



Kazakhstan – #43

WWL 2017 / Summary

Reporting period: 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 56 / Position: 43

WWL 2016: Points: 55 / Position: 42

2. Main persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Kazakhstan are *Dictatorial Paranoia* (which has emerged from *Communist and post-Communist Oppression*) and to a lesser extent *Islamic Oppression*.

3. Context:

Three issues dominate Kazakhstan at the moment: The succession of President Nazarbayev, the sizeable Russian minority and the hundreds of Kazakh citizens who have joined militant Islamic groups in the Middle East.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

All four World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christianity exist in Kazakhstan and experience some level of persecution. Communities of expatriate or migrant Christians and Historical Christian communities experience the least problems from the government as they do not usually evangelise actively. Communities of converts to Christianity – here from a Muslim background (BMBs) – bear the brunt of the persecution both at the hands of the state and from family, friends and community. Non-traditional Protestant Christian communities are active in evangelism and suffer from raids, threats, arrests, and fines, especially when the churches have not been registered.

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

- Overall, the pressure on Christians in the WWL 2017 reporting period remained very high and even increased very slightly.
- Pressure is strongest in the *private, national, and church* spheres (very high pressure). It is less in the *family* sphere (fairly high pressure) and *community* sphere (high pressure). This is typical for a situation in which *Dictatorial Paranoia* is the main persecution engine.
- Pressure resulting from the persecution engine *Islamic Oppression* is present mostly in the *private, family and community* spheres and is exerted particularly on BMBs by the social environment.
- The level of violent incidents did not change in comparison with WWL 2016 and remains very low.
- The overall persecution situation in Kazakhstan is mainly caused by a repressive government seeking to control all areas of life.

6. Future outlook:

Religious freedom is already restricted by new legislation and the Kazakhstan government is constantly working at increasing its control over the entire society, which will continue to mean more surveillance, raids of meetings, and detention of believers. It is using the threat of militant



Islam to restrict more and more areas of freedom. This all accounts for a worsening situation for the Christian minority and makes the future outlook for them look worrying. The pressure from the social environment (mostly on BMBs) will remain stable.

7. Prayer Points:

- Pray for those who are beaten and imprisoned for leaving Islam and turning to Christ.
- Pray for government authorities who seek to suppress or eradicate Christianity.
- Pray that Christian leaders, who are under surveillance, would experience the peace and rest found in Jesus.

8. Role of Open Doors

Open Doors provides immediate aid to Central Asian believers when they are placed in prison, excluded from families and communities, and deprived of livelihood and employment because of their faith in Christ. We also strengthen the persecuted Church in Central Asia through:

- Literature distribution.
- Prayer support.
- Biblical training.
- Presence ministry.
- Income-generating projects.
- Relief ministry.