



Libya – #11

WWL 2017 / Summary

Reporting period: 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 78 / Position: 11

WWL 2016: Points: 79 / Position: 10

2. Main persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Libya are *Islamic Oppression* and to a lesser extent *Organised Corruption and Crime* (blended with *Islamic Oppression*).

3. Context:

Libya is still mired in the conflict and chaos that engulfed the nation since Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's regime was toppled. The country had since then been in a state of anarchy with various militant groups controlling different parts of the country. An UN-brokered deal that attempted to bring the various factions into one inclusive Government of National Accord has not been successful. With US and European support, forces loyal to the Unity Government had been able to defeat Islamic State (IS) forces and expel them from their stronghold in Sirte.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Of the four World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christianity only two exist in Libya: Communities of expatriate or migrant Christians and communities of converts to Christianity from a Muslim background (BMBs). Both experience extreme pressure and high levels of violence.

5. Pressure in the 5 spheres of life and violence:

- Overall, the pressure on Christians is at an extreme level and increased considerably in comparison to WWL 2016.
- Pressure is most extreme in the *national*, *church* and *private* spheres.
- Pressure in the *community* sphere is also extreme. Tribal ties in Libya are strong and blended with *Islamic Oppression*. Therefore, the pressure from the community on BMBs to return to Islam will be very intense.
- The violence level is high but lower than in WWL 2016 when it was very high. The impunity of those who perpetrate violent attacks against Christians exacerbates the problem.
- The persecution situation in Libya is fuelled by the state of anarchy in the country and the violent conflict in which Islamic militias are active, resulting in the persecution of both Libyan BMBs and migrant Christians.

6. Future outlook:

Due to the continuing prominence of local militias, including militant Salafist militias, and the absence of a government that has effective authority across the country, Christians cannot expect their situation to improve substantially in the foreseeable future. Widespread impunity for crimes committed against Christians is likely to continue. Even if the prominence and military might of IS has diminished in 2016, the influence of militant Salafist groups in Libya is going to persist. The existence of rival governments in eastern and western Libya, the prevalence of tribalism, and the



fact that the country is awash with all kinds of arms mean that the future of Libya (as well as that of Christians in Libya) looks bleak.

7. Prayer Points:

- Pray that God would disrupt the plans of the Islamic State in Libya to show them his mercy, grace, and sovereignty over all.
- Pray for the growing church of believers from a Muslim background in Libya, especially those who are isolated from other believers. Pray for Libyan believers scattered throughout Europe. Some of them are still facing persecution from their family back home.
- Pray that many would hear the Gospel through the Internet and social media. Pray for new believers, for their protection, and for possibilities to grow in faith.

8. Role of Open Doors

In cooperation with local partners and churches, Open Doors is supporting the church in Libya through the following activities:

- Training.
- Literature distribution.
- Socioeconomic development.
- Advocacy.
- Open Doors also raises prayer for believers in difficult situations.