



Nigeria – #12

WWL 2017 / Summary

Reporting period: 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 12 / Position: 78

WWL 2016: Points: 12 / Position: 78

2. Main persecution engines:

In Nigeria the persecution engines affecting Christians are *Islamic Oppression* (main) and to a lesser extent *Tribal Antagonism* and *Organised Corruption and Crime*.

3. Context:

Nigeria is a federal country with Christian majorities in the southern states and mainly Muslim majorities in the northern states. Twelve states have instituted sharia, partially or fully since 1999. Since Muhammadu Buhari became president in 2015, Nigeria's military campaign against Boko Haram has been relatively successful in dislodging the group from the territories it had occupied in the northern parts of the country. Despite Buhari's intention to fight Boko Haram, which has been responsible for much of the violence against Christians in recent years, the government seems to be reluctant to respond to the continuing violence against Christians in the Middle Belt region caused by Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christianity exist in Nigeria and are affected to varying degrees in the northern states: Communities of expatriate or migrant Christians, Historical Christian communities, communities of converts to Christianity (from a Muslim background, BMBs) and non-traditional Protestant Christian communities.

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

- Overall, the pressure on Christians in (northern) Nigeria is at a very high level and rose very slightly compared to WWL 2016.
- Pressure is strongest and at a very high level in the *community* and *national* spheres of life. This is typical for all types of Christianity in northern Nigeria where converts to Christianity face enormous pressure to renounce their faith and all types of Christianity are restricted in their access to community resources.
- Pressure from *Islamic Oppression* is also high in the private and family sphere in northern Nigeria especially in relation to BMBs.
- The violence score is at an extreme level but not as high as the maximum reached in the WWL 2016 reporting period.
- The overall persecution situation is fuelled by *Islamic Oppression*, but in northern Nigeria and the Middle Belt it is also partly fuelled by *Ethnic Antagonism*. The prevalence of corruption also exacerbates the situation since it fosters a culture of impunity for those who attack Christians.

6. Future outlook:



Islamic Oppression and Ethnic Antagonism are likely to persist in Nigeria in the foreseeable future, making especially northern Nigeria a dangerous place for Christians. Buhari's campaigns against Boko Haram have had some success, but the group is also intensifying its attacks and making more frequent inroads into neighbouring countries such as Niger, Chad and Cameroon. Until now, the government has taken no decisive measures concerning the violence of Hausa-Fulani Muslim herdsmen against mainly Christian farmers in the Middle Belt region. However, this situation might change and the government might become more responsive as the prospect of the next election looms larger.

7. Prayer Points:

- Pray for the protection of Nigerian Christians, particularly for women who are in danger of being abducted and forced to marry Muslim men.
- Pray for comfort for the thousands of Nigerian Christians displaced in targeted violence. Pray for wisdom for Open Doors partners as they serve these communities.
- In the northern states of Nigeria, that are majority Muslim, Christian communities are neglected and often left without clean water, clinics, and roads. Pray that the Lord would provide.

8. Role of Open Doors

Open Doors partners with the local church to strengthen, support, equip, and provide assistance to persecuted believers in northern Nigeria. This collaboration supports the following activities:

- Persecution preparedness.
- Christian education.
- Holistic mission for community transformation.
- New believer care and discipleship.
- Servant leadership development.
- Legal assistance.
- Trauma counselling.
- Emergency relief.