



Sudan – #5

WWL 2017 / Summary

Reporting period: 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 87 / Position: 5

WWL 2016: Points: 84 / Position: 8

2. Persecution engines:

Two intertwined engines are present in the country: *Islamic Oppression* and *Dictatorial Paranoia*.

3. Context:

Sudan has been on the World Watch List (WWL) since 1993 and was mostly within the top 20 over the years. The persecution in the country is systematic and reminiscent of a policy of *ethnic cleansing*. Under the authoritarian rule of al-Bashir and his party, there is no rule of law in Sudan; press and media laws have been restrictive, and freedom of expression has been highly curtailed. The ethnic-cultural landscape is complicated: Arab versus Ethnic Africans, Muslim versus Christian. The secession of South Sudan in 2011 did not solve these problems. This is particularly true for Ethnic Africans, as a significant number are Christian and still living in the country. Historically, Islam is deeply embedded in Sudan's society and the government is strictly implementing the policy of one religion, one culture, and one language. There have been ongoing conflicts in different parts of the country.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

In Sudan all WWL categories of Christianity are affected: Communities of expatriate or migrant Christians, historical Christian communities, communities of converts to Christianity (here with a Muslim background – BMBs), and non-traditional Protestant Christian communities all live under serious persecution. Government security officials harass and intimidate them.

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

- Overall, the pressure on Christians in Sudan rose considerably in the WWL 2017 reporting period and is at an extreme level.
- Pressure is at extreme levels in all *spheres of life*, but highest in the *church* and *national spheres* and lowest in the *private sphere*.
- Both engines, *Dictatorial Paranoia* and *Islamic Oppression*, are creating very hostile environment for Christians, while Islamic oppression is mainly active in family and community spheres, dictatorial paranoia is a main problem in national and church spheres.
- The score for the violence is less than in WWL 2016 but remains at an extreme level. There were numerous arrests, attacks on churches and Christian buildings, and killings (above all, in the Nuba Mountains).
- The overall persecution situation for Christians has got worse since the independence of South Sudan as the government of Sudan is making progress in implementing its policy of one religion, one culture, and one language.

6. Future outlook:



For Christians in Sudan the future looks gloomy: above all, both engines *Islamic Oppression* and *Dictatorial Paranoia* will remain the main engines in the country. The government of Sudan will almost certainly continue arresting, harassing, and expelling Christians. It will continue to be very difficult to get permission to build churches or renovate existing ones. With regard to the Nuba Christians, the government of Sudan seems intent on targeting them indiscriminately. Al-Bashir looks like he will continue taking his hard-line approach in dealing with the international community.

7. Prayer Points:

- Christians in Sudan face intense oppression and persecution. Pray for protection and opportunities to fellowship with other believers. Pray also for church leaders to stand strong amidst pressure placed on their churches by the government and Islamic extremists.
- Sharia law is the foundation of Sudan's legal system. The government frequently arrests, harasses, and expels Christians. Please pray that the Sudanese government will become more accepting of Christianity and that they will allow freedom of religion.
- The government in Sudan is one of the most dictatorial regimes in Africa. Please pray for Sudanese leaders, that the Holy Spirit will change their hearts and use them to bring justice and peace to the country.

8. Role of Open Doors

Through partnerships with the local Church, Open Doors equips church leaders in Sudan for different aspects of ministry, supports community development, and provides practical assistance to persecuted Christians. The scope of work focused on by the local Church in Sudan includes:

- Various distribution projects.
- Discipleship training.
- *Standing Strong Through the Storm* seminars.
- Trauma ministry.
- Theological training.
- Various community development projects.