



Mexico – #41

WWL 2017 / Summary

Reporting period: 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 57 / Position: 41

WWL 2016: Points: 56 / Position: 40

2. Main persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Mexico are *Organised Corruption and Crime* and to a lesser extent *Ethnic Antagonism*, *Secular Intolerance* and *Denominational Protectionism*.

3. Context:

Mexico has the largest population in the Spanish-speaking world and has the largest economy in Latin America (after Brazil). Mexico is also one of the most violent countries in the world, as result of the presence of organised crime. Mexico's number of IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) has multiplied by almost 36 in seven years, increasing from "only" 8 000 in 2009 to 287 000 in 2015.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Mexico is home to three of the four World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christianity: Historical Christian communities, communities of converts to Christianity (where converts may be from an indigenous or mafia background) and non-traditional Protestant Christian communities. All suffer persecution but there are differences between the persecution engines. *Organised Corruption and Crime* affects all Christians but particularly those who actively engage in social transformation and, therefore, constitute a threat to drug cartels and other criminal groups. The persecution engine *Ethnic Antagonism* focuses mainly on the situation for those converting from indigenous traditional beliefs to non-traditional Protestant denominations, but members of the Catholic Renewal Movement have also been targeted. *Secular Intolerance* affects all Christian communities. *Denominational Protectionism* affects all non-traditional forms of Christianity.

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

- Overall, the pressure on Christians remains high and increased very slightly in comparison to the WWL 2016 reporting period.
- The pressure is highest in the *community* sphere (very high pressure) and *church* sphere (high pressure). Combined with an extremely high score for violence, this is typical for a situation in which criminal groups terrorise society at the local community level.
- The persecution engines *Ethnic Antagonism*, *Secular Intolerance* and *Denominational Protectionism* add further elements of pressure, particularly affecting the scores in the *community* (very high), *national* (fairly high) and *church* spheres (high).
- The level of violence is extreme (reaching the same level as in WWL 2016).
- The overall persecution situation in Mexico is a mixture of different persecution engines, which together make life in the local community very complicated for Christians.

6. Future outlook:

National security forces have been incapable of adequately addressing the violence and crime, in



Part, because of the infiltration and co-optation of security and judiciary institutions. The security situation in Mexico will continue to be dire, which is always a difficult context for the Church to operate in. The culture of violence affects the lives of all Mexicans and reflects the incapacity of the Mexican government to guarantee the security of its population, especially of its most vulnerable groups in rural areas, which includes Christians belonging to minority Christian denominations such as Protestants.

7. Prayer Points:

- Pray for the hearts of those involved in drug cartels. They often kidnap, terrorise, and even kill Christians because they stand in the way of their illegal work. Pray they would come to know Jesus and that they would encourage positive change in Mexico.
- Pray for Christians who experience persecution in the form of being denied access to basic social services and resources. Pray for God's provision and grace.
- Mexico is one of the most violent countries in the world. Pray for physical protection for persecuted believers in Mexico.

8. Role of Open Doors

The ministry of Open Doors in Mexico focuses on two major areas of transformation:

I. Bringing structural change to the persecution situation in Mexico. The transformation we seek is to make the field operations of Open Doors instrumental to achieving solutions to the spiritual and material needs of the Mexican Church that suffers persecution, not by making the Church dependent on the aid supplied by the ministry, but by contributing to make it more resilient to persecution.

II. Engaging and equipping the Mexican Church to reach out to the persecuted Church. The transformation we seek is that the potential of the Mexican Church is untapped so that it can reach out directly to the Mexican Church. Open Doors can play a role in encouraging and equipping the Church using its experience and credibility as a voice of the persecuted and acting as a broker between Mexican churches and persecuted communities.

These two areas of transformation translate into four strategic intervention areas:

- Quality research and communication in order raise awareness about the persecuted Church.
- Effective advocacy to address to root causes of persecution at the local, federal and regional levels.
- Projects that increase the resilience of the Church to cope with persecution.
- Church mobilisation.