



Qatar – #20

WWL 2017 / Summary

Reporting period: 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 66/ Position: 20

WWL 2016: Points: 65 / Position: 21

2. Main persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Qatar are *Islamic Oppression* (main) and to a lesser extent *Ethnic Antagonism* (blended with *Islamic Oppression*).

3. Context:

Eighty percent of Qatar's population of about two million is made up of migrant labourers. The Qataris (20%) enjoy the highest GDP per capita in the world. Expatriates and migrant workers are generally perceived and treated by Qataris as slaves. Forced labour and human trafficking are major problems. Working conditions for migrant workers can be inhumane and dangerous; they face underpayment, domestic violence, sexual abuse, and lack proper living conditions. Some have been known to die at their work place. Apart from Saudi Arabia, Qatar is the only other Wahhabi Islamic country in the world, a strictly conservative and puritan version of Islam.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Only two World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christians exist in Qatar: 1) Communities of expatriate or migrant Christians: These have freedom to practice their faith, as long as they do not evangelise Muslims, which can lead to arrest and deportation. Migrant Christians from "Low Income Countries" are restricted more in their religious liberty. 2) Communities of converts to Christianity, here from a Muslim background (BMBs): Conversion from Islam to another religion carries the death penalty and Christian converts from a Muslim background cannot openly practice their faith.

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

- Overall, the pressure on Christians remains very high and increased slightly in comparison to the WWL 2016 reporting period.^[1]
- The score in the *church* sphere is at an extreme level, mainly indicating pressure on BMBs. Next highest is the pressure in the *national* and *private* spheres of life which is at a very high level. This is typical for a situation in which *Islamic Oppression* is the main persecution engine blended with *Ethnic Antagonism*.
- In the *private* and *family* spheres, pressure is exerted on BMBs in particular. In the *community*, *national* and *church* spheres all types of Christianity are affected.
- The level of violence is very low, but the score did rise in comparison to WWL 2016.
- The overall persecution situation in Qatar is characterised by a puritan form of Islam and a heavy level of control on society.

6. Future outlook:

The political, social and economic situation of Qatar seems quite stable and no major changes in



religious freedom for Christians are expected.

7. Prayer Points:

- Pray for Christian migrant workers to show the love of Christ to employers who abuse them.
- Pray for Christian converts who feel they cannot share their faith with Muslim family members, that they would have wisdom and discernment in sharing their faith.
- Pray that Qataris would be drawn to Christ by whatever means God deems necessary.

8. Role of Open Doors

[1] This increase is mainly due to adjustments based on the availability of more information. In reality, pressure on Christians did not change that much compared to the WWL 2016.