), a Christian from India. She was savagely beaten for daring to follow Jesus. “God is always with me,” she says. “Pray for the persecutors who oppose God, that they may know the love of God.”

**name changed for security reasons*



11 SAUDI ARABIA

100



81

POPULATION

35.3 million / 1.2 million Christians

LEADER

King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud

PERSECUTION SCORE (+3)

Saudi Arabian Christians are usually forced to live out their faith in secrecy.

Otherwise, female converts risk physical violence and forced marriage by their families, while male converts risk being publicly shamed, beaten or imprisoned. Most of the Christians in the country are foreign migrant workers, who are heavily restricted from sharing their faith or gathering to worship.

Nevertheless, some Saudi Christians in recent years have been bold enough to share their faith, at great risk to their lives.

Open Doors supports the body of Christ on the Arabian Peninsula by organising prayer, distributing Scripture resources, and training believers and pastors.

PLEASE PRAY

- For secret Saudi believers, who must hide their faith from friends and family, to know that God is close and faithful
- For foreign Christians to be protected from mistreatment and find a church community
- That God will soften the hearts of religious leaders and the monarchy, so that Christians and other religious minorities will have greater freedom.

12 MYANMAR

100



79

POPULATION

55.3 million / 4.4 million Christians

LEADER

General Min Aung Hlaing

PERSECUTION SCORE (+5)

The persecution of Christians in Myanmar has worsened in the wake of the military coup in February 2021.

The army has attacked Christian villages and churches, while leaving Buddhist monasteries untouched, and killed Christian aid workers and pastors. More Christians than ever have been forced to live in internally displaced people camps where they are often deprived of food and healthcare.

Converts continue to experience persecution from their Buddhist, Muslim or tribal families and communities for leaving their former faith.

Working through local partners, Open Doors strengthens persecuted believers in Myanmar through literature distribution, discipleship programmes, livelihood support and leadership training.

PLEASE PRAY

- That God will soften the hearts of military leaders and give them a desire for peace and reconciliation
- For the provision of all physical and spiritual needs for believers
- That Christians will be beacons of God's love across the country.



“ VOICES OF THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Moses* (PICTURED) is a pastor and evangelist in Myanmar. Despite facing violent persecution in his village, he has continued to preach the good news and now leads a small church.

“There are around ten villages near here that are still living in the dark,” he says. “I want to extend my mission towards them and help them out. So please do pray for my mission, my purpose and my church.”

“Jesus said ‘Carry your cross and follow me.’ That is our motto too. I don’t have any discouragement about what I’m going through, because I remember the Lord Jesus Christ and how He suffered for me. If He suffered that much for me then what I am suffering is nothing.”

**name changed for security reasons*

13 SUDAN

100

79



POPULATION

44.6 million / 2 million Christians

LEADER

Lieutenant-General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan

0 **PERSECUTION SCORE** (no change)

Since the 2019 coup that ousted Omar al-Bashir, the situation for Sudanese Christians has somewhat improved. But continued political instability is threatening positive developments towards religious freedom.

Christians are still vulnerable to extreme persecution in public and private life, particularly if they have converted from Islam. Christian women and girls are vulnerable to rape, forced marriage and domestic violence, while men and boys are vulnerable to beatings, imprisonment and even murder.

Open Doors works through local church partners to strengthen persecuted Christians through persecution survival training, discipleship training and economic empowerment projects.

PLEASE PRAY

- For long-term stability in Sudan, and for new religious freedoms for Christians to be implemented
- For protection, encouragement and courage for Christians who've converted from Islam
- That Open Doors partners will be equipped to help the Sudanese church be resilient and fruitful.

14 IRAQ

100

78



POPULATION

42.6 million / 160,000 Christians

LEADER

President Barham Salih

0 **PERSECUTION SCORE** (-4)

Despite the recent territorial losses of so-called Islamic State, Iraq continues to be plagued by conflict. This gravely affects the country's Christians, with many displaced following bombings.

Many Christians are also seriously affected by intolerance and persecution. This is perpetuated mostly by militant Islamic groups and non-Christian leaders, and they face discrimination from government authorities.

Christians from a Muslim background continue to experience pressure. They often keep their faith a secret, as they risk being threatened by family members, clan leaders and their local community.

Open Doors works through local partners to support the church in Iraq with training, trauma care, Bibles and Christian books, livelihood projects, help to rebuild homes and churches, and crisis relief.

PLEASE PRAY

- For peace and stability so that displaced Christians can return home
- That the new Iraqi government will protect the rights of Christians and other religious minorities
- For the protection of all believers.

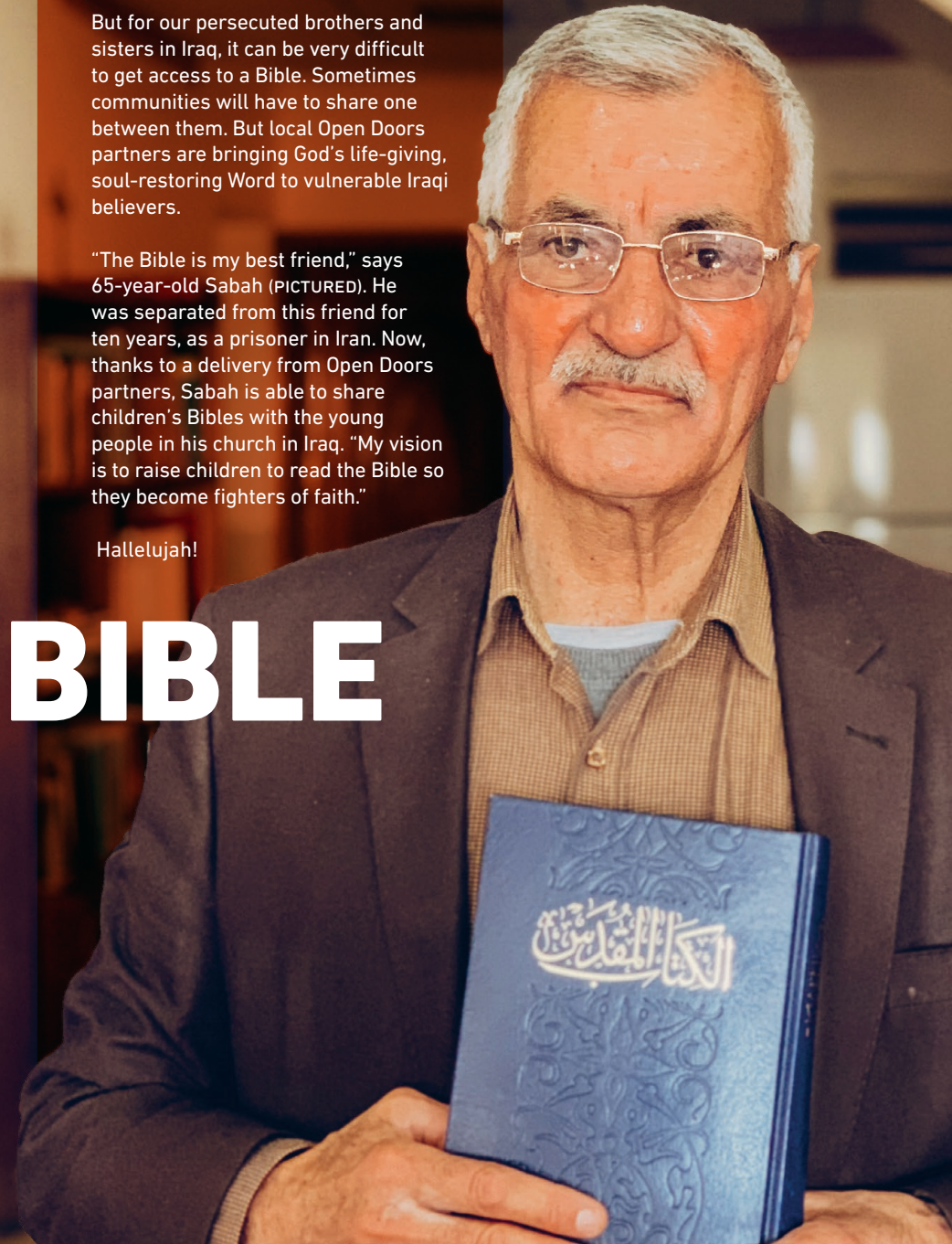
We all know how precious the Bible is. For us it is easy to get hold of a copy. In print, digital or audio, God's Word is at our fingertips.

But for our persecuted brothers and sisters in Iraq, it can be very difficult to get access to a Bible. Sometimes communities will have to share one between them. But local Open Doors partners are bringing God's life-giving, soul-restoring Word to vulnerable Iraqi believers.

"The Bible is my best friend," says 65-year-old Sabah (PICTURED). He was separated from this friend for ten years, as a prisoner in Iran. Now, thanks to a delivery from Open Doors partners, Sabah is able to share children's Bibles with the young people in his church in Iraq. "My vision is to raise children to read the Bible so they become fighters of faith."

Hallelujah!

BIBLE



“As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more.”

PSALM 71:14

Open Doors works through local churches in Syria to provide Centres of Hope – places to help individuals and families with training, aid and income generation projects.

“The money you are donating is truly saving families from underneath the ashes. You are giving a dose of hope and optimism to broken and exhausted people,” says Joseph (PICTURED) from Irbin, who received support to set up a new business.



15 SYRIA

100

78



POPULATION

19.6 million / 638,000 Christians

LEADER

President Bashar al-Assad

PERSECUTION SCORE (-3)

Christians in Syria still grapple with daily persecution, despite the public threat from so-called Islamic State having largely subsided.

In areas where Islamic extremist groups are active, any public expression of faith is dangerous: church leaders are frequently abducted and church buildings have often been completely destroyed. Every Christian in Syria lives with the knowledge that Islamic extremists have not necessarily left Syria – they’ve just retreated into the shadows.

Open Doors partners strengthen the church in Syria through Bible distribution, discipleship and leadership training, trauma counselling and Centres of Hope, which support Syrian Christians and their communities.

PLEASE PRAY

- That God will bring peace to the country and soften the hearts of those in power
- That God will protect Christians in Syria, particularly church leaders and converts from Islam
- That God would increase the ministry of Centres of Hope, to be beacons of God’s peace.

16 MALDIVES

100

77



POPULATION

466,000 / A few hundred Christians

LEADER

President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih

PERSECUTION SCORE (no change)

Government officials in Maldives proudly emphasise that the country is 100 per cent Muslim.

Conversion to another religion will be reported to Muslim leaders or authorities; non-Muslims can also lose their citizenship. Being known as a Christian is so dangerous that there is no ability to meet for fellowship. This lack of Christian support stifles believers’ spiritual growth.

Believers in the Maldives who are migrant workers are also watched by the authorities, making it difficult for even foreign Christian workers to meet together.

Open Doors raises prayer support for believers in the Maldives.

PLEASE PRAY

- For God to sustain believers in Maldives in isolation and secrecy
- That President Solih and his government would soften their stance towards Christians and other religious minorities
- For God to guide and protect foreign Christian workers.

17 CHINA

100

76



POPULATION

1.4 billion / 96.7 million Christians

LEADER

President Xi Jinping

0

PERSECUTION SCORE (+2)

Church under Surveillance.

Church attendance is rigorously monitored, and many churches are being closed down - whether they are independent or belong to the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (the officially state-sanctioned Protestant church in China). It remains illegal for under-18s to attend church. Christian leaders are generally the main target of government surveillance, and a very small number have been abducted. Converts from Islam or Tibetan Buddhism can be threatened or abused by their family and community.

Open Doors supports believers in China with discipleship and persecution survival training, and by providing Christian literature to believers who've converted from Islam or Buddhism.

PLEASE PRAY

- Faith of believers will flourish in China and more people will discover God's love
- Christians will be equipped with vital Christian literature, training and through fellowship
- For the authorities to allow the church to gather and worship without restrictions.

18 QATAR

100

74



POPULATION

2.8 million / 372,000 Christians

LEADER

Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani

0

PERSECUTION SCORE (+7)

Qatari converts to Christianity face extreme pressure from their Muslim family and communities if their faith is discovered. Qatar doesn't officially recognise conversion from Islam.

Most of Qatar's Christians are migrant workers, who are freer to worship - though they mustn't share the gospel with Qataris. In the past year, many of the expatriate community's churches that closed during Covid restrictions were forced to stay closed by the government. It's the main cause of Qatar's significant rise in the World Watch List rankings.

Open Doors supports the church on the Arabian Peninsula by organising prayer, distributing Scripture resources, and training believers and pastors.

PLEASE PRAY

- That Qatari converts from Islam will know they are not alone, and be protected from persecution
- For migrant Christians to have opportunities to gather and share the gospel despite extreme restrictions
- For authorities in Qatar to know the truth of Jesus' love, particularly as Qatar gets global attention as the host of the FIFA 2022 World Cup.



The decision to award the FIFA World Cup 2022 to Qatar remains highly controversial and has focused attention on the state's attitude to human rights and their treatment of migrant workers.

19 VIETNAM



POPULATION

99 million / 9.2 million Christians

LEADER

President Nguyen Xuan Phuc

PERSECUTION SCORE (-1)

Non-traditional Protestants and converts from indigenous religions face the most persecution for their faith in this Buddhist-majority country, especially in remote areas.

Most belong to the country's ethnic communities, like the Hmong, and face social exclusion, discrimination and attacks. Their homes are sometimes destroyed, and they are then forced to leave their villages. Traditional Christian communities (such as Roman Catholic churches) enjoy a certain amount of freedom - unless they become politically active, which can lead to imprisonment.

Open Doors partners support the Vietnamese church through advocacy, relief and practical aid, biblical training and discipleship programmes.

PLEASE PRAY

- For wisdom and strength for Open Doors partners supporting persecuted believers
- For Christians from ethnic minority groups who face intense persecution to know the presence and love of God
- For local and national government in Vietnam to protect the rights of all citizens, including religious minorities.

20 EGYPT



POPULATION

104.7 million / 16.3 million Christians

LEADER

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi

PERSECUTION SCORE (-4)

The persecution of Christians in Egypt typically occurs in the community. Incidents range from women being harassed while walking down the street to whole communities of believers being forcibly displaced.

While the government speaks positively about Christians, the lack of serious law enforcement makes believers further vulnerable to attacks.

Churches face difficulties when trying to construct new buildings, be it from state restrictions or communal hostility, whilst believers from a Muslim background face enormous pressure from their families to return to Islam.

Open Doors works through local partners in Egypt to support the church with literacy training, education support, advocacy, medical care, and youth, family and women's ministries.

PLEASE PRAY

- For the protection of believers, churches and Christian institutions
- That believers from Muslim backgrounds will be strengthened and encouraged to stand firm
- That God will change the hearts of influential national and local leaders.

CROSS

In a church in Egypt, Boutros pauses from sweeping the floor to raise his wrist and show his tattoo.

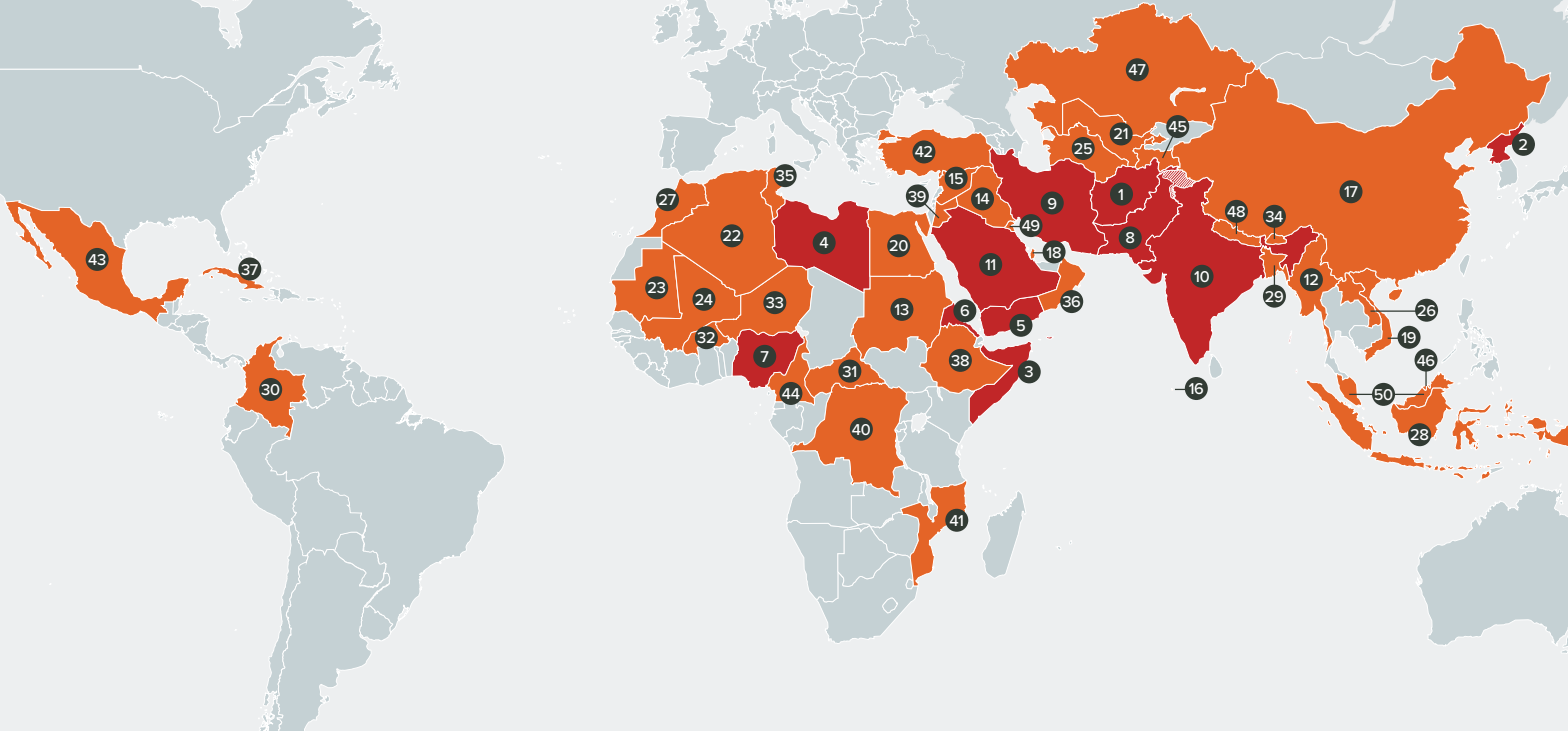
"Jesus is King!" he says. "Because I am a Christian, I am a child of God: the son of a King."

Many Egyptian Christians, young and old, have a little cross tattooed on their wrist or hand. This is faith, not fashion. "This cross is a thank you mark to God," says Boutros. "But the most important

thing is not the cross on my wrist, it is the cross in my heart: The cross is in my heart and Christ is in my heart."

It's also a mark of courage and defiance. Christians bearing these marks have been singled out and martyred. But Boutros is undaunted. "If I deny my religion, that means I am denying Christ. What can you find outside the Christian faith that you might even like? There's nothing outside Christ!"

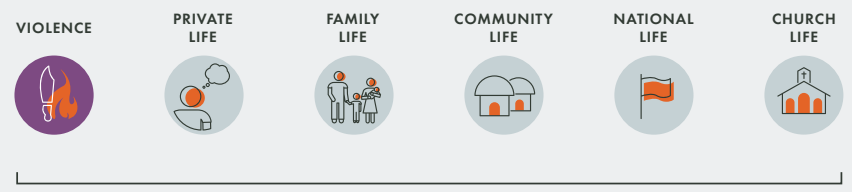
WORLD WATCH LIST 2022



Rank	Country	Score
1	Afghanistan	98
2	North Korea	96
3	Somalia	91
4	Libya	91
5	Yemen	88
6	Eritrea	88
7	Nigeria	87
8	Pakistan	87
9	Iran	85
10	India	82
11	Saudi Arabia	81
12	Myanmar	79
13	Sudan	79
14	Iraq	78
15	Syria	78
16	Maldives	77
17	China	76
18	Qatar	74
19	Vietnam	71
20	Egypt	71
21	Uzbekistan	71
22	Algeria	71
23	Mauritania	70
24	Mali	70
25	Turkmenistan	69
26	Laos	69
27	Morocco	69
28	Indonesia	68
29	Bangladesh	68
30	Colombia	68
31	Central African Rep.	68
32	Burkina Faso	68
33	Niger	68
34	Bhutan	67
35	Tunisia	66
36	Oman	66
37	Cuba	66
38	Ethiopia	66
39	Jordan	66
40	Congo DR	66
41	Mozambique	65
42	Turkey	65
43	Mexico	65
44	Cameroon	65
45	Tajikistan	65
46	Brunei	64
47	Kazakhstan	64
48	Nepal	64
49	Kuwait	64
50	Malaysia	63

ABOUT THE LIST

The World Watch List is compiled by Open Doors analysts using real-world data from experts on the ground in 150 countries. Persecution in each country is recorded using a points system which tracks violence and pressure. This measures the number and severity of violent incidents against Christians and the degree of pressure exerted against the practice of their faith in 5 spheres of life.



Maximum score for each is 16.7, maximum total of 100 when combined. Each country's ranking is determined by its total score out of 100, giving an indication of severity of persecution.

PERSECUTION LEVELS

- HIGH** (Yellow circle): 41-60 points
- VERY HIGH** (Orange circle): 61-80 points
- EXTREME** (Red circle): 81-100 points

For the second year in a row, every country on the list is ranked as having very high or extreme levels of persecution, showing the continued intensity of persecution against Christians.



A PRAYER FOR WOMEN

Lord Jesus,

You are the God who created women in Your image and sees their true value. We praise You for the brave faith of persecuted Christian women around the world.

Draw near to women who are threatened, locked away or abused for their choice to follow You.

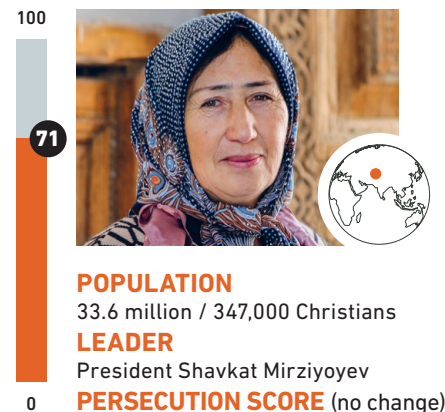
Make a way for girls to receive the education and training they need to thrive.

Bless the widows and the refugees and provide for all their needs.

Open the eyes of our persecuted sisters to see how precious they are in Your sight. May they hear You calling each of them by name; and may their courage and testimony draw many others to You.

Amen.

21 UZBEKISTAN



Uzbekistan is largely Muslim, so any Christian who converts from Islam faces increased pressure from their family and community. They may be beaten or expelled from their communities.

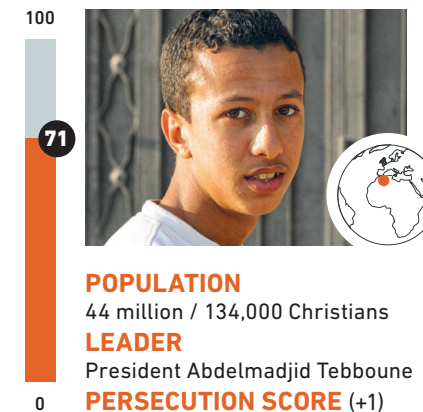
Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to house arrest, which remains widely socially accepted. Christians and churches may be monitored by the government and church leaders are commonly targeted in order to spread fear. Typically, they will be fined, detained, denied exit visas to leave the country, or put under house arrest.

Open Doors strengthens persecuted Christians in Central Asia by providing Bibles and Christian literature, training, socio-economic development projects, practical aid, and women, children and youth ministries.

PLEASE PRAY

- For Christian converts to be protected and know the peace of God
- For the government of Uzbekistan to allow more religious freedom, and to receive the love of God and turn to Him
- For God's provision for Christians who lose their jobs or are expelled from their communities.

22 ALGERIA



Algeria's tiny population of Christians are facing increasing obstacles to religious freedom.

Laws ban anything that would 'shake the faith of a Muslim' or be used as 'a means of seduction intending to convert a Muslim to another religion'. Consequently, Christians are acutely vulnerable to prosecution under blasphemy and proselytising charges.

Meanwhile, the authorities continue to systematically close Protestant churches. Sixteen have been closed in recent years. Most Christians are converts from Islam and face strong opposition from their family and community.

Open Doors works with local partners and churches in North Africa to provide leadership training, discipleship, livelihood support, pastoral care and prayer support.

PLEASE PRAY

- That Christians who've converted from Islam will be protected from harassment, violence and rejection
- For churches that have been closed to reopen, and for courage for believers
- For laws restricting religious freedom to be repealed.

23 MAURITANIA

100

70



POPULATION

4.9 million / 10,900 Christians

LEADER

President Mohamed Ould Ghazouani

0

PERSECUTION SCORE (-1)

It's illegal in Mauritania to convert from Islam to another faith.

Leaving Islam means bringing shame upon the family; any deviation from Islamic belief is strongly opposed nationally, in communities and through family pressure. The restrictive environment makes it impossible for Christians (especially converts from Islam) to openly meet and worship together.

Any expression of faith by non-Mauritanian Christians (such as migrants or aid workers) also carries the risk of being seen as evangelising to Muslims and can lead to prosecution.

Open Doors works with local partners in North Africa to provide leadership training, discipleship, livelihood support, pastoral care and prayer support.

PLEASE PRAY

- For courage for secret believers as they seek to worship God
- For a new openness towards religious freedom among government officials
- That God would provide creative ways for believers to find and support each other in their difficult walk of faith.

24 MALI

100

70



POPULATION

20.9 million / 476,000 Christians

LEADER

(Transitional) President Assimi Goita

0

PERSECUTION SCORE (+3)

Violent extremist attacks continue unabated across Mali.

Ten years ago in northern Mali, Christians were forced to flee when Islamic extremist groups took control of the region. Though some Christians have trickled back in with police protection, the threat of attack still hangs over them, making evangelistic activities especially risky. Christian missionaries live in constant fear of abduction by extremists. Anyone who converts from Islam risks violence and pressure from their relatives if their faith is discovered.

Open Doors works through local partners to provide persecution survival training, Bibles, literacy training, leadership training and socio-economic aid to persecuted believers.

PLEASE PRAY

- For stability in Mali, that God's peace will reign over the country
- For believers who have been internally displaced by violence, that God will comfort and provide for them
- For wisdom, insight and protection for Open Doors local partners.

“But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed.”

2 TIMOTHY 4:17

Across West Africa extremists have increased attacks on churches. Fulani militants burned down the church of Pastor Stifanus Amoga (PICTURED) in Landi Jessi, north-east Nigeria. As in so many Christian communities, Open Doors is helping people to rebuild.



25 TURKMENISTAN

100

69



POPULATION

6.1 million / 67,300 Christians

LEADER

President Kurbanguly
Berdymukhamedov

PERSECUTION SCORE (-1)

In Turkmenistan, persecution against Christians comes from across society. The government heavily restricts religious freedom, and churches are monitored.

Church leaders are particularly vulnerable as targets for persecution – whether through unwarranted fines, physical attacks, or arrest and imprisonment on false charges. In addition to official pressure, Christians who have converted from Islam are pressured by their families and communities, including harassment and interrogation, beatings, disinheritance and house arrest.

Open Doors strengthens persecuted Christians in Central Asia by providing Bibles and Christian literature, training, socio-economic development projects, practical aid, and women, children and youth ministries.

PLEASE PRAY

- For church leaders who are imprisoned or arrested because of their faith to stand strong
- Ask God to soften the hearts of those in authority, towards Christians and other minorities
- That Christians will have freedom to worship and to share the gospel.

26 LAOS

100

69



POPULATION

7.3 million / 203,000 Christians

LEADER

President Thongloun Sisoulith

PERSECUTION SCORE (-2)

Christian freedom in Laos is severely curtailed by the intense monitoring of the Communist authorities.

House churches that do not have administrative approval are considered 'illegal gatherings' and must operate underground. Most registered churches do not have permanent church structures and must conduct worship services in homes.

The brunt of persecution is reserved for converts to Christianity, who are deemed guilty of betraying the Buddhist-animist traditions of their community. They frequently face pressure and violence from their families and local authorities.

Open Doors local partners strengthen persecuted believers in Laos by providing Christian materials, leadership and discipleship training, socio-economic development programmes, advocacy support and emergency relief.

PLEASE PRAY

- That converts will have strength to stand firm in their faith
- That Christians will find increasing favour with local religious leaders and government officials
- For wisdom and protection for Open Doors partners in Laos.



“ VOICES OF THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

When she was 14, Soy* from Laos was jailed for refusing to deny Jesus. The police pressured her to deny her faith but she refused – and they set her free.

“The moment they put us in the van, I felt so scared. I did not want to go to prison. I was afraid they would not release me from there.

“On the morning of our sixth day in prison, the police officers brought us out in pairs to pressure us to sign the documents to deny our faith. They said, ‘Christianity is not a good religion so stop practising it. If you sign this document and agree to renounce your faith, we will let you go home today.’

“One hour later they took the documents away and handed us our release papers.

“Because of God’s love, I received financial support to buy food and school supplies. Without you, I would not be able to continue my studies.”

**name changed for security reasons*

A PRAYER FOR CHILDREN

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the inspirational faith of children around the world who bravely follow You despite suffering.

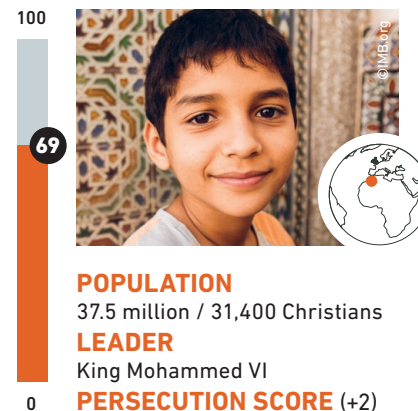
Protect these little ones from those who want to harm them.

Surround them with good friends and role models, equip them with the resources to pursue their dreams and callings, and strengthen them in the face of challenge and difficulty. May they grow and become 'strong in spirit' (Luke 1:80).

And use them in special and significant ways to minister Your love to people, both in the church and beyond.

Amen.

27 MOROCCO



It is illegal in Morocco to 'shake the faith of a Muslim'.

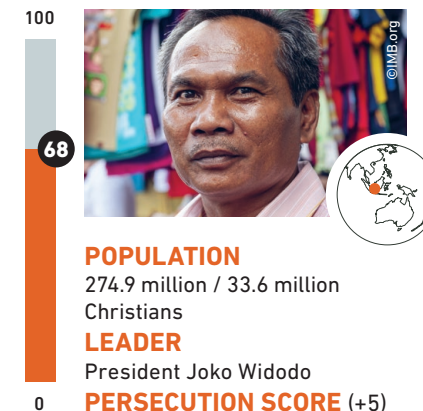
This law puts many Christians, both Moroccan and foreign, who talk to others about their faith at risk of arrest and criminal prosecution. Christian rights advocates have also been targeted by the Moroccan government for their activities and threatened with violent attacks by Islamic extremists. While the law only punishes proselytising, Moroccan converts to Christianity can be pressured in other ways, such as losing inheritance rights and custody of their children.

Open Doors works with local partners in North Africa to provide leadership training, discipleship, livelihood support, pastoral care and prayer support.

PLEASE PRAY

- For isolated believers in Morocco who must sustain their faith alone or risk house arrest, physical attacks, arrest and imprisonment
- For tolerance of all faiths in Moroccan society, with freedom for Christians to gather
- For God's provision for believers forced to leave the country.

28 INDONESIA



The persecution of Christians in Indonesia has worsened considerably, making it one of the biggest risers on the World Watch List, jumping 19 places.

There were three attacks by Islamic extremists on Christians within six months between 2020 and 2021, killing eight believers. Churches that engage in evangelism are especially at risk.

Indonesian society has taken on a more conservative Islamic character, putting added pressure on Christians. Many converts from Islam experience pressure from their families to return to Islam.

Open Doors works through local church partners to support persecuted Christians in Indonesia by providing Bibles and Christian books, socio-economic support, discipleship training and relief aid.

PLEASE PRAY

- For God's comfort and healing for all those affected by recent attacks
- That Christians will be given wisdom and boldness as they follow Jesus in a Muslim-majority society
- That the influence of extremist Islamic groups will be snuffed out.

29 BANGLADESH

100

68



POPULATION

171.5 million / 1.1 million Christians

LEADER

President Abdul Hamid

PERSECUTION SCORE (+1)

Christians who have converted from a Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or tribal background suffer the most severe restrictions, discrimination and attacks.

They often gather in small house churches or meet secretly in groups due to fear of attack. Tribal Christians, like those from the Santal people group, are vulnerable to persecution both because of their ethnicity and because of their religion, and are often the victims of land-grabbing or targeted violence. Other churches are frequently threatened, watched and, at times, violently attacked.

Open Doors works through local church partners to strengthen persecuted believers in Bangladesh through biblical training, Bible distribution, literacy and socio-economic development projects, and emergency relief aid.

PLEASE PRAY

- For wisdom, energy and creativity for Open Doors local partners as they support persecuted believers
- That Bangladeshi believers will find ways to meet to worship together
- For church attacks to cease and for churches to be places to safely worship God.

30 COLOMBIA

100

68



POPULATION

50.6 million / 48 million Christians

LEADER

President Iván Duque Márquez

PERSECUTION SCORE (+1)

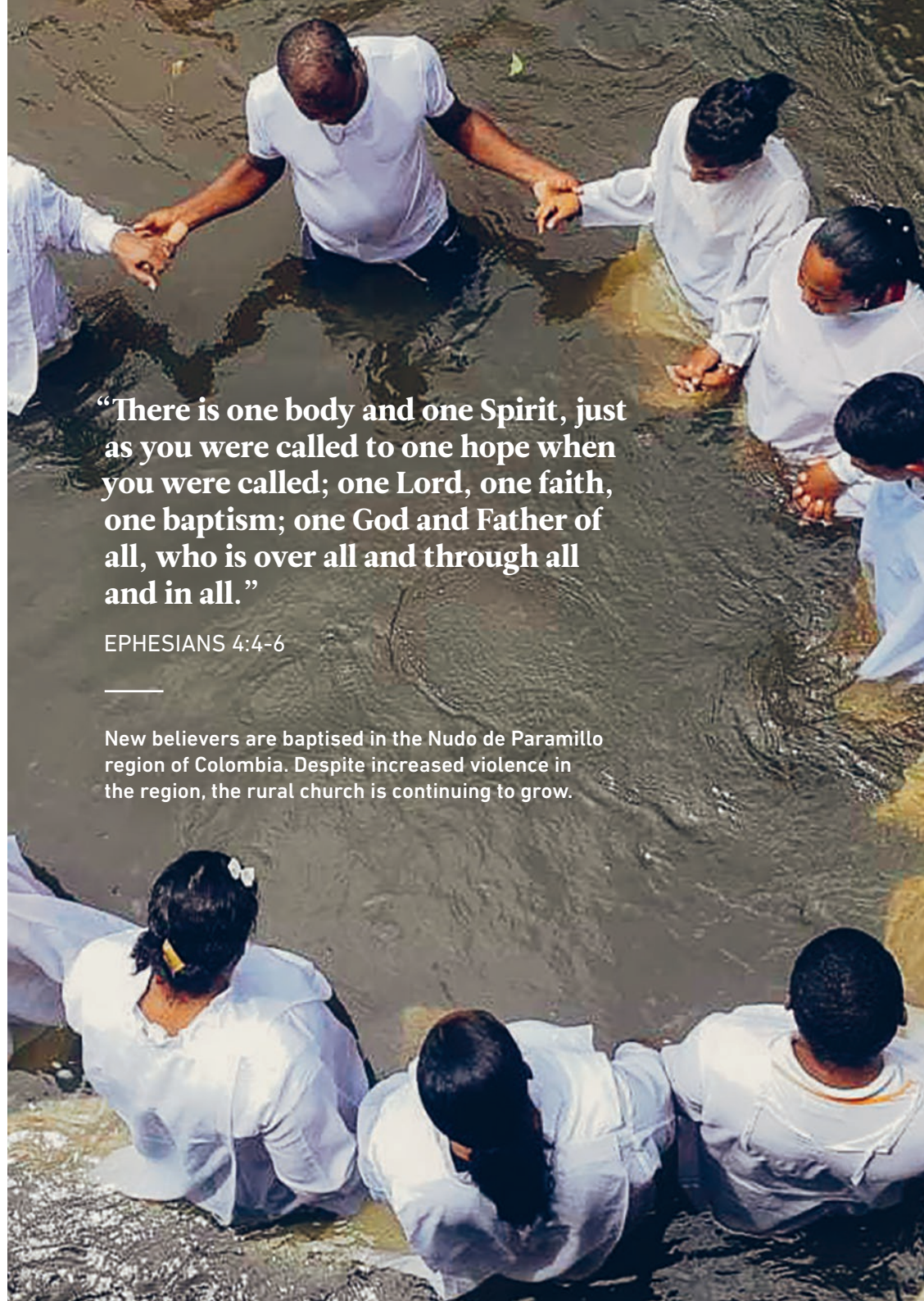
Though Colombia is mostly Christian, believers still face persecution from criminal gangs and indigenous groups.

Guerrilla groups threaten, harass, extort and murder church leaders, who are targeted because they denounce corruption, defend human rights and oppose cartels. Their children may also be targeted, to discourage church leaders from speaking out against organised crime and corruption. Christians who convert from the beliefs of their indigenous tribe also face prison, harassment and abuse from their families and communities.

Open Doors strengthens the persecuted church in Colombia through Bible distribution, training, trauma care, community development projects, emergency relief aid, and education and safe houses for children.

PLEASE PRAY

- For protection for pastors and communities who are targeted by organised criminal groups
- For strength so that indigenous Colombian Christians can remain steadfast in the gospel
- That God will equip and encourage local Open Doors partners.



“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

EPHESIANS 4:4-6

New believers are baptised in the Nudo de Paramillo region of Colombia. Despite increased violence in the region, the rural church is continuing to grow.

A PRAYER FOR PERSECUTORS

Lord Jesus,

There are many people who persecute your church.

Sometimes they are militants who want to see the church destroyed.

Often they are the very people meant to offer protection: governments, communities, even families.

We ask You to thwart all evil plans and soften hardened hearts.

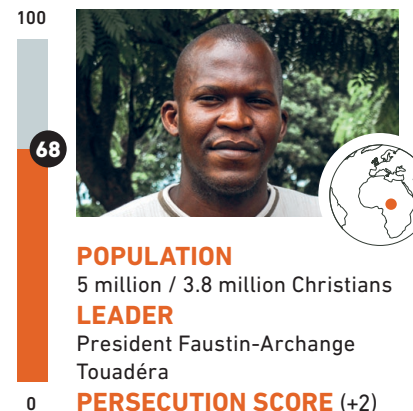
Especially work in the lives of influential figures, to change the way others view and treat Christians.

You died for those who target Your people. May the reality of this dawn on them – through dreams, visions and signs, or the powerful witness of Your people.

May those who seek to destroy Your church, become Your disciples; and may those who live in darkness, see Your light.

Amen.

31 CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



Since 2013, the Central African Republic (CAR) has been embroiled in conflict, and most of the country is occupied by armed militia groups that are responsible for a wide range of human rights abuses.

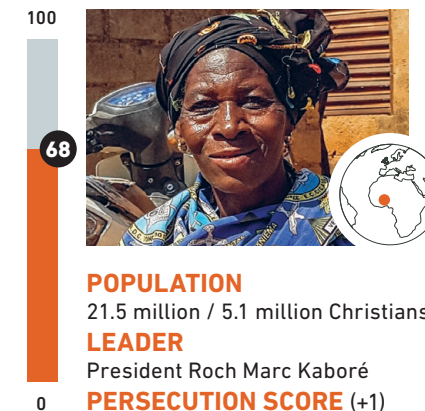
Christian leaders who publicly have denounced the violence have been threatened, and their churches ransacked and torched. Women and girls can be put under house arrest, or forcibly married to a much older Muslim. The local community will often ostracise Christian converts or try to force them to renounce Christianity through violence.

Open Doors works through local partners to support believers in CAR with persecution survival training, economic empowerment projects and trauma care.

PLEASE PRAY

- That God will bring lasting peace and stability to CAR
- For protection for Christians as they live out their witness to Christ, especially pastors and their families
- That God will encourage and protect Open Doors partners who are working to equip the church - while facing many of the same risks.

32 BURKINA FASO



Burkina Faso is located in a region where Islamist groups have growing influence.

Jihadist violence has been rapidly increasing in recent years, and extremists have exploited the government's weakness during the Covid-19 crisis to gain control of the country's infrastructure. There are over 1 million internally displaced people in Burkina Faso, many of whom are Christians. Believers who've converted from Islam face the most persecution; family and community members often reject them and try to force them to renounce their Christian faith.

Open Doors works through local partners to strengthen Christians in Burkina Faso by providing persecution survival training, relief aid, and spiritual and trauma care.

PLEASE PRAY

- For wisdom for the government as it seeks to bring an end to Burkina Faso's insecurity
- That the Lord will be at work in the lives of traumatised believers to bring healing and comfort
- For protection over Open Doors partners as they visit volatile regions.

33 NIGER

100



68

POPULATION

25 million / 64,700 Christians

LEADER

President Mohamed Bazoum

0

PERSECUTION SCORE (+6)

Once a country known for cross-religious harmony, Niger has re-entered the top 50 of the World Watch List, reflecting how pressure is increasing on Christians in this Muslim-majority nation.

Most of the population regard Islam as part of their ethnicity: if you are a Nigerien, you are a Muslim. Believers from Muslim backgrounds are most vulnerable to persecution, and often come under intense pressure from their families and communities to renounce their faith. Violent attacks are also increasing.

Open Doors partners in Niger strengthen persecuted Christians through economic empowerment, various forms of training and pastoral care for new believers.

PLEASE PRAY

- For violence against believers to stop and the influence of militant Islamist groups to diminish rapidly
- For healing for believers affected by trauma
- That Open Doors partners' training programmes will equip believers to withstand persecution and serve Jesus in the places where they live.

34 BHUTAN

100



67

POPULATION

844,000 / 30,000 Christians

LEADER

King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

0

PERSECUTION SCORE (+3)

All Christians who worship together here are technically worshipping illegally. Bhutan's government doesn't officially recognise any churches, and all citizens are expected to be Buddhists.

Local authorities often refuse to issue Christians a 'non-objection certificate', which is needed for loan applications, registering property, applying for jobs and renewing ID cards. Conversion is considered to bring shame on the family, and new believers face intense pressure to return to their previous religion – and, if they don't, are likely to be disowned.

Open Doors works through local partners to strengthen persecuted Christians in Bhutan through relief aid, prayer support and other practical emergency help.

PLEASE PRAY

- That believers who've been rejected by their families would find new communities
- That God would use the support of Open Doors partners to strengthen Christians facing persecution
- For religious freedom in Bhutan, and for the government to officially recognise Christian churches.

Bhutan has a reputation as a haven of beauty and peace. For Christians however, the reality can be very different.



“ VOICES OF THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Pastor Salah is a church leader from North Africa. In his country, more than 15 churches have been closed in the past year due to a combination of pandemic and government opposition; 13 remain closed.

“We rarely meet and the way we have contact is via social networks,” says Pastor Salah.

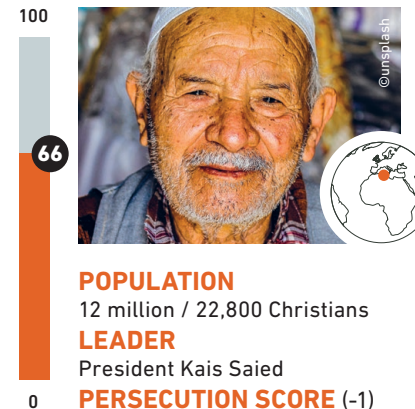
“The positive thing I see is the awareness among the believers of the importance of effective communion. They say they miss church gatherings. This motivates them to pray and fast more.

“Many people seek to know and hear more about the gospel. I would like to remind you of what our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ says to us in his Word: ‘I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.’”

Image is illustrative



35 TUNISIA



Tunisian believers experience high pressure in every area of life. This is particularly true for believers who've converted from Islam, because the country forbids religious conversion.

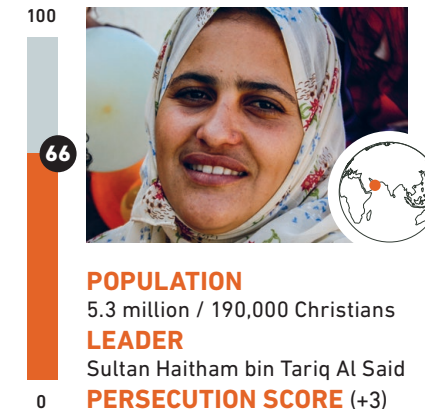
Tunisian Christians face hostility and abuse from their families and their surrounding community – including beatings and death threats. It can be dangerous to share their faith, so many of them are forced to worship Jesus secretly. Exposure would endanger them, and they are monitored by Tunisian security services.

Open Doors works with local partners and churches in North Africa to provide leadership training, discipleship, livelihood support, pastoral care and prayer support.

PLEASE PRAY

- For Christians in Tunisia who have converted from Islam to be protected, preserved and encouraged by God
- For women from Muslim backgrounds to be protected
- That God will speak to the hearts of those in authority, so they will seek the good of all.

36 OMAN



Like other countries in the Arabian Peninsula, the extent to which Christians in Oman are persecuted depends mostly on status and nationality.

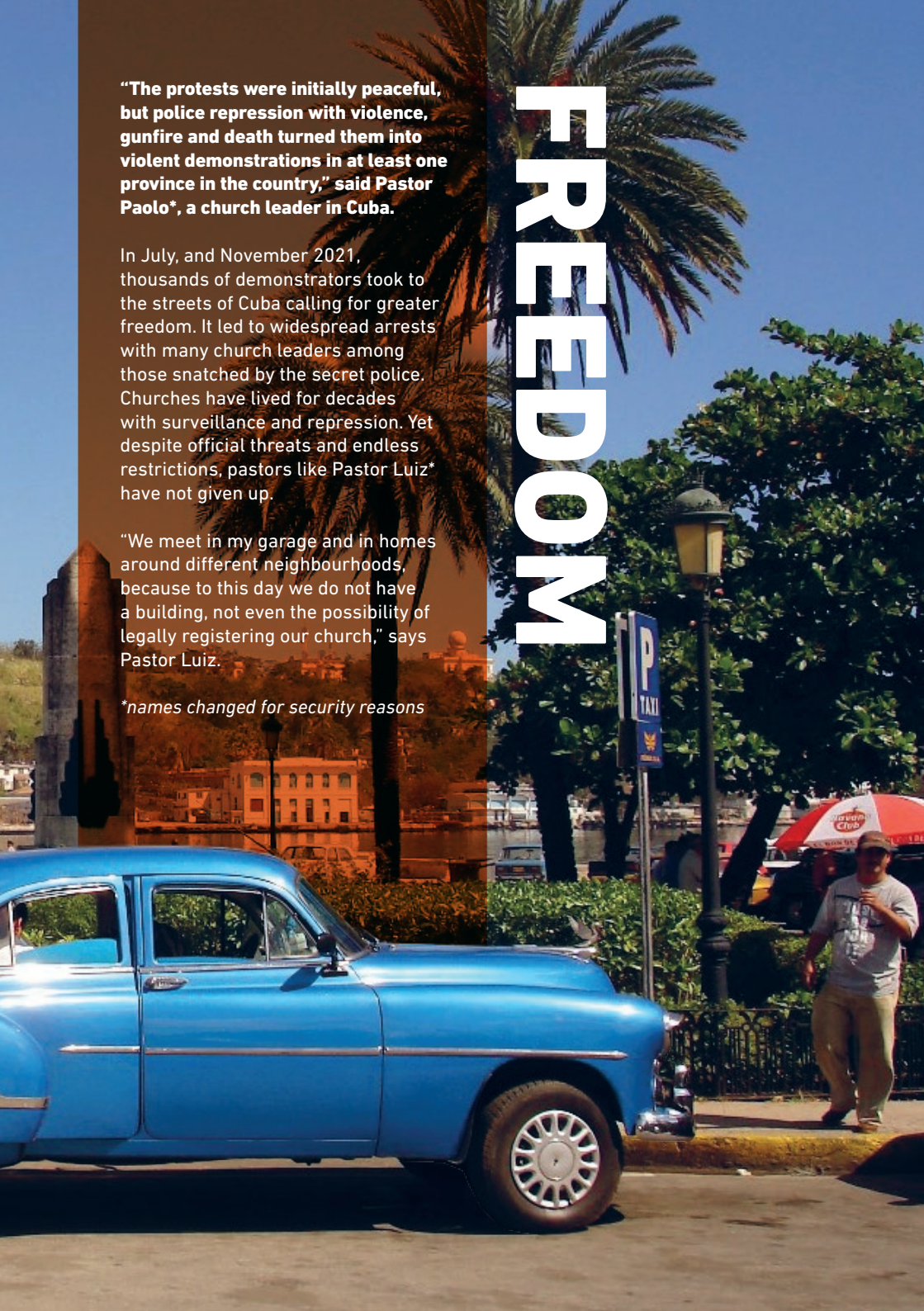
Converts from Islam encounter the greatest opposition, both from families and wider society. Believers could be thrown out of home, separated from their children, disinherited or left jobless.

Expatriate Christian communities are mostly tolerated, but they do experience restrictions and surveillance. Proselytising is illegal. Christians active in evangelism have been put under pressure to leave the country.

Open Doors supports the church on the Arabian Peninsula by organising prayer, distributing Scripture resources, and training believers and pastors.

PLEASE PRAY

- That all believers will have access to discipleship and fellowship
- For the safety of Christians and strength to withstand pressure and persecution
- That the Holy Spirit will soften the heart of the Sultan – who is also the country's Prime Minister - towards religious minorities.



“The protests were initially peaceful, but police repression with violence, gunfire and death turned them into violent demonstrations in at least one province in the country,” said Pastor Paolo*, a church leader in Cuba.

In July, and November 2021, thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of Cuba calling for greater freedom. It led to widespread arrests with many church leaders among those snatched by the secret police. Churches have lived for decades with surveillance and repression. Yet despite official threats and endless restrictions, pastors like Pastor Luiz* have not given up.

“We meet in my garage and in homes around different neighbourhoods, because to this day we do not have a building, not even the possibility of legally registering our church,” says Pastor Luiz.

**names changed for security reasons*

FREEDOM

37 CUBA

100



66



POPULATION

11.5 million / 7.1 million Christians

LEADER

President Miguel Díaz-Canel

PERSECUTION SCORE (+4)

Persecution in Cuba continues to worsen.

The Communist government reacts harshly against opposition. When church leaders or Christian activists criticise the regime, they face arrest, closure of their churches or businesses, prison sentences, and harassment by the government. New churches are often denied registration, as the authorities want to control and limit the church's influence. The government controls all media and restricts access from the outside world, so it is very hard for Christians to communicate widely in the country.

Open Doors partners strengthen the persecuted church in Cuba through Bible distribution, livelihood projects, biblical training, leadership development projects and socio-economic development.

PLEASE PRAY

- That God will bring about change in the political landscape, so that religious freedom will be honoured
- For resilience and wisdom for church leaders
- That God would continue making ways for local Open Doors partners to serve the persecuted church in Cuba.

38 ETHIOPIA

100



66



POPULATION

115.4 million / 69.2 million Christians

LEADER

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

PERSECUTION SCORE (+1)

In Ethiopia, converts to Christianity from Islam and those who join Protestant groups from the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) are equally susceptible to mistreatment from families and communities.

Political violence – especially in Tigray – has led to believers being killed and churches destroyed, and the country has been gravely affected by drought and plagues. These issues create uncertainty, making Christians a soft target.

Where Muslims or Ethiopian Orthodox Christians are the majority, local officials may oppose the growth of Protestant Christianity and refuse church permits.

Open Doors works through local partners to strengthen Christians in Ethiopia with leadership and persecution survival training, economic empowerment projects and skills training.

PLEASE PRAY

- For the government as they lead a country greatly affected by war, drought and plagues
- For Christians facing intense pressure to renounce their faith
- For greater unity between Protestant groups and the EOC.

39 JORDAN

100

66



POPULATION

10.3 million / 180,000 Christians

LEADER

King Abdullah II

PERSECUTION SCORE (+2)

Despite many being able to enjoy relatively high levels of religious freedom compared to other Middle Eastern countries, persecution remains a very real possibility for Christians in Jordan.

If a Christian from a Muslim background publicly declares their faith, this can lead to beatings, arrest or even death, while non-traditional churches can face harassment by public authorities, particularly those that actively evangelise.

The presence of Islamic extremists, including returning jihadists from Syria and Iraq, continues to pose a threat to the Christian community.

Open Doors works with local partners in Jordan to support Christians through training, relief aid and rehabilitation projects and raising prayer support.

PLEASE PRAY

- That Christians from Muslim backgrounds will be equipped, encouraged and empowered
- That more opportunities will open up for Christians to tell others about Jesus
- That the Lord will continue to raise up new leaders to serve the Jordanian church.

40 CONGO DR (DRC)

100

66



POPULATION

92.3 million / 87.8 million Christians

LEADER

President Felix Tshisekedi

PERSECUTION SCORE (+2)

Persecution in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) mostly takes the form of violent attacks.

Although a very high percentage of the population are Christians, the Islamic extremist group, Alliance of Democratic Forces, is responsible for the persecution of Christians in the east of the country, brutally attacking Christians and churches. Converts from Islam and indigenous religions face pressure to take part in non-Christian religious activities and ceremonies. Christian leaders who advocate against corruption risk harassment and government interference.

Open Doors local partners support Christians in DRC through persecution survival and discipleship training, economic empowerment projects and trauma care.

PLEASE PRAY

- That the government will seek real and lasting solutions to the security crisis
- That pastors in the east of the country will receive courage, wisdom and compassion as they minister
- That God will strengthen the church through training and trauma care programmes run by local partners.

A PRAYER FOR REFUGEES

Father God,

We pray for those who must flee their homes because of their faith.

Comfort those who have left everything behind.

Strengthen and equip them as they build new lives in unfamiliar countries and difficult conditions, whether for a short or long time.

Draw near to them, and show them the richness of Your mercy and love.

Remind them that Your earthly family had to flee persecution, and You know what they suffer.

Empower us to show love to these refugees, in whatever way we can.

Amen.

Christians worshipping at an outdoor refugee church in Mozambique, where Open Doors partners are supporting thousands of Christians forced out of their villages by Islamic extremists.



41 MOZAMBIQUE

100

65



POPULATION

33.2 million / 18 million Christians

LEADER

President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi

PERSECUTION SCORE (+2)

0

Islamic extremism is on the increase in Mozambique – particularly in the north of the country where so-called Islamic State-affiliated extremists use violence to spread their influence and control.

Attacks by Islamic militants have killed many believers. Churches have been burned and tens of thousands of people displaced. Christians who manage to escape the violence often lose their livelihoods and possessions. Abduction and forced marriage are also common, and a woman who's converted from Islam may be forcibly married to a Muslim.

Open Doors partners support persecuted Christians in Mozambique through emergency aid, persecution survival training and economic empowerment projects.

PLEASE PRAY

- For wisdom for leaders of churches that have taken in thousands of families displaced by the violence
- For economic development in northern Mozambique, as poverty has left young people vulnerable to recruitment by Islamic extremists
- For protection for Open Doors partners as they visit volatile regions.

42 TURKEY

100

65



POPULATION

84.5 million / 170,000 Christians

LEADER

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

PERSECUTION SCORE (-4)

0

Christians in Turkey experience incredible pressure from very strong – and increasing – religious nationalism in Turkey. The government continues to target even foreign Christians in its borders, who can face deportation.

Although violence has decreased slightly, Christians continue to encounter significant opposition for their faith. Converts from Islam face extreme pressure from their families and communities, who often demand they return to Islam. Women and girls who convert are particularly considered to have brought shame on their family.

Open Doors raises worldwide prayer support for persecuted believers in Turkey.

PLEASE PRAY

- For converts from Islam to have an increasing awareness of God's love and grace
- For the government to recognise that Turkish Christians are a valuable part of the fabric of their country
- That Christians would have the opportunity to share Jesus' love with their friends, neighbours and communities.

43 MEXICO

100

65



POPULATION

135.4 million / 129.6 million Christians

LEADER

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador

0

PERSECUTION SCORE (+1)

In Mexico, criminal groups struggle for territorial control.

Christians are perceived (and rightly so) to be against criminal operations and violence, and are therefore at constant risk of being targeted for elimination.

In rural indigenous communities, anyone who turns away from traditional religious beliefs can face rejection and punishment in the form of fines, imprisonment and forced displacement. Non-discrimination laws mean that any links between Christian faith and politics are placed under very strict legal scrutiny.

Open Doors strengthens persecuted believers in Mexico with biblical training, legal support, trauma care and socio-economic aid.

PLEASE PRAY

- For Christians who face difficult choices when confronted with organised violence
- That ostracised believers who come to faith in Christ in indigenous communities will find fellowship with others
- For open minds in Mexico when Christian voices speak out about social issues.

44 CAMEROON

100

65



POPULATION

26.6 million / 16.4 million Christians

LEADER

President Paul Biya

0

PERSECUTION SCORE (+1)

In the north of Cameroon, the extremist group Boko Haram is a violent presence - abducting, attacking or killing Christians, as well as disrupting church activities.

Christians who've converted from Islam are at great risk if they tell anyone about their new faith, or if Bibles are discovered in their possession. Women who convert from Islam or animism are often forced into marriage with non-Christians, and there are cases of children of Christians in the north being coerced by Muslim relatives to attend Islamic classes.

Open Doors works through local partners to strengthen persecuted Christians in Cameroon by providing emergency relief aid, trauma care, economic empowerment projects, and practical and spiritual care for new believers.

PLEASE PRAY

- That Cameroon's government will take concrete measures to protect vulnerable communities
- That church leaders in the north will receive God's wisdom and strength
- For discernment for local Open Doors partners as they serve the persecuted church.

DEFIANCE

"Holy Ghost, do it again, do it again in my life. Open my eyes to see Jesus, do it again in my life."

Fadi Zara (PICTURED) is a Christian from the far north region of Cameroon. Violent attacks by Islamic extremists have displaced her from her home not just once, but several times. Her 14-year-old sister was among those taken by Boko Haram in 2015, and her mother died from the shock just two weeks later.

And yet, despite these tragedies, she still turns to Jesus in worship and adoration.

Fadi is still far from home, living as a refugee in another town - but now she knows she is not alone. Open Doors partners have been able to give her much-needed emergency aid.

"All these things, I am surprised for getting these things in my life today... I am very, very happy. I need God to stay with me in every situation, to work His wonderful power in my life."





“If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

DANIEL 3:17-18

The statues of dictators – alive or dead – dominate the landscape in many countries on the World Watch List. Yet in the shadows of these false gods, the Kingdom of God is secretly and steadily advancing.

45 TAJIKISTAN

100

65



POPULATION

9.7 million / 65,300 Christians

LEADER

President Emomali Rahmon

PERSECUTION SCORE (-1)

Tajikistan’s totalitarian leadership treats any perceived ‘deviation’ from cultural norms with suspicion. The authorities put significant pressure on Christians by tightening religious laws and strictly enforcing the ones that already exist.

Tajikistan is 98 per cent Muslim, and converts from Islam are at risk from their families and communities. If a woman or girl’s conversion is discovered, she risks being locked up, beaten, rejected, harassed or forced to marry a Muslim. Christian men face beatings, abuse and losing their livelihoods.

Open Doors strengthens persecuted Christians in Central Asia by providing Bibles and Christian literature, training, socio-economic development projects, practical aid, and women, children and youth ministries.

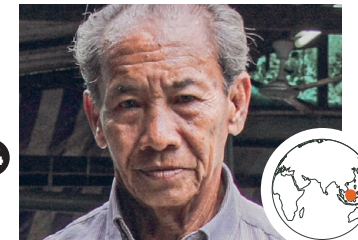
PLEASE PRAY

- That churches would be protected and have courage to keep meeting
- For God to provide ways for church leaders to be trained and equipped
- That God would break through the hardness of President Rahmon’s heart, so that he would see the truth of the gospel.

46 BRUNEI

100

64



POPULATION

450,000 / 42,600 Christians

LEADER

Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah

PERSECUTION SCORE (no change)

The recent implementation of Sharia (Islamic law) has increased insecurity and fear among Brunei’s small number of Christians.

Converts from a Muslim background face strong pressure from family, friends and even the authorities, as conversion is considered illegal.

Whilst traditional Christian communities can worship relatively freely, all church activities are monitored by the authorities and surrounding community, and church leaders are warned against doing outreach or becoming too public.

Open Doors raises prayer support for persecuted believers in Brunei.

PLEASE PRAY

- That converts will be given godly wisdom, discernment and boldness as they seek to express and share their faith
- For pastors to be strengthened and equipped to serve their congregations
- That the eyes of influential figures will be opened to the valuable contribution Christians make to Brunei.

47 KAZAKHSTAN



Christian freedom in Kazakhstan is severely restricted under legislation dating back to September 2011.

Surveillance, raids on meetings, fines and arrests are part of the fabric of Christian life, with the authorities using the threat of Islamic extremism to tighten its control on religious freedom. The past year has seen a number of believers face fines for selling Christian literature and objects.

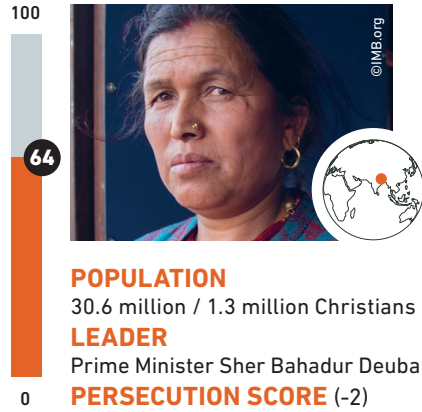
Christians from Muslim backgrounds also face opposition from family, friends and neighbours. They could face house arrest, beatings or expulsion from the community.

Open Doors strengthens persecuted Christians in Central Asia by providing Bibles and Christian literature, training, socio-economic development projects, practical aid, and women, children and youth ministries.

PLEASE PRAY

- That those fined for Christian activities will have all their needs met
- That the faith of our persecuted family will not be shaken but remain strong
- That the authorities will recognise the good intentions of Christians, and give them more freedom.

48 NEPAL



Most Christian persecution in Nepal comes from radical Hindu groups who want the country to return to Hinduism.

Though the country is no longer an official Hindu state, Christian converts from Hinduism experience significant pressure from their families and communities. If discovered, they might be expelled from their family home or even violently attacked. Christians who are members of indigenous groups might also be subjected to violent forms of persecution. Anti-conversion laws and the destruction and forced closures of churches contribute to limiting religious freedom.

Open Doors partners in Nepal support Christians with Bibles and discipleship materials, biblical training, socio-economic aid and advocacy.

PLEASE PRAY

- For believers who've been rejected by their Hindu families because they've chosen to follow Christ
- That God would touch the hearts of Nepalese leaders, that they would allow true religious freedom
- That God will bless the ministry of Open Doors partners in Nepal as they strengthen the church there.



“ VOICES OF THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

When Bhumika* and her husband Deepak* from Nepal became Christians, their neighbours prevented them from using the local pump to collect water. So Open Doors partners gave them their own water pump, right outside their house, as well as a few goats to help the family support themselves.

“We are not allowed to even touch the handle of the water pump,” says Bhumika. “Often I went secretly at night to fetch water.

“When my family was despised by our relatives and isolated from our village, my family came together and prayed, and as a result God filled us with His joy and gave us strength to face this kind of persecution. He also provided for our needs whenever we prayed. I always felt God near us in the storms we faced.

“I am so thankful to all supporters and prayer partners,” she says. “This was the answer to our unceasing prayers and of many others who prayed for us.”

*names changed for security reasons

49 KUWAIT

100



64



POPULATION

4.4 million / 520,000 Christians

LEADER

Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

0

PERSECUTION SCORE (+1)

In Kuwait, conversion from Islam to another faith is not officially recognised.

Converts to Christianity from Islam face hostility from their family and community, intimidation from Islamist groups, and even police monitoring. Consequently, it's almost impossible for converts to reveal their new faith.

Although expatriate Christians are relatively free to worship, finding a place to meet is often difficult. Christians must be very careful when sharing their faith, since proselytising is illegal and they could be expelled from the country.

Open Doors supports the body of Christ on the Arabian Peninsula by organising prayer, distributing Scripture resources, and training believers and pastors.

PLEASE PRAY

- For the protection of Christians in Kuwait
- That secret believers will have opportunities to safely meet with other Christians for fellowship
- For wisdom and boldness as Christians seek to tell others about Jesus.

50 MALAYSIA

100



63



POPULATION

33.3 million / 3 million Christians

LEADER

King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah

0

PERSECUTION SCORE (no change)

According to the country's constitution, every ethnic Malay is expected to be Muslim. Consequently, those who convert to Christianity experience severe pressure from their families and communities. By law, apostasy is punishable by death.

All non-Muslim religious groups are watched by the authorities, as are non-governmental organisations. Christians who actively share their faith face intimidation and harassment.

Political instability in recent years has resulted in a stronger emphasis on conservative Islam, which has intensified pressure on Christians.

Open Doors works with local church partners in Malaysia to provide discipleship training, Bibles and Christian books, and socio-economic aid.

PLEASE PRAY

- That all believers will have access to fellowship and to God's Word
- For greater religious freedom in Malaysia and more protection for those who choose to leave Islam
- That Open Doors local partners will be equipped and inspired as they serve Christians in Malaysia.

“There are no borders, no prison walls, no doors that are closed to us when we pray.”

- BROTHER ANDREW

In 1955, a man called Andrew took a train beyond the Iron Curtain into Communist Europe.


The church he found there was small, struggling and largely forgotten by those in the West. They had no Bibles and their every move was watched. He became known as Brother Andrew and spent decades supporting persecuted and oppressed Christians by smuggling Bibles, raising awareness and simply letting them know that they were not forgotten.

Open Doors, the organisation he founded, continues his work.

Every day, thanks to the prayers and support of Christians around the world, courageous Open Doors partners bring hope to millions of persecuted Christians in over 70 countries around the world.

It is dangerous work. There are many obstacles. But through faith and prayer, no door is closed to us.





**“For to me, to live
is Christ and to
die is gain.”**

PHILIPPIANS 1:21

THANK YOU FOR STANDING WITH YOUR PERSECUTED FAMILY

“A bishop some time ago said that we are the lungs that help the Christians in Syria to breathe. With all we did we gave hope. When a hungry person gets a food package with love and respect, it gives him hope. And giving hope is contagious. Someone who has hope, spreads hope.”

**- MOURAD*, OPEN DOORS PARTNER
IN SYRIA**

Your prayers, your gifts, your actions make a huge difference to persecuted Christians around the world.

For those who have to sacrifice so much, and those who must live their faith in secret, knowing that others are with them - that they haven't been forgotten - means so much.

**name changed for security reasons*

BELOW A volunteer packs food in an Open Doors-supported Centre of Hope in Syria.





Zabi from Afghanistan is

ALONE

but not on her own

Zabi* had to flee her home in Afghanistan to escape the Taliban. She's getting vital shelter, food and support from Open Doors partners in a neighbouring country.

There are thousands of other Christians like Zabi, facing extreme persecution for their faith.

Your gift and prayers today will show them they aren't on their own.

Every \$400 could provide food, medicine and shelter for a family of Christian refugees fleeing extreme persecution.

Every HK\$775 could provide discipleship training to 20 secret believers.

Your Gift: www.opendoors.org.hk

Thank You!

*name changed for security reasons

Illustrative image

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