



Tunisia – #29

WWL 2017 / Summary

Reporting period: 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 61 / Position: 29

WWL 2016: Points: 58 / Position: 32

2. Main persecution engines:

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Tunisia are *Islamic Oppression* (main engine) and to a lesser extent *Organized Corruption and Crime*.

3. Context:

There had been a lot of social, economic and political discontent in Tunisia leading to the Jasmine revolution (Arab Spring). Since the fall of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in 2011, the political landscape in Tunisia has been transformed. A new constitution was approved on 26 January 2014. Despite Tunisia's much celebrated peaceful democratisation process, the country still faces many economic challenges and serious security threats from Islamic militias operating in the region. The threat from these groups has crippled the tourism sector.

4. Types of Christianity affected:

Two World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christianity exist in Tunisia: Communities of expatriate or migrant Christians and communities of converts to Christianity from a Muslim background (BMBs). BMBs bear the brunt of the persecution while expatriate Christians are relatively free to exercise and live in accordance with their faith, although public evangelism is not tolerated.

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

- Overall, the pressure on Christians in Tunisia is at a very high level and has increased considerably since WWL 2016.
- Pressure is strongest (and at a very high level) in the family and *private* spheres of life. This is typical for a situation resulting from *Islamic Oppression*, where BMBs have difficulty finding private space to worship and experience serious opposition from family members.
- Although still high, the *national* and *community* sphere scores are lowest, reflecting the positive presence of influential secularist and liberal political groups in the country.
- The score for violence is less than in WWL 2016 but remains at a fairly high level. The activity of Islamic militias in neighbouring Libya has some spillover effect in Tunisia.
- The overall persecution situation in Tunisia is fuelled by *Islamic Oppression* making society intolerant of Christians and particularly BMBs. The activity of Islamic militant groups in Tunisia and the broader region also adds to the pressure faced by Christians.

6. Future outlook:

Although the political situation in Tunisia seems to have stabilised, this does not mean that the pressure on Christians can be expected to decrease. In fact, society and culture remains anti-Christian (particularly in rural areas) and this has not changed despite the political changes in the



country since the Arab Spring. Democratisation has not resulted in more tolerance and security for Christians in Tunisia. This trend is likely to continue in the foreseeable future.

7. Prayer Points:

- Pray for Christian youth who are rejected and persecuted for their faith. Pray for young believers who are wanting to marry as they face a great deal of opposition and pressure from non-believing family members.
- Pray for Tunisians who are persecuted. Many lose hope and have difficulty knowing how to move forward with their lives. Pray they will know God is always with them.
- Pray that the Lord will hinder the plans of Muslim extremists to create chaos in the country. Pray that the Lord will touch their hearts and that they might bow their knees to Jesus.

8. Role of Open Doors

In cooperation with local partners and churches, Open Doors is supporting the church in Tunisia through the following activities:

- Training.
- Literature distribution.
- Socioeconomic development.
- Advocacy.
- Open Doors also raises prayer support for believers in Tunisia.