



Indonesia – #46

WWL 2017 / Summary

Reporting period: 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 55 / Position: 46

WWL 2016: Points: 55 / Position: 43

2. Main persecution engines: The persecution engines affecting Christians in Indonesia are *Islamic Oppression* (main) and to a lesser extent *Religious Nationalism* and *Organised Corruption and Crime*.

3. Context:

Claims that Indonesia would be unaffected by Islamic State (IS), due to its special brand of moderate and diverse Islam, were shattered when an attack against a café in Jakarta on 14 January 2016 claimed seven lives. Radical Islamic groups continue to pose serious challenges, especially when connected to international movements. Most citizens are not interested in issues of religion or minorities (as was demonstrated by a poll published in May 2016), instead they are more concerned about quick economic improvements. The government is taking the fight against extremists seriously: In July 2016 it killed the leader of the East Indonesian Mujahedin (MIT), “Santoso”, in Central Sulawesi.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christianity exist in Indonesia, but the level of persecution they encounter differs. Communities of expatriate or migrant Christians, which usually congregate in large cities, are least affected. Historical Christian communities are often limited to certain ethnic groups which make the spreading of the religion quite conspicuous, thus drawing persecution. The strongest persecution is felt by communities of converts to Christianity, consisting here of Believers from a Muslim Background (BMBs), be it from their families or Islamic militants. Non-traditional Protestant Christian communities are under pressure from radical Islamic elements due to evangelism.

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

- The overall pressure on Christians is high and increased very slightly since the WWL 2016 reporting period.
- Pressure is strongest in the *community* sphere (very high level) and *family* sphere (high level) followed by the *private* sphere (high level). This pattern is typical in situations resulting from the interaction of *Islamic Oppression* and *Religious Nationalism* where pressure is particularly being exerted on converts by the social environment.
- The level of recorded violence against Christians remains very high, but was less than in the WWL 2016 reporting period.

6. Future outlook:

A survey of the Wahid Foundation, published in August 2016, found that 8.1% of the Indonesian adult population (approximately 12 million people) hold hard-line beliefs. This shows that



Christians remain vulnerable to societal discrimination and even to violence, as is the case in many areas reaching beyond Aceh in the so-called “hot-spot” areas. One of the greater unknowns at the moment is how strongly the largest Muslim organisations in the country will try to oppose these radical views. The mass protests against the ethnic Chinese and Christian Governor Ahok of Jakarta for alleged blasphemy brought over 200 000 people to the streets. The current protests in Jakarta are a clear sign that Islamic oppression in Indonesia is much stronger than is commonly perceived, posing a significant danger for Christians and other religious minorities.

7. Prayer Points:

- Pray for Christian children in public schools of strong Islamic regions who often experience discrimination in their grades. This forfeits them from future jobs in the government. Pray for encouragement, comfort, and a sense of hope for the students, as well as for them to remain strong in their faith.
- Pray for Christian converts from Islam who are heavily pressured to renounce their faith. Pray they would have access to Bibles. Pray for Christian congregations who cannot secure church buildings.
- Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world. Pray that the many Indonesian Muslims would come to know Christ.

8. Role of Open Doors

The present role of Open Doors’ ministry is based upon the following pillars:

- Preparing believers how to deal with persecution and how to react through *Standing Strong Through the Storm* seminars.
- Equipping and training believers, with special emphasis on BMBs and understanding Islam.
- Facilitating gatherings to foster unity among churches and mission agencies.
- Providing Bibles and other Christian literature, particularly for BMBs.
- Providing assistance through socioeconomic development.
- Providing advocacy and immediate relief to victims of persecution.