



## Yemen – #9

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### WWL 2017 / Summary

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

**1. Ranking: WWL 2017: Points: 85 / Position: 9**

WWL 2016: Points: 78 / Position: 11

**2. Main persecution engines:**

The persecution engines affecting Christians in Yemen are *Islamic Oppression* and *Ethnic Antagonism* (blended with *Islamic Oppression*).

**3. Context:**

Yemen is in a complex and devastating war fought between Muslim sects and split over various tribes. Sunni militant groups like Al-Qaeda and Islamic State (IS) use the chaos to gain territory and impose their rules. The country has seen political turmoil and violence since 2012 when the former president was ousted. Meanwhile, Yemen is facing a dire humanitarian crisis. Eighty percent of the population is in need of some form of humanitarian assistance and more than half of the population is food insecure, making Yemen's hunger crisis one of the worst in the world.

**4. Types of Christianity affected:**

Of the four World Watch List (WWL) categories of Christianity, only the communities of converts to Christianity from a Muslim background (BMBs) are currently left in the country. Communities of expatriate or migrant Christians (e.g. from the West, Africa and Asia) have mostly left due to the devastating war in which civilians bear the brunt of the violence.

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

- Overall, the pressure on Christians in Yemen is at an extreme level and rose considerably compared to WWL 2016. The high level of pressure is explained by the war and the departure of most expatriate or migrant Christians. As a result, only indigenous Christians have been focused on in the WWL research and they experience the highest levels of persecution.
- Pressure in all *spheres of life* is at an extreme level, but is strongest in the *private, national, and church* spheres of life. This is typical for a situation in which there are mostly BMBs in a country and *Islamic Oppression* is the main persecution engine, blended with *Ethnic Antagonism*.
- The level of violence is very high and increased compared to WWL 2016. There were more reported cases of Christians killed for their faith and churches and/or Christian buildings attacked. The most serious anti-Christian incident was an attack on a Catholic home for the elderly and disabled in which 16 people were killed, four of them were nuns. An Indian priest was abducted by the assailants.
- The overall pressure in Yemen characterised by a volatile persecution situation, which corresponds to the current chaotic and lawless situation of war in Yemen.

**6. Future outlook:**



An end to the war is not expected in the near future. Meanwhile, Yemen's humanitarian and economic situation is catastrophic. Analysts expect Islamic militant groups to remain in the country for the next few years. This means extreme levels of violence and pressure on Yemen's religious minorities are likely to continue, especially for Christians as they are mostly converts from Islam and hence particularly vulnerable. Nevertheless, reports show that more Muslims are turning to Christ than ever before.

#### **7. Prayer Points:**

- The war that Saudi Arabia is fighting in Yemen is helping the extremists from Al-Qaeda and Islamic State (IS) to move freely through Yemen. They are extremely aggressive toward Christians. Please pray that God will touch the hearts of the extremists in love so they will embrace the Gospel.
- Pray that the secret gatherings of Believers from a Muslim Background (BMBs) would glorify God, and pray that Christians would be able to minister to their fellow Yemenis.
- Eighty percent of Yemenis depend on aid. Aid is typically channelled through the tribal and family lines of which Christians are often disconnected. Please pray that aid will reach Christians.

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