



WWL 2016 Compilation 1 – Short version of all 50 country persecution dynamics



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

World Watch Research

January, 2016

research@od.org

www.theanalytical.org (password **freedom**)

WWL 2016: Short version of all 50 country persecution dynamics

Edition: 2016-02-01

Contents

North Korea – Rank 1	3
Iraq – Rank 2.....	3
Eritrea – Rank 3	5
Afghanistan – Rank 4.....	6
Syria – Rank 5	7
Pakistan – Rank 6.....	8
Somalia – Rank 7	9
Sudan – Rank 8	10
Iran – Rank 9.....	11
Libya – Rank 10.....	12
Yemen – Rank 11.....	13
Nigeria – Rank 12.....	14
Maldives – Rank 13.....	15
Saudi Arabia – Rank 14.....	16
Uzbekistan – Rank 15	17
Kenya – Rank 16	18
India – Rank 17	19
Ethiopia – Rank 18.....	20
Turkmenistan – Rank 19.....	21
Vietnam – Rank 20	22
Qatar – Rank 21.....	23
Egypt – Rank 22	24
Myanmar – Rank 23	25
Palestinian Territories – Rank 24.....	26
Brunei – Rank 25.....	27
Central African Republic (CAR) – Rank 26	28
Jordan – Rank 27	29

Djibouti – Rank 28 30

Laos – Rank 29 31

Malaysia – Rank 30 32

Tajikistan – Rank 31 33

Tunisia – Rank 32 34

China – Rank 33 35

Azerbaijan – Rank 34 36

Bangladesh – Rank 35 37

Tanzania – Rank 36 38

Algeria – Rank 37 39

Bhutan – Rank 38 40

Comoros – Rank 39 41

Mexico – Rank 40 42

Kuwait – Rank 41 43

Kazakhstan – Rank 42 44

Indonesia – Rank 43 45

Mali – Rank 44 46

Turkey – Rank 45 47

Colombia – Rank 46 48

United Arab Emirates (UAE) – Rank 47 49

Bahrain – Rank 48 50

Niger – Rank 49 51

Oman – Rank 50 52

North Korea – Rank 1

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

92 points / rank 1 (WWL 2015: 92 points / rank 1)

2. Persecution engines:

Communist and post-communist oppression and Dictatorial paranoia (blended with Communist and post-communist oppression).

3. Context:

North Korea heads the World Watch List for the fourteenth consecutive year now. Kim Jong Un has continued to consolidate his power, and no changes or even improvements have been seen in the reporting period. On the contrary: ideology again trumped everything as could be seen in the celebration of the ruling Korean Workers Party's 70th anniversary in October 2015. North Korea remains an opaque state and it is difficult to make sense of most of the news pouring out of the country. This is even truer when it comes to topics like Human Rights or the situation of the Christian minority specifically. Christianity is not only seen as "opium for the people" as is normal for all communist states, it is also seen as deeply Western and despicable. Christians try to hide their faith as far as possible to avoid arrest and being sent to a labor camp. Thus, being Christian has to be a well-protected secret, even within families, and most parents refrain from introducing their children to the Christian faith in order to make sure that nothing slips their tongue when they are asked.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All types of Christianity are affected by persecution in North Korea, though there is no community of expatriate or migrant Christians in the country.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

A small number of people gather in the four government-controlled church-buildings in Pyongyang. These are used by the regime to show its international visitors that it grants freedom of religion. Whether there are genuine believers among them or not, even they are not free to live out their Christian faith. All genuine believers are facing the highest pressure imaginable from state authorities, but also from non-Christian family, friends and neighbors. Social and state control are at very high levels and Christians need to carefully hide their faith. This is also the reason why the level of violence remains at a comparably low level. In most cases, Christians succeed in staying secret. If they are discovered, it is not only they who are in danger of being put into labor camps, but their families and Christian networks as well. In February 2015, North Korea detained a Korean-Canadian pastor who had been in the country doing relief work more than a hundred times before.

6. Future outlook:

As the leadership system stabilized in the transition period and all power lies with Kim Jong Un and/or entities related to him, the situation of Christians remains extremely vulnerable and precarious.

Iraq – Rank 2

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

90 points / rank 2 (WWL 2015: 86 points / rank 3)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism (main) and to a lesser extent *Tribal antagonism* (blended with *Islamic extremism*), *Organized corruption and crime* and *Denominational protectionism*.

3. Context:

There has been a long tradition of Christians living in Iraqi cities like Baghdad and Mosul. Christians have lived in Iraq for two millennia but are currently on the verge of extinction. Iraq has suffered from years of structural uncertainty, conflict and instability under a government incapable of enforcing the rule of law and providing a minimum of security. Iraq is divided in two parts, the semi-autonomous Kurdish region in the north and the large remaining Arab part. Kurds and Arabs have their own languages and culture. Most of Iraq's oil resources are found near Kirkuk and Mosul, the border areas between the Kurdish region and Arab Iraq, and these are amongst the most violent places of Iraq. Christians are caught here in the crossfire of two different battles: one for a Kurdish autonomous country and one for a religious cleansing of Iraq by Islamic terrorist groups who wish to make the country purely Islamic. On the other hand, amidst the current crisis, there are also sparks of hope as opportunities arise for churches to reach out to refugees.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Traditional Christian communities, Christian converts from Islam (MBBs) and non-traditional protestant churches.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

The scores for pressure in all *spheres of life* are similar and at a very high level. Especially MBBs face difficulties in all areas of life. The situation is particularly tense in IS held localities, where the religious rights of all types of Christianity are severely violated. Violence is scored very high, although it is slightly lower than last year as there were no reports of Christians being detained without trial during the current reporting period. Many Christians have become internally displaced, faced killings, abduction and physical harm, including sexual violence and forced marriages. Churches, monasteries and Christian-owned property were damaged, destroyed or confiscated – especially in Mosul and in the Nineveh Plain area.

6. Future outlook:

Large areas of the populated territory of Iraq remain under the control of Islamic radicals. This situation is not expected to change in the short run and is likely to lead to another wave of migrants – including Christians – leaving the country.

Eritrea – Rank 3

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

89 points / rank 3 (WWL 2015: 79 points / rank 9)

2. Persecution engines:

Dictatorial paranoia, Islamic extremism and Denominational protectionism are the persecution engines in the country.

3. Context:

Eritrea entered World Watch List top 50 in 2002, and in 2004 the country jumped into the top 20. The Eritrean regime is absolutely authoritarian and intolerant towards any form of association, dissent, and free expression. The government's attempt to control all religious institutions culminated in the deposing of the Eritrean Orthodox Church Patriarch who has been under house arrest since 2007. Eritrea has also consistently supported the rise and spread of radical Islam in the Horn of Africa. In the international context, it is also important to take note of the fact that Eritrea is one of the two African Countries designated as a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC) by the US State Department because of severe violations of freedom of religion. The situation in Eritrea is also contributing to the global refugee crisis. One refugee stated that "the country is almost without its youth - some of them are in the SAWA Defence Training Center and others are escaping the regime through every possible outlet. And the country has become uninhabitable." That is why Robert P. George and Thomas J. Reese from USCIRF ask: "Should Eritrea's track record on human rights crimes and religious freedom warrant a referral to the International Criminal Court at The Hague?"

4. Types of Christianity affected:

In Eritrea, all types of Christianity (expatriate, historical, non-traditional and converts) face severe persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution in Eritrea is shaped by three persecution engines: *Dictatorial paranoia, Islamic extremism and Denominational protectionism*. The pressure on Christians is higher than last year. The score for the violence block is markedly higher. [This suggests Eritrea went in a downwards spiral in the reporting period.](#) Persecution is severe in every *sphere of life*, but strongest in the *private, community and national spheres*. The maximum scores in these *spheres of life* are caused by the overlapping effect of the three powerful persecution engines in the country. Thousands have been imprisoned over the years and many have died as prisoners. Many have also been killed by security forces while attempting to flee the country.

6. Future outlook:

The Eritrean government will continue forcing Christians to join the national army without upholding the rights of conscientious objectors. The Eritrean Orthodox Church and radical Muslims will continue persecuting converts in particular.

Afghanistan – Rank 4

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

88 points / rank 4 (WWL 2015: 81 points / rank 5)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism (main) and to a lesser extent *Tribal antagonism* (blended with *Islamic extremism*), and *Organized corruption and crime*.

3. Context:

Afghanistan is situated in a volatile region and has been for centuries. Elections, which were widely seen as being over-shadowed by fraud, ballot-rigging and violence, took place in June 2014. The former foreign minister and ethnic Tajik, Abdullah Abdullah, acknowledged his defeat and accepted Ashraf Ghani as the new president. He was then announced CEO of the country, a position nowhere to be found in the Afghan constitution. The capturing of the provincial capital Kunduz by Taliban forces in September 2015, the first provincial capital falling to complete Taliban rule since 2001, sent shockwaves through the country, even if their rule was short-lived and the city was re-taken just days later. That the Taliban publically called on the Islamic State not to enter its territory, not to become a competitor and – bluntly spoken – to stay off their turf, shows an increasing nervousness among the Islamic radical groups. Some groups have reportedly already splintered and pledged allegiance to the Islamic State.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Christian converts from Islam (MBBs). For this reporting period, expatriate Christians were not included in our findings anymore as they are so few and their number is decreasing due to the tense security situation.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Known Christian converts from Islam face strong pressure from their family, friends and neighbors to recant their Christian faith, as conversion is absolutely unthinkable. Depending on the family, they even have to fear for their lives. Living openly as a Christian is simply not possible and even shops or other businesses have been destroyed just on the mere suspicion that someone might be a MBB. Children of MBBs are facing an extremely difficult life as they have to hide their parents` faith and often are forced to live a double life. Reports on violence against Christians have been pouring out of the country, highlighted by the killing of three Christian relief workers from South Africa at the end of November 2014. If someone is suspected of having converted to Christianity, he or she is arrested on a plethora of other charges. Many Afghan Christians have fled the country and live abroad.

6. Future outlook:

The small group of Christian converts will stay in hiding as family, friends and society are strictly opposed to them. The increasing level of violence adds to a general feeling of insecurity and there are no signs of improvement for the foreseeable future.

Syria – Rank 5

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

87 points / rank 5 (WWL 2015: 83 points / rank 4)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism (main) and to a lesser extent *Tribal antagonism* (blended with *Islamic extremism*), *Dictatorial paranoia* and *Organized corruption and crime*.

3. Context:

The Syrian civil war began as a popular uprising in 2011, with demands for increased political liberties and economic reforms. However the roots of the conflict are deeper and more complicated, and include class conflict, rural versus urban divisions, and repressed political liberty. The Syrian opposition is increasingly “Islamizing” and the civil war is more and more taking on the form of a *jihād* against the Syrian government. In the conflict, all Syrians are suffering greatly, but some groups are in a more vulnerable position than others. One of the main features of Syria’s Christian population is its combined ethnic and religious identity. The geographical concentration of Christians in strategic areas of the country that are vital to both the government and the opposition’s war efforts is an important factor in their vulnerability, as is their alleged support to the government.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Historical Christian communities, Christian converts from a Muslim background and Christians from non-traditional protestant churches (such as evangelical and pentecostal communities) are all experiencing persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Within the context of war, with Islamic State (IS) controlling large parts of the country and with the rising influence of Islamic jihadists in the opposition forces, Christians have become an increasingly vulnerable group. They face increased faith-related pressure in all *spheres of life: private, family, community, national and church spheres*. This is particularly true for all Christians in IS controlled areas and for MBBs in the entire country. We have received reports of many Christians being abducted, physically harmed and killed. Within the context of civil war, many churches are damaged or destroyed, however in several cases deliberately.

6. Future outlook:

A new development in the civil war in Syria during 2015 was the intervention of Russia. Also, France, Germany and Great Britain planned interventions after the Paris attacks in November. Most likely this will not be enough to save the exhausted Syrian regime and Christians are expected to continue to flee the country.

Pakistan – Rank 6

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

87 points / rank 6 (WWL 2015: 79 points / rank 8)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism (main) and to a lesser extent *Organized corruption and crime*.

3. Context:

Pakistan witnessed another eventful time in the reporting period. This started with the attacks by Taliban insurgents on a military-run school in Peshawar on 16 December 2014, leaving 144 dead, including 132 schoolchildren. Though the military announced a war against Islamic radicals, it continues a policy of distinguishing between “good” and “bad” jihadists. While it fights the latter, it courts the former (eg. *Lashkar-e-Toiba*, now *Jamaat-ud-Dawah*, and the *Haqqani* network) and uses them as a proxy to reach its goals in neighbouring countries such as Afghanistan and India. The recent attacks in December 2014 led to a hasty amendment of the constitution, re-introducing the death penalty and setting up special military courts for terrorism-linked cases, fulfilling two long-standing demands of the military. While observers say that the law’s strongest result is to effectively sideline elected governments, it is also doubtful if the law will reach its goal. According to numbers quoted in newspapers, 49,000 people have been arrested through this new ruling, but only 129 of these were Islamic radicals. The ratio of pickups is even more stunning: while 292,000 people were picked up by the authorities, only 140 Islamic radicals were among them. The situation in Pakistan has become so tight that the very meeting of people is seen as suspicious. This also affects Christians; their Sunday gatherings are still possible, but all other meetings are strongly discouraged.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Members of historical churches mainly suffer from being monitored, pressured and marginalized.

Christian converts from Islam and members of the non-traditional protestant churches bear the brunt of persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

The level of pressure is high in all *spheres of life* and persecution often does not come from the state, but from radical Islamic groups as well as from family, friends and neighbors. One continuing example of the treatment of religious minorities - including Christians - are the notorious blasphemy laws. The reporting period started with the killing of a Christian couple, working in a brick kiln on 4 November 2014 by a furious mob and climaxed in a twin bomb attack on two churches in Lahore on 15 March 2015, leaving 25 dead and wounding dozens. This overt violence conceals the everyday violence against Christian girls and women who are frequently abducted, raped and forcefully married and converted. Consequently, Pakistan is the only country getting the maximum score on violence in the World Watch List, together with Nigeria.

6. Future outlook:

The Christian minority will continue to suffer, especially as the competition between the radical Islamic groups of IS and Taliban becomes fiercer.

Somalia – Rank 7

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

87 points / rank 7 (WWL 2015: 90 points / rank 2)

2. Persecution engines:

The main persecution engines are *Islamic extremism* and *Tribal antagonism*. *Organized corruption and crime* is also present in the country.

3. Context:

Somalia has been on the World Watch List since 1993, and almost always among the top ten countries. In Somalia, Islam was already firmly established before the arrival of Christianity. Somalia's tribal system - as an informal way of governing Somalia - is very resistant to modern government models and more robust than the formal state structure. Since the downfall of Ziad Barre in 1991, Somalia has become a safe haven for Islamic radicalism. Life for MBBs is much more difficult compared to other countries known for persecuting Christians. Christians in Somalia would not last a day in a trial or ever get the chance to be sentenced to a labor camp. A mere suspicion leads to a rush public beheading. This should be seen in connection with the attacks that al-Shabaab has orchestrated against Christians in Kenya.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

In Somalia converts face the worst form of persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Christians in Somalia experience very serious pressure in all *spheres of life*. There is a strong drive to obliterate Christianity from Somalia verging on genocide or ethnic cleansing. Christians are an unwanted group of people.

6. Future outlook:

In general, *Islamic extremism*, *Tribal antagonism* and *Organized corruption and crime* will continue shaping the way in which Christians in Somalia are persecuted, and it will be very difficult to see any church life restarting visibly. Al-Shabaab militants will remain active in the rural areas, which means they will continue hunting Christians. In the urban areas, the government will continue to replace al-Shabaab in restricting life for Christians.

Sudan – Rank 8

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

84 points / rank 8 (WWL 2015: 80 points / 6)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism and *Dictatorial paranoia* (blended with *Islamic extremism*) are the persecution engines in Sudan.

3. Context:

The persecution of Christians in Sudan is systematic and more reminiscent of a policy of *ethnic cleansing*. Historically, Islam is deeply embedded in Sudan's society. Sudan is one of the few African countries that has consistently been on the World Watch List since its first use in 1993 for internal research purposes. The country's rank on the list has been oscillating mostly between the top 10 and the top 20 countries. Sudan has been designated a "Country of Particular Concern" by the US State Department since 1999. Furthermore, for the past decades there has been no rule of law in Sudan; press and media laws have been restrictive, and freedom of expression and religion has been highly curtailed. The ethnic-cultural landscape is very diverse and complicated: Arab versus Black, Muslim versus Christian. The secession of South Sudan did not solve these problems. This is particularly true for black Africans, as a significant number are Christian and still living in the country. The government of Sudan is strictly implementing the policy of one religion, one culture and one language.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

In Sudan, expatriate Christians, historical Christians, converts and non-traditional protestants all face serious persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

In Sudan the pressure on Christians is considerably higher than last year. The score for the violence block is lower. However, it is very difficult to get data on killings, churches attacked and other forms of violence against Christians in Sudan, especially in the Nuba region. The data suggest a deteriorated persecution landscape that is also very violent. Persecution is highest in the *church sphere*, followed by the *private sphere*, while the other *spheres of life* are only slightly lower. MBBs face the worst form of persecution almost in all aspects. Punishing MBBs, demolishing churches, and detaining Christian pastors and priests have been some of the ways persecution is occurring in the country.

6. Future outlook:

The government of Sudan will continue arresting, harassing and expelling Christians. Building or renovating churches or getting permission to assemble will be very difficult. The government of Sudan will in all likelihood continue targeting the Nuba Christians indiscriminately. Radical Islam in the country will continue to grow, and Christians will face the brunt of it. Persecuting and prosecuting MBBs in particular will continue.

Iran – Rank 9

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

83 points / rank 9 (WWL 2015: 80 points / rank 7)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism (main), and to a lesser extent *Dictatorial paranoia* and *Organized corruption and crime*. *Dictatorial paranoia* is blended with *Islamic extremism*.

3. Context

In the Islamic Revolution of 1979 the Shah was removed and Iran was changed into an Islamic Republic. Shia Islamic clerics took political control, today headed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. During his reign, the Shah had started a program of modernization and Western influences entered the country. On the other hand, dissidents were heavily oppressed. As a result, the Shah lost the support of powerful religious, political and popular forces paving the way for an overthrow. In the view of Iran's current leaders, expanding the influence of Shia Islam in the Middle East is a means of continuing the revolution. Particularly in Iraq, Shia Islam has regained influence since the demise of Saddam Hussein and the surge of Islamic State in large parts of the country. Christianity is also considered a condemnable Western influence, an imminent threat to the Islamic identity of the Republic. Especially as their numbers are growing and allegedly even children of political and spiritual leaders are leaving Islam for Christianity. Apart from Christians, the rights of other religious minorities like Jews, Bahai's, Zoroastrians, Dervish and Sunni Muslims are violated as well. Particularly religions that are not recognized in the constitution, like Bahai, are affected.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Especially Christian converts from Islam and all other types of Christianity who evangelize Muslims, which are primarily non-traditional protestants.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution is strongest in the church and national spheres. Almost all churches that had services in Farsi were closed during the past five years and their leaders arrested. Converts from Islam experience persecution in all spheres of life. All other Christians are at least discriminated in the community and national spheres. This affects especially Christians who are ministering to Muslims. Converts are considered unclean especially in villages; rural areas and in conservative cities in the north. Any Muslim who leaves Islam faces the death penalty. At least 108 Christians who were arrested and or imprisoned for their faith in November 2015, another increase compared to last year. Apparently there is a connection between churches going underground and a rise in the number of Christians arrested.

6. Future outlook:

The nuclear deal between Iran and the six world powers is likely to lead to a richer and stronger Iran, whose influence in the region will grow further. On a domestic level, the deal is not expected to lead to an improvement in terms of human rights in general or more specifically religious freedom. On the contrary, it could well lead to a stricter situation.

Libya – Rank 10

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

79 points / rank 10 (WWL 2015: 76 points / rank 13)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Libya are *Islamic extremism* and to a lesser extent *Organized corruption and crime* (blended with *Islamic extremism*).

3. Context:

Libya is still trying to recover from the popular revolution and fierce civil war, which lasted from February to October 2011, against Colonel Muammar Gaddafi who had ruled for over 40 years. Now the influence of Islamic State is growing in the country. In addition to Libya's ongoing security challenges related to the demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration of local militias throughout the country, it also faces increasingly complex difficulties related to the smuggling of people and weapons into and out of its territory.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Christian migrant workers are allowed to gather in their own churches, but Libyans are not allowed to attend. Libyan nationals who are Christians keep their faith secret. Churches for Libyans are forbidden. Most Libyan Christians are afraid to meet with other believers, as any kind of religious gathering (other than Islamic) is forbidden for Libyans.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Libya's persecution situation varies little with respect to last year, but there has been an increase in the *community, national* and *church spheres*; also the score for *violence* increased. This suggests a volatile persecution situation. The persecution pressure is rather homogeneous but with minor peaks for the *private* and *church spheres*.

6. Future outlook: Due to the continuing prominence of local militias, including militant Salafist militias, and the weakness of the country's central government, Christians cannot expect their situation to improve and widespread impunity for crimes committed against Christians is likely to continue. The violent incidents involving the kidnapping and murder of Christian migrants clearly show the strength and visibility of radical Islamic groups, including Islamic State, in a country drifting into absolute lawlessness. Given the structural context of impunity in which jihadist groups thrive, this situation is not expected to change in the near future.

Yemen – Rank 11

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

78 points / rank 11 (WWL 2015: 73 points / rank 14)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism and *Tribal antagonism* (blended with *Islamic extremism*) are the main persecution engines, and to a lesser extent *Organized corruption and crime*.

3. Context:

Yemen has seen political turmoil and sporadic violence since 2012 when the former president Ali Abdullah Saleh was ousted. Now in the resulting power vacuum, militants and rebels – including Al Qaeda and IS affiliated groups - are fighting to gain control of territory. In March 2015, Huthi militias forced president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi and his government into exile in Saudi Arabia. The influence of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and IS appears to be growing further; AQAP could recently expand its territorial control in Southern Yemen. Meanwhile, Yemen is facing a dire humanitarian crisis. 80% of the population is in need of some form of humanitarian assistance and almost half of the population is food insecure, making Yemen's hunger crisis one of the worst in the world.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Expatriate or migrant Christians and Christian converts from a Muslim background.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Scores are very high especially in the *private* and *church spheres*. MBBs cannot openly practice their faith. Giving any indication to those around them that they might be Christians can have serious consequences. Expatriate Christians have relatively more freedom to practice their faith privately, but private worship has become risky for Christians in areas controlled by Islamic militants. Al Qaeda controls large parts of the country. Apart from Aden, churches are forbidden in Yemen. Most of the last few churches have been damaged as a result of the civil war and there are no functioning churches left. Therefore, migrant Christians mostly worship together in private accommodation. MBBs are not allowed to have their own gatherings, so they meet in secret locations. Specific anti-Christian violence against MBBs occurs from the side of the family, Sunni and – to a lesser extent - Shia radicals.

6. Future outlook:

The instability in Yemen is not likely to end soon. If the conflict continues, the country risks a longer-term period of fragmentation similar to Syria or Libya. Obviously, this does not bode well for local and expatriate Christians in Yemen.

Nigeria – Rank 12

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

78 points / rank 12 (WWL 2015: 78 points / rank 10)

2. Persecution engines:

In Nigeria the persecution engines are *Islamic extremism* (main) and to a lesser extent *Tribal antagonism* and *Organized corruption and crime*.

3. Context:

On 29 May 2015 Muhammadu Buhari was sworn in as president. In his inauguration speech he promised to bring “increased prosperity” to the country, and also vowed to tackle corruption and the insurgency headed by Boko Haram which he described as “a mindless, godless group, who are as far away from Islam as one can think.” Despite Buhari’s intention to fight Boko Haram, which has been responsible for much of the violence against Christians in recent years, the continuing violence against Christians in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria remains an enormous source of concern.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Persecution is focused on all types of Christianity in many of the northern states.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

The level of pressure (*squeeze*) on Christians in Nigeria is comparable to last year. Nigeria has again the maximum score for the violence block (*smash*). This suggests a very volatile persecution situation. The fact that the pressure is not higher (in combination with the continuing very high levels of violence) is caused by the specific situation in Nigeria: part of the country is heavily affected by persecution (Muslim majority part), while the other part of the country is not affected by it (Christian majority part). Persecution in Nigeria brings a relatively homogeneous level of pressure throughout all *spheres of life*. The score for the *community sphere* is higher than the other *spheres of life* due to Christians being excluded from basic social services and other forms of discrimination.

6. Future outlook:

Buhari’s campaigns against Boko Haram have had some success, but the group is now intensifying its attacks and making more frequent inroads into neighboring countries such as Niger, Chad and Cameroon. Although Buhari is trying to contain the threat caused by Boko Haram, as a Hausa-Fulani Muslim from northern Nigeria himself, he is not expected to do much about the violence perpetrated by Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen and settlers fighting for the control of the Middle Belt region of Nigeria.

Maldives – Rank 13

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

75 points / rank 13 (WWL 2015: 78 points / rank 11)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism blended with Dictatorial paranoia.

3. Context:

The Maldives are still a country living in two worlds. Internationally they have the image of being a holiday destination of paradisiac dimensions; on the other hand, the country follows a strict form of Islam and is struggling with unrest and many political challenges. This results in a dichotomy of cultures in the Maldives: one that is highly Westernized and pleasure-seeking/hedonistic, and another that is increasingly Islamic and fundamentalist. The latter was shown by several incidents during this reporting period. On 22 February 2015, former president and opposition leader Mohammed Nasheed was arrested and accused of charges of terrorism. This shows that the current conservative Islamist government cares less about its international image than sticking true to their perception of Islam. Consequently, not even a month after the arrest, on March 13 2015, he was [sentenced](#) to thirteen years prison in a surprise move without getting a fair trial. In response, May Day 2015 saw one of the largest [protests](#) against the government the country ever witnessed, with an estimated 20,000 participants. Some were later dismissed for taking part in the demonstrations. In the aftermath, leading figures of the three opposition parties were detained. Towards the end of the reporting period, on September 28 2015 there was an [explosion](#) on the president's boat when he returned from the Hajj. His wife and several aides sustained injuries. While first reactions spoke of an accident or a technical failure, authorities now suppose a planned attack. According to the BBC on 24 October, after the sacking of the [defence minister](#) some days previously, the vice-president, [Abdullah Ahdeeb](#), was detained as well.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

While expatriate and migrant worker Christians are mainly limited in meeting and are closely monitored, Christian converts bear the brunt of persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Due to the high level of social control, Christian converts from Islam face extreme pressure from their family, friends and neighbors, once they are discovered. In several cases, the pressure was so unbearable that Christians chose to live abroad. Expatriate and migrant worker Christians are able to meet, if these meetings are strictly limited to their community. They are closely monitored. Persecution has not been particularly violent, but some Christians have left the country in order to be able to live their faith.

6. Future outlook:

The Christian minority will remain underground as the government continues not only to follow a strict form of Islam, but increasingly gets paranoid as well.

Saudi Arabia – Rank 14

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

76 points / rank 14 (WWL 2015: 77 points / rank 12)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism (main) and to a lesser extent *Tribal antagonism* (blended with *Islamic extremism*).

3. Context

There is a growing gap between Saudi's large youth population and the ageing monarchs. The majority of the population is under thirty and the youth culture has changed radically under the influence of satellite TV, the internet and social media. Young people are longing for more freedom, especially for women, and do not want to be restricted by the religious police. There is also a considerable degree of youth unemployment which leads to widespread social discontent. These factors could drive young people toward radical Islam. On the other hand, social discontent is not new and has been bought off with large sums of money in the form of allocations. Social dissatisfaction has been there for at least twenty years, including the civil disobedience of for instance women driving. Moreover, the internet revolution has also reached Islamic leaders: several imams have twitter accounts and are being followed by many. The number of Christian converts from Islam and other religions is increasing, along with their boldness in sharing their new faith.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Expatriate or migrant Christians; Christian converts.

5. Spheres of life and violence: Pressure on Christians is high in all *spheres of life*, but especially in the *private* and *church spheres*. MBBs cannot openly practice their faith. Any impression to those around them that they might be Christians can have serious consequences. There are no church buildings at all in Saudi Arabia and Christian services take place in compounds or at home. Although the government formally recognizes the right of non-Muslims to worship in private, the religious police (*Muttawa*) often do not respect this right. Christian services are seriously restricted by the strict gender segregation, prohibiting men and women from different families to worship in the same room. Christians who engage in such activities risk arrest, intimate body searches in life-threatening conditions, imprisonment, lashing, deportation, and sometimes torture.

6. Future outlook:

In the short run, no major changes are expected. King Salman's main priority will be to seek stability. Religious restrictions under king Salman seem to indicate a consolidation of the already severe pressure for religious minorities, including Christians.

Uzbekistan – Rank 15

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

70 points / rank 15 (WWL 2015: 69 points / rank 15)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Uzbekistan are *Dictatorial paranoia* and to a lesser extent *Islamic extremism*. Please note that *Dictatorial paranoia* in Uzbekistan is a product of the communist past and has therefore emerged from *Communist and post-communist oppression*, though the ideology of communism has been dead and buried in Uzbekistan for many years.

3. Context:

Uzbekistan has one of the harshest dictatorships in Central Asia. The regime will do everything possible to stay in power – all forms of opposition and deviations from the norm will be ruthlessly attacked. Christianity is regarded as an alien and destabilizing factor. On top of this Christian converts from a Muslim background (Muslim Background Believers, MBBs) experience additional pressure from their social and cultural environment.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All types of Christianity in Uzbekistan exist and are experiencing some form of persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution is strongest in the *private, national, and church spheres of life*. This is typical for a situation in which *Dictatorial paranoia* is the leading persecution engine. Pressure from *Islamic extremism* is present mostly in the *private, family and community spheres* and is exerted by the social environment, while *Dictatorial paranoia* – the pressure from the regime – is felt mostly in the *private, national and church spheres*. The overall pressure in Uzbekistan is fired by a paranoid regime that increases its control more and more. Fewer reports of violence have been registered compared to last year, but that may be due to Christians being afraid to report incidents.

6. Future outlook:

The question who will succeed the aging president Islam Karimov is high on the agenda. Experts say that Karimov will be succeeded by another communist veteran. This means that for Christians little (if anything) will change. In the meantime, state bodies (police, secret services, *mahalla* (local community council) etc.) will continue to monitor religious activities by various means (bugging homes, tapping phones, infiltrating groups etc.) and visit church services. Raids on house church groups, confiscation of religious materials, interrogation and detention of believers will continue. Pressure on and violence against MBBs from family, friends and community will continue, if not increase.

Kenya – Rank 16

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

68 points / rank 16 (WWL 2015: 63 points / rank 19)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Kenya are *Islamic extremism*, and to a lesser extent *Tribal antagonism*, *Secular intolerance* and *Organized corruption and crime*.

3. Context:

It must first be emphasized that the persecution due to *Islamic extremism* contains elements of *ethnic cleansing* in the northeast and coastal areas of Kenya. Kenya has a very complex ethnic composition which also strongly affects daily politics. Secondly, Kenya is a country with a Christian majority (82%) and a considerably smaller Muslim population (10-15%). Yet this Muslim minority has become politically powerful in many sectors in the country. Also important is the level of corruption. In Kenya, the corruption of public institutions is rampant, and its effect on protecting citizens is massive. The Mombasa Republican Council (MRC, a group that advocates for the secession of northeast and coastal Kenya), has become more violent and is linked to terrorist groups like al-Shabaab. It is the cumulative effect of this complex situation that has led to the increase of Kenya's score in WWL 2016.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Historical churches, non-traditional protestant communities (e.g. pentecostal and charismatic churches) and converts (MBBs) are all affected.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

The scores for Kenya derive mainly from *Islamic extremism*, followed by *Tribal antagonism*. The contribution of *Secular intolerance* and *Organized corruption and crime* is much less, but nevertheless the total dynamics caused by their interaction creates a volatile persecution situation that is likely to deteriorate further in the future. In the reporting period the pressure on Christians has risen considerably. Although the score for violence was lower than last year, the number of Christians killed was very high, and Christians were purposefully selected for being killed. (The high number of Christians killed did not directly push up the score for *violence*, because the score for violence is a result of 12 questions. High numbers in the question related to Christians killed, only count for 1/3, whereby 10 or more killings already produce the maximum amounts of points for that question.) The data suggest that the hostile atmosphere in the country (caused by the atrocities of the Islamic terrorists in northeastern and coastal Kenya) has had a tremendous ripple effect on Christian communities throughout the country. Persecution was strongest in the *family* sphere, followed by the *community* and *private spheres*. This is typical for a Christian majority country in which *Islamic extremism* is a powerful persecution engine.

6. Future outlook

The level of persecution in Kenya has kept increasing and is likely to continue that way. There are no signs that the vicious circle Kenyan politics and society find themselves in, will be broken in the near future.

India – Rank 17

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

68 points / rank 17 (WWL-2015: 62 points / rank 21)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in India are *Religious nationalism* and to a lesser extent *Islamic extremism* and *Communist and post-communist oppression*. Furthermore, Christians are facing corruption daily, but this does not especially target them.

3. Context:

Since May 2014 India is being governed by a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government, led by prime minister Narendra Modi. As a result, radical Hinduism, which was already present under the previous government, has increased steadily. While the level of intolerance increased, and minorities were constantly attacked, the central government refused to speak out against the atrocities – thus further encouraging the radical Hindus to step up their actions. The level of impunity has gone up markedly.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All types of Christianity in India exist and are experiencing some form of persecution, but Christian converts and non-traditional protestant churches are persecuted most.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Since the BJP won the election in May 2014 the atmosphere in India has changed. This has resulted in an increase of pressure in all spheres of life and is also expressing itself in an increase of violent incidents (which is even higher than last year). Christians in India cannot feel safe anywhere. As the central government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi abstains from speaking out against these attacks by radical Hindus, the level of impunity increases, which make them feel increasingly justified to carry out such attacks.

6. Future outlook:

Radical Hindu attackers are increasingly enjoying impunity when they harass Muslims or Christians. As a result, the level of fear and uncertainty among the majority of Christians in India is increasing. We expect this dangerous trend (i.e. the government looking away when religious minorities are attacked) will incite an increase in violence in the coming years.

Ethiopia – Rank 18

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

67 points / rank 18 (WWL 2015: 61 points / rank 22)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism and Denominational protectionism (main engines), and to a lesser extent Tribal antagonism, Dictatorial paranoia and Secular intolerance.

3. Context:

Ethiopia has a long history with both Christianity and Islam, and over time, both religions have been engaged in attempts to expand their sphere of influence. Secondly, Ethiopia has many tribes. These are not necessarily favorable to Christianity; and in some places like Afar and the Somali regions tribes are interconnected with Islam. Thirdly, the ruling party has blocked all the channels for freedom of expression and assembly, and has also tried to control all religious institutions in a bid to curb dissent. A fourth point is the ongoing difficulty the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC) experiences in trying to reconcile itself with the growing number of both traditional and non-traditional protestants in Ethiopia and reform-oriented groups within the church itself. Fanatical groups within the EOC use inflammatory rhetoric against protestants/evangelicals in their magazine, website and newspaper, using such expressions as “newcomers”, the “false prophet”, “*menafikan*” (deniers of Virgin Mary and the saints) to portray protestants/evangelicals.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Historical churches, communities of non-traditional protestants and converts all face persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution in Ethiopia is shaped by four persecution engines: *Islamic extremism, Denominational protectionism, Tribal antagonism and Dictatorial paranoia*. The average pressure on Christians is significantly higher than last year. The score for the violence block is lower but still rather high. The combined effect of the persecution engines has led to gradually increased persecution pressure. Persecution pressure is strongest in the *private sphere*. The *community and church spheres* are above average too.

6. Future outlook:

The persecution of Christians (protestants in particular) will continue especially at the hands of radical Muslims and denominational protectionists.

Turkmenistan – Rank 19

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

66 points / rank 19 (WWL 2015: 63 points / rank 20)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Turkmenistan are *Dictatorial paranoia* and to a lesser extent *Islamic extremism*. Please note that *Dictatorial paranoia* in Turkmenistan is a product of the communist past and has therefore emerged from *Communist and post-Communist oppression*, though the ideology of communism has been dead and buried in Turkmenistan for many years.

3. Context:

Turkmenistan is considered to be one of the most restrictive places in the world. There is no freedom of information or press. It is made extremely difficult for foreigners to access the country. A new personality cult has been started around president Berdymukhammedov. Additionally, there is a high level of monitoring of each and every group in society (including Christians) as well as a highly restricted access to foreign media and resources. Consequently, it is also difficult to get information out of the country.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

There are no communities of expatriate or migrant Christians in Turkmenistan. All other types of Christianity are experiencing persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution is strongest in the *private, national, and church spheres of life*. This is typical for a situation in which *Dictatorial paranoia* is the leading persecution engine. Pressure from *Islamic extremism* is present mostly in the *private, family and community spheres* and is exerted by the social environment, while *Dictatorial paranoia* – the pressure from the regime – is felt mostly in the *private, national and church spheres*. The overall pressure in Turkmenistan is fired by a paranoid regime that increases its control more and more. The level of violence is slightly higher than last year. There have been more incidents of raids and pressure on Christians reported.

6. Future outlook:

After Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan is the most repressive Central Asian state for religious minorities. Given the increased nationalism and the “spiritual guidance” the new president is supposed to give the country, the situation for Christians most likely will remain unchanged.

Vietnam – Rank 20

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

66 points / rank 20 (WWL 2015: 68 points / rank 16)

2. Persecution engines:

Communist and post-communist oppression and Tribal antagonism.

3. Context:

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is one of the five remaining countries in the world which is still ruled by a communist party. How communist the country still is can be discussed in some length, suffice it to say that in terms of administration and control it still functions pretty much in the communist way and is hence not a real democracy. The Catholic Church is by far the largest Christian community in the country, but government authorities have a shaky relationship with the Catholic Church as the latter is tied to a foreign power and is often seen as colonial. Stereotypes such as “Catholics are French and Protestants are American” are still heard, especially in rural areas. The government announced it will publish a revised version of its notorious Law No. 92, the law on religion next year and has invited selected Christians to participate in the drafting process. But since the government’s overarching goal remains one of control, it is not expected that things will change substantially, when it comes to registration or the construction of religious buildings, for example.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All types of Christianity are affected by persecution. Converts from a Buddhist background and members of non-traditional protestant churches, which are spread widely among the ethnic minorities like Montagnards, experience the most persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Whereas Christians who have converted from a Buddhist or ancestor worshipping background particularly experience persecution in the *private sphere*, pressure in the *national* and *church spheres* affects all types of Christianity, especially seen in the obligation to supply the authorities with church programs a year in advance. The registration of churches remained difficult. Persecution remains violent: In November 2014, a Mennonite Church in Binh Dhuong province was destroyed as were several small house churches and Christian dwellings in Kon Tum province. Some incidents of physical harm were also reported.

6. Future outlook:

Christians will continue to be seen as foreign agents and suffer from discrimination and harassment. Ethnic minority Christians like the Montagnards will continue to face particularly harsh persecution.

Qatar – Rank 21

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

65 points / rank 21 (WWL 2015: 64 points / rank 18)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism (main) and to a lesser extent *Tribal antagonism* (blended with *Islamic extremism*).

3. Context:

90% of Qatar's population of about two million is made up of migrant laborers. The Qataris (10%) enjoy the highest GDP per capita in the world. Expatriates and migrant workers are generally perceived and treated by Qataris as slaves. Forced labor and human trafficking are major problems. Working conditions for migrant workers can be inhumane and dangerous; they face underpayment, domestic violence, sexual abuse and lack proper living conditions. It is not uncommon for them to die at their work place.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Expatriate or migrant Christians; Christian converts from a Muslim background (MBBs).

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Scores are high especially in the *private* and *church spheres*. Conversion from Islam to another religion carries the death penalty and MBBs cannot openly practice their faith. Giving any impression that they might be Christians can have serious consequences. Expatriate Christians have relatively more freedom to practice their faith privately, as long as they do not evangelize Muslims. Migrant Christians can only gather for worship in private or designated places. Outward symbols of faith, like crosses on churches, are illegal. There are several churches in Qatar that serve the large group of foreign workers, however MBBs are not allowed to attend. Official church recognition is hard to obtain and at least 1,500 registered congregants are required. The churches are mostly concentrated in a district outside the capital, Doha. Churches are not allowed to use their own channels for importing Bibles anymore, but are forced to use a secular bookshop for importing. On a more positive note the Qatari authorities granted land for the Lebanese Maronite and Filipino Evangelical congregations to build churches. MBBs are sometimes physically harmed for their faith by family or peers, but most often, these incidents remain unreported. If they are involved in missionary activities, expatriates run a serious risk of being detained and deported.

6. Future outlook:

The political, social and economic situation of Qatar seems quite stable and no major changes in religious freedom for Christians are expected.

Egypt – Rank 22

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

64 points / rank 22 (WWL 2015: 61 points / rank 23)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Egypt are *Islamic extremism* (main engine), and to a lesser extent *Dictatorial paranoia* and *Organized corruption and crime* (both blended with *Islamic extremism*).

3. Context:

President al-Sisi's authoritarian style of government has to some extent restored the rule of law in Egypt, but also implies a stricter compliance with the relatively restrictive legislation related to religious affairs. This is not in the advantage of the country's Christian population.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

The large Coptic minority, while facing important difficulties, has been tolerated because of its historical presence and its demographic size. In recent years, this has changed, however, causing historical Christian communities to be targeted as well. There is a small but growing community of Christian converts (Muslim Background Believers, MBBs), who bear the brunt of persecution, most often from family members.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

The persecution situation in Egypt is mainly influenced by the persecution engine *Islamic extremism*. *Islamic extremism* is slowly increasing its restrictions of religious expression in all *spheres of life*. In combination with a violence-level that is still very high, this indicates a volatile situation.

6. Future outlook:

The elements that will determine Egypt's future are essentially political. As long as the political instability continues and the economic challenges are not addressed, social protests will not cease. The country faces a seemingly unbridgeable ideological-religious divide between various expressions of radical Islam (from Salafism to the Muslim Brotherhood) and political liberals (secularists). The threat of radical Islamic movements in Egypt is clearly far from averted.

Myanmar – Rank 23

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

62 points / rank 23 (WWL 2015: 60 points / rank 25)

2. Persecution engines:

Religious nationalism (main) and to a lesser extent *Dictatorial paranoia* and *Islamic extremism* are active.

3. Context:

The whole reporting period was filled with preparations for the first free and fair elections in 25 years which were held on 8 November 2015 (slightly outside the reporting period) and saw a landslide win of the opposition under Aung San Suu Kyi. Most ethnic minority parties did not take many seats and the new parliament will most likely contain less Christian members than the old one. During the campaign and elections the Burmese army continued its attacks against ethnic minorities in Kachin and Shan State even though a ceasefire agreement was signed on 15 October 2015. Christians are strongly affected by such attacks and the level of violence is high. Additionally, an organization of Buddhist radical monks (*Ma Ba Tha*) increased their campaigns against religious minorities and successfully helped introduce four laws for the “Protection of Race and Religion” in August 2015, building insurmountable hurdles for conversions and complicating religiously mixed marriages. These will affect Christians as well.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Members of Historical churches, but especially Christian converts from Islam or Buddhism and members of the non-traditional protestant churches are affected by persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Christian converts from Islam or Buddhism face strong pressure from their family, friends and neighbors to recant their Christian faith. With the recently introduced laws, conversion is made very complicated, though not outright forbidden. Christian children are facing discrimination by teachers and co-students in schools. There are reports that some are forced to attend Buddhism classes and wear monks’ or nuns’ attire. Persecution comes with a very high level of violence, especially for the Christians in Kachin and Shan State. In January 2015, two teachers sent by the Kachin Baptist Convention to help and teach displaced people and children, were raped and killed in Shan State. Others have been killed when they tried to find shelter in churches. Thousands of Christians have been internally displaced or are even living across the Chinese border now. In Marsihta village, a monk started to build a pagoda on a church compound, making Christian services practically impossible.

6. Future outlook:

Though the free and fair elections give a ray of hope, it remains to be seen if Christian and other minorities will have their say in society. The powerful role of the Burmese army seems not to change. Another factor to be reckoned with is the implementation of the laws on the “Protection of Race and Religion”.

Palestinian Territories – Rank 24

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

62 points / rank 24 (WWL 2015: 58 points / rank 26)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism (main) and to a lesser extent *Tribal antagonism* (blended with *Islamic extremism*).

3. Context:

The dynamics of persecution of Christians in the Palestinian Territories are complex. Christians are squeezed in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, their ethnicity causing many restrictions from the Israeli side and their religion putting them in a minority position within the Palestinian community. The territories are effectively under different governments. The West Bank's ruling Fatah party is formally based on secular principles and Christians enjoy several rights. Though Christians are largely tolerated by Islamist Hamas, the rights of Christians are neither upheld nor protected in Gaza. Apart from this discrimination, Christians face threats from radical Islamic vigilante groups. The total number of Christians has been decreasing in both areas over time due to emigration and lower birth rates. A ray of hope is the small but growing number of converts from Islam to Christianity.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Historical Christian communities; Christian converts (Muslim Background Believers, MBBs); non-traditional protestant churches. All are affected by persecution, but MBBs are persecuted the most.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

In Gaza and the West Bank, MBBs face pressure in all *spheres of life*, especially from radical Muslims and family members. They experience most pressure in the *family* and *church spheres*. The level of severity depends on the type of family - e.g. poor and lacking influence or more prominent; and it depends on the region - very heavy in Gaza, less though still problematic in West Bank. In Gaza, all other types of Christianity face restrictions in all *spheres of life* as well, but much less in the *private sphere*.

6. Future outlook:

Pressure in general has increased in the territories, due to increased insecurity in the region and due to no progress being made in resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The outlook for the Christian community in Gaza in general is bleak; in the West Bank no major change is expected for Christians.

Brunei – Rank 25

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

61 points / rank 25 (WWL-2015: 58 points / rank 27)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism (main), blended with *Dictatorial paranoia*.

3. Context:

For more than 600 years Brunei has been a sultanate and all important positions are still held by the sultan himself, be it prime minister, finance minister, minister of the interior or defence minister and head of religion. People deeply revere and respect him and any criticism is unthinkable. His government provides free medical services and subsidizes goods such as rice and housing. There are no school fees for state schools, and citizens of Brunei do not have to pay income tax. His politics are based on revenues from large oil and gas fields, covering 90 percent of the government's GDP. Most of the citizens have never lived under any other system. Even the sultan's announcement of introducing Sharia penal law in May 2014 did not change the peoples' affection to him. The second phase encompassing corporal punishments should have started in May 2015, but has been delayed due to international pressure. Minorities like Christians, who make up 16 percent of the population, are feeling more pressure since the sultan leans more and more towards a conservative Islam. This seems to give this tiny and rather young state an identity and serves as uniting factor and may also already be done as preparation for the time the country is running out of oil and gas.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Mainly Christian converts from Islam, but expatriate Christians, Christians from historical churches as well as members of non-traditional protestant churches are affected by the introduction of Sharia law, too.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Christian converts from Islam face the strongest pressure from their family, friends and neighbors to recant their Christian faith. Christians are affected by the growing Islamic conservatism in both their private and business lives. Employment, especially in the public sector, is discriminatory against Christians and children of Christians face discrimination and bias by teachers and co-students in schools. Additionally, they are forced to take Islamic lessons. Persecution has not been violent, but occasionally Christians have to serve prison terms because of allegedly breaking the law. Converts are sometimes forced to go into hiding and many young Christians leave the country as they do not want to live in a society increasingly focused on sharia law.

6. Future outlook:

The continuing introduction of Sharia law makes the Christian minority more vulnerable to pressure from both radicals and the government.

Central African Republic (CAR) – Rank 26

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

59 points / rank 26 (WWL 2015: 67 points / rank 17)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in the Central African Republic are *Islamic extremism* and to a lesser extent *Organized corruption and crime*.

3. Context:

The recent conflict in Central African Republic (CAR) has claimed thousands of lives, displaced hundreds of thousands, and caused severe destruction of property. Although the Séléka have now been driven out of many parts in the country, numerous challenges remain. In Bangui, a growing group of radical Muslims continue to keep a stronghold in the so-called PK5 enclave where they instill a reign of terror. In the north-east, which is mainly populated by Muslims, Christians are forced to flee from their villages and denied access to farming fields. Large groups of Christians live in extremely poor conditions in refugee camps.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

CAR is home to three types of Christianity and all have been affected by the persecution dynamics to a similar extent: Historical Christian communities, Christian converts from a Muslim background (MBBs) and non-traditional protestant movements.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

The *persecution pattern* for the Central African Republic presents the scores for *Islamic extremism*. The overall level of pressure decreased quite substantially, mainly because persecution is no longer countrywide but concentrated geographically in the areas where the former Séléka are still active. The violence, however, remained high, as the former Séléka continued to be responsible for violent incidents against Christians in the north-eastern provinces of the country and in some areas of Bangui.

6. Future outlook:

The recent conflict in CAR has fundamentally changed the relationship between Christians and Muslims in the country. Unless the reconciliation process and the attempt to end the cycle of impunity in CAR succeed, there is grave risk that the polarization and conflict among Muslims and Christians in CAR will continue and exacerbate religious conflict.

Jordan – Rank 27

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

59 points / rank 27 (WWL 2015: 56 points / rank 30)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism and Tribal antagonism (blended with Islamic extremism).

3. Context

Jordanian society is multi-ethnic - a phenomenon which is also reflected by the monarchy. Jordan hosts large groups of refugees, mostly from Iraq and Syria, which leads to economic, political and religious pressure and is a potential destabilizing factor. The number of Christians in the country has been declining for half a century. For a long time, Jordan was one of the most liberal countries of the region in terms of freedom of religion. However, the tide seems to be turning for Christians – especially for Christian converts from a Muslim background (MBBs) who suffer most persecution.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Historical Christian communities; Christian converts from a Muslim background; non-traditional protestant churches.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Jordan scores relatively high in the *private* and *family spheres* of life. This is mostly due to the very high pressure MBBs experience in these areas. They also face resistance at community and national level once their faith is known. Other types of Christianity experience pressure in the *national* and *church spheres* and to a lesser extent *community sphere*. Continued pressure on and violence against MBBs was reported: Open Doors World Watch Research received reports of Christians being held for interrogation by police, being physically abused and abducted (often by family). Many were forced to hide inside the country or flee abroad for faith-related reasons.

6. Future outlook: The development of the civil war in Syria will greatly influence the situation in Jordan, including that of Christians. For now, the situation is stable and no major change is foreseen in the current situation for Christians.

Djibouti – Rank 28

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

58 points / rank 28 (WWL 2015: 60 points / rank 24)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism and *Dictatorial paranoia* are the main engines. *Tribal antagonism* is also present in the country but is blended with *Islamic extremism*.

3. Context:

Djibouti is surrounded by some of the most volatile and repressive countries like Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Yemen. It has a very favorable geographical location along one of the busiest shipping routes. On the political front, the repressive regime of the incumbent president continues to rule the country. Djibouti has been governed by a non-democratic semi-presidential regime, currently headed by Ismail Omer Guelleh. In 1999, he succeeded his uncle and he is only the second president since 1977. Historically, Islam is deeply embedded in Djibouti's society. At the same time, Christianity has existed in Djibouti for a long time, partly because of ties with Ethiopia. On the society level, a significant number of Djibouti's citizens have strong family ties in Somalia, Yemen and other Muslim countries with a strongly ingrained negative attitude towards the West and Christianity. The Djiboutian government supports Western efforts to fight Islamic terrorism; this agitates a significant section of society. Constitutionally, Islam is accorded the status of state religion.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Expatriate Christian communities, non-traditional Protestant churches, and converts with a Muslim background (MBBs) all face persecution in one way or another.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution in Djibouti is shaped by *Islamic extremism* (blended with *Tribal antagonism*) and *Dictatorial paranoia*. The average score for the pressure on Christians is comparable to last year. The score for the violence block is considerably lower. This suggests persecution has stabilized or decreased. However, further analysis shows that in general, the situation of Christians in the last two years has been deteriorating. This is reflected by an increase of pressure in the *family* and *community spheres*, in particular on MBBs. There is a decrease of pressure in the *national* and *church spheres*. It seems persecution has shifted slightly from regime to society. Persecution pressure is highest in the *private* and *family spheres*, followed by the *church sphere*.

6. Future outlook:

As long as radical Islam in the region continues and the repressive regime stays in power, Christians will face persecution.

Laos – Rank 29

Revised 22.12.2015

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

58 points / rank 29 (WWL 2015: 58 points / rank 28)

2. Persecution engines:

Communist and post-communist oppression and to a lesser extent *Tribal antagonism. Religious nationalism* is blended with *Communist and post-communist oppression*.

3. Context:

Laos has been in the tight grip of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party since 1975. Its exclusive networks of party members' families and friends add to the strongly felt pressure by every citizen, but especially minorities. The country also has a complete lack of freedom of opinion, let alone a free press able to highlight cases of corruption. Tight laws on the founding and control of NGOs as well as the use of social media and online criticism were adopted in September 2014 and implemented harshly. Buddhist temples are the center of social and religious life and most Lao men are expected to spend some time serving in a temple. This shows how deeply ingrained Buddhism is in the thinking and culture of society. Although it is often mixed with animistic beliefs and practices, every deviation from it is unthinkable and perceived as dangerous. Therefore, Christians refusing to participate are perceived as foreign and a threat to traditional culture.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

While all types of Christianity are facing limitations, it is mainly Christian converts from a tribal or Buddhist background (as well as members of the non-traditional protestant churches) bearing the brunt of persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Christian converts face strong pressure from their family, friends and neighbors to recant their Christian faith and participate in all community activities. This pressure can even lead to Christians being expelled from villages. Christian children are facing discrimination and bias by teachers and co-students in schools. Persecution has become more violent in the reporting period as on 8 September 2015 Pastor Singkeaw Wongkongpheng was stabbed to death in Luang Prabang province and on 17 September 2015 a Christian from Savannakhet province died in prison as his diabetes was not treated.

6. Future outlook:

The Christian minority will remain vulnerable to pressure and attacks as the situation in Laos will stay stable.

Malaysia – Rank 30

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

58 points / rank 30 (WWL 2015: 55 points / rank 37)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism, and to a lesser extent *Dictatorial paranoia* (blended with Islamic extremism).

3. Context:

Malaysia is still known as probably the best role model of a liberal and tolerant Islamic country in the world. This image is increasingly fading and was also quite damaged in the reporting period. One example of this is the effort to introduce Sharia penal law (*hudud*) in the federal state of Kelantan. Its implementation requires amendments to the federal law and so the introduction is still pending, but it clearly shows an increasing Islamic conservatism. The opposition parties even [split](#) over this issue in June 2015 which in the long term might mean that Islamic parties currently opposed to each other might unite, if they feel Islam is being threatened. Observers are calling the Malaysian society increasingly racist as the ethnic Malay majority is clearly being favored, while the Chinese and Indian ethnicities (as well as the indigenous tribal population) living in the eastern part of Malaysia are discriminated against.

Malaysia has witnessed an increasing political, social and religious instability in the reporting period and there are no signs that these developments will cease soon.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Three types of Christianity in Malaysia exist and all are affected by persecution: members of historical churches, Christian converts from Islam (MBBs) and members of non-traditional protestant churches.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

MBBs face strong pressure from their family, friends and neighbors to recant their Christian faith. They are seen as not only leaving a religion, but as betraying their people and ethnicity. Christians are discriminated against in both their private and business lives. Children of Christians are facing discrimination and bias from teachers and co-students in schools. Persecution is not particularly violent, but there has been an incident on 19 April 2015 however, where fifty protestors demonstrated against a church in Taman Medan and made the pastor to take down the church's cross. This was regretted later, however, by wide parts of society.

6. Future outlook:

The Christian minority will remain vulnerable as long as politics and society are focused along racial lines. With a government feeling increasingly cornered, there may be backlashes against minority religions (including Christians) to come.

Tajikistan – Rank 31

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

58 points / rank 31 (WWL 2015: 50 points / rank 45)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Tajikistan are *Dictatorial paranoia* and to a lesser extent *Islamic extremism*. Please note that *Dictatorial paranoia* in Tajikistan is a product of the communist past and has therefore emerged from *Communist and post-Communist oppression*, though the ideology of communism has been dead and buried in Tajikistan for many years.

3. Context:

On 1 March 2015 parliamentary elections were held in Tajikistan. Soon after the elections, which were of course won by the supporters of President Emomali Rahmon, a change occurred in the country. More and more restrictive legislation was imposed - including on matters of religion.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All types of Christianity exist in Tajikistan and are experiencing various levels of persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution pressure on Christians is markedly higher than last year. The score for the violence block is slightly higher than last year. It suggests the regime is increasing its control more and more. Persecution is strongest in the *private, national, and church spheres*. This is typical for a situation in which *Dictatorial paranoia* is the leading persecution engine. Pressure from *Islamic extremism* is present mostly in the *private, family and community spheres* and is exerted by the social environment, while *Dictatorial paranoia* – the pressure from the regime – is felt mostly in the *private, national and church spheres*.

6. Future outlook:

The regime puts heavy pressure on all “deviating” groups, including Christians. By tightening already existing laws and by enforcing them strictly, the government is putting additional pressure on the Christian minority. The new youth law in particular has left Christians (and other affected religious minorities) in legal limbo as it is not obvious what is allowed and what is denied by law. This means that the situation for Christians will remain the same or even worsen in the future.

Tunisia – Rank 32

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

58 points / rank 32 (WWL 2015: 55 points / rank 36)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engines in Tunisia are *Islamic extremism* and to a lesser extent *Organized corruption and crime*.

3. Context:

There has been a lot of social unrest in the country, which was one of the main reasons for the demonstrations leading to the Jasmine revolution, named after the national flower of Tunisia. On 14 January 2011, president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and his inner circle fled the country to Saudi Arabia. After several days of demonstrations the president saw there was no support for his regime among the people any longer. The regime fell and an interim government was established. A new constitution was approved on 26 January 2014.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Expatriate Christians experience a relative amount of freedom, but public evangelism is not tolerated. Christian converts from a Muslim background (MBBs) face a variety of pressures. Indeed, pressure is clearly much higher for them than for the few international churches in the country.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution in Tunisia is shaped by *Islamic extremism*. Pressure on Christians is highest in the *family sphere*, followed by the *private, church and community spheres*. The terrorist attacks aimed at tourists created more fear among the country's Christian population. Although they do not focus on Christians, the presence of Islamic terrorists has an important psychological impact. As a result of the terror attacks, the police have become stricter in enforcing legislation.

6. Future outlook:

Although the political situation in Tunisia seems to have stabilized, this does not mean that the pressure on Christians can be expected to decrease. In fact, society and culture remains anti-Christian (particularly in rural areas) and this is not influenced by political changes.

China – Rank 33

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

57 points / rank 33 (WWL 2015: 57 points / rank 29)

2. Persecution engines:

Communist and post-communist oppression (main) and to a lesser extent Islamic extremism and Religious nationalism.

3. Context:

China remains one of the most complicated countries on the WWL as it is so multi-faceted and diverse. While a considerable part of persecution is suffered by the small convert minorities among the Tibetans and the Muslim Uighurs, Christians among the main Han majority face continuing restrictions as well. While the campaign of breaking down crosses in the province Zhejiang apparently seems to have come to an end, church meetings continued to be disrupted and stopped, if authorities saw the need for it when foreigners or media are involved or “too many people gather”, for example in the province Guangdong. In the general campaign against so-called “evil cults”, churches were affected as well. The curbing of reporting after the explosions in Tianjin in August 2015, including censorship of social media, is increasingly difficult and does not solve problems. In this plethora of challenges, China’s leadership tries to keep everything calm. Its goal of maintaining power and social harmony includes the control of all religions, including the strongly growing Christian minority.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All types of Christianity are affected by persecution in China, but the very small groups of Christian converts from Muslim or Tibetan background are especially targeted.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

In several regions, church services have been hindered and Christians have been prevented from gathering - for example in the provinces of Guangdong and Yunnan - and some Christians have been detained for up to fifteen days. Christian lawyers who wanted to defend churches in Zhejiang which had been forced to take their crosses off church buildings have been arrested. An estimated 1,500 church buildings lost their crosses and some were even completely demolished. Some Christians are still serving long-term sentences in prison and some were convicted in the reporting period, though always for other reasons than faith matters. Converts from a Muslim or Tibetan background have been facing strong pressure from family and neighbors to recant their Christian faith.

6. Future outlook:

Christians, especially church leaders, will be watched with suspicion, especially if their growth in numbers continues unchanged. Converts from Tibetan and Muslim background will face more persecution as (due to the government’s effort to stay in control) the crackdown on volatile minority regions will increase and the pressure from family, friends and neighbors is going to continue.

Azerbaijan – Rank 34

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

57 points / rank 34 (WWL 2015: 50 points / rank 46)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Azerbaijan are *Dictatorial paranoia* and to a lesser extent *Islamic extremism*. Please note that *Dictatorial paranoia* in Azerbaijan is a product of the communist past and has therefore emerged from *Communist and post-communist oppression*, though the ideology of communism has been dead and buried in Azerbaijan for many years.

3. Context:

The government of Azerbaijan pays a lot of attention to religion. Officially, the country is secular and religion is tolerated. However, the level of surveillance is so incredibly high that Christians in Azerbaijan do not know whom to trust anymore. Another sign of the government pressure is the fact that Azeri Christians find it easier to evangelize in countries like Georgia and Iran than in their own country.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All types of Christianity exist in Azerbaijan and are experiencing various levels of persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution pressure on Christians has gone up markedly since last year. The score for the violence block is a little lower than last year. It suggests that the regime has further tightened its control on society. Persecution is strongest in the *private, national, and church spheres*. This is typical for a situation in which *Dictatorial paranoia* is the leading persecution engine. Pressure from *Islamic extremism* is present mostly in the *private, family and community spheres* and is exerted by the social environment, while *Dictatorial paranoia* – the pressure from the regime – is felt mostly in the *private, national and church spheres*.

6. Future outlook:

It is to be expected that the current regime will continue its control over each and every aspect of life in Azerbaijan – and if possible, even to increase it. The government will continue its propaganda that Azerbaijan is the “Land of Tolerance” everywhere, and target all those who dare to question this. The Church in Azerbaijan will have to survive under the enormous level of surveillance and pressure. Under the circumstances it is remarkable that the Church has survived so far and has even grown slightly.

Bangladesh – Rank 35

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

57 points / rank 35 (WWL 2015: 51 points / rank 43)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism (main) and to a lesser extent *Religious nationalism* (blended with *Tribal antagonism*).

3. Context:

Bangladesh continues to be a secular country and its constitution gives freedom to all religions to practice their own faith. The country does not have blasphemy laws or an anti-conversion bill. But the constitution confirms that the state religion is Islam and the government is known to give in to Islamic pressure from the streets. Additionally, there are *fatwas* implemented all over the country, especially in rural areas and there are demands to introduce Sharia Islamic law in order to show that the country belongs to the “House of Islam”. On the other hand, the killing of four secular bloggers, an Italian and a Japanese citizen and, most recently, a secular publisher in October 2015, – all instituted by radical Islamic groups – led the government to declare war against radical elements. Names of Christian pastors appeared on a list with death threats, published in October 2015, as well. As the Christian minority is growing, it faces more and more restrictions and challenges. This pressure is not driven by the government, but by radical Islamic groups, local religious leaders, and families. The competition between the large political parties of the country is also an important factor, as the government may give in to demands from Islamic pressure groups taking to the streets.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Mainly Christian converts from Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. Recently, adherents from historical churches and non-traditional protestant churches came under persecution as well.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Christian converts from Islam or Buddhism face strong pressure from their family, friends and neighbors to recant their Christian faith, though conversion is not forbidden by law. Christians are discriminated in both their private and business lives. Children of converts are facing discrimination and bias by teachers and co-students in schools. In June 2015, the Compassion Project had to close down which affected at least nine churches. These were forced to close down at the same time. Persecution has become more violent over recent years. In the reporting period, one convert was killed for her faith. On October 5, a pastor was stabbed by youths who had feigned interest in the Christian faith.

6. Future outlook:

The Christian minority will remain vulnerable to pressure from both radicals and government, especially as the country remains vulnerable to violent attacks from radical Islamic groups, partly allied with the Islamic State.

Tanzania – Rank 36

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

57 points / rank 36 (WWL 2015: 56 points / rank 33)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engine in Tanzania is *Islamic extremism*.

3. Context:

Understanding the situation for Christians in Tanzania requires an insight into various sociological, historical and political events in the country. The Island of Zanzibar has had a very long connection with Islam and other Muslim countries, and it was ruled by a sultanate until the British occupation (1890-1963). Tanzania was a socialist country from 1961 to 1987. The militant movements in Somalia and Kenya are having a serious impact on Tanzania. For example, Tanzanian security forces arrested 10 suspected al-Shabaab militants and bomb-making materials during the raid of a mosque in April 2015. It should also be noted that the population of the Zanzibar Archipelago is mainly Muslim, and many in the region think they are being purposely and systematically deprived of development opportunities by Tanzania's central government. The inclusion of the Sharia court provision in the constitution to be ratified by a referendum can only worsen the situation. The inclusion of the provision has already divided the nation and the former president, Jakaya Kikwete, has warned of the danger of religious tension in the country. Finally, Tanzania is a country with great potential for gas, oil and coal and other natural resources. These resources attract foreign investors who influence Tanzanian interests.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

In Tanzania three types of Christianity are present. In the reporting period, all three of them have faced faith-related pressure and/or violence.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution in Tanzania is shaped by *Islamic extremism*. The pressure on Christians is comparable to last year. The score for the violence block is higher. This suggests a stabilized persecution situation, however with a potential for deterioration. All *spheres of life* of Christians are significantly affected in the past year, with the *private, community and church spheres* above average.

6. Future outlook:

The persecution of Christians in Zanzibar and the coastal region will continue. The upcoming referendum on the new constitution might pit Christians against Muslims, which would cause massive pressure on Christians. If the draft constitution is adopted, Muslims would become more influential in the country. There is also the possibility that the new president will be able to stabilize the country.

Algeria – Rank 37

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

56 points / rank 37 (WWL 2015: 55 points / rank 34)

2. Persecution engines:

The main persecution engines in Algeria are *Islamic extremism* and to a lesser extent *Dictatorial paranoia* (blended with *Islamic extremism*), and *Organized corruption and crime*.

3. Context:

In the context of the growing role of Islamism in the region, Algeria is increasingly the scene of more terror by Islamist movements, particularly al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). In 2014 the very ill Abdelaziz Bouteflika was reelected for a fourth mandate as president with a devastating 81% of the vote, in a country that knows no fair and free elections.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Almost all Christians in Algeria are MBBs. The law prohibits public assembly for purposes of practicing a faith other than Islam. Catholic churches, however, including a cathedral in Algiers (the seat of the Archbishop), conduct services without government interference, as does one protestant church.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution in Algeria is shaped by *Islamic extremism* (blended with *Dictatorial paranoia*). Overall, the pressure has increased with respect to last year, although there were less violent incidents to report this year. Pressure on Christians is highest in the *private* and *family spheres*, followed by the *national* and *church spheres*. It is partly due to the issues encountered by Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) when their conversion is known, that the scores are highest in the *private* and *family spheres*.

6. Future outlook:

Should Bouteflika die in office, social unrest is quite likely to erupt under the pressure of a younger generation that is desperate for change. The church may be far worse off in a new political constellation if Islamists capitalize upon the societal discontent as they did in Tunisia and Egypt. It is certain that Islamism is gaining influence in North Africa which causes major challenges and worries.

Bhutan – Rank 38

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

56 points / rank 38 (WWL 2015: 56 points / rank 31)

2. Persecution engines:

Religious nationalism (main), and to a lesser extent *Tribal antagonism* (blended with *Religious nationalism*).

3. Context:

Bhutan is stuck between two giant neighbors: India to its south and China to its north. It does not appear in international headlines much, but gained some fame for its invention of the Gross National Happiness product in order to measure its citizens overall happiness. Politically, not that much has happened in Bhutan where democracy seems to be getting firmer roots, albeit in a climate in which all parties agree with dominance of Buddhism in society and cherish the king. After elections in 2013, the opposition took over power smoothly and is tackling the very normal social and economic questions governments have to take care of. The situation of Christians, which are a small minority among the Bhutanese, remained more or less stable and unchanged as well, which also means that they still lack any formal status and recognition.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

There are no members of historical churches in Bhutan. While expatriate and migrant workers only experience some limitations, Christian converts from Buddhism or Tribal background, as well as members of non-traditional protestant churches, are facing stronger persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Christian converts from Buddhism or a tribal background face strong pressure from their family, friends and neighbors to recant their Christian faith and return to the traditional religion of Bhutan. Christians are discriminated in both their private and business lives. Children are facing discrimination and bias by teachers and co-students in schools and sometimes are even denied access to school. Persecution is usually not violent in Bhutan. In January 2015, Pastor Tandin Wangyal was released from prison after having paid a fine.

6. Future outlook:

As long as government and society are giving Buddhism a prominent and predominant role and as long as the Christian minority is not formally recognized, it will remain vulnerable to accusations and attacks and continue to be perceived as alien.

Comoros – Rank 39

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

56 points / rank 39 (WWL 2015: 56 points / rank 32)

2. Persecution engines:

The main persecution engine affecting Christians in Comoros is *Islamic extremism*. *Dictatorial paranoia* is also visible in the country but is blended with *Islamic extremism*.

3. Context:

Comoros has been on World Watch List for the past 22 years. The constitution declares (Sunni) Islam to be the state religion, but also that everyone's right to have his/her own religion and worship is respected. In society, there is an increasing presence of radical Islamic tendencies on the islands despite a positive trend towards furthering democratic practices. Islamic fundamentalism is on the rise at rates paralleling neighboring East African countries. The constitution reinforces this in dictating that all public policies must be based on Islamic beliefs. Some legal provisions for religious freedom exist, but these are directed more towards foreigners than native Christians. Proselytization of any religion except Islam is illegal, converts can be prosecuted, and MBBs face severe discrimination from the Muslim majority. They are put under pressure not to practice their faith, leaving them little option but to live out their faith effectively in secret. Radical scholars locally known as *Djaulas*, many of whom are from Pakistan, are pushing for stricter sharia rules in the country.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Expatriate Christian communities, non-traditional protestants, and converts to Christianity from Islamic background (MBBs) all face persecution, but converts suffer most severely.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution in Comoros is shaped by *Islamic extremism* (blended with *Dictatorial paranoia*). The average score for the pressure on Christians is comparable to last year. The score for the violence block is now zero (compared to nearly zero in WWL 2015). This suggests that persecution has stabilized at the moment. Christians in Comoros are facing serious pressure in all *spheres of life*, but especially in the *church sphere*. MBBs face the severest form of persecution orchestrated mainly by family, community leaders and government officials. There were no violent incidents registered in the reporting period.

6. Future outlook

It is likely that radical Islam will continue to increase in the country, which will mean that pressure on Christians will continue.

Mexico – Rank 40

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

56 points / rank 40 (WWL 2015: 55 points / rank 38)

2. Persecution engines:

Four distinct persecution engines are present in Mexico: *Organized corruption and crime* (main) and to a lesser extent *Tribal antagonism*, *Denominational protectionism* and *Secular intolerance*.

3. Context:

With over 128.6 million inhabitants (UN figure 2016), Mexico has the largest population in the Spanish speaking world. Mexico also has the largest economy in Latin America (after Brazil). Mexico is one of the most violent countries in the world. [Mexico's number of IDPs](#) (Internally Displaced Persons) has multiplied by 35 in six years, increasing from “only” 8.000 in 2009 to 281.418 in 2014.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All types of Christianity are affected, although there are differences between the persecution engines. *Organized corruption and crime* affects all Christian denominations, but particularly those Christians who actively engage in social transformation and therefore constitute a threat to the hegemony of this engine's drivers. *Tribal antagonism* generally focuses on the situation for those converting from indigenous traditional beliefs to non-traditional protestant denominations, but members of the Catholic Renewal Movement have also been targeted. *Secular intolerance* affects all Christian denominations. *Denominational protectionism*, as stated above, affects all non-traditional forms of Christianity.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution in Mexico is shaped by four persecution engines: *Organized corruption and crime*, *Tribal antagonism*, *Denominational protectionism* and *Secular intolerance*. The pressure on Christians is comparable to last year. The score for the violence block is even higher than last year. This suggests that the persecution situation is characterized more by continued violence (*smash*) than by increasing pressure (*squeeze*) on Christians. This is typical for a situation in which criminal groups terrorize society at local community level.

6. Future outlook:

National security forces have been incapable of adequately addressing the violence and crime, in part because of the infiltration and co-optation of security and judiciary institutions. The security situation in Mexico will continue to be dire, which is always a difficult context for the Church to operate in.

Kuwait – Rank 41

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

56 points / rank 41 (WWL 2015: 49 points / rank 50)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engines active in Kuwait are *Islamic extremism* and to a lesser extent *Dictatorial paranoia* (blended with *Islamic extremism*).

3. Context:

Kuwait is a tiny nation that has a strong economy based on oil. It is one of the richest countries in the Arab world. The country has 4,007,000 inhabitants, of whom more than half are immigrants. Kuwaiti society is conservative. Islam prescribes a wide range of rules for personal, family and community life. Kuwaitis find the idea that religion can be separated from social and political life quite incomprehensible. The constitutional provision regarding religious freedom is full of contradictions. On the one hand, it provides for religious freedom, and on the other hand it puts a very restrictive condition stating that the practice of freedom of religion should not violate established customs, public policy or public morals. The government has been using the traditional conservative tribal society of the country to eliminate the liberal and leftist groups and has so far been very successful. In the process, other religious minorities were also seriously affected. Kuwait has acceded to some of the major United Nations conventions on human rights: e.g. the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Both expatriate Christian communities and converts to Christianity from a Muslim background (MBBs) face persecution, but converts suffer most severely. The impact from Islamic State sympathizers is also growing.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

In Kuwait, Christians face the strongest persecution in the *private sphere of life* followed by the *community sphere*. Converts face the severest form of persecution orchestrated mainly by family (both nuclear and extended), community leaders, religious leaders and government officials. The average score over the first five blocks, showing the pressure on Christians, is seriously higher than last year. As last year, there were no reports of violence towards Christians.

6. Future outlook:

The fear among Christians will continue as the environment in the country becomes more dangerous; society will move further to the far right; and churches will struggle to obtain registration permits.

Kazakhstan – Rank 42

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

55 points / rank 42 (WWL 2015: 51 points / rank 42)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Kazakhstan are *Dictatorial paranoia* and to a lesser extent *Islamic extremism*. Please note that *Dictatorial paranoia* in Kazakhstan is a product of the communist past and has therefore emerged from *Communist and post-communist oppression*, though the ideology of communism has been dead and buried in Kazakhstan for many years.

3. Context:

Three issues dominate Kazakhstan at the moment: the succession of President Nazarbayev, its sizeable Russian minority and the hundreds of Kazakh citizens who have joined radical Muslims in the Middle East.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All types of Christianity exist in Kazakhstan and are experiencing various levels of persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution pressure on Christians has gone up compared with last year. The score for the violence block is slightly higher than last year. This suggests persecution is gradually increasing in the country. Persecution is strongest in the *private, national and church spheres*. This is typical for a situation in which *Dictatorial paranoia* is the leading persecution engine. Pressure from *Islamic extremism* is present mostly in the *private, family and community spheres* and is exerted by the social environment, while *Dictatorial paranoia* – the pressure from the regime – is felt mostly in the *private, national and church spheres*. The overall pressure in Kazakhstan is fired by a regime that seeks to increase its control more and more.

6. Future outlook:

The regime in Kazakhstan is constantly working at increasing its control over the entire society. It is using the threat of radical Islam to restrict more and more freedoms. Religious freedom is restricted by new legislation. This all accounts for a worsening situation for the Christian minority which means the future outlook for them is worrying.

Indonesia – Rank 43

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

55 points / rank 43 (WWL 2015: 50 points / rank 47)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism (main) and to a lesser extent *Religious nationalism* and *Organized corruption and crime*.

3. Context:

Indonesia continues to be a country both blessed and challenged by its diversity. While it is the largest Muslim country in the world, its predominant brand of Islam (*Islam Nusantara*) is fairly tolerant and gives other minorities some space. Indonesia is one of the most de-centralized countries in the world and that is true for the topic of religion as well. A plethora of Islamic by-laws rules regions and territories and the province of Aceh is even ruled by Sharia law, though it is still under Indonesia's constitution which guarantees freedom of religion. President Joko Widodo, who had been elected in a surprising vote in May 2014, is known as leaning towards human rights and having an open ear for minorities. Despite this, his track record has disappointed national and international observers. Religious minorities continued to suffer from radical Islamic groups and Christians faced problems in registering their church buildings and have at times even suffered violent attacks.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Mainly Christian converts from Islam and non-traditional protestant Christians

5. Spheres of life and violence:

If they are living in strictly Islamic areas, Christian converts from Islam (MBBs) face strong pressure from their family, friends and neighbors to recant their Christian faith, though conversion is not forbidden by law. Christians are discriminated in both their private and business lives. Many Christian children have to attend Islam lessons at public schools, due to a lack of Christian teachers. Many are facing discrimination and bias by teachers and co-students as well. Persecution remains violent in recent years: in the reporting period, more than twenty churches were attacked or closed in various provinces. Internationally highlighted was the case of Aceh, where in mid-October 2015 at least nine churches were forcibly closed and broken down and two others were torched. In the resulting unrest, more than 8,000 Christians were forced to flee their homes. An additional 13 churches have been given six months to apply for building permission/registration. Given the rules that 60 non-Christian neighbors are needed to give consent and knowing that this virtually never happens in Aceh, this is an impossible task.

6. Future outlook:

The Christian minority will remain vulnerable to pressure from radicals as the government's law enforcement will remain weak.

Mali – Rank 44

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

55 points / rank 44 (WWL 2015: 52 points / rank 40)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engine in Mali is *Islamic extremism*.

3. Context:

Since the Islamist takeover of northern Mali in mid-2012 and the subsequent French-led effort to restore Malian authority to the entire country in early 2013, the situation of civil liberties and political rights is yet to return to pre-2012 levels in both the north and south of the country. The BBC (20 June 2015) reported that the Tuareg rebels belonging to the Azawad Movements Coalition have finally agreed to the peace deal after their demands (including greater political competences, a regional security force and more investment in the region's development) were met by the government. The question is whether the peace deal will work, considering earlier peace deals have all failed.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Mali is home to the following types of Christianity: Historical Christian communities, Christian converts from a Muslim background (MBBs) and non-traditional protestant churches (such as communities made up of Baptists, Evangelicals and Pentecostals). Even though most Christians live in the south of the country, they feel threatened by the Islamists in the north. The French-led intervention has minimized the threat from the Islamic militants, however, by driving many of them out of the country and from the major northern cities. There are no indications that normal church life can safely resume in northern Mali.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

The persecution situation in Mali is shaped by *Islamic extremism*. The level of pressure decreased (mostly in the *private* and *national spheres*), but the level of violence has increased substantially as a result of terrorist attacks during the reporting period. This suggests a volatile persecution situation. Persecution pressure is highest in the *private* and *family spheres*, lowest in the *national sphere*, and around average in the *community* and *church spheres*. The relatively high score for *violence* indicates that radical forces are increasingly stirring up the situation for Christians and the wider society in a negative way. It is typical for a situation in which persecution is not yet defined by the most radical expressions of Islamic extremism but by more moderate expressions that however still do not give much leeway to Christians.

6. Future outlook:

The main trend Mali is facing is the rising influence of militant Islam and Wahhabism in the country. It will take a long time to build up a Christian presence again in the north of Mali. Islamic militants continue to be active in Mali, notwithstanding the peace deal that was recently signed, and will remain a threat in the years to come.

Turkey – Rank 45

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

55 points / rank 45 (WWL 2015: 52 points / rank 41)

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism.

3. Context:

There are three big trends in Turkey at the moment: the presence of radical Islam, the ethnic conflict and the changing political scene. Each of these trends are linked to each other, and all of them will affect the Church in Turkey.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All types of Christianity in Turkey exist and are experiencing various levels of persecution.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution in Turkey is shaped by *Islamic extremism*. The pressure on Christians is comparable to last year. The score for the violence block is markedly higher. This suggests that the ever present pressure on the Church is now translating into more open violence. Persecution pressure is strongest in the *private, national and church spheres*. Pressure on MBBs is especially acute in the *private sphere* and is mainly exerted by the social environment. The overall pressure is fired by Turkish nationalism and a regime that aims to islamize the country.

6. Future outlook:

Turkey is expected to continue on its current path of gradually enforcing Islamic influences and of continued discrimination against its Christian and other religious minorities. The renewed fighting between the government's military forces and the Kurds will stimulate Turkish nationalism to new heights, which will impact all Christians in Turkey, but converts most of all. The presence of Islamic fundamentalists in Turkey has already proved to be a huge threat for Protestant pastors; converts may expect similar treatment.

Colombia – Rank 46

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

55 points / rank 46 (WWL 2015: 55 points / rank 35)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engines are *Organized corruption and crime*, *Tribal antagonism*, and to a lesser extent *Secular intolerance* and *Denominational protectionism*.

3. Context:

Formally, Colombia is a modern democratic country where the rule of law is established and religious freedom is guaranteed. However, large areas of the country are under the control of criminal organizations, drug cartels, revolutionaries and paramilitary groups. In a context of generalized impunity, all inhabitants of Colombia suffer from the conflict that has lasted for decades, but Christians are specifically vulnerable to such hostilities.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All types of Christianity can become victims of *Organized corruption and crime* by criminal groups, though it affects mostly the more outspoken Christians who play prominent roles in social or public life, or fulfil leadership positions, both at community and national levels. *Secular intolerance* affects all types of Christians in the larger cities that are under government control. *Denominational protectionism* mainly affects non-traditional protestant groups.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Organized corruption and crime expresses itself throughout all *spheres of life* instilling a culture of fear, with a particular emphasis on the *community*, *national* and *church spheres*. *Tribal antagonism* is restricted to indigenous communities. This engine expresses itself mainly in the *family*, *community* and *church spheres*. Sometimes, this engine overlaps with *Organized corruption and crime*, particularly when guerrillas conspire with indigenous tribal leaders against Christians. *Secular intolerance* is a concern mainly in the *national* and *church spheres*.

6. Future outlook: Violence in Colombia will remain a structural phenomenon, even despite the peace talks. In areas where the government has lost control of public security, drug cartels and illegal armed groups still continue to operate with impunity. This means that these criminal gangs will continue to target Christians.

United Arab Emirates (UAE) – Rank 47

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

With a score of 55 United Arab Emirates (UAE) ranks 47. In WWL 2015, the country ranked 49 with a score of 49.

2. Persecution engines:

The main persecution engine affecting Christians in UAE is *Islamic extremism*. *Dictatorial paranoia* is also active (blended with *Islamic extremism*).

3. Context:

The United Arab Emirates is one of the most strategically important and relatively stable countries in a very volatile region. Having a population of less than ten million (of which expatriates make-up around eighty per cent), UAE is one of the free and stable economies in the region and a hub for international financial and construction companies. All decisions about political leadership rest with the dynastic rulers of the seven emirates and there is no place for the will of the people at large. Freedom of religion, press, assembly, association and expression are severely restricted in the kingdom. There is no space or recognition of political parties, according to Freedom House which [rated](#) the country as “not free”. The constitutional provision regarding religious freedom is also full of contradictions. On the one hand, it provides for religious freedom, on the other hand, it puts a very restrictive condition stating that the practice of freedom of religion should not violate established customs, public policy or public morals. Apostasy is punishable by death.

4. Types of Christianity affected

Both expatriate Christian communities and converts to Christianity from Islamic background (MBBs) face persecution, but converts suffer most severely.

5. Spheres of life and violence

In UAE, Christians face the strongest persecution in the *private sphere* followed by the *family* and *community spheres*. Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) face the severest form of persecution. The main drivers are family, community leaders and government officials. The average score over the first five blocks, showing the pressure on Christians, is considerably higher than last year. The score for the violence block is zero (comparable to last year). All but one of the *spheres of life* show an increase in their scores. The highest increase is in the *community* and *family spheres*. This suggests that the increase in persecution stems from social actors.

6. Future outlook

It is likely that radical Islam will continue to increase in the country, which means pressure on Christians will continue. Also, the restrictions by the government will increase.

Bahrain – Rank 48

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

54 points / rank 48 (WWL 2015: outside WWL)

2. Persecution engines:

The main persecution engine affecting Christians in Bahrain is *Islamic extremism. Dictatorial paranoia* is also active (blended with *Islamic extremism*).

3. Context:

Bahrain, a country where Iran and Saudi Arabia show off their political power, is ruled by an authoritarian regime. This mainly Shia-Islamic country is relatively tolerant in general because of its international position in banking and trade. A considerable number of expatriate Christians (mainly from South Asia) work and live in Bahrain and are relatively free to practice their faith in private places of worship, but proselytizing Muslims is illegal. Since the number of compounds is limited, dozens of congregations must use the same building. They are not allowed to advertise their services in Arabic, but they can in English. The constitutional provision regarding religious freedom is full of contradiction. On the one hand, it provides for religious freedom, and on the other hand, it puts a very restrictive condition stating that the practice of freedom of religion should not violate established customs, public policy or public morals.

4. Types of Christianity affected

Both expatriate Christian communities and converts to Christianity from Islamic background (MBBs) face persecution, but converts suffer most severely.

5. Spheres of life and violence

In Bahrain, Christians face the strongest persecution in the *private sphere*. MBBs face the severest form of persecution orchestrated mainly by family, community leaders and government officials. The average score over the first five blocks, showing the pressure on Christians, is high. The score for the violence block is zero. This suggests persecution is gradually building up in a process of increasing pressure, without creating open violence.

6. Future outlook

The region is on the boil and the IS factor is pushing the already conservative society to the extreme. Thus, it is likely that radical Islam will continue to increase in the country, which will mean that pressure on Christians will continue.

Niger – Rank 49

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

53 points / rank 49 (WWL 2015: 46 points / not listed)

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engine in Niger is *Islamic extremism*.

3. Context:

After the liberalization of the associational law in 1991, dozens of Islamic associations emerged, including Wahhabi groups. These organizations have been mostly concerned with the perceived erosion of Niger's religious identity by the secular democratic state. Another important trend in Niger is that the Nigerian terrorist group Boko is increasingly becoming active outside the borders of Nigeria.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

The country has three types of Christianity: Historical Christian communities, such as Roman Catholic churches, Christian converts from a Muslim background (MBBs) and non-traditional protestant churches. Sometimes the pressure on Christians only affects MBBs, sometimes all three types of Christianity are affected.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

Persecution in Niger is shaped by *Islamic extremism*. Although the pressure on Christians is increasing, it is still relatively moderate. However, small incidents can spark very high levels of violence. The pressure on Christians is highest in the *private, family and community spheres*. This is typical for a situation in which moderate Islamic expressions predominate above radical expressions, but the high score for *violence* shows the increasing threat of radical Islamic expressions against Christians and the society in general.

6. Future outlook:

The future for the Church in Niger is worrying. A considerable part of the southern third of the country seems prone to persistent Islamic hostilities. The proximity of hardline Islamic groups in the upper north of Nigeria and northern Mali (Azawad) is far from reassuring. The churches do not seem prepared for higher pressure from radical Islam.

Oman – Rank 50

0. Reporting period: 1 November 2014 - 31 October 2015

1. WWL 2016-Position:

With a score of 53 Oman ranks 50. In WWL 2015, the country ranked 39 with the score of 55.

2. Persecution engines:

Islamic extremism (main) and to a lesser extent *Dictatorial paranoia* (blended with *Islamic extremism*).

3. Context:

Located at the confluence of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea, Oman had been one of the influential sultanates during the medieval period. The current sultan came to power in 1970 after deposing his own father. The sultan is credited for bringing security and stability to a country that has a history of war and conflict and is also credited with introducing democratic reforms. Even as many Arab states have succumbed to sectarian violence and political tumult, the Sultanate of Oman has stood out as a beacon of tranquility and tolerance. Oman is the country of Ibadi Islam, a sect which is supposed to be far less violent than mainstream Sunni or Shi'a. The rise of Islamic State (IS) is putting the region on edge. Even though the issue of IS is not the main concern for Oman, the fighting in Yemen is giving the country massive problems. The constitutional provision regarding religious freedom is full of contradictions. On the one hand, it provides for religious freedom, and on the other, it puts restrictions stating that the practice of freedom of religion should not violate established customs, public policy or public morals.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Both expatriate Christian communities and converts to Christianity from a Muslim background (MBBs) face persecution, but converts suffer most severely.

5. Spheres of life and violence:

In Oman, Christians face the strongest persecution in the *private sphere* followed by the *church sphere*. Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) face strong persecution mainly from family, community leaders and government officials. The average score over the first five blocks, showing the pressure on Christians, is lower than last year. The score for the violence block is zero (same as last year). All but one *spheres of life* show a decrease in their scores. The highest decrease is in the *national sphere*, while the *community sphere* increased its score. This suggests that though the regime might release the pressure a bit, social actors partly compensate for it.

6. Future outlook:

It is expected that the situation for Christians in the country will remain unchanged.