



## Comoros – #42

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### WWL 2017 / Summary

**Reporting period:** 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

**1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 56 / Position: 42**

WWL 2016: Points: 56 / Position: 39

**2. Main Persecution engines:**

*Islamic Oppression* is the main persecution engine affecting Christians in Comoros. *Dictatorial Paranoia* is also present but is blended with *Islamic Oppression*.

**3. Context:**

This Indian Ocean island nation has been listed since the first WWL 1993. The Sunni majority nation has adopted a constitution that declares (Sunni) Islam to be the state religion. In society, there is an increasing presence of radical Islamic tendencies despite a positive trend towards furthering democratic practices. The constitution states that all public policies must be based on Islamic beliefs. Some legal provisions for religious freedom exist, but these are directed more towards foreigners than native Christians. Proselytization of any religion except Islam is illegal, converts can be prosecuted, and Believers from a Muslim Background (BMBs) face severe discrimination from the Muslim majority. They are put under pressure not to practice their faith, leaving them little option but to live out their faith in secret. Radical scholars locally known as *Djaulas*, many of whom are from Pakistan or trained in other Muslim nations, are pushing for stricter sharia laws in the country.

**4. Types of Christianity affected:**

All World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christianity exist in the country except Historical Christian communities. Communities of expatriate and migrant Christians and non-traditional Protestant Christian communities face persecution, but communities of converts to Christianity (here: from a Muslim background, BMBs) are the most affected.

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

- Overall, the pressure on Christians in Comoros is at a very high level but did decrease very slightly compared to the WWL 2016 reporting period.
- The *church* and *private* spheres are where Christians are affected most and both scores were very high. The same pattern existed in WWL 2016.
- *Islamic Oppression* and *Dictatorial Paranoia* are the engines that are causing the persecution, with BMBs facing the severest difficulties at the hands of family, community leaders and government officials.
- The score for violence is very low but rose from zero in WWL 2016.

**6. Future outlook**

The fact that elections were held in 2016 in a relatively peaceful manner will help the country strengthen the advancement of democratic values. However, it is likely that radical Islam will



continue to increase in the country, which will mean that pressure on Christians will continue despite progress in democracy.

#### **7. Prayer Points:**

- Pray for Christian parents from Muslim backgrounds. Their children are taught from the Qur'an in schools. Pray they might have wisdom in raising their children in the truth of God's Word.
- Pray for house churches in Comoros. They are frequently spied on and denied the right to distribute Bibles. Pray for protection and increased freedom.
- Pray for political leaders who have pitted themselves against Christ and his followers. Pray for a change of heart and that they might come to know the Lord.

#### **8. Role of Open Doors**

Through local partnerships, Open Doors has walked alongside Christians in Comoros since the 1990s. Through strategic partnerships with the local Church, Open Doors supports and equips the persecuted Church with the following:

- Integrated economic development.
- Leadership and management development
- Cross-cultural evangelism.