



Jordan – #27

WWL 2017 / Summary

Reporting period: 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 63 / Position: 27

WWL 2016: Points: 59 / Position: 27

2. Main persecution engines:

The main persecution engines affecting Christians in Jordan are *Islamic Oppression* and *Ethnic Antagonism* (blended with *Islamic Oppression*).

3. Context:

Jordanian society is multi-ethnic – a phenomenon which is also reflected by the monarch’s family. Jordan hosts large groups of refugees, mostly from Syria but also from Iraq and Africa, which leads to economic, political and religious pressure and is a potential destabilising factor. The number of Christians in the country has been declining for half a century. For a long time, Jordan was one of the most liberal countries of the region in terms of freedom of religion. However, the tide seems to be turning for Christians – especially for Christian converts from a Muslim background (BMBs) who suffer the most persecution.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Communities of expatriate and migrant Christians exist but not as a separate group. Historical Christian communities, communities of converts to Christianity (here from a Muslim background – BMBs) and non-traditional Protestant Christian communities all experience varying levels of persecution.

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

- Overall, the pressure on Christians in Jordan is at a very high level and the average score increased greatly compared to the WWL 2016 reporting period. (This increase was also due to adjustments based on the availability of more information. In reality, pressure on Christians did not change that much compared to the WWL2016.)
- Pressure is strongest and at a very high scores in the *private, church, and family* spheres of life. This is typical for a situation in which *Islamic Oppression* is the main persecution engine combined with *Ethnic Antagonism*.
- Pressure from *Islamic Oppression* in the *private, family and community* spheres especially affects BMBs. Family, local authorities, and non-Christian leaders are important drivers of persecution here.
- The score for violence decreased in comparison to WWL 2016 and remains at a low level.
- The overall pressure in Jordan is characterised by a serious oppression of BMBs and a relatively free situation for the other types of Christianity as long as they do not cross the line in evangelising Muslims.

6. Future outlook:

The Jordanian king, Abdullah II, wants to reform society and is implementing measures that are



beneficial to religious minorities including Christians. However, this is dividing society and leading to unrest, especially among conservative Muslims. The extra-judicial killing of a prominent author after posting a cartoon mocking 'the god of Daesh' (i.e. Islamic State (IS)) shows how freedom of expression is being suppressed by radical Islamic elements. This is leading to increasing pressure on Christians and others with views not in line with radical Islam.

7. Prayer Points:

- Pray for Christian converts interrogated by police and abused or abducted by family members. Pray that the Lord would provide protection and healing.
- Pray that the refugee crisis would provide an opportunity for many to hear the Gospel.
- Pray for Muslims to be struck by the love of their Christian neighbours and that they would be drawn to Christ.

8. Role of Open Doors

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

- Training.
- Relief and rehabilitation.
- Open Doors also raises prayer support for believers in Jordan.