



Kuwait – #38

WWL 2017 / Summary

Reporting period: 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 57 / Position: 38

WWL 2016: Points: 56 / Position: 41

2. Persecution engines:

The main persecution engine in the country is *Islamic Oppression*. To a lesser extent, *Dictatorial Paranoia* also impacts Christians.

3. Context:

Although Kuwait is one of the smallest nations in the Middle East and one of the richest in the Arab World. More than half of the population is made up of immigrants, a significant number of whom are Christians. Kuwaiti society is conservative and Islam (sharia law) prescribes a wide range of rules for personal, family and community life. The constitutional provision regarding religious freedom is full of contradictions: On the one hand, it provides for religious freedom, but also states that the practice of freedom of religion should not violate established customs, public policy or public morals. The government has been using the traditional conservative tribal society of the country to eliminate the liberal and leftist groups and has so far been very successful. In the process, other religious minorities were also seriously affected. Kuwait has accepted some of the major United Nations conventions on human rights: e.g. the 1996 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the 1996 Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Islamic State (IS) has been trying to establish its network in the country. Some Kuwaitis are reportedly fighting for this group.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Only two World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christianity exist in the country: Communities of expatriate or migrant Christians and communities of converts to Christianity from a Muslim background (BMBs). Both face persecution. Expatriate/migrant Christians often struggle to get licenses and registration for using places of worship.

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

- Overall, the pressure on Christians in Kuwait is at a very high level and rose slightly compared to WWL 2016.
- In Kuwait Christians face the strongest pressure in the *private, family and community* spheres of life (all with very high level scores). This is typical for persecution resulting from *Islamic Oppression* and particularly affecting BMBs.
- As in previous reporting periods, there were no reports of violent incidents targeting Christians.
- The overall persecution situation in Kuwait is driven by family, community leaders, religious leaders and government officials targeting BMBs in particular.

6. Future outlook:

Despite the regional turmoil in the WWL 2017 reporting period, Kuwait has been politically stable.



Also there was not a massive rise in persecution. However, in the coming years the following are likely to be expected:

- The fear among Christians especially the BMBs will continue as the environment in the country becomes more hostile.
- Society is likely to become more conservative. The government is likely to allow this to continue (so long as it does not feel challenged in its administration of power) in order to appease the radical Islamic groups in society.
- Expatriate/migrant Christian communities will continue struggling to obtain registration permits.

7. Prayer Points:

- According to the constitution of Kuwait, Islam is the state religion and Islamic law is an important source of legislation. The atmosphere in Kuwait is becoming increasingly hostile toward non-Muslims. Pray that the country would move toward true freedom of religion.
- Pray for Muslim family members of Christians to see the love of Christ exemplified. Pray that believers would be emboldened to share their faith wisely with those around them.
- In society, Christian converts from a Muslim background are seen as second class, foreigners, and infidels. They are prevented from participating in community activities. Pray that the Christian community would not be discouraged and would continue to show the love of Jesus to their Muslim communities.

8. Role of Open Doors