



China – #39

WWL 2017 / Summary

Reporting period: 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 57 / Position: 39

WWL 2016: Points: 57 / Position: 33

2. Main persecution engines:

Communist and post-Communist Oppression (main) and to a lesser extent *Islamic Oppression* and *Religious Nationalism*.

3. Context:

A considerable part of persecution targets the small converted minorities among the Tibetans and the Muslim Uyghurs, but Christians among the main Han majority face increasing restrictions too. The campaign of breaking down crosses in the province of Zhejiang has ended, but church meetings continued to be disrupted in several provinces. The new NGO law and the new draft regulations on religion are signs of tightening control on Christians in particular. As Christians are the largest social force in China not controlled by the Communist Party, there are increasing efforts to bring them under state control.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christianity are affected by persecution in China. While communities of expatriate or migrant Christians, Historical Christian communities (including government-controlled churches) and non-traditional Protestant Christian communities are monitored and limited in their freedom of religion, the communities of converts to Christianity – very small groups of Christian converts from Muslim or Tibetan background – are particularly targeted. In their case the main perpetrator is not the state, but families, communities and religious leaders.

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

- Overall, the pressure on Christians remains high and almost on the same level as in the WWL 2016 reporting period.
- The pressure is strongest in the *church* and *private* spheres of life. While pressure in the church sphere is typical for countries where *Communist and Post-Communist Oppression* is active, the pressure in the private sphere points to problems Christian converts from Muslim or Tibetan background are facing.
- Pressure from *Islamic Oppression* and *Religious Nationalism* is present not only in the *private* sphere, but also in the *family* and *community* sphere. But even pressure from *Communist and Post-Communist Oppression* can be felt in these spheres, for example, in questions dealing with education.
- Violence is at a very high level and increased in comparison to WWL 2016, reflecting the reality that churches were closed and landlords pressured to stop renting out premises to Christians. There are still a considerable number of Christians imprisoned.



6. Future outlook:

The first four years of President Xi Jinping's rule have seen a reduction in freedom in all sectors of society. This is likely to affect the Church in the near future as the local authorities already seem to be getting more restrictive by emphasising Communist ideology and by limiting the space in which churches can operate, as they come under pressure to adapt their ministry. These developments are most likely going to continue as the new NGO law and the draft regulations on religion indicate. *Communist and Post-Communist Oppression* will continue to be the main engine fuelling persecution in China.

7. Prayer Points:

- Pray for the growth of believers from Muslim Uyghur and Tibetan Buddhist backgrounds. Though there is generally more freedom for Christians in China these days, in many small communities converts continue to experience pressure from family, friends, and community.
- Pray for Chinese Christians to reach out to the many atheists and Confucianists who have not heard the Gospel. That they would do so wisely and with love.
- Pray that Christ will reveal himself to government officials who seek to control the Church.

8. Role of Open Doors

The present role of our ministry in China is based upon the following pillars:

- Raising awareness of persecution among Chinese Christians.
- Providing basic biblical and discipleship training to the most persecuted Christian groups, Muslim and Tibetan background Christians (BMBs & BTBs).
- Distributing contextualised Christian literature to BMBs and BTBs.
- Providing support to Chinese Christians in persecution preparation in a contextualised manner, along with the possible tightening religious restrictions.