



Algeria – #36

WWL 2017 / Summary

Reporting period: 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 58 / Position: 36

WWL 2016: Points: 56 / Position: 37

2. Main persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Algeria are *Islamic Oppression* (main engine) and to a lesser extent *Dictatorial Paranoia* (blended with *Islamic Oppression*) and *Organised Corruption and Crime*.

3. Context:

Ageing President Abdelaziz Bouteflika is currently serving his fourth term as president and is backed by the military and security establishment. The question of who will succeed him as president is of concern to many Algerians. In the context of the growing role of Islamic militancy in the region, Islamist movements such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) are increasingly making their presence felt in Algeria. Furthermore, Ordinance No. 06-03 of 2006, intended to regulate non-Islamic religions has created a more restrictive environment for Christians in Algeria. In addition to the security challenges, Algeria has faced serious economic problems due to low energy prices in the international market.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christianity exist in Algeria and are facing varying degrees of persecution as the law officially prohibits public assembly for purposes of practicing a faith other than Islam: Communities of expatriate or migrant Christians, Historical Christian communities (such as Roman Catholics), communities of converts to Christianity with a Muslim background (BMBs) and non-traditional Protestant Christian communities. Almost all Christians in Algeria are BMBs. Catholic churches, however, including a cathedral in Algiers, conduct services without government interference, as does at least one Protestant church.

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

- Overall, the pressure on Christians 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 *family* and *private* spheres of life, which is typical for the persecution resulting from engine *Islamic Oppression* and particularly affecting BMBs.
- The next strongest pressure (also very high level) is exerted in the *national* sphere caused by the Ordinance No. 06-03 of 2006.
- The score for violence against Christians is at a low level but increased sharply compared to WWL 2016.

6. Future outlook:

Should President 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, which is majority BMB, may be far worse off in a new political constellation if Islamists capitalise upon the societal discontent as they did in Tunisia and Egypt. It is certain that militant Islam is gaining influence in North Africa and is looking for an opportunity to disrupt the status quo in Algeria. It is possible that the army and security establishment would attempt to maintain the status quo and ensure continuity in the country. But this will not be easy to accomplish, especially given the economic pressure the country is also facing.

7. Prayer Points:

- The political future remains uncertain in Algeria and it seems that the government is trying to prepare a succession for President Bouteflika. Pray for a smooth transition without violence. Pray also that the 'new' government will be more open towards Christians and will acknowledge their rights as lawful citizens.
- It is a praise point to see that the Algerian church continues to grow. Pray for the new believers who enter the Church. Pray they will grow spiritually.
- Pray for the Christians who are persecuted by their families, which can be the case for believers from a Muslim background. Please pray for their protection and that they will love and forgive those who persecute them.

8. Role of Open Doors

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

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