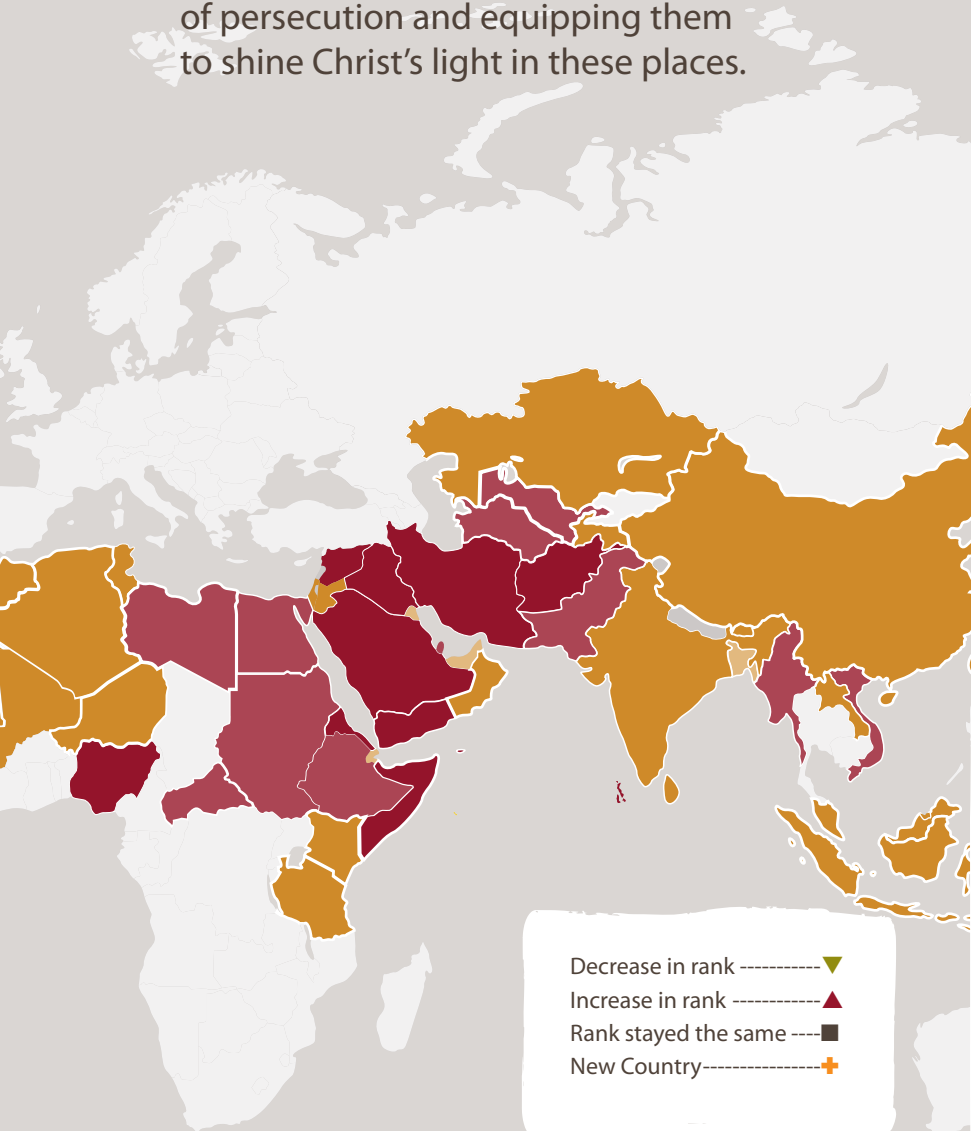


2014 World Watch List OpenDoors

The World Watch List (WWL) is a ranking of 50 countries where persecution of Christians for religious reasons is most severe.

Open Doors works in the world's most oppressive countries, strengthening Christians to stand strong in the face of persecution and equipping them to shine Christ's light in these places.



Decrease in rank -----▼
 Increase in rank -----▲
 Rank stayed the same -----■
 New Country -----+

COUNTRY	RANK	2013
North Korea	1	1
Somalia	2	5
Syria	3	11
Iraq	4	4
Afghanistan	5	3
Saudi Arabia	6	2
Maldives	7	6
Pakistan	8	14
Iran	9	8
Yemen	10	9
Sudan	11	12
Eritrea	12	10
Libya	13	17
Nigeria	14	13
Uzbekistan	15	16
Central African Republic	16	new
Ethiopia	17	15
Vietnam	18	21
Qatar	19	20
Turkmenistan	20	19
Laos	21	18
Egypt	22	25
Myanmar	23	32
Brunei	24	27
Colombia	25	46
Jordan	26	34
Oman	27	22
India	28	31
Sri Lanka	29	new
Tunisia	30	30
Bhutan	31	28
Algeria	32	29
Mali	33	7
Palestinian Territories	34	36
United Arab Emirates	35	26
Mauritania	36	23
China	37	37
Kuwait	38	33
Kazakhstan	39	48
Malaysia	40	42
Bahrain	41	35
Comoros	42	41
Kenya	43	40
Morocco	44	39
Tajikistan	45	44
Djibouti	46	43
Indonesia	47	45
Bangladesh	48	new
Tanzania	49	24
Niger	50	50

A Deeper Look Into The Top 3 Countries On The World Watch List



NORTH KOREA #1



90/100
score

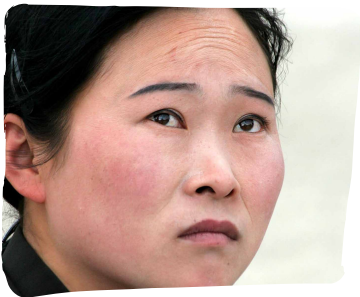
Leader: Kim Jong-Un

Population: 24.5 million (300,000 Christians)

Main Religion: Atheism/traditional beliefs

Government: Communist dictatorship

Source of persecution: Communist oppression/ Dictatorial paranoia



PRAY

- + For the 50,000-70,000 Christians imprisoned in labor camps. Ask God to sustain them.
- + That God would change the heart of Kim Jong-Un, and use him to reform the country.
- + For protection for Open Doors workers and contacts bringing practical and spiritual support to believers.

North Korea ranks first on the 2014 World Watch List for the 12th consecutive year. It is safe to say that nothing has improved for Christians since Kim Jong Un took over power. Pressure remains extremely high and there is virtually no way to escape for those who don't live near the Chinese border.

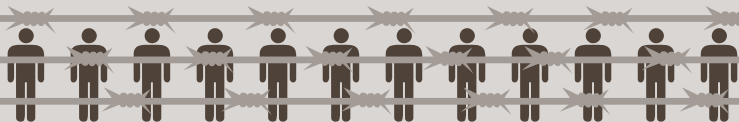
In most countries, there is a mixture of different persecution engines, though regularly one can be identified as the main one. In North Korea, there is one all-encompassing persecution engine, excluding all other possible engines: Communist oppression.

The God-like worship of the rulers leaves no room for any other religion. Any reverence not concentrated on the Kim dynasty will be seen as dangerous and state-threatening.

Not only will the believers themselves be punished if they are discovered, but likely also their families. Immediate family members, even if they aren't Christians themselves, will serve a sentence in a re-education camp. Christians are sent to political labor camps, from which there is no release possible.

According to recent reports about the labor camp systems, it is estimated that political prison camps house approximately 150,000 to 200,000 inmates, not including all those in the other types of prisons in the country. One report suggests the number of political prisoners dropped to between 80,000 and 120,000 people, due to the high death rate. In prison No. 15 alone (Yodok Prison Camp), experts estimate there could be up to 6,000 Christians incarcerated.

AN ESTIMATED **50,000 TO 70,000** CHRISTIANS



SUFFER DAILY IN **NORTH KOREA'S** PRISON CAMPS

SOMALIA #2



80/100
score

Leader: President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud
Population: 10.3 million (A few hundred Christians)
Main Religion: Islam

Government: Federal republic
Source of persecution: Islamic extremism



Behind North Korea, Somalia ranks as the second most difficult place to be a Christian in the world. The main types of Christians in Somalia are Christian converts from a Muslim Background, also known as Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) and there is a tiny population of expatriate aid workers. The position of Christians in Somalia has deteriorated and most face extreme persecution.

The majority of people within Somalia are Muslim, and no one is expected to be a Christian. Moreover, Islamic religious leaders publicly maintain that there is no room for Christianity, Christians and churches in Somalia. This view is upheld and reinforced on different levels by government officials of the various administrations (including the Somalia Federal Government, located in Mogadishu), political parties and ordinary people.

PRAY

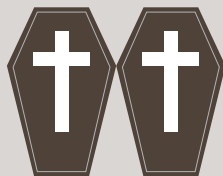
- + Praise God that, despite the pressures, He has preserved a Christian witness in Somalia.
- + For the very few, often isolated believers. Ask God to provide ways for them to mature in Christ.
- + That Christians would have more freedom to worship Jesus.

Additionally, the violent, militant Islamist terrorist group, al-Shabaab, subscribes to the Wahhabist doctrine and advocates for Sharia law as basis to regulate all aspects of life in Somalia (i.e. legal, political, social and economic). Al-Shabaab's implementation of its Wahhabist worldview is so extreme that, according to an Open Doors field researcher, even Sufi-Muslims moved underground to avoid persecution by al-Shabaab. The social structure underpinning the way in which Somalia is governed is tribal. Clans within this tribal system maintain their own militias. This tribal system allows Islamic extremism, via groups like al-Shabaab, to flourish in Somalia.

In 2012, Transparency International's Corruption Index indicated that Somalia was the worst country in terms of corruption. Subsequently, this contributes to the existing levels of violence and impunity in the country and compounds to Somalia's already intensive levels of persecution.

In the country's very recent history, MBBs - or those accused of being MBBs - have often been killed on the spot when discovered. Over the reporting period, the situation appears to have worsened. The government intensified investigations into people who are Christians and in a position of leadership. Subsequently, there have been attempts to arrest Christians. Surveillance of (alleged) 'tentmakers' has increased as well. An Open Doors field researcher indicated that ordinary citizens - in collaboration with al-Shabaab - have been involved in the killing of Christians. The researcher stated that: "Believers have been betrayed into the hands of al-Shabaab by their neighbors..."

Open Doors field reports indicate that Somali Christians have to hide their belief to get access to basic necessities, such as basic social services, education or justice. Church life is constrained and has to remain underground. Believers are organized in small community groups and meet in secret across the country.



IF CHRISTIANS FROM A MUSLIM BACKGROUND ARE DISCOVERED IN SOMALIA, THEY ARE THREATENED WITH IMMEDIATE EXECUTION.



SYRIA #3



79/100
score

Leader: President Bashar al-Assad

Population: 21.8 million (1.3 million Christians)

Main Religion: Islam

Government: Republic

Source of persecution: Islamic extremism



For the first time in the history of the World Watch List, Syria enters the top ten. Before this, the country rose considerably from ranking 36th in 2012 to 11th in 2013.

The face of persecution in Syria has changed. The main persecution engine in pre-civil war Syria was totalitarian paranoia. Today, the current predominant engine has become Islamic extremism. A recent study by renowned defense consultancy, IHS Jane's, estimates that nearly half of rebels fighting in Syria have a jihadist or hardline Islamist background. The influence of these groups that are linked to Al Qaeda and other extremist factions has risen considerably in the past year.

PRAY

- + For protection for the many believers who have chosen to stay in Syria to serve their communities.
- + For Open Doors workers and partners bring relief to thousands of displaced Christian families.
- + For a peaceful end to the conflict that has torn this country apart.

As indeed the conflict is becoming more and more sectarian, targeted violence against Christians has increased. The sectarian dimension of the conflict is indeed a factor that has made Christians, as a religious/ethnic minority, more vulnerable. The USCIRF, in a special report entitled Protecting and Promoting Religious Freedom in Syria points out: 'Due to the intensifying conflict between government forces and affiliates supporting Bashar al-Assad's regime, and anti-government elements seeking his overthrow, the Syrian people have experienced egregious violations of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief.'

Before the civil war four main groups of Christians were present in Syria. Today, practically the entire community of expatriate Christians has left, because of the dangerous situation in the country. The civil war has caused large numbers of the remaining three types to flee the country. There are Christians from the historical churches, (mostly Syrian Orthodox Church and Roman Catholic Church), Christian converts from a Muslim background (MBBs) and a small number of Protestants. Additionally, there are several Christian refugees from Iraq. In total there are 1.3 million Christians in Syria, compared to 1.7 million Christians last year.

Open Doors has received reports of many Christians being abducted, physically harmed and killed. Within the context of the civil war, many churches have been damaged or destroyed, in many cases deliberately. On October 21st, Sadad, a predominantly Christian town, was invaded by Islamist militias, before being re-taken by the Syrian army on October 31.

Stories were told of 45 civilians being murdered and dumped into mass graves. "What happened in Sadad is the most serious and biggest massacre of Christians in Syria in the past two years and a half," says to Archbishop Selwanos Boutros Alnemeh, Syriac Orthodox Metropolitan of Homs and Hama. "It is the largest massacre of Christians in Syria and the second in the Middle East after the one in the Church of Our Lady of Salvation in Iraq in 2010. We have shouted out to the world, but no-one has listened to us. Where is the Christian conscience? Where is human consciousness? Where are my brothers?"

At the end of October, over in Raqqah, there were reports of Bibles and other Christian literature being burned in front of the Greek Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation and a cross ripped off the top of the Armenian Church in Tal Abyad and set alight by militants from ISIS.

