



Oman – #49

WWL 2017 / Summary

Reporting period: 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

1. Ranking: **WWL 2017: Points: 53 / Position: 49**

WWL 2016: Points: 53 / Position: 50

2. Persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Oman are *Islamic Oppression* (main) and, to a lesser extent, *Dictatorial Paranoia*.

3. Context:

Oman is located at a very strategic position – the confluence of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. The current sultan came to power in 1970 and is credited for bringing security and stability and introducing democratic reforms. Even as many Arab states have succumbed to sectarian violence and political tumult, the Sultanate of Oman did not experience any major violence or serious uprisings. Oman is the country of Ibadi Islam, a sect which is supposed to be far less violent than mainstream Sunni or Shia. The constitutional provision regarding religious freedom is full of contradictions: On the one hand, it provides for religious freedom, but then states that the practice of freedom of religion should not violate established customs, public policy or public morals. There is fear that the fighting in Yemen might have a spill-over effect.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Two World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christianity exist in Oman and are facing persecution: Communities of expatriate or migrant Christians and communities of converts to Christianity from a Muslim background (BMBs). BMBs suffer the most.

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

- Overall, the pressure on Christians in Oman is high, remaining at the same level as in WWL 2016.
- Christians face the strongest pressure in the *private, family and church* spheres of life (all with very high level scores). This is typical for a situation resulting from *Islamic Oppression* where BMBs face strong persecution from family, community leaders and government officials.
- Violence against Christians is at a very low level but rose in comparison to the zero level recorded in WWL 2016.
- The overall persecution situation in Oman is fuelled by *Islamic Oppression* and to a lesser extent by *Dictatorial Paranoia*.

6. Future outlook:

Generally speaking, the situation in the country – both in terms of persecution and the political environment – will likely remain the same. However:

- If the aging and ailing Sultan passes away, the transition might create uncertainty and conflict.



- If the problems in Yemen are not solved, it might have an impact on Oman. The radical militants might cross the border from Yemen.

7. Prayer Points:

- There are only a handful of Omani believers in the country. The spiritual climate is described as hard, dry ground. Pray that God will soften this hard ground and pour out His Spirit on the nation like rain on the dry desert.
- Pray that the expat Christians who work in Oman would bear witness of the hope and salvation they have.
- Thank the Lord for Omanis who have realised that salvation is only through the Lord Jesus, the Son of God and their personal King. Pray for boldness to share their new life in Him, and pray also for the protection of these new-born believers and that their family and peers will be touched by their witness of integrity.

8. Role of Open Doors