



Mauritania – #47

WWL 2017 / Summary

Reporting period: 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 55 / Position: 47

WWL 2016: Points: 50 / Persecution Watch Country outside top 50.

2. Main persecution engines:

The primary persecution engine affecting Christians in Mauritania is *Islamic Oppression*.

3. Context:

Mauritania is a self-proclaimed Islamic Republic and has been under military rule for more than 30 years, with only a short democratic interruption in 2007. The country is formally a multiparty democracy, but its parliament is completely dominated by the ruling party. There are several Islamist groups that are active in the political scene in the country. Ethnicity is also an important factor in Mauritania's politics. Mauritania is one of the world's poorest countries. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has been a challenge to the Mauritanian government since 2005.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Of the four World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christianity, two exist in Mauritania and experience persecution: Communities of expatriate or migrant Christians and communities of converts to Christianity from a Muslim background (BMBs).

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

- The average pressure on Christians in Mauritania is at a very high level.
- Pressure in all spheres of life is either at a high or very high level and is strongest in the *national sphere, community and private* spheres of life. This is typical for a situation in which *Dictatorial Paranoia* and *Ethnic Antagonism* increase the effect of the main persecution engine, *Islamic Oppression*.
- Pressure from *Islamic Oppression* is otherwise present mostly in the *private, family and community* spheres, being exerted by the social environment and particularly affecting BMBs.
- The score for violence is very low. One of the very few violent incidents reported concerned a forced expulsion from the country of one believer due to harassment from his family members.
- The overall persecution situation in Mauritania is so intense, that most BMBs are forced to keep their faith secret.

6. Future outlook:

The turbulence and political instability that characterises the country's past and present does not bode well for the future. The lack of strong institutions and of a democratic culture that respects the rights of citizens, means that the chances of the situation for Christians improving are very slim.

7. Prayer Points:

- Pray for the illiterate believers of Mauritania – many of them women – as they seek God



with limited access to scripture and in need of creative new ways to get them the Word of God.

- Pray for new business initiatives in Mauritania that not only hope to help believers financially, but also seek to disciple them and help them grow spiritually through their work.
- Continue to pray for racial reconciliation in a much divided country at a tense time in history. Pray for change in the unjust structures and attitudes of one group or tribe against another. Please pray for the forgiveness needed to deal with a difficult past.

8. Role of Open Doors