



Somalia – #2

WWL 2017 / Summary

Reporting period: 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 91 / Position: 2

WWL 2016: Points: 87 / Position: 7

2. Persecution engines:

The two main persecution engines are *Islamic Oppression* and *Ethnic Antagonism*. *Organised Corruption and Crime* has also become visible.

3. Context:

Somalia has been on the World Watch List since 1993. Islam was already firmly established in Somalia before the arrival of Christianity. Somalia's tribal system – as an informal way of governing Somalia – is very resistant to modern government models and more robust than the formal state structure. Since the downfall of Ziad Barre in 1991, Somalia has become a safe haven for Islamic militants. Believers from a Muslim Background (BMBs) in the country have been facing massive problems and their killing is very common. A mere suspicion leads to a rushed public execution. Al-Shabaab has been orchestrating similar attacks against Christians in Kenya.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

The only WWL category of Christianity truly existing in Somalia are the communities of converts to Christianity with a Muslim background (BMBs). The faith of these BMBs must stay hidden for them to survive. All persecution engines active in the country affect them. (The communities of expatriate or migrant Christians are restricted to chaplaincies for soldiers and workers in Mogadishu and are not representative for WWL analysis.)

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

- Christians in Somalia experience extreme pressure in all *spheres of life*.
- Pressure is strongest in the *private, national* and *church* spheres of life which all show maximum scores.
- Whereas pressure resulting from *Islamic Oppression* manifests itself in all *spheres of life*, the persecution engine *Ethnic Antagonism* is most visible in the *community* and *family* spheres of life, which have lower score.
- The score for violence increased by more than six points and is now at a very high level. The persecution engine *Organised Corruption and Crime*, together with the lack of law and order in many parts of the country, has led to this increase in violence.
- The overall persecution situation in Somalia reveals that there is a strong desire within the society to eliminate Christianity from the country, verging towards ethnic cleansing.

6. Future outlook:

Elections are expected to be held in 2017. Whatever the election results, the persecution engines *Islamic Oppression*, *Ethnic Antagonism* and *Organised Corruption and Crime* will still continue to operate in the country. In addition, in the near future:



- Al-Shabaab will continue targeting BMBs.
- It is unlikely that ruined churches will be reopened.
- If the Africa Union troops leave the country, Al-Shabaab will be emboldened again and might pose an additional threat to Christians in the country and beyond.
- If the elections to be held in 2017 went seriously wrong, the situation in the country could deteriorate even further.

7. Prayer Points:

- Please pray that the Lord will build His Kingdom in Somalia in the midst of harsh circumstances.
- Somali Christians cannot openly attend gatherings and cannot even be caught reading the Bible. Even reading about Christ on the Internet is dangerous. Pray for protection over His children among the Somali people who need to find ways to be discipled in secret.
- Thank the Lord for His promise to build his Church and pray that he will remain at work to draw many Muslims to Himself. Many are seeking. Pray that He will make himself known to them.

8. Role of Open Doors

Open Doors has been involved in strengthening the Church through partnership since the 1990s. Our focus has been on finding the few pockets of severely persecuted Christians and supporting them in whatever way relevant. Our aim is also to raise awareness and prayer for the situation of believers in Somalia. Open Doors advocates on behalf of the persecuted Church in the region with the following activities:

- Prayer support.
- Discipleship support.
- Literature distribution.
- Advocacy and awareness.
- Community development programmes.