



## Egypt – #21

---

# WWL 2017 / Summary

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

**1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 65 / Position: 21**

WWL 2016: Points: 64 / Position: 22

**2. Main persecution engines:**

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

**3. Context:**

President al-Sisi's authoritarian style of government has to some extent restored the rule of law in Egypt, but also implies a stricter compliance with the relatively restrictive legislation related to religious affairs. Islamist groups that feel aggrieved by President Morsi's removal from power also target Christians who are perceived to have supported Morsi's removal. Therefore, Egyptian Christians live in a deeply polarised society where the chasm between Islamists and secularist/nationalist Egyptians is detrimental to stability. President al-Sisi's government seems determined to fight Islamic militants but at the same time seems unlikely to take significant measures to ensure the freedom of religion and equal citizenship of Christians.

**4. Types of Christianity affected:**

Of the four World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christianity existing in Egypt, communities of expatriates or migrant Christians experience the least problems. The brunt of persecution is borne by communities of converts to Christianity from a Muslim background (BMBs). Historic Christian communities and non-traditional Protestant Christian communities may also suffer attacks.

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

- Overall, the pressure on Christians in Egypt is at a high level but decreased very slightly compared to WWL 2016.
- Pressure is strongest in the *family* sphere (very high score), and next strongest in the *community* and *private* spheres (both high level scores). This situation is typical for the persecution engine *Islamic Oppression*, where BMBs cannot worship openly and suffer hostilities from family and local leaders.
- In the *national* sphere (high level pressure), Coptic Christian communities face legislative restrictions.
- The violence score is at an extreme level and increased in comparison to WWL 2016. Attacks were carried out both by the society at large and by militant Salafist groups.
- The overall persecution situation in Egypt is fuelled mainly by *Islamic Oppression*, which is pervasive in all spheres of life. Christians are squeezed by the community, the state and non-state Islamic groups. BMBs also face an added pressure from their family to renounce their faith.



## 6. Future outlook:

The elements that will determine Egypt's future are essentially political and economic. The country faces a seemingly unbridgeable ideological-religious divide between various expressions of radical Islam (Salafism and Muslim Brotherhood) and secularists (nationalist and liberals). The threat of radical Islamic movements in Egypt is clearly far from averted. The prevalence of unemployment among the youth and the stagnation of the economy also fosters discontent within the population. This situation creates an environment that could be exploited by the radical Islamist groups. Unless the government finds a way to address these issues, militant groups could destabilise the country and intensify the persecution of Christians.

## 7. Prayer Points:

- Pray for Christian converts who are ousted from their homes for leaving Islam. Pray that the Lord would provide for them and that he would comfort their hearts.
- Pray that God would bring even the leaders of Islamist groups to Christ, that they would be used for His purposes.
- Pray for Christians who have been slighted in social, political, and legal affairs to entrust their situation to God.

## 8. Role of Open Doors

In cooperation with local churches and other partnering ministries, Open Doors is supporting the church in Egypt through the following activities:

- Family ministry.
- Youth ministry.
- General education.
- Literacy training.
- Advocacy.
- Medical outreach.
- Widows' ministry.
- Women empowerment ministry.