



## United Arab Emirates – #44

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### WWL 2017 / Summary

**Reporting period:** 1 November 2015 to 31 October 2016

**1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 55 / Position: 44**

WWL 2016: Points: 55 / Position: 47

**2. Persecution engines:**

The persecution engines affecting Christians in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are *Islamic Oppression* (main) and *Dictatorial Paranoia* (secondary).

**3. Context:**

United Arab Emirates is a country of contrasts. On the one hand, it is known for its stability, wealth and development. On the other hand, freedom of religion, press, assembly, association and expression are severely restricted in the kingdom. The country is one of the most strategically important and relatively stable countries in a very volatile region. Having a population of less than ten million (of which expatriates make up around 80%), UAE is a hub for international financial and construction companies. All decisions about political leadership rest with the dynastic rulers of the seven emirates and there is no place for the will of the people at large. There is no space or recognition of political parties, according to Freedom House which rated the country as “not free” in its 2016 report. The constitutional provision regarding religious freedom is also full of contradictions: It provides for religious freedom but states that the practice of freedom of religion should not violate established customs, public policy or public morals. Apostasy is punishable by death.

**4. Types of Christianity affected:**

The two World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christianity that exist in UAE are communities of expatriate or migrant Christians and communities of converts to Christianity (here from a Muslim background – BMBs). Both face persecution, but BMBs suffer the most.

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

- Overall, the pressure on Christians in UAE is at a very high level and rose very slightly compared to WWL 2016.
- Christians face the strongest pressure in the *private, family and community* spheres (all with very high level scores). This is typical for persecution resulting from *Islamic Oppression*.
- There were no violent incidents reported, as was the case in WWL 2016.
- The overall persecution situation in UAE is driven by family, community leaders and government officials putting pressure on BMBs.

**6. Future outlook:**

If regional politics remain unchanged, it is likely that the influence of radical Islam will increase in the country. This means that the pressure on Christians is likely to continue at a very high level.

**7. Prayer Points:**

- Pray for leaders of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to have wisdom and tolerance, allowing



citizens to change their faith.

- Pray that the government will be able to keep the country safe from insurgent/terrorist groups and provide policies that encourage young people to be motivated to work hard for the good of their country.
- Pray for Christian converts who are afraid to reveal their faith in Jesus. Pray for Christian women who convert from Islam and lose their rights to possessions and their children.

#### **8. Role of Open Doors**