

# FRONTLINE FAITH



Give hope to  
remind persecuted  
Christians that  
they're never  
alone >>>

**Never alone** campaign 

Standing with Persecuted Christians Under Greatest Threat

**NOVEMBER  
2019**

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Representative image used.

## You're bringing hope to hard-hit believers in Syria

Many people have fled war-ravaged Syria, but Pastor Abdallah has chosen to stay and serve by turning his church into a Centre of Hope.

When asked why, he explains:

*"Families are confused about their future. They're without jobs, their houses are destroyed or damaged. There are so many challenges. They're confused whether they should stay or leave. We need to encourage the Christians to stay in this land. As a church, we want to stand next to the people and help them. We want to see a better future."*

Thanks to the support of partners like you, Open Doors' projects, like the Centre of Hope, are helping to provide practical support to hard-hit families, including activities for their traumatised children – "the generation that got hurt the most in this war," says Pastor Abdallah. "We want to support and strengthen young children psychologically and spiritually and remove the side effects of war."

Through your support we can help provide food distribution, English lessons, evangelistic Alpha courses, marriage

courses, discipleship for new believers, and women's fellowship meetings through these Centres of Hope and more.

Our long-term commitment at Open Doors is to be there for the Church in Syria, for as long as they need us, with whatever support they need. They haven't given up and neither should we – their global Church family.

**That's one reason why we've launched our Never Alone Campaign.** We want to stand with these hard-hit believers in Syria and all Christians around the world under greatest threat. Read more on pages 6 and 7 on how you can be involved with the Never Alone Campaign this summer!

Together as the Body of Christ, we can help many of our brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, and children in Christ to "run with endurance the race that is set before them as they look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1–2).

Thank you for standing with these brave believers in Syria so they can know that, despite their circumstances, Jesus loves them, and they're never alone! ☺

# Tell your family in Christ: 'You're never alone!'

It's difficult to be a believer where everyone is against you, even your own family. But together we can remind our persecuted brothers and sisters that they're never alone.

So, this month we're launching our *Never Alone* Campaign. And you can play a vital role in it!

We want this campaign to be a reminder not just for our persecuted family, but for each one of us to know that we're never alone. And through this campaign, we want to equip our global family in Christ so they can continue to stand strong.

## What can I expect?

Over the next three months, we'll introduce you to some of the people in your persecuted family.

In **November**, we'll introduce you to your embattled fathers and brothers – the **men** of our family. They're our church leaders, mentors and disciple makers. Your support can help them to care for their families, churches, and communities and to disciple others.

In **December**, the *Never Alone* Campaign will bring you the stories of the **children** of the persecuted Church... the little light-bearers in the Kingdom. These are our sons and daughters in the faith.

And in **January**, we'll focus on the daughters of the Kingdom – the **women** of the persecuted Church: Your mothers and sisters in the faith. Your support can help them take care of their families and share the Gospel.

Join the *Never Alone* Campaign in prayer and support to "strengthen what remains" (Revelation 3:2).

Visit [www.neveralone.co.za](http://www.neveralone.co.za) to find out more.



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## SYRIA

RANKING **#11** | WWL SCORE **82**

**Region** Middle East

**2019 World Watch List Position**

#11 out of top 50

**Population** 18 284 000  
(only 4.5% are Christians)

**Main Religion** Islam

**Government** Presidential Republic

**Sources of Persecution** Islamic oppression and dictatorial paranoia

### PRAY

- + Thank God that Open Doors church partners are able to provide vital aid for thousands of families left with nothing after years of war.
- + For protection for believers in Syria, especially those from a Muslim background as leaving Islam is seen as a huge source of shame for the family.
- + That peace and stability will return to the country.

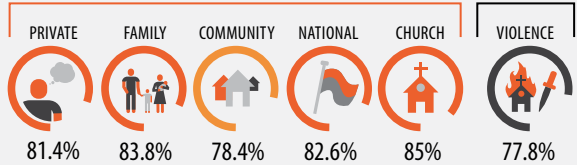


**WORLD WATCH LIST**

[www.opendoors.org.za/wwl](http://www.opendoors.org.za/wwl)

### Pressure

### Violence



Syria has been caught in a civil war since 2011. The flood of foreign jihadist fighters and Islamic State rule in 2014 added to the persecution of Christians. Although Islamic extremists have since lost control, in some areas they still force Christians to pay protection money, follow a strict dress code and dietary rules, and won't allow believers to express their faith publicly.

Some church leaders are targets for abduction. Believers from a Muslim background face opposition from their community and families, and it's illegal for these Christian converts to marry.

Despite the risks, many Christians and church leaders have chosen to stay in Syria to serve their communities as the civil war continues.



Your support helps young Syrian believers find hope for the future, knowing they're not alone.

# Q&A

## Men under fire in Southeast Asia

**Mohd Hassan\* in Southeast Asia is a former Muslim who became a Christian.**

When his five brothers wanted to kill him because of his conversion, he prayed, *“Lord you’ve chosen me, now please save me!”*

He says he was *“persecuted, but never alone,”* as the Lord touched his father’s heart, causing him to beg his other children not to kill Mohd.

Today, Mohd works with Open Doors to help persecuted Christians. His family may have disowned him, but he knows that wherever he goes he still *“has his brothers and sisters in Christ.”* We asked him a few questions:

### **Mohd, how has persecution changed in Southeast Asia?**

Because more people are coming to Christ, the persecution is rising. Many hide their faith to avoid the persecution.

### **What kind of persecution do men in your region face?**

#### **Many are experiencing:**

- Isolation from family.
- Loss of their jobs (most believers live in poverty and work as day labourers because they don’t get work when they’re Christians).
- The persecution of their children.
- People trying to destroy their houses and grab their land.
- False accusations being made to the police.

### **How can we pray for you?**

Pray that God will raise more people to evangelise and for them to not be afraid. Pray also for the safety of the evangelists and unity among churches.



Representative image used.

\*Name changed for security reasons.

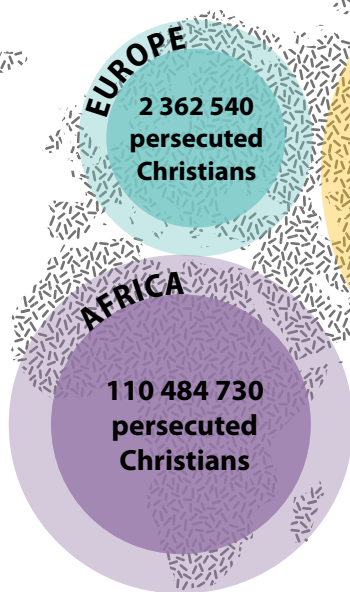
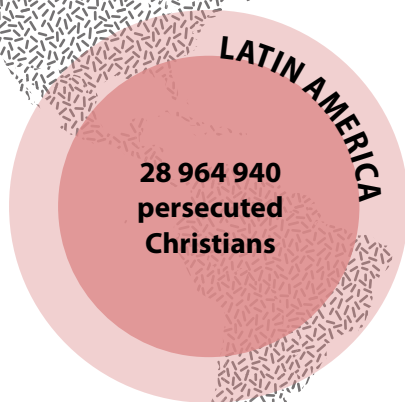
# Help them know you're standing with them

Here's why these persecuted men, women and children need your support now!

There are approximately **2.5 billion\*\*** Christians worldwide and over **245 million** Christians experience "high" levels of persecution for their faith.



## Where Christians are under greatest threat<sup>^</sup>:



Please join us in prayer and support, over the next three months during our *Never Alone* Campaign, as together we seek to continue to reach our family in Christ who are vulnerable because they've chosen to follow Jesus.

Please prayerfully consider supporting Christians under greatest threat by helping meet the **R10 872 000** *Never Alone* campaign goal.



## Persecution against men:

- Denied certain jobs
- Exploited or abused by employer
- Socially ostracised (in areas where they're dependent on their community for survival)
- Physical violence
- Imprisonment
- Militia/military conscription



## Persecution against children:

- Girls: forced marriages, rape, house arrest and even death
- Boys: militia/military conscription as a tool of religious persecution
- Bullying by other non-Christian children and even teachers
- Given lower grades at school because of their faith
- Physical violence
- Seeing loved ones arrested or killed for following Jesus
- Witness persecution of parents
- Orphaned



## Persecution against women:

- Lack of access to education
- Lack of healthcare or infrastructure
- Forced divorce
- Travel bans
- Trafficking
- Widowhood
- Incarceration in a psychiatric unit
- Forced abortions or contraception
- Being denied access to work or the choice of a Christian spouse



\*All statistics and figures are based on the 2019 World Watch List and Gender-specific Religious Persecution Report.

\*\*Source: Johnson, T. M., and G. A. Zurlo, eds. *World Christian Database*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed January 2018.

^Statistics include top 50 plus Open Doors list of Persecution Watch Countries.

# FROM JAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Dear partner of the persecuted Church,

I grew up in a time when there was a belief that "boys don't cry". Where men needed to have the answers or give direction in difficult times.

There were times in my life that I wanted to run away because of this as I didn't have all the answers or direction. One day the Lord sent men of God to give me hope and help me make sense of everything. My hope was restored by the Holy Spirit working through these men.

When I recently saw some footage of Homs and Aleppo in Syria and saw the total devastation, I wondered:

*What does a father do when he needs to take care of his family after losing everything?*

That is why I'm so inspired and encouraged by Pastor Abdallah and other Christians who've made the difficult choice to stay and assist those who are in desperate need.

It's people like him – and generous friends like you – who are helping give hope and reminding our brothers and

sisters that they are not alone!

So, for the next three months we will be focusing on giving hope to our brothers and sisters under greatest threat and reminding them that although they may be persecuted, they're never alone.

As you join in the *Never Alone* Campaign, you'll help provide much-needed practical help and financial assistance, and you'll be a voice for those who are persecuted because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

Your support will help anchor our persecuted family in places like Syria and beyond, so they and our future generation of the Church can continue to point others to Christ, no matter what.

So, let's stand alongside them as they stand up for Jesus in places where they're isolated and rejected. Let's show them: *"You're not alone."*

Together in His service,

Jan Gouws  
Executive Director  
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